Mosaic Theater Company of DC Press Release

Ari Roth, Founding Artistic Director • Serge Seiden, Managing Director & Producer • Victoria Murray-Baatin, Associate Artistic Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Mosaic Theater Company of DC Turns 5 This Fall and Celebrates Historic Year
Twisted Melodies Breaks Box Office Records To Close Season 4 (Over 7,000 attendees)
Dan Logan Gift Launches “Maintaining The Momentum” Capital Reserve
$2,000,000 in Augmented Support Rounds Out Stellar Season
Full Season 5 Casting Announced

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Mosaic Theater Company of DC launches its 5th season this month with the DC premiere of Lynn Nottage’s Fabulation, Or The Re-Education of Undine, previewing August 21 (see our August 1 Fabulation press release for opening night information, and our March 29 “#Wokeseason5” release for full season line-up), exactly one month after the close of the most successful show in Mosaic’s history, the co-production of Kelvin Roston Jr.’s Twisted Melodies, which sold out its last week of performances, playing to record crowds and box office, providing the capstone to a season of transformative artistic and fundraising achievements.

Celebrating the opening of its 5th season producing 8 mainstage productions a year, Mosaic points to recent fundraising gifts—principally from The Roy Cockrum Foundation, in support of the entire production budget of Ifa Bayeza’s upcoming civil rights drama, The Till Trilogy—as the largest single production grant received since Mosaic’s founding. Notification of the grant came on the very day that Mosaic received its largest-ever bequest, from a patron wishing to remain anonymous, and was followed by the announcement of two new gifts from Mosaic Co-Founder, Dan Logan of the Revada Foundation. Totalling some $2,000,000 between all three grants, these major endorsements—along with gifts from premiere funders like the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, Shubert Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Weissberg Foundation and Share Fund (among many others)—help secure Mosaic’s future and realize its expanding artistic ambitions in Season Five and beyond.
Dan Logan’s Third Major Gift To Mosaic Theater Company

Mosaic board president Bill Tompkins shared, “Dan Logan’s game-changing $900,000 commitment to Mosaic Theater Company is in two extraordinary parts. A $400,000 capital gift allows us to go public with our Maintaining the Momentum Campaign to raise $1.2 million dollars to secure operational finances and help fund extraordinary artistic opportunities such as playwright commissions and national tours, as well as unique outreach and educational initiatives in our community. Mosaic’s Maintaining the Momentum Fund is the capstone of Mosaic’s strategic plan -- I’m excited to announce that with additional generous support from the Share Fund, individuals, and Mosaic Board members, the Maintaining the Momentum Fund is halfway toward its goal.”

Managing Director Serge Seiden added, “In addition to Dan Logan’s capital gift, the Revada Foundation has also committed to critical general operating support of $125,000 a year for the next 4 years. Mosaic is one of DC’s most exciting and successful start-up stories. With a budget that’s doubled in size since our first year (next season’s operating budget will be approximately $3,000,000), Mosaic is twice the size and quadruple the audience base from its auspicious first season. Dan’s commitment means Mosaic’s future is more secure than ever.”

“We owe our existence to the visionary investment of Dan Logan,” notes Bill Tompkins, “That’s why we’re honored to call him a co-founder. Without him, we wouldn’t be here.”

Mosaic Theater Company was launched in December 2014 by Founding Artistic Director Ari Roth with visionary grants from Dan Logan and the Reva & David Logan Foundation. An initial $250,000 matching grant was quickly surpassed by hundreds of donors and helped Mosaic “hit the ground running.” A year later, the Reva & David Logan Foundation followed up with generous 4-year, $1,000,000 operational support.

Dan Logan is now President of the Revada Foundation, which supports theater, film, opera, and jazz in the DC area.

The Roy Cockrum Foundation Underwrites The Till Trilogy

This past spring, The Roy Cockrum Foundation announced its decision to fully fund Mosaic’s production of Ifa Bayeza’s epic, The Till Trilogy. The funding has allowed Mosaic to field a robust 10-person cast (see below for full season casting) and bring all facets of Bayeza’s 50 year chronicle of the life, death and legacy of Emmett Till to fruition, including the world premiere unveiling of That Summer in Sumner, focusing on the trial and subsequent acquittal of Till’s murderers along with the FBI’s reopening of
the case. Funding from The Roy Cockrum Foundation has allowed for a 30-hour workshop this past July with the full cast continuing exploratory work on the plays as Mosaic prepares for the Trilogy’s world premiere staging this April, 2020.

Founded in 2014 by Roy Cockrum and Benita Hofstetter Koman, the foundation’s mission is to award grants to support world-class performing arts projects in not-for-profit professional theatres throughout America. Since 2014, sixteen flagship American theatres have received major grants from the foundation.

Twisted Melodies Breaks Records and Brings Huge New Audiences

Mosaic closed out its Season Four by bringing in more audience to see Twisted Melodies over its 5 week run than had ever attended any of Mosaic’s previous 6 week hits like Satchmo at The Waldorf, The Devil’s Music: The Life and Blues of Bessie Smith, or the Native Son Rep. With over 7,100 attendees taking in Kelvin Roston’s spell-binding performance as composer/musician/performer, Donny Hathaway, the play – a co-production with Baltimore Center Stage and Chicago’s Congo Square Theatre in association with the Apollo Theatre in Harlem – revealed the tremendous passion that DC audiences feel for Hathaway’s body of work and their identification with poignant struggles with mental illness which tragically cut short his DC-launched career.

Twisted Melodies received Mosaic’s first-ever National Endowment for the Arts grant to support the run and 19 post-performance conversations. Associated public programming initiated or strengthened Mosaic partnerships with mental health organizations like the Black Mental Health Alliance in Baltimore, the National Association on Mental Health in Arlington, with student, faculty and alumni participation from Howard University’s departments of Music, Theater, History, and beyond, the Black Student Fund, DC Parks and Recreation’s Senior Services Division, Glenn Dale Community Center, Congress Heights Senior Wellness Center, Delta Towers, Seabury Senior Group and Calvary Women’s Services. The production also brought in nearly $200,000 in single ticket sales. “The passion for this project was unprecedented,” extolls Associate Artistic Director Victoria Murray Baatin. “We’re presently in negotiations to bring the show back next year. Stay tuned!”

Announcing Casting for Season Five

Mosaic is excited to be working with its largest assemblage of actors yet in the upcoming season. And as has become customary, it’s a highly diverse cohort of local actors representing the growing depth and diversity of the DC acting pool. Notes Artistic Director, Ari Roth, “It’s our biggest season ever. With bigger, richer ensembles from show to show than ever before. In seasons past, we’ve extended our Big Tent by offering searing solo performance pieces—like Twisted Melodies, Queens Girl in Africa, The Real Americans, I Shall Not Hate, Wrestling Jerusalem, and more. But
this season, because of the capacity afforded us by The Roy Cockrum Foundation underwriting, the whole season has buoyancy, energy, robust ensembles, and talent to burn.”

Full casting information for all eight production in Season Five is below (subject to change):

**Fabulation Or, The Re-Education of Undine**
By Lynn Nottage
Directed by Eric Ruffin
August 21–September 22, 2019
Press Night: 7:30PM Monday, August 26th, 2019
Featuring Felicia Curry, Roz White, Aakhu TuahNera Freeman, William T. Newman, Jr., Carlos Saldaña, Lauryn Simone, Kevin E. Thorne II, and James Whalen

**Theory**
By Norman Yeung
Directed by Victoria Murray Baatin
October 23–November 17, 2019
Press Night: 7:30PM Monday, October 28th, 2019
Featuring Josh Adams, Musa Gurnis, Benairen Kane, Camilo Linares, Tony K. Nam, Andrea Harris Smith, and Tyasia Velines

**Eureka Day**
By Jonathan Spector
Directed by Serge Seiden
December 4, 2019–January 5, 2020
Press Night: 7:30PM Monday, December 9th, 2019
Featuring Regina Aquino, Lise Bruneau, Erica Chamblee, Sam Lunay, and Elan Zafir

**Pilgrims Musa & Sheri In The New World**
By Yussef El Guindi
Directed by Shirley Serotsky
*Part of the Voices from a Changing Middle East Festival*
January 16 – February 16, 2020
**Note New Press Night: 7:30PM Sunday, January 19th, 2020**
Featuring Ahmad Kamal as Musa and Rachel Felstein as Sheri, with Freddie Bennett, Sanam L. Hashemi, and Gerrad Alex Taylor

_Inherit The Windbag_
World Premiere by Alexandra Petri
Directed by Lee Mikeska Gardner
*Part of Locally Grown Mosaic and recipient of a Trish Vradenburg Play Commission*

March 11–March 29, 2020
Press Night: 7:30PM Monday, March 16th, 2020

Featuring John Lescault as William F. Buckley and Paul Morella as Gore Vidal
*(note: two more roles to be cast shortly)*

_The Till Trilogy_
By Ifa Bayeza
Directed by Talvin Wilks
April 1 – June 21, 2020
Press Nights: April 6, 2020 for _The Ballad of Emmett Till_
May 4, 2020 for _That Summer in Sumner_
May 27, 2020 for _Benevolence_

Featuring Scott W. Abernethy, Drew Kopas, Billie Krishawn, Lolita Marie, Clayton Pelham, Jr., Jefferson A. Russell, Vaughn Ryan, Matthew R. Wilson, Jayesen Wright
*(note: one more role to be cast shortly)*

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Mosaic leadership & artists available for interview include:

• **Ari Roth**, Founding Artistic Director

• **Serge Seiden**, Managing Director/Producer and director of _Eureka Day_,
  *Jonathan Spector, playwright Eureka Day*

• **Victoria Murray Baatin**, Associate Artistic Director and director of _Theory_,
  *Norman Yeung, playwright Theory*

• **Jennifer L. Nelson**, Founding Resident Director and recent recipient of Lifetime Achievement Award from the Helen Hayes Awards
• Bill Tompkins, Board President

• Shirley Serotsky, former Acting Artistic Director of Theater J; current Mosaic Associate Producer of Public Programming, dramaturg, and director of Pilgrims Musa & Sheri in The New World

• Eric Ruffin, director of Fabulation; Howard University Professor of Theater

• Alexandra Petri and Lee Mikeska Gardiner, playwright (and Washington Post columnist) and director of Inherit the Windbag (Artistic Director, Nora Theater, Boston)

• Ifa Bayeza and Talvin Wilks, playwright and director of The Till Trilogy

• Dan Logan, President, The Revada Foundation

Contact Marketing Director, Jez Kline, for further assistance.

About Mosaic Theater Company of DC

Independent, intercultural, entertaining, and uncensored, Mosaic Theater Company of DC is committed to making transformational, socially-relevant art, producing plays by authors on the front lines of conflict zones, and building a fusion community to address some of the most pressing issues of our times. Dedicated to making our theater a model of diversity and inclusion at every strata, on stage and off, Mosaic invests in the new as we keep abreast of our changing and challenging times to ensure that our theater is a responsive gathering space, all the while nurturing and producing art of the highest order. Visit us at mosaictheater.org