



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***The Women* is a sumptuous, female-forward feast**

Olympia, WA – September 5, 2019 – Harlequin Productions presents Clare Booth Luce’s classic comedy *The Women*, October 3rd through October 26th at the State Theater in downtown Olympia. Guest Director Erin Murray will direct.

Contented, kindly Mary Haines, a well-off woman living in 1930s New York City, is the envy of her friends, with a happy marriage, adorable children, and a comfortable home. Unfortunately, she is living in a fool’s paradise...

*An immensely entertaining, comedic depiction of romantic rivalries, toxic friendships, and the myriad roles women play in society, *The Women* is juicy, wicked, and a feast for the eyes and ears.*

The Women is a 1936 comedy of manners that follows the lives and power struggles of wealthy Manhattan socialites and the newcomers who would usurp them. Though men never appear, their presence is palpable and drives much of the on-stage action. Of the subject-matter, guest director Erin Murray writes, “At first blush, I wanted to dismiss the story under the notion that women no longer live in a patriarchal world spending every moment thinking about pleasing a man and championing his home, but those pressures are still very much alive...I don’t want women to be consumed with getting married for stability and maintaining their physical appearance, I want women to be able to chart their own path and establish their own definition of joy, and part of self-actualizing is accepting the struggles...The women of *The Women* are smart, considerate, and capable of running the world. While the generation depicted in this story was not permitted that option, their insights and instincts live on in the smashing of the ceilings we are targeting today.”

Costumes and set pieces are essential to this sprawling production, which features multiple locations and dozens of sumptuous outfits, wigs and millinery, much of which will be authentically vintage. Veteran costume designer Darren Mills and set designer Bruce Haasl will be taking on the challenge with gusto. Says Mills, “The key to costuming a show this size is organization, knowing everything you need and utilizing all the resources available. We’ll use a combination of our own vintage stock, borrowed and purchased vintage, rentals from The Oregon Shakespeare Festival and we’ll be building some items ourselves.” Murray looks forward to this aspect as well. “We will forefront the class tensions of Manhattan’s Upper East Side in the 1930s while celebrating the many glamorous fashion plates that *The Women* offers. In short: bring Fashion Week to Thurston County.”

Erin Murray makes her Harlequin debut as director of *The Women*. Her recent credits include the Seattle premiere of Annie Baker's *John* (ArtsWest), Jaclyn Backhaus' *You on the Moors Now* (Seattle University), Scott Kaiser's *Shakespeare's Other Women* (Island Shakespeare Festival) and *Bye Bye Birdie* (Centerstage). Other credits include: Anne Washburn's *The Internationalist* (Steppenwolf Garage), Suzanne Heathcote's *I Saw My Neighbor on the Train and I Didn't Even Smile* (Redtwist Theatre), and bilingual Shakespeare productions of *The Taming of the Shrew/ La Fierecilla Domada* and *Twelfth Night/Duodecima Noche* with Seattle Latinx Artist Ana Maria Campoy for Seattle Shakespeare Company's statewide school tours. Education: MFA, Northwestern University; BA, Trinity College Dublin.

The all-female cast of fifteen play a total of thirty-six roles and stars a mix of Harlequin veterans and firsttimers, many of whom are Olympia locals. Returning to Harlequin are **Jessica Weaver** (*Cybeline, The Understudy*), **Charlotte Darling** (*Ruthless!*), **Eleise Moore** (*Ruthless!, First Date*), **Jana Tyrell** (*The Constant Wife, The Importance of Being Earnest*) and **Shauntal Pyper** (*Love and Information*). Making their Harlequin debuts are **Heather Matthews**, **Shannon Lee Clair***, **Jessica Robins**, **Amanda Kemp**, **Teri Lee Thomas**, **Kate Anders**, **Hannah Seymore**, **Katie Medford**, **Kimberlee Wolfson**, and **Paige Doyle**.

WHAT: Harlequin Productions presents *The Women*, a sumptuous classic comedy, directed by Erin Murray.

WHEN: October 3 – October 26, 2019

WHERE: State Theater, 202 4th Ave East, Olympia, WA 98501

TICKETS: Tickets are available online at harlequinproductions.org, by phone at **360-786-0151**, or in person 12-6 pm, Tuesday-Friday and 2 hours before performances at the Harlequin Box Office in the State Theater.

General admission tickets are \$35

Senior 60+/Military \$32

Student/Youths Under 25 \$20

Rush Tickets (half-hour prior to showtime) General \$15; Senior/Military/Student/Under 25 \$12

SPECIAL DATES FOR THE AUDIENCE:

Opening Night: Thursday, October 3, 2019 at 8:00 pm

Pay-What-You-Can: Wednesday, October 9, 2019 at 8:00 pm

Ladies' Night Out: Friday, October 11, 2019 at 8:00 pm

Post-show Talkback: Sunday, October 13, 2019 at 2:00 pm

Pride Night: Friday, October 18, 2019 at 8:00 pm

CATEGORY: Classic Comedy

AGE RECOMMENDATION: All ages with guidance

CAST:

Jessica Weaver	<i>Mary Haines</i>
Shannon Lee Clair*	<i>Sylvia Fowler</i>
Charlotte Darling	<i>Crystal Allen</i>
Jessica Robins	<i>Edith Potter</i>

Amanda Kemp	<i>Peggy Day</i>
Heather Matthews	<i>Nancy Blake/Ensemble</i>
Eleise Moore	<i>Miriam Aarons/Ensemble</i>
Teri Lee Thomas	<i>Countess de Lag/Ensemble</i>
Kate Anders	Jane/Ensemble
Hannah Seymore	Little Mary
Jana Tyrell	Mrs. Morehead/Ensemble
Katie Medford	Olga/Ensemble
Shauntal Pyper	Miss Watts/Ensemble
Kimberlee Wolfson	Lucy/Ensemble
Paige Doyle	Nurse/Ensemble

* Indicates membership in the Actor's Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

Harlequin Productions is a professional not-for-profit theater company in Olympia, WA. We seek to invigorate, educate, and empower our community and all people to feel more, think more, play more, and judge less through the mirror of real live theatre.

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