

THEATREWORKS SILICON VALLEY PRESENTS
THE GOSPEL OF ROCK
Marie and Rosetta

By George Brant
Directed by Robert Kelley
West Coast Premiere
March 6 – 31, 2019 (*opening night: March 9*)
LUCIE STERN THEATRE, PALO ALTO

PALO ALTO, CA (10 January 2019) — **TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** presents the West Coast premiere of the roof-raising musical play *Marie and Rosetta*. Developed at TheatreWorks' 2015 New Works Festival by Lucille Lortel Award-winner George Brant, *Marie and Rosetta* shares the saga of a musical legend. From stirring up churchgoers in the morning to rocking the Cotton Club at night, Sister Rosetta Tharpe inspired Elvis, Ray Charles, and more on her way to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Growing competition on the 1940s Gospel Circuit finds Rosetta auditioning a new partner with a voice made from heaven. Will they break, blend, or find harmony at last? Directed by Robert Kelley, *Marie and Rosetta* will be presented March 6 – 31, 2019 (*press opening: March 9*) at Lucie Stern Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. For tickets (\$40-\$100) and more information the public may visit **TheatreWorks.org** or call **(650) 463-1960**.

Marie and Rosetta was presented at TheatreWorks as a part of its 2015 New Works Festival, and opened Off-Broadway in 2016 at Atlantic Theatre Company to critical acclaim. The musical play won the 2016 Edgerton New Play Award and has since been seen on stages throughout the country. *The New York Times* said *Marie and Rosetta* offered "Mighty music-making...It really swings," while *Time Out New York* said it was "Heavenly... You don't have to be religious to know when you're in the presence of glory."

TheatreWorks has selected two dynamic Bay Area actors to play the titular duo—**Michelle E. Jordan** as musical icon and 2018 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee Sister Rosetta Tharpe and **Marissa Rudd** as her partner and future gospel legend Marie Knight. Jordan, a TheatreWorks veteran, received a Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award for her performance in TheatreWorks' *Dreamgirls*. She has also been seen at TheatreWorks in *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues*, *Crowns*, *Go Down Garvey*, *Hi-Hat*

Hattie!, *Shakin' the Mess Outta Misery*, and *Ain't Misbehavin'*. She also performed in *Blues in the Night* with Maurice Hines and Freda Payne at the Post Street Theatre and *Bricktop* at the Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, and serves as the music director and staff minister of Center for Spiritual Living San Jose. Rudd also returns to TheatreWorks where she was recently seen in the holiday musical *Tuck Everlasting*, as well as in the New Works Festival. Rudd has also performed at Berkeley Playhouse and in the Ground Floor at Berkeley Repertory Theatre.

George Brant's (Playwright) plays include *Grounded*, *Marie and Rosetta*, *Elephant's Graveyard*, *The Mourners' Bench*, *Into the Breeches!*, *Any Other Name*, *Salvage*, *Grizzly Mama*, *Three Voyages of the Lobotomobile*, and *Dark Room*. An Affiliate Writer at the Playwrights' Center, his scripts have been produced internationally by the Public Theater, the Atlantic Theater Company, Cleveland Play House, the Alley Theatre, Trinity Repertory Company, the Studio Theatre, City Theatre, the Gate Theatre of London, Page 73, and the Traverse Theatre, among others. His plays have received a Lucille Lortel Award, an Edgerton Foundation New Play Award, a Kennedy Center National Playwriting Award, the Smith Prize, an Edinburgh Fringe First Award, a Creative Workforce Fellowship, three OAC Individual Excellence Awards, and the Keene Prize for Literature. He has been awarded writing fellowships from the MacDowell Colony, the McCarter Theatre Center, Blue Mountain Center, Hermitage Artists' Retreat, the Djerassi Resident Artist's Program, and the Michener Center for Writers. He is published by Samuel French, Oberon Books, and Smith & Kraus.

Robert Kelley (Director) is TheatreWorks Silicon Valley's Founder and Artistic Director and has served as artistic head of the company since its inception in 1970. He has directed more than 175 TheatreWorks productions, including many world and regional premieres. In 2003 he was honored with the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle (SFBATCC) Paine Knickerbocker Award for Lifetime Achievement, and in 2016 was awarded the Jerry Friedman Lifetime Achievement Award from the SFBATCC. He received SFBATCC Awards for Outstanding Direction for his productions of *Into the Woods*, *Pacific Overtures*, *Rags*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Another Midsummer Night*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Caroline, or Change*.

With some 100,000 patrons per year, **TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** has captured a national reputation for artistic innovation and integrity, often presenting Bay Area theatregoers with their first look at acclaimed musicals, comedies, and dramas, directed by award-winning local and guest directors, and performed by professional actors cast locally and from across the country.

For Calendar Editors:

WHAT: **TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** presents the West Coast premiere of the roof-raising musical play *Marie and Rosetta*, by Lucille Lortel Award-winner George Brant. From stirring up churchgoers in the morning to rocking the Cotton Club at night, Sister Rosetta Tharpe inspired Elvis, Ray Charles, and more on her way to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Growing competition on the 1940s Gospel Circuit finds Rosetta auditioning a new partner with a voice made from heaven. Will they break, blend, or find harmony at last?

WHEN: Previews: Wednesday, March 6 - Friday, March 8
Opening: Saturday, March 9
Closes: Sunday, March 31

SHOWS: Previews: 8:00pm
Tuesdays: 7:30pm
Wednesdays: 2:00pm, 7:30pm
Thursdays: 8:00pm
Fridays: 8:00pm
Saturdays: 2:00pm, 8:00pm
Sundays: 2:00pm, 7:00pm

WHERE: **Lucie Stern Theatre**, 1305 Middlefield Rd., Palo Alto

TICKETS: \$40-\$100; savings available for educators, seniors, active military, and patrons 35 and under. Single tickets are now available. Pricing subject to change.

INFO: For information or to order tickets visit theatreworks.org or call **(650) 463-1960**

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PRESS: Contact Lauren Goldfarb, Carla Befera & Co.
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PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here: <http://cbpr.co/press/marieandrosetta>