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NEW CONSERVATORY THEATRE CENTER ANNOUNCES 2019-20 SEASON, INCLUDING THREE WORLD PREMIERES

WORLD PREMIERE OF DEL SHORES' CAMPY PARODY, *THIS SIDE OF CRAZY*

REGIONAL PREMIERE OF BEKAH BRUNSTETTER'S SWEETLY COMIC CONFECTION, *THE CAKE*

NCTC'S "GOT THE BEAT" WITH EXUBERANT NEW MUSICAL, *HEAD OVER HEELS*

WORLD PREMIERE OF BITINGLY FUNNY COMEDY, *YOU'LL CATCH FLIES* BY RYAN FOGARTY

WORLD PREMIERE OF EPIC YELP REVIEW ADVENTURE, *THE BOOK OF MOUNTAINS AND SEAS* BY YILONG LIU

DONJA R. LOVE'S UNTOLD LOVE STORY AT A CROSSROADS IN BLACK HISTORY, *SUGAR IN OUR WOUNDS*

TOUCHINGLY CANDID TONY AWARD-WINNING BROADWAY HIT MUSICAL, *FUN HOME*

San Francisco, CA (March 28, 2019) – **New Conservatory Theatre Center Founder & Artistic Director Ed Decker** announced the line-up for NCTC's 2019-20 subscription season last night at NCTC's annual Season Announcement Party for subscribers, donors and artists.

Nationally and internationally renowned as San Francisco's Premier LGBTQ+ and Allied Theatre Company, NCTC is thrilled to offer a season of diverse stories filled with heart, humor and humanity.

"We aim to keep the 'new' in New Conservatory by presenting work that is daring, innovative, and relevant," says Decker. "Just as important as the work we present is gathering with others in the shared experience of live theatre. An opportunity to power-down our gadgets and power-up our hearts and minds as we come together to witness queer and allied stories that insist we explore, imagine, and embrace our collective humanity. At NCTC, there is no 'us' vs. 'them,' just 'we'."

For the 2019-20 Season, we're offering a brand new selection of shows, including three groundbreaking world premieres (two commissioned in NCTC's New Voices/New Work program), two smash hit Broadway musicals, and two bold regional premiere plays.

NCTC opens its 2019-20 Season in September, with the **world premiere** of the devilishly funny *This Side of Crazy*. "Little superstars for Jesus," the Blaylock Sisters, are all grown up and kind of a mess. There's Rachel, a Christian vlogger who still has sex with her comatose husband, Abigail, a chain-smoking virgin with anger management issues, and Bethany, a closeted atheist stripper. When their overbearing stage mother, Ditty, "volunteers" her daughters for a star-studded reunion performance, all hell breaks loose. From the brilliant

and hilarious mind of *Sordid Lives* creator, Del Shores, comes a brand new comedy about fame, family, and finding your way back home. NCTC is thrilled to welcome back the award-winning “master of the Texas Comedy” (*Los Angeles Times*), Del Shores, as both playwright and director after critically acclaimed recent productions of his other plays, *Six Characters in Search of a Play* (2018) and *Sordid Lives* (2017).

Del Shores is the writer/director/producer of *Southern Baptist Sissies*, *Daddy’s Dyin’...Who’s Got The Will?*, *Blues for Willadean*, and Showtime’s *Queer as Folk*. His work has received multiple nominations including Ovation and GLAAD, and awards including Los Angeles Drama Critics’ Circle, NAACP Drama-Logue, Back Stage West Garland, and *LA Weekly* Career Achievement.

Next, NCTC indulges in *The Cake*, a deliciously bittersweet comedy from **Bekah Brunstetter** that has been called “refreshing and heartening” by *Los Angeles Times*. Things are on the rise for Della. She’s been accepted as a contestant on the *Great American Baking Show*, her faith is as solid as ever, and her goddaughter, Jen, is back in town and wants Della to bake her wedding cake. But cracks start to appear in Della’s idyllic life when she learns Jen is marrying a woman - something that goes against everything Della believes. *The Cake* is a “delectably funny” (*Washington Post*) story about love, political divisions, and the value of a good piece of cake.

Bekah Brunstetter is an alumni of the CTG Writers Group, Primary Stages Writers group, Ars Nova Play Group, The Playwright’s Realm, and the Women’s Project Lab. She is currently a member of the Echo Theater’s Playwright’s group. Bekah has previously written for Starz’s *American Gods*, ABC Family’s *Switched at Birth*, NBC’s *This is Us*, and the film adaptation of *The Secret*.

From the mind of Tony Award-winner **Jeff Whitty**, NCTC is thrilled to bring a new musical to the Decker stage this holiday season with the smash-hit that took Broadway by storm, *Head Over Heels*. Based on Sir Philip Sydney’s Elizabethan tale of gender fluidity, *Arcadia*, this laugh-out-loud love story is set to the music of the iconic 1980’s all-female rock band The Go-Go’s, including treasured songs like “We Got the Beat,” “Our Lips Are Sealed,” and “Vacation.” A hilarious, exuberant celebration of love, *Head Over Heels* follows the escapades of a royal family on an outrageous journey to save their beloved kingdom from extinction—only to discover the key to their realm’s survival lies within each of their own hearts.

Jeff Whitty (Conception & Original Book) won the 2004 Tony Award for Best Book of a Musical for *Avenue Q*. He also wrote the book to the musical version of *Tales of the City* and *Bring It On*, which was nominated for a Best Musical Tony Award. His plays include *The Further Adventures of Hedda Gabler*, *The Hiding Place*, and *Suicide Weather*. **The Go-Go’s** (Music and Lyrics) include band members Charlotte Caffey, Belinda Carlisle, Gina Schock, Kathy Valentine and Jane Wiedlin. These female pioneers made history as the first, and to date only, all-female band that both wrote their own songs and played their own instruments to ever top the Billboard charts. Their 1981 debut album, *Beauty and the Beat*, was #1 on the charts for six consecutive weeks and it remains one of the most successful debut albums of all time.

In January, NCTC is proud to present the **world premiere** of *You’ll Catch Flies* by **Ryan Fogarty**, a biting comedy about the families we choose to build. J doesn’t really do “feelings,” but all that is about to change at Dev and Smitty’s party: J’s estranged best friend/crush/whatever Marcos is back in town. Throw in copious amounts of alcohol and hot gossip about their friend Marty’s new “relationship,” and this kiki just got crazy. Playwright Ryan Fogarty says of *You’ll Catch Flies*: “Life is not to be lived ‘behind closed doors,’ but as a gay man I was always told it should be. I was inspired to write *You’ll Catch Flies* after a confluence of

events across different friend groups- a friend had met his biological family, a couple I knew who was in an open relationship broke up, and a close friend hit on me, but I wasn't interested, which led to the end of our friendship. I saw so clearly how these three moments all intersected to be about intimacy and pursuing your own truth and emotional validation."

Ryan Fogarty's plays include *Skin Like Milk*, *Goldfish Love*, and *Beating Off*. His plays have been developed at LAByrinth, The Flea, Celebration Theatre (LA), Strawdog (Chicago), The Lark, and the Drama League, among others. Honors include Wurlitzer Foundation Fellow, Heideman Award- finalist, Princess Grace Award and O'Neill National Playwrights Conference- semifinalist, and Cherry Lane Mentor Project- finalist.

NCTC presents its third **world premiere** in the 2019-20 Season with an epic adventure of Chinese mythology, awkward situations, and the perfect Yelp review in *The Book of Mountains and Seas* by **Yilong Liu**. Andrew is in a weird position. His boyfriend Archie's dad keeps sending him birthday gifts, holiday cards, and even care packages full of Chinese snacks Andrew has never heard of before. Now Archie's father has shown up on Andrew's doorstep with a bizarre request- he wants to retrace all of Archie's Yelp reviews. Only one little problem: Archie has been kind of dead for two years. What ensues is an adventure filled with clashing cultures, unlikely friendships, and the review of a lifetime.

Yilong Liu is a New York-based playwright, originally from Chongqing, China. His awards include Kennedy Center's Paul Stephen Lim Playwriting Award, Paula Vogel Playwriting, and the National Partners of the American Theatre Award for Playwriting. He is a resident playwright at The Flea Theatre whose work has been developed at Stella Adler Studio of Acting, FringeNYC, and Union Theatre (London), among others.

Next in the season, NCTC is honored to present **Donja R. Love's** "fantastically moving" (*The New York Times*) testament to the power of love in the face of brutality, *Sugar in our Wounds*. The mystical tree was ancient long before the plantation grew around it. With roots that have outlived generations and branches extending past the heavens, it has borne witness to heartbreak, slavery, and death. But underneath this same tree, the gentle and expressive James finds a love that feels like freedom with the passionate and rebellious Henry. Called "an artistic, literary and conceptual triumph" by *The Fordham Observer*, *Sugar in Our Wounds* explores the untold story of queer love at a crossroads in Black history.

Donja R. Love is an AfroQueer playwright, poet and filmmaker from Philadelphia. He's the recipient of the 2018 Laurents/Hatcher Foundation Award, the 2017 Princess Grace Playwriting Fellow, and The Lark's 2016 Van Lier New Voices Playwriting Fellow. His work has been developed at Manhattan Theatre Club, The Lark and The Playwrights Realm.

NCTC finishes this powerhouse season with **Jeanine Tesori** and **Lisa Kron's** Tony Award-winning "uplifting musical drama of rare intensity, honesty and beauty" (*New York Daily News*), *Fun Home*. Winner of five Tony Awards, including Best Musical, *Fun Home* is the comically candid story of Alison Bechdel as she tries to understand her dysfunctional relationship with her father, a deeply closeted and mercurial funeral director. Based on the best-selling graphic memoir, the past and present blend together in this tender and surprisingly hilarious testament to the complicated nature of family. Ben Brantley of *The New York Times* raves "I can't think of a recent musical — or play, for that matter — that has done a better job at finding theatrical expression for the wayward dynamics of remembering."

Jeanine Tesori (Music) has written Tony-nominated scores for *Twelfth Night* at Lincoln Center; *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Lyrics, Dick Scanlan); *Caroline, or Change* (Lyrics, Tony Kushner); and *Shrek The Musical* (Lyrics, David Lindsay-Abaire). **Lisa Kron's** (Book and Lyrics) work has been widely produced in New York, regionally, and internationally. Lisa has received playwriting fellowships from the Lortel and Guggenheim Foundations, Sundance Theater Lab, the Lark Play Development Center, and the MacDowell Colony, the Cal Arts/Alpert Award, a Helen Merrill Award, and grants from the Creative Capital Foundation and New York Foundation for the Arts. Together, their work on *Fun Home* marked first all-female writing team to win a Tony Award for a musical's score

As always, subscribers get the best seats at the best prices for every show in the season. Seven show full-season subscriptions are available now, as well as a four show sampler, with a choice of any four shows in the season, and a **special three show flex pass to guests 35 years and under for just \$60 – \$20 a play!** Subscriber benefits include 30% off single ticket prices, access to the best seats, free and easy ticket exchanges, 50% off guest tickets, savings on non-subscription shows and much more. Subscriptions are now available at nctcsf.org/subscribe or by calling the Box Office at **415.861.8972**.

New Conservatory Theatre Center has been San Francisco's premier LGBTQ+ and Allied performing arts institution and **progressive arts education conservatory** since 1981. NCTC is renowned for its diverse range of **innovative, high-quality productions**, touring productions and **shows for young audiences**; its foundational anti-bullying work with youth and educators through **YouthAware**; and its commitment to developing **new plays** to continue expanding the canon of queer and allied dramatic work.

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This Side of Crazy

Written and Directed by Del Shores

September 20 - October 20, 2019

Opening Night: September 28, 2019

The Cake

By Bekah Brunstetter

October 25 - December 1, 2019

Opening Night: November 2, 2019

Head Over Heels

Book by Jeff Whitty

Adapted by James Magruder

Music and Lyrics by The Go-Go's

Based on *Arcadia* by Sir Philip Sydney

December 6, 2019 - January 12, 2020

Opening Night: December 14, 2019

You'll Catch Flies

By Ryan Fogarty

January 17 - February 23, 2020

Opening Night: January 25, 2020

The Book of Mountains and Seas

By Yilong Liu

March 6 - April 5, 2020

Opening Night: March 14, 2020

Sugar in our Wounds

By Donja R. Love

April 3 - May 10, 2020

Opening Night: April 11, 2020

Fun Home

Music by Jeanine Tesori

Book and Lyrics by Lisa Kron

Based on the graphic novel by Alison Bechdel

May 15 - June 14, 2020

Opening Night: May 23, 2020