



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media contact: Susan E. Evans

Media phone: 925.283.6673

Email: press@TownHallTheatre.com;

Susan.Evans@TownHallTheatre.com

TOWN HALL THEATRE ANNOUNCES

A CIVIL WAR CHRISTMAS: An American Musical Celebration

OCTOBER 20, 2017 – Town Hall Theatre “Generations” Season 2017-2018 celebrates this holiday season with the warm and deeply-moving musical play, ***A CIVIL WAR CHRISTMAS: An American Musical Celebration***, by Pulitzer Prize-winner Paula Vogel, with music by Daryl Waters. ***A CIVIL WAR CHRISTMAS*** will have 12 performances, including two previews, November 30 through December 16, 2017, at Town Hall Theatre Company, 3535 School Street, in Lafayette, CA. Tickets are \$18 - \$30, and are available through the Box Office at (925) 283-1557 or online at www.TownHallTheatre.com.

THT will host three Special Events for ***A CIVIL WAR CHRISTMAS: Opening Night*** gala, on Saturday, December 2, 2017; *LIT UP at Town Hall*, a literary salon, on Wednesday, December 6, 2017; and Theatre Club, our post-show talk-back with complimentary wine, Friday, December 8, 2017. As an extra holiday treat, the Contra Costa Performing Arts Society will be providing music in our lobby before every performance.

THT's production of ***A CIVIL WAR CHRISTMAS*** is directed by Dawn Monique Williams, with music direction by Margaret Halbig, and features an impressively large and multi-talented ensemble of local performers, who also perform as musicians in the show: Reginald Clay, Elizabeth Curtis, Jason Gray, Eleanor "Ellie" Harris, Nick Mandracchia, Shannon Mauldin, Khary L. Moye, Morgan Pavey, Tom

Reilly, Lindsey Schmeltzer, Jeunée Simon, Terrance Smith, Alicia von Kugelgen, and Dan Wilson.

“A beautifully stitched tapestry of American lives in transition ... this unusual holiday pageant represents an illuminating alternative to the often garish or sentimental holiday fare ...” *NY Times*

Ms. Vogel sets her play on the bitterly cold Christmas Eve of 1864, in Washington, D.C. In the White House, President and Mrs. Lincoln plan their gift-giving, while on the banks of the frozen Potomac a young rebel soldier is captured by a Union blacksmith; nearby John Wilkes Booth hatches a plot with conspirators; and an enslaved woman and her daughter become separated on their journey to freedom. Featuring hymns and carols of the period, Ms. Vogel's ***A Civil War Christmas*** masterfully interweaves stories of lives from both sides of the Civil War, sharing messages of compassion, good will and wishes for peace.

“We are often given very isolated narratives and accounts of the Civil War and to look at just one night in the lives of such a cross section of folk is deeply moving, and affirming,” says director Dawn Monique Williams. “I'm glad that Paula Vogel wrote this story of hope; it is uniquely American and certainly asks us to go on a journey with spirits from our past, present, and future.”

Originally commissioned by the Arena Stage, ***A Civil War Christmas*** received its world premiere in 2008 at the Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven, Connecticut. In December 2009, TheatreWorks presented the West Coast Premiere of the play.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Paula Vogel's plays include *Indecent*, *How I Learned to Drive* (Pulitzer Prize, New York Drama Critics Award, Obie Award, Lucille Lortel, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle), *A Civil War Christmas*, *The Long Christmas Ride Home*, *The Mineola Twins*, *Hot 'N' Throbbing*, *The Baltimore Waltz*, *Desdemona*, *And Baby Makes Seven*,

and *The Oldest Profession*. Her plays have been produced by Second Stage, New York Theatre Workshop, the Vineyard Theatre, Roundabout and Circle Repertory, and regionally around the country at Center Stage, Woolly Mammoth, the Goodman Theatre, the Magic Theatre and Berkeley Repertory Theatre, among many others. Ms. Vogel's many awards include two Obies, a Guggenheim, a Pew Charitable Trust Award and numerous fellowships. She is also honored by three awards given in her name. A renowned teacher of playwriting, Ms. Vogel counts among her former students Sarah Ruhl, Lynn Nottage, Quiara Alegría Hudes and Nilo Cruz. Most recently, she received the Dramatists Guild of America's Hull-Warriner Award honoring works dealing with social, political or religious mores of the time for her play *Indecent*, which marked her Broadway debut this year, after some 22 plays.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Dawn Monique Williams, a native of Oakland, is drawn to heightened language, magic realism, mythology, and poetic diction. She is a resident artist at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival where this year she directed *Merry Wives of Windsor*. A 2016 Princess Grace Theatre Fellowship recipient and former OSF Killian Directing Fellow, Dawn's recent directing credits include *Romeo and Juliet*, August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson*, and Lynn Nottage's *By The Way, Meet Vera Stark*. Other plays directed include the English language premiere of Gracia Morales' *NN12*, *Othello*, *Twelfth Night*, *In The Blood*, *Children Of Eden*, *Burial At Thebes*, *Medea*, and *La Ronde*; international directing credits include Edinburgh Festival Fringe productions of *Scapin The Cheat*, *Anna Bella Eema*, and *The Tempest*. She is a proud alum of the Drama League Directors Project and a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society.

ABOUT THE MUSIC DIRECTOR

Margaret Halbig is on the accompanying and vocal coaching staff at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and also coaches at the Chamber Music Silicon Valley Young Artists and the Bay Area Vocal Academy. She has served as pianist for the Young Women's Chorus of San Francisco since 2014. An advocate of new and contemporary music, Margaret has been the pianist for *Wild Rumpus New Music Collective* since 2011, and is also a member of the wind and piano chamber ensemble *Frequency 49*. For THT, Margaret was Music Director for *The Song of the Nightingale* this season, Stephen Sondheim's *Company* (2014) and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (2015), and the Music Director for THT's high school musicals for over six years (*Urinetown*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, and *Little Shop of Horrors*, among others).

ABOUT TOWN HALL THEATRE COMPANY

Established in 1944 as the Dramateurs, Town Hall Theatre turned 73 this year, making it the oldest continuously active theatre in Contra Costa County. Town Hall Theatre was awarded Best Theatre Troupe 2016 in *Diablo Magazines*, *Best of The East Bay*, and is the past recipient of numerous Shellie Awards, and four regional 2016 Theatre Bay Area Awards. THT is also home to an extensive children's educational program, twice voted the "Best Children's Theatre Company" by *Bay Area Parent Magazine*. THT's 102-year old historical building is managed by the Lafayette Association (LIA).

Town Hall Theatre Company, 3535 School Street, in Lafayette, CA 94549. The Box Office is open Tuesday through Friday, 4:00 to 6:00PM and Saturday 2:00-4:00 pm and can be reached at 925.283.1557. Information is also available at www.TownHallTheatre.com.

-more-

CALENDAR Information on A CIVIL WAR CHRISTMAS: An American Musical Celebration

WHO: TOWN HALL THEATRE COMPANY presents

WHAT: A CIVIL WAR CHRISTMAS: An American Musical Celebration by Paula Vogel, Music by Daryl Waters, directed by Dawn Monique Williams, with music direction by Margaret Halbig.

CAST: Reginald Clay, Elizabeth Curtis, Jason Gray, Eleanor "Ellie" Harris, Nick Mandracchia, Shannon Mauldin, Khary L. Moye, Morgan Pavey, Tom Reilly, Lindsey Schmeltzer, Jeunée Simon, Terrance Smith, Alicia von Kugelgen, and Dan Wilson

DATES: Thursday, November 30, 2017, Preview @ 8:00 p.m.

Friday, December 1, 2017, Preview @ 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 2, 2017: OPENING RECEPTION

THROUGH December 16, 2017

SHOWTIMES: Nov 30 – Dec 16, 2017

Thursdays and Fridays @ 8:00pm

Saturday, December 2 @ 8:00pm

Saturdays, December 9 and December 16 @ 3:00pm & 8:00pm

Sunday, Dec. 10 @ 2:00 PM

CLOSES: December 16

WHERE: Town Hall Theatre Company, 3535 School Street, Lafayette, CA 94549

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Pre-show Music at every performance by the CCPAS

December 2, 2017: *Opening Night*

December 6, 2017: *LIT UP at Town Hall*, a Literary Salon, 7:30-9:00pm

December 8, 2017: **Theatre Club** 8:00pm Post-Show Talk-Back

TICKETS: \$18 Previews

Town Hall Theatre, *A CIVIL WAR CHRISTMAS*
P. 6 of 6

\$27-30 Thurs. eve., Fri. eve., Sat. eve

\$25-27 Sun. matinee

Discounts available for Seniors and youth

BOX OFFICE: (925) 283-1557; www.townhalltheatre.com

-XXX-