

Theater By Women

**Renaissance**  
T H E A T E R W O R K S

For Everyone

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**RENAISSANCE THEATERWORKS**

**REIMAGINES ITS 2020/21 SEASON**

**“NEAT” RETURNS WITH MARTI GOBEL REPRISING 2012 TOUR-DE-FORCE ROLE**

**Milwaukee, WI. (December 15, 2020)** – Due to the complex challenges of COVID-19 and in keeping with recommendations from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and the CDC, Renaissance Theaterworks (RTW) reimagined their 2020-2021 season to ensure the safety of patrons, artists, and staff. Originally scheduled productions of MUTHALAND, ACTUALLY and THE CAKE, will be postponed to a later season. NEAT, by Charlayne Woodard, produced to great acclaim by RTW in 2012, returns as a virtual production March 12 – April 4, with Marti Gobel portraying more than 27 characters in this one-woman production.

Says co-founder & Artistic Director Suzan Fete: *“We believe it is more important than ever to continue telling stories that make you feel more, think harder and laugh louder. Because the health and safety of our patrons, artists and staff are our top priorities, we have reimagined a flexible 2020-21 season with three inspiring productions that speak to the moment and remind us of what really matters. We are deeply grateful to our patrons for their patience as we navigate these challenging times.”*

**RENAISSANCE THEATERWORKS**

**2020-2021 Season Lineup**

RTW’s 2020-2021 season includes **BELONGING**, a virtual collection of three short plays by playwrights of color, all exploring the complex question, “Who Belongs?” BELONGING is available on demand until December 20, 2020. The season continues in March with **NEAT**, by Charlayne Woodard, a joyful and poignant portrait of a

young woman's coming of age during the Civil Rights era. To finish the season in June 2021, RTW will present **BEST OF BR!NK BRIEFS**, a collection of ten-minute plays written by Midwestern women playwrights, originally produced during RTW's annual Br!NK New Play Festival.

*All Programing will be available to stream. In-person live performances will resume when health and safety conditions permit.*

## **BELONGING**

**December 4 – 14, 2020**

*Virtual performances*

In response to the nationwide call for social justice, RTW presents BELONGING, a collection of three theatrical gems exploring the complex question, "Who Belongs?" A virtual production with state-of-the-art effects created by The Outer Loop Theater Experience.

### **The BELONGING short play collection**

**THE WINGED MAN** by José Rivera

*Directed by Melanie Queponds*

A young Latina bears the child of a mystical winged man. A lyrical play about home, hope and identity. Featuring Leslye Martinez, Ashley Rodriguez, Isabel Quintero and Alexandro Zatarain.

**POOF!** by Lynn Nottage

*Directed by Marti Gobel*

When Loureen comes to the end of her rope, she doesn't expect her husband to spontaneously combust. Now she has a pile of ashes on the floor and a life to reclaim. Featuring Melody Betts and Lachrisa Grandberry.

**ALL OF THE EVERYTHING** by Alayna Jacqueline

*Directed by Jamil Mangan*

Haunting and heartbreaking, this short play contains a lifetime, revealing all that is lost when a life is cut short by police violence. A 2018 Br!NK Br!ef play and a finalist at the 2019 Samuel French Off Off Short Play Festival in NYC. Featuring Malkia Stampley and Chiké Johnson.

## **NEAT**

**By Charlayne Woodard**

March 12 – April 4, 2021

*Virtual performances*

Back by popular demand, with Marti Gobel reprising her 2012 tour-de-force role. Based in the oral traditions of the African Diaspora, award-winning playwright Charlayne Woodard is a modern-day griot. NEAT is the story of Woodard's beloved Aunt Beneatha (Neat). As an infant, Neat is denied treatment at the local "white" hospital, resulting in her permanent brain damage. With her enormous love, Neat teaches Charlayne to cherish life through the turbulent 1960s and 70s.

*"Powerful, heartbreaking and beautiful." —The New York Times*

## **BEST OF BR!NK BRIEFS**

June 26 – July 18, 2021

Always an audience favorite at RTW's annual Br!NK New Play Festival, the Br!NK Br!efs are ten-minute, fully-staged plays written by women playwrights from the Midwest. These short gems are written in response to intriguing prompts like: "Fortune Favors the Bold" or "It's a Sign". RTW has carefully chosen some of the best Br!efs from the last three seasons to create BEST OF BR!NK BRIEFS, a collection that fully represents the powerful voices of these emerging women playwrights.

## General Season Information

Season subscriptions are currently available until February 5, 2021, and single tickets for **NEAT** and **BEST OF BR!NK BRIEFS** will go on sale on the same date. For more information, visit [www.r-t-w.com](http://www.r-t-w.com).

When health and safety conditions permit, RTW will offer live, on-stage performances at their new theatrical home at 255 S. Water Street — also home to Next Act Theatre. Adds Managing Director Lisa Rasmussen: *"We are working hard to welcome our patrons safely and comfortably into our new theater home at 255 S Water Street. Together with Next Act Theatre and with health experts, we are working to make all necessary changes, which include reducing the capacity of the theater to allow for physical distancing, instituting enhanced cleaning and sanitization measures, reducing touch points with new technology such as paperless tickets and playbills, and improving the HVAC system."*

## IN THE BOX ENTERTAINMENT

In addition to BELONGING, NEAT and BEST OF BR!NK BRIEFS, which are part of the regular season, RTW has partnered with Adirondack Theatre Festival to present **IN THE BOX ENTERTAINMENT**, a series of live, interactive virtual experiences that entertain audiences from the comfort of their homes. All shows will include a mystery box mailed to the ticket holder prior to the show, which will fuel their at-home, interactive experience. Upcoming IN THE BOX shows include:

### **MYSTERY IN A BOX**

January 12 – 23, 2021

*Live, virtual performances*

You buy a ticket. You're delivered a box, inside which you find a variety of objects, along with an invitation beckoning you to solve a mysterious puzzle. You accept the invitation, and are connected online to a detective who needs the clues in your box to start connecting the pieces... but... the pieces to what? As the plot unfolds into a night of twists and turns —along with virtual live performances that plunge you deeper into a world of noir and intrigue— you realize this is about much more than random items in a box. You begin to wonder: Who's chasing who? And why is one of your objects a clock that's slowly counting down? And... perhaps most importantly of all... what happens when it hits zero? All this fun and excitement right from your own couch!

### **PAINT IN A BOX**

February 9 – 20, 2021

*Live, virtual performances*

You receive your canvas and paints in the mail, and you'll be following along with Andy and Laura to make it a masterpiece in a night where wine and canvas meets live theatre. One small change: Laura isn't here. She's gone. But... Andy's here, live... from the living room they once shared... and he's ready to make this blank canvas into a stunning piece of art with YOU!

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## ABOUT RENAISSANCE THEATERWORKS

Renaissance Theaterworks, “Theater by Women for Everyone”, is **Milwaukee’s only women-founded, women-run professional theater company**. Dedicated to promoting the work of women onstage and off, Renaissance Theaterworks creates **theater that connects with all people – and what it means to be human – through vibrant, visceral storytelling**. Founded in 1993 by Suzan Fete, Marie Kohler, Raeleen McMillion, Jennifer Rupp and Michele Traband, Renaissance Theaterworks is the nation’s **second oldest** theater company with a mission to promote **gender equity in theater**. Renaissance Theaterworks produces **outstanding, artistically unsurpassed theater that makes audiences feel more, think harder, and laugh louder**.

### NEW ARTISTIC HOME FOR 2020-2021 SEASON

Renaissance Theaterworks will permanently move its productions as **resident theater company** to the **Next Act Theatre** at 255 S. Water Street, as soon as health and safety conditions permit. *This bold move will allow us to continue on a positive trajectory for many years to come*, shares Managing Director **Lisa Rasmussen**. Administrative offices will remain on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the Broadway Theatre Center.

*Renaissance Theaterworks is a member of the National New Play Network, Theater Wisconsin, Samuel French’s Playwrights Welcome, Hispanic Professionals of Greater Milwaukee, Visit Milwaukee, and the Historic Third Ward Association. They receive support from the United Performing Arts Fund, Brico Fund, CAMPAC, the Evinrude Foundation, The Greater Milwaukee Foundation, the Richard & Ethel Herzfeld Foundation, Jane Bradley Pettit Foundation, Milwaukee Arts Board, Sempercors Foundation, the Shubert Foundation, the Bert L. and Patricia S. Steigleder Charitable Trust, Wisconsin Arts Board, and private donors and foundations.*

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