



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **ARIZONA THEATRE COMPANY CHARGES INTO 54<sup>TH</sup> SEASON WITH 6 MAIN STAGE PRODUCTIONS, ADDITIONAL CO-PRODUCTIONS, 9 INNOVATIVE LOCAL, NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND NEW-WORK DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

Arizona Theatre Company will launch its 54<sup>th</sup> season with Artistic Director Sean Daniel's first fully chosen six-play Main Stage lineup complemented by additional co-productions, nine exciting and innovative local and national collaborations and partnerships and numerous new-work development programs.

"With our upcoming season, the first I got to fully plan, we're laying out the blueprint for how Arizona Theatre Company can truly be the State Theatre," Daniels said. "We'll work with organizations larger and smaller than us to establish Arizona as one of the most exciting and innovative states when it comes to producing theater, and in the creation of new work. We'll launch a year-round musical theater development program and nine new partnerships will reshape the arts in Arizona."

ATC will partner with University of Arizona, ASU/Gammage, Herberger Institute of Design and Arts, Stray Cat Theatre, Tony Award-winning Tom Kirdahy Productions, Southwest Shakespeare Company, The Winding Road Theatre Ensemble of Tucson, Playwrights Center in Minneapolis and the fourth-largest music company in the world, BMG.

Full details of the partnerships will be announced in the coming weeks

"In addition to our usual six-play Main Stage Season, this will add two co-productions in Phoenix, one co-production in Tucson, two reading series and at least four musical and play workshop productions that will happen throughout the state," Daniels said. "It's time for Arizona to be a national leader, and Arizona Theatre Company is the way that happens."

## Main Stage Season

The 2020/2021 Main Stage Season opens with the Daniels-directed ***My 80 Year Old Boyfriend***, created by Charissa Bertels, Christian Duhamel and Edward Bell. ***My 80 Year Old Boyfriend*** is a delightful award-winning musical about the magic that happens when we let ourselves say "yes." From a chance encounter to the unlikeliest of friendships, Charissa discovers there's much she can learn from her surprising new companion. Based on the true story of Broadway performer Charissa Bertels, ***My 80-Year-Old Boyfriend*** is an incredible musical tale of the most unlikely pair as they reach across generational barriers to find friendship and learn a bit more about themselves. This show will be going on tour after playing in Arizona. Details will be announced. Tucson: Sept.5-26; Phoenix: Oct. 1-18.

***My 80-Year-Old Boyfriend*** will be followed by:

***Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberly*** by America's most produced playwright Lauren Gunderson (***Silent Sky***) and Margo Melcon, directed by Melissa Crespo. A cleverly imagined sequel to *Pride and Prejudice!* Mary Bennet is unmarried, nerdy, and growing tired of her role as the obedient middle sister. ***Miss Bennet*** is an energetic, witty, and romantic holiday comedy about family, awkward love, and personal transformation blending modern wit and grand period style. Perfect for all Jane Austen fans. Tucson: Oct. 17-Nov. 7; Phoenix: Nov. 11-29.

***Little Shop of Horrors***, music by Alan Menkin, book and lyrics by Howard Ashman, directed by Casey Stangl. With a charming doo-wop and Motown-flavored score containing several well-known tunes, including the title song, "Skid Row (Downtown)", "Somewhere That's Green", and "Suddenly, Seymour", Grammy and Academy Award-winning duo Howard Ashman and Alan Menken's (Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*) ***Little Shop of Horrors*** will satisfy your craving for tongue-in-cheek humor, toe-tapping songs, and murderous hijinks! Tucson: Dec. 5-26; Phoenix: Jan. 8-31 2021.

***how to make an American Son*** by christopher oscar peña, directed by Kimberly Senior in a co-production with The Rattlestick Playwrights Theater. The world premiere of a moving new play about the complexities of privilege, citizenship, and the most complex relationship of all: family. Senior directed *Disgraced* on Broadway when it won the Pulitzer Prize. A "Model Immigrant" and business mogul, Honduran born Mando's cleaning empire is bracing for a downturn and he must rein in his over-privileged American son Orlando. In the wake of a personal crisis, Orlando suddenly finds himself responsible for the fate of a treasured undocumented worker and the future of his father's entire enterprise. The show will go directly from its world premiere to to play Off-Broadway. Tucson: Jan. 23-Feb. 13, 2021; Phoenix: Feb. 18-March 7.

***Pru Payne*** by Steven Drukman, directed by Sean Daniels. The world premiere of a life-affirming story of love, (memory) loss, and how we deal with it all. ***Pru Payne*** explores love and family by hilariously and heartrendingly asking: what's the best way for any of us to be remembered, and what's love got to do with it? Tucson: March 13-April 3; Phoenix: April 8-25.

***Nina Simone: Four Women*** by Christina Ham, directed by Tiffany Nichole Greene. A face-to-face musical evening with the fiery genius. Nina Simone rocked the nation with "Four Women," her tribute in song to the four little girls lost in the tragic 1963 bombing by the Klu Klux Klan at the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. ***Nina Simone: Four Women*** imagines a conversation, often through music, between Simone and three African-American women from

varied walks-of-life. Director Greene is the current Resident Director on Broadway's *Hamilton*. Tucson: April 24-May 15; Phoenix: May 20-June 6.

## PARTNERSHIPS

With full details to be announced in the weeks ahead, here is a brief look at what to expect in 2020/2021.

- **BMG**: which is the world's fourth-largest music company and the first new global player in the recording business in decades. ATC Artistic Director Sean Daniels and Elyse Cogan, Director, Theatrical of BMG, are excited to announce a groundbreaking partnership to begin creating, workshopping and producing new musicals using today's top theater artists and BMG musical artists. This is the first known partnership of its kind.
- **University of Arizona**: to produce the "hilarious and dizzyingly fun" *Hot Pink* by Joanie Drago and directed by Veronika Duerr.
- **ASU/Gammage**. Project to be announced.
- **Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts**: workshop of "Froggy" by Jen Haley, directed Matt Morrow.
- **Stray Cat Theatre**: the world premiere of *Bleeding Hearts* by Steve Yockey (*Mercury, Wolves, Pluto, Octopus*), directed by Daniels and starring Veronika Duerr, the stunning lead from this season's production of *Silent Sky*.
- **Southwest Shakespeare**: a reading series focusing on new work created from classic texts.
- **Tom Kirdahy Productions**: details to be announced soon.
- **Winding Road Theatre Ensemble**: a reading series focused on new work using artists from ATC and Winding Road Theatre Ensemble.
- **Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis**: providing year-long dramaturgical support as we launch these new work efforts.

## MUSICAL THEATRE WORKSHOP SERIES

The following shows will be workshopped throughout the 2020/2021 season and open to subscribers and donors.

- **'Sueños'** by Jesse Sanchez
- **Jeanette** by Lauren Gunderson and Ari Afsar, Directed by Erin Ortman
- **'Untitled But Sure To Be Awesomely Titled 70's FM Radio jukebox lovefest- get ready'** by Chris D'Arienzo (*Rock of Ages*), directed by Sean Daniels

More shows will be announced at a later date.

Season-ticket packages for ATC's Six Main Stage Season are available for renewing subscribers now. Renewing Subscribers will also have exclusive access to those new co-productions and events.

New subscriptions will be available for sale starting on sale April 1. Single tickets will be available for purchase later this year. For information, visit [www.arizonatheatre.org](http://www.arizonatheatre.org).

To see a video of Artistic Director Sean Daniels talking about the season, visit <https://youtu.be/dPPAjhDBqc4>.

**Contact:**

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

**About Arizona Theatre Company:**

Under new leadership, and now celebrating its 53rd Season, Arizona Theatre Company is truly “The State Theatre.” Our company boasts the largest subscriber base of any performing arts organization in Arizona, with more than 130,000 people each year attending performances at the historic Temple of Music and Art in Tucson, and the elegant Herberger Theater Center in downtown Phoenix.

Each season of high quality productions reflects the rich variety of world theatre – from classic to contemporary plays, from musicals to new works – audiences enjoy the rich emotional experience and joy that can only be captured through live theatre. ATC is the preeminent professional theatre in the state of Arizona. Under the direction of Artistic Director Sean Daniels, Managing Director Billy Russo, and Managing Director Designee, Geri Wright, ATC operates in two cities – unlike any other League of Resident Theaters (LORT) company in the country.

ATC shares the passion of the theatre through a wide array of outreach programs, educational opportunities, access initiatives, and community events. With more than 800 Education & Engagement activities through the schools and summer programs, ATC focuses on teaching Arizona’s youth about the creative power of dramatic literature and how it can enrich their own lives in multiple ways

ATC reaches far beyond the metropolitan areas of Tucson and Phoenix, enriching the theatre learning experience for current and future audiences.