



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media contact: Susan E. Evans

Media phone: 925.283.6673

Email: press@TownHallTheatre.com;

Susan.Evans@TownHallTheatre.com

**TOWN HALL THEATRE OPENS SEASON 2018/19 WITH
LAUREN GUNDERSON'S EXPLOSIVE COMEDY *THE REVOLUTIONISTS***

AUGUST 14, 2018 – Town Hall Theatre “Lost & Found” Season 2018/19 opens with the Bay Area Premiere of ***THE REVOLUTIONISTS***, a bold and irreverent new comedy by Lauren Gunderson. ***THE REVOLUTIONISTS*** will have 12 performances, including two previews, September 27 through October 20, 2018, 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 ***THE REVOLUTIONISTS***: *Opening Night* gala on Saturday, September 29, 2018; *LIT UP at Town Hall*, a literary salon, on Wednesday, October 3, 2018; and Theatre Club, our post-show talk-backs with complimentary wine, on Friday, October 5, and Friday, October 19, 2018. We welcome audiences to enjoy THT's full bar and entertainment in our lobby one hour before performances.

THT's production of ***THE REVOLUTIONISTS*** is directed by THT's Artistic Director Susan E. Evans, and showcases a super-talented quartet of Bay Area performers: Sarah Mitchell as Olympe de Gouges, Kimberly Ridgeway as Marianne Angelle, Heather Kellogg as Charlotte Corday, and Suzie Shepard as Marie Antoinette. THT's production also features an all-female creative team: Liliana Duque

Piñeiro (scenic design); Keira Sullivan (lighting design); Lana Palmer (sound design); Hope Birdwell (costume design); and Debbie Shelley (properties design).

Liberté, égalité... sororité! *American Theatre* magazine named Gunderson the most popular playwright in the country for the 2017-18 season, with 27 productions; and Town Hall is thrilled to introduce Bay Area audiences to yet another work from the playwright. In ***The Revolutionists***, Gunderson concocts a bold and brutal comedic quartet about three real-life and one invented (but could be real) badass women during the French Revolution's Reign of Terror - Olympe de Gouges, activist playwright and feminist; Charlotte Corday, country girl and assassin; Marie Antoinette, fascinating former queen; and Marianne Angelle, black free woman from the Caribbean, a spy.

“ ... a sassy, hold-on-to-your-seats theatrical adventure. ... wonderfully wild and raucous... She puts four women on the stage who have a lot to say and turns them loose. It's a wild ride ...” *Cincinnati Enquirer*

“ ... in this sparkling new work, politics is very, very funny.” – *Houston Chronicle*

As Madame de Gouges (now best known for her *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen*) struggles to write an important play to solidify her own legacy, three other women crowd in with their own agendas – Haitian rebel Marianne wants pamphlets about the abolition of slavery, Assassin Charlotte needs some last words before charging off to stab extremist Jean-Paul Marat, and deposed Queen Marie-A could really use better press, and minor revisionist history. *The Revolutionists* covers a lot of territory – violence and terrorism, feminism and sisterhood, passion and compassion, and the value of art and activism. In a recent interview in *The Guardian*, the playwright weighs in

about the role of art and theatre given the current world climate and the timeliness of the play: "... I argue in the play that the stronger the art the better, the more art the better. It's not a distraction from the real world. It's another way of engaging with it. ... " She also notes an "eerie" similarity between our fraught times and 1793.

"Ms. Gunderson tells us in the preface exactly what her play is and should be," says director Evans, " *mostly* a comedy, based on real women and real executions, a quartet, a revolutionary *dream fugue* taking place in Olympe's mind, and a (mostly) true story. In this proto-feminist comedy with meta-theatre elements, she throws these four women together during one of the most frightening, savage and explosive periods in history. Add to that her canny and witty 21st century dialogue, and you have a courageous and relevant piece of theatre we think will reach out and grab our audiences."

Performance History

The world premiere of ***THE REVOLUTIONISTS*** was commissioned and produced at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park in February 2016; it is enjoying many subsequent productions around the country, including at Baltimore's Everyman Theatre Company, Atlanta's 7 Stages, Houston's Main Street Theater and San Diego's Moxie Theatre.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

LAUREN M. GUNDERSON was the most produced playwright in America of 2017, the winner of the Lanford Wilson Award, the Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award and the Otis Guernsey New Voices Award, she is also a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize and John Gassner Award for Playwriting, and a recipient of the Mellon Foundation's 3-Year Residency with Marin Theatre Company. She studied Southern Literature and Drama at Emory University, and Dramatic Writing

at NYU's Tisch School where she was a Reynolds Fellow in Social Entrepreneurship. Her work has been commissioned, produced and developed at companies across the US including South Coast Rep (*Emilie, Silent Sky*), The Kennedy Center (*The Amazing Adventures of Dr. Wonderful And Her Dog!*), Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The O'Neill, The Denver Center, San Francisco Playhouse, Marin Theatre, Synchronicity, Berkeley Rep, Shotgun Players, TheatreWorks, Crowded Fire and more. She co-authored *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* with Margot Melcon, which was one of the most produced plays in America in 2017. **See also <http://laurengunderson.com/> and <http://therevolutionists.tumblr.com/>**

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Susan E. Evans joined Town Hall Theatre as Artistic Director in December 2016, and last Season directed THT's *Sense & Sensibility*. Previously, she served as the Artistic Director of the Douglas Morrison Theatre, directing *Private Lives, Dividing the Estate, All My Sons, Eurydice, An Ideal Husband* (Scott Munson adaptation), *The Skin of Our Teeth* and *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. Before DMT, Susan served for 11 years as the Artistic Director of Eastenders Repertory Company where her directing work included *We Won't Pay, We Won't Pay, Frozen, Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*, co-directed with Founder Charles E. Polly, and the World Premieres of Parts II and III of Mr. Polly's *Twyla Trilogy*, among many others. She trained at the Drama Studio London @ Berkeley. Evans has twice collaborated with solo artist Carolyn Doyle (*the Marsh, SF Fringe Festival*), and directed locally with CCCT (Lisa Kron's *Well*), and Actors Reading Writers in Berkeley. She is an Associate Member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society.
www.susaneevansdirector.com.

ABOUT TOWN HALL THEATRE COMPANY

Established in 1944 as the Dramateurs, Town Hall Theatre turned 74 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 is located at 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 *THE REVOLUTIONISTS*

WHO: TOWN HALL THEATRE COMPANY presents

WHAT: *THE REVOLUTIONISTS* by Lauren Gunderson, directed by Susan E. Evans.

CAST: Heather Kellogg, Sarah Mitchell, Kimberly Ridgeway, and Suzie Shepard

DATES: Thursday, Sept. 27, 2018, Preview @ 8:00 p.m.
Friday, Sept. 28, 2018, Preview @ 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, Sept. 29, 2018: OPENING RECEPTION
THROUGH October 20, 2018

SHOWTIMES: Sept. 27 – Oct. 20, 2018
Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays @ 8:00pm
Sundays, Oct. 7 and Oct. 14 @ 2:00 PM

CLOSES: October 20

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

SPECIAL EVENTS:

September 29, 2018: *Opening Night*

October 3, 2018: *LIT UP at Town Hall*, a Literary Salon, 7:30-9:00pm

Oct. 5 & 19, 2018: *Theatre Club* 8:00pm Post-Show Talk-Backs

TICKETS: \$18 Previews
 \$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-