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

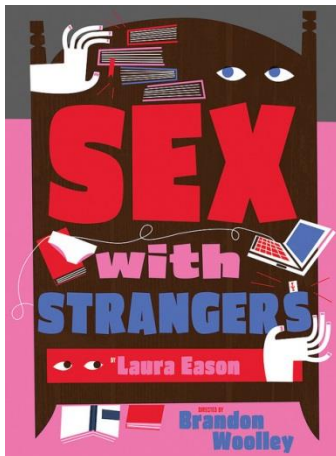
### Sex is Imminent at Portland Center Stage when Laura Eason's Steamy

### *Sex with Strangers* Opens in the Ellyn Bye Studio

Previews Begin October 10, Opening Night is October 16, Closes November 22

**"Sexually and intellectually provocative ... A HELL OF A LOT OF FUN!"**

—*The Hollywood Reporter*



**September 9, 2015 — PORTLAND, OR.** Sparks will fly at Portland Center Stage when *Sex with Strangers* opens in the Ellyn Bye Studio on October 16, with preview performances beginning October 10, and regular performances running through November 22, 2015. This intimate look at publishing, intellectual property, success and relationships in the digital age was written by *House of Cards* screenwriter, Laura Eason. The production will be directed by local producer/director Brandon Woolley in his PCS directorial debut. The strangers in this two-person drama also make their PCS debuts: Danielle Slavick as Olivia and Christopher M. Smith as Ethan.

"I'm excited about digging into the gritty, sexy, startling world of *Sex with Strangers*," said Director Brandon Woolley. "The thrill of this play is not just that we get to watch two people engage intimately on stage, but that we get to see what happens after the fact. Laura Eason seduces us with her title and then drags us into the complications that arise when life experience, baggage and ambitions get in the way. Sex can be easy. Relationships are hard."

Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased at [www.pcs.org](http://www.pcs.org), 503.445.3700 or in person at the Gerding Theater at the Armory box office (128 NW Eleventh Avenue, Portland, Ore., 97209). Regular tickets start at \$40.

Preview performance tickets are \$35. Rush tickets are \$20. Tickets for students and patrons who are 30 or younger are \$25. Showtimes are 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays (excluding October 25 and November 8); 2 p.m. matinees on select Saturdays and Sundays; and matinees at noon on select Thursdays. More information at <http://www.pcs.org/strangers/>.

### **ABOUT *SEX WITH STRANGERS***

A raging snowstorm traps strangers Olivia, an unsuccessful yet gifted thirty-nine-year-old writer, and Ethan, a tech-addicted and wildly successful young blogger, in a secluded cabin. Opposites instantly attract, and undeniable chemistry ignites. As the dawn rises, however, what could have just been a one-night-stand transforms into something more complicated when online exploits interfere with their real-life connection. *Sex with Strangers* debuted at Steppenwolf Theatre Company in 2011. The New York premiere opened in 2014, Off-Broadway at Second Stage Theatre (directed by David Schwimmer and starring Anna Gunn of *Breaking Bad* fame and Billy Magnussen). *Sex with Strangers* was the writing sample Laura Eason used to get hired as a screenwriter on the Netflix hit show, *House of Cards*.

### **CRITICAL ACCLAIM FOR *SEX WITH STRANGERS***

Since the world premiere in 2011, productions of *Sex with Strangers* across the United States have received much critical acclaim. *The Hollywood Reporter* called it “sexually and intellectually provocative ... A HELL OF A LOT OF FUN!” *The New York Times* called it a “twisty and timely play” about “lust, love and the complex nature of identity in our digital-dominated era.” *The Washington Post* praised it as a “bodice-ripper with a brain,” and *Newsweek* said, “*Sex with Strangers* is a compelling, comic drama about letting go of the past and embracing the future — even if that future is written in pixels instead of on paper.”

### **ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT**

Laura Eason is a playwright, musical book writer and screenwriter. Recent plays include *The Undeniable Sound of Right Now* (Rattlestick Theatre; Women’s Project Theatre; Rising Phoenix Repertory); *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (Hartford Stage; New Victory; People’s Light; Actor’s Theatre of Louisville; Kansas City Repertory Theatre; Repertory Theatre of St. Louis; Denver Center for the Performing Arts; published by Dramatists Play Service) and *Around the World in 80 Days* (New Vic Theatre and Royal Exchange Theatre, UK; Lookingglass Theatre; Center Stage (Baltimore); published by Broadway Play Publishing). She wrote the book for the musicals *Days Like Today*, with music and lyrics by Alan Schmuckler (Writers Theatre) and *Summerland*, with music by Jenny Giering and lyrics by Sean Barry (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre commission). As a screenwriter, Eason wrote on season two

and three of the Emmy-winning Netflix show *House of Cards*. She is an ensemble member and former artistic director of Chicago's Lookingglass Theatre (2011 Regional Tony Award). In New York, she is a member of Rising Phoenix Repertory, New Georges and an alumna of Women's Project Playwright's Lab. [www.lauraeason.com](http://www.lauraeason.com)



**DANIELLE SLAVICK (OLIVIA)**

On Broadway, Danielle Slavick has appeared in *The Other Place* (Manhattan Theatre Club). Off-Broadway credits include *I See You* (The Flea), *Through the Yellow Hour* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater), *Bright New Boise* (Partial Comfort), *That Pretty Pretty or The Rape Play* (Rattlestick), *Blind* (Rattlestick), *10x25* (Atlantic Theater Company), *Love Song of an Albanian Sous Chef* (Ensemble Studio Theatre). Regional credits include the world premiere of Sam Hunter's *A Permanent Image* (Boise Contemporary Theater) and *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Denver Center). TV/Film credits include *While We're Young*, *Adult Beginners*, recurring roles on *Hostages* and *Guiding Light*, and *Unforgettable*. Currently based in Brooklyn, Slavick is originally from Timberlake, Ohio and has an M.F.A. from the National Theatre Conservatory.



**CHRISTOPHER M. SMITH (ETHAN)**

Christopher M. Smith's credits include *Other Desert Cities* (Boston premiere), *The Pavilion* (Los Angeles premiere), *Orange Flower Water*, *True West*, *Tennis in Nablus* (New York premiere), *Eurydice*, *Antigone*; and many others in New York and Los Angeles, including site specific productions of *Fool for Love* (set in an apartment in Brooklyn) and *The Cherry Orchard* (set in a Victorian-style house in Echo Park). Most recently Smith co-adapted and performed in a four-actor production of *Washington Square* by Henry James, with The Actors' Ensemble in New York. Film work includes *Something Blue* (Best Feature, Sonoma International Film Festival), *Wart* and *The Golden Age*. Smith studied theater at the University of La Verne. Originally from Southern California, he currently resides in New York City.

**THE CREATIVE TEAM**

*Sex with Strangers* marks Brandon Woolley's PCS directorial debut (recent credits include *The God Game* by Suzanne Bradbeer, *International Falls* at CoHo Productions, *The End of Sex* at Theatre Vertigo and *Dial M for Murder* at Bag&Baggage Productions; Woolley is the producing associate at PCS). Woolley is joined by **Scenic Designer Tony Cisek** (most recently *Our Town* at PCS), **Costume Designer Christine Meyers** (PCS debut; recently

*Napoli* at Oregon Ballet Theatre and the upcoming indie film *I Am That*), **Lighting Designer Kristeen Crosser** (PCS debut; recently won the 2014 Drammy Award for Outstanding Lighting Design for *A Bright New Boise* at Third Rail Repertory Theatre), **Sound Designer Scott Thorson** (recently *The Typographer's Dream* at PCS), **Stage Manager Kelsey Daye Lutz** and **Production Assistant Bailey Anne Maxwell**.

#### TICKET AND PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

**When:** October 10\* – November 22, 2015

\*Opening Night is Friday, October 16 at 7:30 p.m.

Preview Performances: October 10, 11, 13, 14 and 15 at 7:30 p.m.

**Showtimes:** Showtimes are 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays (excluding October 25 and November 8); 2 p.m. matinees on select Saturdays and Sundays; and matinees at noon on select Thursdays.

**Where:** In the Ellyn Bye Studio at the [Gerding Theater at the Armory](#).  
128 NW Eleventh Ave., Portland, Ore., 97209

**More Info:** <http://www.pcs.org/strangers/>

**To Purchase:** Regular tickets range from \$40-\$55. Preview tickets are \$35. Rush tickets are \$20. Discounts for students, those 30 or younger, and groups. Prices subject to change.

**Online:** <http://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

**Groups:** Discounts available for groups of 10+ by calling 503.445.3794.

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

**Accessibility:** PCS is committed to making our performances and facilities accessible to all of our patrons. Learn more at <http://www.pcs.org/access/>.

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[Portland Center Stage](#) inspires our community by bringing stories to life in unexpected ways. Founded in 1988, PCS is the city's leading professional theater and one of the top 20 largest regional theater companies in the U.S. PCS attracts more than 150,000 theatergoers annually with its blend of classical, contemporary and premiere works, along with its summer playwrights festival, JAW. PCS also offers a variety of education and community programs tailored for patrons of all ages.

[The Gerding Theater at the Armory](#) houses the 590-seat U.S. Bank 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.

[Portland Center Stage's 2015-2016 season](#) is funded in part by Season Superstars Tim and Mary Boyle and Lead Corporate Champion Umpqua Bank; and Supporting Season Sponsors the Regional Arts and Culture Council, The Wallace Foundation, Work for Art and KINK FM. Support for *Sex with Strangers* is provided by Show Sponsors Paul and Tasca Gulick, Sharon Mueller and Reynolds Potter. PCS's official hotel partner is The Mark Spencer Hotel. PCS is a participant in the Wallace Foundation's [Building Audiences for Sustainability Initiative](#), a four-year effort with a nationwide cohort of 26 performing arts organizations. PCS also receives support from the Oregon Arts Commission, a state agency funded by the State of Oregon and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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