

# ARTISTS REPERTORY THEATRE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Nicole Lane  
nlane@artistsrep.org  
503.241.9807x102(o) | 360.601.4298(c)

### Artists Rep presents *Grand Concourse*

Off Broadway Hit Comedy by Northwest-Raised  
Award-Winning Playwright and TV Writer Heidi Schreck

- WHO:** Artists Repertory Theatre  
**WHAT:** *Grand Concourse*  
By Heidi Schreck. Directed by JoAnn Johnson.  
**WHEN:** May 3 – June 5, 2016 – EXTENDED before opening!
- Preview performances: May 3-6
  - Opening Night: May 7
  - Regular run: Wednesday-Sunday @ 7:30pm; Sundays @ 2pm; Wednesday, May 18 @ 11am; Sunday, May 22 @ 7:30pm (Open Captioned); Saturday, May 28 @ 2pm (ASL Interpreted).
  - Extended run performances: Tuesday, May 31 through Friday, June 3 @ 7:30pm; no show June 4 due to Starlight Parade; closing show Sunday, June 5 @ 2pm.
  - Oregon Food Bank benefit performance: Tuesday, May 17
- WHERE:** Artists Repertory Theatre, Morrison Stage, 1515 SW Morrison Street, Portland  
**TICKETS:** \$48 regular price; \$25 preview/student/under 25; \$20 rush
- Pay-What-You-Can First Preview performance: May 3
  - Buy Tickets: 503.241.1278 or [www.artistsrep.org](http://www.artistsrep.org)
- SHOW IMAGE ATTACHED:** Photo credit, David Straub  
**PRODUCTION PHOTOS AVAILABLE:** May 4, 2016

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Portland, Oregon | April 14, 2016.** Artists Repertory Theatre is delighted to bring the West Coast premiere of the comedic and touching *Grand Concourse* to Portland audiences. This tragicomedy is written by Pacific Northwest native Heidi Schreck, a graduate of the University of Oregon, who is now an award-winning playwright and acclaimed TV writer. With *Grand Concourse*, Schreck was a 2015 finalist for the prestigious Susan Smith Blackburn Prize and a nominee for the 2015 Lucille Lortel Award.

*Grand Concourse* takes place in an industrial soup kitchen in the Bronx, where we meet Shelley, a nun struggling to pray and questioning her life's work. Her world in service to the needy, alongside a Dominican immigrant security guard and joke-writing "regular," is rocked when a rainbow-haired college drop-out comes to volunteer. The girl's enthusiasm and erratic behavior will change the course of their

lives. With touching humor this motley group unravels the intricacies of need, the vagaries of compassion and limits of forgiveness.

“I was drawn to this play because of its culturally diverse, multi-dimensional characters who represent communities of faith and homelessness, as well as perspectives of immigrants and youth,” said Artists Rep Artistic Director Dámaso Rodriguez at the production’s first rehearsal. “In its seldom-seen theatrical setting of a Bronx soup kitchen, Heidi Schreck’s sensitive, funny and quietly moving play explores faith, compassion and forgiveness.”

At the helm of this production is Director JoAnn Johnson. “In this simple setting, big questions are lurking,” she wrote for the production’s playbill. “What are the limits of compassion? Who is deserving of forgiveness? What is our personal response to the desperation on our own streets? And is there hope for us?” An Artists Rep Resident Artist, JoAnn has appeared in or directed dozens of productions at the theatre over the past 25 years. To bring this play’s compelling characters to life, JoAnn has cast the talented Artists Rep Resident Artists Ayanna Berkshire, Allen Nause, John San Nicolas and, making her Artists Rep debut, Jahnvi Alyssa.

#### **FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT**

“Having worked in soup kitchens and for social justice organizations both in my hometown and here in the city [NYC], I was interested in writing about the provisional families that spring up in places where people gather explicitly to care for one another — to help and to seek help. There is a great deal of affection and humor and... well, love in these situations, which also means that so much can go horribly wrong. Emma, Oscar, Frog and Shelley become a weird little family during the course of this play, and, like any real family, they have the power to both heal and harm one another.” — Heidi Schreck

#### **ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT**

Heidi Schreck is a writer and actor living in Brooklyn who grew up in Wenatchee, Washington and attended the University of Oregon as a theatre major. Her plays include *Grand Concourse*, which premiered at Playwrights Horizons and Steppenwolf Theatre in 2014/15 and was a Lilly Award winner and finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn prize; *Creature* (New Georges and Page 73); *There Are No More Big Secrets* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre); and *The Consultant* (Long Wharf Theatre). Other playwriting awards include the Claire Tow Fellowship at Playwrights Horizons, the Roe Green Award at Cleveland Playhouse, and the Page 73 Playwriting Fellowship. Heidi is an alumna of the Soho Rep Writer/Director Lab and Sundance Theatre Lab, and is currently commissioned by MTC, True Love Productions, South Coast Rep and the Atlantic Theatre Company. As an actor, Heidi has performed at Playwrights Horizons, The Public Theatre (Shakespeare in the Park); MTC, Theater of a Two-Headed Calf, The Foundry, Clubbed Thumb, The Women’s Project, The Roundabout, Williamstown, Berkeley Rep, Center Theatre Group, and with The Talking Band. She has also worked as a writer and actor on Showtime’s *NURSE JACKIE* and *BILLIONS*, and as reporter in St. Petersburg Russia. Heidi has received two OBIES, a Drama Desk, and the Theatre World Award.

#### **FROM THE CRITICS**

"*Grand Concourse* may well break your heart. You may need tissues by the end." — New York Post

"Insightful with a moving, even shocking epiphany." —Huffington Post

“Heidi Schreck’s beautiful tragicomedy of life... reminds you of why you go to the theater in the first place.” —Chicago Sun Times

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## ***Grand Concourse***

By Heidi Schreck

Directed by JoAnn Johnson^

### **CAST**

Ayanna Berkshire*^	Shelley
Jahnvi Alyssa+	Emma
John San Nicolas*^	Oscar
Allen Nause*^	Frog

### **CREATIVE TEAM**

Kristeen Willis Crosser^	Scenic Designer
Emily Horton	Costume Designer
Carl Faber#	Lighting Designer
Sharath Patel^	Sound Designer
Mary McDonald-Lewis^	Dialect Coach
Jonathan Cole	Fight Choreographer
Amy Katrina Bryant	Props Master
Jonathan Cole	Fight Director
Carol Ann Wohlmutter*	Production Stage Manager
Karen Hill	Assistant Stage Manager
Nate Cohen	Assistant Director
Jessica Evans Irvine	Production Assistant
Dave Petersen	Board Operator

*\* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers*

*+ Equity Membership Candidate*

*^ Artists Rep Resident Artist*

*# The scenic, costume, lighting, projection & sound designers are represented by United Scenic Artists*

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### **OREGON FOOD BANK BENEFIT PERFORMANCE**

On Tuesday, May 17 Artists Rep will host a benefit performance for the Oregon Food Bank. Tickets for that performance are \$10 and all proceeds will go to the Oregon Food Bank. According to the Oregon Food Bank, \$10 will buy 30 meals, which is a different proposition than collecting canned goods. A sold-out benefit performance will make a powerful difference and provide close to 5,000 meals.

### **ARTISTS REPERTORY THEATRE**

Portland's premiere mid-size regional theatre company is led by Artistic Director Dámaso Rodriguez and Managing Director Sarah Horton. Founded in 1982, Artists Repertory Theatre is the longest-running professional theatre company in Portland. For the 2015/16 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 is also home to the ArtsHub, a program which offers residencies within Artists Rep's facility to smaller and emerging arts organizations with subsidized administrative, performance and

rehearsal space, as well other infrastructural services. The Artists Rep facility serves as a community arts center, where performance venues and other public spaces are continually buzzing with activity.

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 2015/16 Artists Repertory Theatre season is presented by Ronni Lacroute/WillaKenzie Estate and David and Christine Vernier. *Grand Concourse* is presented at Artists Rep with support from show sponsors Rosalie & Ed Tank and Hugh & Mair Lewis . Our season media sponsors are The Oregonian and KINK. Other season support comes from the Regional Arts Culture Council, Oregon Community Foundation, Collins Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation and Work for Art.

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