

THE PEAR THEATRE CONTINUES MAGICAL SEASON 22 WITH TWO TAKES ON SHAKESPEARE: A REIMAGINATION OF *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE* AND ZOMBIE EPIC PITTING THE BARD AGAINST THE WALKING DEAD.

IN REPERTORY NOV. 17 - DEC. 10, 2023

District Merchants by Aaron Posner

William Shakespeare's The Land of the Dead by John Heimbuch

Opening Night (*The Land of the Dead*) | Friday, Nov. 17 at 8 pm

Opening Night (*District Merchants*) | Saturday, Nov. 18 at 8 pm

Directed by Sinjin Jones

Mountain View, CA (October 17, 2023) The Pear Theatre continues its magical Season 22 lineup with another "Pear Pairing." Two biting comedies. One with a bloodier bite. It's Shakespeare, uneasy laughs and epic zombie fights in *District Merchants* by Aaron Posner and *William Shakespeare's The Land of the Dead* by John Heimbuch. Performing in repertory Nov. 17 through Dec. 10.

WHAT: *District Merchants*, an uneasy comedy and compelling reimagining of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, performs in repertory with *William Shakespeare's The Land of the Dead*, a true and accurate account of the Elizabethan zombie plague featuring epic fight sequences (think Shakespeare-meets-*The Walking Dead*).

WHO: *William Shakespeare's The Land of the Dead* **cast** features JM Appleby as Sir Robert Cecil, Marc Berman as Sir Francis Bacon, William J. Brown III as William Shakespeare, Helena G. Clarkson as Queen Elizabeth, Arturo Dirzo as Richard Burbage, Nique Eagen as Kate Braithwaite, Tom Farley as Dr. John Dee, Annamarie MacLeod as Kemp, Olga Molina as Rice, Adam C. Torrian as John Sinklo, Kelly Weber Barraza as Soldier 2, and Raymond Alvarez, Syeda Huq, Max Mahle, Vic Prosak & Erika Robertson as Zombies. *District Merchants* **cast** features JM Appleby as Antoine DuPre, Marc Berman as Shylock, William J. Brown III as Finn, Nique Eagen as Nessa, Annamarie MacLeod as Portia, Reggie Washington as Benjamin, Michaela Stewart as Jessica, and Adam C. Torrian as Lancelot.

The **crew and creative team** includes director Sinjin Jones, stage management by Pear Production Manager Kelly Weber Barraza, costume design by Pati Bristow (*The Land of the Dead*), lighting design by Val Zvinyatskovsky, sound design by Sinjin Jones, fight choreography by Arturo Dirzo, and set design by Pear Technical Director, Louis Stone-Collonge.

WHEN: *William Shakespeare's The Land of the Dead* opens Friday, Nov. 17 at 8:00 pm. Performs through Dec. 9: Thursday, Nov. 30 at 7:30 pm, Fridays at 8:00 pm, and Saturdays at 2:00 pm. *District Merchants* opens Saturday, Nov. 18 at 8:00 pm. Performs through Dec. 10: Thursday, Dec. 7 at 7:30 pm, Saturdays at 8:00 pm, and Sundays at 2:00 pm.





ABOUT THE PLAYS

District Merchants, *An Uneasy Comedy*, examines love, loss, litigation, and predatory lending in surprising ways, wading fearlessly into the endless complexities and contradictions of life in America. Set among the Black and Jewish populations of an imagined time and place that is simultaneously Shakespearean, Reconstruction-era Washington, D.C., and today, *District Merchants* is a remarkable tale of money, merchandise, and mercy brought to the stage by award-winning playwright and director Aaron Posner.

William Shakespeare's The Land of The Dead by John Heimbuch takes places in London, 1599. After the opening of his newest play at the Globe playhouse, William Shakespeare and actors strut and fret while an excess of bile plagues the populace outside. When the company's costumer is bitten by a plague-ridden madman, and the Queen and her men arrive seeking safety, life in the playhouse takes a turn for the worse. As the affliction spreads through London, the survivors within must fight for their lives. Can they escape? Is there a cure? Is artistic integrity ever worth dying for? A true and accurate account of the Elizabethan zombie plague.

WHAT MAKES THIS PAIRING OF SHOWS UNIQUE?

The Pear presents two clever twists and takes on Shakespeare: an uneasy, comedic reimagining of *The Merchant of Venice*, and a bloody epic pitting the Bard against *The Walking Dead*! Two biting comedies. One with a bloodier bite. It's Shakespeare, uneasy laughs and epic zombie fights!

PRODUCTION FACTS

WHAT: The Pear Theatre continues its 22nd Season with *District Merchants* by Aaron Posner and *William Shakespeare's The Land of the Dead* by John Heimbuch performing in repertory.

WHEN: *William Shakespeare's The Land of the Dead* opens Friday, Nov. 17 at 8:00 pm. Performs through Dec. 9: Thursday, Nov. 30 at 7:30 pm, Fridays at 8:00 pm, and Saturdays at 2:00 pm. *District Merchants* opens Saturday, Nov. 18 at 8:00 pm. Performs through Dec. 10: Thursday, Dec. 7 at 7:30 pm, Saturdays at 8:00 pm, and Sundays at 2:00 pm.

WHERE: The Pear Theatre; 1110 La Avenida St., Suite A, Mountain View, CA 94043.

TICKETS: General \$40, Student/Senior \$38. Purchase tickets at thepear.vbotickets.com/events For more info visit thepear.org/whats-playing, call (650) 254-1148 or email info@thepear.org

ABOUT THE PEAR THEATRE

The Pear Theatre was founded in 2002 by Diane Tasca and came under the leadership of its third Artistic Director, Sinjin Jones, in 2020. Its goal is to deliver unique theatrical experiences, and intimate theatre that is big, bold, brave and magical, while fostering community connection and inspiring the lives of patrons and artists in transformative ways. The theatre, a state-of-the-art black box with a capacity of 75-99 seats, has been recognized by the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle with the Paine Knickerbocker Award and multiple cast and crew nominations for Excellence in Theatre. In 2022, The Pear began hosting monthly Pear Pressure Cabaret presented by Harmony Werks. The Pear is also home to the Pear Playwrights' Guild which hosts a developmental reading series (Fresh Produce), an annual festival of new one-act plays (Pear Slices), and an annual playwriting festival featuring new works (Fresh Baked Pears). The theatre is also home to a student outreach, immersion and education program that hosts matinee performances (Pear Roots), and the recently launched Pear Seeds Youth Summer Camp.

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The Pear Theatre
(650) 254-1148
info@thepear.org
1110 La Avenida, Suite A
Mountain View, CA 94043