

Mark Jackson – Theater Maker Press Kit

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Press Highlights

*"Jackson has long been **one of the Bay Area's most interesting theater makers – intelligent, audacious, boundary pushing and always, always interesting...** His shows, especially the ones he writes and directs, can't be described as easy, but there's always **depth, invention and sharp stagecraft...**"*

– Chad Jones' theaterdogs.net

*"**MVP: Mark Jackson** – Sometimes it seems that no theater season would be complete without at least three productions from **triple-threat director-playwright-performer Jackson...** Every show, since his **dynamic** early *Io Princess of Argos* and sweeping, **bold** *The Death of Meyerhold*, is at least **exhilarating in its intellectual challenges, sharp visual images and expressive physical acting...**"*

– San Francisco Chronicle

*"Playwright/director Mark Jackson has made his name as a **first-class theatrical provocateur. Gutsy showmanship, brainy literary instincts, and laser-sharp satire mark his canon**, from *The Death of Meyerhold* and *American Suicide*, to *Faust Pt1* and *Metamorphosis*."*

– San Jose Mercury News

*"From reimagined Shakespeare to adaptations of under-produced Russian dramas, **Jackson's work is invariably characterized by his respect for and understanding of the universal nature of human emotion**, regardless of location or century, as well as **an intensely verbal style of playwriting and often aggressively physical staging.**"*

– San Francisco Bay Guardian

*"The director, playwright, educator and actor is **that rare kind of theatre artist who constantly strives to defy expectations.**"*

– American Theatre Magazine

Artist Statement

I'm drawn to theater that can only happen in the theater, and experiences that are at once truthful and theatrical.

In pre-production and rehearsal I aim to create a fluid process based in clear communication, practical action, and bold choices.

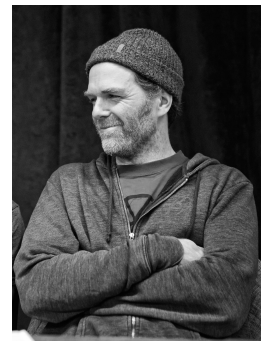
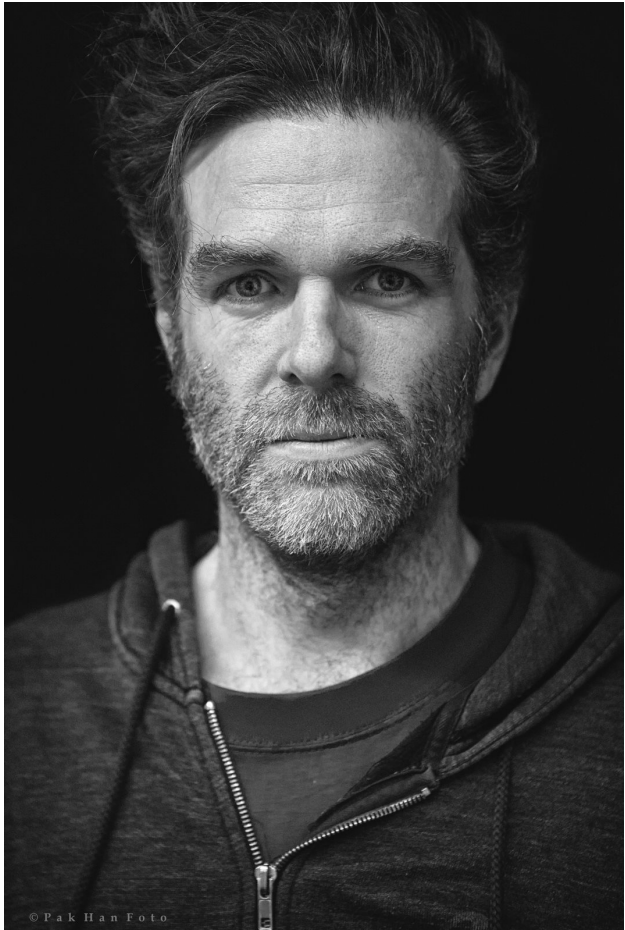
I am committed to making the rehearsal room a practical creative place—rigorous, good humored, efficient, critically engaged, open to happy accidents, and supportive of various acts of daring-do.

On stage I combine clear, dynamic storytelling images with a muscular and precise approach to language to create moments that are as specific as they are open to possibility.

I believe that for theater to be useful, regardless of style or genre it must encourage people to have more compassion for, and to be more open to, diverse and contradictory perspectives. It should also make them laugh and feel at least a bit nervous.

I believe the “product” is not on stage, but in the audience. Whatever my own point of view may be, I hope each project offers its audience certain questions and compels them to answer: What *is* this? What is *your* question? What is *your* statement? Most importantly, what is your neighbor asking and saying?

– Mark J



Some Awards & Honors:

Honorary MFA in Theatre-Performance Making from California Institute of Integral Studies.

Resident playwright of English Theatre Berlin, Germany.

Resident playwright of the Djerassi Resident Artists Program, California, where Mark was awarded the **William and Flora Hewlett Foundation Honorary Fellowship**.

German Chancellor Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, which has provided Mark with three extended artist residencies in Berlin between 2004 and 2013, for projects undertaken at Mime Centrum, Deutsches Theater, and English Theatre Berlin.

Mark has twice been named “**Best Director**” by the *East Bay Express*, “**Best Theatrical Auteur**” by the *SF Weekly*, and one of the “**Top 100 Bay Area Artists**” by *San Francisco Magazine*.

The **Edgerton Foundation New American Plays Award**

The *San Francisco Bay Guardian* **Goldie Award**

A **Magic Theater / Z Space New Works Initiative** commission

Two **Theatre Bay Area CA\$H Grants**

Three **Bay Area Theater Critics Circle Awards**

Three *San Francisco Bay Guardian* **Upstage/Downstage Awards**

Mark’s work has also received generous support from the **Kenneth Rainin Foundation**, the **Tournesol Project**, and the **Zellerbach Family Foundation**.

Mark graduated *magna cum laude* from **San Francisco State University**, where he received the Theatre Arts Department **Award for Outstanding Achievement in Directing**. He has studied extensively with **SITI Company** and master Biomechanics instructor **Gennadi Bogdanov**.

In addition to his work as a director and playwright, Mark continues to teach theater courses on a freelance basis. He has led workshops for actors at theaters and schools, and served on the faculties of universities, in both California and Berlin, Germany, and is the director of the **American Conservatory Theater Studio Program**.

Examples of Past Projects:

NOW FOR NOW

A multimedia physical theater piece about embarrassing things. Created, performed and produced by Mark Jackson and Megan Trout.

Z Space, San Francisco, July 9-26 2015.
Shotgun BLAST Theatre Festival, Berkeley,
Feb 27-29 2016.

Three relationships between a woman and man a generation apart—a daughter and father, a romance, a student and teacher—are followed over 40 years. Their stories converge and diverge in dialogues, movement, IMs and Skypes.

NOW FOR NOW explored uncomfortable, ugly, embarrassing issues about age and gender dynamics with both depth and humor. It brought together elements of theater, dance, and technology in a unique, ambitious way for an intimate production large in thematic and emotional scope.

"Now for Now is peppered with intensely uncomfortable moments... Beautifully melancholy and often funny..." – KQED.ORG

"Intimate and as funny as it is penetrating... Delights the senses and tickles the brain as much as it leaves your head spinning... The building tensions converge in a shattering, expressive climax." – SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

"The joy of this piece is reveling in its surprises, its patterns, its emotional and intellectual intelligence... Challenging, occasionally uncomfortable, very funny and quite moving... There's intention and intelligence behind everything. Jackson and Trout are disarming to the degree that they make the show seem, if not easy, then very much of the moment and filled with the sparks of creation and discovery. Individually, Jackson and Trout are extraordinary. Together they are—wow." – CHAD JONES OF THEATERDOGS.NET





ANTIGONICK

Written by Anne Carson

Directed by Mark Jackson and Hope Mohr

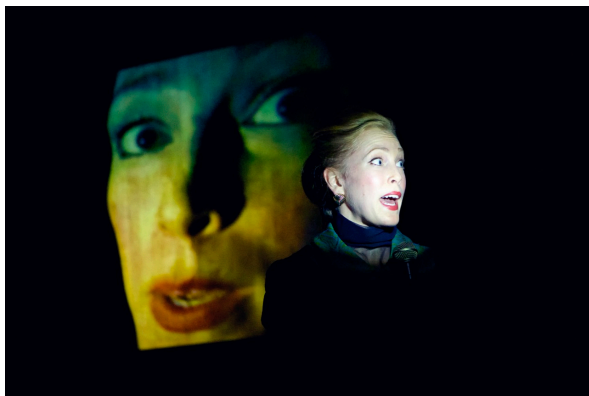
Produced by The Shotgun Players, Berkeley, CA,
March 19 to May 3, 2015.

Antigonick is an art-book “translation” of Sophokles’ *Antigone*, filtered through writer Anne Carson’s stylish, witty, and radical sensibility, with alternately unsettling and comic artwork by Bianca Stone. The Shotgun Players production aimed to translate this visual and literary art object into live, theatrical terms in order to achieve on stage what Carson and Stone did on the page—a fresh and energetic telling of the familiar myth that makes it instantly unfamiliar.

“There’s almost nothing that isn’t interesting, at times fascinating, about Shotgun Players’ dance-infused production of Antigonick... Carefully detailed direction by Mark Jackson and choreographer Hope Mohr physicalize the story in equally compelling, wonderfully theatrical ways... Suspenseful and intriguing...” – SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

“Codirected by stage auteur Mark Jackson and choreographer Hope Mohr, this postmodern stab at the ancient Greek tragedy is framed by almost trancelike movement that builds to eerie tableaux... Uncompromising physicality... Alternately hypnotic and impenetrable... Gutsy... Unsettling and memorable...” – SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS

“Shotgun Players’ incendiary production of Antigonick is an intensely felt, richly inventive and resonant show... One of the most impressive productions of the year... Jackson, an inventive director with a penchant for expressive physical interpretations of texts, and Hope Mohr, best known as a choreographer, fill the stage with endlessly intriguing, propulsive and slowly evolving movement patterns... Vital and immediate...” – SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE



BONNIE & CLYDE

Written by Adam Peck

Directed by Mark Jackson

The Shotgun Players, August 27 to September 29, 2013



Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow's actual lives were hard, their love as deep as their myth suggests, and their deeds at once horrible and perversely admirable. It's amazing how they survived as long as they did. Their success in that regard embodies one of the American conundrums: How to reconcile our tangled relationships with authority, class, greed, need, desire, and the American dream? While they lived, Bonnie and Clyde were consciously caught between their own mythic status and just being two people. The one complicates the other, and it's a complication that chews at the heart of the American experiment. How to square this? Adam Peck's play asks this question with a remarkable openness to how it might translate into stage terms, and how an audience might respond.

"The word 'gorgeous' doesn't even begin to brush the surface when it comes to describing the production... This work, directed by Mark Jackson, is a hybrid form of theater-meets-performance-art. Alluring in almost every way... Delicate and dramatic, with dreamlike interludes of internal monologues and poetry, coalesced with gorgeous visual projections and modern dance." – THE DAILY CALIFORNIAN

"It's the quieter, frailer, more delicate moments in Mark Jackson's robust, at times transcendent staging that prove most memorable... It's a sign of Jackson's sure intelligence as a director that he can let a moment happen here wordlessly, without recourse to cut-and-dry cues... Enthralling..." – SAN FRANCISCO BAY GUARDIAN



"Compelling and tragic... At turns frantic, poppy, and sensuous... Riveting throughout... The whole atmosphere is pervaded by a sense of both exhilaration and doom... The play brings a devastating energy to the task of making Bonnie and Clyde's legend mortal once more." – EAST BAY EXPRESS

WOYZECK

Music & Lyrics by Tom Waits & Kathleen Brennan

Concept by Robert Wilson

Directed by Mark Jackson

The Shotgun Players, December 5, 2012, to January 27, 2013



Of the many approaches to Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck* I've experienced, only Tom Waits and Kathleen Brennan's has moved me and helped me understand why Büchner's jarring shard about the lives of poor people has continuously struck the imaginations of people around the world for close to 200 years. And because Waits and Brennan's work, like that of all great artists—including Robert Wilson, their collaborator—speaks for itself and is best understood in action on its own terms, I'll not wax on about it. I'll just say that I'm grateful to have had the opportunity

to share with audiences this play, which offers such clear-eyed compassion to anyone whose circumstances have found them blown overboard and questioning whether or not to wait on God, the Devil, or The Man for a hand up.

"Tom Waits and Kathleen Brennan's sensuous melodies and sardonic lyrics envelop the fractured shards of Georg Büchner's unfinished script to create riveting theater in Woyzeck. Director Mark Jackson blends their talents with those of his company to deliver one of the most exciting productions of the year. This is a Woyzeck that's as emotionally compelling as it is intellectually stimulating and mordantly comic, which is a major achievement. ...The show's impact also derives from how well the director builds on the genius of his predecessors. ...As seductive as it is potently immediate."

– SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

"Jackson has always had a way with the avant-garde impulse. He brings electrifying intensity to this groundbreaking drama... Jackson also gilds the piece with wit, which helps make the play's grim themes tartly comic as well as disturbing... From start to finish, Jackson nails the jarring tone of the piece, its unsettling theatricality punctuated by the lure of circus music... We may never know how Büchner intended to fit all the shards of this haunting narrative together. But it's hard to imagine a Woyzeck more darkly hypnotic than this one."



SALOMANIA

Written & directed by Mark Jackson

Commissioned & produced by Aurora Theatre Company, June 15 to July 22, 2012



In 1895, Maud Durrant moved from San Francisco to Berlin, Germany, to study music. Shortly after, her brother killed two girls in the belfry of a church. Their mother told Maud to stay in Europe and change her name, lest the scandal ruin her career. Now going by Maud Allan, she became a major celebrity in Great Britain as a dancer and society personality. In 1918, in the weariest depths of WWI, she was accused by a British MP, Noel Pemberton-Billing, of being a lesbian, sadist, and German sympathizer as evidenced by her having played the title role in a private production of Oscar Wilde's *Salome*. Against the advice of friends in high places, Maud sued Billing for libel. He then used the case as a platform to promote a conspiracy theory involving a secret German book listing the names of

47,000 traitors to England, all held under the thumb of homosexual German agents. While soldiers continued to fight and die in the mud of France, people back home read the latest on the salacious events of the trial. How could I resist making theater about that?

"Salomania, written and directed by Mark Jackson, is a spectacular play in all senses of the word. ...As funny as it is disturbing, it spins out a staggering constellation of questions relating theater and war, art and politics, beauty and brutality... Fantastically entertaining throughout and studded with scenes of profound relevance and philosophical weight, Salomania is a brilliant play as substantial as it is well composed."

– SFAPPEAL.COM

"Wildly imaginative... Jackson lives up to his reputation for bracing ideas and balletic stage pictures here. He cleverly juxtaposes Allan's ludicrous trial with the carnage of life in the trenches during World War I."

– SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS



"Maud Allan has long deserved a play of her own, and she gets a brilliant one in Mark Jackson's Salomania. Directed by the playwright in its world premiere by Aurora Theatre Company, it's an incisive courtroom drama... Deftly staged... The trial scenes are riveting, but some of the finest moments in Salomania happen outside the courtroom. An encounter between a bitter soldier and a war widow is haunting... Salomania is sensational." – SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER