FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MARIN THEATRE COMPANY’S PLAYWRIGHT-IN-RESIDENCE LAUREN GUNDERSON RECEIVES ESTEEMED STEINBERG/ATCA AWARD

MILL VALLEY, CA—Marin Theatre Company is thrilled to announce that Lauren Gunderson, MTC’s playwright-in-residence, has been honored with the Harold and Mimi Steinberg/American Theatre Critics Association (ATCA) New Play Award for her play, The Book of Will. The winners were announced on Saturday, April 7th at Actors’ Theatre of Louisville during the annual Humana Festival of New American Plays. Other finalists include: Molly Smith Metzler for her play, Cry It Out; Tracy Letts for his plays, The Minutes and Linda Vista; Charles Smith for his play, Objects in the Mirror; and Ike Holter for his play, The Wolf at the End of the Block. Lauren Gunderson is the only woman to win the Steinberg/ATCA award twice, as she was previously awarded the esteemed prize in 2014 for her play, I and You, which received its world premiere at Marin Theatre Company.

From the ceremony, Ms. Gunderson shared her exciting news with MTC:

“The Book of Will is a play about the power of theatre, community, and love; so it’s really about all of the colleagues, artists and audiences across the world who make plays happen. To receive the Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award at the Humana Festival surrounded by so many of these colleagues was a perfect compliment to the meaning of this play and this award to me. I am absolutely glowing from gratitude to the ATCA, to Jim and Mimi Steinberg for all they do for theatre in America, and to the cohort of generous, wise, soulful artists who helped give this play life.”

More About the Harold and Mimi Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award

The Harold and Mimi Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award is an annual prize, awarded to a play that has received its professional premiere as a finished work, outside of New York City. The winner receives a cash prize of $25,000, and two additional finalists are awarded citations of $7,500. Plays are first nominated by ATCA members; scripts are then read and honorees selected by a large committee of critics from different regions of the country, and the recent practice has been to announce the awards at the annual Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors’ Theatre of Louisville. Many ATCA Award selections have gone on to major off-Broadway or Broadway productions, and many have received subsequent other awards. Recent winners include Qui Nguyen for his play Vietgone (2016), Rebecca Gilman for her play Luna Gale (2015), and Bill Cain for his play Equivocation (2010). First awarded in 1977, the Steinberg/ATCA award has been awarded multiple times to only three playwrights in its forty-one year span: August Wilson for Fences (1986), The Piano Lesson (1989) and Two Trains Running (1991); Bill Cain for Equivocation (2010) and 9 Circles (2011); and now, Lauren Gunderson holds this recognition. Marin Theatre Company has been immensely privileged be one of very few theatres to debut multiple Steinberg/ATCA award-winners; 9 Circles by Bill Cain, and I and You by Lauren Gunderson both received their world premiere at MTC.
Lauren Gunderson’s Upcoming Work at MTC

As part of her three-year Andrew W. Mellon Foundation National Playwright Residency at MTC, Lauren Gunderson has written two full-length plays for the Boyer mainstage season. In 2016, MTC staged the rolling world premiere of Gunderson and co-playwright Margot Melcon’s Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley, and as part of MTC’s upcoming 2018-19 season, Gunderson and Melcon are creating and developing a companion piece—The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley. Gunderson has been a present, artistic voice at MTC over the past two seasons, playing a vital role in the season selection process, participating on panel discussions, and lending her expertise toward creating best practices for collaborations with visiting artists and playwrights.

Most recently, Gunderson waived the royalties to her newly-written one-woman piece, Natural Shocks, around which she has organized readings at theatre companies across the nation for a weekend of theatre activism to raise awareness of gun violence. MTC will participate by holding two public readings, with Lauren Gunderson lending her own voice as reader, on the evenings of April 20th and April 21st.

More about Natural Shocks: Based on Hamlet’s “To be or not to be” speech, Natural Shocks is a 65-minute, one-woman tour-de-force play that bursts to life when we meet a woman waiting out an imminent tornado in her basement. Her story—and the secret she reveals—puts the reality of guns in America front and center. Natural Shocks is part confessional, part stand-up, and part reckoning.

The following performances will be held in MTC’s Sali Leiberman Theatre:

Friday, April 20 at 7:30 PM
Saturday, April 21 at 7:30 PM

Fill out this form to RSVP.

Lauren M. Gunderson is the most produced playwright in America of 2017, the winner of the Lanford Wilson Award, the Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award and the Otis Guernsey New Voices Award. She is also a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize and John Gassner Award for Playwriting, and a recipient of the Mellon Foundation’s three-year National Playwright Residency with Marin Theatre Company. She studied Southern Literature and Drama at Emory University, and Dramatic Writing at NYU’s Tisch School where she was a Reynolds Fellow in Social Entrepreneurship. Her work has been commissioned, produced and developed at companies across the US including South Coast Rep (Emilie, Silent Sky), The Kennedy Center (The Amazing Adventures of Dr. Wonderful And Her Dog!), Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The O’Neill, The Denver Center, San Francisco Playhouse, Marin Theatre Company, Synchronicity, Berkeley Rep, Shotgun Players, TheatreWorks, Crowded Fire and more. She co-authored Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley with Margot Melcon, which was one of the most produced plays in America in 2017. Her work is published at Playscripts (I and You, Exit Pursued By A Bear, The Taming, and Toil And Trouble), Dramatists Play Service (The Revolutionists, The Book of Will, Silent Sky, Bauer, Miss Bennet) and Samuel French (Emilie). Her picture book Dr
Wonderful: Blast Off to the Moon was released from Two Lions / Amazon in May 2017. LaurenGunderson.com and @LalaTellsAStory

ABOUT MTC
Marin Theatre Company is the Bay Area’s premier mid-sized theatre and the leading professional theatre in the North Bay. We produce a six-show season focused on new American plays. We are committed to the development and production of new plays, with a comprehensive New Play Program that includes productions of world premieres, two nationally recognized annual playwriting awards and readings and workshops by the nation’s best emerging and established playwrights. Our numerous education programs serve more than 10,000 students from over 40 Bay Area schools each year. MTC strives to create intimate, powerful and emotional experiences that engage audiences to discuss new ideas and adopt a broader point of view. We believe in taking risks and inspiring people to participate in live theatre, regardless of personal means. MTC celebrates the intellectual curiosity of our community, and we believe that theatre is an important tool to help build empathy. MTC was founded in 1966 and is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

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