

THEATREWORKS SILICON VALLEY PRESENTS

NEW LOOK AT SOUTHERN COMIC DRAMA

STEEL MAGNOLIAS

By Robert Harling

Directed by Elizabeth Carter

June 7 – July 2, 2023 (opening night: June 10)

MOUNTAIN VIEW CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA (11 April 2023) — **TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** presents a new look at the cherished comic drama *Steel Magnolias* by **Robert Harling**. A tight-knit group of Southern women flock to Truvy’s beauty parlor, where its occupants dish gossip, do hair, and provide strength and support through life’s joys and tragedies. TheatreWorks’ new production features a multicultural cast offering a deeper look at how women from various backgrounds regard the sanctity of having their hair “done,” helmed by sought-after actor/director **Elizabeth Carter** who makes her TheatreWorks directing debut. *Steel Magnolias* will be presented **June 7 – July 2, 2023** (press opening: June 10) at Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro Street, Mountain View. For tickets (starting at \$30) and more information the public may visit **TheatreWorks.org** or call **(877)-662-8978**.

Steel Magnolias was written by Harling as a coping mechanism to deal with the death of his sister from diabetic complications following the birth of his namesake nephew. Originally a short story intended to help his young nephew know more about his deceased mother and her coterie of Southern women, it evolved into a play which enjoyed an acclaimed run Off-Broadway in 1987 before making its way to the big screen as the beloved film starring Julia Roberts, Dolly Parton, Shirley MacLaine, Sally Field, Olympia Dukakis, and Daryl Hannah. It has since been revived on Broadway and as a 2012 film starring Queen Latifah, Phylicia Rashad, Condola Rashad, Alfre Woodard, Jill Scott, and Adepéro Oduye. The play, whose topic of how women bond through good times and bad has proved to be universal, has been performed at theatres around the world, including at TheatreWorks Silicon Valley in 1990. *Los Angeles Times* called it “a Southern recipe, served up with love,” and *The Guardian* commended how it “taps into some fundamental truths about the strength that women derive from one another, regardless of their age or social background.”

TheatreWorks is committed to creating an environment that is accessible for all audiences in its community. American Sign Language interpretation will be available at the performance of ***Steel Magnolias*** at **7:30pm Tuesday, June 20, 2023**. In partnership with c2 Caption Coalition, TheatreWorks will offer open captioning (a screen displaying all dialogue and a description of sound effects) for the performances of ***Steel Magnolias*** at **2pm & 7pm Sunday, June 25, 2023** and **2pm Wednesday, June 28, 2023**. TheatreWorks is partnering with Gravity Access Services in offering audio descriptions to assist patrons who are visually impaired. This service, which includes a pre-show talk, will be available **8pm Friday, June 30, 2023; 8pm Saturday, July 1, 2023; and 2pm Sunday, July 2, 2023**. (To utilize audio description, patrons should pre-register at **(877)-662-8978** after purchasing tickets). Assisted listening devices are offered at every performance with no advance registration required. For more information about accessibility programs at TheatreWorks the public may visit **TheatreWorks.org/venues/accessibility/**

TheatreWorks is also dedicated to engaging audiences through community programming and arts engagement, furthering its mission to develop programming that invests and amplifies the voices and experiences of the theatre company's diverse communities. For each of the shows in the 2022/23 season, TheatreWorks will host In Conversation events, a series of free community events allowing community members to be in conversation with artists and the works onstage. In Conversation events will be staged for ***Steel Magnolias*** after the 2pm matinees on **Saturday, June 17, 2023** and **Saturday, June 24, 2023**.

For up to date information about COVID-19 health and safety procedures the public may visit **TheatreWorks.org/safetyupdate/**

Director Carter has assembled a wonderful cast of multicultural talent to bring to life this beloved classic. **Jasmine Milan Williams** (she/her) makes her TheatreWorks debut as Shelby, a sweet and stubborn young woman. Williams has appeared in productions at California Shakespeare Theater, Aurora Theatre Company, New Conservatory Theatre Center, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, Cutting Ball Theater, African-American Shakespeare Company, TheatreFIRST, and Campo Santo.

Dawn L. Troupe (she/her) returns to TheatreWorks as M'Lynn, Shelby's overprotective mother. Her TheatreWorks performances include *Memphis*; *Book of Days*; *Once on this Island*; *Big River*; and *Caroline, or Change*, as well as New Works Festival readings of *Once Upon a Rhyme*, *Memphis*, *The Water*, and *The Giver*. Recently seen in Roundabout Theatre Company's *1776* on Broadway, Troupe has

also performed at American Repertory Theatre, Cleveland Playhouse, Joe's Pub at The Public Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theatre's Ground Floor, California Shakespeare Theater, Marin Theatre Company, Aurora Theatre Company, Oakland Theatre Project, Shotgun Players, San Jose Stage Company, Hillbarn Theatre, and Broadway By the Bay.

Lisa Strum (she/her) makes her TheatreWorks debut as Truvy, the owner of a small-town beauty salon. Seen on Broadway in *Death of a Salesman*, Strum has performed Off-Broadway at Lincoln Center Theatre, Signature Theatre, The Public Theater, The Classical Theatre of Harlem, and Theatre Row. She has performed with regional theatres including the Intiman Theatre, Seattle Public Theatre, People's Light, Virginia Repertory Theatre, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Detroit Public Theatre, and Artist Repertory Theatre. Her TV credits include roles on CBS' "Citizen Baines" as well as NBC's "New Amsterdam," "The Blacklist," and "Law & Order: SVU."

Alexandra Lee (she/her) makes her TheatreWorks debut as Annelle, a shy new arrival to town who works in Truvy's salon. She has performed with American Conservatory Theatre, Shotgun Players, SF Bay Area Theatre Company (SFBATCO), Berkeley Repertory Theatre's Ground Floor, and Circle of Life Theatre. Her voice can be heard in Netflix's *First Love* and *Re/Member* and she appeared in the films *Willow*, *Ambitious Romance*, *Addict*, and *This isn't Going to End Well*.

Seen in TheatreWorks' *The Country House* and *The Pitmen Painters*, Bay Area theatre veteran **Marcia Pizzo** (she/her) returns as Clairee, the know-it-all widow of the town's former mayor. Pizzo has also acted with American Conservatory Theater, California Shakespeare Theater, Marin Theatre Company, Magic Theatre, Aurora Theatre Company, Center Repertory Company, Jewel Theatre Company, Marin Shakespeare Company, Pacific Repertory Theater, and Mountain Play Association. Her film and TV credits include Disney's *Bicentennial Man*, Universal Studios' *Knight Rider*, "Chance," "Trauma," "Match," and "Nash Bridges."

Seen in TheatreWorks' *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *On Golden Pond*, **Nancy Carlin** (she/her) returns as wealthy and curmudgeonly Ouiser. A prolific Bay Area theatre actor and director, Carlin has performed with American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, California Shakespeare Theater, San Francisco Playhouse, Marin Theatre Company, Shotgun Players, Aurora Theatre Company, Center Repertory Company, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Jewel Theatre

Company, and TheatreFIRST. Her TV and film credits include “Bed of Lies,” “The Ewok Adventure,” “America’s Most Wanted,” *Love is Love is Love*, *The Heart that Stings*, and *Frameup*.

Steel Magnolias features scenic design by **Andrea Bechert**, costume design by **Dana Rebecca Woods**, lighting design by **Steven B. Mannshardt**, and sound design by **Christopher Saucedo**. **Randall K. Lum** serves as stage manager.

Robert Harling (Playwright) is an actor, playwright, screenwriter, and director who was born in Natchitoches, Louisiana. He wrote his play *Steel Magnolias* based on his mother and sister, and adapted it into the film of the same name. Other film credits include the screenplays for *Soapdish*, *The First Wives Club*, *Laws of Attraction*, and *The Evening Star* (which he also directed). He served as writer and producer for ABC TV’s “GCB.”

Elizabeth Carter (Director) is a Bay Area actor/director. Her directing credits include *SWEAT* at Center Repertory Company; *Stoop Stories* at Aurora Theatre Company; the virtual production of *Feel the Spirit* for Shotgun Players and Colt Coeur; San Francisco Shakespeare Festival’s 2020 groundbreaking virtual *King Lear*; *Bondage* (Honorable Mention for the Relentless Award) with AlterTheater; *Every 28 Hours* Plays and *A Place to Belong* with American Conservatory Theater; *for colored girls...* (Broadway World Best Local Play and TBA nominee Best Ensemble) with African-American Shakespeare Company; and *Participants* (TBA Best Anthology) for TheatreFIRST. She has directed numerous productions for California Shakespeare Theater Conservatory and has served as the Associate Director of the Theatre Department at Ruth Asawa School of the Arts in San Francisco. As an actor, she was nominated for both San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle (SFBATCC) and TBA Awards for her performance in Marin Theatre Company’s *The Convert*, received an SFBATCC Award nomination for her performance in Aurora Theatre Company’s *Wittenburg*, and has appeared onstage at California Shakespeare Theater, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, and Lorraine Hansberry Theatre. She is a recipient of the Bridging the Gap Grant from Shotgun Players and a Director’s West 2019 Alum. Carter is the Inaugural SDCF Lloyd Richards New Futures Resident Director at Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, led by Artistic Director **Tim Bond** and Executive Director **Debbie Chinn**, presents a wide variety of contemporary plays and musicals, revitalizes great works of the past, and serves more than 100,000 patrons per year. Founded in 1970 by **Robert Kelley**, TheatreWorks has grown from a truly original Silicon Valley start-up to become one of the nation’s leading professional

non-profit theatre companies. TheatreWorks was recently honored as the recipient of the 2019 Regional Theatre Tony Award. TheatreWorks also champions new work, offering artists support and a creative home as they develop new stories for the American theatre. Offstage, TheatreWorks' arts education programs in local schools and arts engagement programs in Silicon Valley neighborhoods uplift its audiences and strengthen community bonds. Onstage and off, TheatreWorks welcomes the mosaic of people that embody the Bay Area and beyond, celebrating the transformative power of theatre to ignite imagination, inspire conversation, and enliven our souls.

Media sponsor for TheatreWorks Silicon Valley's 2022/23 season is San Francisco Chronicle.

For Calendar Editors:

WHAT: TheatreWorks Silicon Valley presents a new look at the cherished comic drama *Steel Magnolias* by Robert Harling. A tight-knit group of Southern women flock to Truvy's beauty parlor, where its occupants dish gossip, do hair, and provide strength and support through life's joys and tragedies. TheatreWorks' new production features a multicultural cast offering a deeper look at how women from various backgrounds regard the sanctity of having their hair "done," helmed by sought-after actor/director **Elizabeth Carter** who makes her TheatreWorks directing debut.

WHEN: Previews: Wednesday, June 7 – Friday, June 9, 2023
Opening: Saturday, June 10, 2023
Closes: Sunday, July 2, 2023

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

ACCESS: **ASL Interpretation:** 7:30pm Tuesday, June 20, 2023
Open Captioning: 2pm and 7pm on Sunday, June 25, 2023; 2pm Wednesday, June 28, 2023
Audio Description: 8pm Friday, June 30, 2023; 8pm Saturday, July 1, 2023; 2pm Sunday, July 2, 2023
Please register in advance, as service includes a pre-show talk thirty minutes before the performance.
Assisted Listening Devices available at every performance

EVENTS: **In Conversations** (*free of cost, open to community*): After the 2pm matinees on Saturday, June 17, 2023 and Saturday, June 24, 2023

WHERE: **Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts.** 500 Castro Street, Mountain View

TICKETS: Ticket prices start at \$30; savings available for educators, seniors, and patrons 35 and under. Pricing subject to change.

INFO: For information visit **theatreworks.org** or call **(877)-662-8978**

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PRESS: Contact Lauren Goldfarb, Carla Befera & Co., lauren@cb-pr.com

PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available: <http://cbpr.co/press/steelmagnolias>