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Mosaic Theater Company of DC Kicks Off Third Season with its First Musical
Miche Braden brings her Celebrated Show About Bessie Smith to H Street

WASHINGTON, DC—Mosaic Theater Company of DC, the 2017 Helen Hayes Award-winning theatre for Outstanding Emerging Company, will begin its 2017-2018 season with the Off-Broadway hit The Devil’s Music: The Life and Blues of Bessie Smith. Written by Angelo Parra and performed by the indomitable Miche Braden (who also directed and arranged the music) and directed by Joe Brancato, this boisterous show featuring thirteen songs tells the story of Bessie Smith’s final performance after she and her band are turned away from a whites-only theatre in 1937 Memphis. Previews begin August 24 with a press opening of Monday, August 28, and the show runs through September 24, with a potential extension week through October 1.

“A year ago, Mosaic audiences delighted in seeing the life of Louis Armstrong unfold in Satchmo At The Waldorf,” notes Ari Roth, Founding Artistic Director of Mosaic. “That play’s impeccably researched script and standout performance by Craig Wallace provided Mosaic with its first bona-fide hit. And yet, all the box office ever heard from patrons was, ‘Why isn’t there any music?’ This told us that audiences were hungry for a revealing portrait of an artist on the frontlines of the race and culture battlefront and eager to see layers of humanity underneath the veneer of the legend—but they wanted the dang music too! They wanted iconic songs sung through so that the artist and artistry could come most fully alive. With Miche Braden in command of this arresting portrait of a battle-worn, tough-as-nails diva, audiences will get the full complement: drama, gut-bucket emotion, music from a fabulous band, and songs that will electrify and rip your heart out!”

Known as the “Empress of the Blues,” Bessie Smith overcame poverty to become the most influential Blues singer of the early 20th century. Bessie was also known for her fierce independence, bisexuality, and wild lifestyle. Her extraordinary personality and talent is brought to life by actor, singer, musician, and songwriter Miche Braden. Braden has performed internationally as both an actor and as a singer, and has taken this particular show on tour, including an Off-Broadway run in 2011 (for which she was nominated for the Drama Desk Award “Best Actress in a Musical”) and a run at the Cleveland Play House in 2013. She is supported by a three-person band of jazz all-stars: Jim Hankins (bass, who also plays the character of Pickles and who in real life is Miche Braden’s uncle), Anthony Nelson Jr (saxophone), and Gerard Gibbs (piano).
The Devil’s Music: The Life and Blues of Bessie Smith will be directed by Joe Brancato, Founding Artistic Director of Penguin Rep Theatre. Brancato has directed extensively Off-Broadway and has worked with high-profile stars including Marsha Mason, Sarah Jessica Parker, Madeline Kahn, Matthew Broderick, Marisa Tomei, and Laura Linney. His regional credits include the Cleveland Play House, Seattle Rep, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Alley Theatre (Houston), Hartford Stage, and Florida Rep. The set is designed by Brian Prather; costumes designed by Pat Doherty, and lighting design by Todd Wren.

“Mosaic is committed to promoting diversity,” continues Roth, “and Bessie Smith embodies so many different aspects of American culture, including the rich tradition of African American music and the early struggles for LGBTQ rights. We are excited to be starting our third season with the portrayal of such an iconic woman.”

Additional Information about The Devil’s Music: The Life and Blues of Bessie Smith

Opening Night: Monday, August 28th 7:30 PM

Tickets: Tickets for The Devil’s Music are $40-$60, plus applicable fees. For information on savings programs such as discounts and packages, visit mosaictheater.org/tickets. Tickets may be purchased online at mosaictheater.org, by phone at 202-399-7993 ext. 2, or at the Atlas Performing Arts Center Box Office at 1333 H Street NE, Washington DC 20002.

Special Performances: Student matinee at 11 AM on Thursday September 14; Open Captions at 3 PM and 8 PM on September 16 and at 3 PM and 7:30 PM on September 17.

VALET PARKING NOW AVAILABLE FOR ALL PERFORMANCES.

For all other information, visit: http://www.mosaictheater.org/the-devils-music.

About Mosaic Theatre 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.