

The logo for the Chester Theatre Company, featuring the text "CHESTER THEATRE COMPANY" in a white, serif font centered within a solid gold square.

CHESTER
THEATRE
COMPANY

REQUEST FOR COVERAGE
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**CHESTER THEATRE COMPANY BRINGS LAUREN GUNDERSON'S
I AND YOU TO LIFE JUNE 28-JULY 9**

WAM Artistic Director Kristen van Ginhoven makes her
CTC Directorial Debut at The Town Hall Theatre

Chester, MA – Chester Theatre Company (CTC) is proud to present Lauren Gunderson's *I and You* in the historic Chester Town Hall, 15 Middlefield Road in Chester, MA, from June 28 through July 9, 2017. The production is directed by WAM Theatre Artistic Director Kristen van Ginhoven.

Anthony arrives at Caroline's door bearing a beat-up copy of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, an assignment from their English teacher. Due tomorrow. As the two let their guards down, this seemingly straightforward poetry project unlocks a deeper mystery that has brought them together. *The Boston Globe* writes, "Funny and moving by turns, "I and You" is suffused with a warmth that does not cloy, an intimacy that does not stifle, and a wit that connects it all together."

This staging of *I and You* marks the third Lauren Gunderson play on which Kristen van Ginhoven has worked. She has also directed (and subsequently remounted) Gunderson's *Emilie* for WAM, and she collaborated with CTC on a staged reading of *The Revolutionists*.

Lauren Gunderson was named the most produced living playwright (*American Theatre*) of the 2016-17 season. *I and You* was the 2014 winner of the Mimi Steinberg/American Theatre Critics Association New Play Award, an award bestowed on playwrights for shows which premiered professionally outside New York City.

Chester Theatre Company Producing Artistic Director Daniel Elihu Kramer selected this work to kick off the 2017 Season, his second heading CTC, at a time where he feels it is vital to recognize and appreciate shared humanity despite great divides that seem to pervade all aspects of society. "Caroline and Anthony are young, but through Walt Whitman they engage with vital ideas: the beauty of the individual person and soul, the democratic idea of our equality, and what it means to love another," says Kramer. "*I and You* is funny, moving, and deeply thoughtful."

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The artistic team of *I and You* includes:

Kristen van Ginhoven (Director) is the Artistic Director and Co-Founder of WAM Theatre, where she has directed *The Bakelite Masterpiece* (co-production with Berkshire Theatre Group), *In Darfur* (New England Premiere), *Emilie* (New England Premiere), *The Old Mezzo* (World Premiere), *The Attic*, *The Pearls and Three Fine Girls*, and *Melancholy Play*. Elsewhere she has directed *Waxworks* (Williams College), *The Whale* (Adirondack Theatre Festival), *10 Minute Play Festival* (Barrington Stage Company), *Petticoats of Steel* (Capital Repertory Theatre), *Footloose* (Cohoes Music Hall), *The Children's Hour* (Siena College), and *Vendetta Chrome* (Emerson College).

Lilli Hokama (Caroline), is a recent transplant to New York from Denver, CO. This winter she performed in *Greenland* at Dixon Place. Last fall she toured to CA with the new musical *I Am Alive*, set within the travesty of the Armenian genocide. Her CO credits include *Troilus and Cressida*, (Aeneas) with the Colorado Shakespeare Festival, *The Arabian Nights* (Scheherazade), and *She Kills Monsters* (Agnes) with the Aurora Fox. She has been a part of numerous new works including *The Wave That Set the Fire* and *Companions LLC*, as well as the staged reading of *The Rape of the Sabine Women* presented by Local Lab. She also performed a one woman show, *Foundations*, presented as a part of Theater Esprit Asia's *Coming to America*.

Paul Pontrelli (Anthony) is an MFA candidate at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts Graduate Acting Program. He has appeared Off-Broadway in *The Flick* (u/s, Barrow Street), *This Clement World* (St. Ann's Warehouse), *Donogoo* (Mint Theatre Company), and *Captain Louie* (The Little Shubert.) Other theatre credits include *House of Dance* (Half Straddle, Zurich Theatre Spektakel, Kyoto Experiment), and *Look Upon Our Lowliness* (Movement Theatre Company). Most recently, he appeared in the film *Fry Day* which had screenings at Tribeca Film Festival and SXSW, among others.

Lauren Gunderson (Playwright) is the most produced living playwright in America of 2016, the winner of the Lanford Wilson Award and the Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award, a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize and John Gassner Award for Playwriting, and a recipient of the Mellon Foundation's 3-Year Residency with Marin Theatre Company. She studied Southern Literature and Drama at Emory University, and Dramatic Writing at NYU's Tisch School where she was a Reynolds Fellow in Social Entrepreneurship. Her work has been commissioned, produced and developed at companies across the US including South Coast Rep (*Emilie*, *Silent Sky*), The Kennedy Center (*The Amazing Adventures of Dr. Wonderful And Her Dog!*), The O'Neill, The Denver Center, San Francisco Playhouse, Marin Theatre, Synchronicity, Olney Theatre, Berkeley Rep, Shotgun Players, TheatreWorks, Crowded Fire and more. She co-authored *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* with Margot Melcon. Her work is published at Playscripts (*I and You*, *Exit Pursued By A Bear*, *The Taming*, and *Toil And Trouble*), Dramatists (*Silent Sky*, *Bauer*, *Miss Bennet*) and Samuel French (*Emilie*).

The design team for *I and You* includes **Lara Dubin** (Lighting Design), **Juliana von Haubrich** (Scenic Design), **Tom Shread** (Sound Design), and **Stella Giulietta Schwartz** (Costume Design.)

All performances will take place in the intimate setting of Chester's Historic Town Hall, 15 Middlefield Road, Chester, MA. Show times are 8:00 p.m. Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and 2:00 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays, and Sundays. Individual ticket prices are \$37.50. Chester residents may purchase \$10 tickets with valid i.d. at the door or by calling the box office. Student Rush \$10 tickets are available day of show. Single tickets, season subscriptions, and flex

passes may be purchased online at chestertheatre.org, or by phone at 413.354.7771. Special rates for groups of 10 or more are available.

About Chester Theatre Company

Chester Theatre Company, a professional theatre company located between the Berkshires and the Pioneer Valley--and convenient to both--is known for presenting high-quality productions with top-notch actors, directors, and designers from across the country since 1990. Founded by former Artistic Director of Dublin's Abbey Theatre, Vincent Dowling, CTC is now in its 28th season, and produces four thought-provoking plays each summer in the intimate setting of the Town Hall Theatre.

For further information, please call CTC at 413.354.7770, or visit www.chestertheatre.org.

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