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**DIRECTOR/CHOREOGRAPHER MAIJA GARCÍA
NAMED AS THE GUTHRIE THEATER'S DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING**

**New York-based García choreographed
the Guthrie's summer musical sensation, *West Side Story***

(Minneapolis/St. Paul) — The Guthrie Theater (Joseph Haj, artistic director) today announced the hiring of director and choreographer Maija García as director of professional training for the Guthrie Theater. García is a Cuban-American director, choreographer, educator and producer based in Harlem, New York who notably created innovative choreography for the Guthrie's summer musical *West Side Story*, which played to sold-out audiences. Her employment with the Guthrie Theater begins on Monday, October 8.

The director of professional training creates, leads and oversees the Guthrie Theater's B.F.A., M.F.A. and internship/fellowship programs. In this role, García will be the primary Guthrie liaison for the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater B.F.A. Actor Training Program, which provides undergraduate students with a variety of skills essential to realizing the dynamics of performing classical text and modern literature. She will also create and manage the Guthrie Theater internship/fellowship programs to provide meaningful, hands-on opportunities that contribute to the function of the theater and offer significant educational experiences for participants. A Guthrie Experience for Actors in Training, a summer intensive for outstanding M.F.A. students, will also be under García's direction.

Teaching artists is one of García's passions, as evidenced by her academic career. As adjunct faculty member of The City College of New York department of theater and speech and New York University graduate acting, García is a guest professor at University of Michigan School of Music Theater and Dance, Yale School of Drama, Long Island University and Spelman College.

Offering students an opportunity to engage in the creative process is essential for García, whose goal is to inspire artists to develop their craft and become agents of change in their communities. "Working with Joseph Haj and our brilliant team of collaborators on *West Side Story* was a remarkable experience," said García. "I am encouraged to begin a new chapter at the Guthrie Theater because I believe in its legacy and leadership. As director of professional training, I am uniquely positioned to empower a rising generation of theater-makers who will carry the torch."

Artistic Director Joseph Haj shared, "Having spent countless hours with Maija García in rehearsals for *West Side Story*, I experienced her passion for mentoring young people firsthand, and her meaningful engagement with each of the actors, both onstage and offstage, was exciting to witness." Haj continued, "We are so fortunate to have her join us as director of professional training where she will have the opportunity to continue impacting emerging artists and arts administrators for years to come."

ABOUT MAIJA GARCÍA

As a Cuban-American director, choreographer and producer, García generates urban folklore for the future. Prior to making original choreography for the Guthrie Theater's production of *West Side Story*, García served as director of movement for the Spike Lee films *BlackKkKlansman* and *Chi-Raq* and the Netflix comedy series "She's Gotta Have It." She directed *Salsa, Mambo, Cha Cha Cha* in Havana, Cuba, *Stories of Service: An Evening with Veterans at Hill Auditorium* and Heather Henson's *Crane: On Earth, In Sky* at the Lied Center for Performing Arts. Choreography credits include the hit musical *Cuba Libre* at Artists Repertory Theatre, *Another Word for Beauty* by José Rivera at Goodman Theatre in Chicago, *Snow in Midsummer* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the upcoming *Hatuey: Memory of Fire*, a Cuban-Yiddish opera with Peak Performances at Montclair State University.

As creative director of *FELA!*, García worked alongside Bill T. Jones to develop the Tony Award-winning musical nationally for Broadway and off-Broadway and internationally at London's National Theatre, Amsterdam and Lagos, Nigeria. García formed Organic Magnetism to engage cross-cultural dialogue and sustainable practice in the arts. She co-wrote, directed and produced *Ghosts of Manhattan: 1512–2012, an interactive history* in Fort Tryon Park and *I Am New York: Juan Rodriguez* at El Museo del Barrio. García devises original work, produces live installations and engages students in the creative process with transformative theater arts curriculum. Learn more at organicmagnetism.com.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA/GUTHRIE THEATER B.F.A. ACTOR TRAINING PROGRAM

The University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater B.F.A. Actor Training Program offers an undergraduate training curriculum that leads to a Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.) degree. In a unique actor training partnership, The University of Minnesota College of Liberal Arts and the Guthrie Theater combine outstanding academic preparation with the artistic vision of the internationally known Guthrie Theater. The program was founded in 2004 and has celebrated 256 graduates to date. Currently, 67 students are enrolled in the program for the 2018–2019 academic year.

Students are immersed in rigorous training founded on an innovative liberal arts curriculum and work directly with a company of professional artists in a studio atmosphere at the Guthrie Theater's multi-stage facility. The program is dedicated to developing the mind, body, voice and spirit of the actor/artist/scholar. Students explore classic texts and apply their learnings to contemporary literature drawn from the world repertoire and emerging dramatic forms.

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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