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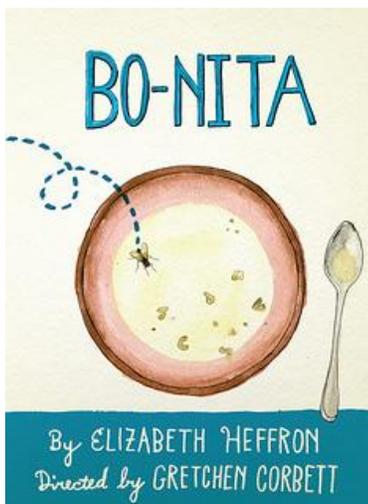
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M E D I A R E L E A S E

“POIGNANT, GUTSY AND REWARDING”

- *The Seattle Times*

**Elizabeth Heffron’s *Bo-Nita*, a JAW festival favorite, returns for a full staging directed by Gretchen Corbett in the Ellyn Bye Studio
February 1 – March 16**



January 7, 2014 – PORTLAND, ORE., The hilarious and heartbreaking story that delighted audiences at the 2012 JAW festival comes to the Ellyn Bye Studio after a critically acclaimed world premiere in October at Seattle Repertory Theatre. Gretchen Corbett will direct this new play written by Seattle-based playwright Elizabeth Heffron. Kate Eastwood Norris, who performed the work at JAW, returns to tell the unbelievable story of a day in the life of 13-year-old Bo-Nita. *Bo-Nita* begins preview performance on February 1, opens on February 7 and runs through March 16. Regular tickets start at \$40. Preview tickets

start at \$35. A *Formative Stages* discussion will be held on February 20 in partnership with the Oregon Psychoanalytic Center.

Life’s not easy for Bo-Nita. It never is for a 13-year-old, but especially one who winds up with a dead, semi-ex-stepfather on her bedroom floor. With humor, pathos and a dash of Midwest magical

realism, *Bo-Nita* follows a mother and daughter's journey through a working-class America of dwindling resources, and the lengths they must go to stay together and keep their beat alive. *Bo-Nita* is a storytelling piece in the vein of *The Moth*, *This American Life* and Portland's own Back Fence PDX. In this one-woman show, Kate Eastwood Norris takes on the role of Bo-Nita, along with six other characters, to bring the story to life.

During the 2012 JAW festival *The Oregonian* praised Elizabeth Heffron's *Bo-Nita*, noting that "this madcap comedy of mid-American family dysfunction carries dark undertones about the effects of poverty and sexual abuse on a resourceful 13-year-old, but handles such issues with sensitivity – even amid the outlandish characters and situations that had the JAW audience howling with laughter."

PCS is thrilled to bring *Bo-Nita* to a larger audience as a fully staged work in the Ellyn Bye Studio. "*Bo-Nita* is one of the projects we helped along the way in 2012 and became smitten with the marriage of Elizabeth Heffron's world and words, and Kate Eastwood Norris' uncanny ability to own anything – from a 13-year-old girl to her mother's pedophile ex-boyfriend," said JAW Festival Director and Associate Artistic Director Rose Riordan, "throwing Gretchen Corbett in the mix as the director is going to only add another layer to the project that will be an unforgettable night of storytelling."

Kate Eastwood Norris has become a Portland favorite. Audiences loved her as Tanya in *The North Plan* (2011) and Sophie in *How to Disappear and Never Be Found* (2009). She's played a number of roles in JAW in the past few years and *The Oregonian* commended her for her take on the challenging one-woman role in *Bo-Nita*: "Norris nailed all the parts, from the middle-schooler protagonist to her dissolute mother to the skeezy boyfriends who make their lives even messier."

Bo-Nita will mark **Gretchen Corbett's directorial debut at PCS**, though she has, of course, performed at PCS many times. Locally she has directed at CoHo Theatre, Tygres Heart, Sowelu Theatre and Stark Raving Theatre. She was also Resident Director for the Audrey Skirball-Kenis Theatre in Los Angeles for several years, a theater dedicated to nurturing new plays and playwrights. Rounding out the creative team is Scenic Designer **Daniel Meeker** (most recently *Twist Your Dickens* and *The Mountaintop*) and PCS Resident Costume Designer **Jeff Cone** (most recently *Chinglish*). Sound

Designer **Mark Valadez** will make his PCS debut (Mark is currently the resident sound designer for Portland Experimental Theatre Ensemble). **Judith Shahn** will act as Dialect Coach and **Emily Wells** will once again take the role of Stage Manager (most recently *Twist Your Dickens*).

Portland Center Stage's 2013-2014 season is funded in part by Season Superstars Tim & Mary Boyle and Lead Corporate Champion Umpqua Bank; Season Sponsors the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, Oregon Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts, the Regional Arts & Culture Council and Work for Art; and Season Supporting Sponsors KINK FM and Oregonian Media Group. The Mark Spencer Hotel is the official hotel partner for Portland Center Stage.

RELATED EVENTS – Calendar Editors Kindly Note:

Formative Stages

February 20, 2014

Following the 7:30 p.m. performance, in the Ellyn Bye Studio.

Presented by the **Oregon Psychoanalytic Center** in partnership with PCS, *Formative Stages* puts theater on the couch and the audience in the conversational driver's seat. Join us post show for a lively discussion focusing on issues, themes and lessons gleaned from the plays, revealing that theater is truly a microcosm of life.

Leading the discussion is **Susan Gendein-Marshall, Ph.D.**, a clinical psychologist with a therapy practice in NW Portland. She works with children, teens and adults, as well as couples therapy. She has many years of experience as a therapist, supervisor and teacher.

Formative Stages events are free and open to the public, no ticket required.

➤ **Next page: Ticket and Performance Information**

Ticket and Performance Information | *Bo-Nita*

When: February 1 – March 16, 2014

Preview Performances: February 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7:30 p.m.

Opening Night: Friday, February 7, 7:30 p.m.

Showtimes: 7:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and select Sundays; 2 p.m. matinees on select Saturdays and Sundays; matinees at noon on select Thursdays.

Complete schedule: www.pcs.org/bonita

Where: In the Ellyn Bye Studio at [The Gerding Theater at the Armory](#)

Regular tickets start at \$40. Preview tickets start at \$35.

Discounts for students, those under 25 and groups.

Online: www.pcs.org

By Phone: 503.445.3700, 12–6 p.m.

In Person: PCS's box office is at 128 NW Eleventh Avenue
12 p.m. – curtain on performance days
12–6 p.m. on non-performance days

Rush Tickets: \$20

Groups: Discounts for groups of 10 or more.
Group tickets can purchased at 503.445.3794.

Please Note: *Recommended for ages 16+; mature content and language.*

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#pcs_Bonita

[PORTLAND CENTER STAGE](#) inspires our community by bringing stories to life in unexpected ways.

Established in 1988 as a branch of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, PCS became an independent

theater in 1994 and has been under the leadership of Artistic Director Chris Coleman since May 2000.

The company presents a blend of classic, contemporary and original productions in a conscious effort

to appeal to the eclectic palate of theatergoers in Portland. PCS also offers a variety of education and outreach programs for curious minds from six to 106, including discussions, classes, workshops and partnerships with organizations throughout the Portland metro area.

[THE GERDING THEATER AT THE ARMORY](#) houses the 590-seat Main Stage and the 190-seat black box Ellyn Bye Studio. It was the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, and the first performing arts venue, to achieve a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certification. The Gerding Theater at the Armory opened to the public on Oct. 1, 2006. The capital campaign to fund the renovation of this hub for community artistic activity continues.

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