



CONTACT:

Laura Greenawalt
Marketing Director
412-431-4400 x230
lgreenawalt@citytheatrecompany.org
CityTheatreCompany.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**City Theatre Announces Details of
MOMENTUM '18
New Plays at Different Stages
May 31 – June 3, 2018**

**Annual festival creates links to local & national talents:
Singer-Songwriter Jill Sobule, CMU Alum Matt Schatz,
an EQT Young Playwrights Festival winner, and more.**

Pittsburgh, PA (May 10, 2018). The annual **Momentum Festival of New Plays at Different Stages** will close the **2017-18 City Theatre season** with four days of cutting-edge drama, hilarious comedy, music-fueled storytelling, and a chilling new thriller. Opportunities to connect with local and national writers abound, with a Friday night event—New Play Speed Dating—as well as post-show conversations with the artists after each program. Supported by The Fine Foundation, **the festival runs May 31 – June 3, 2018, and is free and open to the public**, though reservations are strongly suggested as seating is limited. Reservations may be made at CityTheatreCompany.org or by calling the box office at 412-431-CITY (2489). Event schedule and project descriptions below.

“We’ve expanded our new play development activities this season, and City’s annual Momentum Festival is the culmination of that effort. I’m thrilled to share the scope of the work that we do: from projects in their earliest stages to a sneak peek at our 2018-19 world premiere of *The Burdens* by Matt Schatz,” said **Clare Drobot, Director of New Play Development**. “It’s especially exciting to have the festival happen in conjunction with the National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere of Carla Ching’s *Nomad Motel*.”

“We’re celebrating diverse artistic voices and exploring everything from a wry take on the trauma of middle school to the blurred lines between love and art, to a satirical look at cultural appropriation through the lens of reality television,” continued Ms. Drobot. “The festival allows us to showcase the tremendous artistic talent in Pittsburgh and to place our community in conversation with national artists.”

Projects include three public play readings: *The Burdens* by **Matt Schatz** (which receives its world premiere at City Theatre in April 2019), *P.Y.G. or The Mis-Education of Dorian Belle* by **Tearrance Arvelle Chisholm**, and *The Haunted* by **Claire Keichel**, plus a private reading of *Threads* by **EQT Young Playwrights Festival alum Mehrnaz Tiv**. In collaboration with the regional chapter of the Dramatists Guild, *In Their Own Voices* will feature local playwrights reading excerpts of unproduced work, as well as a piece by Dramatists Guild Fellow **Eric Michael Holmes (Momentum '18 Playwright in Residence)**. Singer-songwriter **Jill Sobule** will perform a concert version of a solo show in development called **#Fuck7thGrade**, with additional text created by playwright **Liza Birkenmeier**.

MOMENTUM '18 SCHEDULE & EVENT DETAILS

THURSDAY, MAY 31

Threads

By Mehrnaz Tiv

Directed by Maggie Sulka

Private Play Reading Lester Hamburg Studio

A new play about a female owned threading salon in California that investigates the immigrant experience. Written by EQT Young Playwrights Festival 2016 alum and current NYU student, Mehrnaz Tiv.

Cast & Creative Team: Heather Irwin (Karen), Serena El-Khatib (Delara), Jalina McClarin (Leyla), and Tammy Tsai (Meryam); Kristen Link (Director of Education & Accessibility) and Jillian Bradshaw (Artistic Assistant).

FRIDAY, JUNE 1

5:00-7:00 p.m.

Momentum Happy Hour Gordon Lounge

Enjoy drink specials and mingle with the playwrights and artists.

Sign up for **New Play Speed Dating at 6:00 p.m.:** A panel of playwrights, directors, actors, and City Theatre staff will be set up in the lobby for brief and casual one-on-one conversations about their work.

7:00 p.m.

P.Y.G. or The Mis-Education of Dorian Belle

By Terrance Arvelle Chisholm

Directed by Reginald L. Douglas

Play Reading, Lester Hamburg Studio

In this whip-smart send up of reality TV culture, an up-and-coming black rap duo called P.Y.G. are tasked with lending some street cred to white pop idol, Dorian Belle. The rappers quickly begin to question the politics of their roles as the play delves head first into a hilarious and disturbing look at the ins and outs of cultural appropriation.

Cast & Creative Team: Lamar K. Cheston (Blacky Blackerson), LaTrea Rembert (Alexan Da Great), and Quinn Patrick Shannon (Dorian Belle); Gabrielle Kogut (Stage Directions), Megan Monaghan Rivas (Dramaturg), and Taylor Meszaros (Stage Manager).

SATURDAY, JUNE 2

1:00 p.m.

Nomad Motel

By Carla Ching

Directed by Bart DeLorenzo

Performance & Talkback, Main Stage

Following the 1:00 p.m. performance of the National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere of *Nomad Motel*, playwright Carla Ching will be joined by the cast and Director of New Play Development Clare Drobot to answer audience questions and discuss the new play development process.

About *Nomad Motel*: In the not-so-sunny side of California, Alix bounces between motel rooms, taking care of her brothers for her mostly MIA mother. Her classmate Mason is a budding songwriter trying to keep off the radar of his absent father's Hong Kong mafia friends. Together, they must learn to scrape by without giving up their dreams. This world premiere is a coming-of-age tale about making something out of nothing in the land of plenty. On stage through June 3.

Note: A ticket is required to attend the performance at 1:00 p.m., and can be purchased at CityTheatreCompany.org or at the box office. **Talkback will begin at approximately 3:00 p.m., and is free and open to the public.**

4:00 p.m.

In Their Own Voices

Presented in Partnership with The Dramatists Guild

Hosted by Gab Cody and Spencer Whale

Excerpted Readings, Lester Hamburg Studio

Newly added to the Momentum Festival, this continued partnership with the Dramatists Guild celebrates the vibrant Pittsburgh playwriting community. Local writers and national Dramatists Guild Fellow Eric Micha Holmes (Momentum '18 Playwright in Residence) will read excerpts of their own work out loud. Co-hosted by City Theatre Directing/Producing Fellow Spencer Whale and regional Dramatists Guild representative, Gab Cody.

Playwrights: D.T. Burns, Mariah Franklin, Yona Harvey, Matt Henderson, Eric Micha Holmes, Anya Martin, Maureen McGranaghan, Seanan Palmero, Kelsey Robinson, Tammy Ryan, Ayne Terceira, Arlene Weiner, and TJ Young.

Music: Morgan Erina; Artistic Assistant: Gabrielle Kogut.

7:00 p.m.

The Burdens

By Matt Schatz

Directed by Reginald L. Douglas

Play Reading, Lester Hamburg Studio

Siblings Mordy and Jane communicate like proper millennials: primarily through text message and loaded with sarcasm. Their lives flailing on opposite coasts, they hatch an outrageous plan to relieve their mother of the burden of Zad-Zad, their centenarian – and particularly prickly – grandfather. A dark comedy for the digital age, *The Burdens* explores pop culture, connection, and the value of actual face time.

Get a sneak peek: *The Burdens* receives its world premiere at City in April 2019.

Cast & Creative Team: Robin Abramson (Jane) and Alec Silberblatt (Mordy); Morgan Erina (Music), Catherine Kolos (Stage Manager), and Jillian Bradshaw (Artistic Assistant).

9:30 p.m.

#Fuck7thGrade

By Jill Sobule

With additional text by Liza Birkenmeier

Dramaturgy by Clare Drobot

Concert/Solo Show Work in Progress, Lester Hamburg Studio

Hear the songs and stories that warrant the hashtag. Singer/songwriter Jill Sobule—whose 1990s hit tracks include “Supermodel” and “I Kissed a Girl”—takes a tongue-in-cheek view of middle school trauma in *#Fuck7thGrade*. In a City Theatre-led collaboration with playwright Liza Birkenmeier (*Radio Island*, Momentum 2016), Sobule is exploring turning her life into a solo show.

Cast & Creative Team: Jill Sobule; Sarah Powell (artistic assistant)

SUNDAY, JUNE 3

New Play Circle Brunch

By invitation only

Lester Hamburg Studio

An engaged and exciting group of influential theater lovers support City Theatre; their donations help to build sets, design costumes, house actors, and develop new plays by writers at the forefront of the theatre industry. The New Play Circle recognizes some of City’s most generous contributors with an intimate send off to the 2017-18 season. Contact Dianne Duursma for details: 412-431-4400 x278

1:00 p.m.

The Haunted

By Claire Keichel

Directed by Caitlin Sullivan

Play Reading, Lester Hamburg Studio

Sleek and sexy, this eerie play explores the tricky truths of marriage through the eyes of a video performance artist and her older, grounded husband. Something’s amiss in the newlywed’s apartment, but is it the ghosts of past tenants or a more ominous presence? *The Haunted* asks what we sacrifice of our individual selves in service of love.

Cast & Creative Team: Kelsey Robinson (Jayne) and Sam Turich (Leo); Cassandra Clark (Artistic Assistant) and Claire Landuyt (Stage Manager).

BOX OFFICE INFORMATION:

Momentum '18 is free and open to the public. Seating is limited; reservations are suggested. 412.431.CITY (2489) or CityTheatreCompany.org

WHERE:

1300 Bingham Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203 (South Side)
Port Authority bus routes: 48, 51, 54, 81, 83

PARKING:

Patron parking is available in the lot across from the City Theatre entrances for \$8, subject to availability.

ABOUT CITY THEATRE:

City Theatre is Pittsburgh's home for bold new plays. Located in the historic South Side, the company produces a season of regional and world premieres, including *Citizens Market* by Cori Thomas and an NNPN rolling World Premiere *Nomad Motel* by Carla Ching. City Theatre's mission is to provide an artistic home for the development and production of contemporary plays of substance and ideas that engage and challenge a diverse audience.

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