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**Artistic Director**  
Anna Russell

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Anna Russell

# Keeping Up with APT

December 2016

AllentownPublicTheatre.com

## *Then Athena* at the Art Museum

*The year-long project ends on a high note*



Actors Sam Beedle, Louise Howard and Holly Cate perform in APT's production of "Then Athena". Photo by Kenek Photography.

With the conclusion of *Then Athena's* run at the Allentown Art Museum on November 20, APT puts to rest a project that has been at the heart of the company for over a year.

After touring the piece to the Philadelphia Fringe Festival in September, performers Sam Beedle, Holly Cate, Louise Howard and Anna Russell finally had

the pleasure of sharing their (and director Troy Dwyer's) creation back home with Lehigh Valley audiences.

Artistic Director Anna Russell notes, "For me, it was especially rewarding to perform for other members of the Lehigh Valley community, and even more rewarding to watch our work hit home for them. I didn't quite know how people would react in the midst of our current political turmoil, but audience response has given me cause to hope."

One audience member wrote of the play: "Tight, rhythmic, poignant, soft, confrontational, but didn't place genders in opposition. Left with lots of material for reflection." Another described it as: "Intellectual - emotional - social - cultural - historical and timeless."

**Thank you to everyone who came out to support the production and the cause!**



If *Then Athena* inspired you to stand up for gender equality (or equality of any form), we invite you to participate in the upcoming [Women's March on Washington](#) on January 21, 2017. APT will certainly be there! [Click here for information about transportation to the event.](#)

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To subscribe to this newsletter via email and to receive regular emails announcing upcoming events, [please visit the APT website](#) and fill out the form on the home page.

## Meet APT Reception

*A membership drive reception held after a performance of “Then Athena”*

After *Then Athena*’s Saturday matinee performance on November 19, audiences stayed to talk with APT ensemble and board members for a closer look at the company’s initiatives.

Artistic Director Anna Russell spoke of her vision for the company and the future of Allentown. As our mission states: “Allentown Public Theatre is dedicated to empowering our diverse communities through the performing arts. We expand opportunities for cultural participation and education in theatre, and create works that address contemporary issues.”

Russell went on to describe some of the projects at APT that are already working to engage the community through responsive programming:

Lehigh County Correctional Center theatre programming

Opioid awareness assemblies for middle schoolers

*Voices of Conscience: Toward Racial Understanding* arts and discussion series

*Page to Stage*, APT’s free afterschool program

Free summer children’s theatre workshops at St. Luke’s Lutheran Church



Board member Deirdre Johnson concluded the event by asking the public to join us. With our hearts open and our sleeves rolled up, we invite you to become an APT member and help us grow a healthy, sustainable, inclusive cultural community in Allentown.

To learn about membership options at APT, or to make a donation, [please visit our website](#).

Our thanks to the [Allentown Art Museum](#) for providing a space for the production and the reception, to [Catering by Karen Hunter](#) for their delectable appetizers for the reception, and to [Tito’s Handmade Vodka](#) for providing a martini tasting.



Reception catered by Karen Hunter.

## The Island returns!

The human spirit that conquered apartheid still lives.

### The Island

by Athol Fugard, John Kani,  
and Winston Ntshona

#### WHEN:

Friday, January 13, 8:00pm

Saturday, January 14, 8:00pm

Sunday, January 15, 2:00pm

#### WHERE:

The Charles Brown IceHouse  
56 River St., Bethlehem

#### ADMISSION:

Pay-What-You-Will

“Spare and thought-provoking.” - *The Morning Call*

On January 13, 14 and 15, Allentown Public Theatre will again present our unique production of *The Island*, this time at the IceHouse in Bethlehem.

After first performing the play last April at the Arts Park, Christ Lutheran Church and St. Luke’s Lutheran Church in Allentown, the original cast of actors (Ryan Fields and Jamil Joseph), dancers (Chiedu Mbonu and Theophilus Timothy) and drummer (Vernon Mobley) return to present this classic with a modern twist.

First written in 1973 under the racist system of South African apartheid, *The Island* is an award-winning play about two political prisoners on Robben Island - the notorious prison where Nelson Mandela was held for 27 years. Those who resist

apartheid’s injustices face hard labor and punishment at the hands of the guards. And in the very heart of this turmoil, John (Joseph) and Winston (Fields) decide to put on a play. *The Island* tells the amazing story of two prisoners who find their voice in the Greek tragedy *Antigone*.

In APT’s production, an ensemble of modern-day, American prisoners (Mbonu, Mobley and Timothy) frames the story with musical interludes. Through drumming and dance, Allentown Public Theatre brings *The Island*’s legacy to present-day America - where racial tensions and corrupt prison systems are far from gone.

“It’s amazing how many more parallels I can see this time around,” says director Anna Russell. “After the recent elections, somehow apartheid doesn’t seem so far away.” Dramaturg and choreographer Chloe Cole-Wilson adds: “Taking a look at the past and how it has affected our future is important in this time of uncertainty. Finding the parallels between the past and



Dancers Theophilus Timothy (far left) and Chiedu Mbonu (far right) frame actors Ryan Field (middle left) and Jamil Joseph (middle right) in “The Island”.  
Photo by Kenek Photography.

present is critical to our well-being. One of our biggest tools of protest is art. We must use this to drive our communities to rise up for change.” Russell agrees: “We feel that now, more than ever, it is important for stories like this one to be told. People need to know that it is possible to resist oppression. It is possible to hope. Even in the midst of chaos and fear.”

*The Island* will appear as APT’s own contribution to our Lehigh Valley arts series [Voices of Conscience: Toward Racial Understanding](#).



## Paradox—a Charles Stonewall photography exhibit

An event in the *Voices of Conscience arts series*



**WHAT:** *Paradox*, photos by Charles Stonewall

**WHEN:** January 3-29, 2017

**WHERE:** Williams Center Gallery, Lafayette College

Easton native Charles Stonewall's signature work ranges from theater and dance to social justice themes. His current photography series, *Paradox*, combines them, exploring and juxtaposing the exhilaration and freedom of dance with the social circumstances of impoverishment and misfortune. A keen observer of the human drama - our highs and lows, our hopes and despairs, our victories and defeats - Stonewall draws our attention to the joy and beauty captured in the moment, encouraging us to look closely and feel deeply.

[Click here for more information about the exhibit.](#)

## Theatre Café 2017 Play-Reading Series

We're moving to the Art Museum!

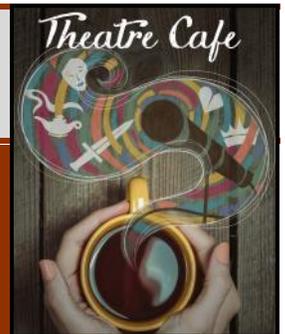


**WHEN:** Third Thursday of every month, 6:30pm

**WHERE:** Allentown Art Museum Café

31 N. 5th St., Allentown

**ADMISSION:** By donation only



Allentown Public Theatre is proud to be partnering with the Allentown Art Museum of the Lehigh Valley to present this season's *Theatre Café series*. Join us for a cup of coffee and experience the work of trailblazing playwrights past and present!

Our 2017 series kicks off at 6:30pm on Thursday, January 19, at the Art Museum Cafe with a dramatic reading of *Regret*, an original one-act play by APT's own Willow Reichard-Flynn. Surreal in style, *Regret* focuses on the story of a lesbian couple with a disturbing past they can't escape. The evening will also feature additional performances by local youth from the Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Performing Arts.

[Click here for the complete 2017 Theatre Café series.](#)



**WHEN:** Sunday, December 18, 12:00pm—3:00pm

**WHERE:** Civic Theatre, 527 N. 19th St., Allentown

**WHO:** Actors of all ages, genders and races

Come audition for Allentown Public Theatre's 2017 *Theatre Café season*! Auditions will be conducted in six half-hour slots between noon and 3pm on December 18 at Civic Theatre, and will consist of group readings from the plays in the [2017 Theatre Café series](#). No preparation is needed. Resumes and head shots are optional. If interested, please contact [Artistic Director Anna Russell](#) with your preferred time slot. If you can't audition on Dec. 18, contact Anna to schedule a more convenient date and/or time.