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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Megan Behm, Director of Marketing and Press Relations
press@mosaictheater.org

March 31, 2018

MOSAIC THEATER COMPANY OF DC ANNOUNCES SEASON FOUR:
“How Hope Happens”
Plays Animate History to Speak to Present

Season Four’s “How Hope Happens: Past as Prologue/Plays in Dialogue” offers a wide-ranging line-up including a rousing musical offering, Marie and Rosetta, about gospel icon and rock pioneer, Rosetta Tharpe and protégé Marie Knight featuring local diva, Roz White

History speaks powerfully in The Agitators, a new play about Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglas; and a searing new adaptation of Richard Wright’s classic novel, Native Son directed by local Helen Hayes Award Winning director Psalmayene 24

“Locally Grown Mosaic” continues with Sooner/Later by local playwright Allyson Currin; while Aaron Davidman (Wrestling Jerusalem) returns with timely theatrical travelogue, The Peacemaker: A Play About Guns in America

Annual Voices from a Changing Middle East Festival to include festival’s first comedy, Oh, God by Anat Gov starring beloved local actors Mitchell Hébert and Kimberly Schraf; and Shame (with Comments From The Populace) by Israeli and Palestinian artist-activists, Einat Weizman and Morad Hassan.

Workshop Series returns with new response piece to Native Son by Psalmayene 24 and Voices Festival readings of Twice Bereaved by Joshua Sobol and Eyes: A Theatrical Performance Based on Poems of Mahmoud Darwish, along with new Locally Grown works-in-progress.

(Washington, DC) Mosaic Theater Company of DC announces an eclectic lineup for the 2018-2019 season, offering serious comic release alongside searing indictment; sustaining its commitment to local writers alongside its long-running Voices from a Changing Middle East Festival, while championing intercultural encounters and honoring iconic figures in African-American culture. In addition, Season Four is the first season to achieve gender parity for Mosaic’s playwrights: four of the plays are written by men, and four by women.

“The process of choosing Mosaic’s fourth season was the most inclusive and comprehensive in our brief but intense history,” says Founding Artistic Director Ari Roth. “That befits a company dedicated more, now more than ever, to forging a Fusion Community in its audience and living out the values of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access, on stage and off. Thematically, we’re spending a little more time in the past—not to turn away from the polarizing present, but to draw
sustenance, example, and inspiration from history to meet our challenging moment. We are effectively saying: ‘This is how it’s been done; this is how we fight; this is how we overcome.’”

The 2018-2019 season kicks off with Marie and Rosetta, a musical celebration of two extraordinary Black Women full of flights of joy and gospel jubilation. Written by George Brant, the author of the internationally acclaimed Grounded, this powerful play with music chronicles the unlikely first rehearsal between Rosetta and the prim, young, Marie Knight. The New Yorker wrote about the play: “It is so rare for a play about the inner lives of black women to center on their intimacy and not world politics or degradation that the very [existence] of George Brant’s loving two-character script is refreshing.” Local Helen Hayes award winner Roz White will play Rosetta Tharpe, and Sandra L. Holloway will direct.

The season continues drawing inspiration from past icons in the second play of the season, The Agitators, about the 45-year tempestuous yet enduring friendship of Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass. Audiences will recognize elements of modern activism, of Black Lives Matter and Third Wave Feminism, in this moving and often funny play about the tension of coalition building, assumed alliances, intersectionality, and the consciousness of privilege.

With the winter comes the Voices from a Changing Middle East Festival, which includes: Oh, God, a witty and touching comedy by the late Anat Gov, the “Wendy Wasserstein of Israel” and starring local favorites Mitchell Hebert and Kimberly Schraf; and Shame (With Comments From The Populace) by Einat Weizman with Morad Hassan, a blistering documentary portrait about the precariousness of cross-cultural collaboration when Israelis and Palestinians work together against formidable opposition. Centering on the testimonies of the two actors who worked on the embattled world premiere of The Return at the Al Midan Theatre in Haifa (the play would later run at Mosaic in 2017), this American premiere is adapted by Artistic Director Ari Roth and will be directed by John Vreeke.

The Festival is followed by a bold new adaptation of Richard Wright’s iconic novel about racism, freedom, and justice, Native Son, directed by Helen Hayes Award Winner Psalmayene 24. Native Son will be performed in repertory with The Peacemaker: A Play About Guns in America, written and performed by Aaron Davidman, the creator of Wrestling Jerusalem.

The penultimate show in Season Four is Sooner/Later, written by local author Allyson Currin. This heartwarming DC premiere with a metaphysical twist continues the “Locally Grown Mosaic” initiative started with Season Three’s Queens Girl in Africa.

The grand finale of Season Four is another musical offering that will be announced shortly.

The eight-play season will be rounded out by a workshop series tied to main stage programming, including a commission for director Psalmayene 24: a two-performance workshop entitled My Notes on Baldwin’s Notes of a Native Son. The workshop series will also include Twice Bereaved by Joshua Sobol and Eyes: A Theatrical Performance Based on Poems of Mahmoud Darwish as part of the Voices from a Changing Middle East Festival.
In summing up Season Four’s trajectory Roth notes, “We’ve chosen plays that, quite consciously, for part one of the season, shed light, burn bright, set a tone of humor and intentional uplift. In the second part, we return to form with fury, but for a while there, we’re making a point in opening our arms and leading with warmth. But it’s also good to be furious, as we will be for a spate of winter because art must burn with anger at injustice and expose the pernicious impact of it on the soul; we must expose the pernicious impact of firearms in our country – how something meant to protect has begotten a license to decimate.

And finally, as the season ends, we will look to the songs we sing to overcome grief and the schizophrenia of living in a wonderful yet ultra-maddening world; how art brings healing even as the forces of mortality hold us back from being fully free. We know we never will be; but still we can fly, like Bigger Thomas in Native Son, and transcend.”

Roth concludes, “And so to answer, at the end of the season, How Does Hope Happen? Where does the hope live? It lives in the art we make and leave behind. And how our best light can change the world.

**Mosaic Theater Company of DC’s 2018-2019 Season:**

**August 23-September 30, 2018**
**MARIE AND ROSETTA**
*By George Brant | Directed by Sandra L. Holloway*
*Featuring Roz White as Rosetta Tharpe*

At the Atlas Performing Arts Center, Lang Theatre

**PRESS/OPENING NIGHT:** Monday, August 27, 2018 @ 7:30 PM

Set in the showroom of a funeral home, in Mississippi, 1946, this musical celebration of two extraordinary Black Women chronicles the unlikely first rehearsal between Rosetta and the prim, young Marie Knight, to see if the potential protégée could summon the stuff to allow for a professional partnership that might topple the male stranglehold suppressing Rosetta's career. They would embark on a tour to establish them as one of the great duos in musical history.

"When it sings, it really swings" - New York Times

**October 24-November 25, 2018**
**THE AGITATORS**
*By Mat Smart*

At the Atlas Performing Arts Center, Lang Theatre

**PRESS/OPENING NIGHT:** Monday, October 29 at 7:30 PM

This brilliant play examines the 45-year friendship and occasional rivalry between two great, rebellious, and flawed American icons: Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglas. Young abolitionists when they met in Rochester in the 1840s, they were full of hopes, dreams and a common purpose. As they grew to become the cultural icons we know today, their movements collided and their friendship was severely tested. A loving and faithful portrait of two historical figures, Mat Smart’s story also brims with modern urgency and relevance.

“A brilliant success in illuminating the rights of American citizenship… Faithfully demonstrates the demarcation line of wills that brought these two forces of nature together, when race and
gender issues, equality and voting rights, were being forged in the wake of slavery and the Civil War."-Rochester Democrat & Chronicle

December 12, 2018-January 6, 2019  
Voices from a Changing Middle East Festival, Part One: The Persistence of Light  
OH, GOD  
By Anat Gov | Directed by Michael Bloom  
Featuring Mitchell Hébert and Kimberly Schraf  
At the Atlas Performing Arts Center, Sprenger Theatre  
PRESS/OPENING NIGHT: Sunday, December 16 at 7:30 PM  
In this “witty and touching comedy” (Jerusalem Post), a psychotherapist named Ella, single mother of an autistic child, gets a visit from a new and desperate patient: God. The late Anat Gov was known as Israel’s Wendy Wasserstein, and in her gently veiled analogy, Ella and God must learn to help each other--and save the world from destruction in the process! With a clash of biblical quotes framed by a modern-day wit, Gov brings a funny, often brilliant text that forces us to confront our own faith, hubris, and the power of humility.

January 16, 2019-February 10, 2019  
Voices from a Changing Middle East Festival. Part Two: Independent Theatre Under Seige  
SHAME (With Comments From The Populace)  
By Einat Weizman and Morad Hassan  
Adapted by Ari Roth and Directed by John Vreeke  
At the Atlas Performing Arts Center, Sprenger Theatre  
PRESS/OPENING NIGHT: Tuesday, January 22 at 7:30 PM  
A blistering documentary portrait about the precariousness of cross-cultural collaboration when Israelis and Palestinians work together against formidable opposition, Shame centers on the testimonies of the two actors who worked on the embattled world premiere of THE RETURN in Haifa (which would later run at Mosaic in 2017), a run which would be aborted when funding for the Al Midan Theater was cut because of controversial content. Integrating performance excerpts and often disrupted by audience comments based on Facebook messages, tweets, and telephone threats, the play covers censorship controversies at both the Akko Alternative Theatre Festival and Jaffa Theater involving newly controversial lightning rod Einat Weizman, whose latest work advocates for a Palestinian poet accused of incitement, and prisoners sharing letters from jail.

March 27-April 28, 2019  
NATIVE SON  
By Nambi E. Kelley | Directed by Psalmayene 24  
At the Atlas Performing Arts Center, Lang Theatre  
PRESS/OPENING NIGHT: Sunday, March 31 at 7:30 PM  
Richard Wright's iconic novel about oppression, freedom, and justice comes to life on stage in this ground-breaking adaptation. Suffocating in rat-infested poverty on the South Side of Chicago in the 1930s, 20-year-old Bigger Thomas struggles to find a place for himself in a world whose prejudice has shut him out. After taking a job in a wealthy white man's house, Bigger unwittingly unleashes a series of events that violently and irrevocably seal his fate. Adapted with theatrical ingenuity by Chicago's own Nambi E. Kelley, this Native Son captures the power of Richard Wright's novel for a whole new generation.
"A bold new tone...distills Wright's novel into 90 intermission-less minutes that are all action. It appreciates Wright's book for its intensity, refusing to slow down." - Hartford Courant

IN REP WITH:

March 27-April 28, 2019
THE PEACEMAKER: A PLAY ABOUT GUNS IN AMERICA
Performed and Written By Aaron Davidman | Directed by Michael John Garcés
At the Atlas Performing Arts Center, Lang Theatre
A minister in Virginia. A cop in Los Angeles. A surgeon on the South Side of Chicago. A hunter in Tennessee. These are a few of the characters in Aaron Davidman's searing and heartfelt world premiere performance piece about the most divisive issue in America today. The creator of Wrestling Jerusalem comes back to Mosaic after traveling the country to chronicle our nation's love affair with guns and the brutal consequences that lay in its wake.

May 15-June 16, 2019
SOONER/LATER
By Allyson Currin
At the Atlas Performing Arts Center, Sprenger Theatre
*Locally Grown Mosaic*
PRESS/OPENING NIGHT: Monday, March 20 at 7:30 PM
When teenage daughter Lexie helps her reluctant single mother, Nora, re-enter the dating scene, an unlikely suitor emerges in Griff – the guy at the coffee shop who inadvertently witnesses Nora’s string of unsuccessful dates. As choices collide with coincidences and longing mixes with reality, each character must face the complications that always arise in the search for intimacy and the closeness of family. This captivating bittersweet comedy navigates the paths of romance, marriage, and parenting while exploring the metaphysical illusiveness and pleasures of all three.

SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW ON SALE AT WWW.MOSAICTHEATER.ORG

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.