



## NEWS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

**ARIZONA THEATRE COMPANY, STRAY CAT THEATRE PRESENT “SEX WITH STRANGERS,” A NEW COMEDY ABOUT LOVE IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA.**

TUCSON, Ariz. (Jan. 13, 2016): Arizona Theatre Company, in a special collaboration with Stray Cat Theatre, will present Laura Eason’s new comedy about the calculations people are making to find love or fame in an age of social media, brightly-lit phone screens and blogging, Feb. 11-21 at the Temple of Music and Art, 333. S. Scott Ave. I. Michael and Beth Kasser are Arizona Theatre Company’s 2015-16 Season Sponsors.

Directed by Stray Cat Theatre Artistic Director Ron May, The Washington Post called ***Sex With Strangers*** “a bodice-ripper with a brain.” Olivia, played by Heather Lee Harper, is snowbound in a Michigan bed and breakfast where she’s working on her novel when she opens the door to a handsome younger man, played by Tyler Eglen. Opposites instantly attract, undeniable chemistry ignites and sex is imminent. As dawn rises, however, what could have been just a one-night stand transforms into something much more complicated.

According to May, “This kind of exposure for Stray Cat as we launch into our 14<sup>th</sup> season is incredibly exciting. And to be able to do it with *this* play – one of off-Broadway’s biggest hits last season - is even more thrilling. Audiences are in for a seriously hot, thrilling ride.”

A collaboration between Arizona Theatre Company and Tempe’s Stray Cat Theatre, one of Arizona’s leading indie theatre companies, ***Sex With Strangers*** is the first of what ATC Artistic Director David Ira Goldstein expects to be an ongoing series of partnerships “with our superb smaller independent colleagues on projects to give their diverse, exciting work more

statewide exposure while bringing a wider range of theatrical works to our audiences.” **Sex With Strangers** will play ATC’s Tucson home at the Temple of Music and Art next February.

Single ticket prices are \$20-\$52. Visit [www.arizonatheatre.org](http://www.arizonatheatre.org) or call the Arizona Theatre Company Box Office at (520) 622-2823.

**Sex With Strangers** will be followed by John Steinbeck’s classic tale of friendship in hard circumstances, **Of Mice and Men** (March 31-April 17) and the witty Arizona premiere of Scott Carter’s new play, **The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens and Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord** (May 5-22).

For more information call (520) 622-2823 or visit [www.arizonatheatre.org](http://www.arizonatheatre.org).

## BIOGRAPHIES

**Laura Eason (Playwright)** is a writer and story editor on the Emmy Award-winning series *House of Cards*. Her play *Sex With Strangers* (Sydney Theatre Company, Australia; Steppenwolf Theatre, Chicago) recently played at Second Stage Theatre in New York. Her adaptation of *Around the World in 80 Days* (Lookingglass Theatre, Chicago; Baltimore CENTERSTAGE; KC Rep) was produced in a hugely successful production in the UK at The New Vic Theatre and the Royal Exchange in 2014. Her new musical, *Days Like Today*, with music and lyrics by Alan Schmuckler, was produced in a critically acclaimed sold out run at Writers’ Theatre in Chicago. She has received Chicago’s Jeff Award for New Work and Adaptation. In New York, she is a member of Rising Phoenix Rep, an Affiliated Artist of New Georges and an alumna of the Women’s Project Playwright’s Lab. She is an active ensemble member and former Artistic Director of Lookingglass Theatre Company in Chicago, recipient of the 2011 Regional Theatre Tony Award. Laura is a graduate of the Performance Studies Department of Northwestern University. Originally from Chicago, she lives in Brooklyn, NY.

**Ron May (Director/Stray Cat Artistic Director)** is the Founding Artistic Director for Stray Cat Theatre where his credits include *Pulp*, *columbinus*, *Speech and Debate*, *Learn to be Latina*, and *Wolves* (all winners of Zoni Award for Best Overall Production – Non-Contracted Play/Musical) as well as *[sic]*, *The Normal Heart*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *The 4th Graders Present an Unnamed Love/Suicide*, *Trainspotting*, *Fat Pig*, *4.48 Psychosis*, *A Number*, *Everything Will Be Different*, *An Impending Rupture of the Belly*, *Blackbird*, *Octopus*, *The Sparrow*, *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*, *Heddatron*, *Sons of the Prophet*, *Chicks With Dicks*, *The Flick*, *The Whale*, *The Brothers Size*, and *Pluto*. In 2010, he directed the Arizona staged reading of *The Laramie Project: 10 Years Later, an Epilogue* as part of a national project. As an actor, he has appeared as the “One Man” in Phoenix Theatre’s *One Man*, *Two Guvnors*, in Stray Cat’s *Year of the Rooster* and *The Agony and the Ecstasy of Steve Jobs* for Actors Theatre. For Phoenix Theatre, he directed *Buyer & Cellar* and *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* (Zoni for Best Overall Production – Contracted Musical). For Actors Theatre, he has directed *Seminar*, *Hunter Gatherers*, *This*, *Boom*, *Augusta*, *The Pursuit of Happiness* and *A View of the Harbor*. During the summer of 2001, he spent time in New York as a fellow in The Lincoln Center Theatre Director’s Lab.

**Heather Lee Harper (Olivia)** has previously appeared at ATC in *Romeo and Juliet*. Selected Off-Broadway/New York Credits include *The Violet Hour* (Active Theater); *King Stag* (Long Wharf Development Series); *AliceAnon* (New Georges Theater); *Courtney & Kathleen: A Riot Act* (La Mama); *Manson the Musical* (The Krane Theater); *Undeniable Desire*, *Tom’s Children*,

*and Infusions*: Tennessee William's 100th Birthday Celebration (Blue Roses Theatre Company). Local credits include *Hotel Athena*, *R&J Void* (HOWL Theatre Project); *Thomas and the Library Lady* (Geva Theatre Center/Childsplay); *E2* (Nearly Naked Theatre); *A Clockwork Orange* (Stray Cat Theatre); *The Tempest* (Southwest Shakespeare Company); *Wait Until Dark* (Tempe Little Theater, ariZoni winner for Best Leading Actress). Ms. Harper trained at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in LA, Pàn Theatre in Paris, and holds a BA in theater from ASU. She is a company member of Blue Roses Theater (NYC), founding member of the Active Theatre (NYC) and Howl Theatre Project (PHX). Ms. Harper is a proud member of the Actors Equity Association.

**Tyler Eglen (Ethan)** appeared in *Wolves* and *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* both with Stray Cat Theatre under the direction of Ron May. He appeared in Paul Gordon's musical version of Jane Austen's *Emma* at ATC. Other recent Valley credits include *The Boy who Loved Monsters and the Girl who Loved Peas* (Evan) and *Junie B. Jones: Jingle Bells, Batman Smells* (Herb) with Childsplay, and *The Book Club Play* (Will) and *The Cottage* (Clark) with Actors Theatre. Tyler has worked as an actor, fight choreographer, education artist, and designer for numerous companies outside of the valley including The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, Playwrights Theatre, Garfield Shakespeare Co., Actor's Shakespeare Company, and many more. A Phoenix-based actor and full-time science educator, he received his MFA in theatre performance from Arizona State University.

#### **CREATIVE TEAM**

**Scenic Design:** Eric Beeck

**Lighting Design:** Paul Black

**Costume Design:** Danny Chihuahua

**Prop Design:** B Reeves

**Sound Design:** Pete Bish

**Stage Manager:** Ruth Farber

Tickets for *Sex With Strangers* start at \$21 and are subject to change depending on time, date and section, and are available at [www.arizonatheatre.org](http://www.arizonatheatre.org) or by calling the box office at (602) 256-6995. Discounts are available for seniors and active military. A \$10 student ticket pricing is now available for all performances. Half-price rush tickets are available for balcony seating for all performances one hour prior to curtain at the ATC box office (subject to availability). **Pay What You Can** performance Thursday, Feb. 11 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are available for a suggested \$10 donation. (Tickets must be purchased at the Temple of Music and Art starting one hour prior to curtain. Tickets are first-come, first served. *Cash only*. Two tickets maximum per person.) For discounts for groups of 10 or more, call (520) 622-2823

**Arizona Theatre Company offers accessibility services for patrons with disabilities for select performances.** Large print and Braille playbills and infrared listening amplification devices are also available at every ATC performance with reservation. TTY access for the box office is available in Tucson at (520) 622-2823 or via Arizona Relay at (800) 367-8939 (TTY/ASCII).

#### **Fact Sheet:**

*Sex With Strangers*

Written by Laura Eason

Directed by Ron May

**Venue:**

Temple of Music and Art  
333 S. Scott Ave.  
Tucson, Arizona

**Previews Begin:** Thursday, Feb, 11 at 7:30 p.m.

**Opening Night:** Friday, Feb. 12 at 7:30 p.m.

**Closing Performance:** Sunday, Feb. 21 at 2 p.m.

**Ticket Info:**

Ticket prices currently start at \$20 and are available in-person at the Temple of Music and Art box office, via phone at (520) 622-2823 or online at [www.arizonatheatre.org](http://www.arizonatheatre.org).

**Contact:**

Steve Carr, The Kur Carr Group, Inc., (602) 317-3040

**About Arizona Theatre Company:**

Arizona Theatre Company (ATC) is the preeminent fully professional theatre in the state of Arizona committed to inspiring, engaging, and entertaining - one moment, one production, and one audience at a time. Boasting the largest seasonal subscriber base in the performing arts in Arizona, ATC is the only resident company in the U.S. that is fully based in two cities providing its wide array of programming and community outreach across the region. Now in its 49th season, more than 130,000 people a year attend our performances at the historic Temple of Music and Art in Tucson, and the elegant Herberger Theater Center in downtown Phoenix. Each season of home-grown productions reflects the rich variety of world drama—from classics to contemporary plays, from musicals to new works—along with a wide array of community outreach programs, educational opportunities, access initiatives and new play programs. Designated The State Theatre of Arizona, ATC is led by Artistic Director David Ira Goldstein, Interim Managing Director Matt Lehrman, and a dedicated Board of Trustees.

**About Stray Cat Theatre:**

Stray Cat Theatre (SCT) is heading into their 14<sup>th</sup> season of bringing the best indie theatre to the Valley. Quirky, irreverent, and decidedly off the beaten path, SCT scratches the Valley's itch for a visceral, provocative theatre experience for culture-savvy cats who crave something beyond the standard kitty chow. Committed to aggressively seeking out and showcasing the most vital contemporary material and most vibrant emerging artists in the Valley, SCT is proud to call Tempe, AZ their permanent alley. More information at <http://straycattheatre.org>.