



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 7, 2018

Contact: Andrew Leshovsky
andrew@latteda.org
612-767-5646 office

**THEATER LATTÉ DA CONTINUES ITS COMMITMENT TO NEW MUSICAL
THEATER, ANNOUNCING A SLATE OF FOUR NEW WORKS AS PART OF
THE 2018 *NEXT FESTIVAL***

Theater Latté Da hosts the National Alliance for Musical Theatre (NAMT)'s New Work Roundtable from Thursday, July 19 – Friday, July 20 as part of this year's *NEXT Festival*.

Four dynamic new works from **Angelica Cheri** and **Ross Baum**, **Jelloslave** cellists **Michelle Kinney** and **Jacqueline Ultar**, **Michael Gruber**, **Harrison David Rivers**, **Matt Spring**, **Nikki Swoboda**, **Ryan Underbakke**, and **Max Wojtanowicz** that stretch the boundaries of musical theater, will receive workshops culminating in eight public readings.

**Readings begin July 15 and run through July 28 at the Ritz Theater in Minneapolis.
\$30 *NEXT Festival* passes and \$15 single tickets go on sale June 15
at Latteda.org or 612-339-3003.**

(*Minneapolis/St. Paul*) Theater Latté Da (TLD) announces the slate of artists and projects for this year's *NEXT Festival*. Four dynamic new works from **Angelica Cheri** and **Ross Baum**, **Jelloslave** cellists **Michelle Kinney** and **Jacqueline Ultar**, **Michael Gruber**, **Harrison David Rivers**, **Nikki Swoboda**, **Ryan Underbakke** and **Matt Spring**, and **Max Wojtanowicz** will each receive workshops and public readings beginning Sunday, July 15. The *NEXT Festival* is part of TLD's *NEXT 20/20*, a robust new work initiative aimed at developing 20 new musicals or plays-with-music by 2020, shepherding many of them to full production. Past *NEXT Festivals* have offered audiences a first look at new musicals that have gone on to full production including *C.* (2015) and *Five Points* (2018).

The first piece in the festival is ***To Let Go and Fall*** by **Harrison David Rivers** with music by **Jelloslave** cellists **Michelle Kinney** and **Jacqueline Ultar**. *To Let Go and Fall* is the story of

Todd and Arthur, two former ballet dancers who reunite at New York's Lincoln Center Plaza having not seen each other for more than 25 years. This beautifully-told story takes us through the lives of both men, their choices, regrets, and coming to terms with age, illness, and sexual identity.

"Ask any playwright, workshop opportunities, like *NEXT* are where the magic happens," says Twin Cities playwright Harrison David Rivers. "It's where you meet your collaborators [possibly for the first time]. It's where you hear your play aloud [possibly for the first time]. It's where ideas are exchanged and questions asked. It's where the story deepens, where it finds its heart. And in the case of *To Let Go and Fall*, it's where I'll hear my work set to music for the first time! I can't wait to see what this magnificent team comes up with."

To Let Go and Fall will be directed by **Peter Rothstein** with music direction by **Michelle Kinney** and **Jacqueline Ultan**.

Public readings of *To Let Go and Fall* are Sunday, July 15 at 2:00 pm and Monday, July 16 at 7:30 pm at the Ritz Theater.

The second piece in the festival is ***Gun and Powder*** with book and lyrics by Angelica Cheri and music by Ross Baum. *Gun & Powder* is inspired by the true story of Mary and Martha Clarke (book writer Angelica Cheri's great aunts), African American sisters who passed for White and were notorious outlaws. Set in Post-Emancipation Texas, the musical follows Mary and Martha's journey of defying racial boundaries and seizing what rightfully belongs to them, by any means necessary. They are successful at their charade until they each find themselves in love, but with two very different men.

Nicole A. Watson will direct with music direction by **John Lynn**.

Public Readings of *Gun and Powder* are Friday, July 20 at 7:30 pm and Monday, July 23 at 7:30 pm at the Ritz Theater.

The third piece receiving support during the *NEXT Festival* is ***7 Shot Swing*** by **Ryan Underbakke** and **Matt Spring**. Physical theater meets cinematic staging in this mash-up of world myths and the Roaring Twenties, re-imagining Sun Wukong and Brer Rabbit in an action-packed heist gone wrong, the Osiris myth of Egypt as a Film Noir detective tale, and the Greek gods as a crime family rising to power.

7 Shot Swing will be directed by **Ryan Underbakke**.

Public performances of *7 Shot Swing* are Thursday, July 26 and Saturday, July 28 at 7:30 at the Ritz Theater.

The final piece of the Festival is *Pansy*, written and performed by **Max Wojtanowicz**. *Pansy* is devised by **Nikki Swoboda** and **Max Wojtanowicz**, with music and additional lyrics by **Michael Gruber**. Los Angeles, 1940. The last remaining performer of the *Pansy Craze* holds court at a nightclub frequented by Hollywood stars, entertaining straight and gay audiences alike with original songs. A tribute to the oft-forgotten crusaders of the gay underground cabaret movement of the 1930s, *Pansy* is a story about singing out when the world demands your silence. The piece is inspired by Tyler Alpern's research and book *Bruz Fletcher: Camped, Tramped & A Riotous Vamp*.

Pansy will be directed by **Nikki Swoboda** with music direction by **Bradley Beahen**.

Public readings will be presented as a late-night cabaret on Thursday, July 26 and Saturday, July 28, 2018 at 9:30 pm.

As part of this year's *NEXT Festival*, Theater Latté Da is proud to host the National Alliance for Musical Theatre (NAMT)'s New Work Roundtable from Thursday, July 19 – Friday, July 20. NAMT is a national membership organization committed to nurturing the creation, development, production, and presentation of new and classic musicals and provides a forum for the sharing of resources and information relating to the professional musical theatre community. The New Work Roundtable will bring together musical theater producers, administrators, and artists from across the country for a two-day gathering featuring panel discussions and special events. The Roundtable will focus on best practices for building regional new work development programs, fostering local talent and building community among local artists and sharing ways to maximize local partnerships and engage communities around new work. Twin Cities-based panelists will include Ben Cameron, President of the Jerome Foundation, Rod Kaats, Producing Artistic Director, Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, playwright Harrison David Rivers, Ben Krywosz, Artistic Director, Nautilus Music-Theater, and others.

For more information or to register for the New Works Roundtable, visit:

<https://namt.org/events/new-works-roundtable-2018>

Theater Latté Da is an award-winning Twin Cities musical theater company that combines music and story to illuminate the breadth and depth of the human experience. The company seeks to create new connections between story, music, artists, and audience by exploring and expanding the art of musical theater. latteda.org.

Festival Dates: July 15-28, 2018

All public readings will be presented at the Ritz Theater.

Performance Dates, Venues and Times:

TO LET GO AND FALL

Sunday, July 15 at 2:00 pm

Monday, July 16 at 7:30 pm

Ritz Theater, 345 13th Ave. NE, Minneapolis, MN

GUN AND POWDER

Friday, July 20 at 7:30 pm

Monday, July 23 at 7:30 pm

Ritz Theater, 345 13th Ave. NE, Minneapolis, MN

7 SHOT SWING

Thursday, July 26 at 7:30 pm

Saturday, July 28 at 7:30 pm

Ritz Theater, 345 13th Ave. NE, Minneapolis, MN

PANSY

Thursday, July 26 at 9:30 pm

Saturday, July 28 at 9:30 pm

Ritz Theater, 345 13th Ave. NE, Minneapolis, MN

###