Jungle Theater’s New Artistic Director Opens 26th Season with Shakespeare Comedy, The Two Gentlemen of Verona
Sarah Rasmussen directs all-female cast in an opulent production, on stage Feb. 12-Mar. 27

(MINNEAPOLIS; January 7, 2016) – To kick off her first season as the Jungle Theater's Artistic Director, Sarah Rasmussen will direct THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA, one of William Shakespeare’s first plays. With twists that echo in his later work, this lavish production honors and mirrors Elizabethan tradition with an all-female cast. The new version also offers a modern take on Shakespeare’s own Globe Theatre, bringing 24 seats on stage to create a dynamic connection between actors and audience. The Two Gentlemen of Verona opens February 12 and runs through March 27 at the Lyn-Lake neighborhood theater, 2951 Lyndale Ave. So. in Minneapolis.

Ivey Award-winning Christiana Clark returns to the Twin Cities to reprise her role as Proteus, which she performed at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) in August 2014 with Rasmussen at the helm. Costume designer Moria Sine Clinton, who created the sumptuous costumes for the Jungle’s In the Next Room, designed for OSF and this production as well. Rasmussen directed the Jungle’s In the Next Room in 2012, which won the IVEY Award for Overall Excellence in 2013.

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Far more than a gimmick or a superficial gesture towards equality, this Jungle show offers ample proof that an all-female cast can transform and illuminate the familiar texts—and in this case, even improve them. Joining Clark on stage is a multigenerational cast featuring Shá Cage, Maggie Chestovich, George Keller, Barbara Kingsley, Lenne Klingaman, Wendy Lehr, Mo Perry, Andrea San Miguel and ensemble members Taylor Harvey, Maia Hernandez, Am’ber Montgomery, Madelyn Pham and Lily Wangrin.

This winning comedy asks, “Is all really fair in love?” Young Proteus (Clark) only has eyes for his hometown sweetheart, Julia (Chestovich). But on a trip to Milan, he gets one look at the lovely Sylvia (Klingaman)…and dumps Julia in a heartbeat. Two problems: Sylvia is his best friend’s girl, and Julia won’t be dumped that easily. Add a band of outlaws, an outraged father and bad-mannered dog (played by Bear, George Keller’s real-life animal companion), and it’s friend versus friend in this wild tale of friendship and forgiveness.

Scenic design is by Andrew Boyce, who is adapting the OSF set for the intimate Jungle stage. Rounding out Rasmussen’s creative team are Barry Browning (lighting designer), Andre Pluess (composer/sound designer) collaborating with Sean Healey (sound designer), and John Stillwell (technical director).

New this Season
For this production only, there will be 24 onstage seats, offering an up-close and personal look at the production from the actors’ point of view. Stage seats for all performances are $20 each or $16 for groups of 10 or more. Also new this year is the “$25 Under 30” program where anyone under 30 years old can purchase Friday night tickets for $25 (rather than the usual $48). The 2016 Season introduces the Jungle’s “Come Early Stay Late” program, which will offer pre- and post-show conversations at every performance. Come early (one hour prior to curtain) and stay late sessions (immediately following the show) will give audience members the opportunity to discuss the play’s themes and ideas with people in the know.

Ticket information
Performances of The Two Gentlemen of Verona are Tuesdays ($28), Wednesdays ($35) and Thursdays ($40) at 7:30 p.m.; Fridays ($45) and Saturdays at 8 p.m. ($48); Sundays at 2 p.m. ($40) and 7:30 p.m. ($35). Senior, student and group discounts are also available, and rush tickets are offered every night of the week based on availability at 30 minutes prior to the performance for $10 off the regular price for adults and half-price for students. Tickets are available at (612) 822-7063 or online at www.jungletheater.com
THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA
By William Shakespeare
Directed by Sarah Rasmussen
February 12-March 27, 2016
The Jungle Theater
2951 Lyndale Av. S., Minneapolis
Tickets: $25-$48 (on stage $20)
Box office: 612-822-7063 or www.jungletheater.com

Dates
Opening Night Friday February 12 @ 8:00 p.m.
Media Night Friday February 12 @ 8:00 p.m.
Audio-Described Thursday February 25 @ 7:30 p.m.
Closes Sunday March 27 @ 7:30 p.m.

About the Jungle Theater
The Jungle Theater is one of the region’s most dynamic theaters, renowned for its definitive productions of plays drawn from our rich theatrical heritage as well as from the body of work written in our own time. Since its founding in 1991, the Jungle has been a flagship example of the transformative power of the performing arts, playing a vital, continuing role in the economic, social and cultural life of its Minneapolis Lyn-Lake neighborhood.

About Artistic Director Sarah Rasmussen
Sarah Rasmussen was appointed Artistic Director in summer 2015. She labels her vision for the theater “Yes, and…”: Yes to continuing to distinguish the Jungle with compelling stories that respect the intelligence of audiences, and to creating space for new voices that spark meaningful dialogue. Rasmussen will continue to focus on masterful acting and exquisite design—hallmarks of the Jungle for more than 25 years.

Rasmussen most recently served as Associate Professor and Head of the MFA Directing Program at the University of Texas at Austin. She is the recipient of the 2011 Princess Grace Award, Drama League and Fulbright Fellowships and alum of the Lincoln Center Directors Lab. She served for three seasons as Resident Director for Oregon Shakespeare Festival’s Black Swan Lab, a new work development program.

She directed the Jungle’s In the Next Room in 2012, which won the IVEY Award for overall excellence. She served as assistant director for the same show on Broadway. Locally, she also has directed shows for Mixed Blood Theatre (Crashing the Party), Ten Thousand Things Theatre (Dear World, The Seven), and at The Playwrights’ Center.

Nationally, she has directed and developed new work at the Dallas Theater Center, Humana Festival, Marin Theatre Company, O’Neill Playwrights Conference, La Jolla Playhouse, Hangar Theater, SoHo Rep Writer/Director Lab, PlayPenn, Women’s Project Theater, The Lark, and many others. In Spring 2015, she directed a new adaptation of Jane Austen’s Sense and Sensibility for Dallas Theater Center.

A native of South Dakota, Rasmussen first began directing theater in her hometown of Sisseton as a teenager, inspired by the shows she had seen at Children’s Theatre Company and the Guthrie Theater. She graduated summa cum laude in 2001 from St. Olaf College with a B.A. in theater and English and earned an MFA in directing from the University of California San Diego.