



NEWS RELEASE

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ARIZONA THEATRE COMPANY LAUNCHES FREE *NEW WORKS PROGRAM* WITH PLAYS BY STEVEN DRUKMAN, STEVE YOCKEY AND CHRISTOPHER OSCAR PEÑA

If you want to see what will be taking New York by storm in a few years, come to Arizona now

PHOENIX, Ariz. (July 25, 2019): As part of Artistic Director Sean Daniels' vision to introduce Arizona theatergoers to new works from the world's best playwrights, Arizona Theatre Company has scheduled the first three ***New Works Programs*** readings and workshops in the Valley.

The readings and workshops also will be the official launch of The Cohort Club that offers 20 members each in Tucson and Phoenix the chance to follow ATC main stage productions from first rehearsal through opening night and new plays from first read to staged readings. Daniels introduced The Cohort Club concept to ATC after seven successful seasons in other cities.

"Part of our plan to grow Arizona Theatre Company as a national company and to deepen our local roots is the creation of a new work program," Daniels said. "We'll be bringing in the best playwrights and directors from around the world to work with the local actors of Phoenix and Tucson - with the goal of developing work here in Arizona that will later be seen on stages around the world.

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Readings are:

- ***Pru Payne*** by Steven Drukman. Rehearsals: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., July 31 to Aug. 3; Final Reading: 5 p.m., Aug. 3, at Arizona Opera, 1636 N Central Ave, Phoenix. In 1988, one of America's leading public intellectuals starts to lose it a bit—or is she really gaining more of herself? With pathos leavened by bawdy humor, ***Pru Payne*** grapples with love and family, the battle between thinking and feeling, and ultimately asks: how is it best for anyone to be remembered?

Drukman, currently an associate professor at New York University, spent many years writing for the Arts and Leisure section of *The New York Times*. His 2016 play about Ted Williams,

Going to See the Kid, had its world premiere at Merrimack Repertory Theatre where Daniels was artistic director. In 2014, **Death of the Author** premiered at the Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles. *Variety's* Bob Verini called it "hands down, one of the very best plays of the year." One of Drukman's best-known works, **Another Fine Mess**, was an entrant for the 2003 Pulitzer Prize.

• **Bleeding Hearts** by Steve Yockey. Rehearsals: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Aug. 8-11; Final Reading: 5 p.m., Aug. 8 at Arizona Opera. Sloane isn't sure why exactly her husband Timothy brought home a probably dangerous drifter with a knife, but she definitely doesn't like it. Of course, it's hard to focus when her wealthy neighbor keeps dropping by to steal anything that isn't nailed down. And then things get violent. **Bleeding Hearts** is a wildly dark comedy about the disappearing American middle class & how easily people forget to put themselves in each others' shoes.

Yockey is a Los Angeles based writer with work produced throughout the US, Europe, and Asia. His plays **Bellwether, Pluto, Afterlife, Octopus, Large Animal Games, CARTOON, Subculture, Very Still & Hard to See, The Fisherman's Wife, Wolves, Disassembly** and **Niagara Falls & Other Plays** are published and licensed by Samuel French. Other plays **include Blackberry Winter, The Thrush & The Woodpecker, and Mercury**. This season: **Reykjavik** will open as a National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere at Actor's Express (Atlanta), Rorschach Theatre (DC), Kitchen Dog Theatre (Dallas), and Southern Rep (New Orleans) and **Sleeping Giant** will premiere at the Assembly Rooms in the 2019 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Steve holds an MFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and currently serves as a writer/producer for the television series *Supernatural*.

• **How to Make an American Son** by Christopher Oscar Peña. Rehearsals: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Aug. 27-30; Final Reading: 5 p.m., Aug. 30 at Phoenix College, John Paul Theatre, 1202 W. Thomas Rd., Phoenix. A "Model Immigrant" and business mogul, Honduran born Mando's cleaning empire is bracing for a downturn and he must rein in his over-privileged American son Orlando — who is living large on his dime. To teach him a lesson, he puts Orlando on the floor with the cleaning team, but in the wake of a personal gay-bashing, Orlando suddenly finds himself responsible for the fate of a treasured undocumented worker and the future of his father's entire enterprise. A play about the complexities of privilege, status, sexual identity and legal status within a newly wealthy immigrant family.

Peña, ATC's artistic associate, is a story-teller originally from the Silicon Valley, now splitting his time between New York and LA. Before joining Artistic Director Sean Daniels in Arizona as an Artistic Associate, he co-directed the world premiere of Daniel's adaptation of Jack Kerouac's "lost novel" **The Haunted Life** at Merrimack Rep. The production marked the first time the Kerouac Estate had ever sanctioned an official theatrical adaptation of Kerouac's work. Most recently as a playwright, the Clarence Brown Theatre commissioned and produced the world premiere of his play **The Strangers**. In New York, the Flea Theatre produced the world premiere of his play **a cautionary tail**. His work has been developed by Playwrights Horizons, the Goodman Theater, Public Theater, Two River Theater, INTAR, Ontological Hysteric Incubator, Playwrights Realm, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, Old Vic, Orchard Project, Naked Angels and New York Theatre Workshop, and the Bay Area Playwrights Festival / Playwrights Foundation among many others. His plays have been commissioned by the Goodman Theatre, the Clarence Brown Theatre, NYU Grad Acting, and Yale Rep. He is currently adapting the young adult novel **The First Rule of Punk** into a musical, commissioned by the Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis.

ATC's Cohort Club will include a diverse group of 20 people in Tucson and 20 people in Phoenix who will have "unprecedented access to the artistic process through all rehearsals, including technical rehearsals; one-on-one time with actors, artists and staff; exclusive invitations to special events; tickets to all preview performances and more," Daniels said.

“We want members to learn about the creation of theater through observations and conversations with professional artists,” he added.

Anyone interested in becoming part of The Cohort Group should write to Anna Jennings (ajennings@arizonatheatre.org) and include a short note about a past experience at Arizona Theatre Company or, for those who have never been to ATC production, any experience with the arts.

For more information about Arizona Theatre Company, visit www.arizonatheatre.org.

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Contact:

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About Arizona Theatre Company:

Arizona Theatre Company (ATC) is the preeminent fully professional theatre in the state of Arizona committed to inspiring, engaging, and entertaining - one moment, one production, and one audience at a time. Boasting the largest seasonal subscriber base in the performing arts in Arizona, ATC is the only resident company in the U.S. that is fully based in two cities providing its wide array of programming and community outreach across the region. Now in its 53rd season, more than 130,000 people a year attend our performances at the historic Temple of Music and Art in Tucson, and the elegant Herberger Theater Center in downtown Phoenix. Each season of home-grown productions reflects the rich variety of world drama—from classics to contemporary plays, from musicals to new works—along with a wide array of community outreach programs, educational opportunities, access initiatives and new play programs. Designated The State Theatre of Arizona, ATC is led by Artistic Director Sean Daniels, Managing Director Billy Russo and a dedicated Board of Trustees.