

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Artists Rep's 35th Season

New. Now. Necessary.

World, Regional & Portland Premieres

by Brendan Jacobs-Jenkins, Christopher Chen, Stephen Karam,

Stephen Adly Guirgis, Larissa FastHorse, Lauren Gunderson

and the World Premiere of E.M. Lewis' epic play in 5 acts MAGELLANICA

PORTLAND, OREGON – July 19, 2017. For its 35th anniversary as Portland's premiere mid-size regional theatre company, Artists Repertory Theatre will offer seven gripping, contemporary plays for their mainstage series. Among these plays are Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winners, the second Table|Room|Stage commission, *The Thanksgiving Play*, by Larissa FastHorse, and a limited run of the World Premiere of the epic theatrical event *Magellanica*, by Portland playwright E.M. Lewis. Artists Rep's FRONTIER SERIES returns for a second season with internationally acclaimed artists from New York, Seattle and Iran.

"Our 2017/18 season includes of some of the most provocative, talked about and acclaimed new plays in recent memory. These seven playwrights are urgently responding to our complicated times and will make you think, feel and start a conversation," said Dámaso Rodríguez, Artists Rep's Artistic Director. "I am especially proud that Artists Rep will take on the challenge of producing the timely World Premiere of Oregon playwright E.M. Lewis' extraordinary epic *Magellanica*, a play with the immersive grip of a great novel. It will be an unforgettable theatre experience."

The 2017/18 selections emphasize a strong commitment to reflecting the world we live in today through a wide variety of voices. **This group of plays is unflinching, topical and designed to create robust dialogue.**

"We believe that it is the special role of theatre to create art that illuminates our commonality, seeks truth, promotes empathy and encourages connection," Artistic Director Dámaso Rodríguez and Managing Director Sarah Horton. "For us, the key to fulfilling that potential lies in using the power of theatre to share and amplify many perspectives, voices and points of view. We reaffirm our commitment to our mission statement: to produce intimate, provocative theatre and provide a home for artists and audiences of varied backgrounds to take creative risks ...with renewed urgency."

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Artists Rep's productions feature the work of the Resident Artist Company, alongside guest artists from Portland's professional theatre community and beyond. Now comprised of more than two dozen theatre practitioners, [Artists Rep's Resident Artists](#) represent some of Portland's finest talent, in a variety of theatrical disciplines.

Single tickets go on sale August 1. **Launching the 35th Anniversary season, August 1 through 8, all single tickets will be sold at a discounted \$35 per ticket** – single tickets are normally \$50. Full season ticket packages are currently on sale and can be arranged by calling the Artists Rep box office at 503.241.1278.

2017/18 ARTISTS REPERTORY THEATRE MAINSTAGE SEASON

AN OCTOROON

by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins

Directed by Lava Alapai & Dámaso Rodríguez

SEPT 3 - OCT 1

An Octoroon is a raucously irreverent *Gone with the Wind* meets *Looney Tunes* mash-up that *The New York Times* calls "...this decade's most eloquent theatrical statement on race in America today." Riffing off a 19th Century hit set on a Louisiana plantation, Jacobs-Jenkins offers a brazen, metatheatrical melodrama that twists a funhouse world of larger-than-life stereotypes into blistering social commentary. It's gasp-inducing satire from one of America's most thrilling writers.

- Shocking Comedy
- 2014 OBIE Award for Best New Play
- McArthur Genius Award-winning playwright
- "entertainingly demented" *New York Post*
- NW Premiere

CAST Joseph Gibson* (BJJ), Michael Mendelson*^ (Playwright), John San Nicolas*^ (Assistant), Alex Ramirez de Cruz (Zoe), Kailey Rhodes~ (Dora), Jocelyn Seid~ (Dido), Ayanna Berkshire*^ (Grace), Jimmy Garcia* (Ratts).

CREATIVE TEAM Tal Sanders** (Scenic Design), Wanda Walden (Costume Design), Blanca Forzan (Light Design), Phillip Johnson (Composer/Sound Design), Carol Ann Wohlmut*^ (Stage Manager), Robert Amico (Prop Master), Mary McDonald-Lewis^ (Voice & Text Director), Jonathan Cole (Fight Choreographer), Pancho Savery (Dramaturg)

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CAUGHT

with artist Lin Bo, in collaboration with playwright Christopher Chen

Directed by Shawn Lee

An installation of visual art and live theatre presented in partnership with The Chújú Gallery/SF and The Geezer Gallery

OCT 1 - OCT 29

Ripped from today's headlines and breaking the theatrical mold, artist Lin Bo's work, *Qín (Caught)*, presents a sly philosophical puzzle that investigates the murky intersections of fact and fiction in the crafting of art ... and news. The show features Lin, a dissident visual, performance and conceptual artist whose piece, *Shìwēi ('Rally')* led to his arrest and two-year detention by the Chinese government in 2012. After his release, Lin moved to San Francisco and launched a traveling exhibition of his work to Vancouver BC, Tacoma, Portland, Las Vegas and Minneapolis. In each city, Lin is partnering with theatre companies rather than traditional gallery spaces; in Portland, Artists Rep is hosting the exhibit. The Artists Rep exhibition includes his current work, as well as a new theatrical piece, *Qín (Caught)*, a lively exploration of the American obsession with 'story' and 'narrative' as markers for 'authenticity.' Lin will be introducing the work at each performance, and discussing his harrowing experiences in detention under the Chinese authorities. Recently profiled by *The New Yorker Magazine*, he is writing a book about his journey as a dissident artist in an authoritarian culture, which will be published following this tour. In Portland, Lin is collaborating with artists: playwright Christopher Chen, Dmae Roberts, Chris Harder, Sara Hennessy, Greg Watanabe, Horatio Law, Megan Wilkerson, Sarah Gahagan, Jennifer Lin, Rodolfo Ortega, Mary McDonald-Lewis, Samson Syharath and Shawn Lee to recreate this piece for Portland viewers.

- Timely, One-of-a-Kind Drama
- 2017 Obie Award for Playwrighting
- 2015 Barrymore Award for Best New Play
- Dramatist Guild's 2017 Lanford Wilson Award
- "...an ingenious, beguiling play..." *Lily Janiak, San Francisco Chronicle*
- NW Premiere

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THE HUMANS

by Stephen Karam

Directed by Dámaso Rodríguez

NOV 19 - DEC 17

It's the small family dinner that made big waves on Broadway. Enclosed in a basement apartment, a middle-class family gathers to christen Brigid and Richard's new digs with a fancy Thanksgiving dinner on paper plates and undertake their holiday ritual of smashing the peppermint pig. With darkness falling and mysterious bumps from above, the lights ominously flicker on the Blake's family banter. While Momo mumbles quasi-prophetic gibberish from her wheelchair and Aimee makes urgent trips to the bathroom, the world creaks curiously around them and layers of their fragile lives and lurking secrets are revealed. "There is so much love, dread, tenderness and brutality in *The Humans*...deeply-felt family tragicomedy thriller..." – *Newsday*

(more)

[*The Humans, cont...*]

- Tragicomic Family Drama
- FIVE Best New Play Awards
 - 2016 Tony Award
 - New York Drama Critics' Circle
 - Outer Critic Circle
 - Drama League
 - Drama Desk
- 2016 Pulitzer Prize finalist
- Portland Premiere

CAST

Robert Pescovitz* (Erik Blake), Luisa Sermol* (Deirdre Blake), Val Landrum*^ (Aimee Blake), Quinlan Fitzgerald~ (Brigid Blake), Vana O'Brien*^ (Fiona "Momo" Blake), John San Nicolas*^ (Richard Saad)

CREATIVE TEAM

Megan Wilkerson***^ (Scenic Design), Gregory Pulver^ (Costume Design), Kristeen Crosser** (Light Design), Phillip Johnson (Composer/Sound Design), Carol Ann Wohlmutter*^ (Stage Manager), Katrina Lind (Props Master), Mary McDonald-Lewis^ (Voice & Text Director), Roy Arauz (Assistant Director), Luan Schooler (Dramaturg).

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MAGELLANICA

by E.M. Lewis

Directed by Dámaso Rodríguez

JAN 20 - FEB 18

In 1985, scientists and engineers from around the world converge at the South Pole Research Station to figure out, among other things, if there really is a hole in the sky. In the darkest, coldest, most dangerous place on Earth, eight imperfect souls are trapped together. Utterly isolated from the outside world for eight and a half months, this research team must face life or death challenges, their own inner demons and depend upon each other for survival.

With epic scope in the tradition of *The Kentucky Cycle* or *Angels in America*, this play takes its inspiration from the true story of the discovery of the hole in the ozone layer at the height of the Cold War. Part historical adventure, love story and mystical foray into the unknown, it's about a world that can either tear apart or come together for its own survival. It's a vital story for today and an extraordinary excursion for audiences to the end of the Earth.

- Epic. Immersive. Unforgettable.
- 5-act, 4-intermission adventure, with a dinner break
- Oregonian playwright. Winner of the 2016 Oregon Literary Fellowship in Drama
- Limited 3-week Run
- World Premiere

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[Magellanica, cont...]

CAST

Vin Shambry*[^](Captain Adam Burrell), John San Nicolas*[^] (Freddie de la Rosa), Sara Hennessy* (Dr. Morgan Halsted), Michael Mendelson*[^] (Dr. Vadik Chapayev), Allen Nause*[^] (Dr. Todor Kozlek), Barbie Wu~ (Dr. May Zhou), Eric Pargac* (Dr. Lars Broten), Joshua J. Weinstein*[^] (Dr. William Huffington)

CREATIVE TEAM

Stephanie Kerley Schwartz** (Scenic Design), Robert Brewer-Wallin[^] (Costume Design), Carl Faber** (Light Design), Rodolfo Ortega[^] (Composer/Sound Design), Megan Wilkerson***[^] (Projection Design), Jamie Lynne Simons* (Stage Manager), Robert Amico (Props Master), Mary McDonald-Lewis[^] (Voice & Text Director), Jonathan Cole (Resident Fight Choreographer), Tamera Lynn (Assistant Director), Luan Schooler (Dramaturg).

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BETWEEN RIVERSIDE AND CRAZY

by Stephen Adly Guirgis

Directed by Adriana Baer

MAR 4 - APR 1

Meet Walter “Pops” Washington, retired after 30 years from the NYPD after being shot by a white, rookie cop. Holding court from his recently deceased wife’s wheelchair over a motley crew of housemates, he righteously, tenaciously, holds out for a police department settlement until an ecstatic experience shakes him from inaction. For once, “Pops” will make it go how he wants it to go while everyone else hustles to get what they think they deserve. A well-lived life can’t only be eating Ring Dings, drinking whiskey all day and living in a ramshackle palace on Riverside Drive, now can it?

- Explosive Comedy
- 2015 Pulitzer Prize for Drama
- 2015 New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Play
- 2015 Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Play
- 2015 Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding New Off-Broadway Play
- 2016 Literature Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters
- Special NW Release

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THE THANKSGIVING PLAY

by Larissa FastHorse

Directed by Luan Schooler

APR 1 - APR 29

A group of mismatched teachers and actors have been charged by the school district to devise an ethnically sensitive play to somehow celebrate both Thanksgiving and Native American Heritage Month. In order to be as respectful and accurate as possible, the three white actors defer to the only Native American in the room for guidance and find their expectations of her insights are wildly misguided. In this wickedly funny satire, this foursome must find their way through a hilarious thicket of assumptions, historical perspectives and school district policies as the absurd pageant must go on!

- Provocative Satire
- TABLE|ROOM|STAGE commission
- Highly commissioned playwright
- Multiple Fellowship and Award-winning Playwright
- PEN USA Literary Award for Drama
- 2015/16 Joe Dowling Annaghmakerrig Fellowship Award
- National Endowment for the Arts Distinguished New Play Development grant recipient
- World Premiere

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I AND YOU

by Lauren Gunderson

Directed by JoAnn Johnson

MAY 20 - JUN 17

Two teens – a sick and snarky girl who hates poetry, and a sweet and sporty boy who just wants to get his class work project done – are thrust together to work on a school project about Walt Whitman’s poems. Like boxers in a ring, the mismatched pair spar their way through Whitman's epic *Song of Myself* into an uneasy friendship. With growing urgency and searing poignancy, *I and You* is a funny, tender and surprising journey about the strange beauty of human connectedness.

- Revelatory Drama
- 2014 Harold and Mimi Steinberg/American Theatre Critics Association New Play Award
- 2014 Susan Smith Blackburn Prize
- Dramatist Guild 2016 Lanford Wilson Award Finalist
- 2016/17 most-produced living playwright in the U.S.
- Portland Premiere

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* Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the U.S.

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

*** Member of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society

~ Equity Membership Candidate

^ Artists Rep Resident Artist

(more)

[2017/18 FRONTIER SERIES](#)

Artists Rep's Frontier Series presents internationally acclaimed artists who are reimagining how theatre is created and shared. The second year of this groundbreaking series features bold new work from New York, Seattle and Iran. These are limited, one weekend engagements, offering Portland audiences access to exciting touring performances from around the world. The Frontier Series is curated by Jerry Tischleder (Risk/Reward Festival).

THEY, THEMSELVES AND SCHMERM

Written & performed by Becca Blackwell

Co-Presented with PICA's Time-based Art (TBA) Festival

SEPT 8 - SEPT 11

Part standup comedy special, part teen zine confessional, *They, Themselves and Scherm* is Becca's disturbingly hilarious personal tale of identity, abuse, sexuality and gender. You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll question what bathroom to use.

"A singular sensation" - *New York Theatre Review*

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THE HOLLER SESSIONS

Written, directed & performed by Frank Boyd

Created in collaboration with the TEAM

MAR 8 - MAR 11

An explosive Kansas City DJ broadcasts his articulate, profane and impassioned testimony to American jazz in an 80-minute music-filled interactive experience.

"An intense and invigorating crash course in music appreciation." – *The New York Times*

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WHITE RABBIT RED RABBIT

A play by Nassim Soleimanpour

APR 12 - APR 15

No rehearsals. No director. No set. Every night a new actor opens an envelope and encounters the script for the first time. Will you participate? Will you be manipulated? Will you listen? Will you really listen?

"A dazzling, transcendent piece of alive-and-kicking avant-garde theater." – *Entertainment Weekly*

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ARTISTS REPERTORY THEATRE

[Artists Repertory Theatre](#)'s mission is to produce intimate, provocative theatre and provide a home for artists and audiences of varied backgrounds to take creative risks. Artists Rep is Portland's premiere mid-size regional theatre company and 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. Artist Rep became the 72nd member of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) in 2016 and is an Associate Member of the National New Play Network (NNPN).

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Artists Rep has become a significant presence in American Regional Theatre with a legacy of world, national and regional premieres of provocative new work with the highest standards of stagecraft. The organization is committed to local artists and features a company of Resident Artists, professionals of varied theatre disciplines, who are a driving force behind Artists Rep's creative output and identity.

Artists Rep is committed to developing new work through its new play development program Table|Room|Stage. With T|R|S, Artists Rep strives to empower and support Oregon-based playwrights while also creating a Portland home for writers from around the country to develop their work. Additionally, this program strives to make a meaningful impact on diversity, equity and inclusion in the theatre field by mandating opportunities for women writers and writers of color, and cultivating the next generation of theatre-goers by creating work specifically for young people (13 and up). Artists Rep makes a vital impact on the Portland arts community with its ArtsHub, creating space and offering a home to ten multidisciplinary arts organizations within its facility.

[RESIDENT ARTISTS](#) – Artists Rep productions feature the work of a core group of over two dozen multidisciplinary theatre professionals. Hailing from around the country, our Resident Artists are nationally renowned and award-winning actors, directors, writers, designers and educators who have chosen to make Portland and Artists Rep their artistic home. Working together and independently, they create inventive and theatrically rich experiences for our audiences while playing a major role in defining Portland's cultural landscape.

[TABLE|ROOM|STAGE](#) – Established in 2015, Table|Room|Stage (T|R|S) is Artists Rep's robust new play program that offers development opportunities for local and national playwrights, and ensures that underrepresented voices are heard on stage. With this program, Artists Rep is committed to bringing the work of exciting women, transgender and non-binary writers and writers of color to its stages. Artists Rep's first completed T|R|S commission was *The Talented Ones*, by Yussef El Guindi. Current playwright commissions include: Linda Alper, Larissa FastHorse, Hansol Jung, Dael Orlandersmith, Steve Rathje and Andrea Stolowitz. The works created by these writers through T|R|S will establish Artists Rep and Portland as an engine for new play development and will enrich the national new play landscape. To learn more about the all projects and the playwrights [visit here](#).

[ARTSHUB](#) – Artists Rep is also home to the growing ArtsHub, where 12 arts organizations find a home in the building. A diverse range of artists and arts organizations can thrive here with access to affordable administrative, performance and rehearsal space, as well as a myriad of support services. The ArtsHub serves as a community arts center, where its performance venues and lobbies buzz with creative energy and Portland's arts-loving audiences can gather. Over the last year, more than 500 performances, events and happenings by Portlanders found a place in Artists Rep's building. To learn about the arts organizations Artists Rep's ArtsHub [visit here](#).

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