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

Portland Center Stage Presents the
**World Premiere Production of Seattle-based Playwright
Yussef El Guindi's *Threesome***

Playing January 30 – March 8, with Preview Performances Beginning January 24



December 30, 2014 – PORTLAND, OR. The world premiere of *Threesome*, the searing new play by acclaimed Seattle-based playwright Yussef El Guindi, opens on January 30, 2015 in Portland Center Stage's Ellyn Bye Studio. PCS Artistic Director Chris Coleman will direct the three-member cast who will make their PCS debuts: Alia Attallah and Dominic Rains will star as the struggling couple, Leila and Rashid. They'll be joined by Quinn

Franzen as Doug, the acquaintance they invite into their bedroom for a threesome. *Threesome* is a co-production with ACT-Seattle, originally developed at Portland Center Stage's JAW: A Playwrights Festival in 2013. A post-show discussion series is scheduled to explore how the play connects directly to our community.

"I'm thrilled to present the world premiere of this layered, provocative new play," said Coleman. "When we workshopped *Threesome* at our JAW festival last summer, it was one of the funniest new plays I had ever seen an audience respond to – it's side-splittingly funny. The first half is a sex farce. It's physically hilarious and awkward, but it takes a surprising turn. Ultimately it gets at something deeper underneath, about how we can reclaim our identity, and our sense of ownership of our body. The complexity of this story, combined with the crazy humor, will make a really interesting journey for our audience."

Previews for *Threesome* begin January 24; it opens January 30 and runs through March 8, 2015 in the Ellyn Bye Studio at PCS's Gerding Theater at the Armory. Regular tickets start at \$40. Preview tickets are \$35. Rush tickets

are \$20. Showtimes are 7:30 p.m. Tuesday through Sundays (excluding Feb. 8, 22, 24, March 3 and 8); 2 p.m. matinees on select Saturdays and Sundays; and matinees at noon on select Thursdays. Tickets can be purchased at pcs.org or 503.445.3700. A complete schedule can be found [online](#).

ABOUT THE PLAY

Leila and Rashid, Egyptian Americans with ties to Cairo, attempt to solve their relationship issues by inviting a relative stranger into their bedroom to engage in a threesome. What begins as a hilariously awkward evening soon becomes an experience fraught with secrets, raising issues of sexism, possession and independence. *Threesome* was one of four works selected from hundreds of submissions to appear at JAW 2013, where playwrights collaborate with directors, dramaturgs, actors and other theater professionals to develop their scripts. During the public staged readings at JAW (while the script was still in development) audiences described the play as “arresting,” “intriguing,” “heart wrenching” and “hilarious.” The script has since been further fine-tuned. This world premiere joins a healthy roster of recent JAW scripts that went on to become world premieres at PCS, including *The People’s Republic of Portland*, *The Body of an American*, *Anna Karenina*, *The North Plan*, *Futura* and *Crazy Enough*.

PLAYWRIGHT YUSSEF EL GUINDI

Celebrated Seattle-based playwright Yusef El Guindi is a recipient of the Middle East America Distinguished Playwright Award, the Steinberg/American Theater Critics Association’s New Play Award, the Gregory Award, *Seattle Times*’ “Footlight Award” for Best World Premiere Play, the Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award and M. Elizabeth Osborn New Play Award from the American Theatre Critics Association. His work has been published in *American Theatre Magazine*, Dramatists Play Service and McFarland Books; and featured in a collection of *Best American Short Plays* published by Applause Books, among others. Yusef El Guindi’s most recent productions include *The Ramayana* (co-adaptor with Stephanie Timm) at ACT; *Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World* at ACT and Center Repertory Company; and *Language Rooms* co-produced by the Asian American Theater Company and Golden Thread Productions in San Francisco, at the Wilma Theater in Philadelphia (premiere), and at the Los Angeles Theater Center. El Guindi was born in Cairo, left Egypt at the age of four, was raised in London and returned to Cairo to earn his undergraduate degree in English and Comparative Literature. He holds an M.F.A. from Carnegie-Mellon University and was a playwright-in-residence at Duke University. He moved to Seattle in 1994 and received his U.S. citizenship in 1996.

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THE CAST OF *THREESOME*



Alia Attallah (Leila)

While in the Graduate Acting program at New York University's Tisch School of Arts, Attallah appeared in Beckett's one-woman play, *Rockabye* (directed by JoAnn Akalaitis) and Masha in *The Seagull* (directed by Richard Feldman), among many others. Alia has worked with John Barton (Royal Shakespeare Company), studied clowning at the London Institute for the Performing Arts (LISPA) and collaborated with Eve Ensler (author of *The Vagina Monologues*) on a performance festival. In 2010, Alia traveled to India to be part of a cultural immersion project focused on training American Actors in the ancient discipline of Kathakali Theater.

Dominic Rains (Rashid)

Rains is a member of the Elephant Theater Company in Los Angeles, having appeared in *The North Plan*, *Baby Doll*, *Love Sick*, *Block 9* and the *Love Bites* series. He has also appeared in over a dozen television shows and movies, including the critically acclaimed independent film *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* (three Independent Spirit Award nominations, Vice Films), which **will open at Portland's Cinema 21 while he is in Portland working on *Threesome*.**



Quinn Franzen (Doug)

Franzen is a member of the Seattle-based new works company, the Satori Group, where he developed and performed in *Returning to Albert Joseph*, *reWilding* and *Fabulous Prizes*. He was last seen onstage as Louis in Intiman Theatre Festival's *Angels in America* (parts one and two). Other Seattle credits include: Stapleton in *Hound of the Baskervilles* (Seattle Repertory Theatre), Algernon in *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Seattle Shakespeare Company), Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet*, Frank in *Dirty Story* (Intiman Theatre Festival) and the title role in *Crash* (Seattle Children's Theatre).

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THE CREATIVE TEAM

Directing the play is PCS Artistic Director Chris Coleman (most recently *Dreamgirls* at PCS). Regarding his vision for this production, he said: “We’re trying to get the audience as close to the event as possible. It’s actually closer than we’ve ever designed a set in our studio. There’s something really naked, both literally and emotionally about the events that are unfolding. There is something really delicate and intimate about being in this room, which will be quite intense and extraordinary.” Bringing this intimate world to life is Costume Designer **Alison Heryer** (a new faculty member at Portland State University in her PCS debut), Lighting Designer **Peter Maradudin** (most recently *Othello* at PCS; he also designed the lighting for the lobby spaces of the Gerding Theater at the Armory), PCS Resident Sound Designer **Casi Pacilio** (most recently *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* at PCS), with a collaborative scenic design from members of PCS’s production team: **David McCrum** (Assistant Technical Director), **Seth Chandler** (Master Carpenter) and **Erinn McGrew** (Scenic Charge Artist). **Stephanie Mulligan** returns to PCS as stage manager.

RELATED EVENTS – Calendar Editors Kindly Note:

Perspectives on *Threesome*: A Post-Show Discussion Series

Sundays, February 8, 15, 22 and March 1, 2015

In the Ellyn Bye Studio, immediately following the 2 p.m. matinee performances

In a partnership with the YWCA of Greater Portland, Portland Center Stage presents a series of 30-minute post-show discussions following select Sunday matinee performances of *Threesome*. Hear and share personal reactions and thoughts inspired by the play, filtered through the perspectives of social justice activists, academics and artists. Guest speakers will read the play, visit rehearsal, attend the production and be ready to share their thoughts on how the play connects directly to our community.

Guest speakers include **Tracy Cameron Francis**, an Egyptian-American theater director and interdisciplinary artist with a degree in Middle Eastern Studies and Theater Arts from Fordham University with one term at the American University of Cairo; **Michael Malek Najjar**, an assistant professor at the University of Oregon with a focus on Arab-American theater and performance, directing, playwriting, and contemporary theater and performance, and the author of *Four Arab American Plays: Works by Leila Buck, Jamil Khoury, Yussef El Guindi, and Lameece Issaq & Jacob Kader*, among others; and **Taghrid Khuri**, an adjunct faculty member teaching international and women’s studies at Portland State University, including Gender Issues in the Middle East, Third World; Socio-economic Development, Human Rights and related gender policy development courses.

Threesome | Ticket and Performance Information

When: January 24* – March 8, 2015

***Opening Night is Friday, January 30, 7:30 p.m.**

Preview Performances: January 24, 25, 27, 28 and 29 at 7:30 p.m.

Showtimes: 7:30 p.m. Tuesday through Sundays (excluding Feb. 8, 22, 24, March 3 and 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.

More Info: <http://www.pcs.org/threesome/>

To Purchase: Regular tickets range from \$40-55. Preview tickets are \$35. Rush tickets are \$20.

Discounts for students, those under 25 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 or more.

Group tickets can purchased at 503.445.3794.

Please Note: *Threesome is recommended for ages 17+; contains male and female nudity, strong language and mature content. There is no late seating in the Ellyn Bye Studio.*

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.

Additional support for *Threesome* is provided by Show Sponsors Dr. Barbara Hort, Ronni Lacroute/Willakenzie Estate, and Sharon Mueller and Reynolds Potter. [Portland Center Stage's 2014-2015 season](#) is funded in part by Season Superstars Tim and 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 and Culture Council, Work for Art, and Season Supporting Sponsor KINK FM. The Mark Spencer Hotel is the official hotel partner for Portland Center Stage. Portland Center Stage is a participant in the Audience (R)Evolution Program, funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and administered by Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the professional not-for-profit American theater.

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