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**GUTHRIE THEATER AND AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER CO-COMMISSION NEW WORK BY
AWARD-WINNING ACTOR, DIRECTOR AND PLAYWRIGHT MARK RYLANCE**

***Steel*, a six-part American history cycle, will bring to life the Age of Steel
between the Civil War and World War I with a focus on the dramatic life and characters of the
Carnegie Steel Company in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**

(Minneapolis/St. Paul) — The Guthrie Theater (Joseph Haj, artistic director) announced today its partnership with American Repertory Theater at Harvard University (Diane Paulus, Terrie and Bradley Bloom artistic director; Diane Borger, executive producer) to co-commission and co-develop a new play cycle by **Mark Rylance** and **Peter Reder**.

After opening Shakespeare's Globe in London and directing there for 10 years, Rylance's work as an actor, director and playwright expanded into new works for theater, television and film. Among other credits, he has won Tony, Olivier, BAFTA and Academy awards for his work. Rylance's professional engagement with the Guthrie and A.R.T. spans the last two decades.

Reder trained as a classical pianist and then as an actor with Jacques Lecoq in Paris. He has created original works internationally, and his work as a theatermaker took him to Pittsburgh where he, like Rylance, was struck by the drama and characters of Pittsburgh's development as the steel capital of the world.

Steel will be directed by **Claire van Kampen**, who directed *Nice Fish* for the Guthrie in 2013 and the A.R.T. in 2016. She has since directed at Shakespeare's Globe and received great praise for her original West End and Broadway play *Farinelli and the King*.

"Steel is the kingliest instrument of peoples for subduing the earth," said a priest at the opening of the Brooklyn Bridge in 1883. At the core of *Steel* is the 1892 Battle of Homestead (Pennsylvania) when, during a lockout, thousands of workers at Carnegie Steel Company clashed with privately hired security guards. The battle resulted in numerous deaths and is considered pivotal to the history of U.S. labor relations. Historian Paul Krause writes, "The story of Homestead is about the endless conflict between the pursuit of private interest and the defense of the common good. It's about the aspirations and the frustrations of Americans who wanted their country to be a republic in fact and not merely in name."

Rylance began reading about the Homestead strike in 2003 while touring with the Shakespeare's Globe production of *Twelfth Night*. "I was looking for a story for Shakespeare's Globe with two strong protagonists," said Rylance. While in Pittsburgh, he visited the home of Henry Clay Frick, and "that was the beginning." Frick, the King of Coke, and his boss, Andrew Carnegie, the King of Steel, are two of the most successful industrialists and philanthropists America has ever produced. Over the years, Rylance and Reder have returned to Pittsburgh many times to better understand the conditions that produced such remarkable industry and the related costs.

The co-commission provides for the development and realization of the first two parts in a six-part series. "It's a story worthy of Shakespeare," said Rylance at the 125th anniversary of the Battle of Homestead at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Library Music Hall in 2017. "We should never forget the role of labor and industry and what it's done for a nation. This story is essential to American culture. It shaped where we are now."

Rylance has a long history with both theaters. In 1991, he appeared as the title role in *Hamlet* and as Treplev in *The Seagull* at A.R.T. Rylance first appeared at the Guthrie in 2003 as Olivia in the Guthrie WorldStage Series presentation of *Twelfth Night*, an original practices production by Shakespeare's Globe where Rylance was artistic director from 1995 to 2005. Rylance returned two years later to play Vincentio in the Shakespeare's Globe production of *Measure for Measure*, also a Guthrie WorldStage Series presentation. In 2008, he proposed and then performed the title role in the Guthrie's world-premiere adaptation of *Peer Gynt* by Robert Bly, and in 2013, he returned to write and perform in the Guthrie-commissioned production of *Nice Fish*, which was inspired by another Minnesota poet, Louis Jenkins. A new production of *Nice Fish*, directed by van Kampen and starring Rylance, premiered at the American Repertory Theater in 2016 and transferred to Brooklyn Academy of Music and London's West End later that year where it was nominated for the Olivier Award for Best New Comedy.

"Mark Rylance is an extraordinary actor, playwright and theatermaker," said Guthrie Artistic Director Joseph Haj. "It is a privilege and a pleasure to partner with A.R.T. and allow Mark the opportunity to explore this important time in our country's history and development."

"I'm delighted for A.R.T. to be collaborating again with Mark, Claire and the Guthrie on this project that will explore the stories of these complex men whose actions left indelible marks on the United States," said A.R.T. Executive Producer Diane Borger.

Download a photo of Mark Rylance [here](#). Photo: Mike Habermann



THE GUTHRIE THEATER (Joseph Haj, artistic director) was founded by Sir Tyrone Guthrie in 1963 and is an American center for theater performance, production, education and professional training, dedicated to producing the great works of dramatic literature and cultivating the next generation of theater artists. Under Haj's leadership, the Guthrie is guided by four core values: Artistic Excellence; Community; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; and Fiscal Responsibility. The Guthrie produces a mix of classic and contemporary plays on three stages and continues to set a national standard for excellence in theatrical production and performance, serving more than 350,000 patrons annually. In 2006, the Guthrie opened a new home, designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Jean Nouvel, located on the banks of the Mississippi River in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Open to the public year-round, it houses three state-of-the-art stages, production facilities, classrooms, full-service restaurants and dramatic public lobbies. guthrietheater.org



AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER (A.R.T.) at Harvard University is a leading force in the American theater, producing groundbreaking work that is driven by risk-taking, artistic inquiry, and passionate inquiry. Under the leadership of Diane Paulus as the Terrie and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director and Executive Producer Diane Borger, A.R.T. seeks to expand the boundaries of theater by programming transformative theatrical experiences—always including the audience as a central partner. As the professional theater on the campus of Harvard University, A.R.T. plays a central role in its life, engaging in a number of multi-year initiatives with partners that explore some of the most pressing issues of our day. Dedicated to making great theater accessible, A.R.T. actively engages more than 5,000 community members and local students annually in project-based partnerships, workshops, conversations with artists and other enrichment activities both at the theater and across the Greater Boston area. americanrepertorytheater.org

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