



MEDIA RELEASE

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A GROWING
MILWAUKEE REPERTORY THEATER
EXPANDS LEADERSHIP TEAM AS A
TRIO OF EXCEPTIONAL FEMALE LEADERS MOVE INTO NEW ROLES

***Melissa Vartanian-Mikaelian** named **Managing Director**,
May Adrales moves to Milwaukee as fulltime **Associate Artistic Director**
and Milwaukee native **Laura Braza** appointed new **Artistic Producer***

June 11, 2019 – (Milwaukee) Artistic Director **Mark Clements** and Executive Director **Chad Bauman** are thrilled to expand the leadership team at [Milwaukee Repertory Theater](http://MilwaukeeRep.com) with three exceptional female leaders. Current General Manager **Melissa Vartanian-Mikaelian**, coming up on her 18th Season with Milwaukee Rep, is named Managing Director, providing leadership to the Community Engagement, Education, Finance and Administration departments. **Associate Artistic Director May Adrales** who has already made a significant impact at Milwaukee Rep these past two seasons beyond directing *Animal Farm*, *The Who & The What*, *The Chinese Lady* and *In The Heights*, will move to Milwaukee full time and spearhead the John (Jack) D. Lewis New Play Development program in addition to directing productions including *Eclipsed* next season. **Laura Braza** returns home to Milwaukee to join the team in a newly created role of **Artistic Producer**, providing oversight to the Artistic department. Laura is no stranger to Milwaukee Rep, having directed four productions in the past three seasons and again is set to direct *2 Pianos 4 Hands* in the Stackner Cabaret this fall.

“In the six years I’ve been at Milwaukee Rep, the theater has grown exponentially and in order to realize some ambitious and exciting new goals ahead we needed to rethink our leadership structure. **Melissa** has been with Milwaukee Rep for 17 years in more positions than anyone on our senior staff. She knows this theater inside and out and continues to prove herself an influential leader,” said Executive Director **Chad Bauman**. “I’m excited to continue to work with her in this expanded capacity.”

“**May Adrales** has been instrumental to The Rep since 2010 and we are thrilled she is moving her family to Milwaukee as our full time Associate Artistic Director,” said Artistic Director **Mark Clements**. “She brings a fresh global perspective to our work that is needed and necessary to our growth as a theater company. It is also wonderful to welcome **Laura Braza** back home to Milwaukee after 15 years working and developing as an artist in New York. Not only does she bring a level of artistic ambition and expertise to Milwaukee Rep, but her intimate knowledge of the community, having grown up here, is invaluable.”

Artistic Director **Mark Clements** and Executive Director **Chad Bauman** will remain co-equals reporting to the Board of Trustees, but the new leadership team for the theater will now consist of Chief Development Officer **Chuck Rozewicz**, Chief Marketing Officer **Lisa Fulton**, Managing Director **Melissa Vartanian-Mikaelian**, Director of Production **Jared Clarkin**, Artistic Producer **Laura Braza**, Associate Artistic Director **May Adrales**,

Chief Financial Officer **Mark Wyss**, Director of Community Engagement **Leah Harris** and Director of Education **Jenny Toutant**.

For more information, please visit www.MilwaukeeRep.com

Biographies:

Melissa Vartanian, *Managing Director*

Melissa joined Milwaukee Repertory Theater in 2002 as the Assistant Technical Director. Soon thereafter, she was promoted to Technical Director serving in that capacity from 2003 to 2008. In 2008, she was named Production Manager and served in that role until 2014, when Managing Director Chad Bauman named her as General Manager. Melissa holds a B.F.A. in Design & Production from North Carolina School of the Arts. Melissa is a mentee in the inaugural class of the LORT EDI Mentorship Program which addresses barriers that have prohibited the diversity of racial and gender composition in LORT managing and executive leadership. She is the proud mother of two adorable boys.

May Adrales, *Associate Artistic Director*

May's previous Milwaukee Rep directing credits include *Yellowman*, *The Mountaintop*, *after all the terrible things I do*, *The Who & The What*, *Animal Farm*, *In The Heights*, *The Chinese Lady* and upcoming *Eclipsed*. She has worked nationally, primarily directing new plays including Qui Nguyen's award-winning *Vietgone* (Manhattan Theatre Club, South Coast Rep, Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Seattle Rep). Her work has been seen at Lincoln Center Theater, The Public Theater, Signature Theatre, Second Stage Theater, Old Globe, Actors Theatre of Louisville, The Goodman, Two River Theater, Portland Center Stage, Cleveland Play House and Syracuse Stage. She is a former Director of On-Site Programs at the Lark Play Development Center and Artistic Associate at The Public Theater. She received the Alan Schneider Director Award, TCG New Generations Grant, Denham Fellowship and Drama League Fellowship. MFA, Yale School of Drama. www.mayadrales.net

Laura Braza, *Artistic Producer*

Laura is the Artistic Director of the Attic Theater Company as well as a freelance director and teaching artist. NYC credits include *Moonchildren*, *Dark Rapture*, *Wonderful World*, *This One Time In Last Chance (World Premiere)*, *The Time of Your Life*, *The Tutors*, *The Notebook of Trigorin (NYC Premiere)*, *Strictly Dishonorable*, *the dreamer examines his pillow*, *On The Verge, or the Geography of Yearning* and *Jericho (World Premiere)*, all for The Attic Theater Company; *Friend of the Devil (World Premiere)* and *If I Were You (World Premiere)* ([Harold Clurman](#) Theatre); work at New York Musical Theatre Festival, FringeNYC, Dixon Place, [Atlantic Theater Company](#)'s Stage II and more. Regional credits include *Grounded*, *Souvenir*, *Always...Patsy Cline*, and *Songs for Nobodies (American Premiere)* (Milwaukee Repertory Theater), *The Dispute* and *If You Give a Pig a Pancake* (Hangar Theatre), and *Theophilus North* (Dog Days Theatre with FSU/Asolo Rep). She has also worked extensively as a guest director for University of North Carolina School of the Arts, NYU/Tisch and [Stella Adler](#). Drama League Directors Project Alumnus. BFA from NYU. Proud member of SDC. Pius IX High School of Milwaukee alum.

About Milwaukee Repertory Theater

Milwaukee Rep is the largest performing arts organization in Wisconsin in terms of audiences served and one of the largest professional theaters in the country. Each year, The Rep welcomes up to 275,000 people at nearly 700 performances of 15 productions ranging from compelling dramas, powerful classics, new plays and full-scale musicals in its three unique performance venues – the Quadracci Powerhouse, Stiemke Studio and Stackner Cabaret. For over 65 years, The Rep has gained a national reputation as an incubator of new work, an agent of community change and a forward-thinking provider of vital arts education programs. Under the leadership of **Artistic Director Mark Clements** and **Executive Director Chad Bauman**, Milwaukee Repertory Theater ignites positive change in the cultural, social, and economic vitality of its community by creating world-class theater experiences that entertain, provoke, and inspire meaningful dialogue among an audience representative of Milwaukee’s rich diversity.

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