



Press Release
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Regional Premiere

TREE

By Julie Hébert

Directed by Jon Tracy

January 20th to March 7th, **opens January 24, 2015**

Tues, Wed, Thurs 7pm / Fri, Sat 8pm / Sat 3pm, Sun 2pm

No matinee January 24 or 25

Previews 8pm January 20, 21, 22 and 23 at 8pm

Press Opening: 8 pm, Saturday, January 24, 2015

San Francisco, CA (December 2014) – **San Francisco Playhouse** (Bill English, Artistic Director; Susi Damilano, Producing Director) begins the new year of its twelfth season with the regional premiere of *Tree*, by Julie Hébert and directed by Jon Tracy.

Winner of the Pen Award for Drama and Backstage Garland Award, *Tree* is the story of three generations divided by race, culture, and time. The play has contemporary resonance, posing questions about family and what it means to “be related.” “I set out to write a play about race and ended up writing a play about family,” said playwright Julie Hébert about *Tree*. “About the inescapability of family, of being known over time, of recognizing yourself in others, of continuing relationships after betrayal and suffering. We keep each other honest. Sometimes it’s funny, sometimes painful – and so it is with this play.”

The story explored in *Tree* unfolds when a southern white woman shows up at the home of an African-American man in Chicago and claims to be his half-sister, impelling them to confront a shared past. In their search for the truth, they must navigate the fragmented memories of the man’s aged mother to discover where their roots intersect.

The cast includes Tristan Cunningham*, Susi Damilano*, Carl Lumbly* and Cathleen Riddley*.
Designers include: **Nina Ball** (Set design), **Michael Oesch** (Light design), **Theodore J.H. Hulsker** (Sound design) and **Abra Berman** (Costume design).

SAN FRANCISCO PLAYHOUSE

Regional Premiere: Tree

Continued:

Julie Hébert (Playwright) is an award-winning writer/director of theater, film and television. She grew up in a small town on the Louisiana coast and many of her plays are set there. After college Julie moved to San Francisco beginning a vibrant career as a playwright and theater director, studying and working with Sam Shepard, Robert Woodruff, Maria Irene Fornes and many other talented and dedicated theater artists. She started by directing and writing plays for the Magic Theater, the Eureka, the Bay Area Playwrights Festival and soon moved on to national theater companies including Steppenwolf, La Mama, Circle Rep, the Women's Project, LATC, San Diego Rep and many others. Hébert's plays have been honored many times, including with two PEN Awards for Drama, one for *Tree*. Julie has written and directed for hit shows ER, The West Wing, Third Watch and Numb3rs, and written the screenplay for "Ruby's Bucket of Blood," based on her play, and "Female Perversions," starring Tilda Swinton, which was nominated for the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival. Julie's work for film has been praised as "intriguingly complex" (Variety) and "pulsing with veracity" (LA Times), with "a raw power that is impossible to dismiss" (Roger Ebert). She has won many awards for her television work, including a George Foster Peabody Award, Prism Award, and an Environmental Media Award.

Jon Tracy (Director) returns to San Francisco Playhouse after directing the opening show for their new theater at 450 Post with *Bloody, Bloody Andrew Jackson*. Additional shows with the Playhouse include *Track-in-a-Box, Slasher, Bug, Man of La Mancha and First Person Shooter*. He is a Director, Playwright, Designer, Educator and Associate with many Bay Area theaters including: Shotgun Players (Company Member), Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, American Conservatory Theatre, Darkroom Productions (Founder, Former Artistic Director) Willows, TheatreFIRST, Berkeley Playhouse and Playground (Company Member and Resident Director). A graduate of Solano College Theatre's Actor Training Program, he is also the recipient of the Kennedy Center Meritorious Achievement Award, fifteen North Bay Arty Awards, a Sacramento Elly Award, Bay Area Critics Circle Award and is a grant recipient from Theatre Bay Area and the National Endowment for the Arts. He is a proud member of Theatre Bay Area's Gender Parity Commission and of SDC, the union for stage directors and choreographers.

Founded by Bill English and Susi Damilano in 2003, **San Francisco Playhouse** has been described in the New York Times as "a company that stages some of the most consistently high-quality work around." Located right in the heart of the Union Square Theater District, **San Francisco Playhouse** is the city's Off-Broadway style company, an intimate alternative to the larger more traditional Union Square theater fare. **San Francisco Playhouse** provides audiences the opportunity to experience professional theater with top-notch actors and world-class design in a setting where they are close to the action. The company has received multiple awards for overall productions, acting, and design including the SF Weekly Best Theatre Award and the Bay Guardian's Best Off-Broadway Theatre Award. Presenting a diverse range of plays and musicals, **San Francisco Playhouse** produces new works as well as re-imagining classics, "making the edgy accessible and the traditional edgy." The San Francisco Chronicle raved: "On the verge of opening its 10th season, 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, directors, writers, designers, and theater lovers converge to create works that celebrate the human spirit.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: A southern white woman shows up at the home of an African-American man in Chicago and claims to be his half-sister, impelling them to confront a shared past. In their search for the truth, they must navigate the fragmented memories of the man's aged mother to discover where their roots intersect.

SHOWS: **Previews** 1.20-1.23 at 8pm, **Opens** 1.24 at 8pm through 3.7
Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 7pm
Friday & Saturday 8pm
Matinees Saturday 3pm and Sunday 2pm.
No Matinee 1.24 or 1.25

WHERE: 450 Post Street, San Francisco

TICKETS: For tickets (\$20-\$120) or more information, the public may contact San Francisco Playhouse box office at 415-677-9596, or www.sfplayhouse.org.