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TRINITY REP EXPANDS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS

PROVIDENCE, RI: Community, along with company and education, has long been one of Trinity Rep's three core values, but recently the organization, which was founded in 1963, is expanding its commitment to that principle. Through the addition of staff and inclusion in a prestigious international pilot program, Trinity Rep's community engagement efforts strive toward fulfilling the non-profit organization's mission to reinvent the public square and provide an accessible and relevant cultural resource for the entire community.

Led by Trinity Rep's Artistic Associate for Community **Rebecca Noon**, community engagement efforts affect all aspects of the organization, including creating local partnerships and deepening audience involvement around our productions, plus producing events like Context & Conversation panel discussions and America Too, an annual event created with, by, and for Providence in response to local issues. In addition, Noon plays a critical role in leading the organization's equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts within the staff.

Noon comments, "As a Rhode Islander dedicated not only to creating a more vibrant, active, and diverse theater community, but also a more connected, compassionate, and creative society, I am energized and inspired by my work at Trinity Rep. When I reflect on some early community meetings I had when I started four years ago -- with people like Marta V. Martínez from RI Latino Arts, Lorén Spears from Tomaquag Museum, and Jeannine Chartier from VSA RI -- and see how our relationships have evolved; how their work (and many others) now influence Trinity Rep's work, both on and off our stages; and how the city feels connected in new and significant ways, I am reminded again that arts organizations are powerful forces for civic change and that live performance is more relevant and necessary than ever."

America Too: Providence's Housing Crisis

On Monday, October 22, 2018 at 7:00 pm, Trinity Rep will present **America Too: Providence's Housing Crisis**. This free event will feature powerful, honest, and revealing short plays about Providence's rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods, in partnership with D.A.R.E. (Direct Action for Rights and Equality)'s Tenants and Homeowners Association (THA). The short plays are written by local playwrights April Brown, Julia Izumi, Vatic Kuumba, Eli Nixon, David Rabinow, and Gina Rodriguez in collaboration with THA members. They were inspired by conversations around prompts like: How has your neighborhood changed? What is important to you about your neighborhood? What things keep you in your neighborhood? What things push you out? What do you want other people to know about your neighborhood? Following the performance will be a community conversation on what we can do to create a city that works for everyone, and stops pushing out people who can no longer afford to live here. More information about this free event can be found at trinityrep.com/america-too. Reservations are recommended.

Joe Wilson, Jr. Joins Staff as Coordinator of Activism Through Performance

As a member of the resident acting company since 2005, **Joe Wilson, Jr.** has been increasingly involved with Trinity Rep's efforts to connect more deeply with its community. In 2015, he played an important role in bringing the *Every 28 Hours* plays to Providence following the events in Ferguson, Missouri. This event grew to become Trinity Rep's America Too project. Wilson's relationship with Trinity Rep was formalized this year, as he was brought on staff as the Coordinator of Activism through Performance. This part-time position allows him to continue his work as an actor on stage and expand our ability to produce responsive events outside the regular season of programming. In his new role, he will be working with Rebecca Noon on special projects including America Too, as well as developing a new Center for Activism and Performance at Trinity Rep.

Wilson says, "I am so proud and excited that my artistic home has decided to increase support for initiatives that will prioritize building relationships that are less transactional, but more transformative. Art, at its core, is not a commodity. It is a response to the world around us and our desire to seek truth and justice, and celebrate our common humanity. In addition, art making and organizations that engage in such work must be committed to creating a culture that shapes our values such that they are inextricably linked to artistic product. I am so pleased that our Board of Trustees is making increased, critical investments in community engagement, and deepening our efforts to shift the lens through which we view the value of art making through supporting the creation for the Center for Activism and Performance at Trinity Repertory Company."

OF/BY/FOR ALL

An initiative of the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History, OF/BY/FOR ALL is a community engagement research program formed to change the way people design, manage, fund, and engage with community organizations. Trinity Rep was chosen to participate in a cohort of 20 organizations from around the world who will test and co-develop community building tools during a six-month intensive research period. This “First Wave” of participants comes from six countries and includes six museums, five performing arts organizations, three public libraries, three parks, and three community centers. Each participating organization in this diverse group will set specific goals for deepening community involvement and then test tools and measure results related to those goals. Trinity Rep’s inclusion in this group will strongly position the company to be a leader and innovator in community engagement in its field. Trinity Rep has formed a cross-departmental team to work on the OF/BY/FOR ALL project that includes Noon and Wilson, as well as Artistic Director Curt Columbus, Director of Development Jen Canole, and Trustee Theresa Moore.

Context & Conversation

In partnership with the Providence Public Library (PPL), Trinity Rep coordinates six Context & Conversation events each year. These panel discussions are facilitated by Christina Bevilaqua, who serves as the theater’s Conversationalist-in-Residence, as well as Programs and Exhibitions Director at the PPL. Each of these events is hosted by a different partner whose work resonates with the themes of the play currently on stage at Trinity Rep, and the ensuing conversation illuminates where those themes are found in our community. During the 2018-19 Season, Trinity Rep will partner with the woman-run comedy venue Wage House during *Pride and Prejudice* (October 18), the all-girls middle school Sophia Academy during *black odyssey* and *An Iliad* (January 17), the Mental Health Association of Rhode Island during *Macbeth* (February 11), the family-run music studio Zabinski Music Studio during *The Song of Summer* (March 24), The Herbarium at Brown University during *Little Shop of Horrors* (April 23), and Mathewson St. Church and the secular service organization 134 Collaborative during *Marisol* (May 31). These events are held at the community partners’ locations in an effort to reach not only Trinity Rep audiences, but also the clients and community served by these partners. More information about each of these events can be found at trinityrep.com/context-conversation.

Prologues



Trinity Rep offers Prologues – free pre-show discussions that are open to all audience members. A member of the cast or artistic team lead a half-hour (spoiler-free) look into the making of the play and finishes the discussion by answering audience questions. The Prologues begin one hour prior to every performance for all shows except *A Christmas Carol*. New this year, Trinity Rep is testing an option for audience members to pre-order dinner from a set menu from nearby restaurant Bravo, which will be delivered to the theater to be enjoyed between the conclusion of the Prologue and the start of the performance.

***A Christmas Carol* Choirs**

Based on the successful inclusion of 18 different community groups over the course of Trinity Rep's 2017 production of *A Christmas Carol*, this year's production will again have a strong community element. Director Mark Valdez was inspired to find community choirs to perform during the show. Noon took on the task of identifying and organizing the choirs and to date, has scheduled 18 community choruses, eight school choruses, three church choirs, and two college choirs to participate over the course of 46 performances.

TRINITY REPERTORY COMPANY

Rhode Island's Tony Award-winning theater, Trinity Rep has created unparalleled professional theater for and with its community since its founding in 1963. Trinity Rep strives to facilitate human connection and has been a driving force behind the creativity that fuels and defines the region for more than 50 years.

Trinity Rep is committed to reinventing the public square and inspiring dialogue by creating emotionally-stimulating live productions that range from classical to contemporary and innovative education programs for all ages and abilities. Its annual production of *A Christmas Carol* has brought families together for 41 years and made memories for over a million audience members.

Subscriptions for the 2018-19 Season are now on sale. The season includes *Pride & Prejudice* by Kate Hamill, *black odyssey* by Marcus Gardley, a special limited-engagement of *An Iliad* by Lisa Peterson and Denis O'Hare, *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare, *The Song of Summer* by Lauren Yee, *Little Shop of Horrors* with book and lyrics by Howard Ashman and music by Alan Menken, and José Rivera's *Marisol*. **For more information on our 2018-19 season, call the box office at (401) 351-4242 or visit Trinity Rep's website at www.TrinityRep.com.**

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