American Repertory Theater announces the cast and design team for
William Shakespeare’s
THE TEMPEST
Adapted and Directed by Aaron Posner and Teller
Magic by Teller / Music by Tom Waits and Kathleen Brennan
Movement by Pilobolus
May 10 – June 15
Loeb Drama Center

Cambridge, MA — The American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University, under the leadership of Diane Paulus, Artistic Director and William Russo, Managing Director; announced today the Company for the last production of its 2013/14 Season, THE TEMPEST, adapted and directed by Aaron Posner and Teller from the play by William Shakespeare, with magic by Teller, music by Tom Waits and Kathleen Brennan, and movement by Matt Kent of Pilobolus.

The Tempest is produced in association with The Smith Center for the Performing Arts in Las Vegas, Nevada. The production will have a limited run in Las Vegas beginning on April 1 then move to the A.R.T. beginning performances on Saturday, May 10, 2014 at the Loeb Drama Center. It will be available for press viewing from Wednesday, May 14 at 7:30pm. Press night invitations will be sent out in late April.

Experience Prospero’s wizardry as never before in this thrilling new production featuring magic by the illusionist Teller (of the legendary duo Penn and Teller). When shipwrecked aristocrats wash up on the shores of Prospero’s strange island, they find themselves immersed in a world of trickery and amazement, where Tom Waits and Kathleen Brennan’s dusty music and Pilobolus’ athletic movement animate the spirits and monsters. But the revels come to an end when the master magician realizes he has neglected his life in service of his art, and must now relinquish his conjuring in order to reclaim his life and provide for the future of his only child.

The cast will be led by Tom Nelis as Prospero, with Louis Butelli as Antonio, Nate Dendy as Ariel, Dawn Didawick as Gonzala, Christopher Donohue as Alonso, Joby Earle as Ferdinand, Zach Eisenstat and Manelich Minniee as Caliban, Charlotte Graham as Miranda, Eric Hissom as Stephano, Jonathan Kim as Trinculo, and Edmund Lewis as Sebastian. They are joined by the musicians Shaina Taub, Miche Braden, Michael Brun, and Nate Tucker.

The creative team also includes scenic designer Daniel Conway, costume designer Paloma Young, lighting designer Christopher Akerlind, sound designer Darron L. West, music direction by Shaina Taub, magic consultant Johnny Thompson, magical prop designer Thom Rubino, and instrument designer Kenny Wollesen.

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About the principal cast members:

Tom Nels (Prospero) was previously seen at the A.R.T. in The Blue Flower and bobrauschenbergamerica and appeared recently at the Huntington Theatre in Now or Later. His Broadway roles include Enron, The Caine Mutiny Court Martial, and Aida; and Off Broadway credits include Road Show, Richard III, the title role in Henry VI, and ‘Tis Pity She’s A Whore (The Public Theater), Doris to Darlene (Playwrights Horizons), Ipheginia 2.0 and Hot ‘n’ Throbbing (Signature Theatre), Passion and Orlando (Classic Stage Company), Septimus and Clarissa (Ripe Time), The Merchant of Venice (Theatre for a New Audience and The Royal Shakespeare Company), Ahab in Laurie Anderson’s Songs and Stories from Moby Dick (BAM/world tour), Oscar Wilde in Gross Indecency (Mineta Lane Theatre), Hot Mouth (Manhattan Theatre Club), Pearls for Pigs (Richard Foreman/world tour); as well as 20 years with SITI Company, including last season’s Café Variations at ArtsEmerson. He is the recipient of an Obie (The Medium) and San Diego Critics Ensemble (Wintertime) Awards, and Drama League (Score) and Barrymore Award (Candide) nominations. Mr. Nels received his MFA from Brown University/Trinity Rep.

Louis Butelli (Antonio) appeared in CYCLOPS: A Rock Opera (47th St, NYMF Award Outstanding Individual Performer, Pulitzer Prize Jury Nomination); and regionally in Henry VIII (Folger Theatre, Helen Hayes Award, Outstanding Supporting Actor); Twelfth Night (Folger Theatre, Helen Hayes Nomination, Outstanding Supporting Actor); Shakespeare Theatre DC; Alabama Shakespeare Festival; among others.

Nate Dendy (Ariel) was seen in The Fantasticks (The Mute; L.A. Drama Critics Circle Award and Helen Hayes Award nominations) at Arena Stage, South Coast Rep, Trinity Repertory Company; in Angels In America (Prior Walter) at Risk Theatre Initiative; Twelfth Night at Dallas Shakespeare Festival; and A Christmas Carol at Trinity Repertory Company. He appeared in the film Turtle Hill: Brooklyn. He has an M.F.A. from Brown University/Trinity Rep.

Christopher Donahue (Alonso) appeared in Metamorphoses at Circle in the Square and Monsters (Obie Award) at Classic Stage Company. He was seen in numerous off-Broadway productions and regional theaters, including the Huntington Theatre, Hartford Stage, BLO, Chicago Opera Theatre, and The Goodman Theatre.

Dawn Didawick (Gonzala) was seen on Broadway in All My Sons (Tony Award for Best Revival) and in regional theater productions including Actor’s Theatre of Louisville, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, The Globe Theater, Longwharf Theatre, Hartford Stage Company, Seattle and Saint Louis Repertory Theaters. Her films include Erin Brockovich, Breakfast of Champions, and on television in “Almost a Woman” (Peabody Award), “Pretty Little Liars,” and “Heart of Dixie.”

Joby Earle (Ferdinand) was seen on Broadway in War Horse; Off Broadway in Julius Caesar and Romeo and Juliet. His regional credits include Owners (Yale Rep), The Puppetmaster of Lodz (Berkshire Theatre Group), and The Pitmen Painters (Palm Beach Dramaworks).

Zachary Eisenstat (Caliban) was previously seen at the A.R.T. as Will Scathlock in The Heart of Robin Hood, and in The Donkey Show. Other recent local credits include On The Town and The Chosen at Lyric Stage Company; Coriolanus at Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, and The Play About the Baby at Exquisite Corps. Other theater includes Matchmaker, Matchmaker I’m Willing To Settle at the 2011 NY Musical Festival; and a staged reading of A Midsummer Night’s Dream with the Boston Landmarks Orchestra. He has a degree in Mechanical Engineering from MIT.

Charlotte Graham (Miranda) was seen in Three Sisters, Build, and Love’s Labour’s Lost at Chautauqua Theater Company, Camelot at Trinity Repertory Company, and Beast at New York Stage & Film. Her television credits include “Gossip Girl,” “Law & Order: SVU,” “Hart of Dixie,” “Joe, Joe & Jane” (NBC pilot). She is a graduate of the Brown/Trinity Rep MFA Program in Acting.

Eric Hissom (Stephano) performed the title role of Cyrano at the Folger Shakespeare Theatre, appeared in Twelfth Night at Actors Theatre of Louisville, The Thirty-nine Steps at La Jolla Playhouse, Seattle Rep and the Broadway National Tour, and Eurydice at Milwaukee Repertory Theatre among others.

Jonathan Kim (Trinculo) was seen in New York in In Masks Outrageous and Austere (originated the role of the Interpreter) and The Radio City Christmas Spectacular (Principal/Soloist). His films include Second Hand Lions, and appeared on Television in Boardwalk Empire, Barney and Friends.
Edmund Lewis (Sebastian) appeared in Hamlet and Saint Joan at the Lynn Redgrave Theater and Access Theatre in New York and regionally at the Olney Theater Center; The Orphan at The Tank Theater; Five by Ives at Arclight Theater; Waiting For Godot and The Misanthrope at Pilot House Theater; and Like Larvae at the NY Fringe Festival.

Manelich Minniefee (Caliban) is a principal dancer of the Pilobolus Dance Theater and has performed in The Magic Flute at the Verdi Opera House, Parma Italy; appeared on television as a dancer in “Sesame Street,” the “2007 Academy Awards Telecast,” “Ellen,” “Live with Regis and Kelly,” and on the NFL Network. He has a B.F.A. in Dance from NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts.

About the creative team:

Director and adaptor Aaron Posner is a Helen Hayes and Barrymore Award-winning playwright and director. His adaptations include Macbeth (with Teller, from Shakespeare), Stupid Fucking Bird (adapted from Chekhov’s The Seagull), Who Am I This Time? (& Other Conundrums of Love) adapted from Kurt Vonnegut short stories, The Chosen and My Name is Asher Lev (adapted from the Chaim Potok novels), Sometimes a Great Notion (adapted from Ken Kesey), a nine-actor Cyranos, and musical adaptation of Mark Twain’s A Murder, A Mystery & A Marriage, and many more. He is a founder and former Artistic Director of Philadelphia’s Arden Theatre and has directed at major regional theaters from coast to coast. He is an artistic associate at Milwaukee Rep and the Folger Theatre in Washington, DC (where his recent production of Romeo and Juliet received rave reviews).

Director and adaptor Teller has been the smaller, quieter half of Penn & Teller since 1975. With Penn Jillette, he has played off and on Broadway, toured in North America and Britain, and is currently the longest-running headline act in Las Vegas. Penn & Teller have written and starred in television series and specials, including eight seasons of the Emmy-nominated Showtime series “Penn & Teller: Bullshit!;” “Penn & Teller Tell a Lie” on Discovery; “Penn & Teller’s Sincerity Spectacular” on FX; “Behind the Scenes,” a PBS children’s series on the arts; “The Unpleasant World of Penn & Teller,” a magic and comedy series on England’s Channel 4; and the recent ITV variety series, “Penn & Teller: Fool Us.” Teller has written for The Atlantic Monthly, Smithsonian, The New York Times, The Washington Post, Esquire, GQ, The New Yorker; as well as three books with Penn Jillette and two on his own. He is also a frequent contributor to All Things Considered on NPR. In 2008, Teller and Aaron Posner co-directed a version of Shakespeare’s Macbeth, conceived as a supernatural horror thriller that employed stage magic to represent the play’s uncanny hallucinations and manifestations. He also co-wrote and directed the original Off-Broadway and Los Angeles productions of Play Dead and co-directed the performance film. Tim’s Vermeer, a feature documentary film, which will be released in theaters internationally in 2014 by Sony Picture Classics.

Founded in 1971, Pilobolus has built its fervent and ever-expanding international following by proving the human body to be the most expressive, universal, and magical of media. Pilobolus maintains its own singular style while actively collaborating with the best and brightest minds from all conceivable professions the world over. Based in Washington Depot, Connecticut and New York City, in recent years Pilobolus has transformed from avant-garde dance company into an international entertainment brand featured on the likes of Oprah, Late Night with Conan O’Brien and the Academy Awards. The company has engaged in activities as varied as making circuses, creating television advertising, publishing books, breaking world records, teaching in schools, and producing music videos. Pilobolus has been awarded prestigious honors over the years, including the Berlin Critic’s Prize, the Scotsman Award, the Brandeis Award, a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Achievement in Cultural Programming, the Samuel H. Scripps American Dance Festival Award for Lifetime Achievement in Choreography, a TED Fellowship for presenting at the TED conference in 2005, and 2012 Grammy® Award nomination for its interactive music video collaboration with OK Go and Google Chrome Japan, “All Is Not Lost” (allisnotlost.stop). Pilobolus achieves all of this without ever losing sight of its core mission: to make art that builds community.

Choreographer Matt Kent is the Associate Artistic Director of Pilobolus and has worked with the company since 1996 as a dancer, collaborator, creative director, choreographer, and associate artistic director. Past Pilobolus projects include Head Choreographer for Andre Heller’s Magnifíca, a large-scale circus production; Choreographer for a Sports Emmy-nominated teaser created in collaboration with the NFL network; and Choreographer for a television appearance on Late Night with Conan O’Brien. Matt is one of the creators of the Pilobolus’s European hit Shadowland, and he has performed in over 24 countries and on Pilobolus’s
appearance on the 79th Academy Awards. Outside of Pilobolus, he has worked as zombie choreographer for AMC’s hit series “The Walking Dead” and as movement consultant on the Duncan Sheik musical, Whisper House. He lives in Connecticut with his wife and two sons.

In a career that spans four decades, singer-songwriter Tom Waits has adventurously delved into recording, literature, film and theater, as both actor and composer. His music, recognized for its distinctive orchestrations and arrangements, has ranged from country, blues, cabaret, waltz and field hollers to gospel, polkas and marches. He has recorded over 20 albums including Bad As Me and appeared in well over 20 films including, Ironweed, Dracula, Down By Law, Short Cuts, Book of Eli and The Imaginarium of Dr. Parnassus, working with such maverick directors like Jim Jarmusch, Terry Gilliam, Francis Ford Coppola, Hughes Brothers, Hector Barbenco and Robert Altman. Waits and his long time collaborator and wife, Kathleen Brennan were recently named number four in a list of the “100 Best Living Songwriters” published by America’s Paste magazine. Paste said “In literature only a handful of writers have pulled off the near impossible. In music, it happens on every Tom Waits recording”.

ASL interpreted performances are scheduled for June 3 at 7:30 PM and June 8 at 2:00 PM. Audio described performances for blind and low-vision patrons are scheduled for June 4 at 7:30 PM and June 7 at 2:00 PM.

For more information on The Tempest and the upcoming A.R.T. season call 617-547-8300 or visit us on line at americanrepertorytheater.org

About the A.R.T.:

The American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) The A.R.T. at Harvard University is a leading force in the American theater, producing groundbreaking work in Cambridge and beyond. The A.R.T. was founded in 1980 by Robert Brustein, who served as Artistic Director until 2002, when he was succeeded by Robert Woodruff. Diane Paulus began her tenure as Artistic Director in 2008. Under her leadership, the A.R.T. seeks to expand the boundaries of theater by programming events that immerse audiences in transformative theatrical experiences. Throughout its history, the A.R.T. has been honored with many distinguished awards, including consecutive Tony Awards for Best Revival of a Musical for Pippin (2013) and The Gershwins’ Porgy and Bess (2012), both of which Paulus directed; a Pulitzer Prize; a Jujamcyn Prize for outstanding contribution to the development of creative talent; the Tony Award for Best Regional Theater; and numerous Elliot Norton and I.R.N.E. Awards. The A.R.T. collaborates with artists around the world to develop and create work in new ways. It is currently engaged in a number of multi-year projects, including the Civil War Project, an initiative that will culminate in the staging of new work in the 2014/15 season. Under Paulus’s leadership, the A.R.T.’s club theater, OBERON, has become an incubator for local and emerging artists and has attracted national attention for its innovative programming and business models. As the professional theater on the campus of Harvard University, the A.R.T. catalyzes discourse, interdisciplinary collaboration, and creative exchange among a wide range of academic departments, institutions, students, and faculty members, acting as a conduit between its community of artists and the university. A.R.T. artists also teach undergraduate courses in directing, dramatic literature, acting, voice, design, and dramaturgy. The A.R.T. Institute for Advanced Theater Training, which is run in partnership with the Moscow Art Theater School, offers graduate-level training in acting, dramaturgy, and voice. Dedicated to making great theater accessible, the A.R.T. actively engages more than 5,000 community members and local students annually in project-based partnerships, workshops, conversations with artists, and other enrichment activities both at the theater and across the Greater Boston area. Through all of these initiatives, the A.R.T. is dedicated to producing world-class performances in which the audience is central to the theatrical experience.

The Loeb Drama Center, located at 64 Brattle Street, Harvard Square, Cambridge, is fully accessible. ASL interpreted and audio described performances are available at select productions. Visit americanrepertorytheater.org/access for more information.

For further information call 617-547-8300 or visit AmericanRepertoryTheater.org