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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

American Blues Theater announces its 2017-2018 Season
Including the World Premiere of *Six Corners* by Keith Huff, directed by Gary Griffin; the Chicago Premiere of *Beauty's Daughter* by Dael Orlandersmith, directed by Ron OJ Parson; the 16th annual production of *It's a Wonderful Life: Live in Chicago!* from Frank Capra's film, directed by Gwendolyn Whiteside; and *Buddy – the Buddy Holly Story* by Alan Janes, directed by Lili-Anne Brown and music directed by Michael Mahler.

Chicago, IL – **American Blues Theater**, under the continued leadership of Producing Artistic Director **Gwendolyn Whiteside**, announces the lineup for its 2017 – 2018 Season, "The Beat Goes On." American Blues' 32nd Season will include the World Premiere of *Six Corners* by **Keith Huff**, directed by **Gary Griffin**; the Chicago Premiere of *Beauty's Daughter* by **Dael Orlandersmith**, directed by **Ron OJ Parson**; the 16th annual production of *It's a Wonderful Life: Live in Chicago!* from **Frank Capra's** film, directed by **Gwendolyn Whiteside**; and *Buddy – the Buddy Holly Story* by **Alan Janes**, directed by **Lili-Anne Brown** with musical direction by Ensemble member **Michael Mahler**. All performances in the 2017-2018 Season will take place at Stage 773, located at 1225 W Belmont Ave, Chicago.

"From the lyric beats of a poet, the heartbeat of a family man, the patrol beat of a Chicago cop, to the inimitable beat of Buddy Holly & the Crickets, we're thrilled with the rich and varied stories offered for our audiences," notes Producing Artistic Director **Gwendolyn Whiteside**. "We're honored to have such extraordinary talent on the American Blues stage."

The 2017-18 American Blues Theater Season up close:

The Chicago Premiere of
Beauty's Daughter
by Dael Orlandersmith
directed by Ron OJ Parson
July 7 – August 5, 2017

Press Opening: July 13, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.

This Obie Award-winning play by Dael Orlandersmith depicts one woman's journey through life's obstacles in an East Harlem neighborhood. Artistic Affiliate Wandachristine takes on 6 different characters during the course of this solo play—some broken, some on the way down, but all memorable.

16th Anniversary Production of
It's a Wonderful Life: Live in Chicago!
from Frank Capra's film
directed by Producing Artistic Director Gwendolyn Whiteside
November 17 – December 30, 2017
Press Opening: November 19, 2017 at 2:30 p.m.

For 16 years, the American Blues Ensemble has treated Chicago audiences to a live 1940s radio broadcast of holiday favorite *It's a Wonderful Life*. The incredible cast recreates the entire town of Bedford Falls with Foley sound effects, an original score and holiday carols. The Bedford Falls "residents" extend their hospitality after every performance when audiences are treated to milk and cookies served by the cast.

**The World Premiere of
Six Corners
by Keith Huff
directed by Gary Griffin
February 16 – March 25, 2018**

Press Opening: February 22, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

Late one night, two burnt-out violent crimes unit detectives try their damndest to close the puzzling murder of a CTA employee. What should be a simple open-and-shut case, however, evolves into a horrifying mystery and unearths a legacy of violence stretching back years.

**The Chicago Revival of
Buddy – the Buddy Holly Story
by Alan Janes
directed by Lili-Anne Brown
musical direction by Ensemble member Michael Mahler
April 27 – May 26, 2018**

Press Opening: May 3, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

Before the Beatles or the Rolling Stones ever played a note, rock & roll was forever changed by the bespectacled kid from Texas. BUDDY tells the true story of Buddy Holly through his short yet spectacular career and features the classic songs "That'll be the Day", "Peggy Sue", The Big Bopper's "Chantilly Lace", Ritchie Valens' "La Bamba" plus many more.

Additional 2017-2018 Programming

Ripped Festival: Edition 16

Spring 2018

Written and direction by various Chicago artists

Since 2009, American Blues Theater has produced 135 short plays in the *RIPPED: the Living Newspaper* series. Based on the 1930's WPA era program that brought Orson Welles, Arthur Miller, Richard Wright and Clifford Odets into public attention, playwrights use inspiration ripped from today's headlines to create stories performed live on stage.

Arts Education in Chicago Public Schools

The Lincoln Project

Conceived and Adapted by Producing Artistic Director Gwendolyn Whiteside from Artistic Affiliate James Still's Pulitzer-nominated *The Heavens Are Hung in Black*

American Blues Theater's innovative and adaptive program aligns with Illinois Learning Standards to engage 5th-10th graders about the life of Abraham Lincoln, specifically the events surrounding the Emancipation Proclamation. Students watch scenes performed by professional actors, participate in discussions, and most importantly, write their own plays. Since the program's launch in 2013, over 5,500 students have participated in the program.

Subscriptions

All main stage performances take place at **Stage 773**, 1225 W. Belmont Ave. The Blue Card – the most affording ticketing offer the 2017-2018 season are available now at www.AmericanBluesTheater.com or by calling **773.654.3103**.

About American Blues Theater

Winner of the American Theatre Wing's prestigious 2016 National Theatre Company Award, American Blues Theater is a premier arts organization with an intimate environment that patrons, artists, and all Chicagoans call home. American Blues Theater explores the American identity through the plays it produces and communities it serves.

The diverse and multi-generational artists have established the second-oldest professional Equity Ensemble theater in Chicago. The 37-member Ensemble has 530+ combined years of collaboration on stage. As of 2016, the theater and artists received 186 Joseph Jefferson Awards and nominations that celebrate excellence in Chicago theater and over 31 Black Theatre Alliance Awards. The artists are

honored with Pulitzer Prize nominations, Academy Awards, Golden Globe Awards, Emmy Awards and numerous other accolades.

The American Blues Theater Ensemble includes all four Founders Ed Blatchford, Rick Cleveland, James Leaming, and William Payne with Dawn Bach, Matthew Brumlow, Manny Buckley, Kate Buddeke, Sarah Burnham, Dara Cameron, Casey Campbell, Darren Canady, Brian Claggett, Dennis Cockrum, Austin Cook, Laura Coover, Ian Paul Custer, Lauri Dahl, Joe Foust, Cheryl Graeff, Marty Higginbotham, Jaclyn Holsey, Lindsay Jones, Nambi E. Kelley, Kevin R. Kelly, Steve Key, Ed Kross, Warren Levon, Michael Mahler, Heather Meyers, John Mohrlein, Christopher J. Neville, Suzanne Petri, Carmen Roman, Editha Rosario, Sarah E. Ross, and Gwendolyn Whiteside.

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