



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 21, 2017

Press release #1715

For more information contact:

Marita Meinerts Albinson, 612.225.6142

maritaa@guthrietheater.org

CASTING ANNOUNCED FOR *ROMEO AND JULIET*

**SHAKESPEARE'S TIMELESS TALE OF STAR-CROSSED LOVERS
TO BE DIRECTED BY JOSEPH HAJ**

(*Minneapolis/St. Paul*)—The Guthrie Theater (Joseph Haj, Artistic Director) today announced casting for Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Joseph Haj. *Romeo and Juliet* will play September 9 – October 28, 2017 on the Wurtele Thrust Stage. Single tickets start at \$15 for preview performances and are on sale now through the Guthrie Box Office at 612.377.2224, toll-free 877.44.STAGE, 612.225.6244 (Group Sales) and online at guthrietheater.org.

It's a story so well-known it scarcely needs an introduction, yet surprisingly the Guthrie has produced it just twice before. Set in Verona, where the rival houses of Capulet and Montague have had a long-standing feud, *Romeo and Juliet* is Shakespeare's famous tragedy of star-crossed lovers, filled with all the passion of young love. Underscored by ingenious wit and astonishing beauty, the play pits the bitterness of resentment against the intensity of romance.

Romeo and Juliet was produced in the Guthrie's 1979-1980 Season under the direction of Ron Daniels, and the 2003-2004 production was directed by Ethan McSweeney. The Guthrie presented The Acting Company's production of the play, helmed by Penny Metropoulos, on the McGuire Proscenium Stage in the theater's 2009-2010 Season. Of note, director Joseph Haj has performed in three productions of *Romeo and Juliet*; this will be his first time directing the work.

At the company's first rehearsal Haj stated, "It's very important to note that until Act III, *Romeo and Juliet* plays as a romantic comedy filled with the discovery of new love and the energy of deep attraction. As the story tips into tragedy, it's a very domestic, personal one. It's in those places where the play becomes most resonant with contemporary audiences, and we can see ourselves in it."

Haj added, "All of the action in the play happens over five days. To me, it is so clearly written in the rhythms of a teenage mind—a propulsive, muscular chase. There are so many bad decisions made by perfectly reasonable people, and if they had taken five minutes more to consider their actions, there would be drastically different outcomes. But it is their inability to slow things down, to see problems at their actual size and have larger perspective that makes it a play about young people and how the adults in their lives fail to protect them. I believe that has great relevance in our society today."

The cast features **Candace Barrett Birk** (*To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Primrose Path*) as Nurse, **Shá Cage** (*King Lear*, *Clybourne Park*) as Lady Capulet, **John Catron** (*Sense and Sensibility*, *Trouble in Mind*) as

Paris, **Stan Demidoff** (Guthrie: debut) as Tybalt/Apothecary, **Kelsey Didion** (Guthrie: debut) as Mercutio, **Kate Eastman** (Guthrie: debut) as Juliet, **Corey Farrell** (Guthrie: debut, University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater B.F.A. Actor Training program, class of 2018) as Sampson/Potpan/Paris' Page, **Ryan-James Hatanaka** (Guthrie: debut) as Romeo, **Lamar Jefferson** (*We Are Proud to Present, South Pacific*) as Benvolio, **Charity Jones** (*King Lear, The Critic/The Real Inspector Hound*) as Lady Montague, **Damian Leverett** (Guthrie: debut, University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater B.F.A. Actor Training program graduate) as Gregory/1st Servingman/Friar John, **Bill McCallum** (*The Royal Family, The Crucible*) as Prince, **Jason Rojas** (*King Lear, Arms and the Man*) as Abram/Balthazar, **Andrew Weems** (*A Midsummer Night's Dream, Uncle Vanya*) as Lord Capulet and **James A. Williams** (*King Lear*) as Friar Lawrence.

The creative team for *Romeo and Juliet* includes **Linda Talcott Lee** (Choreographer), **Anna Louizos** (Scenic Designer), **Jennifer Moeller** (Costume Designer), **Josh Epstein** (Lighting Designer), **Vincent Olivieri** (Sound Designer), **Victor Zupanc** (Composer), **Jill Walmsley Zager** (Vocal Coach), **Kara Wooten** (Fight Director), **Carla Steen** (Dramaturg), **Justin Hossle** (Stage Manager), **Katie Hawkinson** (Assistant Stage Manager) and **Daisuke Kawachi** (Assistant Director).

The Guthrie Theater's production of *Romeo and Juliet* is sponsored by U.S. Bank.

Romeo and Juliet is part of Shakespeare in American Communities, a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest. The Guthrie is one of 40 professional theater companies selected to participate in bringing the finest productions of Shakespeare to middle- and high-school students in communities across the United States.

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 Haj's leadership, 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

FACT SHEET

Romeo and Juliet

by William Shakespeare
directed by Joseph Haj

About the show: It's a story so well-known it scarcely needs an introduction, yet surprisingly the Guthrie has produced it just twice before. Set in Verona, where the rival houses of Capulet and Montague have had a long-standing feud, *Romeo and Juliet* is Shakespeare's famous tragedy of star-crossed lovers, filled with all the passion of young love. Underscored by ingenious wit and astonishing beauty, the play pits the bitterness of resentment against the intensity of romance.

Cast: **Candace Barrett Birk** as Nurse, **Shá Cage** as Lady Capulet, **John Catron** as Paris, **Stan Demidoff** as Tybalt/Apothecary, **Kelsey Didion** as Mercutio, **Kate Eastman** as Juliet, **Corey Farrell** as Sampson/Potpan/Paris' Page, **Ryan-James Hatanaka** as Romeo, **Lamar Jefferson** as Benvolio, **Charity Jones** as Lady Montague, **Damian Leverett** as Gregory/1st Servingman/Friar John, **Bill McCallum** as Prince, **Jason Rojas** as Abram/Balthazar, **Andrew Weems** as Lord Capulet and **James A. Williams** as Friar Lawrence.

Creative team: **Linda Talcott Lee** (Choreographer), **Anna Louizos** (Scenic Designer), **Jennifer Moeller** (Costume Designer), **Josh Epstein** (Lighting Designer), **Vincent Olivieri** (Sound Designer), **Victor Zupanc** (Composer), **Jill Walmsley Zager** (Vocal Coach), **Kara Wooten** (Fight Director) **Carla Steen** (Dramaturg), **Justin Hossle** (Stage Manager), **Katie Hawkinson** (Assistant Stage Manager) and **Daisuke Kawachi** (Assistant Director).

Performance Dates: September 9 – October 28, 2017 on the Wurtele Thrust Stage

Opening Night: Friday, September 15 at 7:30 p.m.

Performance Times: Tuesdays – Saturdays at 7:30 p.m.; select Sundays at 7 p.m.; matinees on select Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays at 1 p.m.; select student matinees at 10:30 a.m. Visit guthrietheater.org for the complete performance schedule.

Location: Guthrie Theater – Wurtele Thrust Stage
818 South 2nd Street, Minneapolis, MN 55415

Pricing: Single tickets start at \$29 (\$15 for previews, Sept. 9-14)
(Discounts for students and seniors available.)

Tickets: Tickets may be purchased online at guthrietheater.org
Guthrie Box Office: 612.377.2224 or 877.44.STAGE
Box Office hours: 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. (11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on non-performance days)
Group Sales: 612.225.6244 or 877.225.6211

RELATED EVENTS

Post-Play Discussions

Audiences are invited to stay after the performance on these dates for a discussion with the artists who bring the show to life.

Sunday, September 17 at 1 p.m.

Tuesday, September 19 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, September 23 at 1 p.m.
Saturday, October 7 at 1 p.m.
Sunday, October 15 at 1 p.m.

The Shakespeare Classic

The 18th annual Shakespeare Classic provides young people ages 10 to 17 the opportunity to experience *Romeo and Juliet* with an adult companion. Established in 1999, this annual event is tailored specifically for young audiences and offers \$10 tickets to all patrons, a specially-prepared play program and a meet and greet opportunity with actors in the lobby after the performance.

Sunday, October 8 at 1 p.m.

ACCESS DATES

ASL Performances

October 7 at 1 p.m.
October 13 at 7:30 p.m.

Audio Described Performances

October 6 at 7:30 p.m.
October 7 at 1 p.m.

Open Captioned Performances

September 27 at 1 p.m.
September 30 at 1 p.m.
October 6 at 7:30 p.m.
October 8 at 1 p.m.

If you have specific program questions or need an accommodation, please contact the Accessibility Office by phone at 612.225.6390 (voice) or 612.225.6391 (TTY) or email at accessibility@guthrietheater.org.

###