

ARTISTS REPERTORY THEATRE

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American Dream teeters on the edge in dark comedy

THE TALENTED ONES

Inaugural commission for Artists Rep's Table | Room | Stage program

- WHO:** Artists Repertory Theatre
- WHAT:** [THE TALENTED ONES](#)
By Youssef El Guindi.
Directed by Jane Unger.
- WHEN:** April 25 – May 21, 2017
- Preview performances: April 25, 26, 27, 28
 - Opening Night/Press Night: Saturday, April 29
 - Regular run through April 2: Wed-Sun @ 7:30pm, Sun @ 2pm
Tuesdays: April 25 & May 16 @ 7:30pm
Wednesday: May 10 @ noon
Accessibility Performances: Sun, May 14 @ 7:30pm (Open Captioned); Sat, May 20 @ 2pm (ASL Interpreted)
 - Post-show discussions follow Sun 2pm matinee performances; Wed, May 10 @ noon
- WHERE:** Artists Repertory Theatre, Morrison Stage, 1515 SW Morrison Street, Portland
- TICKETS:** \$50 regular price; \$25 preview/student/under 25
- PREVIEW WEEK SPECIALS**
- Pay-What-You-Can First Preview performance: Tuesday, April 25
 - \$10 book ahead or PWYC at the door
 - Preview Play Price & Pizza: Wednesday, April 26
 - \$25 ticket & FREE slice of HotLips Pizza
 - Preview Play Price & Beer: Thursday, April 27
 - \$25 ticket & Lagunitas Beer
 - Preview Play Price & Happy Hour + Live Music: Friday, April 28
 - p:ear Partner Performance on May 16
 - \$40 ticket, \$20 goes to [p:ear](#)
 - Buy Tickets: 503.241.1278 or www.artistsrep.org

SPECIAL EVENTS

Post Show Discussions | Every Sunday after 2pm matinee + TBA, see website for updates

SHOW IMAGE ATTACHED: Photo Credit, David Straub

PRODUCTION PHOTOS AVAILABLE: April 27, 2017

INTERVIEW WITH THE PLAYWRIGHT: [HERE](#)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE. Portland, Oregon | April 7, 2017. Artists Repertory Theatre presents the World Premiere of *The Talented Ones* by Yussef El Guindi, directed by Jane Unger. Preview performances run April 25 through April 28, the play opens April 29 and runs through May 21 on the Morrison Stage. *The Talented Ones* is Artists Rep's first new play development commission for Table|Room|Stage (T|R|S) as part of the Oregon Community Foundation's "Creative Heights Initiative."

The American Dream teeters on the edge of the abyss as immigrants Cindy and Omar face their thwarted dreams and unraveling marriage while Omar's buddy, Patrick, connives to push them over the edge. In this surprisingly funny dark comedy, trouble erupts one night when bad choices are followed by *verrrrry* bad choices. The stakes become lethal as these characters manipulate the truth and do anything to justify their desires.

Artists Rep's production features Resident Artist John San Nicolas in his third production this season, along with Khanh Doan, Heath Koerschgen, Michel Castillo and Madeleine Tran making their Artists Rep debuts.

This production of *The Talented Ones* marks Artists Rep's first production through the T|R|S program that began in 2015. [T|R|S](#) was established by a \$125,000 Oregon Community Foundation "Creative Heights" grant to create a robust new play development program that offers development opportunities for local and national playwrights, ensure that underrepresented voices are heard on stage and establish Artists Rep and Portland as an engine for new play development. The two-year pilot program is commissioning eight new plays. Four of the eight commissions go to writers of color, four to women, one play written for young adults and one to an Oregon writer through the publicly vetted Oregon Play Prize.

"When we launched Table|Room|Stage, we knew that the first commission we offered would set the bar for the whole program: we wanted a writer whose work exemplifies our commitment to fiercely intelligent, nuanced, opinionated, boldly theatrical plays that grapple with the complexity of human relationships," said Luan Schooler, Director of New Play Development and Dramaturgy. "Yussef's work embodies those qualities – and brings a healthy dose of humor to boot. *The Talented Ones* not only wrestles with significant issues, but also is a very funny play about a dinner party gone horribly wrong."

Schooler continues, "With Table|Room|Stage, supporting writers of color, women and non-binary writers is part of our DNA – it is a founding principle of our new play development program. This focus allows us to bring some of the most exciting American writers into our theatre, enriching the contemporary social conversation and challenging out-of-date assumptions. In this play, the experience of being 'other' is brought to attention with compassion, intelligence and humor. Yussef's work is particularly thrilling in its focus on the immigrant experience and the promise of the American Dream, a conversation that is particularly urgent now."

"My feeling is that the immigrant state of mind can be glimpsed by anyone who feels displaced or foreign and is trying to fit into new surroundings. Which basically covers everyone!," wrote El Guindi in an interview for the production playbill. "Who doesn't at times feel slightly alien and separate from their environment, and the people that surround them? When we open our mouths and try to communicate with someone we are making an 'immigrant' journey of sorts from the familiar – our own view of the

world – to that stranger’s point of view. When it comes to human relations, it’s *all* terra incognita with unexpected borders, and much traveling to try and comprehend each other better. “

“*The Talented Ones* holds up a mirror to all of us who have ever held onto dreams and expectations,” said Director Jane Unger. “It also opens a door into the world of the outsider, newcomers to this country whose obstacles are not as obvious as a border crossing.”

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Yussef El Guindi’s productions include *Our Enemies: Lively Scenes of Love and Combat* at Golden Thread Productions; *An Evening with Activists* at Cutting Ball Theater; *Collaborator* at Macha Monkey Productions; *Threesome* at Portland Center Stage, ACT, and at 59E59 (winner of a Portland Drammy for Best Original Script); *The Ramayana* (co-adaptor with Stephanie Timm) at ACT; *Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World* (winner of the Steinberg/ American Theater Critics Association’s New Play Award in 2012; Gregory Award 2011; Seattle Times’ “Footlight Award” for Best World Premiere Play, 2011) also at ACT, and at Center Repertory Company (Walnut Creek, CA); and *Language Rooms* (Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award, as well as ACT’s New Play Award), co-produced by Golden Thread Productions and Asian American Theater Company in San Francisco; at the Wilma Theater in Philadelphia (premiere), and at the Los Angeles Theater Center. Other past productions: *Jihad Jones and The Kalashnikov Babes*, produced at Golden Thread Productions, at InterAct Theater, and at Kitchen Dog theater, as part of the National New Play Network. His play *Our Enemies: Lively Scenes of Love and Combat*, also produced by Silk Road Theater Project, won the M. Elizabeth Osborn award. His plays, *Back of the Throat* (winner of L.A. Weekly’s Excellence in Playwriting Award for 2006), as well as *Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World*, *Jihad Jones and The Kalashnikov Babes*, *Such a Beautiful Voice is Sayeda’s* and *Karima’s City*, have been published by Dramatists Play Service. The latter one-acts have also been included in *The Best American Short Plays: 2004-2005*, published by Applause Books. *Ten Acrobats in an Amazing Leap of Faith* (winner of Chicago’s “After Dark/John W. Schmid Award” for Best New Play in 2006) is included in “Salaam/ Peace: An Anthology of Middle-Eastern American Playwrights,” published by TCG, 2009. *Our Enemies: Lively Scenes of Love and Combat* is included in the anthology “Four Arab American Plays” published by McFarland Books. *Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World* was included in the September, 2012 issue of “American Theatre Magazine.” *Threesome* was published by Broadway Play Publishing Inc. and *Language Rooms* was published in Rain City Projects’ anthology “Manifesto Series Volume 3.” Yussef is the recipient of the 2010 Middle East America Distinguished Playwright Award, and Seattle’s 2015 *Stranger’s Genius Award*. He holds an MFA from Carnegie-Mellon University and was playwright-in-residence at Duke University.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Most recently at Artists Rep, Jane directed *Mothers and Sons* and the staged reading of *The Talented Ones* as part of Table|Room|Stage program. Jane is the founding Artistic Director of Profile Theatre Project in Portland whose mission celebrates the playwright by presenting a full season of plays by a single writer. In her 15 years helming Profile, she featured the following playwrights: Arthur Kopit, Tennessee Williams, Constance Congdon, Arthur Miller, Harold Pinter, Edward Albee, Romulus Linney, Terrence McNally, Lanford Wilson, Wendy Wasserstein, John Guare, Neil Simon, Horton Foote, Lee Blessing and Athol Fugard. During that time, Jane produced 55 productions, (directed 35), 31 staged readings, (directed eight, acted in three), and 20 concert readings through the One Night Stand series she conceived and implemented. Jane worked directly with many of these writers on new play development, including the World Premiere of Romulus Linney’s *Klonsky and Schwartz*, co-directed by Linney and Unger. Other directorial work includes Triad Stage, Inge Theatre Festival, Great Plains Theatre Conference, Creede Repertory Theatre, Idaho Theatre for Youth, Storefront Theatre, Miracle

Theatre, CoHo Productions, JAW, Portland Center Stage, New Rose Theatre. Among the awards Jane has received, she is especially proud of Profile being among the first 10 recipients honored by the American Theatre Wing in 2010 with a National Theatre Company Grant, Portland's Drammy Award for Best Director for *Wings* and the Drammy Lifetime Achievement Award for her founding of Profile Theatre Project. janeunger.com

THE TALENTED ONES

By Youssef El Guindi

Directed by Jane Unger

CAST

John San Nicolas*^ | Omar

Khanh Doan* | Cindy

Heath Koerschgen+ | Patrick

Michel Castillo+ | Young Omar

Madeleine Tran | Dancer Cindy

CREATIVE TEAM

June Unger | Director

Luan Schooler | Dramaturg

Daniel Meeker | Scenic Designer

Darrin Pufall | Costume Designer

Kristeen Willis Crosser# | Lighting Designer

Rodolfo Ortega^ | Sound Designer

Jonathan Cole* | Resident Fight Choreographer

Mary McDonald Lewis^ | Voice & Text Director

Kaye Blankenship | Props Master

Sarah Jane Hardy | Choreographer

Camille Trinko | Assistant Choreographer

PRODUCTION TEAM

Artistic Producer | Shawn Lee

Associate Producer & Production Manager | Kristeen Willis Crosser

Stage Manager | Michelle Jazuk*^

Board Op | Jason Coffey

Production Assistant | Esther McFaden+

Wardrobe | Will Bailey

Costumer | Clare Hungate-Hawk

Technical Director | Nathan Crone

Master Carpenter | Eddie Rivera

Master Electrician | Ronan Kilkelly

Scenic Charge | Sarah Kindler

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

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

^ Artists Rep Resident Artist

+ Equity Membership Candidate

ABOUT ARTISTS REPERTORY THEATRE

[Artists Repertory Theatre](#)'s mission is to produce intimate, provocative theatre and provide a home for artists 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). Artists Rep's 35th season is announced, the 2017/18 play selections can be [found here](#).

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](#) – Through T|R|S, Artists Rep is committed to becoming an engine for new play development. As a recipient of a \$125,000 Oregon Community Foundation Creative Heights grant to establish a robust new play development program, the company is creating opportunities for local and national playwrights to ensure that underrepresented voices are heard on stage. The goal of the T|R|S program was to commission a total of eight plays by year-end 2017 – at least four of the eight commissions to writers of color, at least four to women, one play written for young adults and one is the [Oregon Play Prize](#), which was awarded to Oregon playwright Steve Rathje for his play *Signs*. In addition to Steve Rathje, Artists Rep has commissioned plays from Yussef El Guindi, Linda Alper, Larissa FastHorse, Andrea Stolowitz ([Lacroute Playwright-in-Residence](#)), Dael Orlandersmith and Hansol Jung – more information about these [At the Table](#) projects is on the website. [On the Workbench](#) is another aspect of the T|R|S initiative which is supporting the creation of new works by Anthony Hudson and Susannah Mars. Additionally, the [Fresh Eyes](#) program invites 'civilians' to attend productions in rehearsal and share their observations with our wider community.

[ARTSHUB](#) – Artists Rep is also home to the ArtsHub, serving as a community arts center, where its performance venues and lobbies buzz with creative energy and Portland's arts-loving audiences can

gather. Artists Rep offers a home within its facility to a diverse range of artists and arts organizations. They can thrive here with access to affordable administrative, performance and rehearsal space, as well as a myriad of support services. Over the last year, hundreds of performances, events and happenings by Portlanders found a place in Artists Rep's building.

The 2016/17 Artists Repertory Theatre season is presented by sponsors Ronni Lacroute/WillaKenzie Estate and David & Christine Vernier and the Robert and Mercedes Eichholz and Renaissance Foundations. Other season support comes from the Collins Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation, Theatre Communication Group and the Regional Arts and Culture Council and Work for Art.

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