



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Information and Press Requests:

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<http://rorschachtheatre.com>

TICKETS: (202) 399-7993

<http://www.atlasarts.org/events/>

Rorschach Theatre presents the world premiere of

FORGOTTEN KINGDOMS

By Randy Baker

Directed by Cara Gabriel

April 21 – May 21, 2017

PRESS OPENING, Saturday, April 29 at 8pm

Featuring Indonesian actor Rizal Iwan:

appearance sponsored by the Indonesian Embassy

and made possible in part by the Minister of Education and Culture of Indonesia

Following an international development process in Penang, Malaysia, Jakarta, Indonesia and Washington, D.C. this winter, Rorschach Theatre will present the world premiere of FORGOTTEN KINGDOMS, a new play by five-time Helen Hayes Award nominated director, playwright, and co-artistic director Randy Baker. Reflecting both Baker's personal history and Rorschach's distinct aesthetic, FORGOTTEN KINGDOMS is a mystical and intimate portrait of cultures in conflict.

Forgotten Kingdoms begins with five Pay-What-You-Can previews on April 21 and 22 at 8pm, April 23 at 3pm and April 27 and 28 at 8pm. **It opens to the press on Saturday, April 29 at 8pm.**

THE PLAY

On a small island in Indonesia, a wooden house balances on stilts over a churning sea. Reverend David Holiday lives in this house with his wife and son while attempting to share his faith with the predominantly Muslim community on the island. This evening David is to meet with Yusuf, the son of the local leader.

David is determined to show Yusuf the way of his god and in doing so, succeed in converting a prominent and influential community leader. The give and take between David and Yusuf becomes more heated as dusk turns into night and events begin to occur that defy conventional perception. Much is revealed, including the failings of these two men and the worlds they hold so dear. At stake is the life of Yusuf's father, the future of this island's ancient culture and the happiness of this family caught between worlds. As the night turns into morning, the fate of David's haunted young son becomes the biggest question of all.

A world premiere by co-Artistic Director Randy Baker, the script of *Forgotten Kingdoms* has been developed here in Washington with the National New Play Network and Inkwell Theatre as well as Houston with Wordsmyth Theatre and New York with Manhattan Theatre Works' National Newborn Festival. Most recently it was developed in Malaysia and Indonesia, culminating in a staged reading with the Jakarta Players in January 2017.

Forgotten Kingdoms is also a deeply personal work for Baker, inspired by his childhood growing up in Asia and his family history as the son of educators and the grandson of Pentacostal missionaries.

"I remember a story my grandfather told," says Baker "about how he healed a little girl on the verge of death with the power of his belief. It would be easy to dismiss were it not for his sincere and passionate retelling the event. There was always something compelling in my grandfather's contradictions - he may have harmed local cultures with his proselytizing but he was so sincere in his desire to transform them for the better. The kindness and the destruction was something I always remembered living within him."

THE PRODUCTION

Forgotten Kingdoms will be directed by Cara Gabriel. Gabriel's most recent credits include *The Thrush and the Woodpecker* as part of the 2014 Source Festival and *Threepenny Opera* and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* at American University, where she is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Performing Arts. Gabriel's solo show, *I am the Gentry*, played to sold-out, extended runs at the 2015 Capital Fringe Festival in DC and the United Solo Theatre Festival in New York. Of the show, Gabriel says, "Randy's play is contemporary and timeless all at once. Cultures and individual certainties are upended as humans seek personal connection and redemption in a time of crisis, isolation, and loss. It appears Realistic at first glance, but there are elements of the mystical, spiritual, and the divine."

Says Producer Jenny McConnell Frederick about the production: "Understanding another culture can be difficult and dangerous but so can empathizing with things closer to home - our country, our family. Sometimes understanding requires that we have empathy for someone who doesn't hold our beliefs; sometimes it means that for a moment we believe in someone else's ghosts. Rorschach Theatre has never looked for easy answers. Our name comes from the famous Rorschach test which demands that the patient look inward and that philosophy has always been an important part of our mission."

The cast includes Jakarta-based Indonesian actor Rizal Iwan in the role of Yusuf bin Ibrihim. Some recent projects include the Indonesian comedy series *CONQ* and the film *A Time for Us*. Iwan's performance in the production is sponsored by the Embassy of Indonesia and made possible in part by the Minister of Education and Culture of Indonesia. Joining Iwan is Rorschach alumni Natalie Cutcher (*Glassheart, A Bid to Save the World*) as well as Sun King Davis, Jeremy Gee and Vishwas.

Designing the set and costumes is company member Debra Kim Sivigny who has designed numerous shows with Rorschach including *Neverwhere, Very Still and Hard to See, She Kills Monsters* and *After the Quake*. Sivigny recently became a member of the Welders Playwrights Collective with whom she will premiere her original performance piece about Korean adoption "*Hello, My Name Is...*" in October 2017. Designing the lights is Rorschach Company Member Robbie Hayes who designed lights for *Very Still and Hard to See* and set for shows such as *A Maze, Living Dead in Denmark* and *References to Salvador Dali Makes Me Hot*. Joining them is Sound Designer Justin Schmitz.

THE PLAYWRIGHT

Randy Baker is a playwright, director and the co-Artistic Director of Rorschach Theatre which he founded with Jenny McConnell Frederick in the summer of 1999. He is also faculty at American University, National Conservatory of Dramatic Arts and the Theatre Lab. He recently finished his residency as a member of The Playwright's Arena, a part of Arena Stage's American Voices New Play Institute.

Plays he has written and had produced at Rorschach Theatre include the recent production of *Truth & Beauty Bombs: A Softer World* a project co-written with four other playwrights and inspired by the web comic *A Softer World*; as well as the full-length plays *Dream Sailors* and *After the Flood* and numerous short plays. Other produced plays include the full length plays *Circus of Fallen Angels* at the National Conservatory of Dramatic Arts, *wild42hold* at George Washington University, an adaptation of *Rashōmon* at American University and short plays at Source Theatre, Forum Theatre, Three Leaches Theatre Extreme Exchange, the Washington Theatre Festival and the One Minute Play Festivals.

Some recent development projects include *The Burning Road* which was developed at Arena stage and had a reading in the Kogod Cradle in March 2014; *Monastery* which was developed through Theater J's Locally Grown program and had a public reading in May 2013. As a director with Rorschach Theatre he has directed *Very Still and Hard to See* (which was nominated for five Helen Hayes awards including Best Director), *The Electric Baby, She Kills Monsters, The Minotaur, After the Quake, 1001, Rhinoceros, JB, Behold!, Fair Ladies at a Game of Poem Cards* and *Monster*. Some recent projects outside of Rorschach include a shadow puppet gamelan-inspired *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at WSC Avant Bard, *Big Love* at Catholic University and his own adaptation of *Rashōmon* at American University. He has also directed at Source Theatre, WSC Avant Bard, Inkwell Theatre, Imagination Stage, Theatre Lab, NCCA's Actors Repertory Theatre, Wayward Theatre, Cherry Red Productions, Georgetown University, Catholic University, American University and Young Playwrights Theater among others.

THE SPACE

A landmark of the newly revitalized H Street NE neighborhood, the Atlas stood vacant for years until it was re-opened as the Atlas Performing Arts Center in November 2006 following an extensive four-year renovation. Its 60,000 square foot complex includes four theatres, three dance studios, administrative offices, dressing rooms, lobbies, a café and production and rehearsal spaces. The center is home to a diverse group of locally renowned theatre and dance companies, symphony orchestras, choral groups and arts education programs. Its mission includes serving the greater metropolitan DC area as well as being the artistic heart of its immediate community.

In the past Rorschach Theatre has performed in a greenhouse, a back-alley art gallery, the lobby of 16th Street JCC, the former sanctuary of a Methodist Church in Columbia Heights, Georgetown University's Performing Arts Center and in the basement of a Lutheran Church in Georgetown. The 2016-2017 year marks Rorschach's sixth season as an Arts Partner at the Atlas Performing Arts Center.

Forgotten Kingdoms will be performed in the Sprenger theatre, the large flexible space in which previous shows such as *Neverwhere* and *She Kills Monsters* were performed. As with all Rorschach shows, the space will be used in unexpected ways, using the environment to tell this story with a thrilling and immersive approach.

ABOUT RORSCHACH THEATRE

Through uncommon uses of environment and intimate passionate performances, Rorschach Theatre seeks to lure its audiences beyond the limits of ordinary theatrical experience so that they may discover new elements of their own humanity.

Rorschach Theatre is a company that has received significant acclaim for its fierce performance style, its bold use of theatrical space and its dedication to challenging works that are at once relevant and timeless. The company's work has focused on helping to reveal the contemporary relevance of fable, finding magic in rough spaces, connecting timeless works to a contemporary audience.

Rorschach Theatre has produced more than three dozen plays seen by tens of thousands of people in the Washington area. They have been nominated for over a dozen Helen Hayes Awards, have been a finalist for the Mayor's Arts Award and have been the recipients of multiple grants and awards from the DC Commission on the Art and Humanities. Rorschach Theatre won a Mary Goldwater award in 2006 and many Rorschach artists have won Mary Goldwater awards for their work with the company. The company's work has garnered the attention of The New York Times, The Washington Post, American Theatre Magazine and National Public Radio, as well as countless local publications. The company has become, "proof that limited resources do not stymie great talents, any more than big budgets can squeeze works of genius from mediocre minds." (Washington Post)

Rorschach Theatre is a member of the LEAGUE OF WASHINGTON THEATRES and THE CULTURAL ALLIANCE OF GREATER WASHINGTON.

FORGOTTEN KINGDOMS - FACT SHEET

Written by: Randy Baker

Director: Cara Gabriel

Producers: Jenny McConnell Frederick, Randy Baker and Jonelle Walker

Blurb: On a small island in Indonesia, a wooden house balances on stilts over a churning sea. In this house Reverend David Holiday tries to convert a skeptical young local whose fate has become improbably intertwined with his own. At stake this night is the life of the young man's father, the future of this island's ancient culture and the happiness of an American family caught between worlds. As the night turns into morning, the fate of David's haunted young son becomes the biggest question of all.

Actors: Rizal Iwan, Natalie Cutcher, Sun King Davis, Jeremy Gee and Vishwas

Designers: Debra Kim Sivigny (Set and Costumes), Robbie Hayes (Lights), Justin Schmitz (Sound)

With: Jennifer Knight (Assistant Director), Sybil Williams (Dramaturg), Linz Moore (Stage Manager), Sybil R. Williams (Dramaturgy), Christian Sullivan (Technical Director), Britney Mongold (Scenic Charge)

Pay-What-You-Can Previews (3): April 21, 22, 26 and 27 at 8pm; April 23 at 3pm

Press Night: Saturday, April 28 at 8pm

Performance Schedule: Through May 21

with shows on **Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm** and **Sundays at 3pm.**

Additional performance on Monday May 15 at 8pm

Rorschach Theatre Mission Statement: Through uncommon uses of environment and intimate passionate performances, Rorschach Theatre seeks to lure its audiences beyond the limits of ordinary theatrical experience so that they may discover new elements of their own humanity.

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Rorschach Theatre Founding Artistic Directors: Jenny McConnell Frederick and Randy Baker

For Tickets: (202) 399-7993, <http://atlasarts.org/events/>

For Information: 202-452-5538, www.rorschachtheatre.com

Ticket Prices: \$30 full price / \$20 for students, seniors or groups / \$15 for H Street neighborhood; All Previews (see schedule above) are "pay what you can."

Discounts can be found on our website at <http://www.rorschachtheatre.com/tickets/>

Location: 1333 H St NE Washington, DC 20002

Parking/Transportation: The Atlas has secured limited amount of parking at H Street Parking which is located at 1008 H Street NE. Buy parking passes online at www.atlasarts.org.

Atlas is accessible by Metro, bus and now Streetcar!

For more information visit <http://www.rorschachtheatre.com/directions/>