



NEWS RELEASE

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ARIZONA THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS ONLINE PLAY READING OF WENDY MACLEOD'S COMEDY, "SLOW FOOD," SEPT. 15-19

Arizona Theatre Company continues its series of online play readings with Wendy MacLeod's comedy for anyone who's ever been "hangry," ***Slow Food***, beginning at 5 p.m. on Sept. 15. The reading will be available through Sept. 19.

MacLeod, whose play ***Women in Jeopardy!*** is included in ATC's 2021 Mainstage season when live performances resume early next year, tells the story of Irene and Peter, who just want to have a nice meal out in Palm Springs on their big anniversary.

But, their highly neurotic waiter, Stephen, will not bring them their food, and everything goes horribly, ridiculously wrong. This absurd server will have them examining everything from their menu choices to their very future together. Will their shared desperation get them their spanakopita or end their marriage?

Slow Food will be accessible on Arizona Theatre Company's website (www.arizonatheatre.org) as well as on Facebook, YouTube and Vimeo from Sept. 15 at 5 p.m. through Sept. 19 at 5 p.m. A variety of programming around the play also will be available. There is no charge to view the play, but donations to Arizona Theatre Company are encouraged and will be greatly appreciated. For information, visit www.arizonatheatre.org

ATC Artistic Director Sean Daniels and Associate Artistic Director Chanel Bragg are codirecting ***Slow Food***, which features Daina Griffith and Joel Van Liew as the celebrating couple and Brian Beacock as the waiter. ATC's Matthew DeVore is the Sound Designer; Ido Levran is the Technology Director; and Kristi Hess is the Stage Manager.

"I've been lucky enough to direct several world premieres of Wendy MacLeod, including ***Slow Food***, and I'm thrilled for the first thing I direct for ATC to be a true bit of comedic genius by someone I admire so much," said ATC Artistic Director Sean Daniels. "Play readings are an important part of theatre's creative process, providing an opportunity to hear how a play reads – its flow and rhythm – and

letting us work through sections and make improvements,” said Daniels. “Watching them digitally, with the actors performing in their homes, it’s an intimate glimpse into part of the play-making process that audiences don’t usually see. And this play is just pure hilarity.”

Bragg agreed, noting, “Personally, I think our patrons could use an uproarious comedy at this time. With all that is going on in the world today, a little escapism is certainly welcome. Reading the script, I was immediately nostalgic to the days we sat in a restaurant. What I would give to have terrible service right now!”

ATC’s online readings are sponsored by Lavidge with additional support from Gammage and Burnham and Snell and Wilmer.

In addition to the play reading of **Slow Food**, the public is invited to participate in **ATC Nails It!**, a virtual culinary contest in which people can compete in a butter carving competition. Participants must carve one of three images on ATC’s website at www.arizonatheatre.org/nailsit (Charlie Brown, The Infinity Gauntlet, and Simba from the Lion King), and have 14 minutes to carve it. Entries will be judged on likeness, creativity and how hard it makes the judges laugh. Entries must be received by September 17 at 5 p.m. and can be emailed to info@arizonatheatre.org or posted on Facebook or Instagram with the hashtag #ATCNAILSIT. Rules and entry information can be found on ATC’s website.

ATC staff will also compete in a baklava Nails It! Contest in celebration of **Slow Food**. The show will be broadcast on Sept. 14 at 5 p.m. Additional programming for **Slow Food** includes a Facebook Watch Party on Sept. 15 at 5 p.m., **Hang & Focus** podcasts featuring MacLeod on Sept. 4 and the cast of the reading on Sept. 18. The creative team from **My 80-Year-Old Boyfriend**, ATC’s first production when Mainstage Productions resume, will be on the podcast on Sept. 11.

ATC’s *Digital Play Readings* this fall also include: **Covenant** by York Walker, Directed by Tamilla Woodard – ATC Premiere October 27-31; **The Realness** by Idris Goodwin, Directed by Wendy Goldberg – ATC Premiere November 2020; and **The Heath** by Lauren Gunderson and directed by Sean Daniels – date to be announced.

Additional plays in production and set for digital showings (dates to be announced) are **Walk Into The Sea** by ATC Playwright-in-Residence Elaine Romero and directed by Melissa Crespo; **Vivian’s Music: 1969** by Monica Bauer; **Road To The Pacific: The Story of Lewis and Clark**, a series of five 20-minute radio play podcast episodes coproduced with Dad’s Garage Theatre Company; **Maverick: The John McCain Project; Coronalogues**, created and curated by ATC Associate Artistic Director Chanel Bragg; **Forensics** by Reggie White and Gunderson; and **The Making of a Great Moment** by Peter Nachtrieb, in association with Z Space in San Francisco.

Plans are to open Daniels’ first fully chosen Main Stage lineup in January, with shows to be presented throughout the spring and summer, a time when ATC has traditionally been dark, and ending in November. All shows will offer a video option for any ticket holders who aren’t able to be in the theatre when shows are performed.

The 54th Main Stage Season lineup includes: *My 80 Year Old Boyfriend*, directed by Daniels and created by Charissa Bertels, Christian Duhamel and Ed Bell; *Pru Payne* by Steven Drukman, directed by Daniels; and a face-to-face musical evening with *Nina Simone: Four Women* by Christina Ham, directed by Tiffany Nichole Greene.

ATC will present two plays in Summer 2021: *Women in Jeopardy!* and *how to make an American Son* by christopher oscar peña and directed by Kimberly Senior in a co-production with The Rattlestick Playwrights Theater. Matthew Lopez's *The Legend of Georgia McBride*, directed by Meredith McDonough will be on-stage in Fall 2021. Specific show dates will be forthcoming.

Current plans call for a mini-season that will run from November/December 2021 through late spring 2022, kicking off with *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*, directed by Melissa Crespo.

A special 6-play 2020 Star Package is currently on sale and offers a seat at six show, with dates and seating to be determined. Single tickets will be available for purchase later this year.

For more information, visit www.arizonatheatre.org.

Bios:

Wendy MacLeod (Playwright) WENDY MACLEOD'S play *The House of Yes* became an award-winning Miramax film starring Parker Posey, and was produced by The Magic Theater, Soho Rep, The Washington Shakespeare Company, The Maxim Gorki Theater in Berlin, and The Gate Theater in London, among others. Her other plays include *Sin* and *Schoolgirl Figure*, both of which premiered at The Goodman, *Juvenilia* and *The Water Children*, both of which premiered at Playwrights Horizons, and *Things Being What They Are*, which premiered at Seattle Repertory Theatre, and had an extended run at Steppenwolf in Chicago. She was the first writer selected for The Writer's Room residency at the Arden Theater in Philadelphia, where she wrote *Women in Jeopardy!* which was selected for The Kilroys' List and premiered at GEVA, and has since been done around the country at theaters including Merrimack Repertory Theater, the Cape Cod Playhouse, and Center Repertory Theater in the Bay Area. *The Ballad of Bonnie Prince Chucky* premiered at ACT's Young Conservatory in San Francisco and her play *Slow Food* was developed at the 2015 National Playwrights Conference at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center and will premiere this season at Merrimack Repertory Theater. Her play *The Laugh Track* was selected by ACT in Seattle for the 2018 Hedgebrook Women's Playwrights Festival. Her prose has appeared in The New York Times, McSweeney's, Salon, POETRY magazine, and on NPR's All Things Considered. A graduate of the Yale School of Drama, she is the James E. Michael Playwright-in-Residence at Kenyon College. Her plays are available through Dramatists Play Service and at Playscripts.com. She worked as Executive Story Editor on Ryan Murphy's *Popular*, sold a pilot to CBS, that was developed by Diane Keaton, with Jeanne Tripplehorn attached, and her play *Schoolgirl Figure* was optioned by HBO. She recently did the screenplay adaptation for *The Shallow End*, a short film directed by Cynthia Silver.

Sean Daniels (Director) is honored to be the Artistic Director at ATC, where he first fell in love with theatre. He is an internationally known theater director, writer and Artistic Director, known for new work and innovative leadership. He's been a New York Times Critic Pick as a director and a writer. Sean has directed at Manhattan Theatre Club (*The Lion*, Drama Desk Award & Theatre World Award, nominated for Lucille Lortel and Outer Critics Circle), 59e59 (NYC, *I and You*, nominated for Outer Critics Circle) Lynn Redgrave (NYC) The Kennedy Center (Washington, D.C.), and St. James (West End, London - *The Lion*, winner of Best New Musical). He has been named "one of the top 15 up & coming artists in the U.S., whose work will be transforming America's stages for decades to come" and "One Of 7 People Reshaping And Revitalizing The American Musical" by American Theatre magazine. As a playwright, his work has been produced in multiple theaters over the country including a Commercial Off-Broadway run of his sober comedy *The White Chip* which was produced by Tony Award winner Tom Kirdahy. He'd love to hear from you. sdaniels@arizonatheatre.org twitter: @seandaniels

Chanel Bragg (Assistant Director) Pronoun: She/her -is ecstatic that *Slow Food* marks her co-directorial debut after being named the Associate Artistic Director of Arizona Theatre Co. She is elated to work alongside her partner Sean Daniels and such a talented cast. Chanel has directed at various theaters across the valley. Her most recent project being Spotlight Youth Theatre's production of *The Wolves*. ATC credits include: *Frenchie*- Cabaret, *Alma Hix*- Music Man. As an actress her favorite roles include- Tour: *Power Woman*- Menopause the Musical. Regional: *Pat*-Kinky Boots, *Medda Larkin*- Newsies, *Carla*- In the Heights, *Justice*-Rock of Ages, *Mary Magdalene*- Jesus Christ Superstar. Non regional: *Effie* in DreamGirls. *Joanne*- Rent, *Ruth*- Raisin in the Sun, *Mrs. Mueller*- Doubt, *Dorothy*- The Wiz, and many more. Founder of *United Colours of Arizona Theatre*, Producer/Director of "*The Alexander Project*" & *The Soul of Broadway Cabaret*. Supporting vocalist -"The Phoenix Afro-Beat Orchestra. www.chanelbragg.com

Daina Griffith (Woman): ATC Debut! OFF BROADWAY: *Jane Ho* (Theatre Row, heXtc). REGIONAL: Wendy MacLeod's *Slow Food* (Merrimack Rep, Dir. Sean Daniels), *Marjorie Prime*, *Circle Mirror Transformation*, *Cabaret*, *Amadeus*, *Company* (Pittsburgh Public Theater), Sean Daniels' *The White Chip*, *The Last Match*, *The Revolutionists* (City Theatre), *The River* (Quantum Theatre), *Oliver!* (The Gateway), *The Trimble Wars* (Human Race Theatre), *Blithe Spirit*, *Jaques Brel Is Alive And Well...* (PICT Classic Theatre), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Kansas City Starlight), *Grey Gardens* (Broadway World Regional Winner: *Best Actress In A Musical*), *Parade*, *Next To Normal* (Front Porch Theatricals) *Ragtime* (Lincoln Park) *A Devil Inside*, *All My Sons*, *The Threepenny Opera* (Pittsburgh Playhouse THE REP). FILM: *The Dark Knight Rises* (Dir. Christopher Nolan), *Where'd You Go*, *Bernadette* (Dir. Richard Linklater), *Holidaysburg*, *Happiest Season*, *Unsinkable*. TELEVISION: Spectrum's "Manhunt: Deadly Games" (Emily Lyons, recurring Season 2), WGN's "Outsiders" (Ricki, recurring Season 1), "Intrusion".

Joel Van Liew (Man) is thrilled to be working with Sean, Wendy, Daina, and Brian again, after having performed in the premiere of *Slow Food* at Merrimack Repertory Theatre. Other regional credits include *Home of the Brave* (MRT) and *The 39 Steps* (Geva Theatre), both directed by Sean Daniels, *The Ver**on Play* (ATL Humana Festival), *Seven Homeless Mammoths Wander New England* (Two River), *Pride and Prejudice* (ATL), *Well* (ACT), *The Pavilion* (City Theatre). **NY Theatre:** *Well* (Public), *From Up Here* (MTC), *The Hunt* (HB Studio Theatre), *Park Slope Minstrel Show* by Eleanor Burgess (finalist, Samuel French Play Fest), *Permanent Visitor* (New Georges), *Born of Conviction* (White Bird Prods). **Film:** *The Girl in the Book*, *Crown Heights*, *All Rise*. **TV:** *Escape at Dannemora*, *Billions*, *Broad City*, *Blue Bloods*, *Girls*, *Boardwalk Empire*, *Nurse Jackie*, *Law & Order*. Member of the Actors Center.

Brian Beacock (Waiter) is an actor, writer, producer, VO actor, singer and musician from the San Francisco Bay Area. After completing the National Tour of *Les Misérables*, he moved to Los Angeles where he has created a diverse career including numerous cartoon series and video games such as: *Digimon*, *Bleach*, *Naruto*, *Sailor Moon*, *Durarara*, *Blue Exorcist*, *Doraemon*, and more. Theater credits include: the West Coast Premiere of *Elegies*, *When Pigs Fly*, *the insane one-man show Fully Committed* and as a Broadway Axl Rose in Andy Prieboys' cult favorite, *White Trash Wins Lotto*. Television appearances on *Kath & Kim*, *CSI*, *General Hospital*, *Playing it Straight*, *Passions*, *Imagination Movers*, and NBC's *The Rerun Show*. Films include: *Mulholland Drive*, *Laws of the Universe-Part 1*, *Buying The Cow*, *Circuit*, *To The Beat*, *Racing Colt*, and the upcoming horror feature *Hollow Scream*. He has been a musical guest on *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, and was honored to sing to Betty White on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. He wrote and created the zombie comedy digital series *Acting Dead* (currently streaming on Amazon Prime) which won one of the first ever Primetime Emmys in the new short form category. Follow him on Twitter and Instagram@[brianbeacock](https://twitter.com/brianbeacock).

CREATIVE TEAM

Technical Director: Ido Levran

Sound Director: Matthew DeVore

Stage Manager: Kristi Hess

FACT SHEET

Slow Food

Written by Wendy MacLeod

Directed by Sean Daniels and Chanel Bragg

Viewing Dates

Sept. 15-18

Viewing Options

ATC website (www.arizonatheatre.org), YouTube channel, Facebook and Vimeo.

Contact:

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

About Arizona Theatre Company:

Under new leadership and now celebrating its 54th Season, Arizona Theatre Company is truly “The State Theatre,” with the largest subscriber base of any performing arts organization in Arizona. More than 130,000 people each year attend 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 – and 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 and Managing Director 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 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 nationally for current and future audiences.