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- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -

Marin Shakespeare Company's First Summer Season since Covid Opens with "Hamlet"

SAN RAFAEL, CA - Marin Shakespeare Company opens its Summer Season with a new production of "Hamlet." This production was adapted and directed by Jon Tracy, Marin Shakespeare Company's Artistic Producer for the Summer Season. The show opens at 7:30 pm on Saturday, June 17 at the Forest Meadows Amphitheatre at Dominican University of California. After three years without a summer season, Marin Shakespeare Company returns to Forest Meadows in a changed world. "Hamlet" responds with a visceral, chamber-style production. Drilling deep into this long-told tale of revenge, the production creates a space for us all to commune with the question: how can we rise above our collective cycles of destruction?

The production features a contemporary design by Nina Ball with a large, rotating dining table as its centerpiece. Costumes feature modern silhouettes following the rising trend of "stealth wealth" seen in popular TV shows like "Succession" and "Billions."

The cast of eight features Bay Area favorites as well as Nick Musleh in the title role. Nick is a Bay Area native who credits Director Jon Tracy with instilling in him a love of Shakespeare. The two met over two decades ago when Jon cast Nick as an understudy in a production of "Twelfth Night." Nick has studied and performed around the U.S., and is currently a film and theatre actor based in Los Angeles.

"Hamlet" audiences can also look forward to the vocal stylings of internationally known, celebrated performing artist, Lady Zen Quezada. Lady Zen is a TEDx talk alumna, published author, lyric fusion poet, producer, photographer and art director; they are currently a resident of Mexico collaborating on works around the world. They are the writer of one of the most talked about movies in festival circulation, "What's In A Name?," winner of over thirty international awards. Marin audiences will be able to see the film in conversation with Lady Zen on July 3rd at 514 Fourth Street in Downtown San Rafael. Audiences will have another opportunity to catch Lady Zen in solo concert and conversation in "Mother Of My Voice" on July 17th at 514 Fourth Street, where they will be treated to inspiring vocals and personal stories. More information about these and other exciting events can be found on the Marin Shakespeare Company website.

"Hamlet" performances are June 17 through July 16 with a preview on June 16 and an Opening Night celebration on June 17. Performances will also feature pre-show Kaleidoscope Talks curated by dramaturg Philipa Kelly 45 minutes prior to each performance.

Performances are presented outdoors Thursdays through Saturdays at 7:30 pm; Sundays at 5 pm, at Forest Meadows Amphitheatre, located on the campus of Dominican University of California, 890 Belle Avenue, San Rafael, CA. Doors open one hour before showtime. Ticket prices range from \$15-40, and are available by phone at 415-499-4488 or online at www.marinshakespeare.org/tickets For more information visit www.marinshakespeare.org.

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COST: \$15 - \$40
\$40 general; \$35 senior (65 and up); and \$15 youth (25 and under). Preview performances are \$20, \$10 youth.
Marin Shakespeare Company also offers those 65 and over \$20 tickets at designated Senior Matinees.
Students who are 18 and under are admitted free at designated Family Matinee performances.
Thursday, June 22 is a pay-what-you-will performance.

WHERE: Forest Meadows Amphitheatre, on the campus of Dominican University of California, 890 Belle Avenue, San Rafael, CA

WHEN: Thursdays - Saturdays at 7:30 pm; Sundays at 5:00 pm. Doors open one hour before show for picnicking.

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Marin Shakespeare Company Opens its New Theatre in Downtown San Rafael

SAN RAFAEL, CA - After seven years of planning, fundraising, and construction, Marin Shakespeare Company has finally been granted a Certificate of Occupancy by the City of San Rafael to operate its new Center for Performing Arts, Education, and Social Justice at 514 Fourth Street in downtown San Rafael.

Robert Currier, Artistic Director Emeritus, who first noticed the old Heller's for Children's store was for sale, says: "This has been a lot of work, but it will be a lasting legacy for future generations. Now that I'm a grandfather myself, I'm delighted to leave this beautiful venue for my grandchildren and future generations."

Heller's for Children was built in the mid-1960's by Herb Heller, a Holocaust survivor and entrepreneur, whose family ran the business selling cribs, strollers, children's clothing, and more for 50 years.

Marin Shakespeare Company purchased the property in January of 2017 after the Hellers had sold it to a real estate investor. They hired John Sergio Fisher & Associates as architects, with Joe Monteadora as the lead. Contractors Oliver & Company spent just over a year and a half on renovations. Janice Fetzer served as Project Manager as a volunteer. Larry Rosenberger and Board Member Sandy Zuber served as Capital Campaign Co-Chairs. Lesley Currier and Robert Currier were the leaders at Marin Shakespeare Company who oversaw every aspect of the project.

Marin Shakespeare Company and the Curriers are grateful to the many donors who supported the project, notably two Anonymous donors, the Buck Family Fund of the Marin Community Foundation, and the Rosenberger Family Foundation.

The Center boasts a 165-seat theatre in a three-quarter thrust configuration, with seating on three sides -- similar to Shakespeare's playhouses. It has an ample lobby which will function as a 40-seat Cabaret performance venue, a large Classroom/Rehearsal Hall, dressing rooms, backstage greenroom space, a Catering Kitchen/Concessions area, and Administrative offices. In addition, the large attic provides storage space for costumes, props, and scenery, a luxury for any theatre company.

Marin Shakespeare Company expects to fill the Center with performances, classes, and events. Already, it has hosted performances by MSC's Returned Citizen's Theatre Troupe, the annual party for Next Generation Scholars, the first Actors' Reading Collective "Outside the Box Reading Series" Play Reading, and a Shakespeare for Student Audiences production of "Macbeth" featuring MSC Artist-in-Residence Dameion Brown. Other performances are scheduled through the summer, and Shakespeare Summer Camps for youth began June 12 and continue through August.

Managing Director Lesley Currier is relieved to have Marin Shakespeare move out of her family's home after 34 years. "It's been wonderful working from home while I raised my children, but there was a time every nook and cranny we could find was filled with costumes, props, and desks for our growing staff. Knowing MSC has a long-time future home, with street visibility, being fully part of the San Rafael community, and knowing that MSC will survive its founders is an extraordinary thing. I'm exhausted -- but very happy."

Marin Shakespeare Company welcomes everyone to come explore the new Center. Donations are still being accepted: for \$1,500 to \$2,500 you can dedicate a chair in the new theatre; for \$5,000 your name will be permanently displayed on the Donor Wall; and there are many opportunities for Naming Rights for different parts of the new Center. Mostly, though, MSC wants everyone to come to be creative, learn, and build community. Especially now, after the ravages of Covid, it is more important than ever to be together in person. Marin Shakespeare Company is delighted to be able to provide space and time for gathering to explore our shared humanity.

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**TOURS: Please contact us to arrange a tour.
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Santa Rosa Local, Stevie DeMott, Brings Shakespeare to Life This Summer

SAN RAFAEL, CA - Marin Shakespeare Company welcomes audiences back to Forest Meadows Amphitheater this summer with an exciting season of Shakespeare. The season opens with a production of "Hamlet," directed and adapted by Jon Tracy which runs from June 16 through July 16. Next up is "Twelfth Night," directed, adapted, and choreographed by Bridgette Loriaux, running from August 4 through September 3. Both productions will be presented outdoors Thursdays through Saturdays at 7:30 pm and Sundays at 5:00 pm, at Forest Meadows Amphitheatre, located on the campus of Dominican University of California, 890 Belle Avenue, San Rafael, CA.

Both productions will feature Santa Rosa local, Stevie DeMott. In "Hamlet," DeMott plays both Horatio and Guildenstern. In "Twelfth Night," DeMott stars as Viola. Stevie grew up doing theatre in Pleasanton before earning two Bachelor's degrees in theater and creative writing at SFSU and an MFA from the American Conservatory Theater. Stevie is a devised theater maker, teacher, and actor. She has performed with the American Conservatory Theater, Magic Theatre, TheatreFirst, Word For Word, and Mugwumpin, among others. Favorite roles include May in "Fool For Love", Sara in "Stop Kiss", Orlando in Sarah Ruhl's "Orlando", Lady Macbeth, and Mercutio. Stevie has taught for California Institute of Integral Studies, at Burning Man exploring devising theater under extreme conditions, and for A.C.T.'s YC and Studio programs.

Since moving to Santa Rosa, DeMott and her partner, Haley Seppa have found it incredibly peaceful, dog friendly, and wine enthusiastic with beautiful nature, hikes, and parks. Seppa's father, Don Seppa, has a small crop of pinot grapes that he sells locally.

Performances of "Hamlet" are June 17 through July 16 with a preview on June 16 and an Opening Night celebration on June 17. "Twelfth Night" performances are August 4 through September 3 with a Preview on August 3 and an opening night celebration on August 4. Doors open one hour before showtime. Tickets prices range from \$15-40, and are available by phone at 415-499-4488 or online at www.marinshakespeare.org/tickets. For more information visit www.marinshakespeare.org.

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Weapons Master Richard Pallaziol, seen in Marin Shakespeare Company's "Hamlet", uses Theatre to End Gun Violence

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This production features several Bay Area natives, including Richard Pallaziol as Ophelia's father, Polonius. Richard has been a proud "Napkin" since 1990. This is his sixth season with MSC. He takes immense pride in his current position as an actor and instructor with Valley Players in Napa, (where is he one of the founding members) a remarkable theater company dedicated to empowering women over forty through the theatre arts. He is the Napa point person for Enough! Plays to End Gun Violence, a nation-wide movement of theatre activism for middle and high school students to address the impact gun violence has on their lives.

Richard is also the owner of Weapons of Choice: a company that makes prop weapons for the stage. He has been a stage fight choreographer for over 40 years, during which time he has designed and taught the fights for nearly 300 productions throughout California. Both during and after studying theatre at CSU Long Beach and ACT in San Francisco, he apprenticed with several fight masters including those of the Society of American Fight Directors. In order to better inform his techniques, he augmented his studies with a mastery of seven different disciplines of Asian and Western martial arts. His fights have been seen at every level of theatre, from high school to professional opera, and he provided fight coordination for independent films and even for the Prince of Persia 3D video game. As a fight instructor he has taught the techniques of stage combat to an estimated 8,000 actors, as well as mentoring other fight choreographers in their own technical and artistic development.

See Richard as Polonius in "Hamlet," June 17 through July 16 with a preview on June 16th at 7:30 pm and an Opening Night celebration on June 17th. Productions will be presented outdoors Thursdays through Saturdays at 7:30 pm and Sundays at 5:00 pm, at the Forest Meadows Amphitheatre, located on the campus of Dominican University of California, 890 Belle Avenue, San Rafael, CA. Doors open one hour before showtime. Tickets prices range from \$15-40, and are available by phone at 415-499-4488 or online at www.marinshakespeare.org/tickets. For more information visit www.marinshakespeare.org.

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From Shakespearean Understudy to Playing Hamlet

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This production features the talents of two Bay Area natives who share an unparalleled passion for Shakespeare. Nick Musleh plays "Hamlet" in Tracy's adaptation and this production serves as a reunion for the two. "I started acting in plays as a kid in Fairfield when my family moved there from San Francisco when I was 10. When I met Jon he was already being recognized as a brilliant director. A few years later he offered me an understudy role in a Shakespeare in the Park production of 'Twelfth Night'". I said, "What's 'Twelfth Night?'" Thus began my Shakespeare career. He directed me in three Shakespeare plays in total, while also producing other projects I performed in. It has been 20 years since our last time working together." says Musleh.

Tracy says, "I did this production of 'Hamlet' for Nick. I first realized he must do the role almost 30 years ago but needed to wait until I was anywhere near his league to actually ask him. Turns out I'll never be in his league but, wow, is he gracious with whatever I throw at him anyway."

The two are endlessly humble in their appreciation for each other and the art of performing Shakespeare. Musleh says, "This being sort of an anniversary for us feels very right. Bay Area theatre is what made me an artist, and Jon was a huge inspiration not just creatively but as a person. I've spent the last several years making Shakespeare films and theatre in Los Angeles, much of the credit goes to the model I had in Jon coming up. It's great to be back home getting to know the community again in a new way, and to be working with this amazing group."

You can see Jon and Nick's work in "Hamlet" June 17 through July 16 with a preview on June 16 and an Opening Night celebration on June 17. Productions will be presented outdoors Thursdays through Saturdays at 7:30 pm and Sundays at 5:00 pm, at Forest Meadows Amphitheatre, located on the campus of Dominican University of California, 890 Belle Avenue, San Rafael, CA. Doors open one hour before showtime. Tickets prices range from \$15-40, and are available by phone at 415-499-4488 or online at www.marinshakespeare.org/tickets. For more information visit www.marinshakespeare.org.

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