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Northern Stage Welcomes New BOLD Associate Artistic Director Jess Chayes and BOLD Gurley Brown Fellow Virginia Ogden as 2018-19 Season is Launched

(White River Junction, VT – August 28, 2018) Northern Stage announces its 2018-19 Season, a season of plays connected by a theme of peace in a turbulent world. The main stage season is sponsored by Alice Peck Day Memorial Hospital and begins with a rotating repertory of the **2017 Tony Award-winner for Best Play, *Oslo* by J.T. Rogers**, and **Sarah Ruhl's *Dear Elizabeth***. Inspired by the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords between the Israelis and Palestinians, *Oslo* is a deeply personal story about the individuals behind an historic peace negotiation and their all-too-human ambitions. This regional premiere runs September 19 – October 21. *Dear Elizabeth*, October 4 – 28, follows the beautiful and bittersweet friendship between American poets Elizabeth Bishop and Robert Lowell. *Oslo* is sponsored by Casella Resource Solutions and The Norwich Inn, and *Dear Elizabeth* is sponsored by Four Seasons Sotheby's International Realty and Sabil & Sons. **Roald Dahl's *Matilda The Musical*, by Dennis Kelly and Tim Minchin, will bring 30 local young actors to Northern Stage for the holidays.** Another regional premiere, this Tony Award-winning musical follows the struggles of Matilda against her neglectful parents and cruel headmistress in a heartwarming story of empowerment. Playing November 14 – January 1, *Matilda The Musical* is sponsored by La Valley Building Supply, the River Valley Club, and the Upper Valley Aquatic Center.

The new year brings new plays to Northern Stage with the sixth annual New Works Now festival, offering free staged readings January 18 – 19, 2019. Among the pieces will be the inaugural Neukom Institute Literary Arts Award-winner for Playwriting, *Choices People Make* by Jessica Andrewartha. **Northern Stage is thrilled to bring its second production to New York. Jack Neary's *Trick or Treat*, starring Emmy Award-winning Gordon Clapp (*NYPD Blue*), will enjoy a run at 59E59 Theaters January 12 – February 24. Tickets will be available at 59E59.org in November 2018.**

Playwright Marisa Smith, author of 2016's *Mad Love*, returns with the world premiere of *Venus Rising*, January 30 – February 17. This mother-daughter comedy about aging gracefully is sponsored by Coldwell Banker Lifestyles, Stave Puzzles, and Wells Fargo Advisors. *Venus Rising* will be directed by **Northern Stage's new BOLD Associate Artistic Director Jess Chayes**. Chayes comes to Northern Stage from New York with a wealth of experience as a director and founding co-artistic director of The Assembly, with whom she created and directed ten original productions. She has directed at theaters throughout New York (including Broadway associate directing credits for *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *The Snow Geese*, and *Misery*) and across the country and has developed new work with Williamstown Theatre Festival, The Playwrights Center, and New York Theatre Workshop, among others. As a producer, Chayes co-founded the New

Georges Jam, a collaboration-based "performance gym" for early-career theater-makers, and co-curated the Jam on Toast Festival in 2014. "I am thrilled to be joining Northern Stage at this exciting period of growth, bolstered by the BOLD Theater Women's Leadership Circle," says Chayes. "I am inspired by Carol's work and by the passionate Upper Valley audiences, and I am looking forward to joining the community and contributing to bringing excellent new plays to Northern Stage." Next up at Northern Stage will be the one-man show **Buyer & Cellar by Jonathan Tolins, starring Director of Education Eric Love**. This comedy about a struggling actor who works in the Malibu basement mini-mall of megastar Barbra Streisand plays February 27 – March 17 and is sponsored by Pompanoosuc Mills and media partner Vermont Public Radio. **The season concludes with the Tony Award-winning musical Once, featuring a cast of actor-musicians who play their own instruments on stage.** Based on the motion picture written and directed by John Carney, *Once* follows a Dublin street musician about to give up on his dream when a beautiful young woman takes an interest in his haunting love songs. With book by Enda Walsh and Oscar-winning music and lyrics by Glen Hansard and Markéta Irglová, this production plays April 10 – May 19 and is sponsored by Chippers, Mascoma Bank, and White Mountains Insurance.

Last year the Youth Ensemble Studio (YES) partnered with the Vermont Humanities Council to create an original piece of theater based on the 2017 Vermont Reads book, Jacqueline Woodson's *Brown Girl Dreaming*, and was invited to perform the piece at the Partnership for Literacy and Learning Conference in Burlington, VT. Due to the success of that partnership, YES will once again create an original piece of theater using music, movement, and community conversations, inspired by the 2018 Vermont Reads book, Katherine Paterson's *Bread and Roses, Too*. Performances are free and will take place at local libraries October 13 and 14 and at the Barrette Center for the Arts October 15. **Northern Stage is excited to announce that for the first time, the Youth Ensemble Studio will introduce a brand new musical to the American stage.** *Pete(Her) Pan, Jr.* (book by Melvin Tunstall III, music by Michael Thurber & Douglas Lyons, lyrics by Douglas Lyons) is the classic legend of Peter Pan and Wendy as seen through the eyes of Wendy's precocious and daring daughter Jane and runs March 22 – 24, 2019. Tickets are \$19 for students and \$25 for adults.

Northern Stage welcomes back Virginia Ogden as their first BOLD Gurley Brown Fellow. Ogden will assist on main stage productions throughout the season and co-direct the presentation of *Bread and Roses, Too* with fellow theater artists Hannah Ferguson and Zachary Gottschall. Ogden is a recent Dartmouth graduate who participated in the Dartmouth Experiential Term at Northern Stage in the fall of 2016, performing in *Macbeth* and *A Christmas Carol*. Along with BOLD Associate Artistic Director Jess Chayes, Ogden joins the BOLD Theater Women's Leadership Circle, which offers major support for artistic initiatives focused on women artists and creates a formal mentorship program to train and prepare future women artistic directors to lead, create, innovate, and deepen the impact of theater on American culture.

Northern Stage kicks off its 22nd Season with the Lights Up Cabaret on Saturday, September 8, with hors d'oeuvres and beverages, a live auction, and a musical revue entitled "Seasons of Love." Tickets are \$75 and are available at northernstage.org.

Northern Stage (northernstage.org) is a regional non-profit LORT-D professional theater company located in White River Junction, VT. Northern Stage actively engages its audiences with world-class productions and extensive educational and outreach programs in its new home, the Barrette Center for the Arts. Founded in 1997, the company has offered more

than 150 professional productions of new works, classics, and musicals. Now in its 22nd Season, Northern Stage serves over 50,000 people. In 2014, the company launched a new play festival that has cultivated five world premiere productions and two Off-Broadway transfers. A robust educational program focuses on professional training in a nurturing and supportive environment for students of all ages. Offerings include student acting ensembles, a summer musical theater intensive, and an expansive theater-in-the-schools residency program. Northern Stage's breadth of programming supports the company's mission to "change lives, one story at a time."

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