

ARTISTS REPERTORY THEATRE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Artists Rep launches its 2014/15 season *Intimate Apparel* Portland Premiere by a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright

WHO: Artists Repertory Theatre

WHAT: Mainstage production of *Intimate Apparel* by Lynn Nottage

WHEN: September 9 – October 5, 2014, **Opening Night is Saturday, Sept. 13**

WHERE: Artists Repertory Theatre - Alder Stage, 1516 Alder St. Portland, OR 97205

TICKETS: \$25-\$55, Discounts available: Seniors, Students, Under 25

- Pay-What-You-Can preview performance on Tuesday, Sept. 9
- Wednesday through Sunday at 7:30pm; Sundays at 2pm; Wednesday, Sept. 24 @ 11am and Saturday, Oct. 24 @ 2pm
- 503.241.1278 or www.artistsrep.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – August 20, 2014. Artists Rep is thrilled to kick off its 2014/15 season with the Portland premiere of *Intimate Apparel* by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Lynn Nottage. Artists Rep Artistic Associate and Resident Artist Michael Mendelson will direct this award-winning, Off-Broadway and regional theatre sensation.

Intimate Apparel was first commissioned and produced by South Coast Repertory and Center Stage in Costa Mesa, California in 2003. It is the winner of five national awards for Best Play and has been produced by such prominent theatres as Roundabout Theatre in New York, Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles, Southern Repertory Theatre in New Orleans, Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago, City Theatre in Pittsburgh, and Actors Theatre of Louisville.

ABOUT THE PLAY:

Set in 1905 NYC, this riveting tale is about the empowerment of Esther, an African American seamstress who creates exquisite lingerie for Fifth Avenue boudoirs and red-light brothels. As she yearns for a different life, she finds unconventional friendships with clients that defy race, religion and class.

“With *Intimate Apparel*, I’m moved by the fragile vulnerability and enduring strength of Esther, a woman who discovers her voice, place and contribution in a world set up to thwart her dreams” said Michael Mendelson. “Ms. Nottage says of her own work, ‘*Intimate Apparel* is a meditation on loneliness,’ but for me it is ultimately a love story. Courageously, Ms. Nottage crosses lines of race and religion in pursuit of that love. I believe this is a story of dreams, expectations and endurance, forging an untrodden path that is often about loneliness and more importantly the strength it takes to stay true to oneself.”

"Nottage's play has a delicacy and eloquence that seem absolutely right for the time she is depicting ... New York has no richer play..." —NY Daily News

"... thoughtful, affecting...The play offers poignant commentary on an era when the cut and color of one's dress—and of course, skin—determined whom one could and could not marry, sleep with, even talk to in public." —Variety

"Ms. Nottage has done so much good historical research ... I want Ms. Nottage to keep working with this form; we see it so little, and we need it so much." —NY Times

"...a near-perfect balance between content and execution ..." — Associated Press

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT:

Lynn Nottage is a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright and screenwriter. Her plays have been produced widely in the United States and throughout the world. They include *By The Way, Meet Vera Stark* (Lily Award, Drama Desk Nomination); *Ruined* (Pulitzer Prize, OBIE, Lucille Lortel, New York Drama Critics' Circle, Audelco, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle Award); *Intimate Apparel* (American Theatre Critics and New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards for Best Play); *Fabulation, or The Re-Education of Undine* (OBIE Award); *Crumbs from the Table of Joy, Las Meninas, Mud, River, Stone, Por'knockers* and *POOF!*. She is currently developing a new play and multimedia performance installation based on two years of research and interviews conducted in Reading, PA (with Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Arena Stage & Labyrinth Theatre Company). In addition, she is working with composer Ricky Ian Gordon on adapting her play *Intimate Apparel* into an opera (commissioned by The Met/LCT). She is the co-founder of the production company, Market Road Films, whose most recent projects include *The Notorious Mr. Bout* directed by Tony Gerber and Maxim Pozdorovkin (Premiere/Sundance 2014); *First to Fall* directed by Rachel Beth Anderson (Premiere/ IDFA, 2013) and *Remote Control* (Premiere/Busan 2013- New Currents Award). Over the years, she has developed original projects for HBO, Sidney Kimmel Entertainment, Showtime, This is That and Harpo. Nottage is the recipient of a MacArthur “Genius Grant” Fellowship, Steinberg “Mimi” Distinguished Playwright Award, the Dramatists Guild Hull-Warriner Award, the inaugural Horton Foote Prize, Helen Hayes Award, the Lee Reynolds Award and the Jewish World Watch iWitness Award. Her other honors include the National Black Theatre Fest's August Wilson Playwriting Award, a Guggenheim Grant, PEN/Laura Pels Award, Lucille Lortel Fellowship and Visiting Research Fellowship at Princeton University. She is a graduate of Brown University and the Yale School of Drama, where she has been a faculty member since 2001. She is also teaching graduate playwriting at Columbia School of the Arts.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR:

Michael Mendelson is the Artistic Associate and a Resident Artist here at Artists Rep and the Artistic Director of Portland Shakespeare Project. Well known in Portland as an actor, director and teacher, he received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Wayne State University and a Master of Fine Arts from University of Washington's Professional Actors Training Program. While in New York City, he studied

with Tanya Berezin. Michael directed and starred in *Mistakes Were Made* for Artists Rep. Other directing credits include *The Tempest*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *As You Like It* and *Lear's Follies* for Portland Shakespeare Project, *Love's Labour's Lost* (Northwest Classical Theatre Company), *Stones In His Pockets* (Public House Theatre), *As Is* (Key Productions), *The Meaning of Prayer* (Verbatim Productions) and staged readings of *Botticelli* (Profile Theatre) and *Dinner With Friends* (Mt. Hood Repertory Theatre). His acting credits at Artists Rep include Neil in *The Quality of Life*, Alfred Lunt in *Ten Chimneys*, Andrei Borchevsky in *Red Herring* and Sherlock in *Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Christmas Carol*, also *God of Carnage*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Superior Donuts*, *Othello*, *Design for Living*, *Holidazed*, *Becky's New Car*, *Three Sisters*, *Eurydice*, *House, Garden, Orson's Shadow*, *Mr. Marmalade* and *Theater District*. Other local credits include work with Oregon Shakespeare Festival/Portland, Profile Theatre, Miracle Theatre, Northwest Classical Theatre Company, triangle productions!, Tygres Heart Shakespeare, Portland Center Stage, A Contemporary Theatre, Reader's Theatre Repertory and New Rose Theatre. New York credits include Revolving Shakespeare Company, Theatre 1010, The Normal Heart (Lincoln Center/Clark Studio Theatre), Genesis Guild and The Barrow Group. Regional credits include work at PCPA TheatreFest, Paper Mill Playhouse, A Contemporary Theatre, Saint Michael's Playhouse, Penobscot Theatre Company, Arkansas Repertory Theatre, First Stage Milwaukee, Idaho Rep, Attic Theater and Wisconsin, Utah and Berkeley Shakespeare Festivals.

CAST:

Ayanna Berkshire* – Esther
Demene E. Hall* – Mrs. Dickson
Sara Hennessy* – Mrs. Van Buren
Chris Harder *^ – Mr. Marks
Dedra D. Woods+ – Mayme
Vin Shambry*^ – George

CREATIVE TEAM:

Michael Mendelson*^ – Director
Jack O'Brien – Scenic Designer
Sarah Gahagan – Costume Designer
Brent J. Sullivan – Lighting Designer
Rodolfo Ortega^ – Composer/Sound Designer
Mary McDonald Lewis^ – Voice & Text Director
Gavin Hales – Stage Manager

* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers
^ Artists Rep Resident Artist

ABOUT ARTISTS REPERTORY THEATRE:

Portland's premiere mid-size regional theatre company is led by Artistic Director Dámaso Rodríguez and Managing Director Sarah Horton. Founded in 1982, Artists Repertory Theatre is the longest-running professional theatre company in Portland. For the 2014/15 season Artists Rep will offer eight bold and entertaining plays written by internationally acclaimed playwrights, and guided by esteemed directors. Artists Rep productions will feature the work of a core group of accomplished Resident Artists, each with a shared history and a shorthand for collaboration, working alongside guest artists from Portland and beyond.

Artists Rep's mission is to engage diverse audiences in fresh, thought-provoking and intimate theatre. We are committed to world-class acting, directing, design and stagecraft that support new playwriting and aspire to embody great literature, moving audiences to truly feel — to *experience* — storytelling in a way that only the best live theatre can.

The 2014/15 Artists Repertory Theatre season is presented by Ronni Lacroute/WillaKenzie Estate. Our season media sponsors are The Oregonian and KINK. Other season support comes from the Regional Arts Culture Council, The Oregon Community Foundation, the Collins Foundation, the Harold and Arlene Schnitzer CARE Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, The James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation and Rafati's Catering.

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