

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Alert for Theatre Editors, Reviewers and Calendar Listings

Chance Theater is proud to announce the World Premiere of
**“Matinicus: The Story of
Abigail Burgess”**

Based on the true story that inspired books, music, and the US Coast Guard

ANAHEIM, CA: Chance Theater, Anaheim’s official resident theater company, is pleased to announce the World Premiere of **“Matinicus: The Story of Abigail Burgess.”** Written by Jenny Connell Davis, directed by Katie Chidester, and starring Aubrey Saverino, this exciting new play will run from May 5 through June 4 on the Fyda-Mar Stage at Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken theater arts Center.

For over 160 years, the courage of teenager Abigail Burgess has inspired books, songs, and even the US Coast Guard to name a ship after her. Now, for the first time, see her remarkable story live on stage. When young Abbie moved to Matinicus Rock in the mid-19th century with her lighthouse keeper father and their family, her biggest concern was boredom. However, when the winds changed, Abbie found herself thrust into the seemingly impossible position of protecting her family — and some chickens — from a violent storm while keeping the lights brightly burning for any passing ship to miss the perilous shores. Brilliantly brought to life by OCTG Theatre Award-nominated actress, Aubrey Saverino (last season’s “Cry It Out”), this tale of humor and heroism highlights how far some will go to keep their lights shining and demonstrates how small actions can make a big difference.

See the courageous story of Abigail Burgess come to life for the first time that inspired ...

- » *Keep The Lights Burning, Abbie* (book featured on Reading Rainbow)
- » *Abbie, The Lighthouse Keeper’s Daughter* (radio drama)

- » “Lighthouse Keeper” (folk song by Neptune’s Car)
- » Cutter Abbie Burgess (175’ Keeper-Class buoy tender in US Coast Guard)
- » More books — *Abbie Against The Storm; The Stormy Adventure of Abbie Burgess, Lighthouse Keeper; Abbie Burgess: Lighthouse Heroine*; among others
- » And much, much more!

Jenny Connell Davis (Playwright) was the 2016 resident playwright at Chance, and is grateful to still count it as an artistic home. Her plays include “Dragon Play” (produced at the Chance, now optioned as a screenplay), “Goddess of Mercy,” “As I See It,” and “Scientific Method,” among others. Her work has been developed and produced around the country, including here, at the O’Neill, Ars Nova, ACT, Icicle Creek, Asolo Rep, Rivendell, The Gift Theatre, NYSF, Hyde Park Theatre and more. She is a proud member of Scriptworks, The Gift, and Hyde Park Play Group, and an Associate Artist with the Playwright Center. She has written screenplays and teleplays for companies including Sony, Fox Family, and Iconoclast/Anonymous Content.

Katie Chidester (Director) is a Southern California-based director who spent 12 years as an executive member of The Hunger Artists Theatre Co., as an actor, producer and director. She directed/devised with experimental playwriting collective Fell Swoop Playwrights for the Hollywood Fringe Festival. Katie recently remounted *Beautiful Star: An Appalachian Nativity* at Triad Stage in North Carolina. Other credits include *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (UNCG), *Machinal* (Long Beach Playhouse), *Desdemona: A Play About A Handkerchief* (The Hunger Artists), *Sans Merci* (The Garage), *The Miss Julie Dream Project* (Son of Semele) *Cloud 9* and *Trifles* (Triad UpStage). She interned at the Yale School of Drama (Summer Cabaret), is an alumni of Directors Lab West (‘14), and was a candidate in the 2016-17 SDC Observers Program. Katie holds a BA degree from the University of Southern California and an MFA in Directing from the University of North Carolina, Greensboro where she studied with Triad Stage’s Founding Artistic Director, Preston Lane. www.katiechidester.com

Aubrey Saverino (Starring as Abigail Burgess) is a professional actor, director and theater professor with an MFA in Acting from The Old Globe/USD and a BA in Theater from Occidental College. Aubrey has performed on screen (including Adam Sandler’s “*The Week of*” on Netflix), and in classical, contemporary and world premiere productions in New York, Los Angeles, and around the country. Highlights include *Twelfth Night* and *King Lear* at The Old Globe (SDCC Award Nomination); *In the Next Room or the vibrator play* at The San Diego Repertory Theatre (SDCC Award Nomination), *An Impending Rupture of the Belly* with Furious Theatre Company (LA Weekly nomination), and *Inventing Van Gogh* at the Chance Theater, among others. She currently teaches theater at Fullerton, Moorpark and Ventura Colleges. She recently starred in Chance

Theater's OC premiere of *Cry It Out* in the role of Jessie, for which she was nominated for an OCTG Theatre Award for Outstanding Leading Performance in a Play.

Rachelle Menaker & Eddie Schuller are the Executive Producers for this production. Bette & Wylie Aitken are producers for the entire 2023 Season and The Family of Mary Kay Fyda-Mar are this season's associate producers.

To schedule press interviews, arrange for press comps, request press photos, or for any additional information regarding this production, please contact Casey Long, the Chance's managing director, at (626) 523-7151 or casey@chancetheater.com.

ABOUT CHANCE THEATER

Proud to be one of the leading ensemble-driven theatre companies in Southern California, CHANCE THEATER has received the National Theatre Company grant from American Theatre Wing for "nurturing a community of artists in ways that strengthen and demonstrate the quality, diversity, and dynamism of American theatre." The Chance recently won 14 OCTG Theatre Awards, including Outstanding Production of a Musical (*Next to Normal*) and Outstanding Production of a Play (*Cry It Out*). Previously, Chance Theater has won eight OCTG Theatre Awards, including Outstanding Production of a Musical (*Fun Home*), eight Ovation Awards, including four for Best Production of a Musical (Intimate Theatre), and four LADCC Awards, including the Polly Warfield Award for Outstanding Season. The Anaheim City Council named Chance Theater "the Official Resident Theater Company of Anaheim" in 2014, and Arts Orange County has twice named the Chance as "Outstanding Arts Organization." Known for using bold and personal storytelling to promote dialogue and connection within the Southern California theatrical landscape, the Chance is committed to contributing to a more compassionate, connected and creative community. As a constituent member of Theatre Communications Group, The Theatrical Producers League of Los Angeles, and OC Theatre Guild, Chance Theater continues to bring national attention to the Southern California and Orange County theater scenes.

CALENDAR LISTING

WHAT: Matinicus: The Story of Abigail Burgess

For over 160 years, the courage of teenager Abigail Burgess has inspired books, songs, and even the US Coast Guard to name a ship after her. Now, for the first time, see her remarkable story live on stage. When young Abbie moved to Matinicus Rock in the mid-19th century with her lighthouse keeper father and their family, her biggest concern was boredom. However, when the winds changed, Abbie found herself thrust into the seemingly impossible position of protecting her family — and some chickens — from a violent storm while keeping the lights brightly burning for any passing ship to miss the perilous shores. Brilliantly brought to life by OCTG Theatre Award-nominated actress, Aubrey Saverino, this tale of humor and heroism highlights how far some will go to keep their lights shining and demonstrates how small actions can make a big difference.

WHEN:

Previews: May 5 - May 12, 2023; Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m., Sunday at 7 p.m.

Performances: May 13 - June 4 , 2023; Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 3 p.m. & 8 p.m., Sundays at 3 p.m.

REVIEWERS AND OTHER PRESS are encouraged to come to Press Night on Friday, May 12 at 8 p.m.

RUNNING TIME: 1 hour, 30 minutes, with no intermission

WHERE: Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken theater arts Center on the Fyda-Mar Stage

5522 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807

TICKETS: \$25-\$39

MORE INFO: www.ChanceTheater.com or call (888) 455-4212

COVID POLICY: Masks are strongly recommended while inside our building, but we are no longer requiring mask-wearing or proof of vaccination to attend a general performance.

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