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**GUTHRIE THEATER ANNOUNCES 2017-2018 DOWLING STUDIO SEASON**

(*Minneapolis/St. Paul*)—The Guthrie Theater (Joseph Haj, Artistic Director) today announced the productions and presentations slated for the 2017-2018 Dowling Studio season, including the Midwest premiere of *Mala* by Melinda Lopez, the return of monologist Mike Daisey, a residency with the theater collective Rude Mechs, as well as first-time partnerships with established and emerging artists and community members. As part of the theater's Level 9 Series, all tickets for productions in the Dowling Studio are \$9. To purchase, call the Box Office 612.377.2224 or toll-free 877.44.STAGE or visit [guthrietheater.org](http://guthrietheater.org).

"As part of the Level 9 Series, we're committed to ensuring greater access for audiences through \$9 tickets and expanding the range of programming available on the ninth floor, challenging our expectations of theater as an art form and deepening our ties to the community through conversation," said Artistic Director Joseph Haj. "We have cultivated exciting collaborations with new partners locally and we continue to attract nationally acclaimed artists to the Guthrie to develop their work with us. I am deeply proud of the work our team has done to curate this lineup, and look forward to sharing this richly layered season with our community."

The Guthrie kicks off the studio season with the Midwest premiere of the ArtsEmerson production of *Mala*, written and performed by Melinda Lopez and directed by David Dower, playing September 22 – October 8. Funny, brutally honest and ultimately cathartic, *Mala* puts a sharp focus on what it means to put our loved ones first, right to the very end, and what happens when we strive to be good but don't always succeed. This powerful one-woman show reveals an utterly unsentimental narrative on how we live, cope and survive in the moment. Grounded in humor, *Mala* dances between doctors and 911 calls, a mother's growing frailty and a daughter's quest for grace.

Lopez is a Cuban-American playwright and actress. She is the inaugural playwright-in-residence at Boston's Huntington Theatre Company. Her plays, which include *Sonia Flew*, *Becoming Cuba*, *Caroline in Jersey*, and *Orchids to Octopi*, among others, have been produced at the Huntington Theatre, Williamstown Theater Festival, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Laguna Playhouse, Central Square Theater and many more.

The ArtsEmerson production of *Mala* made its world premiere in Boston at the Emerson Paramount Center in October 2016. *The Boston Globe* called *Mala* "a richly layered work...piercingly honest, exquisitely moving," and named the play "Best of 2016." WBUR said it's "an exquisitely fashioned theater piece, brimming with humor, frustration and honesty as biting as the wind, snow and Arctic fantasy that

blow through it.” The play won the Elliot Norton Award for Best New Play from the Boston Theatre Critics Association. This marks Lopez’s return to the Guthrie where she first appeared as Oya in *Many Colors Make the Thunder King* in the 1996-1997 season.

From October 27-29, the Guthrie welcomes the **Iraqi and American Reconciliation Project (IARP)** to present *Birds Sing Differently Here*, a theater piece based on the true stories of 12 Iraqi-Minnesotan refugees and immigrants, directed by Taous Claire Khazem and created by Dylan Fresco, Taous Claire Khazem and Iraqi Voices program participants. *Birds Sing Differently Here* weaves together tales of sweetness, sorrow, grief and discovery. Inventively performed in both English and Arabic, participants come together with a cast of professional actors to tell “the story of a thousand olive pits and seven thousand praises, tokens of love and a chilling escape from the desert of death.” *Birds Sing Differently Here* shares the ache of endings and the fullness of new opportunity.

In conjunction with the performance, patrons will be able to engage with the work from IARP’s Iraqi Voices program, a collaborative art lab that gives Iraqi immigrants and refugees in Minnesota a platform to share their stories through bookmaking, documentary filmmaking and visual art.

Established in 2007, IARP engages Iraqis and Americans in the arts, education and personal and professional exchanges in an effort to counter negative stereotypes, strengthen cultural understanding and provide a platform for cross-cultural dialogue.

Next in the lineup is a **Solo Emerging Artist Celebration**, three solo performances by local emerging performer-producers that will play in repertory, February 24 – March 11, 2018. The Solo Emerging Artist Celebration will feature **Antonio Duke**, **A.P. Looze** and **Ifrah Mansour**.

Duke is a multidisciplinary artist whose work centers on race, police violence and historical memory. Using inspiration from myths from the black spiritual canon that derive from the Yoruba, Santeria and Voodoo deities, his work aims to reconnect African heritage to African American youth. Duke’s work was recently featured in the 2017 New Griots Festival in the Dowling Studio.

Looze is a literary and performance-based storyteller whose work has been performed as part of 20% Theatre Company’s Naked I and Q-Stage, at Queertopia, Patrick’s Cabaret, Bryant Lake Bowl and Madame. Using a tragic-comic lens, their work explores a constellation of themes including transgender identity, grief, spirituality and family.

Mansour is an internationally-recognized Somali multidisciplinary artist and educator. She interweaves text, movement and digital media to create multi-sensory artwork that illuminates the invisible stories of immigrants. As a female Muslim refugee, she uses her art to connect and bridge different cultures and generations and has become known for her uniquely humorous approach to exploring trauma through the eyes of children.

Next, acclaimed monologist **Mike Daisey** will return to the Dowling Studio to present his latest work, *A People’s History*, March 14-31, 2018. Created and performed by Daisey, this new piece begins simply: Daisey finds a copy of the U.S. history textbook from his high school in rural Maine from over twenty five years ago. What follows is a kind of history lesson as only Daisey could teach, contrasting the history he grew up with and a very different book: Howard Zinn’s *A People’s History of the United States*. In this 18-part performance he will tell a history of America—from the first landing of Columbus to the election of Donald Trump—exposing and illuminating with his signature dark humor as he eviscerates the myths we

have all helped make. Daisey made his Guthrie debut in the fall of 2016 with *The Trump Card*, in which he explored the theatrics of Trump and how he rose to his standing in the Presidential race.

Daisey has been hailed as “the master storyteller” and “one of the finest solo performers of his generation” by *The New York Times*. He has been compared to a modern-day Mark Twain and a latter-day Orson Welles for his provocative monologues that combine the political and the personal, weaving together secret histories with hilarity and heart. He’s known for art that has reinvented the form, like his 29-night live theatrical novel, *All the Faces of the Moon*, a 40-hour performance staged at The Public Theater in New York City.

As a playwright, Daisey’s transcript of *The Agony and the Ecstasy of Steve Jobs* was downloaded over 100,000 times in its first week. Under a revolutionary open license it has seen more than two hundred productions around the world and been translated into six languages. Daisey has been a guest on “Real Time with Bill Maher,” “Late Show with David Letterman,” a longtime host and storyteller with “The Moth,” as well as a commentator and contributor to *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Harper’s Magazine*, *Newsweek*, *WIRED*, *Vanity Fair*, *Slate*, *Salon*, NPR and the BBC. He has been nominated for the Outer Critics Circle Award, two Drama League Awards, and is the recipient of the Bay Area Critics Circle Award, six *Seattle Times* Footlight Awards, the Sloan Foundation’s Galileo Prize and a MacDowell Fellowship.

Next, the Guthrie will present **Full Circle Theater’s** world premiere production of *Under This Roof*, by longtime Twin Cities actor and theater artist Barbara Kingsley, May 4-20, 2018. Directed by award-winning actor/director James A. Williams, the play centers on Mamie and Raymond Warren, who live in the segregated black neighborhood of central Cleveland in the late 1940s. After Raymond suffers a serious accident, Mamie hires a white woman named Bessie, whose arrival brings new challenges. *Under this Roof* examines issues that resonate with today’s realities: race, gender, aging, power, family, disability and love, on an ever-shifting axis, with unexpected results that are comic, painful and healing.

Established in 2015, Full Circle Theater is led by Co-Artistic Directors Rick Shiomi and Martha B. Johnson, with Core Artistic Group Members James A. Williams, Lara Trujillo and Stephanie Lein Walseth. It is dedicated to producing heartfelt, groundbreaking theater that artfully addresses issues of human nature and social justice.

In July 2018, the Guthrie will host **Rude Mechs** (aka Rude Mechanicals), the Austin, TX-based theater collective, in a development residency to present their latest original work *Not Every Mountain*, directed by Thomas Graves, with text written by Kirk Lynn and original compositions by Peter Stopschinski. *Not Every Mountain* is a beguiling meditation on change and permanence. Set against the backdrop of Lynn’s soft-spoken rumination on life, relationships and ephemerality, performers use simple elements like string, cardboard and magnets to make giant mountains slowly rise, shift and grow. With some help from the audience, the mountains come alive, the seasons change and the moon makes its way across the sky. *Not Every Mountain* is the first episode in *Perverse Results*, the ensemble’s long-form experiment in episodic collaboration. This marks the first time Rude Mechs’ work will be produced by the Guthrie Theater.

Rude Mechs is a company of 28 members led by five co-producing artistic directors. Since 1995, it has created and produced a genre-defying slate of original works in Texas and toured nationally and abroad. The Rude Mechs manage RudeStudios, an arts space in Austin for arts groups of every discipline. Touring and Off-Broadway productions include *Field Guide*, *Stop Hitting Yourself*, *Now Now Oh Now*, *I’ve Never Been So Happy*, *The Method Gun*, *Get Your War On* and *Lipstick Traces*.

Finally, the Guthrie welcomes the return of artist Sun Mee Chomet with ***The Sex Show***, August 10-19, 2018. This edgy world premiere is a movement-theater piece directed by Chomet in collaboration with an ensemble of talented Twin Cities Asian American artists. *The Sex Show* dives into the heart of stereotypes and sexuality, exploring Asian American identity in surprising and thought-provoking ways. The play will encourage community engagement through an open and lively discussion about a taboo subject. Chomet, who recently appeared in the Guthrie's production of *King Lear*, performed her one-woman show *How to Be a Korean Woman* in the Dowling Studio in 2013.

The Dowling Studio season is part of the Guthrie's Level 9 Series, an initiative devoted to the creation of a theater that wrestles with urgent questions and inspires dynamic dialogue with its audience, expands the diversity of voices, visions and styles on its stages, and engages community members currently underserved by its work. As part of the series, all tickets to productions in the Dowling Studio are \$9. Single tickets and season passes are on sale now through the Box Office at 612.377.2224 or toll-free 877.44.STAGE, 612.225.6244 (Group Sales) and online at [guthrietheater.org](http://guthrietheater.org).

Programming in the Dowling Studio is supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

**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](http://guthrietheater.org)

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