



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Truth-telling Comedy

THE THANKSGIVING PLAY

by Larissa FastHorse (Sicangu Lakota)

World Premiere. Table | Room | Stage Commission.

WHO: Artists Repertory Theatre
WHAT: [THE THANKSGIVING PLAY](#)
by Larissa FastHorse (Sicangu Lakota)
Directed by Luan Schooler
WHEN: April 1 – April 29, 2018
Preview Performances: April 1, 3, 4, 5, 6
Opening Night/Press Night: Saturday, April 7 @ 7:30pm
Regular run April 1 through April 29: Wed-Sun @ 7:30pm, Sun @ 2pm
Additional Performances:
 Tuesdays: April 3 & 24 @ 7:30pm
 Wednesday: April 18 @ noon
 Saturday: April 28 @ 2pm
Post Show Discussions:
 Sunday 2pm matinee: April 8, 15, 22, 29
 Wednesday Noon matinee: April 18
 Oregon Psychoanalytic Center: Sunday 2pm matinee April 15
Open Captioned Performance: April 28 @ 2pm
Closing Performance: April 29 @ 2pm
WHERE: Artists Repertory Theatre, Morrison Stage, 1515 SW Morrison St., Portland
TICKETS: \$50 regular price; \$25 preview/student/under 25
Buy Tickets: 503.241.1278 or www.artistsrep.org
PREVIEW PERFORMANCE SPECIALS:
April 1: Sunday Sounding – Pay-What-You-Can First Preview + Live Music by [Scott Kalama](#)
(Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs)
April 3: Ten Buck Tuesday – Tickets only \$10
April 4: Wine Down Wednesday – \$25 preview ticket + a glass of Dark Horse wine
April 5: Pizza Love Thursday – \$25 preview ticket + slice of Hot Lips Pizza
April 6: Happy Friday – \$25 preview ticket

COMMUNITY EVENT:

April 9 @ 7:30pm – RESPONSIBILITY TO REPRESENT Panel Discussion
with Larissa FastHorse (Sicangu Lakota), Mary Kathryn Nagle (Cherokee) and DeLanna Studi (Cherokee)

Held at: Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA)
5135 NE Columbia Blvd, Portland OR 97218

Moderated by Alyssa Macy (Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs)

Presented by Artists Repertory Theatre. Sponsored by NAYA.

Full panel schedule listed below. More information attached.

SHOW IMAGE ATTACHED: Design credit Jeff Hayes

PRODUCTION PHOTOS AVAILABLE: March 8, 2018

PLAYWRIGHT PHOTO: Larissa FastHorse, photo credit Conor Horgan

VIDEO INTERVIEW WITH LARISSA FASTHORSE: [HERE](#)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE. Portland, Oregon | March 16, 2018. Artists Repertory Theatre is proud to present the World Premiere of *The Thanksgiving Play* by Larissa FastHorse (Sicangu Lakota) from April 1 through 29, on the Morrison Stage. The play is directed by Luan Schooler, Artists Rep's Director of New Play Development & Dramaturgy. *The Thanksgiving Play* is the second commission of the theatre's Table|Room|Stage new play development program to receive its World Premiere at Artists Rep.

A group of mismatched teachers and actors have been charged by the school district to devise an ethnically sensitive play to somehow celebrate both Thanksgiving and Native American Heritage Month. In order to be as respectful and accurate as possible, the three white actors defer to the only Native American in the room for guidance and find their expectations of her insights are wildly misguided. In this wickedly funny satire, this foursome must find their way through a hilarious thicket of assumptions, historical perspectives and school district policies as the absurd pageant must go on!

"I am thrilled to be bringing this play to Artists Rep first – they have been strong, early supporters of this piece, and it would not be getting all of the national attention it is without them," said Larissa FastHorse, playwright of *The Thanksgiving Play*. "One of the biggest obstacles to my work getting second and third productions is casting. In American theatre, even a play with a half Native American character is considered 'uncastable.' However, this country needs and wants to know more about Native peoples so I gave myself the challenge of writing a play about those issues using four people who can pass for white. I really like the play that came from that challenge and, fortunately, theatres across the country do too. I want audiences to laugh and have a good time seeing the play, but my goal is that they will leave with a lot of new ideas and questions that they want to talk about."

"I love writers who have a strong opinion that they express in vivid, evocative and daring ways – and Larissa is a champion in this category," said Luan Schooler, director of *The Thanksgiving Play* and Director of New Play Development and Dramaturgy for Artists Rep. "When we met two and half years ago, I knew immediately we wanted to work with her. She offered me a sneak peek at a new play she had just started, *The Thanksgiving Play*. The bones were strong, the conflict presented was culturally important and the writing was so funny that I snorted coffee out my nose as I read it. I knew immediately this was the play."

The Thanksgiving Play is sponsored by Kris Olson & Les Swanson, John & Jan Swanson, U.S. Bank and Boeing.

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AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMMING

Artists Rep has worked with Phillip Hillaire (Lummi) as a cultural consultant and Indigenous community liaison to engage regional Indigenous people with this production. Before most performances of *The Thanksgiving Play*, a craft fair will be hosted in the lobby featuring art work from the local Indigenous community for sale to theatregoers. For a number of performances, members of the Indigenous community will offer a welcome to the event and blessings for the people and lands upon which Artists Rep occupies. Three thematic panel discussions will be offered to audiences and the community – details below. Artists Rep’s website will list further details as they become available.

PORTLAND PANEL DISCUSSION SERIES

Three Indigenous, female playwrights will present their work on Oregon’s top stages at the same time this spring. It’s a groundbreaking convergence of award-winning, distinguished playwrights. All three will participate in a series of panel discussions around Portland.

The Thanksgiving Play by Larissa FastHorse (Sicangu Lakota) at Artists Rep (World Premiere)
Manahatta by Mary Kathryn Nagle (Cherokee) at Oregon Shakespeare Festival (World Premiere)
And So We Walked written and performed by DeLanna Studi (Cherokee) at Portland Center Stage

SOCIAL JUSTICE

How the telling of Native stories can be used to re-humanize Native peoples.

Presented by [Advance Gender Equity in the Arts](#)

Monday, April 9, from 2 – 4pm

Moderated by Jacqueline Keeler

Held at: Old Church Concert Hall | 1422 SW 11th Ave, 97201

RESPONSIBILITY TO REPRESENT

What is the artist’s responsibility to their community and how does it inspire/empower the future generation of Indigenous artists?

Presented by [Artists Repertory Theatre](#), [Native American Youth and Family Center](#) (NAYA) and [Native Arts & Cultures Foundation](#)

Monday, April 9, from 7:30 – 9:30pm

Moderated by Alyssa Macy (Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs)

Held at: NAYA | 5135 NE Columbia Blvd, 97218

WOMEN ON STAGE

Women’s voices are becoming a national theatre movement. As we celebrate Native women playwrights, and new work in general, how did we get here and what are the challenges still ahead?

Presented by [The Armory](#) and [Native Arts & Cultures Foundation](#)

Tuesday, April 10, from 5:30 – 6:30pm

Moderated by Portland Center Stage Managing Director Cynthia Fuhrman

Held at: The Armory | 128 NW 11th Ave, 97209

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PLAY DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

The Thanksgiving Play was written during a Joe Dowling Annaghmakerrig Fellowship from the Guthrie Theater (2015) and then workshopped at the U.C. Berkeley Department of Theater (2015). In the spring of 2016, FastHorse was offered a finishing commission from Artists Repertory Theatre's new play development program Table|Room|Stage. *The Thanksgiving Play* was a part of the fall Play Lab during the 2016/2017 season at Center Stage in Baltimore, Maryland. In the fall of 2016, FastHorse further developed the play with a second workshop at Artists Repertory Theatre, followed by an additional workshop in Minneapolis in partnership with The Playwrights' Center. In the fall of 2017, the play was part of Playwrights Horizons' SuperLab program and at The Lark's 24th Annual Playwrights' Week, both in New York City. Following this production, *The Thanksgiving Play* will premiere in New York at Playwrights Horizons in the fall of 2018 and at Cincinnati Playhouse in March of 2019.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Larissa FastHorse (Sicangu Lakota) is an award-winning playwright, director and choreographer based in Santa Monica, California. Larissa's produced plays include *Urban Rez* (Cornerstone Theater Company), *Landless* (AlterTheater), *Average Family* (Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis), *Teaching Disco Squaredancing to Our Elders: a Class Presentation* (Native Voices at the Autry), *Vanishing Point* (Eagle Project) and *Cherokee Family Reunion* (Mountainside Theatre). In 2017, *What Would Crazy Horse Do?* premiered at Kansas City Rep. *The Thanksgiving Play* is FastHorse's newest play which premieres at Artists Repertory Theatre in April 2018, and then will premiere in New York at Playwrights Horizons in the fall, and at Cincinnati Playhouse in March of 2019. Larissa directed the critically acclaimed play, *Our Voices Will Be Heard* (Perseverance Theatre Company) and is developing several new projects to direct with an emphasis on cross-cultural, community-engaged work between Indigenous nations. Additional theatres that have commissioned or developed plays with Larissa include Kennedy Center TYA, Baltimore's Center Stage, Arizona Theatre Company, Mixed Blood, the Center Theatre Group Writer's Workshop and Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor. Larissa was awarded the PEN USA Literary Award for Drama, NEA Distinguished New Play Development Grant, Joe Dowling Annamaghkerrig Fellowship, AATE Distinguished Play Award, Inge Residency, Sundance/Ford Foundation Fellowship, Aurand Harris Fellowship, the UCLA Native American Program Woman of the Year and numerous Ford and NEA Grants. She is a current member of the Playwright's Union, Director's Lab West 2015, Theatre Communications Group board of directors, Playwright's Center Core Writers and is an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Lakota. hoganhorsestudio.com

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Luan Schooler honed her theatre chops at Perseverance Theatre in Alaska, working with then-artistic director Molly Smith on new plays and devised works with wide-ranging artists including Paula Vogel, John Murrell, John Luther Adams and Darrah Cloud. As Literary Manager/Dramaturg for Berkeley Rep, she worked with many luminary writers, including David Edgar, Naomi Iizuka, Salman Rushdie, Dominique Serrand, Rinde Eckert and Robert Fagles, and astute directors Tony Taccone, Mark Wing-Davey, Stephen Wadsworth and Lisa Peterson, among others. She has also worked at Denver Center Theatre Company, Oregon Shakespeare Festival (where she is currently dramaturg for Lisa Peterson's translation of *Hamlet* for OSF's Play On! project), California Shakespeare Festival, A Traveling Jewish Theatre and Shaking the Tree. In 2015, she joined Artists Rep to launch Table|Room|Stage, the theatre's new play development program. With Artists Rep she is developing work with Yussef El Guindi, Larissa FastHorse, Andrea Stolowitz, Linda Alper, Dael Orlandersmith, Hansol Jung, Steve Rathje, Anthony Hudson and Susannah Mars. Luan does production dramaturgy on most of Artists Rep's shows.

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THE THANKSGIVING PLAY

By Larissa FastHorse (Sicangu Lakota)

Directed by Luan Schooler

CAST

Chris Harder*^ as Caden

Caught, Marjorie Prime, The Skin of Our Teeth, We Are Proud to Present..., Intimate Apparel (Artists Rep)

Sarah Lucht*^ as Logan

The Importance of Being Earnest, Trevor, The Skin of Our Teeth, Ten Chimneys (Artists Rep)

Michael O'Connell* as Jaxton

House and Garden (Artists Rep), *The Nether, The Lying Kind, Recent Tragic Events* (Third Rail Rep)

Claire Rigsby+ as Alicia

The Thanksgiving Play (2016 workshop Artists Rep), *A Christmas Carol* (Portland Playhouse), *Fly Guy* (OCT)

CREATIVE TEAM

Director | Luan Schooler

Scenic Designer: [Megan Wilkerson](#) #^

Costume Designer: [Emily Horton](#)

Lighting Designer: [Kristeen Crosser](#) #

Composer/Sound Designer: [Ed Littlefield](#)

Resident Stage Manager: [Carol Ann Wohlmuth](#) *^

Props Master: [Katrina Lind](#)

Resident Fight Choreographer: [Jonathan Cole](#) ~

PRODUCTION TEAM

Producing Director | Shawn Lee

Associate Producer & Production Manager | Kristeen Crosser

Board Op | Alan Cline

Production Assistant | Charlie Capps

Wardrobe | Clare Hungate-Hawk

Technical Director | Nathan Crone

Master Carpenter | Eddie Rivera

Master Electrician | Ronan Kilkelly

Scenic Charge | Sarah Kindler

* *Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers*

The scenic, costume, lighting, projection & sound designers are represented by United Scenic Artists

~ *Member of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society*

^ *Artists Rep Resident Artist*

+ *Equity Membership Candidate*

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ABOUT ARTISTS REPERTORY THEATRE

[Artists Repertory Theatre's](#) mission is to produce intimate, provocative theatre and provide a home for artists and audiences to take creative risks. Artists Rep is Portland's premiere mid-size regional theatre company, and is led by Artistic Director and Interim Managing Director Dámaso Rodríguez. Founded in 1982, Artists Repertory Theatre is the longest-running professional theatre company in Portland. Artists Rep became the 72nd member of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) in 2016 and is an Associate Member of the National New Play Network (NNPN).

Artists Rep's 2017/18 season of play selections for the company's 35th anniversary season can be [found here](#).

Artists Rep has become a significant presence in American regional theatre with a legacy of world, national and regional premieres of provocative new work with the highest standards of stagecraft. The organization is committed to local artists and features a company of Resident Artists, professionals of varied theatre disciplines, who are a driving force behind Artists Rep's creative output and identity.

[RESIDENT ARTISTS](#) – Artists Rep productions feature the work of a core group of over two dozen multidisciplinary theatre professionals. Hailing from around the country, our Resident Artists are nationally renowned and award-winning actors, directors, writers, designers and educators who have chosen to make Portland and Artists Rep their artistic home. Working together and independently, they create inventive and theatrically rich experiences for our audiences while playing a major role in defining Portland's cultural landscape.

[TABLE|ROOM|STAGE](#) – Established in 2015, Table|Room|Stage (T|R|S) is Artists Rep's robust new play program that offers development opportunities for local and national playwrights, and ensures that underrepresented voices are heard on stage. This program strives to make a meaningful impact on diversity, equity and inclusion in the theatre field by mandating opportunities for women writers and writers of color, and cultivating the next generation of theatre-goers. Artists Rep is committed to bringing the exciting work of women, transgender and non-binary writers and writers of color to its stages with this program. Artists Rep's first completed T|R|S commission was *The Talented Ones*, by Yussef El Guindi (2017). The second T|R|S commission is *The Thanksgiving Play*, by Larissa FastHorse (Sicangu Lakota) (2018). Current playwright commissions include: Linda Alper, Larissa FastHorse, Hansol Jung, Dael Orlandersmith, Steve Rathje and Andrea Stolowitz. T|R|S is also developing work with playwrights Anthony Hudson and Susannah Mars. The works created by these writers through T|R|S will establish Artists Rep and Portland as an engine for new play development and will enrich the national new play landscape. To learn more about all the projects, playwrights and programs of T|R|S [visit here](#).

[ARTSHUB](#) – Artists Rep is also home to the ArtsHub, where 12 arts organizations find a home in the building. A diverse range of artists and arts organizations thrive here with access to affordable administrative, performance and rehearsal space, as well as myriad support services. The ArtsHub serves as a community arts center, where performance venues and lobbies buzz with creative energy and Portland's arts-loving audiences gather. Over the past year, Artists Rep hosted 324 rehearsals and more than 602 performances, events and other happenings by 51 groups. To learn about the arts organizations of Artists Rep's ArtsHub [visit here](#).

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The 2017/18 Artists Repertory Theatre season is presented by Ronni Lacroute, David & Christine Vernier, and The Robert & Mercedes Eichholz Foundation. Other season support comes from The Collins Foundation, Oregon Arts Commission, Oregon Community Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation, The Renaissance Foundation, Regional Arts and Culture Council, The Shubert Foundation, Work for Art, and Media Sponsor The Oregonian. *The Thanksgiving Play* is sponsored by Kris Olson & Les Swanson, John & Jan Swanson, U.S. Bank and Boeing.

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