

# HARLEQUIN

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## What to expect from Harlequin's first-ever repertory season

**Olympia, WA** – September 15, 2021 – On October 22, Harlequin Productions returns to live performances after a twenty-month, pandemic-mandated closure. The 2021 - 2022 season begins with a bang in the form of a three-show, rotating repertory: a first for Harlequin. The three productions in the season - *Tenderly*, *The Rosemary Clooney Musical*, *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*, and *Until the Flood* - each open one week apart and run concurrently for five weeks each. In practice, this means that from the preview of *Until the Flood* on November 4, through the close of *Tenderly* on November 20, patrons will not only have the opportunity to see three different productions in one week, but they can also see all three shows in a single weekend. After the close of *Tenderly*, *A Christmas Carol* will open. From the preview of *A Christmas Carol* on November 24 through the close of *Lady Day*, three productions will continue to perform on the same stage.

The complexity inherent in such an undertaking is enough to explain why this has never been done by the theater. Why now? Artistic Director Aaron Lamb, who has previous experience with rotating repertoires as an actor, wanted to announce Harlequin's return in a big way. Rather than staging one enormous production, which would have incurred great risk due to ongoing health regulations, he chose this approach: three relatively small-cast shows, running simultaneously. Actors will rehearse and perform safely, in a controlled environment, while audiences will have the opportunity to experience something truly unique.

Mr. Lamb selected the shows in the hope that patrons would view all three. Seen together, *Tenderly* and *Lady Day* not only showcase two beloved, extraordinarily talented women, but put into stark relief the rather breathtaking differences in their contemporaneous careers due to racial prejudice. *Until the Flood* pushes this examination further, asking audiences to take a hard look at the racial issues that have come at last to the forefront of American culture.

When it comes to the art, Resident Scenic Designer Jeannie Beirne has arguably the biggest challenge: design a set that can be used by four separate productions, whose component parts can be easily accessible backstage, and which can be "repped out" quickly and easily, often in a few hours. The design she created is a modular set on a wood floor, whose panels and furniture pieces will shift for each production. Subtly depicting a river and inspired by *Until the Flood*, the floor is the through-line for all productions and Ms. Beirne's favorite aspect of the design.

Per the theater's previous press release on 8/23/2021, COVID protocols will be in place at Harlequin. Please see the press release at our website under For Press or view our [COVID Protocols page here](#).

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## PRODUCTIONS

Oct 22 – Nov 20: ***Tenderly, The Rosemary Clooney Musical*** directed by Corey McDaniel

A fresh, personal, and poignant picture of the woman whose unparalleled talent and unbridled personality made her a legend. Starting with Clooney's simple Maysville, Kentucky childhood and following her rise to Hollywood stardom, *Tenderly* weaves her signature songs in and out.

Oct 29 – Nov 27: ***Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*** directed by Jimmy Shields

The time is 1959. The place is a seedy bar in Philadelphia. The audience is about to witness one of Billie Holiday's last performances, given four months before her death. In Lanie Robertson's award-winning play, Holiday lets music tell her story, sharing soulful and heart-wrenching songs from her memorable canon.

Nov 5 – Dec 4: ***Until the Flood*** directed by Faith Bennett Russell

Pulitzer Prize finalist and celebrated performer and playwright Dael Orlandersmith explores the social uprising in Ferguson, Missouri following the shooting of teenager Michael Brown. Pulling from her extensive interviews with Missouri residents, Orlandersmith crafts a stunning theatrical experience that must be seen.

## DIRECTORS

**Corey McDaniel** returns to Harlequin after directing *Noises Off* in 2020. In 2019 he directed *I Ought to be in Pictures*, and in 2018 he starred in Harlequin's production of the one-man show *I Am My Own Wife*. Mr. McDaniel is the founder and producing artistic director of Seattle's Theatre22. As an actor, he has worked throughout the US and internationally and his performance credits have placed him in such reputable arenas as the Fox Theatres, the Hollywood Bowl, Teatro Sistina in Rome, and the Metropolitan Opera House of NYC. Mr. McDaniel's most recent directing credits include *White, Burn This, The Pride, Wizzer Pizzer*, and *The Hours of Life* for Theatre22, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* with Wooden O/Seattle Shakespeare Company, *Treasure Island* with Book-It Repertory Theatre, *Sister Act the Musical, Bonnie and Clyde*, and *Good Kids* at Cornish College of the Arts, *Julius Caesar* with Island Shakespeare Festival and *The Wild Party* for Sound Theatre Company (Gregory Award for Best Musical).

**Jimmy Shields** has had the opportunity to sing and share the stage with the likes of Sugar Ray, Keith Sweat, (the REAL) Lady-A, Kim Archer, and Tiffany Wilson, and to perform for the Seattle Seahawks Season Opener and the Make a Wish Foundation. As an actor, Mr. Shields has performed at Village Theatre, Tacoma Musical Playhouse, or ACT Theatre. As a director and choreographer, his work has been seen at Showtunes Theatre Company, Seattle Repertory Theatre, The 5th Avenue Theatre, Village Theatre, Theatre Puget Sound, and Tacoma Arts Live.

**Faith Bennett Russell** has been an actor, director, teaching artist, and choreographer for 30 plus years. She has a background in radio, was a D.J. for 13 years and hosted the gospel radio show, "Doing the Gospel Thing, with Sister Faith" on Spirit 105.3. Ms. Bennett Russell has served as the Education Assistant Manager for Village Theatre's KIDSTAGE program, and as the host of the Webinar Series "Meet the Masters". Past directing credits include *Legally Blonde* (Showtunes Theatre Co), *CROWNS* (Taproot Theater), *In The Heights* (Village Theater KIDSTAGE), and *Once On This Island* (Studio East).

## CASTS

*Tenderly, The Rosemary Clooney Musical* stars **Meg McLynn** as Rosemary Clooney and features Harlequin veteran **Bruce Haasl** (*The 1940s Radio Hour; First Date*) as the Doctor.

*Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill* stars **Alexandria J. Henderson\*** as Billie Holiday (*The Stardust Christmas Enchantment*).

The cast of *Until the Flood* features **Vincent Orduña** in his Harlequin debut, as well as returning actors **Kristen Natalia** (*Vanya & Sonia & Masha & Spike*), **Nikki Visel** (*Clybourne Park*), and **Gerald B. Browning** (*Love and Information; The 1940s Radio Hour*).

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**WHAT:** Harlequin Productions presents its first repertory season: *Tenderly, The Rosemary Clooney Musical* (Oct 22 – Nov 20), *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill* (Oct 29 – Nov 27), and *Until the Flood* (Nov 5 – Dec 4).

**WHEN:** October 22 – December 4, 2021

**WHERE:** State Theater, 202 4<sup>th</sup> Ave East, Olympia, WA 98501

**TICKETS:** Tickets are available online at [harlequinproductions.org](http://harlequinproductions.org), by phone at **360-786-0151**, in person **12-5:30 pm, Tuesday-Saturday at the Washington Center**, and **2 hours before performances at the State Theater**.

### PRICES:

General admission tickets: \$42/Musicals (*Tenderly; Lady Day*); \$35/Plays (*Until the Flood*)

Senior 60+/Military: \$38/Musicals; \$32/Plays

Student/Youths Under 25: \$25/Musicals; \$20/Plays

Rush Tickets (half-hour to showtime): General \$21/Musicals; \$17/Plays; Senior/Military

\$19/Musicals; \$16/Plays; Student/Under 25 \$12.50/Musicals; \$10/Plays; Teens (all patrons 19 and under); \$5

### SPECIAL DATES FOR THE AUDIENCE:

**Previews:** *Tenderly* Thursday, October 21, 2021 at 7:30 pm; *Lady Day* Thursday, October 28, 2021 at 7:30 pm; *Until the Flood* Thursday, November 4, 2021 at 7:30 pm

*Tickets to the Previews are \$20 General Admission*

**Opening Nights:** *Tenderly* Friday, October 22, 2021 at 7:30 pm; *Lady Day* Friday, October 29, 2021 at 7:30 pm; *Until the Flood* Friday, November 5, 2021 at 7:30 pm

**Pay-What-You-Can:** TBA

**CATEGORY:** Musical; Musical; Drama

**AGE RECOMMENDATION:** All ages with guidance (some strong language and adult content)

\* 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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