

# [Inside] the Ford



## NEWS RELEASE

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## TheSpyAnts presents the *Los Angeles premiere of Charles L. Mee's* "bobrauschenbergamerica" at *[Inside] the Ford*.

LOS ANGELES - Have you ever wondered what it was like to swim in a giant martini? **TheSpyAnts Theatre Company** presents the long-awaited **Los Angeles premiere of Charles L. Mee's** delightful, kaleidoscopic play, *bobrauschenbergamerica*. Director **Bart DeLorenzo** teams up with choreographer **Ken Roht** to dish up Mee's rollicking collage-montage tribute to Robert Rauschenberg that captures the happy, improvisational quality of the artist's singular vision. *bobrauschenbergamerica* opens at **[Inside] the Ford** on **January 23**, with **Pay-What-You-Can** previews on January 21 and 22.

*bobrauschenbergamerica* is a wild road trip through our American landscape, a play made as one of America's greatest artists, Robert Rauschenberg, might have conceived it if he had been a playwright instead of a painter. TheSpyAnts **Breeze Braunschweig, Eric Bunton, Adam Dornbusch, Jennifer Etienne Eckert, Brett Hren, Mari Marks, John Charles Meyer, Danny Parker-Lopes, Mark Slater** and **Maria Tomas** create a collage of people and places, of music and dancing, of love stories and picnics and business schemes and shootings and chicken jokes and golfing, and of the sheer exhilaration of living in a country where people make up their lives as they go.

Artist Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008) once said, "A painting is more like the real world if it is made out of the real world." This infatuation with art and everyday life led him to pioneer the idea of "Combines," provocative collages created out of nontraditional materials. Taking a single canvas, Rauschenberg would combine pictures, familiar prints, sculptures and everyday objects (like tennis balls and stuffed goats), blurring the line between art and sculpture, between art and life. In *bobrauschenbergamerica*, the stage is the canvas, and TheSpyAnts create a living, breathing "Combine." The eclectic group of characters and collage of colorful vignettes and fantastical images may seem to unfold like juxtaposing elements, but when seen as a whole they produce a loving tribute to American life.

"The play is a celebration," enthuses DeLorenzo. "It's a collage play written by a collagist about another collagist - an appropriate homage to our crazy quilt of a country."

*bobrauschenbergamerica* originally premiered at the 2001 Humana Festival in Louisville. Conceived and produced by Anne Bogart and New York's SITI Company, where Mee is resident playwright, it enjoyed limited runs in New York, at Boston's ART, Chicago, France and Germany. *The New York Times* called it, "Brashly, unapologetically entertaining... a work that will resonate even with someone who has never seen one of Mr. Rauschenberg's famous collages."

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Charles L. Mee was born in Barrington, Illinois in 1938. He was stricken with polio in 1953, which he details in his 1999 memoir *A Nearly Normal Life*. His plays include *The Imperialists at the Club Cave Canem*, *Full Circle*, *The Trojan Women: A Love Story*, *Snow in June*, *Hotel Cassiopeia*, *True Love*, *A Perfect Wedding*, *Big Love*, *Viena Lusthaus*, *Orestes 2.0*, *The Investigation of the Murder in El Salvador*, *Fetes de la Nuit*, *Summertime*, *Wintertime*, *Agamemnon 2.0*, *Iphigenia 2.0*, *Paradise Park*, *Queens Boulevard*, *Chiang Kai Shek* and *First Love*. As of February, 2007, he has made all of his plays available on his Web site ([www.charlesmee.org](http://www.charlesmee.org)) with an invitation to other artists to use them as copyright-free texts as a "resource" for their own work. However, the Web site indicates that the play texts as they appear on the site are protected by copyright, and that permission from his agent must be obtained before performing them "essentially or substantially as I have composed them." Mee is also an accomplished historian, having written about the Potsdam Conference and World War II. He currently teaches playwriting at the Columbia University School of the Arts.

Bart DeLorenzo is founding Artistic Director of the Evidence Room in Los Angeles where he has directed many shows over the last 14 years including local and world premieres by Charles L. Mee, David Greenspan, Kelly Stuart, Philip K. Dick, Gordon Dahlquist, Martin Crimp, David Edgar, Naomi Wallace, and Edward Bond, as well as his own adaptation of Dickens' *Hard Times*, *The Cherry Orchard*, and *Don Carlos*, among many others. His freelance work includes the world premiere of Donald Margulies' *Shipwrecked! An Entertainment* at South Coast Repertory, later revived at the Geffen Playhouse; the world premiere of *Joan Rivers: A Work in Progress by a Life in Progress* at the Geffen; Sarah Ruhl's *Dead Man's Cell Phone* at South Coast Rep; Racine's *Britannicus* at Cal Rep; and *Around the World in 80 Days* at the Cleveland Playhouse. 2009 productions include Adam Bock's *The Receptionist* and Caryl Churchill's *A Number* at the Odyssey, and the world premieres of Justin Tanner's *Voice Lessons* at the Zephyr, and Michael Sargent's *The Projectionist* at the Kirk Douglas. For his work, he has received five *LA Weekly* awards and three *Back Stage* Garlands.

A member of the company since January 2008, Breeze Braunschweig has appeared in TheSpyAnts' *The Life and Times of Tulsa Lovechild* and *What If?* Other L.A. theater roles include Peggy in *The Women*, The Moon in *Bloodwedding*, Nina in *The Seagull*, and "The woman who loved to make vagina's happy" in *The Vagina Monologues*.

Eric Bunton, a founding member of TheSpyAnts Theatre Company as well as a member of the Elephant Theatre Company, has appeared in TheSpyAnts' hit productions of *Kidnapped by Craigslist*, *Infinite Black Suitcase*, *Rudolph the Red-Hosed Reindeer*, *The Reunion*, *The Birds*, *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told*, *Terminus Americana*, *Hellcab*, *La Ronde*, and *Edmond*.

Adam Dornbusch previously appeared with TheSpyAnts as Charlie (the coworker) and Jason (the pothead) in *Terminus Americana*.

Jennifer Etienne Eckert is a long time member of TheSpyAnts and is also on the board of the Elephant Theatre Company. Recent stage credits include *Seven Redneck Cheerleaders*, *Tooth and Nail*, and *One Fell Swoop*, all of which were original world premiere productions.

Brett Hren has been a member of TheSpyAnts since 2001 and is also a member of the Elephant Theatre Company. For his role in TheSpyAnts 2009 production of *Terminus Americana*, he was nominated by StageSceneLA.com for Best Performance by a Lead Actor.

Mari Marks has appeared in TheSpyAnts' productions of *If Susan Smith Could Talk*, *The Reunion* and *What If* (original works by company members). Other L.A. theater roles include Nat in the Pulitzer Prize-winning play, *Rabbit Hole* (The Complex), Karla in *Wonder of the World* (Hollywood Fight Club), the Doctor in *Getting Out* (Lyric Hyperion), and a year-and-a-half run as the woman who couldn't get no satisfaction in *Sex, Relationships and Sometimes Love* (Sierra Stages).

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A former front man for the rock band *Strawman*, John Charles Meyer returned to acting three years ago. TV credits include *CSI: NY*, *The Forgotten*, *iCarly* and *Zoey 101*. Films include upcoming features *The Taqwacores* and *The Millennium Bug*; the Emmy-winning USC pilot *The Cost of Living*; and more than twenty shorts, including *In Twilight's Shadow*, *love/junkie*, *Lily and Sam*, and *Frank DanCoolo: Paranormal Drug Dealer*.

Danny Parker-Lopes is a founding member of TheSpyAnts and has been on the Board of Directors since its inception a decade ago. He starred in *Hellcab*, *Kidnapped By Craigslist*, and *The Life and Times of Tulsa Lovechild* among others, and directed *Infinite Black Suitcase*, *Terminus Americana* and *The Reunion*, which he also co-wrote and acted in.

Mark Slater has performed in *The Reunion* (TheSpyAnts); *In The Boom Boom Room* (Underground Theater); *Welcome To The Moon* and *The Woolgatherer* (2nd Story Theater); *Working* (Ascending Artists Theater); *Twelfth Night* (Descanso Gardens Outdoor Theatre). A dancer, he was a member of Le Studio Dancecorps.

Maria Tomas has been a member of TheSpyAnts since 2003, performing in critically-acclaimed productions of *Terminus Americana*, *The Birds* (LA Weekly Award nomination for Best Comedy Ensemble), *Hellcab*, and *La Ronde*, among others. Maria portrayed Gabriela in the Los Angeles premiere of Jose Rivera's *References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot* (directed by Jon Rivera).

Scenic Design for *bobrauschenbergamerica* is by **Marina Mouhibian**; Lighting Design is by **Christopher Kuhl**; Sound Design is by **Cricket S. Myers**; Costume Design is by **Leah Piehl**; and **Lori Evans Taylor** produces for TheSpyAnts.

TheSpyAnts is a 26-member company that started as play reading group and quickly evolved into a formidable theater company that has developed numerous critically acclaimed hit productions including *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told*, *The Bird's*, *Hellcab*, *Edmond*, *Infinite Black Suitcase*, *Rudolph The Red Hosed Reindeer*, *The Reunion* and *Kidnapped By Craigslist*. TheSpyAnts strive to provide a quality theater experience while challenging the audience to "think outside the box."

*bobrauschebergamerica* is the second production in the 2009-10 Season at [Inside] the Ford, a three-play, curated series of new works from three L.A.-based theater companies. The 2009-10 Season at [Inside] the Ford is supported by the Los Angeles County Arts Commission and the Ford Theatre Foundation, with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

*bobrauschenbergamerica* runs **Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 pm and Sundays at 3 pm and 7pm, January 23 through February 28**. Two previews take place on Thursday, January 21 and Friday, January 22, both at 8 pm. General admission is **\$20**; seniors and full-time students with ID are **\$12**; **Pay-What-You-Can** tickets are available for previews and all Sunday matinee performances when purchased at the door (subject to availability).

**[Inside] the Ford** is located in the Ford Theatres complex at **2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East, Hollywood, CA 90068**, just off the 101 Hollywood Freeway across from the Hollywood Bowl and south of Universal Studios. **On-site, non-stacked parking is free**. For reservations and information, call the **Ford Theatres Box Office** at **323.461.3673** (323.GO1.FORD) or go to [www.FordTheatres.org](http://www.FordTheatres.org).

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## Details for Calendar Listings

# ***bobrauschenbergamerica***

### **WHAT:**

***bobrauschenbergamerica*** - The Los Angeles premiere of Charles L. Mee's delightful, kaleidoscopic play, a fantastical road trip through the American landscape, written as Robert Rauschenberg, one of America's greatest living artists, might conceive it. Traveling easily through time, the play is a glorious collage of images and sensations - Rauschenberg's childhood home, a human martini, a pizza delivery boy, the world's worst collection of chicken jokes. More than a biographical portrait, ***bobrauschenbergamerica*** is a tribute to one artist's singular vision. "Brashly, unapologetically entertaining... a work that will resonate even with someone who has never seen one of Mr. Rauschenberg's famous collages." - *The New York Times*.

### **WHO:**

Written by **Charles L. Mee**

Directed by **Bart DeLorenzo**

Choreography by **Ken Roht**

Featuring **Breeze Braunschweig, Eric Bunton, Adam Dornbusch, Jennifer Etienne Eckert,**

**Brett Hren, Mari Marks, John Charles Meyer, Danny Parker-Lopes, Mark Slater, Maria Tomas**

Presented by **TheSpyAnts Theatre Company**

### **WHEN:**

Previews: January 21 and 22

Performances: January 23 through February 28:

- **Thursdays at 8 pm:** January 21 (*preview*), 28; February 4, 11, 18, 25
- **Fridays at 8 pm:** January 22 (*preview*), 29; February 5, 12, 19, 26
- **Saturdays at 8 pm:** January 23 (*opening night*), 30; February 6, 13, 20, 27
- **Sundays at 3 pm:** January 24, 31; February 7, 14, 21, 28
- **Sundays at 7 pm:** January 24, 31; February 7, 14, 21, 28

### **WHERE:**

[Inside] the Ford (*the 87-seat indoor theater in the Ford Theatres complex*)

2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East

Hollywood, CA 90068

(*just off the 101, across the freeway from the Hollywood Bowl and south of Universal Studios*)

### **HOW:**

(323) 461-3673 (GO 1-FORD) or [www.FordTheatres.org](http://www.FordTheatres.org)

### **TICKETS:**

- General admission: **\$20**
- Students with ID and Seniors: **\$12**
- **Pay-What-You-Can** tickets are available for previews and all Sunday matinee performances when purchased at the door (subject to availability).

### **PARKING:**

FREE on-site (non-stacked)

*bobrauschenbergamerica* is part of the [Inside] the Ford 2009-10 Season, a program of the Los Angeles County Arts Commission and the Ford Theatre Foundation in cooperation with Los Angeles County-based arts organizations, with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.