



Press Release
For immediate release
November 2013

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“Everybody Wants Johnny!”

West Coast Premiere

JERUSALEM

By Jez Butterworth

Directed by Bill English

January 21 to March 8, 2014

Previews January 21-24 8pm

Tuesday through Thursday at 7pm, Friday and Saturday at 8pm
Saturday at 3pm and (new this season) select Sundays at 2pm

PRESS OPENING: Saturday, January 25th at 8pm

San Francisco, CA (November 2013) – **San Francisco Playhouse** (Artistic Director Bill English and Producing Director Susi Damilano) launches the New Year with the West Coast’s first production of ***Jerusalem***, **Jez Butterworth’s** epic Tony and Olivier award-winning play.

Bill English directs and **Brian Dykstra*** stars in the role of Johnny “Rooster” Byron. Quickly gaining recognition as a seminal play of the 21st Century, ***Jerusalem*** is about our relationship with sacred land and the balance we strike when confronted with its economic development. The state of Jerusalem is invoked as a metaphor, placed in the West of England where ancient Druid ruins are quickly becoming swept away by the sprawl of suburban industry.

Johnny “Rooster” Byron squats on a precious piece of “holy land,” a final holdout against urban growth. A former motorcycle daredevil claiming to have been conceived on the tip of a speeding bullet, he has for 27 years held court as a drug dealer and pied-piper-like wise man to generations of impoverished suburban teens. Part Falstaff, part Evil Knevil, and part Henry V, Rooster stubbornly guards his land from real estate developers and enables rites of passage for kids whose parents have nothing to give them.

When the town fathers finally move to evict Rooster, he draws an eloquent line in the sand, summoning giants and angels to defend his “Jerusalem” to the death—his chemistry and rhetoric a glorious blend of sideshow carnival banter and grand Shakespearian verse. Amidst its metaphors and bold imagery, this tale is strikingly contemporary, grappling with the challenges of urban progress and

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encroachment into rural, sacred, and environmentally protected regions—issues that resonate particularly strongly within our Bay Area community.

The production also features **Julia Belanoff, Joe Estlack, Richard James*, Riley Krull, Maggie Mason, Ian Scott McGregor*, Aaron Murphy, Paris Hunter Paul*, Chris Reber*, Joshua Schell, Devon Simpson, and Courtney Walsh.**

Jez Butterworth (Playwright) is the author of six plays: *Mojo* (Royal Court, 1995), *The Night Heron* (Royal Court, 2002), *The Winterling* (Royal Court, 2006), *Parlour Song* (Almeida, 2009), *Jerusalem* (Royal Court, 2009), and *The River* (Royal Court 2012). He has been nominated for an Olivier Award three times, winning once. He has won two Evening Standard Awards, two Critics' Circle awards, two Writers' Guild of Great Britain awards and the George Devine Award. In 2007, he received the E.M. Forster Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. *Jerusalem* opened on Broadway in April 2011 with many of its original UK cast members. It returned to London later that year, again playing at The Apollo. In May 2011, *Jerusalem* was nominated for a Tony Award and Mark Rylance, in the role of Johnny "Rooster" Byron, won both the Tony and Olivier Awards for Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role in a Play. Jez Butterworth and John-Henry Butterworth were soon named recipients of the Writers Guild of America West's 2011 Paul Selvin Award for their screenplay for the film *Fair Game* (2010), directed by Doug Liman and starring Sean Penn Naomi Watts.

Bill English (Director/Artistic Director), an accomplished singer, pianist and composer, has spent his life producing works of art. He co-founded San Francisco Playhouse, and in ten years, has overseen its growth from a storefront to a major regional theater company, with a 6-play main stage series, a 2-play World Premiere series, an education program and a New Works program that has commissioned 10 playwrights. Bill's vision propels San Francisco Playhouse to stand out among its peers for making bold choices and taking artistic risks. Bill's work in the theater has been recognized with numerous awards for acting, directing, sound and set design. Under Bill's leadership The San Francisco Playhouse, has earned multiple nominations and awards.

Brian Dykstra* (Johnny Rooster) is an actor, playwright, and HBO Def Poet. He recently played Lord Capulet in *Romeo & Juliet* (Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C.) and spent six months on Broadway with Tom Hanks in *Lucky Guy* (directed by George C. Wolfe). Dykstra has also played Rothko (*Red*), Walter (*The Price*), Trigorin (*The Seagull*), Gus (*Call Me Waldo*), Elyot Chase (*Private Lives*), Claudius (*Hamlet*), Heisenberg (*Copenhagen*), Eddie Carbon (*View from the Bridge*). Solo shows include: *Cornered & Alone, Ho, The Jesus Factor, and Selling Out*. Film/TV roles include: "HBO Def Poetry," "Chappelle's Show," *Knight & Day, Freedomland, Corn*, "Third Watch," "Law & Order". His play productions include: *Hiding Behind Comets* (Stavis Award Winner), *A Play On Words, The Two of You, Clean Alternatives* (Edinburgh Fringe First) *Strangerhorse, Forsaking All Others, and Spill The Wine*. His current projects include two plays and an operatic adaptation of *The Learned Ladies* by Moliere.

Founded by Susi Damilano and Bill English in 2003, **San Francisco Playhouse** was described by the New York Times as "a company that stages some of the most consistently high-quality work

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around,” and deemed “ever adventurous” by the Bay Area News Group. Located in the heart of Union Square’s Theater District, **San Francisco Playhouse** is the city’s Off-Broadway company, a powerfully intimate alternative to the larger, more traditional city venues. **San Francisco Playhouse** provides audiences with the opportunity to experience professional theater close up, produced by top-notch actors and with world-class design. The company has been awarded a range of accolades for acting, design, and production including the *SF Weekly*’s Best Theatre Award and *The Bay Guardian*’s Best Off-Broadway Theatre Award. Presenting a diverse array of plays and musicals, **San Francisco Playhouse** produces new works as well as re-imagined classics, “making the edgy accessible and the traditional edgy.” The company’s 2012-2013 Season marked its 10th anniversary and as it moved to a newly renovated venue, *The San Francisco Chronicle* raved that “the company that lived a hand-to-mouth existence for its first few years has become the little playhouse that could. It quickly established a reputation for attracting some of the Bay Area’s best acting and directing talent, as well as for its exciting play choices. And with its bold Sandbox Series, it’s become a player in developing new works as well.” **San Francisco Playhouse** is committed to providing a creative home and inspiring environment where actors, designers, directors, theatergoers and writers converge to create works that celebrate the human spirit.

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FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: Everyone wants Johnny. His son wants to go to the county fair. His mates want his stash and his booze. County officials want him evicted. But what does Johnny want? And will the giants come when they are called? Come find out in this wildly original Tony and Olivier winning play.

SHOWS: January 21 to March 8, 2014 (Previews: January 21 - 24 at 8pm)
Tuesday through Thursday at 7pm, Friday and Saturday at 8pm
Saturday at 3pm and select Sundays (2/9, 2/16 and 3/2) at 2pm

WHERE: **The San Francisco Playhouse**
450 Post Street (2nd Floor of Kensington Park Hotel, b/n Powell & Mason)

TICKETS: For tickets (\$30-\$100) or more information, the public may contact The San Francisco Playhouse box office at **415-677-9596**, or www.sfplayhouse.org.