Mosaic Theater Company Media Release

Ari Roth, Founding Artistic Director • Serge Seiden, Managing Director & Producer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Megan Behm
press@mosaictheater.org

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MOSAIC THEATER COMPANY OF DC ANNOUNCES THIRD SEASON:
A RIPPED-FROM-REAL-LIFE, HUGELY ADVENTUROUS LINEUP OF EIGHT PLAYS INCLUDING TWO MUSICALS, TWO WORLD PREMIERES, AND ADDITIONAL SPECIAL EVENTS

Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-nominee Jon Robin Baitz pens world-premiere epilogue to his 2016 Trump-inspired satire, Vicuña

Mosaic’s salute to the Empress of the Blues, The Devil’s Music: The Life & Blues of Bessie Smith, and American premiere of international film sensation, Paper Dolls, are company’s first two musicals

Mosaic launches “Locally Grown Mosaic” initiative with Caleen Sinnette Jennings’ newly commissioned Queens Girl in Africa, part of 2018 Women’s Voices Theater Festival

Voices From a Changing Middle East Festival continues with American Premiere of Paper Dolls and culmination of Mona Mansour’s The Vagrant Trilogy, plus national tour of 2016 hits Wrestling Jerusalem and I Shall Not Hate, along with presentation of David Hare’s Via Dolorosa

Tearrance Arvelle Chisholm’s breakaway hit Hooded, Or Being Black for Dummies returns for encore remount

New solo series, “Transformational Journeys: Inspiring Singular Explorations” launches tour-de-force repertory of Dan Hoyle’s The Real Americans and Mashuq Mushtaq Deen’s Draw the Circle

(Washington, DC) Mosaic Theater Company of DC announces its most ambitious and theatrically varied lineup to date with its 2017-18 season. Compelled to respond to changing and challenging times in our country, Season Three grapples with our current political climate, celebrating outspoken heroines (of fluid gender and sexuality) in two new musicals, while embracing documentary inspired reportage, sharp political and social satire, and stirring family drama.
“This is a season ripped from real life,” shares Founding Artistic Director, Ari Roth “and we’re deriving sizable energy from boldly responding with fact-based art in the face of belligerence, resisting despair, and rejoicing in our resilience. And that’s really the key dynamic this season. Beyond political resistance, what animates us is the practice of cultural resilience—the act of drawing together as a diverse body, inspired by art, to reflect on who we are and what’s at stake.”

Roth continues, “In a year of so many new challenges, our mission remains the same: to foster cross-cultural connections and to fuse communities through inclusive, deeply probing, thought-provoking art. The plays of Season Three do just that. With stories about Filipino care workers, Pakistani immigrants, Iranian tailors, Palestinian academics far from home, and Israeli families grappling with end-of-life issues, we’re embracing globalism in the face of bedrock American nativism, but we’re listening to those native voices, venturing out from our bubble, addressing our blind spots, as the best art compels us to. There is no forward movement without internal growth, within ourselves and across coalitions and kindred alliances. Our sense of community must broaden. The art we’re offering can expand our embrace, beyond the comfort zone we’ve known. Mosaic art can help ignite personal transformation experienced in the collective assembly of our town hall theater.”

The 2017-18 season features a number of big Mosaic firsts that both expand the ambition, scale, and scope of the programming in the company’s third year. The lineup is anchored by two musicals celebrating two modern musical traditions that are as distinctly American as they are political—the Blues of Bessie Smith, and American pop karaoke drag as performed through a Filipino group called the “Paper Dolls.”

Two of the eight titles are world premieres, including a two-part piece by acclaimed stage and screen-writer Jon Robin Baitz (Other Desert Cities, TV’s Brothers and Sisters and American Crime), and a commission (Mosaic’s first) from Caleen Sinnette Jennings, which launches the new “Locally Grown Mosaic” initiative and plays in the 2018 Women’s Voices Theater Festival.

Augmenting the season will be the Voices From a Changing Middle East Festival National Tour, which takes three shows on the road to theaters and universities across the country. Izzeldin Abuelaish and Shay Pitovsky’s I Shall Not Hate, one of the hits of Mosaic’s Inaugural Season, anchors the tour. Bookings are complemented by Aaron Davidman’s Wrestling Jerusalem, performed either in the original one-man staging, or as a screening of the new feature film adaptation; and by a chamber presentation of David Hare’s Via Dolorosa.

The season kicks off with Mosaic’s first-ever musical, The Devil’s Music: The Life & Blues of Bessie Smith, playing August 24-September 24, 2017. This Off-Broadway hit explores the life of musical icon, Bessie Smith, with Miche Braden reprising the role she originated for the Penguin Rep Theater’s Off-Broadway run in 2011. The show, which re-imagines Bessie’s final electrifying evening after she and her band are turned away from a whites-only theater, “thrills with the bold, bawdy, and brilliant life of Bessie Smith” (Los Angeles Times), and is jam-packed with a trove of all-time hits like “I Ain’t Got Nobody,” “St. Louis Blues,” and “Tain’t Nobody’s Bizness If I Do.”
The momentum continues in November with two breathtakingly-topical pieces by one of the nation’s most significant and prolific writers, Pulitzer Prize-nominee Jon Robin Baitz. A newly-reimagined staging of Baitz’s Trump-inspired satire, *Vicuña*, a piece “so hot off the press that it almost singes” (*Los Angeles Times*) plays in conjunction with a world-premiere epilogue inspired by Baitz’s own experience as the victim of a violent assault by a Trump supporter in DC on the night of the 2017 Inauguration, as imagined through one of the Iranian characters in the play.

In November, Mosaic launches a three-part series of probing solo performances, titled “Transformational Journeys: Singular Explorations.” Dan Hoyle’s *The Real Americans* launches the series in November, a one-man show recounting Hoyle’s 100 days travelling in a van across rural America, encountering the folks who live at ground zero of America’s growing inequality and political polarization. The show plays in rep with Mashuq Mushtaq Deen’s intimate *Draw the Circle*, the hilarious and moving account of Deen’s coming out as a transgender man to his conservative Muslim family. Told entirely from the point of view of Deen’s family members, the show is a heartwarming lesson in survival, transition, and unconditional love.

The new year brings the culmination of the series, and Mosaic’s first commission—*Queens Girl in Africa*, Caleen Sinnette Jennings’ anticipated sequel to the 2015 hit, *Queens Girl in the World*. Helen Hayes Award winner Erika Rose (Mosaic’s *Unexplored Interior*) plays Jacqueline Marie Butler, who travels with her family to Nigeria at the top of the show following the assassination of her father’s close friend, Malcolm X. *Queens Girl in Africa* plays in January as part of the 2018 Women’s Voices Theater Festival.

The 2018 Voices From a Changing Middle East Festival launches its DC-lineup with the American premiere of *Paper Dolls*, Mosaic’s second musical in the 2017-18 season. The show follows five Filipino guest workers in Tel Aviv who care for orthodox Jewish men by day—and headline a drag show by night. The “Paper Dolls” became an international sensation following a 2006 Israeli documentary by filmmaker Tomer Heymann, later adapted by Philip Himberg into a full-length karaoke musical which premiered at the Tricycle Theatre in London in 2013. *Paper Dolls* is produced in association with Stanley Buchthal and Bob and Co, Ltd, and begins previews March 29, 2018. This production will be directed by Broadway veteran Mark Brokaw.

Tearrance Arvelle Chilshom’s groundbreaking hit, *Hooded, Or Being Black for Dummies*, returns for a special encore remount following its acclaimed, sold-out run in 2017. This “breathtakingly on-point new comedy” (*Washington Post*) is an irreverent examination of growing up Black in America, featuring two unlikely allies—the book-smart Marquis and the street-savvy Tru—who navigate a world of cheerleaders, 2Pac, Apollo, and Dionysus.

Season Three concludes with the culmination of Mona Mansour’s acclaimed *The Vagrant Trilogy*, about the life of one Palestinian family spanning four decades. *The Hour of Feeling* plays as the first act, followed by the second installment, *The Vagrant*, which runs as Act II. The pair run from May 31-April 24, 2018, with a special three-night presentation of the third part of the trilogy, *Urge for Going*, June 18-20.

A ticketed workshop series will complement the season. On September 25, the series will kick off with *Native Son*, a stage adaptation of the Richard Wright novel directed by Helen Hayes.
Award winning director Psalmayene 24. On November 27, the Honest Accomplice Theater will bring their hilarious ensemble piece, *The Birds and the Bees: Unabridged*, to Mosaic Theater for its DC debut. *Yoga Play*, a satire of corporations and fitness trends written by Dipika Guha and directed by Mosaic Theater Associate Artist Jennifer L. Nelson, will be performed on January 29, 2018. *To Kill a King*, a look at the 1968 sanitation workers strike written by Josh Ford and directed by KenYatta Rogers, will play at the Hill Center on March 12, 2018. The series concludes with a special event trilogy about the final weeks of Emmett Till’s life. Entitled *The Till Trilogy* and written by Ifa Bayeza, this three-part play will be performed on June 12, 18, and 25, 2018.

Mosaic will also be rolling out another year of its characteristically robust discussion series, following the breakout success of the first and second season’s probing discussions with hundreds of panelists, artists, and audience members. Both the workshop series and discussion series are made possible by the *Reva and David Logan Foundation Community Engagement Initiative*.

"We are so proud to announce this ambitious third season,” shares Managing Director & Producer Serge Seiden. “These plays are a testament to a growing organization, an incredible staff, and a loyal audience that has bought into our mission from Day One. Just as important, Season Three is about responding to changing and challenging times in our country. We need Mosaic now more than ever, and we are honored to bring you art that continues to spark conversation and bridge communities. We hope you'll join us for the ride, and can't wait to see you at the theater in Season Three!"

**Musical salute to the Empress of the Blues:**

*THE DEVIL’S MUSIC: THE LIFE & BLUES OF BESSIE SMITH*

By Angelo Parra | Directed by Joe Brancato | Musical arrangements & starring Miche Braden

At the Atlas Performing Arts Center, Lang Theatre
August 24-September 24, 2017

Mosaic’s Season Three launches with this hit Off-Broadway musical celebration of the legendary Bessie Smith, whose life was as large and outrageous as her talent. Starring Miche Braden, reprising the role she originated Off-Broadway, *The Devil’s Music* re-imagines Bessie’s final electrifying evening after she and her band are turned away by a whites-only theater. This is a musical celebration not to be missed, packed with a trove of Bessie’s all-time hits—songs like “I Ain’t Got Nobody,” “St. Louis Blues,” and “Tain’t Nobody’s Bizness If I Do.” “Thrills with the bold, bawdy, and brilliant life of Bessie Smith.” (*Los Angeles Times*)

**Trump-inspired satire gets world-premiere update:**

*VICUÑA & AN EPILOGUE*

An area & world premiere by Jon Robin Baitz | Directed by Robert Egan

At the Atlas Performing Arts Center, Lang Theatre
November 1-26, 2017

From Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-nominee, Jon Robin Baitz (*Other Desert Cities*), comes this hit, Trump- inspired satire about an Iranian tailor and his apprentice who struggle to make a custom-suit out of vicuña wool for an unlikely customer—a real-estate tycoon preparing for his second presidential debate. Originally produced to acclaim during the 2016 election, this newly
compressed version is followed by a world premiere epilogue drawn from the playwright’s own headline-making experience as victim of an assault in DC on the night of the inauguration at the hands of a Trump supporter. Baitz reimagines the incident as experienced by the tailor’s apprentice, Amir, who comes to be a witness to history, only to find himself a participant in it. “Baitz generously provides amusement in a play that is so hot off the press that it almost singes.” *(Los Angeles Times)*

**One-man odyssey through America:**

**THE REAL AMERICANS**

Part of the series “Transformational Journeys: Inspired Singular Explorations”

In rep with *Draw the Circle*

Written & performed by Dan Hoyle | Directed by Charlie Varon

At the Atlas Performing Arts Center, Lab II

November 10-December 22, 2017

Inspired by 100 days travelling in a van through small-town America, actor/journalist Dan Hoyle enacts a multi-character encounter with the people at ground zero of our country’s growing economic inequality and polarized politics. Hoyle’s quest to “break the liberal bubble” sends him on an unforgettable journey into the lives of the real Americans: union coal miners, rural drug dealers, anti-war Veterans, and closeted gay creation theory experts...among others.

“Nothing short of BRILLIANT: unsettling, poignant, and hilarious.” *(Huffington Post)*

**Intimate story of a family’s evolving love:**

**DRAW THE CIRCLE**

Part of series “Transformational Journeys: Inspired Singular Explorations”

In rep with *The Real Americans*

Written & performed by Mashuq Mushtaq Deen | Directed by Chay Yew

At the Atlas Performing Arts Center, Lab II

December 1-24, 2017

Gender transition can be a test for any household—but when Mashuq Mushtaq Deen comes out to his conservative Muslim family, traditional values and Western ideals collide in an hilarious and moving immigration journey unlike any other. Told entirely from the point of view of family and friends, yet performed by Deen himself, *Draw the Circle* is a moving story about survival, transition, and unconditional love.

“Truly a tour de force...universal in its observation of love within the family structure.” *(Triangle Arts & Entertainment)*

**Part of the Women’s Voices Theater Festival:**

**QUEENS GIRL IN AFRICA**

Part of the series “Transformational Journeys: Inspired Singular Explorations”

World premiere by Caleen Sinnette Jennings | Directed by Paige Hernandez | Featuring Erika Rose

At the Atlas Performing Arts Center, Lang Theatre

January 4-January 28, 2018

Mosaic’s first commission brings the world premiere sequel to Caleen Sinnette Jennings’ “sweet-spirited solo show” which the *New York Times* described as one of the breakout hits of DC’s first Women's Voices Theatre Festival in 2015. Now part of the 2018 Women’s Voices
Theater Festival, *Queens Girl in Africa* picks back up with Jacqueline Marie Butler as she and her family sail to Nigeria following the assassination of her father’s close friend, Malcolm X. Performed by Helen Hayes Award-winner Erika Rose (*In Darfur, An Octaroon, Unexplored Interior...*), this is a touching coming-of-age story of a woman finding her place in war-torn Nigeria. Part of Mosaic’s new Locally Grown initiative. “Queens Girl in the World is a rewarding, absorbing work...I can only wonder and wish for a second installment.” *(DC Metro Theater Arts)*

**American premiere of an international film sensation:**

**PAPER DOLLS**
American premiere by Philip Himberg | Directed by Mark Brokaw
Based on the film by Tomer Heymann
In Association with Stanley Buchthal and Bob and Co, Ltd
At the Atlas Performing Arts Center, Lang Theatre
March 29-April 22, 2018
This vibrant and thought-provoking musical illuminates the world of five Filipino guest workers in Tel Aviv who care for elderly Orthodox men by day—and headline a drag show by night! Based on the true story behind a 2006 Israeli documentary, *Paper Dolls* is a rich, unforgettable karaoke musical about the challenges that migrant workers face while yearning for citizenship. This American premiere plays as part of the 2018 Voices From a Changing Middle East Festival. “Beautiful... both achingly intimate and rich in universal themes.” *(The Times)*

**Special Encore Remount:**

**HOODED, OR BEING BLACK FOR DUMMIES**
By Tearrance Arvelle Chisholm | Directed by Serge Seiden
At the Atlas Performing Arts Center, Sprenger Theatre
May 2-June 3, 2018
Back by popular demand, Tearrance Arvelle Chisholm’s “breathtakingly on-point new comedy” *(Washington Post)* returns for a special encore remount after its sold-out run became one of the first breakout DC hits of 2017. This irreverent examination of growing up Black in America features two unlikely allies—Marquis and Tru. Suspecting that Marquis has lost his “blackness,” Tru pens a manual entitled *Being Black for Dummies* which sends the two on a whirlwind journey through a world of cheerleaders, 2Pac, Nietzsche, Apollo, and Dionysus. "A PERFECT SHOW...’brilliant’ is barely adequate." *(DC Theatre Scene)*

**Culmination of acclaimed family epic:**

**THE VAGRANT TRILOGY (Parts I & II)**
By Mona Mansour | Directed by Mark Wing-Davey
In dramaturgical collaboration with The Public Theater At the Atlas Performing Arts Center Lang Theatre May 31-June 24, 2018
The life of a displaced Palestinian family spanning four decades, and the trenchant pull of home. *The Hour of Feeling* introduces us to Adham who journeys to the UK on the eve of the Six Day War with his new wife, Abir, to deliver a career-defining lecture. In *The Vagrant*, Adham, up for professorship, must respond to terrorist incidents in London and Lebanon. Part of the 2018 Voices From a Changing Middle East Festival. “A delight to watch...Mansour’s characters are rich and complex.” *(WFPL)*
Special Event Presentation:

URGE FOR GOING (Part III of The Vagrant Trilogy)

By Mona Mansour | Directed by Mark Wing-Davey
At the Atlas Performing Arts Center, Lang Theatre
June 18-20, 2018

2003. A refugee camp in Lebanon. Adham pursues a different course, as his niece explores the cost of their collective dreams deferred.

Plan Your Visit:

TICKETS: Tickets 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

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 Performing Arts Center 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 of at H St & 14th St NE.

For more information, or for additional directions: mosaictheater.org/getting-here
Mosaic 8, First 8, and Opening 8 packages for the 2017-18 will be available for purchase by the beginning of April by visiting mosaictheater.org, or by calling the Atlas Performing Arts Center box office at 202-399-7993 ext. 2.

About Mosaic Theater Company of DC
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, 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. 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-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 2017-18 Season:
The Devil’s Music: The Life & Blues of Bessie Smith: Monday, August 28, 2017 at 7:30PM
Vicuna & An Epilogue: Monday, November 6, 2017 at 7:30PM
The Real Americans: Monday, November 13, 2017 at 7:30PM
Draw the Circle: Monday, December 4, 2017 at 7:30PM
Queens Girl in Africa: Monday, January 8, 2018 at 7:30PM
Paper Dolls: Tuesday, April 3, 2018 at 7:30PM
Hooded, Or Being Black for Dummies: Monday, May 7, 2018 at 7:30PM
The Vagrant Trilogy (Parts I & II): Monday, June 11, 2018 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