

## **SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY FISHER CENTER**

The Syracuse University Fisher Center is the University's academic home in New York City – a state-of-the-art teaching facility that supports SU's goal of providing every student a chance to study in one of the world's greatest, most dynamic metropolitan areas.

## **SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY TEPPER SEMESTER**

Syracuse University's Tepper Semester in NYC is a resident program at the Fisher Center. The Tepper Semester is a unique program from Syracuse University's Department of Drama that offers undergraduate students in advanced levels of acting, directing, musical theater, playwriting, casting, design, theater management and stage management the opportunity to immerse themselves in a rigorous artistic training program in the culturally rich setting of New York City.

For more information, please contact:

Tepper Semester  
Syracuse University  
136 Madison Avenue, Second Floor  
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(212) 239-1113  
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**KEAKA PRODUCTIONS, LLC**

**WELCOMES YOU TO THE  
“FRIENDS OF THE PLAY” READING  
OF**



**BY IRA BERKOW AND BILL MADDEN  
(BASED ON BILL MADDEN'S BOOK “STEINBRENNER – THE  
LAST LION OF BASEBALL”)**

Directed by Heidi Mueller Smith

**SEPTEMBER 29, 2017**

**SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY  
FISHER CENTER  
19 EAST 31<sup>ST</sup> STREET  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016**

No owner changed the landscape of sports more than New York Yankees owner George Steinbrenner. From the moment he bought the team in 1973 for \$10 million, Steinbrenner's monomaniacal pursuit was to restore the most fabled franchise in baseball history to its former glory. Today, the New York Yankees are worth more than he could have ever imagined, have won seven World Series championships (for a total of 27) during his reign and, in 2009, opened a new stadium in the Bronx, replacing the "House that Ruth Built" with the "House that George Built."

On behalf of writers Ira Berkow and Bill Madden and director Heidi Mueller Smith, thank you for joining us today for a "Friends of the Play" reading of "Steinbrenner!" We hope you enjoy it and appreciate the hard work of the creative team to take this next step in its development. We also welcome your thoughts on the current version of the play. Please e-mail your comments to [info@keakaproductions.com](mailto:info@keakaproductions.com) or call me at 973.845.6525. Our goal and commitment is to bring to stage the best possible production to tell George's story and honor his legacy on and off the field.

As a proud alumnus, I want to also thank Syracuse University, the College of Visual and Performing Arts, Fisher Center and the Tepper Semester in NYC Program, and especially Lisa Nicholas and David Major, for their support and for allowing us to showcase these beautiful facilities.

Brian Spector  
Keaka Productions, LLC, Producer

**KEAKA**  
PRODUCTIONS, LLC

## CREATIVE TEAM (continued)

In addition to the Steinbrenner biography, Madden has written five other books, including the critically acclaimed *Pride of October*, a history of the New York Yankees told through interviews with 18 former Yankees from all different eras, *Zim – A Baseball Life* – the autobiography of baseball legend Don Zimmer which appeared on the New York Times bestseller list for six weeks, and *1954*, a study of race relations and integration in baseball.

### **HEIDI MUELLER SMITH - *Director***

Heidi first combined her theater experience with the world of sports when she served as dramaturg and director for renowned sportscaster Dick Enberg's play *McGUIRE*, a tribute to legendary college basketball coach Al McGuire. After directing the premiere production of the play in 2005 at Marquette University, she has since remounted it numerous times across the country, at venues such as the New York Athletic Club in Manhattan, Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, Greenhouse Theatre in Chicago, Alliance Theatre in Atlanta, Portland Stage Company in Maine, Indiana University, the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego, with many other stops along the way.

She was the co-Founder and Artistic Director of the Cornerstone Theatre Company in Milwaukee, where she produced over 30 plays, many of which she directed, including *THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK*, *TWELVE ANGRY MEN*, *LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT* and *EDUCATING RITA*, to name a few favorites. In New York, she has worked with the Stella Adler Studio of Acting, directing Conservatory productions of *AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY* by Tracy Letts, *ESCAPE FROM HAPPINESS* by George F. Walker, *FACTORY GIRLS* by Frank McGuinness and Shakespeare's *JULIUS CAESAR*.

### **KEAKA PRODUCTIONS, LLC**

Keaka Productions, LLC is a theatrical production company formed by business lawyer Brian Spector. Spector is passionate about theater and sports (especially the New York Yankees and Syracuse University), and is currently connected to the Tony Award winning musical "Come From Away." Other projects include the Off-Broadway production of "The Woodsman" and the Off-Broadway production of "Transport" written by Thomas Keneally (*Schindler's Ark*), music and lyrics by Larry Kirwan (*Black 47*), and directed by Tony Walton.

## CREATIVE TEAM

### IRA BERKOW *Co-writer*

Ira Berkow, a sports columnist and feature writer for the New York Times for 26 years, shared a Pulitzer Prize for national reporting and was a finalist for the Pulitzer for Distinguished Commentary. He has been the recipient of numerous other writing awards, including those of the prestigious Deadline Club and Associated Press Sports Editors contests. He has been cited numerous times and his columns and features reprinted in both Best Sports Stories and its successor The Best American Sports Writing anthologies, as well as the Best American Sports Writer of the Century (edited by David Halberstam). His work has been included in scores of literary, scholastic and other sports anthologies. He is the author of 25 books, including the best sellers “RED: A Biography of Red Smith,” “MAXWELL STREET: Survival in a Bazaar” and “ROCKIN’ STEADY: A Guide to Basketball and Cool” (with Walt Frazier). He wrote the play, “THE SHAKESPEARE OF THE PRESS BOX: The Life and Times of Red Smith.” He has had nine collections of his columns and feature stories published, including “SUMMERS IN THE BRONX.” He is the author of two documentaries – HBO’s “Champions of American Sports” (1982) and PBS’s “Jews and Baseball: An American Love Story” (2010).

Before coming to The Times, Mr. Berkow worked as a sports writer and book-reviewer for The Minneapolis Tribune, sports columnist, sports editor and general columnist for the newspaper feature syndicate Newspaper Enterprise Association, and has written for such magazines as Esquire, The New York Times Magazine and the distinguished but departed Inside Sports.

Mr. Berkow was born and raised in Chicago, holds a BA in English Literature from Miami University (Ohio) and an MSJ from Northwestern’s Medill school of Journalism. He also received an honorary doctorate in humanities from Roosevelt University.

### BILL MADDEN *Co-writer*

Bill Madden is an award-winning sports columnist for the New York Daily News. His 2010 biography of the New York Yankees owner, George Steinbrenner – Steinbrenner: The Last Lion of Baseball – for Harper-Collins, appeared on the New York Times best-seller list for nine weeks. In his capacity as the Yankee beat writer for the Daily News and later as its national baseball columnist, Madden covered Steinbrenner’s entire tenure as Yankee owner, from 1973-2010. During that time, Madden became acquainted – and in many cases formed close relationships – with a great number of Steinbrenner’s friends and associates both in and out of baseball, which proved beneficial for him in compiling what critics praised as the definitive biography of the multi-faceted Yankee owner.

Madden joined the Daily News in 1978 after nine years with United Press International in New York, covering baseball, college football and the Olympics. He has twice been cited by the Associated Press Sports Editors, in 1994 and 2014, for excellence in journalism awards as well as the Society of the Silurians for investigative sports reporting awards in 2013 and 2014.



**JIM ANDERSON** (*Thurman Munson*) graduated from the New School for Drama in 2013 and is a founding member of New Dance Theatre and Hazard Rep in New York. Jim recently appeared in Brimstone Creek’s inaugural production of AS YOU LIKE IT in Sharon Springs, New York, as well as New Dance Theatre’s original production, ASYLUM, at Access Theatre. Other credits include Tommy in HAPPILY EVER AFTER at 59E59, HENRY IN MUD, Friar Laurence in R&J: The Web-Series, Claudius in HAMLET and Tupolski in THE PILLOWMAN. (*Thurman Munson*)



**MARK COFFIN** (*Voices*) is an award winning actor-singer most recently seen in BONE ON BONE in the 2017 BBTF and THE DREYFUSS AFFAIR at BAM. He received a 2015 NYMF “Outstanding Individual Performance” award for his work in Riley Thomas’ WEARING BLACK. Other shows include TRANSPORT (Irish Rep), WIT (Triad Stage), HIGH TIME (Martha’s Vineyard Playhouse), MEN’S LIVES (Bay Street Theater), MY FAIR LADY (Pittsburgh Public Theater). He is a MAC nominee and has received two Backstage Bistro awards. Films include CONFESSION (Starr Films) and BY JINGO. He is a member of The Actors Center. (*Voices*)



**FRANCES EVE** (*Doris*) is known for her work on the television shows VINYL, HOUSE OF CARDS, BLUE BLOODS and PUBLIC MORALS, in addition to several short and feature films. Originally from Atlanta, Frances graduated from the American University of Paris with a BA in art history and French before moving to New York to attend the acting conservatory at Stella Adler Studio. She is currently represented by Davis Spylios Management, and lives in Park Slope, Brooklyn. (*Doris*)



**ZACH GRENIER** (*Gabe Paul*) recently played Willy Loman in Pittsburgh Public Theater’s production of DEATH OF A SALESMAN. Selected television credits: series regulars on “The Good Wife,” “C16:FBI” and “Touching Evil,” recurring roles on “24” and “Deadwood,” and appearances on NBC’s “Blindspot” and “Chicago PD.” Films include Twister, Donnie Brasco, Fight Club, Zodiac, J. Edgar, and Crown Heights. On stage — Regional: title roles in Uncle Vanya (Yale Rep) and Tartuffe (McCarter Theatre and Yale Rep co-production); Yvan in Art (Chicago’s Royal George Theatre). Off-Broadway: New York Theatre Workshop’s A Question of Mercy (Outstanding Artist, Drama League); the Atlantic Theater Company’s Storefront Church (Lucille Lortel Award nom.) and Gabriel; the Public Theater’s Stuff Happens (Drama Desk Ensemble Award), Woyzeck, and Talk Radio.

## CAST (continued)

### Zach Grenier (cont'd)



Broadway: Roundabout Theatre Company's Man and Boy and A Man For All Seasons. He was nominated for a Tony Award® for his portrayal of Beethoven in Moisés Kaufman's 33 Variations.

**FRANK HARTS (Reggie Jackson)** is a writer/actor/producer based in New York City. His new play about Jazz legend Charles Mingus was recently commissioned by the New Neighborhood company for development on stage and film <http://www.newneighborhood.net> As actor, he made his Broadway debut as George Murchison in Lorraine Hansberry's A Raisin In The Sun. Select Films include: Paterson (dir. Jim Jarmusch), Experimenter (dir. Michael Almereyda), and The Family Fang (dir. Jason Bateman). Select Television shows include: Showtime's Billions, HBO's The Leftovers, and Master of None on Netflix. Frank received his BFA in Acting from Juilliard where he was awarded the Raul Julia Prize for Excellence. [www.frankharts.net](http://www.frankharts.net)

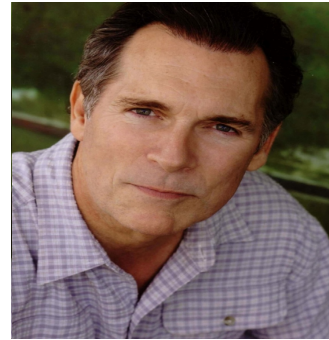


**LAWTON PASEKA (Voices)** was born and raised in Queens, and trained with inimitable Freddie Kareman and on the Off-Broadway stages of NY and Philadelphia. While driving a cab, he made his NY stage debut in The Last White Cab Driver in NY and later that year his screen debut as Theo Skinner in the award winning film noir classic SPARE ME. He is a proud member of The Ensemble Studio Theatre. Other credits: Off-Broadway: Asking for Trouble at EST, Extinct Animal, Tragedy: A Comedy, Does A Tiger Wear A Necktie, Desperate For A Smoke. Regional: The Act, Lewis & Clark, The Hostage. Film: The Runner, The Living, The Inquisition of Camilo Sanz, Split Ends, Godzilla. Television: Orange Is The New Black," "Casting," "Captain Blackout," "Onion TV," "Guiding Light."



**JAY O. SANDERS (George Steinbrenner)** most recently appeared at the Public Theater in a trilogy of new plays written and directed by Richard Nelson called The Gabriels; Election Year in the Life of One Family, which toured the world, were filmed by WNET, and livestreamed on BroadwayHD. Before that, he also appeared together in Nelson's four-play series The Apple Family. More at the Public; King Lear, Titus Andronicus, Twelfth Night, Hamlet, Midsummer Night's Dream, among others, as well as portraying George W. Bush in David Hare's Stuff Happens. In 2015, his own play, Unexplored Interior, had its world premiere as the inaugural production of Washington D.C.'s Mosaic Theater. His long list of film credits includes JFK, The Day After Tomorrow, Glory, Tumbleweeds, Half Nelson, Edge of Darkness, and Revolutionary Road. Recent television includes Sneaky Pete, True Detective, Blindspot, The Good Wife, American Odyssey, and Person of Interest. His voice can be frequently heard narrating a long list of PBS documentaries.

## CAST (continued)

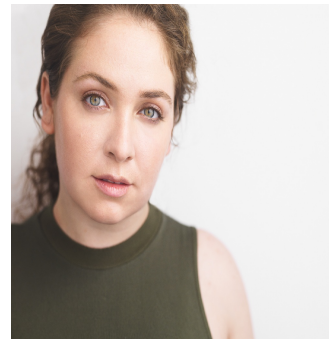


**COTTER SMITH (Billy Martin)** is currently a series regular on David Fincher's series MINDHUNTER, scheduled for release on Netflix this October. His many New York theater credits include the Broadway productions of NEXT FALL, AN AMERICAN DAUGHTER and BURN THIS, and last summer's Shakespeare in the Park production of THE TEMPEST with Sam Waterston. His screen work ranges from his debut as Robert Kennedy in the miniseries BLOOD FEUD to his role as the President in X2: X-MEN UNITED. He has also appeared in numerous television series along the way, from the early days of HILL STREET BLUES to his more recent appearances on THE AMERICANS, MADAM SECRETARY, PERSON OF INTEREST and THE GOOD WIFE. His teaching career includes seven years on the faculty of The New School for Drama, serving as the Department Head of the MFA Acting Program for the past two years.



**ASTRID VAN WIEREN (Elaine Kaufman)** is currently in the Tony nominated b'way hit COME FROM AWAY! Recently, she originated two major roles in Canadian theatre: Germaine in BELLES SOEURS -the musical (Segal Centre, Montréal) and Fielding in COLONY OF UNREQUITED DREAMS (Artistic Fraud, Newfoundland). Last summer she shot the feature THE RIVER YOU STEP IN... [the-river-you-step-in.ca](http://the-river-you-step-in.ca)

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**SAMANTHA BLINN (Stage Direction)** is a graduate of Syracuse University's BFA Musical Theater program. After her time at SU, she went on to receive her MA in Classical Acting from The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA). Since returning to NYC, Samantha has worked on various projects, including the development of the New York based theatre company, Ducdame Ensemble, which she formed with her former LAMDA classmates. [www.samanthablinn.com](http://www.samanthablinn.com)