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Milwaukee Repertory Theater

Announces 2020/21 Season Reset Due to Covid-19 Challenges and an Emergency Relief *Rep Rising* Fundraising Campaign

August 25, 2020, 9:30AM CST (Milwaukee, WI) – Due to the increasingly complex challenges of COVID-19, [Milwaukee Rep](#) will move the previously announced 2020/21 Season in its entirety to 2021/22. In its place will be the **2020/21 Season Reset** starting with a one-actor version of *A Christmas Carol* in the Quadracci Powerhouse featuring **Lee E. Ernst** in December. The remainder of the Season Reset will continue in 2021 with four plays that provide entertaining and uplifting stories in theaters that are socially-distanced and revamped for the safety of both artists and patrons.

“The original 2020/21 Season was designed to be enjoyed by over 250,000 audience members and involved 500+ artists and staff,” said **Artistic Director Mark Clements**. “Unfortunately, given the realities of COVID-19, producing the announced season in a safe and responsible manner is not possible at this time. However, we know how important theater is during challenging times, so we are pleased to offer an alternative that will provide high-quality, entertaining theater in an environment that is safe and welcoming to our patrons. For safety, we are starting with the smallest cast shows and building up from there through the spring. It may look different, but our dedicated artists and staff are eager to put their skills to task and provide our audiences with a theatrical experience that will undoubtedly meet our world-class standards.”

The Season Reset continues in February after *A Christmas Carol* with the following four productions: *Ella Fitzgerald: The First Lady of Song* with Alexis J Roston (*Lady Day at Emerson’s Bar and Grill*), *McGuire* with Tony Award-winning actor Anthony Crivello, the world premiere *Antonio’s Song/I Was Dreaming of a Son* by Pulitzer prize finalist Dael Orlandermsith and Antonio Suarez and *Nina Simone: Four Women* by Christina Ham. A detailed line-up of the Season Reset is below and available at www.MilwaukeeRep.com.

Subscribers and ticket holders for the originally planned 2020/21 Season will automatically have their tickets rolled over to the 2021/22 Season. A Reset Pass is on sale now for the newly announced line up of plays and will provide the option of a high-definition virtual viewing of the production if the ticket holder is not comfortable attending in person.

Comprehensive protocols have been put in place at **Milwaukee Rep** to protect audiences, artists and staff. In addition to increased cleaning procedures, paperless tickets, a face mask requirement and an enhanced HVAC system, all theaters will be limited to 35% capacity and patrons will be seated in a socially distanced manner. Please visit this link for a detailed list of [Safety Protocols](#).

“We were one of the first institutions to shut down in Milwaukee at the beginning of this pandemic and we’ve utilized all the creativity and expertise of our staff and board to put forth this reopening plan,” said **Executive Director Chad Bauman**. “All of us are looking forward to the day where we can welcome audiences together in a shared live experience and we are doing everything in our power to reopen with revitalized energy and purpose.”

Milwaukee Rep has realized \$1.5 million in lost revenue and anticipates an additional \$6 million loss in 2020/21 due to limited capacities and fewer productions. The theater has kept the full-time and seasonal employees on payroll since March utilizing reserves, a PPP loan and the generous support from donors. However, as of August 3, Milwaukee Rep was forced to eliminate and furlough nearly half of the company. For those that remain, all are working at reduced salary and benefits. For this reason, the theater started the emergency relief **Rep Rising Fundraising Campaign** to help sustain artists, staff and facilities during this enormous challenge. Milwaukee Rep's Board of Trustees will match all new and increased gifts dollar for dollar up to \$500,000. Donate today at www.MilwaukeeRep.com.

"Milwaukee Rep has been a cultural cornerstone of Milwaukee for over 66 years. It was built by the community, for the community, and now we need that same community support more than ever," said **Board President Greg Oberland**. "Looking back at the past six months and at what's ahead, I'm honored to be a part of an institution that continues to find ways to thrive and do the work necessary to be a leader in the arts. However, in order to continue that trajectory, we need the community to join the Board of Trustees and myself in supporting a theater that has shaped so many lives."

As part of the 2020/21 Season Reset Milwaukee Rep will continue with original virtual content in its series [From Our Home To Your Home](#) this fall. Programs include **Original Commissions** by the country's leading playwrights; **Play On** featuring Shakespeare monologues, sonnets and scenes; **REPrise Concerts** with Milwaukee Rep favorite artists; and **REPair Divides Conversations** a virtual dialogue series that includes an online performance that sparks a facilitated discussion in partnership with the Zeidler Group. New this fall will be two programs **SoundStage** and **REPlay**. **SoundStage** will include four original audio plays that will center on Milwaukee points of interest that listeners can go to on their own time and listen for an immersive experience. **REPlay** will take audiences back as Mark Clements discusses a few of his favorite productions over the last ten years with some of the shows creative team and actors. For more details, visit [Milwaukee Rep at Home](#).

Below is a full timeline of the 2020/21 Reset Season. For more information, please visit www.MilwaukeeRep.com.

Milwaukee Repertory Theater 2020/21 Reset Season

45th Anniversary Production
Jay Franke & David Herro Present
Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol
By Tom Mula
Directed by Mark Clements
December 1 – 24, 2020
Quadracci Powerhouse

A Christmas Carol is one of the best-known and loved stories in the English language. A staple of countless family traditions, the holidays wouldn't be complete without Scrooge, Tiny Tim, Bob Cratchit, and the ghosts of Christmas past, present and future. This one-person intimate tour-de-force adaptation, **featuring Lee E. Ernst**, embodies the very heart of this beloved holiday classic. Until it is safe to bring back the full ensemble for our annual production at the Pabst Theater, we invite you to celebrate this tale of love, hope and redemption in our special 45th Anniversary production

Presented by Artists Lounge
Ella Fitzgerald: First Lady of Song
Starring Alexis J Roston
February 16 – March 14, 2021
Quadracci Powerhouse

Award-winning actress Alexis J Roston salutes America's favorite jazz singer, Ella Fitzgerald. Roston was last seen at Milwaukee Rep in her mesmerizing star turn as Billie Holiday in *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill* (Chicago's Jeff Award, Black Theatre Alliance Award) and in the 2014 production of *The Color Purple*. In a spellbinding performance, Roston effortlessly emits the sultry swing and playful joy that made Ella an American treasure. Classic tunes by Ellington, Gershwin, Porter and more include "Summertime," "The Lady Is a Tramp," and "It Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing."

Anthony Crivello as
McGuire
By Dick Enberg
Produced by Rech Entertainment
March 23 – April 18, 2021
Quadracci Powerhouse

Few names trigger more memories and smiles in Milwaukee than Al McGuire, Marquette University's legendary basketball coach. Many know him for leading the Warriors to the NCAA Championship and for his candid television personality, but few knew him like his broadcasting partner – the late Emmy Award-winner Dick Enberg. Back by popular demand from a sold-out extended run at Milwaukee Rep in 2017, *McGuire* is a touching portrait of the uncommonly funny and profound man behind the legend with the man himself played by Tony Award-winning actor Anthony Crivello.

A John (Jack) D. Lewis New Play Development Program Production
Antonio's Song/I Was Dreaming Of A Son
By Dael Orlandersmith and Antonio Edwards Suarez
Directed by Mark Clements
April 7 – May 2, 2021
Stiemke Studio

A poetic journey of a dancer/artist/father questioning the balance of his passions – art, culture family. A story that, questions/challenges the legacy of stereotypes: of manhood/race/fatherhood. This solo/movement drama explores the sins of our fathers and mothers – as well as the gifts that our parents bestow upon us. How do we own the responsibility – TO RECOGNIZE? TO BE AWARE? Antonio Edwards Suarez, a breathtaking performer, share the legacy with pain, promise and hope.

Nina Simone: Four Women
By Christina Ham
April 27 – May 23, 2021
Quadracci Powerhouse

When "The High Priestess of Soul" Nina Simone heard about the tragic bombing death of four young girls in an Alabama church in 1963, the songstress turned to her music as a means of expressing the country's agony. Powerful anthems such as "Four Women," "Mississippi Goddam," "His Eye Is on the Sparrow," and "To Be Young, Gifted and Black" followed, fueling the Civil Rights Movement and transforming her public persona from

songstress to activist. Through storytelling and song, *Nina Simone: Four Women* reveals how this iconic artist found her true voice.

Programming, cast, dates and prices are subject to change

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About Milwaukee Repertory Theater

Milwaukee Rep is the largest performing arts organization in Wisconsin with three unique performance venues in the Patty & Jay Baker Theater Complex— the Quadracci Powerhouse, Stiemke Studio and Stackner Cabaret. For over six decades, Milwaukee Rep has been a centerpiece of Milwaukee’s vibrant arts and cultural scene with productions ranging from Broadway musicals to Shakespeare to American Classics and New Works that are entertaining, inclusive and impactful. 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.