Dear Friends,

Producing a mix of classic and contemporary plays has been at the heart of the Guthrie’s mission for the past 60 years. *Shane* bridges both the classic and the contemporary, making it an ideal conclusion to our milestone 2022–2023 Season. Based on Jack Schaefer’s iconic 1949 novel and adapted with great research, care and creativity by Karen Zacarías, this reimagined tale invites us to interrogate the well-worn Western genre and work to distinguish fact from myth. As this new version of *Shane* unfolds, it exposes as many questions as it provides answers — precisely the kind of tension that makes theater so thrilling.

When I first heard about Karen’s idea for *Shane* from my friend Blake Robison, the Artistic Director at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, I was immediately interested in collaborating on the project. It’s been a privilege to co-commission and co-produce *Shane* with everyone in Cincinnati and share Karen’s insightful adaptation with so many theatergoers. Under Blake’s keen directorial eye, this outstanding team of artists has created a magnificent production that includes all the grit and gusto of a traditional Western — and so much more.

One of the great things about theater is that it is never static. New stories and voices are always emerging. The classics are constantly being revisited with fresh perspectives. And as one season ends, another prepares to begin. It was an honor to celebrate the Guthrie’s 60th season with you, and I look forward to welcoming you to the exciting season ahead.

With gratitude,

From Artistic Director
Joseph Haj
The Guthrie Theater, in co-production with Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, presents

Shane
by Karen Zacarías
adapted from the novel by Jack Schaefer

Creative Team

DIRECTOR
Blake Robison
Lex Liang
Trevor Bowen
Pablo Santiago
Matthew M. Nielson
Jocelyn Clarke
Vanessa Severo
Sordelet Inc.: Rick Sordelet and Christian Kelly-Sordelet
Tipiziwin Tolman
Jennifer Liestman
Jason Clusman*
Lyndsey R. Harter*
Stephanie Klapper, C.S.A.
McCorkle Casting, Ltd.
Juan Arturo*

SCENIC DESIGNER

COSTUME DESIGNER

LIGHTING DESIGNER

SOUND DESIGNER/COMPOSER

DRAMATURG

MOVEMENT DIRECTOR

FIGHT DIRECTORS

LAKOTA LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL CONSULTANT

RESIDENT CASTING DIRECTOR

STAGE MANAGER

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

NYC CASTING DIRECTOR

NYC CASTING CONSULTANT

FIGHT CAPTAIN

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association
Synopsis

“I still remember the effect Shane had on my father and mother that night. They were more alive, more vibrant with him. I felt the same way myself.”

– Older Bob in Shane

It’s 1889 when Shane, a loner with a dark and mysterious past, rides into the heart of Wyoming’s cattle country. He’s instantly idolized by the young Bob Starrett, whose settler parents, Joe and Marian, welcome Shane into their home and hire him to work on their farm where he finds peace from his gunslinger past and discovers the family he never had.

Meanwhile, hostility grows between the ruthless rancher Luke Fletcher and the settlers establishing their farms. When Fletcher makes plans to squeeze the farmers out, the only way to keep their livelihoods is to fight back. As a result, Shane’s dangerous ways resurface as he battles to save the Starretts from ruin.
THE CREATIVE TEAM

Playwright
Karen Zacarías

Karen Zacarías is currently one of the most-produced Latina playwrights in the U.S. She was born in Mexico to what she calls “an artistic family.” The granddaughter of a well-known movie director and writer, Zacarías was initially reluctant to identify herself as an artist. Her work includes Native Gardens, an adaptation of How the García Girls Lost Their Accents, The Book Club Play, Mariela in the Desert and The Sins of Sor Juana, which won her The Kennedy Center’s Charles MacArthur Prize for Outstanding New Play. She is a core founder of Latinx Theatre Commons, a national organization of artists seeking to update the American narrative with Latinx stories, and the founder of Young Playwrights’ Theater, an award-winning theater company that teaches playwriting in Washington, D.C., public schools. Learn more at www.karenzacarias.com.

Director Blake Robison

Blake Robison is the Osborn Family Producing Artistic Director at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park. During his 11-season tenure, he has directed the world premieres of Karen Zacarías’ Native Gardens, Audrey Cefaly’s The Last Wide Open and Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa’s Abigail/1702; adaptations such as Treasure Island, Shakespeare in Love, A Prayer for Owen Meany, Peter and the Starcatcher, Pride and Prejudice, The Three Musketeers, Margaret Atwood’s Alias Grace and Stephen King’s Misery; and contemporary works such as Amy Herzog’s 4000 Miles, Karen Zacarías’ The Book Club Play and Dana Yeaton’s Mad River Rising. Other directing credits include productions at the Guthrie Theater, Arena Stage, Baltimore Center Stage, Milwaukee Rep, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Utah Shakespeare Festival, PlayMakers Repertory Company, Folger Theatre, Round House Theatre, Clarence Brown Theatre, National Shakespeare Company and Vermont Stage. Robison served on the Theatre Communications Group board for six years and was a finalist for the 2019 Zelda Fichandler Award from SDCF honoring extraordinary work in regional theater.

ROBISON ON ZACARÍAS’ ADAPTATION OF SHANE

Reexamining a beloved genre carries both risks and rewards. Karen has done a monumental amount of research. She studied the history of Black cowboys and the economic development of Mexican Americans throughout the 19th century. She worked with Native artists and consultants to give voice and personae to an Indigenous perspective in the story. She studied the Homestead Act and its influence on ranching and land development. Will we get it all right? Probably not — how is that even possible? But I stand in awe of Karen’s big heart, talent and commitment to tell this story authentically. In my mind, she is taking an American genre built on erasure and making it truly American.

PHOTO: BLAKE ROBISON (TONY ARRASMITH)
Cowboys: A Brief History

By Tatiana Godfrey
Literary Manager, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park

The term “cowboy” might immediately evoke an image of John Wayne on a horse, riding valiantly into the sunset. But Westerns, in both movies and novels, have painted an incomplete picture of Old West cowboys. The first cowboys appeared in America in the 1500s. They were largely Indigenous American vaqueros, who were trained by Spanish colonizers to wrangle cattle on horseback and utilize expert skill with a lasso.

In the 19th century, enslaved African American men were frequently trained in ranching. When the end of the Civil War saw those formerly enslaved moving north and west, many were able to gain work as cowhands. By the end of the 1800s, about a quarter of all cowboys were Black and an even larger percentage were of Mexican descent.

Although the contributions of these cowboys of color are not widely known, some of these cowboys have become as legendary as John Wayne himself.
Few images embody the spirit of the American West as well as the trailblazing, sharpshooting, horseback-riding cowboy of American lore. And though African American cowboys don’t play a part in the popular narrative, historians estimate that one in four cowboys were Black.


**Nat Love** was born in Tennessee in 1854 and grew up during the Civil War and Reconstruction. After the Civil War, he moved to Texas and worked for 20 years moving cattle. In Love’s 1907 memoir — The Life and Adventures of Nat Love: Better Known in the Cattle Country as “Deadwood Dick” — he tells some tall tales about his adventurous life and many accomplishments, including a run-in with William Frederick Cody (known as “Buffalo Bill”), winning the same horse in two different raffles and being a horse whisperer. Stories like these helped Love go down in history as one of the most famous cowboys.

**Bill Pickett** was of African American and Cherokee descent. He was born to formerly enslaved parents in 1870, and the family moved to Texas when he was 18 years old. Pickett and his brothers opened a cowboy service where they would break horses, move herds and provide other ranching duties. While doing this work, Pickett invented “bull-dogging,” the skill of grabbing cattle by the horns and wrestling them to the ground. He eventually took this skill on the rodeo circuit, performing with Buffalo Bill and Will Rogers.

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This feature originally appeared in Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park’s *Shane* program. It has been reprinted with permission and edited for content and style.
Shane: Then and Now

1949 NOVEL
A Cleveland native, Jack Schaefer drew on his journalism background to research and write Shane, as he spent his life in Ohio and eastern parts of the U.S. When Schaefer wrote Shane, which was his first novel, he had never been west of Cleveland. He researched the book by reading old newspapers and diaries at Yale University. Shane won him a Spur Award from the Western Writers of America in 1985 as the best Western novel ever written. It also earned the group’s Levi-Strauss Saddleman Award (now called the Owen Wister Award) in 1986.

1953 FILM
Directed by George Stevens, the film starred Alan Ladd as Shane, Jean Arthur as Marian Starrett and Van Heflin as Joe Starrett. Filmed on location near Jackson Hole, Wyoming, it became a massive box office success and won the 1954 Academy Award for Best Cinematography. Shane is considered one of the best Western films ever made, and it is one of the few Westerns listed in the National Film Registry at the Library of Congress, which selected to preserve the film in 1993.

1966 TV SERIES
More than a decade after the film’s release, Schaefer’s beloved story was also adapted for television. Starring David Carradine as Shane and Jill Ireland as Marian, the series made some notable departures from the novel and film, including Marian being a widow living with her son (named Joey in the series) and her father-in-law. Shane aired on ABC in 1966 for one season and featured 17 episodes.

2023 PLAY
Renowned playwright Karen Zacarias based her adaptation on the novel (not the film or TV series). She reimagined the Starretts as a Latinx family and Shane as the son of an enslaved Cuban, which is how she envisioned the characters when she read the novel in sixth grade after recently immigrating from Mexico to Boston. In Zacarias’ stage adaptation, she aims to honor the Western genre while challenging the assumptions and myths of the American West.
Next Season at the Guthrie

As our celebratory 60th season comes to a close, we’re excited to begin the next chapter in the Guthrie’s history with an extraordinary lineup during our 2023–2024 Season.

**WURTELE THRUST STAGE**

**The Importance of Being Earnest**
by OSCAR WILDE
directed by DAVID IVERS
September 9 – October 15, 2023

**A Christmas Carol**
by CHARLES DICKENS
adapted by LAVINA JADHWANI
directed by ADDIE GORLIN-HAN
based on the original direction by JOSEPH HAJ
November 11 – December 30, 2023

**Dial M for Murder**
adapted by JEFFREY HATCHER
from the original by FREDERICK KNOTT
directed by TRACY BRIGDEN
January 20 – February 25, 2024

**A Brittle Glory**
Richard II, Henry IV and Henry V
by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
directed by JOSEPH HAJ
March 23 – May 25, 2024

**Little Shop of Horrors**
book and lyrics by HOWARD ASHMAN
music by ALAN MENKEN
based on the film by ROGER CORMAN,
screenplay by CHARLES GRIFFITH
directed and choreographed by MARCIA MILGROM DODGE
June 22 – August 18, 2024

**McGUIRE PROSCENIUM STAGE**

**For the People**
by TY DEFOE and LARISSA FASTHORSE
directed by MICHAEL JOHN GARCÉS
October 7 – November 12, 2023

**‘Art’**
by YASMINA REZA
translated by CHRISTOPHER HAMPTON
directed by LISA PORTES
December 16, 2023 – January 28, 2024

The Guthrie Theater presents an Irish Repertory Theatre production
produced by Octopus Theatricals

**On Beckett**
based on the writings of SAMUEL BECKETT
conceived, performed and directed by BILL IRWIN
February 17 – March 24, 2024

**Skeleton Crew**
by DOMINIQUE MORISSEAU
directed by AUSTENE VAN
May 4 – June 9, 2024

The Guthrie Theater, in co-production with
Goodman Theatre, presents

**English**
by SANAZ TOOSSI
directed by HAMID DEHGHANI
July 13 – August 18, 2024

**SEASON SPONSORS**

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