



THE STEADFAST

BY MAT SMART



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.



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SPECIAL NOTE

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Inspired by Steve Alpert's painting "Legacy."

Originally produced by Steve Alpert and Ken Greiner
in association with Slant Theatre Project.

for my father and grandfather

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the University of Evansville Theatre Department, Asolo Repertory Theatre, American Theater Company, the University of Chicago, and the numerous artists and donors who contributed to the development and initial production of *The Steadfast*.

A special thanks to the servicemen and servicewomen who shared their experiences with me and offered guidance with accuracy.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In Steve Alpert's painting "Legacy," eight American soldiers — from the eight different uniform eras of the United States Army — walk across a field together. From left to right:

Revolutionary War
War of 1812
Civil War
Spanish-American War of 1898
World War I
World War II / Korean War
Vietnam
Present Day

In a single moment, on canvas, these eight soldiers exist together. It is this painting and this simple and profound gesture that inspired *The Steadfast*.

To view the painting, please go to Mr. Alpert's website:
www.stevealpertart.com/2010/10/20/a-painting-called-legacy/

THE STEADFAST received its world premiere at The TBG Theatre in New York City, opening on January 23, 2013. It was produced by Steve Alpert and Ken Greiner in association with Slant Theatre Project (Matt Dellapina, Wes Grantom, Adam Knight and Mat Smart, Co-Artistic Directors). It was directed by Wes Grantom; the set design was by Daniel Zimmerman; the costume design was by Tilly Grimes; the lighting design was by Driscoll Otto; the original music and sound design were by Daniel Kluger and Phil Pickens; the stage manager was Johanna Sarriot; the general manager was Adam Knight; and the production manager was Isaac Katzanek. The cast was as follows:

WESLEY EVERS Ben Kahre
GERTRUDE (also MARGARET) Susan Greenhill
AARON (also SMITH, GRANT, GEORGE) John Behlmann
SIYAH POWELL (also STEVENS, PHEBE) ... Cloteal L. Horne
KELLAR (also PETE, DEREK) Matt Dellapina
MR. WALCOTT (also THOMAS, WENZEL) Brent Langdon
ELMER (also OSTERMANN, VACLAVIK) Brendan Titley
ROY (also NATHANIEL, ANDREW,
MILLER) Alex Ubokudom
LAWRENCE (also B.K., ROUSE) David Ryan Smith
MARK Nick Mills

CHARACTERS

DEREK BROMPTON, late teens
will fight in the Revolutionary War

also: KELLAR,
PETE

ELMER BROMPTON, various ages
a veteran of the War of 1812

also: VACLAVIK,
BOB OSTERMANN

LAWRENCE MONTGOMERY,
20s, veteran of the Civil War

also: ROUSE,
B.K. BULLINS

STAFF SERGEANT ROY
MONTGOMERY,
various ages, a Buffalo Soldier in
the Spanish-American War of 1898

also: MILLER,
NATHANIEL,
ANDREW

WALCOTT'S FATHER,
a veteran of WWI

also: WENZEL,
THOMAS

STAFF SERGEANT WESLEY EVERS,
21 years old, a U.S. Soldier who fought
in the Korean War

AARON, 19 years old
will fight in the Vietnam War

also: GRANT,
SMITH,
GEORGE

SECOND LIEUTENANT
SIYAH POWELL, 24, female, a
U.S. Marine in Operation Enduring
Freedom in Afghanistan

also: STEVENS,
PHEBE

MARK POWELL, Siyah's husband

GERTRUDE EVERS, Wesley's
mother, various ages

also: MARGARET

The actors playing Lawrence, Roy and Powell are African-American. Derek and Mr. Walcott may be any ethnicity, but should be the same ethnicity.

Mark may be any ethnicity.

Elmer, Evers, Aaron and Gertrude are Caucasian.

Evers and Mark do not double as any other role.

For the characters that play various ages, they are always played by the same actor. For example, Elmer is played by the same actor whether it is 1863 or 1776.

If a larger cast than 10 is desired (minimum 8 men, 2 women), all of the roles can be single-cast (22+ men, 4 women) with the exception that Roy and Nathaniel should be played by the same actor. Ideally, Lawrence and B.K. are played by different actors. As with the minimum cast size, Evers is not double cast and should always be played by one actor. Mark is not double cast.

In the original production, only one prop gun was used — the Springfield rifle. This emphasized the importance of the Springfield rifle and how it passes from Smith to Lawrence to Roy. In 1776, the Springfield was used as the British Long Land musket. All of the other guns were pantomimed.

There is an intermission between Act One and Act Two.

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PROLOGUE

*Eden Prairie, Minnesota. The backyard of a suburban home.
It is 1939.*

Wesley Evers, 10 years old, plays outside in his sandbox.

After several moments, he looks up and stops playing.

*He stands and walks to the sapling of a red oak tree. He pulls
several weeds up from the ground around the young tree.*

*He sizes up the tree. He puts his back against the sapling. He
touches the top of his head and measures it against the top of
the tree. Evers and the tree are exactly the same height.*

EVERS. Ma!

Ma! Come out here!

GERTRUDE. *(From inside, offstage.)*

Don't yell from the backyard!

EVERS. Please, Ma! You gotta see this!

(Gertrude comes to the backyard.)

GERTRUDE. What is it?

(Evers stands next to the tree.)

EVERS. Look!

GERTRUDE. What?

EVERS. Just look. What do you see?

(Gertrude really looks.)

GERTRUDE. What happened to your arm?

EVERS. Nothing, that's not what I'm trying to show you.

GERTRUDE. Your elbow is all —

EVERS. Ma, it's nothing.

GERTRUDE. What happened?

EVERS. I fell.

GERTRUDE. What happened?

EVERS. Bob Ostermann pushed me at recess.

GERTRUDE. Why did Bob Ostermann push you?

EVERS. Because I saw some weeds on the field — by where we play ball — and I pulled them up. And he saw me do it. And he said,
(In Bob's mean voice.)

“That's for the gardeners to do. Or the janitors.”

And I looked at him funny and laughed because I can't imagine there being a better job than being a gardener and then he shoved me really hard and I fell on my arm.

GERTRUDE. Did you shove him back?

EVERS. No.

GERTRUDE. Did you?

EVERS. No, I swear.

Ma, I don't get angry about Bob Osterman, okay?

Now will you please look? What do you see?

(Evers stands next to the sapling. Gertrude looks. She's not sure what he wants her to see.)

I planted this red oak from an acorn — and now it's as tall as I am.

And one day it will be taller than me.

And one day it will be taller than the fence

and taller than the house

and taller than the telephone pole.

And it came out of the one little acorn that I planted.

And Mrs. Johnson says — with trees — there's as much underneath the ground — all the roots — as there is above. And —

GERTRUDE. Your pa will be home soon and supper is about ready. Go inside.

EVERS. Is that how you feel about me?

GERTRUDE. ... What?

EVERS. One day I'll be taller than you, won't I?

... I think I'm

proud?

of this tree. Especially for surviving the winter.

I hope it lives to be one hundred years old.

I hope it grows to be as tall as the sky.

THE STEADFAST

by Mat Smart

22M, 4W (flexible casting, doubling — minimum 8M, 2W)

The mother of a fallen U.S. soldier refuses to leave the red oak tree her son planted. A father forbids his sons from joining the Revolution against the British. A young woman enlists on the afternoon of 9/11 without discussing it with her family. Inspired by Steve Alpert's painting "Legacy," THE STEADFAST is an unflinching look at eight U.S. soldiers across the sweep of American history from the Revolutionary War to present day — and what happens when the forces of their stories collide.

"[An] ambitious, nuanced work ... Tying these stories together is a difficult formal feat. That Mr. Smart does so economically, while imbuing them with complexity and emotion, is an impressive achievement."
—**The New York Times**

"This is a story that reminds us why we must never forget those who fight on our behalf."
—**The Examiner (New York)**

ISBN 978-0-8222-2946-9



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