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**GUTHRIE THEATER ANNOUNCES CASTING FOR
GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER
A RELEVANT AND PROVOKING COMEDY DIRECTED BY TIMOTHY BOND**

Based on the screenplay by William Rose for the classic 1967 Academy Award-nominated film starring Katharine Hepburn, Sidney Poitier and Spencer Tracy

**Previews begin Saturday, April 7; Opening on Friday, April 13;
Playing through Sunday, May 27, 2018
on the Wurtele Thrust Stage at the Guthrie Theater**

(*Minneapolis/St. Paul*)—The Guthrie Theater (Joseph Haj, Artistic Director) today announced casting for *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, a timely and relevant comedy directed by Timothy Bond. Based on the screenplay by William Rose for the 1967 Academy Award-nominated film which starred Katharine Hepburn, Sidney Poitier and Spencer Tracy, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* is insightfully reimaged by playwright Todd Kreidler as the complexities of race relations continue in America.

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner will play April 7 – May 27, 2018 on the Wurtele Thrust Stage. Single tickets start at \$15 for preview performances (April 7 – 12) and are on sale now through the Box Office at 612.377.2224, toll-free 877.44.STAGE, 612.225.6244 (Group Sales) and online at guthrietheater.org.

The play takes place in the spring of 1967, the same year that the U.S. Supreme Court ruled—in *Loving v. Virginia*—that bans on interracial marriage were unconstitutional. The United States is caught in the fervor and protests of the Vietnam War even while the “Summer of Love” is in bloom. The Civil Rights Act is only three years old, and Martin Luther King Jr. is leading a movement that has hopes for changing the country.

In *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, Matt and Christina Drayton are a progressive middle-aged couple living in San Francisco when their daughter Joanna arrives home unexpectedly with Dr. John Prentice, an African American doctor 11 years her senior. They're in love, and they want the Draytons' blessing for their marriage – today. The Draytons have prided themselves on their liberal-mindedness and having raised “Joey” to be open-minded, but now they are forced to put their values to the test against the mores of the 1960s. Kreidler's adaptation is a witty, tender and insightful reflection on two families confronted by their prejudices.

“Underneath this hilarious and pointed play is an allegory which holds up a mirror to well-meaning people who truly believe they have progressive values,” director Timothy Bond recently shared. “*Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* puts those progressive values and our inherent unconscious biases to the test when we ask the question, ‘Would we be as progressive in our own homes, with our families, as the positions we take in the public arena?’”

Bond continued, “Only with a true change of heart can America be assured of lasting change. And this play is about the heart! My hope is that laughter and frank conversation, which this play is sure to inspire, will be an invitation to open the hearts of all who experience it to live more fully by what we say we believe. It takes courage to truly face and transcend our conscious and unconscious biases. I remain forever vigilant and hopeful, buoyed by the Beatles song of 1967 that “we can work it out,” and inspired by the Civil Rights mantra “We shall overcome.”

The cast of *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner* features **Michelle Duffy** (Guthrie: debut) as Hilary St. George, **JaBen Early** (Guthrie: *We Are Proud to Present...*) as Dr. John Prentice, **David Manis** (Guthrie: *Much Ado About Nothing, A Month in the Country, The Importance of Being Earnest*) as Matt Drayton, **Maevae Coleen Moynihan** (Guthrie: *The Music Man, The Master Butchers Singing Club*) as Joanna Drayton, **Greta Oglesby** (Guthrie: *Harvey, The Crucible, Appomattox*) as Mary Prentice, **Peter Thomson** (Guthrie: *Trouble in Mind, To Kill a Mockingbird, A Midsummer Night’s Dream*) as Monsignor Ryan, **Derrick Lee Weeden** (Guthrie: debut) as John Prentice, Sr., **Regina Marie Williams** (Guthrie: *The Bluest Eye, To Kill A Mockingbird, Othello, the Moor of Venice*) as Matilda Binks (Tillie) and **Sally Wingert** (Guthrie: *Indecent, Blithe Spirit, Native Gardens*) as Christina Drayton.

The creative team for *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner* includes **Timothy Bond** (Director), **Matt Saunders** (Set Designer), **Lydia Tanji** (Costume Designer), **Dawn Chiang** (Lighting Designer), **Scott W. Edwards** (Sound Designer), **Lucinda Holshue** (Vocal Coach), **Jo Holcomb** (Dramaturg), **Chris A. Code** (Stage Manager), **Katie Hawkinson** (Assistant Stage Manager) and **Katie Bradley** (Assistant Director).

Timothy Bond (Director) is the head of the Professional Actor Training Program at University of Washington. Prior to accepting this post in 2016, he served as producing artistic director of Syracuse Stage and the Syracuse University Department of Drama. His previous Guthrie directing credits include *Crowns* (2004) and *Intimate Apparel* (2005).

Bond was an Associate Artistic Director of Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) for eleven seasons. During his time at OSF he directed 12 productions, promoted equity and inclusion efforts and created the FAIR Program which cultivates the next generation of diverse theater artists and administrators. Timothy Bond began his career in Seattle with Seattle Group Theatre where he directed over 20 productions and curated the nationally recognized MultiCultural Playwrights Festival.

Bond received two Backstage West Garland Awards for Outstanding Direction and two Syracuse Area Live Theatre (S.A.L.T.) Awards for Outstanding Production and Director of the Year. He has served on the national boards of trustees for both Theatre Communications Group and ASSITEJ: The International Association of Theatre for Children and Young Audiences. His work as an organizational leader, teacher and stage director has led him to South Africa, The Republic of the Congo, Beijing, Hong Kong, Japan, Mexico, Uzbekistan, Austria, France, England and Belgium.

Todd Kreidler (Playwright) is a playwright, director and dramaturg, best known for writing the jukebox musical *Holler If Ya Hear Me*, featuring the music of Tupac Shakur, which played on Broadway in 2014. Kreidler also collaborated frequently with the late August Wilson, directing and co-conceiving with Wilson the one-man show *How I Learned What I Learned*. Kreidler served as Wilson’s dramaturg on both *Gem of the Ocean* and *Radio Golf*, and he was associate director for the Broadway revival of *Fences* in 2010. He co-founded the August Wilson Monologue Competition, a national program aimed at integrating August Wilson’s work into high school curriculum. *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner* will be the first production of a play by Todd Kreidler at the Guthrie Theater.

Post-play discussions and access services (ASL, Audio Described and Open Captioned performances) are available on select dates. Visit guthrietheater.org or call the Box Office at 612.377.2224 for more information.

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 is guided by four core values: Artistic Excellence; Community; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; and Fiscal Responsibility. 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, serving nearly 400,000 patrons annually. In 2006, the Guthrie opened a new home, designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Jean Nouvel, located on the banks of the Mississippi River in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Open to the public year-round, it houses three state-of-the-art stages, production facilities, classrooms, full-service restaurants and dramatic public lobbies. guthrietheater.org

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