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**WOMEN'S PROJECT THEATER ANNOUNCES
INITIAL CASTING FOR THE NEW YORK PREMIERE OF**

DEAR ELIZABETH

WRITTEN BY SARAH RUHL

DIRECTED BY KATE WHORISKEY



ROTATING CAST OF LUMINARIES INCLUDES:

**DAVID AARON BAKER, KATHLEEN CHALFANT, RINDE ECKERT,
CHERRY JONES, MIA KATIGBAK, ELLEN MCLAUGHLIN, J. SMITH-CAMERON,
JOHN DOUGLAS THOMPSON, HARRIS YULIN AND POLLY NOONAN**

ADDITIONAL CASTING SOON TO BE ANNOUNCED

OCTOBER 26 - DECEMBER 5, 2015

****TICKETS ARE NOW ON-SALE****

(New York, NY) **Women's Project Theater**, under the leadership of **Producing Artistic Director Lisa McNulty** and **Managing Director Maureen Moynihan**, is thrilled to announce the rotating casts for the New York premiere of **DEAR ELIZABETH**, the inaugural production at the WP's new theatrical home the McGinn/Cazale Theatre, 2162 Broadway (at 76th Street). Written by two-time Pulitzer Nominee and Tony Nominee **Sarah Ruhl** (*The Oldest Boy, In the Next Room, or the vibrator play*) and directed by **Kate Whoriskey** (*Ruined, Sweat*), this insightful and impassioned examination of the famed correspondence between Elizabeth Bishop and Robert Lowell - two of the twentieth century's most brilliant poets - will be presented from October 26 through December 5, 2015 with six rotating casts of stage and screen luminaries.

DEAR ELIZABETH tells a tale of unconventional friendship and intimacy that spanned thirty years and more than 400 letters, with postmarks from Maine to Key West, from London to South America. This portrayal of Bishop and Lowell's lives, work, and the true nature of friendship will be performed from October 26 – 31 by WP Theater founding artist, Tony Award nominee and Drama Desk, Obie & Outer Critics Circle Award winner **Kathleen Chalfant** (*Wit, Angels in America*) & Drama Desk nominee **Harris Yulin** (*Hedda Gabler, Diary of Anne Frank*); from November 2 – 7 by Obie Award & Drama Desk Award winner **J. Smith-Cameron** (*Juno and the Paycock, Fuddy Meers*) & Obie Award winner **John Douglas Thompson** (*Othello, Satchmo at the Waldorf*); from November 16 – 21 by two-time Tony Award winner and Emmy Award winner **Cherry Jones** (*Doubt, "24"*) & **David Aaron Baker** (*Once Upon A Mattress, A Raisin in the Sun*); from November 23 – 28 by real-life married couple **Ellen McLaughlin** (*Angels in America*) & Grammy winner and Pulitzer finalist **Rinde Eckert** (*Slow Fire, And God Created Great Whales*); and from November 30 – December 5 Obie & Lortel Award winner **Mia Katigbak** (*Awake and Sing!*). Helen Hayes Nominee **Polly Noonan** (*Dead Man's Cell Phone*) will play the "Stage Manager" role for all six weeks. Additional casting to be announced shortly.

The *DEAR ELIZABETH* design team features Set Design by **Antje Ellermann** (*Abigail/1702, Liberty City*), Costume Design by **Anita Yavich** (*Venus in Fur, Fool for Love*), Lighting Design by **Mary Louise Geiger** (*The Constant Wife, Buffalo Gal*), Sound Design by **Jill BC Du Boff** (*Hand to God, Disgraced*) & **Emily Auciello** (Assoc., *Of Good Stock*) and casting by **Kelly Gillespie** (Assoc., Manhattan Theatre Club) & **David Caparelliotis** (*Disgraced, It's Only A Play*).

Tickets for *DEAR ELIZABETH* are now on sale via WWW.WPTHEATER.ORG / (212) 765-1706. The performance schedule is as follows: Monday – Thursday at 7:30pm, Friday at 8:00pm and Saturday at 3:00pm & 8:00pm.

BIOGRAPHIES

OCTOBER 26 – 31: KATHLEEN CHALFANT & HARRIS YULIN

KATHLEEN CHALFANT (*Elizabeth*) BROADWAY: *Angels in America* (Tony and Drama Desk nominations), *Racing Demon, Dance With Me*. OFF-BROADWAY: *Wit* (Drama Desk, Lucille Lortel, Outer Critics Circle, Drama League, Connecticut Critics Circle, and Obie Awards), *A Walk in the Woods* (Drama Desk nomination), *Tales from Red Vienna, Miss Ovington & Dr. Dubois, Somewhere Fun, Red Dog Howls, Painting Churches, Talking Heads* (Obie Award), *Vita & Virginia, Dead Man's Cell Phone, Spalding Grey: Stories Left to Tell, Bloomer Girl, Nine Armenians* (Drama Desk nomination), *Far Away, Twelve Dreams, Henry V* (Callaway Award). OTHER NY CREDITS: *The Vagina Monologues, True History and Real Adventures, Phaedra in Delirium, Iphigenia and Other Daughters, Endgame, The Party, Sister Mary Ignatius..., The Investigation of the Murder in El Salvador*. LONDON & LOS ANGELES: Ovation Awards for both *Wit* and *Red Dog Howls*. SELECT REGIONAL THEATRE: McCarter, Berkley Rep, Guthrie, Yale Rep, Long Wharf, Yale Repertory Theatre, Arena Stage, Hartford Stage, Mark Taper Forum, ATL, Sundance Lab. FILM: *Isn't it Delicious?, R.I.P.D., The Bath, In Bed With Ulysses, Lillian, Duplicity, The People Speak, Lackawanna Blues, Perfect Stranger, The Last New Yorker, Second Guessing Grandma, Dark Water, Kinsey, Laramie Project, Random Hearts, A Price Below Rubies, Murder and Murder*. SELECT TELEVISION Recurring on "The Affair," "The Strain," "The Americans," "House of Cards," "Rescue Me," "The Book of Daniel," "The Guardian," "Jo," "Law and Order" and "One Life to Live"; also "Madam Secretary," "Forever," "Heartbreaker," "Elementary," "Mercy," "Muhammad Ali's Greatest Fight" (HBO), "Benjamin Franklin," "Lackawanna Blues" (HBO), "Georgia O'Keeffe" (Lifetime), "Voices from the White House" (PBS), "A Death in the Family" (PBS), "Storm of the Century". AWARDS: 1996 OBIE Award for Sustained Excellence, 2004 Lortel Award for Sustained Excellence of Performance, 2015 Lifetime Achievement Award from the League of Professional Women. She has received the Drama League and Sidney Kingsley Awards for her body of work and holds an honorary doctorate in Humane Letters from Cooper Union.

HARRIS YULIN (*Robert*) has appeared on Broadway in *Hedda Gabler, The Price, The Diary of Anne Frank, The Visit, A Lesson From Aloes, and Watch On The Rhine*. His off-Broadway credits include *Raindance* at Signature Theatre; *Don Juan In Hell* at Symphony Space; Steve Tesich's *Arts And Leisure* at Playwrights Horizons; Tina Howe's *Approaching Zanzibar* at Second Stage; *Hamlet, King John, Richard III, and A Midsummer Night's Dream* at New York Shakespeare Festival; and *Mrs. Warren's Profession* and *Hedda*

Gabler at Roundabout. Regional credits include *Finishing the Picture* at Goodman Theatre; a recent appearance in the title role of *King Lear* at New Jersey Shakespeare Festival; *The Talking Cure* at Mark Taper Forum; *Tartuffe* at the Guthrie and Arena Stage; *Henry V* at Hartford Stage; and *The Tempest* at Shakespeare & Co. Mr. Yulin's directing credits include Horton Foote's *The Prisoner's Song* at Ensemble Studio Theatre; Conor McPherson's *This Lime Tree Bower* at Primary Stages; *Don Juan In Hell* in London (Riverside Studios) and in New York (Symphony Space), Steve Tesich's *Baba Goya* (Second Stage), Adele Shank's *Winter Play* at Second Stage; *Candida* at the Shaw Festival; and *The Front Page* and *The Guardsman* at Long Wharf. His television credits include "Muhammad Ali's Greatest Fight," "Mister Sterling," "24," "Buffy The Vampire Slayer," "Frasier" (Emmy Nomination), and "La Femme Nikita" (Emmy Nomination). His film credits include *Fur*, *The Place Beyond the Pines*, *The Emperor's Club*, *Training Day*, *The Million Dollar Hotel*, *The Hurricane*, *Looking for Richard*, *Murder at 1600*, *Multiplicity*, *Clear and Present Danger*, and *Scarface*.

NOVEMBER 2 – 7: J. SMITH-CAMERON & JOHN DOUGLAS THOMPSON

J. SMITH-CAMERON (*Elizabeth*) has appeared in numerous theatre productions off and on Broadway. Highlights include *Our Country's Good* (Tony® nomination), *Sarah, Sarah* (Drama Desk nomination), *Fuddy Meers* (Outer Critics and Drama Desk nominations), and *As Bees In Honey Drown* (Obie award, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics nominations). Recent credits include a critically acclaimed run as the title character in *Juno And The Paycock* at the Irish Repertory Theatre in NYC, as well as Richard Nelson's *Sorry and Sweet and Sad* (Drama Desk and Obie awards) at the Public and *That Hopey Changey Thing* by the same author. Also *Midsummer Night's Dream* at La Jolla Playhouse and *The Starry Messenger* by Kenneth Lonergan at the New Group. TV work includes a Series Regular role on SUNDANCE'S "Rectify" and a Recurring Role on HBO's "True Blood." Recent film work includes Frank Whaley's *Like Sunday, Like Rain*, and J. also stars opposite Anna Paquin in Kenneth Lonergan's film *Margaret*, which won her the Best Supporting Actress award for the International Cinephile Society.

JOHN DOUGLAS THOMPSON (Robert) won Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards for Outstanding Solo Performance for his portrayal of Louis Armstrong in *Satchmo at the Waldorf*. Shakespeare & Company: *Richard III*, *Othello*, *The Dreamer Examines His Pillow*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *King Lear*. Joe Mott in *The Iceman Cometh* with Nathan Lane and Brian Dennehy at the Goodman Theatre, Kent in *King Lear* at the Public Theater with Sam Waterston, *Macbeth* at TFANA, Marc Antony in *Antony and Cleopatra* at Hartford Stage with Kate Mulgrew, Gennady in *The Forest* at CSC with Dianne Wiest, Brutus Jones in *The Emperor Jones* at The Irish Rep (Lucille Lortel, Drama League and Drama Desk nominations), *Othello* at TFANA (OBIE, Lucille Lortel Award, Drama League nomination, AUDELCO nomination). Broadway: *A Time to Kill*, LeBret in *Cyrano* with Kevin Kline and Jennifer Garner, and *Julius Caesar* with Denzel Washington. International credits: Hotspur in *Henry IV* (Royal Shakespeare Company). Other off-Broadway credits: *Women Beware Women* (Red Bull), Enobarbus in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Orombo in *Oroonoko* (TFANA, AUDELCO nomination), Judge Brack in *Hedda Gabler* (NYTW), Edgar in *King Lear* (Classical Theater of Harlem, AUDELCO nomination). Regional credits: Lucious Jenkins in *Jesus Hopped the A Train* (The Wilma Theater, Barrymore Award), Williamstown Theater, Trinity Rep, Shakespeare & Company, ART. TV/FILM: *Law and Order*, *Conviction*, *Michael Clayton*, *Midway*, *Malcolm X*.

NOVEMBER 9 – 14: TO BE ANNOUNCED

NOVEMBER 16 – 21: CHERRY JONES & DAVID AARON BAKER

CHERRY JONES (*Elizabeth*) starred most recently in the triumphant Broadway revival of Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* (Tony Nomination), which originated at the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she is a founding member and where earlier in her career she appeared in more than 25 productions including *Twelfth Night*, *Three Sisters* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. Broadway and Off-Broadway: *Doubt* (Tony, Drama Desk, Lucille Lortel, Outer Critics Circle and Obie Awards), Lincoln Center Theater's production of *The Heiress* (Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards); *Pride's Crossing* (Drama Desk Award); *When We Were Young and Unafraid*; *The Baltimore Waltz* (Obie Award); *Faith Healer*; *Flesh and Blood*; *Imaginary Friends*; *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (Tony Award nomination); *Angels in America*; *Our Country's Good* (Tony Award nomination); and Roundabout Theatre Company's productions of *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, *Major Barbara* and *The Night of the Iguana*. Television: President Allison Taylor in "24" (Emmy Award), "What Makes a Family," "Awake," the next season of

“Transparent” on Amazon, the upcoming series “Mercy Street,” and the upcoming mini-series “11/22/63” starring James Franco. Film: *Ocean’s Twelve*, *Cradle Will Rock*, *The Horse Whisperer*, *The Perfect Storm*, *Erin Brockovich*, *Signs*, *The Village*, *Mother and Child*, *Swimmers*, the upcoming films *I Saw the Light*, and *Fun House* opposite Tina Fey.

DAVID AARON BAKER (*Robert*) is thrilled to once more share the stage with Cherry Jones after playing her husband in Jon Robin Baitz’s play, *The Film Society*, directed by the late Roger Rees, at The Williamstown Theater Festival in 1997. David had the great fortune to work with Sarah Ruhl in 2008, when he performed in the Playwrights Horizons production of her play *Dead Man’s Cell Phone*. He is honored to work again with these extraordinary artists. David attended Illinois State University, received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Texas – Austin and a diploma from The Julliard School.

NOVEMBER 23 – 28: ELLEN MCLAUGHLIN & RINDE ECKERT

ELLEN MCLAUGHLIN (*Elizabeth*) Acting work includes originating the part of the Angel in *Angels in America*, playing the role in workshops and regional productions through its Broadway run in 1993-1994. Other favorite work includes the Homebody in Bart Sher’s production of *Homebody/Kabul* (Intiman, Seattle, WA), Pirate Jenny in *A Threepenny Opera* (Trinity Rep. Elliot Norton Award), Claire in Albee’s *A Delicate Balance*, (Arena Stage, Yale Repertory Theater), Margie in *Good People* (George St. Playhouse. Seattle Rep.) and Rosemary in *Outside Mullingar* (George St. Playhouse.) New York credits include: *String of Pearls* (Primary Stages), *Blue Window* (Manhattan Theater Club), and *A Bright Room Called Day* (Public Theater). Television work includes several appearances on “Law and Order”. McLaughlin is also a playwright.

RINDE ECKERT (*Robert*) is a writer, composer, librettist, musician, performer and director. His Opera / New Music Theatre productions have toured throughout America and to major theater festivals in Europe and Asia. Eckert began his career as a writer and performer in the 1980’s, writing librettos for Paul Dresher (*Pioneer*, *Power Failure*, *Slow Fire*, *Ravenshead*). He composed dance scores for choreographers Sarah Shelton Mann and Margaret Jenkins, including the evening-length *Woman, Window, Square* for The Margaret Jenkins Dance Company. Rinde began composing and performing his own music/theater works in 1992 with *The Gardening of Thomas D*, an homage to Dante which subsequently toured the United States and France. Staged works for solo performer include *Becoming...Unusual: The Education of an Eclectic*; three one-act plays: *An Idiot Divine*, *Romeo Sierra Tango* and *Quit This House*; and works for radio including *Shoot the Moving Things* and *Four Songs Lost in a Wall*. Writing credits for the theater include *Highway Ulysses*, *Horizon*, *Orpheus X*, *And God Created Great Whales*, which has been produced three times with the original cast and director, for a total of 227 performances. *And God Created Great Whales*, *Horizon* and *Orpheus X* have run off-Broadway, garnering Drama Desk Nominations and the Lucille Lortel Award. Rinde has received numerous honors and awards for his body of work. In 2012 he was named an inaugural Doris Duke Artist, was honored to receive the 2009 Alpert Award in the Arts for Theatre, a 2007 Guggenheim Fellowship, and The American Academy of Arts and Letters 2005 Marc Blitzstein Award. In 2007 Rinde Eckert was the finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama. Eckert wrote the text and performed in the multi-media production *Slide* with composer/guitarist Mackey and the new music ensemble 8th blackbird, which toured to major university campuses and the Ojai Festival. Renamed *Lonely Motel* by Cedille Records, the project won the 2011 Grammy Award for Best Small Ensemble Performance. Eckert and Mackey are members of BIG FARM, a ‘prog-rock’ super group with drummer Jason Treuting (So Percussion) and bassist Mark Haanstra. Rinde Eckert’s own uniquely eclectic music is released on Germany’s Intuition label and through Songline/Tonefield Productions.

NOVEMBER 30 – DECEMBER 5: MIA KATIGBAK & TO BE ANNOUNCED

MIA KATIGBAK (*Elizabeth*) NYC: Most recent: *Awake & Sing!* NAATCO (Obie Award); *Washeteria* (Soho Rep); *A Beautiful Day in November...Great Lakes* (New Georges/Women’s Project), *Scenes from a Marriage* (New York Theater Workshop). Other NYC: Public Theater, Foundry Theater, Civilians, Ma-Yi, Target Margin, Clubbed Thumb, Intar, Pan Asian Rep. Regional: Berkeley Repertory Theater (CA), Swine Palace (LA), Guthrie (MN). International: Manila, Philippines; Abu Dhabi, UAE. Film: *I Smile Back*, *Clutter*, *Slow Jam King*. TV: “Mysteries of Laura,” “Chicago PD,” “Conviction.” Artistic Producing Director and co-founder, NAATCO (National Asian American Theatre Company). Founding director, CAATA (Consortium of Asian American Theaters & Artists). Other awards: Lucille Lortel, Lee Reynolds Awards (League of

Professional Theatre Women); Actors Equity's Rosetta LeNoire Award, in recognition of her "artistic contribution to the universality of the human experience in the American theater"; New Dramatists' Charles Bowden Actor Award. BA, Barnard College; MA, Columbia University.

POLLY NOONAN (*Stage Manager*) has worked on many of Sarah Ruhl's plays, including *In the Next Room, or The Vibrator Play* (Victory Gardens Theatre, Jeff nomination), *Late, A Cowboy Song* (Piven Theatre Workshop), *Dead Man's Cell Phone* (Woolly Mammoth Theatre, Helen Hayes nomination; Steppenwolf Theatre Company; Mosaic Theatre), *Passion Play* (Arena Stage, Helen Hayes nomination; Goodman Theatre, After Dark Award, Jeff nomination; Yale Rep Theatre, Epic Theatre Ensemble), *Eurydice* (Madison Repertory Theatre; Piven), *Melancholy Play* (Piven; Echo Theater Company), and *Orlando* (Piven; The Actors' Gang). Her other credits include *A Brief History of America* (Drama League Directors Project), *Careless Love* (Soho Rep), *Brilliant Traces, American Voices* (Piven); *Methusalem, Accidental Death of an Anarchist, The Balcony* (New Criminals); *Ajax* (Theater of War); and development of new work at Sundance, Geva Theatre Center, New Dramatists, Soho Rep, Sewanee and REDCAT. Film credits include *Welcome to Me, Novocaine, High Fidelity, Arizona Dream, and Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. Polly is on the cover of the Lemonhead's album *It's a Shame About Ray* and can be heard on track 11 of *Lovey*.

WOMEN'S PROJECT THEATER (WP) is the nation's oldest and largest theater company dedicated to developing, producing and promoting the work of female theater artists at every stage in their careers. WP Theater supports female-identified theater artists and the world-class, groundbreaking work they create, and provides a platform where their voices can be heard and celebrated on the American stage. Founded in 1978 by visionary producer, Julia Miles, WP has been the launching pad for many of our nation's most important theater artists. Eve Ensler, María Irene Fornés, Katori Hall, Pam MacKinnon, Lynn Nottage and Leigh Silverman, among many, many others, all found early artistic homes here. Throughout its 38 year history, WP has produced over 600 main stage productions and developmental projects, and published 11 anthologies of plays. No other producing institution in the country can claim this kind of ongoing history of advocacy and support for women in the theater, and we look ahead to the next generation of artists who will also begin their careers here.

WP Theater accomplishes its mission through several fundamental programs: the WP Lab, a two-year mentorship and new play development program for women playwrights, directors, and producers; the Playwright In Residence commissioning program; the Developmental series; and the Main Stage series, which features a full season of Off-Broadway productions written and directed by extraordinary theater artists.

LISA MCNULTY (Producing Artistic Director). Lisa is in her second season as Producing Artistic Director of Women's Project Theater. Lisa comes to WP from MTC, where she served as Artistic Line Producer for eight seasons, working on more than 30 productions both on and off Broadway, including plays by Lynn Nottage, Sarah Treem, Harvey Fierstein, and Tarell Alvin McCraney, among many, many others. Lisa has a long history with WP Theater. She was originally hired by the company's founder, Julia Miles, as the Literary Manager from 1997-2000, where she dramaturged work by María Irene Fornés, Julie Hébert, and Karen Hartman, among others, and in 2004, she returned to WP as its Associate Artistic Director. From 2000-2004 she was McCarter Theater's Producing Associate, and her independent producing career includes projects with Sarah Ruhl, Todd Almond, and Lucy Thurber.

MAUREEN MOYNIHAN (Managing Director) Maureen started her career in Chicago working for the Steppenwolf Theatre Company and commercial producer Fox Theatricals. Prior to joining WP Theater, Maureen spent over a decade working for Blue Man Productions in several positions including serving as their Executive Director for five North American Productions. Since moving to New York, she has worked for several nonprofit and commercial organizations including Manhattan New Music Project, York Theatre Company and the immersive theatrical experience *Queen of the Night*.

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