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For more information contact:
Elizabeth Deacon, 612.225.6193
elizabethd@guthrietheater.org

Marita Meinerts Albinson, 612.225.6142
maritaa@guthrietheater.org

**INDIGENOUS DIRECTION AND THE GUTHRIE THEATER PRESENT
*WATER IS SACRED***

All Nations Community Gathering

**Free performances followed by community discussion with
Indigenous artists Ty Defoe and Larissa FastHorse**

July 1 & 2 at 7:30 p.m. in the Dowling Studio

(*Minneapolis/St. Paul*)—The Guthrie Theater (Joseph Haj, Artistic Director) today announced that it will present a Level Nine “Happening” in collaboration with Indigenous Direction titled *Water Is Sacred* on July 1 & 2 at 7:30 p.m. in the Dowling Studio. Curated by award-winning Indigenous artists Ty Defoe and Larissa FastHorse, *Water Is Sacred* combines ceremony, music, text, dance and discussion to honor and celebrate water and to recognize the ways it has been threatened on Indigenous lands. Tickets are free but reservations are required through the Box Office at 612.377.2224, toll-free 877.44.STAGE, or online at guthrietheater.org. Due to limited capacity, there is a two ticket limit per person.

Since this past winter, Indigenous Direction has worked with the Guthrie to create a community-centered, community-driven presentation of local Indigenous artistry that highlights the relationship between Native communities and water rights in Minnesota. FastHorse (Sicangu Lakota) and Defoe (Oneida/Ojibwe), the founders of Indigenous Direction, have both worked extensively in the Twin Cities area as artists and community builders. Their expertise has guided the Guthrie in building a bridge between the Theater and local Indigenous artists.

Water Is Sacred will be followed by community discussions with Defoe and FastHorse, and Indigenous artists will sell merchandise in the Pohlad lobby on the Guthrie’s ninth floor.

As part of the Level Nine series, the Guthrie is committed to offering Happenings, periodic community gatherings in response to local and national current events, creating a forum in which citizens can grapple with today’s biggest topics and questions. In addition to live performance, Happenings may include conversations, town hall meetings, salons, celebrations and readings. The Guthrie’s Dowling Studio and the entire ninth floor lobby is a space devoted to the community, where history in the making is tracked.

Performances of *Water Is Sacred* at the Guthrie are made possible through generous support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Ty Defoe is from the Oneida/Ojibwe tribes of Wisconsin. A Grammy Award winner for *Come to Me Great Mystery: Native American Healing Songs*, Defoe is a two-spirit/trans* activist, cultural pioneer, writer, and musician. Highlights: Defoe received an Indigenous Heritage Festival Award (given to artists who have made a major positive impact on indigenous people and issues of the world), and a Robert Rauschenberg Artist in Residence and 2015 Yale Institute for Musical Theatre for book and lyrics on "Clouds Are Pillows for the Moon" (with composer Tidtaya Sinutoke). Defoe works with Indigenous populations at the Alaskan Cultural Heritage Center and the Hawaiian Playwrights Initiative and is member of the East Coast Two Spirit Society and consultant for the Institute of the American Indian Arts new performing arts program. He holds degrees from CalArts, Goddard College, and from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. Defoe is Theatre Communications Group's Leading the Charge: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Fellow and artEquity Facilitator. He lives in New York City. tydefoe.com

Larissa FastHorse is an award-winning playwright and member of the Sicangu Lakota Nation. Larissa's produced plays include *What Would Crazy Horse Do?*, *Urban Rez*, *Landless*, *Average Family*, *Teaching Disco Squaredancing to Our Elders: a Class Presentation*, *Vanishing Point* and *Cherokee Family Reunion*. *The Thanksgiving Play* is scheduled for two productions in the next year. Larissa won the PEN USA Literary Award for Drama, NEA Distinguished New Play Grant, Joe Dowling Annamaghkerrig Fellowship, AATE Distinguished Play Award, Inge Residency, Sundance/Ford Foundation Fellowship, Aurand Harris Fellowship, the UCLA Native American Woman of the Year and numerous Ford, Mellon and NEA Grants. www.hoganhorsestudio.com

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

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