Mosaic Theater Company Media Release
Ari Roth, Founding Artistic Director • Serge Seiden, Managing Director & Producer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: T. Chase Meacham
press@mosaictheater.org, 202-399-7993 ext. 155
Press/Opening Night: Monday, January 30 at 7:30 PM

January 30, 2017

OPENING TONIGHT: WORLD PREMIERE OF TEARRANCE ARVELLE CHISHOLM’S
HOODED, OR BEING BLACK FOR DUMMIES
THE CLIMACTIC CULMINATION OF MOSAIC THEATER’S THREE-PART SERIES:
“CLAMOROUS ENCOUNTERS: COMING OF AGE IN AMERICA”

From one of America’s hottest rising-star playwrights comes an unforgettable story about
two young African American men navigating adolescence, identity, and race in America

Jeremy Keith Hunter & Keith L. Royal Smith lead ensemble that includes
stage and screen actor Frederick Strother, and Helen Hayes Award-winner Jennifer Mendenhall

Staged by Mosaic Theater Managing Director & Producer, Serge Seiden,
with associate director Vaughn Ryan Midder

ALL PERFORMANCES of are accessible to Deaf and hard-of-hearing audience members
via projected surtitles, part of the Season Two Accessibility and Inclusion Initiative

Hooded Discussion Series announced: “Compelling Dilemmas: Race in America”

January 25—February 19, 2017

(Washington, DC) Mosaic Theater Company of DC’s three-part “Clamorous Encounters” series culminates with
the world premiere of local playwright Tearrance Arvelle Chisholm’s urgent and timely world premiere drama
HOODED, OR BEING BLACK FOR DUMMIES (January 25—February 19, 2017), under the direction of Serge
Seiden (When January Feels Like Summer, Bad Jews) with associate director Vaughn Ryan Midder (When
January Feels Like Summer, Milk Like Sugar). The timeliest play in Mosaic’s second season—and one of the
timeliest plays to be staged in DC this season—Hooded tackles key questions about race and identity, especially
as they affect young men of color. The play interrogates the country’s resurgent crises around race relations,
police misconduct, and recent murders of African American men. The play is an important new work by a DC-area
playwright, and lives at the intersection of theater and politics that Mosaic Theater Company was founded to
explore.

Hooded follows two young African American men, Marquis (Keith L. Royal Smith) and Tru (Jeremy Keith
Hunter), who meet in a holding cell where both are being unlawfully detained. Marquis is a book-smart prep-
schooler from suburban Maryland, and Tru a street-savvy Baltimorean who thinks Marquis has lost touch with his
roots. Tru takes Marquis under his wing by penning a how-to manual called Being Black For Dummies, as a
competing chorus of influence from cheerleaders, 2Pac, Nietzsche, Apollo, and Dionysus each vie for Marquis’
uncertain future.

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Opening tonight: Mosaic’s world premiere production of Hooded, Or Being Black for Dummies—Page 2

“Tearrance’s play is chock-full of rich ideas about intersectionality and the multifaceted layering of what it means to be African American in the 21st century, presenting case studies in Code Switching and Identity as their own kind of performance,” shares Founding Artistic Director Ari Roth. “Hooded is a play of dialectics that ends with a dialectical glimpse into the future: Are we living in an age of progress or regression? Is it a tragedy, or does Tru emerge as the true protagonist, both activist and educator, moving to build a better world? There’s no doubt that our playwright emerges as one of the real heroes of the evening, bravely sharing his nuanced exposure of the world.”

In addition to Hunter (Tru) and Smith (Marquis), the cast includes stage and screen actor Frederick Strother (Officer Borzoi, Apollo) and Helen Hayes Award-winner Jennifer Mendenhall (Debra, Prairie), as well as Josh Adams (Fielder, Dionysus, Concerned Citizen), Madeline Burrows (Clementine), Emma Lou Hébert (Meadow), and Dylan Morrison Myers (Hunter, Headmaster Burns).

"Hooded, Or Being Black for Dummies rounds out the first half of Mosaic’s second season, fulfilling a trifecta showcase of the lives of urban youth on stage,” share director Serge Seiden and associate director Vaughn Ryan Midder. “Following Kirsten Greenidge’s Milk Like Sugar and Philip Dawkins’ Charm, Mosaic continues to usher in a new generation of American playwrights with the bold artistic voice heard in Tearrance Arvelle Chisholm’s Hooded. Tearrance’s play is a quintessential display of art that responds to the ever-changing and challenging times we’re facing. Just as our next Commander-in-Chief takes office, our company of actors will take the stage to spark discussions on the perception of Black youth in America and the duality of identity. Tru and Marquis, Tearrance’s central characters, provide us with a coming-of-age story that too many, if not all, African American teenage boys in this country have to experience first-hand. As with all of the plays in Season Two thus far, Mosaic is anxious to pinpoint the hope within Hooded, Or Being Black for Dummies that just might aid our community in furthering its efforts to care for our often marginalized youth.”

Mosaic is excited to be producing this impactful world premiere play. The production follows a developmental reading Mosaic presented last fall at the Kennedy Center’s Page-to-Stage Festival. Hooded was workshopped last summer at the Pyramid Theatre Company in Iowa, and last fall at Theatre Battery in Washington state.

Included in the “Clamorous Encounters” series and coinciding with the run of Hooded is the workshop of Anu Yadav’s fierce and funny satire Ism: A Tragicomedy, a series of biting sketches about identity, racism, sexism, the economic crisis, body hair, and other light topics. The workshop of Ism will take place on February 6 & 7 on the set of Hooded.

Accessibility and Inclusion Initiative ensures ALL PERFORMANCES of Hooded are accessible to Deaf and hard-of-hearing audience members

Mosaic Theater Company is deeply committed to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA). During its first two seasons, Mosaic and neighboring Gallaudet University have collaborated on a number of fronts, including establishing an annual apprentice position for a Gallaudet student or alumnus/a, and the workshop of Quid Pro Quo, written and directed by Deaf artists. Mosaic’s staging of Hooded furthers this important collaboration; the production’s set is designed by Ethan Sinnott, Associate Professor of Theatre Arts and Chair of the Department of Theatre Arts at Gallaudet University.

This season Mosaic’s expanded Accessibility Initiative ensures that all eight productions in Mosaic Theater’s second season will be accessible to the Deaf community. Three shows have select Open Captioned performances; three shows have select ASL-interpreted performances and post-show conversations; and two productions, Milk Like Sugar and Hooded, Or Being Black for Dummies are fully accessible at EVERY PERFORMANCE via surtitles incorporated into the direction and design.

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The Accessibility Initiative is made possible in part by a three year, $195,000 grant from the Weissberg Foundation, as part of their 2016-2019 Fund for Diversity in Theater—a $1,000,000 commitment to engage and expand new voices and audiences in DC-area theaters.

_Hooded_ Discussion Panels announced: “Compelling Dilemmas: Race in America”

Mosaic’s trademark post-show discussion series continues through _Hooded_, anchored around the theme “Compelling Dilemmas: Race in America.” The series includes discussions with the playwright, cast, and members of the creative team, as well as community and faith leaders, affiliated artists, and members of the audience. Confirmed participants and discussants include musical group _Aflocentric_, Stuart Anderson (Founder and President, Families and Friends of Incarcerated People), Dr. Jared A. Ball (Founder, imixwhatilike.org), James Early (board member, Mosaic Theater Company; Former Director, Cultural Heritage Policy at the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Smithsonian Institution), Aaron Goggans (Black Lives Matter DC), Joshua Harris (Founder, Hollins Creative Placemaking and 2016 Green Party Candidate for Mayor of Baltimore), Tyleah Hawkins (staff member, Mosaic Theater Company), Caleen Jennings (Professor, Department of Performing Arts at American University), Tawanda Jones (President and Founder, Camden Sophisticated Sisters), Ron Moten (Contemporary Family Services), Eugene Puryear (Director of Field Operation, Justice First), Brayden Simpson (staff member, Mosaic Theater Company), and Bryan Weaver (Founder and Executive Director, Hoops Sagrada). The series will include the return of two audience favorites—a special 75-minute _Race & Identity Workshop Discussion_ in Lab I following the 7:30PM show on February 19; and the _Peace Café_ in the lobby following the 3PM show on February 11. The Peace Café will include an open mic for artists and audience to share poems, thoughts, or short performances in response to _Hooded_. To submit a performance piece for the lineup, contact: caitlin@mosaictheater.org. For updated information on the discussion series schedule, panelist bios, and ASL interpretation for discussions, visit mosaictheater.org/hooded.

_Tearrance Arvelle Chisholm_ (Playwright) is a playwright. That title is an indelible part of his character. Theater is the filter through which he sees and interprets the world. As a playwright, Tearrance is interested in exploring the many facets of the African American experience. He feels that race is a double edged sword, equipped with its advantages and shortcomings. It is the exploration of this theme that permeates all of his work. His works includes *Burning Books* (MU New Play Series), *Liddy’s Samiches Potions & Baths* (Arkansas Rep; Voices on the River), *Vulpicide* (MU New Play Series), _Month of Sundays_ (Midwinter Madness Short Play Festival; NYC), and _In Sweet Remembrance_ (Endstation Theatre Company and Sweet Briar College). Tearrance has also been published in _interJACtions: 75 Monologues by Some of America’s Finest Playwrights_ and _Arcadia Magazine_. He has worked closely with Endstation Theatre Company (Lynchburg, VA), Theatre Alliance (Washington, DC), The Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, and has held residencies at The Virginia Center for Creative Arts and The Eugene O’Neill National Playwrights Conference (Playwright Observer). Tearrance is a current member of the Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwrights Program at Juilliard and a recent MFA Playwriting graduate from the Catholic University of America.

_Serge Seiden_ (Director) joined Mosaic Theater Company as Managing Director & Producer to help found a company committed to social justice, and most recently directed Mosaic Theater Company’s _When January Feels Like Summer_. In 2013, Seiden received the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Director/Resident Musical for _Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris_... at MetroStage. His production of _Bad Jews_ at Studio Theatre was nominated for four 2015 Helen Hayes Awards including Outstanding Director, and was remounted the following season. Seiden also directed Studio’s acclaimed _The Apple Family Cycle_. From 1990 to 2015, Seiden held many positions at Studio including stage manager, Literary Manager, and Producing Director. Seiden was a key player in Studio’s 1996 and 2004 expansions—developments crucial to the re-emergence of 14th Street NW as a DC cultural hub. For 20 years, Seiden has been a member of the faculty of the Studio Theatre Acting Conservatory, where he trained as an actor and director. More recent directing credits include _When January Feels Like Summer_ at Mosaic Theater, Everett Quinton’s _A Tale of Two Cities_ at Synetic Theater, _Freud’s Last —continued—_
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Session at Theater J, and Clifford Odets’ *Awake and Sing!* at Olney Theatre Center. Other Studio Theatre credits include *The Motherfucker with the Hat, The Golden Dragon, Superior Donuts, In the Red and Brown Water, Grey Gardens, My Children! My Africa!, Souvenir: A Fantasia on the Life of Florence Foster Jenkins, and Old Wicked Songs.* His productions at Adventure Theatre MTC—*A Little House Christmas* and *Charlotte’s Web*—were both nominated for Helen Hayes Awards for Outstanding Production/Theatre for Young Audiences.

**Vaughn Ryan Midder (Associate Director)** returns to Mosaic, this time behind the scenes, after portraying Malik in *Milk Like Sugar.* He is excited to assist Serge Seiden after being directed by him last season in *When January Feels Like Summer.* Other performance credits include: Woolly Mammoth Theatre: *Black Side of the Moon* (male swing); Adventure Theatre MTC: *Three Little Birds* national tour; Constellation Theatre Company: *Urinetown,* *Avenue Q* (Helen Hayes Award - Outstanding Supporting Actor); Studio Theatre: *Choir Boy* (u/s). As a director, Vaughn has assisted various projects for the John F. Kennedy Center’s Millennium Stage and American College Theatre Festival.

The creative team for *Hooded* includes set designer **Ethan Sinnott,** lighting designer **Brittany Shemuga,** sound designer **David Lamont Wilson,** costume designer **Brandee Mathies,** properties designer **Kat Fleshman,** dramaturg **Otis Cortez Ramsey-Zöe,** projections designers **Mimi d’Autremont & Roc Lee,** technical director **William M. Woodard,** and stage manager **Bekah Wachenfeld.**

For additional production information visit [mosaictheater.org/hooded](http://mosaictheater.org/hooded).

**Hooded Opening Night:**
Monday, January 30 at 7:30PM

**Production Information**

*Hooded, Or Being Black for Dummies*
World premiere by Tearrance Arvelle Chisholm
Directed by Serge Seiden with associate director Vaughn Ryan Midder
Produced by Mosaic Theater Company of DC at the Atlas Performing Arts Center, Sprenger Theatre
January 25—February 19, 2017

**ABOUT:** A timely, irreverent examination of growing up black in America by rising-star local playwright Tearrance Arvelle Chisholm. Marquis, a book smart prep-schooler from suburban Maryland, meets Tru, a street savvy Baltimorean, in a holding cell. Tru thinks Marquis has lost his “blackness” and pens a manual entitled Being Black for Dummies, as they navigate a world of cheerleaders, Black Lives Matter, 2Pac, Nietzsche, Apollo, and Dionysus—each vying for Marquis’ future.

Staged by Serge Seiden (*When January Feels Like Summer, Bad Jews*) with associate director Vaughn Ryan Midder.

**CAST (in order of appearance):**
Officer Borzoi, Apollo: Frederick Strother
Tru: Jeremy Keith Hunter
Marquis: Keith L. Royal Smith
Debra, Prairie: Jennifer Mendenhall
Meadow: Emma Lou Hébert
Clementine: Madeline Burrows
Hunter, Headmaster Burns: Dylan Morrison Myers
Fielder, Dionysus, Concerned Citizen: Josh Adams

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**CREATIVE TEAM:**
Author: Tearrance Arvelle Chisholm  
Director: Serge Seiden  
Associate Director: Vaughn Ryan Midder  
Set Designer: Ethan Sinnott  
Lighting Designer: Brittany Shemuga  
Sound Designer: David Lamont Wilson  
Costumes Designer: Brandee Mathies  
Properties Designer: Kat Fleshman  
Dramaturg: Otis Cortez Ramsey-Zoë  
Projections Designers: Mimi d’Autremont & Roc Lee  
Technical Director: William M. Woodard  
Production Stage Manager: Bekah Wachenfeld

**Plan Your Visit:**

**TICKETS:** Tickets for *Hooded* 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

**PERFORMANCE DATES:**
- Preview performances at 8:15PM on Wednesday 1/25 (Pay-What-You-Can), Thursday 1/26, Friday 1/27, and Saturday 1/28, and at 4:00PM on Sunday 1/29
- Opening Night at 7:30PM on Monday 1/30
- Wednesday, Thursdays, and Fridays at 8PM
- Saturdays at 3PM and 8PM
- Sundays at 3PM and 7:30PM
- Student matinee at 11AM on Thursday 2/2
- Two-show evening at 7PM and 10PM on Saturday 2/18
- Closing performance at 7:30PM on Sunday 2/19

Full calendar: mosaictheater.org/hooded

**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.**

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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 6th & 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 educational initiatives, including our touring “Mosaic on the Move.” We strive to foster a culture of listening and welcoming, embracing complexity and a multi-local 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 7:30PM
Milk Like Sugar: Sunday, November 6 at 7:30PM
Charm: Sunday, January 8 at 7:30PM
Hooded, Or Being Black for Dummies: Monday, January 30 at 7:30PM
Blood Knot: Sunday, April 2 at 7:30PM
A Human Being Died That Night: Sunday, April 9 at 7:30PM
Ulysses on Bottles: Monday, May 22 at 7:30PM
The Return: Monday, June 12 at 7:30PM

Meet Mosaic
Website: MosaicTheater.org
Facebook: facebook.com/MosaicTheater
Twitter: twitter.com/Mosaic_Theater
Instagram: instagram.com/MosaicTheaterDC
Blog: mosaictheater.org/blog