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**MEDIA PAGE:** [**www.northcoastrep.org/press**](http://www.northcoastrep.org/press)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, PLEASE:**

**ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND FREDERICK DOUGLASS FACE OFF**

**IN EMOTIONALLY CHARGED DRAMA, *NECESSARY SACRIFICES,***

**A WEST COAST PREMIERE BY NORTH COAST REPERTORY THEATRE**

**Written By Richard Hellesen**

**Directed By Peter Ellenstein**

**A Full Theatrical Production Streaming Online September 9 – October 11, 2020**

Solana Beach, Calif. – In the summer of 1863, at the height of the Civil War, Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln confront each other at the White House in two searing, no-holds-barred sessions that forever change the course of history. Originally commissioned by Ford’s Theatre in Washington, D.C., ***NECESSARY SACRIFICES*** by Richard Hellesen is based on their two documented meetings. This West Coast premiere by North Coast Repertory Theatre puts audiences squarely in the room with these two great leaders as they struggle with issues of war, peace, politics, and moral courage. With its strong echoes of today’s political landscape, this riveting drama will captivate history buffs and theatre-lovers alike.

Peter Ellenstein directed actors Ray Chambers and Hawthorn James on North Coast Rep’s mainstage, adhering to all mandated safety and testing procedures under the SAG New Media Agreement.. Audiences will see a full theatrical production with sets by Scenic Designer Marty Burnett and costumes by Elisa Benzoni and Hair/Wigs by Peter Herman. Music by Michael Silversher. Cinematographer/editor Aaron Rumley filmed the show during tech and final rehearsal.

***NECESSARY SACRIFICES* will stream on showtix4U September 9 through October 11, 2020**. **Tickets are $24 and can be purchased at** [**www.northcoastrep.org**](http://www.northcoastrep.org)**.**

**BIOS:**

**RICHARD HELLESEN** (Playwright)is the author of numerous plays and musicals for adult and young audiences. His work has been seen at the Denver Center, South Coast Repertory, Geva, Dallas Theater Center, Florida Stage, Gretna Theatre, Sacramento Theatre Company, Los Angeles Repertory Company, Sundance Children’s Theatre, Imagination Stage, People’s Light & Theatre, Stage West, City Theatre in Miami, and at Ford's Theatre in Washington, DC, where he is an Associate Artist. A member of the Dramatists Guild, he has been honored with playwriting awards from the National Theatre Conference, the Beverly Hills Theatre Guild, and the Philadelphia Festival Theatre for New Plays. Additionally, he has worked on the literary staffs of such theatres as Berkeley Repertory Theatre, South Coast Repertory, and the B Street Theatre in Sacramento, and twice served as Playwright-in-Residence at the William Inge Center for the Arts in Kansas. [www.richardhellesen.com](http://www.richardhellesen.com).

**PETER ELLENSTEIN** (Director) is an award-winning director, producer and educator whose work has been seen all over the country.  For thirteen years he was Artistic Director of the William Inge Center for the Arts in Kansas, and seven years as Producing Director of the Los Angeles Repertory Company.   He also served as Interim Artistic Director of both the Gretna Theatre in Pennsylvania, and the Jerry Herman Ring Theatre at the University of Miami in Florida. Peter has served as a consultant, board member, panelist and site visitor for many institutions including the National Endowment for the Arts, California Arts Council, Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) and KCACTF.  He is thrilled to be back at North Coast Rep, where he directed *The Last Five Years* over a decade ago. Thanks to the remarkable artistic and production staff and designers for their great work on this important piece. Peter shares his passion for theatre with his brother David, North Coast Rep’s longtime Artistic Director.

**RAY CHAMBERS** (Abraham Lincoln) has worked as an actor and director with regional theaters across the country since first training with The Old Globe in the mid-‘80s. For nearly two decades as an Associate Artist with the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Chambers was an actor, director, writer, and served as Director of the MFA/Professional Actor Training Program. Regional acting credits include title roles in *Hamlet, The Count of Monte Cristo, Richard III, Coriolanus, King John, Henry V, Bill W. and Dr. Bob, Tartuffe* and leading roles in *Julius Caesar, The Winter's Tale, The Rivals, Henry IV, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Great Expectations, The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Saint Joan*, among many others. His credits at North Coast Rep are *Hedda Gabler* and *Alphabetical Order.* Credits at The Old Globe include *Life of Riley, Macbeth, Hamlet, Love’s Labour’s Lost, The Comedy of Errors*, *Antony and Cleopatra, The School for Scandal* and *Coriolanus.* He is Head of Acting in the Old Globe and USD Shiley Graduate Theatre Program.

**HAWTHORNE JAMES\*** (Frederick Douglass) Hawthorne James was born in Chicago Illinois. He received his Bachelor of Arts from the University of Notre Dame, his Master of Arts from the University of Michigan, and received scholarship offers from Yale and Cornell for his doctorate degree.  He taught for two years at Illinois State University before moving to Los Angeles to pursue a professional acting career. He received a scholarship to study in London, England, at the London Shakespeare academy through Ted Lange. He became an executive in postproduction at the major film company Tri-Star.  He has performed in over 300 plays, and directed national tours of plays. He has performed in over 80 film and television projects. Among them are, “The Color Purple,“ “Speed,” “I’m Gonna Git U, Sucka,”  “Seven,”  “The Five Heartbeats,“ “Othello,” “Disjointed,“ “Frasier,” “Cheers,” “Workaholics,” “Charmed,” “ER,” “Martin,” and “Sparks.”  In addition to directing theater he has directed, written and produced several short films including “Remember Me?,” “Lisa Trotter” and the feature film, “The Stick Up Kids.”  He has received several awards for his performances and for his community mindedness around the country. This year he has been nominated for his performance in the Pulitzer Prize- winning play, “No Place to Be Somebody” as best supporting actor for the NAACP Image Awards for theatre.  He is extremely proud to have been a part of the legendary Inner City Cultural Center, which helped to shape his mind body and soul through the Arts.  His parents and ancestors being the first to set him on a course of manhood, he was blessed to have been in the presence of the maestro himself, C. Bernard Jackson, where he continued his courses in the true meaning of manhood and the responsibilities that are carried with it.

**AARON RUMLEY** (Cinematographer/Editor) has worked on over 120 shows at North Coast Rep, over 50 as a stage manager, over 20 as a designer.

**MARTY BURNETT** (Set Design) Resident Designer at North Coast Rep since 1992. ***Necessary*** ***Sacrifices*** marks his 199th design for the theater. Other design venues include Sahara and Hacienda hotels in Las Vegas, Drury Lane, Chicago. Claridge Hotel, Atlantic City and Drury Lane Chicago.

**ELISA BENZONI**(Costume Design) is thrilled to be working on her fourth season at North Coast Rep including numerous Craig Noel Nominated productions. Elisa has also worked on over a hundred productions across Southern California with theaters including The Old Globe, La Jolla Playhouse, Geffen Playhouse, South Coast Repertory Theatre, Laguna Playhouse, San Diego Repertory Theatre, Diversionary Theatre and New Village Arts. Being Italian born, Elisa has also had the opportunity to work and perfect her craft in Europe. Elisa holds a costume design M.F.A. from UCSD where she currently is an adjunct professor. [www.elisabenzoni.com](http://www.elisabenzoni.com/).

**PETER HERMAN** (Hair & Wig Design) has previously designed wigs for over 30 North Coast Rep productions. Peter teaches wig and makeup design at San Diego State University. He is glad to be part of the creative team on this show.

**MICHAEL SILVERSHER** (Music) with Patty Silversher won a Grammy for “Elmo in Grouchland” and has three Emmy nominations. They co-wrote the theme songs for Disney’s television series, “Tale Spin” and “Gummi Bears,” and the theme song to Jim Henson’s “Pajanimals.” Michael has scored five seasons of “Dinosaur Train” on PBS and four seasons of “Word Party” on Netflix. Patty and Michael have additionally written hundreds of songs for the Disney and Jim Henson catalogs; television with MGM, Sony, Warner Bros. Michael on his own, was founding composer and musical director for the Bay Area’s own Tony-winning company, TheatreWorks, He served as Sundance Institute’s Children’s Theater musical director, and as resident composer for Sundance’s Playwright’s Lab. Michael has written theatre music — both full musicals and background scores — for the Tony-winning Kennedy Center, Los Angeles Opera, South Coast Repertory Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, and many others. He resides in Ashland, Oregon, home of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the pre-eminent repertory theatre company in America.

**About the North Coast Repertory Theatre**:

Next up: *SAME TIME NEXT YEAR* by Bernard Slade

The play explores a love affair between two seemingly ordinary people who meet once a year. ***SAME TIME NEXT YEAR***deftly examines the monumental political, social, and personal changes that impact their lives over the course of 25 years. Full of clever dialogue, comic visuals, and unexpected admissions, this play will have you laughing one moment and wiping away tears the next. David Ellenstein directs the play, which runs October 21 to November 15, 2020.

North Coast Repertory Theatre,under the artistic leadership of David Ellenstein since 2003,is a professional Equity theatre founded in 1982 by Olive and Tom Blakistone. Currently celebrating its 39th season, North Coast Rep has received critical acclaim from media and audiences alike, and has evolved into one of the area’s leading performing arts organizations. North Coast Rep prides itself on employing the majority of its actors from Actors’ Equity Association for its high quality, award-winning productions, and staging works by established and emerging playwrights. Throughout its history, North Coast Rep has created a platform where artist and audience thrive through the intimacy of live theatre, recognizing the power of theatre to challenge complacency, revitalize the imagination, nurture the unexpected, and embrace the variety and diversity in our lives.

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