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**GUTHRIE ANNOUNCES FINAL TWO PRODUCTIONS IN THE 2017-18 SEASON:**

**INDECENT**  
**THE CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED NEW PLAY WITH MUSIC BY**  
**PULITZER PRIZE-WINNER PAULA VOGEL, CURRENTLY ON BROADWAY**

**ARTISTIC DIRECTOR JOSEPH HAJ HELMS THE GUTHRIE'S**  
**FIRST-EVER PRODUCTION OF *WEST SIDE STORY***

(*Minneapolis/St. Paul*)—The Guthrie Theater (Joseph Haj, Artistic Director) today announced the final two of nine productions to be offered as part of the theater's 2017-2018 subscription season: *Indecent*, a new play with music by Pulitzer Prize-winner Paula Vogel (*How I Learned to Drive*), conceived by Vogel and Rebecca Taichman; and the Guthrie's first production of the iconic American musical *West Side Story*, directed by Joseph Haj. *Indecent*, which opens on Broadway tomorrow following a widely acclaimed production at New York City's Vineyard Theatre, will play February 17 – March 24, 2018 on the theater's thrust stage. *West Side Story* will round out the thrust season playing June 16 – August 26, 2018. New season subscriptions start at \$90 and go on sale May 19, 2017 through the Season Ticket Office at 612.225.6238 or 1.877.997.3276 (toll-free) and at [guthrietheater.org](http://guthrietheater.org).

"As a playwright and a teacher, Paula Vogel has had an indelible impact on our field and she remains one of the most essential voices writing today. We are beyond thrilled to bring her work to our audience for the first time," said Haj. "As an exploration of artistic censorship, *Indecent* is absolutely perfect for our current social and political moment."

Haj added, "*West Side Story* is one of the greatest musicals of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and has long been on my wish list of plays to direct. Next summer marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Leonard Bernstein's birth, and I can't think of more fitting way for the Guthrie to celebrate his legacy and contributions to the American theater than to present this genre-defining musical on the thrust stage."

"As an organization dedicated to the classics, it excites me to put *West Side Story* in conversation with *Romeo and Juliet*, on which it's based, and to explore those profoundly moving narratives about young people trying to find love in dangerous environments and against impossible odds."

"*West Side Story* is a major theatrical undertaking. This production simply would not be possible without the substantial support we have received from Penny and Bill George. Their gift exceeds the standard for most productions at the Guthrie, and we are immensely grateful to them and the George Family Foundation for their commitment to our work."

Guthrie Lifetime Director Bill George stated, "It is our great joy to support the important endeavors of the Guthrie Theater with this \$1 million gift that will support *Sunday in the Park with George* this season, *West Side Story* next season, as well as a large-scale production in 2018-2019. Our hope is that this gift will seed a new Producers' Fund, one that will inspire other individuals, corporations and foundations to also give generously to our community's cultural gem."

*Indecent* is inspired by the 1923 Broadway debut of Sholem Asch's *God of Vengeance*, in which a Jewish brothel owner learns of the lesbian romance between his 17-year-old daughter and a prostitute. The play with music charts the journey of Asch's controversial drama, which was upheld as a groundbreaking piece of Jewish literature by some, and an act of obscenity by others. An ensemble of eight actors plays music as well as nearly 40 roles to shed light on one of the most fascinating scandals in theater history.

Written in 1907, and set in Poland, *The God of Vengeance* was performed successfully in Europe, then in Yiddish in New York and in English at Greenwich Village's Provincetown Playhouse. But in 1923, after the downtown production moved to Broadway, it was closed and its producer and cast were indicted and convicted on obscenity charges. It wasn't the brothel scenes, but rather the lesbian relationship portrayed on stage that caused the uproar. It marked the first conviction by a jury in a case of its kind. *Indecent* is Vogel's rendering of the story, centered on the lives of the acting company, the risks they took to perform the play, and the impact of their work.

*Indecent* will be the first production of a play by Vogel at the Guthrie. Vogel is best known for writing *How I Learned to Drive*, which received the 1998 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Other plays include *Don Juan Comes Home from Iraq*, *The Long Christmas Ride Home*, *The Mineola Twins*, *The Baltimore Waltz*, *Hot 'N' Throbbing*, *Desdemona*, *And Baby Makes Seven*, *The Oldest Profession* and *A Civil War Christmas*. She has taught for 24 years at Brown University and for five years at Yale School of Drama where she was the Eugene O'Neill Professor of Playwriting.

*Indecent* was commissioned by Oregon Shakespeare Festival's American Revolutions and Yale Repertory Theatre in close collaboration with Rebecca Taichman, and co-produced by La Jolla Playhouse. The play was developed at the Sundance Theatre Lab in 2013 and has been produced at Yale Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse and New York City's Vineyard Theatre. It is currently playing at the Cort Theatre on Broadway.

The Guthrie's 2017-18 thrust season culminates with the iconic American musical *West Side Story*, based on a conception by Jerome Robbins, with a book by Arthur Laurents, music by Leonard Bernstein and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim. Directed by Haj, this will be the first production of *West Side Story* at the Guthrie. The theater has previously staged work by Bernstein (*Candide* in 1990) and Sondheim (*Sweeney Todd* in 1999, *Merrily We Roll Along* in 2001 and *Sunday in the Park with George* this summer).

Inspired by Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, *West Side Story* is set in Manhattan in 1957. Two rival gangs of teenagers, the American "Jets" and the Puerto Rican "Sharks," are fighting for the streets of the city's west side. Tony, a former Jet, reluctantly attends a dance where he instantly locks eyes and falls in love with Maria, the sister of a rival gang member. Like Romeo and Juliet, the young lovers in *West Side Story* are caught in the middle of an ages-long feud as they pledge their undying love for each other. Through the genius of Bernstein and Sondheim, incomparable hits like "Maria," "Tonight," "Cool" and "I Feel Pretty" are merged with an unforgettable love story in this larger-than-life musical.

*West Side Story* opened on Broadway in September 1957 and ran for 732 performances. The production was revived within a year of its closing for a return engagement of eight months. A film version, released in 1961, received 10 Academy Awards and is often cited as the best example of a stage musical translated to the screen.

In addition, Haj announced the directors for six productions in the 2017-18 season. Lisa Peterson (*Clybourne Park*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*) will direct *Watch on the Rhine*, David Ivers (*The Cocoanuts*) will direct *Blithe Spirit*, Taibi Magar (*We Are Proud to Present*) will direct *Familiar*, and Timothy Bond (*Intimate Apparel*, *Crowns*) will direct *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*. Guthrie Associate Producer Lauren Keating will make her Guthrie directorial debut on *A Christmas Carol*, and Associate Artistic Director Jeffrey Meanza will make his Guthrie directorial debut at the helm of *The Legend of Georgia McBride*. A director for *Indecent* will be announced at a later date.

### **TICKET INFORMATION**

Nine plays will be available as part of the 2017-2018 subscription series: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Indecent*, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* and *West Side Story* on the Wurtele Thrust Stage and *Watch on the Rhine*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Familiar*, *An Enemy of the People* and *The Legend of Georgia McBride* on the McGuire Proscenium Stage.

New season subscriptions start at \$90 and go on sale May 19, 2017. Single tickets for *Romeo and Juliet*, *Watch on the Rhine*, and *Blithe Spirit* go on sale July 17, 2017. Single tickets for *A Christmas Carol* go on sale September 5, 2017. Single tickets for *Indecent*, *Familiar*, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, and *An Enemy of the People* go on sale November 1, 2017. Single tickets for *West Side Story* and *The Legend of Georgia McBride* go on sale February 15, 2018. Single ticket prices for all mainstage shows, excluding *A Christmas Carol*, range from \$15 to \$92; *A Christmas Carol* ranges from \$15 - \$137. Discounts are available for students, seniors and children.

For more information or to purchase tickets or season subscriptions, call the Season Ticket Office at 612.225.6238 or 1.877.997.3276 or visit [guthrietheater.org](http://guthrietheater.org).

**THE GUTHRIE THEATER** (Joseph Haj, Artistic Director) was founded by Sir Tyrone Guthrie in 1963 and is an American center for theater performance, production, education and professional training, dedicated to producing the great works of dramatic literature and to cultivating the next generation of theater artists. Under the leadership of Haj, the Guthrie produces a mix of classic and contemporary plays on three stages, and continues to set a national standard for excellence in theatrical production and performance. In 2006, the Guthrie opened its new home on the banks of the Mississippi River in Minneapolis. Designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Jean Nouvel, the Guthrie Theater houses three state-of-the-art stages, production facilities, classrooms, full-service restaurants and dramatic public lobbies. [guthrietheater.org](http://guthrietheater.org)

### **GUTHRIE THEATER 2017-2018 MAINSTAGE SEASON**

#### **On the Wurtele Thrust Stage**

*Romeo and Juliet*  
by William Shakespeare  
directed by Joseph Haj  
September 9 – October 28, 2017

*A Christmas Carol*  
by Charles Dickens  
adapted by Crispin Whittell  
directed by Lauren Keating  
November 14 – December 30, 2017

*Indecent*  
by Paula Vogel  
conceived by Paula Vogel and Rebecca Taichman  
directed by TBA  
February 17 – March 24, 2018

*Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*  
by Todd Kreidler  
based on the screenplay *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* by William Rose  
directed by Timothy Bond  
April 7 – May 27, 2018

*West Side Story*  
based on a conception by Jerome Robbins  
book by Arthur Laurents  
music by Leonard Bernstein  
lyrics by Stephen Sondheim  
directed by Joseph Haj  
June 16 – August 26, 2018

#### **On the McGuire Proscenium Stage**

*Watch on the Rhine*  
by Lillian Hellman  
directed by Lisa Peterson  
September 30 – November 5, 2017

*Blithe Spirit*  
by Noël Coward  
directed by David Ivers  
November 25, 2017 – January 14, 2018

*Familiar*  
by Danai Gurira  
directed by Taibi Magar  
March 10 – April 14, 2018

*An Enemy of the People*  
based on the play by Henrik Ibsen  
by Kia Corthron  
directed by Lyndsey Turner  
April 28 – June 3, 2018

*The Legend of Georgia McBride*  
by Matthew Lopez  
directed by Jeffrey Meanza  
July 14 – August 26, 2018

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