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**GUTHRIE THEATER OPENS 2018–2019 SEASON WITH
BARBARA FIELD'S ADAPTATION OF *FRANKENSTEIN – PLAYING WITH FIRE*,
A CAPTIVATING RETELLING OF THE CLASSIC MARY SHELLEY NOVEL**

**Previews begin Saturday, September 15; Opening on Friday, September 21;
Playing through Saturday, October 27, 2018, on the Wurtele Thrust Stage**

(Minneapolis/St. Paul) — The Guthrie Theater (Joseph Haj, artistic director) today announced casting for ***Frankenstein – Playing with Fire***, an engaging adaptation of Mary Shelley's classic tale adapted by Barbara Field and directed by Rob Melrose. Commissioned for the Guthrie by former artistic director Garland Wright, this adaptation was previously performed at the Guthrie Theater in July 1988 following a national five-month tour.

Frankenstein – Playing with Fire will run September 15 – October 27, 2018, on the Wurtele Thrust Stage. Single tickets start at \$15 for preview performances (September 15–20) and are on sale now through the Box Office at 612.377.2224, 1.877.44.STAGE (toll-free) or online at guthrietheater.org.

Inspired by Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (celebrating its 200th anniversary this year), *Frankenstein – Playing with Fire* imagines a meeting between a dying Frankenstein and his creation in the Arctic Circle. As Frankenstein prepares to right his greatest wrong by confronting the Creature, scenes from their past are replayed and the line between good and evil is debated, revealing a powerful and agonizing question that interrogates the ethical limits of science and human imagination.

Director and Minnesota native Rob Melrose recently shared, "Like many people who grow up in Minneapolis, the first play I ever saw was Barbara Field's adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* at the Guthrie. And I decided I wanted a life in the theater when I was a student at the Playwrights' Center [in Minneapolis] where Barbara was a founding member." He continued, "To work with her is a thrill. Her adaptation of *Frankenstein*, one of my favorite novels, is brilliant. She takes a huge and winding story, considered to be the first work of science fiction, and makes it sleek and compact, beautifully moving through dreams, memories and flashes of a dying man." When asked about the story's impact on audiences, Melrose said, "With recent advances in gene editing, artificial intelligence, virtual reality and cloning, this 200-year-old story about the dangers of pursuing the frontiers of science and technology without considering the human consequences still has a great deal to say to the world and is as relevant as ever."

The cast of *Frankenstein – Playing with Fire* features **Elijah Alexander** (Guthrie: *Watch on the Rhine*) as Creature, **Ryan Colbert** (Guthrie: *A Christmas Carol, Choir Boy, Born Yesterday*) as Victor, **Robert Dorfman** (Guthrie: *Indecent, Sense and Sensibility, The Critic/The Real Inspector Hound*) as Krempe/Old Man, **Zachary Fine** (Guthrie: *An Enemy of the People, Julius Caesar*) as Frankenstein, **Amelia Pedlow** (Guthrie: debut) as Elizabeth and **Jason Rojas** (Guthrie: *Romeo and Juliet, King Lear, Arms and the Man*) as Adam.

The creative team for *Frankenstein – Playing with Fire* includes **Barbara Field** (playwright), **Rob Melrose** (director), **Michael Locher** (scenic designer), **Raquel Barreto** (costume designer), **Cat Tate Starmer** (lighting designer), **Cliff Caruthers** (sound designer/composer), **Jill Walmsley Zager** (resident vocal coach), **Carla Steen** (dramaturg), **Aaron Preusse** (fight director), **Jonathan Beller** and **Beth Brooks** (movement directors), **Chris A. Code** (stage manager) and **Jane E. Heer** (assistant stage manager).

Barbara Field (playwright) has created work that has been seen across the United States, Canada and Europe. She served as playwright-in-residence at the Guthrie Theater from 1974 to 1981 and crafted a number of pieces, including translations and adaptations. Novel adaptations for the Guthrie Theater include *Camille* by Alexandre Dumas and *Frankenstein – Playing with Fire*, a response to Mary Shelley's novel. An adaptation of *Great Expectations* commissioned by the Seattle Children's Theatre later played at the Guthrie Theater and traveled the country on an eight-month tour. A revival of *Great Expectations* won a Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award. Her adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* has been part of theater seasons for the Guthrie Theater, Actors Theatre of Louisville and Kansas City Repertory Theatre. Field is a founding member of the Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis, and a book of seven of her plays, *New Classics from the Guthrie Theater*, was published in 2003 by Smith & Kraus. She is also the author of two anthologies: *Collected Plays, Volume One* (2008) and *Collected Plays, Volume Two* (2014).

Rob Melrose (director) is the former artistic director and co-founder of The Cutting Ball Theater and works nationally as a freelance director. He has directed at The Public Theater (*Pericles, Prince of Tyre*), Guthrie Theater (*Freud's Last Session, Happy Days, Pen, Julius Caesar* with The Acting Company), Oregon Shakespeare Festival (*Troilus and Cressida* with The Public Theater), The Old Globe (*Much Ado About Nothing*), Magic Theatre (*An Accident*, world premiere), PlayMakers Repertory Company (*Happy Days*), Black Box Theatre (*The Creature*, world premiere and Bay Area Theater Circle Critics Award for best director), The Actor's Collective, The Gamm Theatre and Crowded Fire Theater among others. His directing credits at The Cutting Ball Theater include *Timon of Athens, A Dreamplay, Ondine, Strindberg Cycle, Krispy Kritters in the Scarlett Night* (world premiere), *Pelleas & Melisande*, the Bay Area premiere of Will Eno's *Lady Grey (in ever lower light)*, *The Tempest, The Bald Soprano, Victims of Duty, Bone to Pick & Diadem* (world premiere), *Endgame, Krapp's Last Tape, The Taming of the Shrew, Macbeth, Hamletmachine, As You Like It* and *The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World* among others. He has taught at Stanford University; University of California, Berkeley; University of San

Francisco; The University of Rhode Island; and Marin Academy. Melrose has a B.A. in English and Theater from Princeton University and an M.F.A. in Directing from the Yale School of Drama.

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 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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