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PHILIP DAWKINS’ AWARD-WINNING CHARM, A GROUNDBREAKING STORY ABOUT TRANSGENDER & GENDER NONCONFORMING YOUTH, CONTINUES MOSAIC’S SERIES “CLAMOROUS ENCOUNTERS: COMING OF AGE IN AMERICA”

B’Ellana Duquesne leads ensemble in role inspired by Chicago transgender icon Gloria Allen
Winner of the 2016 Jefferson Award for Outstanding New Work
Staged by innovative DC director Natsu Onoda Power with associate director KenYatta Rogers

Mosaic Theater Company announces new community partnership with Whitman-Walker Health, aimed at expanding awareness of health & legal services for LGBTQ clients

Charm Discussion Panels announced: “Compelling Dilemmas: Transforming Identity”

January 5-29, 2017

(Washington, DC) Mosaic Theater Company of DC’s “Clamorous Encounters” series about coming-of-age in America continues with Philip Dawkins’ groundbreaking comedy-drama CHARM (January 5-29, 2017), under the direction of one of DC’s most innovative directors, Natsu Onoda Power (The T Party, Wind Me Up Maria: A Go-Go Musical). This is Mosaic’s third consecutive DC premiere in Season Two, and tells the story of “Mama Darleena Andrews,” the inimitable 67 year-old transgender woman at the helm of an unforgettable etiquette class for transgender and gender nonconforming youth. Mama’s unconventional brand of mentorship meets her students at their most vulnerable moments, helping them combat prejudice and discover themselves—and doing it all with class and with charm!

As announced on December 7, the principal role of ‘Mama Darleena Andrews’ is played by B’Ellana Duquesne, a transgender performer and collaborator on Onoda Power’s The T Party. KenYatta Rogers, originally slated for the role, is understudy for Duquesne and supports production as Associate Director alongside director Natsu Onoda Power.

It is a true ‘mosaic’ tapestry of one of America’s most historically marginalized communities in a period of rapid transition—embodied by the culture clash between Mama’s methodical approach to identity, and the gender-bending breakthroughs of a new generation. But most importantly, Charm is a

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CELEBRATION—of the young transgender community, the perseverance of transgender adults before them, and the inspiring culture of mentorship that connects them both.

The show’s kaleidoscopic ensemble is helmed by B’Ellana Duquesne (Mama Darleena Andrews), in a role inspired by the life and work of Chicago’s Gloria Allen, a transgender icon who drew national attention for her unlikely etiquette class for LGBTQ youth at Chicago’s Center on Halsted. The cast includes Joe Brack (Lady), Louis E. Davis (Donnie), Nyla Rose (Ariella), Samy El-Noury (Logan), Helen Hayes Award-winner Kimberly Gilbert (D), Jade Jones (Victoria), Clayton Pelham (Beta), and Justin Weaks (Jonelle).

“When we first described Season Two as a line-up of Clamorous Encounters,” shares Founding Artistic Director Ari Roth, “we had Charm in mind as our theatrical anchor. It is a raucous celebration of life on the margins that takes over center stage, presenting a wildly eclectic group of young people from all walks coming under the tutelage of a most extraordinary teacher. When I first read this play, its cacophonous orchestration of overlapping dialogue and outsized characters living on the street seeking shelter in a nourishing gather spot reminded me of Lanford Wilson’s 1965 portrait of down and out New York denizens, Balm in Gilead. But the sexual and gender politics of Charm are wholly up-to-date and the clash between these young street urchins and sex workers, and their older etiquette instructor, represents an eternal generational battle that will be wholly identifiable to anyone who’s ever watched To Sir, With Love or any of the other great teacher-student movies that the playwright studied so assiduously. Theatrically, this very cutting edge portrait of at-risk youth has something traditional and redemptive at its core.”

Mosaic Theater Company takes seriously issues of presentation at all levels of the organization. **Charm’s cast and creative team is the result of a local and national search, and includes transgender, cisgender, and gender nonconforming actors, managers, consultants, and public programmers**, as part of an ongoing effort to authentically produce experiences that are welcoming and inclusive to our full community.

“Reading this play, meeting Philip and Gloria, and working with Mosaic’s creative team has already been a transformative experience,” says director Natsu Onoda Power. “To me, this play is about communities, trust, and friendships as much as it is about (trans)gender identities. The play has already begun working its magic on our team—we have come together to laugh, weep, discuss, work hard, agree and disagree, embrace each other, and celebrate together.”

Mosaic Theater Company’s production of Charm is a regional premiere. Chicago’s Northlight Theatre commissioned the work in 2012 and produced the world premiere in 2015 at Steppenwolf’s Garage Theatre. The world premiere received two 2016 Jeff Awards for Outstanding New Work and Outstanding Actor in a Principal Role, as well as two additional nominations for Outstanding Production and Outstanding Ensemble. Charm was later staged by Minneapolis’ Mixed Blood Theatre in April 2016 and by Los Angeles’ Celebration Theatre in September 2016.

Whitman-Walker Health lends support as Community Partner

“We are thrilled to be working with Mosaic as a Community Partner supporting Charm,” shares Abby Fenton, Chief External Affairs Officer at Whitman-Walker Health. “Mama’s rallying cry for her kids is ‘I —continued—
see you,’ a subtle yet powerful message about dignity and respect that connects perfectly with our new ‘We See You’ campaign. At Whitman-Walker we strive to provide an atmosphere where our patients and clients can be themselves, without fear of judgment or retribution. We are a place where people can expect patience, kindness, empathy, and humanity—just like Mama’s classroom.”

**Charm Public Programming Announced:**
“Compelling Dilemmas: Transforming Identity”

In preparation for Charm, Mosaic has enlisted an expanded team of public programmers in the development of a discussion series that builds on recurring season themes of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access (IDEA). This show’s discussion series is titled “Compelling Dilemmas: Transforming Identity,” and will include a strong lineup of leaders from the LGBTQ community, health care providers, educators, and faith leaders. The series is supported by community partner Whitman-Walker Health, and will include open discussions on the politics of transgender representation in entertainment; voice and identity; healthcare and support services available to the transgender community in DC; LGBTQ identity on local college campuses; and LGBTQ representation in communities of faith. In addition to Whitman-Walker Health, Mosaic is working with local artist Rayceen Pendarvis (The Ask Rayceen Show), Sarah McBride (Human Rights Campaign), Casa Ruby, Sasha Bruce House, Rev. Aaron McEmrys (Senior Minister, Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington), and opening night musician AJ Head, in addition to others. The discussion series will conclude with a new installment of the acclaimed Peace Café series focusing on the state of housing services available to the transgender community.

**Philip Dawkins’** (he/him/his) **(Playwright)** works include *The Homosexuals* (About Face Theatre), *Le Switch* (About Face Theater, The Jungle), and *Failure: A Love Story* (Victory Gardens Theater), all of which were nominated for the Joseph Jefferson Award for Best New Work; and *Miss Marx: Or The Involuntary Side Effect of Living* (Strawdog Theatre) and *Charm* (Northlight Theatre), both of which won the Joseph Jefferson Award for Best New Work. This fall, he performed the world premier of his solo play, *The Happiest Place on Earth* at the Greenehouse Theater Center (co-production with Sideshow Theatre Company). Look for his musical adaptation of Dr. Seuss’s *The Sneetches* (with composer, David Mallamud) at Children’s Theater Company in Minneapolis this winter. Philip teaches playwriting at Northwestern University, Loyola University Chicago, his alma mater, and through the Victory Gardens ACCESS Program for writers with disabilities. His plays, including his plays for young performers, are available through Playscripts, Inc. and Dramatic Publishing.

**Natsu Onoda Power** (Director) is a DC-based playwright/adapter/director/designer. Most recently she wrote and directed *Wind Me Up, Maria! A Go-Go Musical*, with Charles “Shorty Corleone” Garris, at Georgetown University. Other recent plays include *The T Party* (writer/director, DC’s Forum Theatre; Boston’s Company One Theater), *A Trip to the Moon* (writer/director/illustrator, Synetic Theatre), *Astro Boy and the God of Comics* (writer/director, Studio Theatre; Company One Theatre, Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Director in Small Theatre, 2015). Directing credits include David Henry Hwang’s *Yellow Face* (Theater J) and Young Jean Lee’s *Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven* (Studio Theatre). Her set design has been seen at Company One Theater, Imagination Stage, Forum Theatre, Synetic Theatre, and The Hub Theatre, among others. She is the Artistic Director of the Davis Performing Arts Center at Georgetown University, and is an Associate Professor in Georgetown’s Theater and Performance Studies department, where she has directed *War with the Newts* (adapted

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from Karek Capek), On the Origin of Species (adapted from Charles Darwin), The Omnivore's Dilemma (adapted from Michael Pollan), Madness and Civilization (adapted from Michel Foucault), and other productions. Natsu holds a Ph.D. in Performance Studies from Northwestern University, and is the author of God of Comics: Osamu Tezuka and the Creation of Post World War II Manga (The University Press of Mississippi, 2009). She is a member of the Forum Ensemble and the Studio Cabinet.

B’Ellana Marie Duquesne (Mama) Her life as Jack Eng included stints as a radio broadcaster, WFL football player, businessman, and high school drama teacher. In 2012 she revealed a long hidden personality of B’Ellana Duquesne when serving as hostess at MoMos, a DC restaurant. The visibility at "Homos at MoMos" led to additional performing opportunities including a role in The T Party, written and directed by Natsu Onoda Power. B’Ellana is very excited to be working with Natsu again on Charm. While now living almost entirely in female mode, she believes that freedom of gender expression is essential to a happy life and defines herself as gender-fluid.

The creative team for Charm includes set designer Daniel Conway, lighting designer Max Doolittle, sound designer Roc Lee, costume designer Frank Labovitz, properties designer Kat Fleshman, technical director William M. Woodard, and stage manager James Holbrook.

The show follows Jennifer L. Nelson’s critically acclaimed staging of Kirsten Greenidge’s Milk Like Sugar, which kicked off a series of three plays about young urban teens and millennials. The series concludes in February with the world premiere of Tearrance Arvelle Chisholm’s Hooded, Or Being Black for Dummies.

For additional production information visit mosaictheater.org/charm.

Charm Opening Night:
Sunday, January 8 at 7:30 PM

Production Information
Charm
By Philip Dawkins
Directed by Natsu Onoda Power I Associated directed by KenYatta Rogers
January 5-29, 2017

ABOUT: Meet Mama Darleena Andrews, a 67 year-old transgender woman and the inimitable etiquette instructor at “The Center,” an organization for Chicago’s homeless and LGTBQ youth. Her students are as diverse in background as they are in identity, united by a feeling of other-ness in the heart of a city that’s left them behind. But for “Mama Darlin,” triumph over poverty and prejudice begins with lacing up and fitting in—playing the part with class and with charm.

Based on the heartwarming true story of Chicago trans icon Miss Gloria Allen of the Center on Halsted, and staged by trailblazing director Natsu Onoda Power (The T Party), this touching, enchanting story of hardship, wit, and an indomitable Mama’s love is a “portrait of pain, kindness, and an LGBTQ community in transition” (Time Out Chicago).

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CAST:
Lady: Joe Brack
Donnie: Louis E. Davis
Mama: B'Ellana Duquesne
Logan: Samy El-Noury
D: Kimberly Gilbert
Victoria: Jade Jones*
Beta: Clayton Pelham Jr.
Jonelle: Justin Weaks †
Ariella: Nyla Rose

* From January 18-29, the role of “Victoria” will be played by Tamieka Chavis.
† From January 12-15, the role of “Jonelle” will be played by Carl Williams.
Understudy for “Mama”: KenYatta Rogers*

CREATIVE TEAM:
Author: Philip Dawkins
Director: Natsu Onoda Power
Associate Director: KenYatta Rogers
Set Designer: Daniel Conway
Lighting Designer: Max Doolittle
Sound Designer: Roc Lee
Costumes Designer: Frank Labovitz
Properties Designer: Kat Fleshman
Technical Director: William M. Woodard
Production Stage Manager: James Holbrook

Plan Your Visit:
TICKETS: Tickets for Charm are $40-$60, plus applicable fees. For information on savings programs such as student discounts, neighborhood nights, military and first responder discounts, and others, visit mosaictheater.org/tickets. Tickets may be purchased online at mosaictheater.org, or by phone at 202-399-7993 ext. 2, or in person at the Atlas Performing Arts Center Box Office at 1333 H Street NE, Washington, DC 20002.

Atlas Performing Arts Center Box Office: 202-399-7993 ext. 2

PRICING TIERS:
General: $40-$60 tickets
NE & SE Neighbors: $30 tickets
Under 30 and student: $20 tickets
Senior: 10% discount
Military and first responder: 10% discount
TodayTix Daily Mobile Rush: $12 tickets

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PERFORMANCE DATES:
Preview performances at 8PM on Thursday 1/5 (Pay-What-You-Can), Friday 1/6, Saturday 1/7, and 3PM on Sunday 1/8
Opening Night at 7:30PM on Sunday 1/8
Wednesday, Thursdays, and Fridays at 8PM
Saturdays at 3PM and 8PM
Sundays at 3PM and 7:30PM
Student matinee at 11AM on Thursday 1/12
Closing performance at 3PM on Sunday 1/29
Full calendar: mosaictheater.org/charm

DC STREETCAR: Mosaic Theater Company performs at the Atlas Performing Arts Center, located 1.2 miles from DC’s Union Station. Patrons arriving at the Union Station Metro Station (Red Line) can catch the new DC Streetcar by exiting the station, and following the signs to the bus-level parking garage. Exit the back of the garage and turn right onto H Street, where the Eastbound Streetcar can be caught in the middle of the bridge. The DC Streetcar is free, and operates seven days a week.

AUTOMATED PARKING GARAGE: Patrons are encouraged to make use of a new, automated parking garage located at 625 H St NE, open 24/7. The garage is credit card-only. Pricing is $12 flat on weekends, and $12 per two hours on weekdays (weekday max is $18). The garage is located one block away from the free DC Streetcar stop at 8th & H St NE.

VALET PARKING: Mosaic Theater Company has partnered with the Atlas and H Street Parking to provide valet parking throughout the season for nearly every performance (Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sunday matinees). Patrons can pre-purchase valet parking for $20, which can either be used at the nearby valet drop-off, or as a self-parking voucher at the lot at 1008 H Street NE. Mosaic 2016-17 season subscribers can purchase discounted valet parking for $15.

METRO AND METROBUS: If coming by the Metro Center or Chinatown Metro Stations, patrons can catch the X2 or X9 busses, getting off at H St & 14th St NE.

For more information, or for additional directions: mosaictheater.org/getting-here.

Mosaic 8, First 8, and Mosaic Workshop packages are now on sale and may be purchased by calling the Atlas Performing Arts Center box office at 202-399-7993 ext. 2, or by visiting mosaictheater.org.

Independent, intercultural, entertaining, and uncensored, Mosaic Theater Company is committed to making transformational, socially-relevant art, producing plays by authors on the front lines of conflict zones, 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.

We complement our productions with comprehensive engagement through free pre- and post-show programming, an annual intercultural festival, like our “Voices From a Changing Middle East” series, and

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educational initiatives, including our touring “Mosaic on the Move.” We strive to foster a culture of listening and welcoming, embracing complexity and a multi-focal perspective. Our plays speak truth to power and to the private parts of our soul. In short, we make art with a purpose and strive for impact.

Opening Nights for Mosaic Theater Company of DC’s second season:

**Satchmo at the Waldorf**: Monday, August 29 at 7:30 PM

**Milk Like Sugar**: Sunday, November 6 at 7:30 PM

**Charm**: Sunday, January 8 at 7:30 PM

**Hooded, Or Being Black for Dummies**: Monday, January 30 at 7:30 PM

**Blood Knot**: Sunday, April 2 at 7:30 PM

**A Human Being Died That Night**: Sunday, April 9 at 7:30 PM

**Ulysses on Bottles**: Monday, May 22 at 7:30 PM

**The Return**: Monday, June 12 at 7:30 PM

Meet Mosaic
Website: [MosaicTheater.org](http://MosaicTheater.org)
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