

Contact: Scott Palmer
503 516 4840
scott@bagnbaggage.org
www.bagnbaggage.org



A NEW HOME. A NEW SEASON. A BOLD NEW FUTURE.

Hillsboro, OR – Well, no one can say it has been easy!

After a grueling \$1.5 million, 18 month capital campaign, the sale and subsequent closure of The Venetian Theatre, moving one show to a library, canceling the largest show in the company's history, and seven months of construction, Bag&Baggage Productions has weathered the storm and proudly announces the inaugural season in their permanent new home.

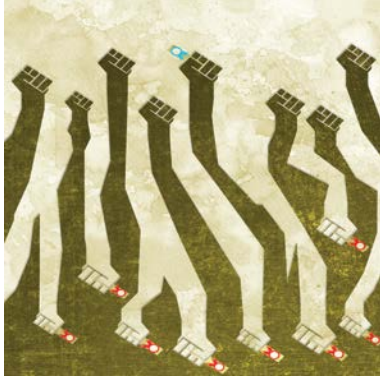
In addition to announcing their six show line-up, Bag&Baggage is also pleased to announce that an anonymous major donor has stepped forward to secure naming rights of the new building. *The Vault Theater & Event Space* will not only house B&B's productions, but will also be available for rent for corporate and community events, and will act as a base for a number of Portland-area performing arts groups. B&B is also planning a series of Improv Comedy nights, called *Cabaret Improv*, featuring *No Filter Improv Comedy*, the return of their *Drunk As The Dickens* holiday event and relocating their annual *Burns Night Supper* to the space in January of 2018.

"There were definitely moments where I wondered why I hadn't gone to school to become an accountant," said Scott Palmer, Founding Artistic Director of Bag&Baggage. "But with the passionate, generous support of our patrons and a wide range of trusts and foundations, our new home will be ready to go for our first indoor show in September. I could not be happier, or more proud of this organization."

As usual, B&B begins their season this summer at the Tom Hughes Civic Center Plaza with a world-premiere, outdoor Shakespeare performance. For 2017, the company returns to the main plaza for a timely, powerful, reimagined *Romeo and Juliet*, relocating the Bard's tragic lovers to ancient Iran during the time of Emperor Constantine.



Artistic Director Scott Palmer has fused Shakespeare's tale of "star cross'd lovers" with one of the earliest influences on the story, *Layla and Majnun* by the 12th Century Persian Sunni poet Nizami. "There is ample evidence to suggest that one of the main literary influences for Shakespeare's story of feuding families and tragic love comes from ancient Persia," said Palmer. "In Nizami's poem, two young lovers rebel against their parents, embrace their forbidden love, and pay the ultimate price. Sound familiar?" *Romeo and Juliet* (*Layla & Majnun*) stars B&B Resident Artist Arianne Jacques as Juliet, and is Assistant Directed by recent Hillsboro High School graduate and Linfield College student Melory Mirashrafi, who is Iranian-American. *Romeo and Juliet* (*Layla and Majnun*) runs from July 20 – August 5, 2017.



Heading indoors for the first production in The Vault Theater, Palmer directs a critically-acclaimed work by one of America's foremost contemporary female playwrights, *Spinning Into Butter* by Rebecca Gilman. Gilman, who received the *Harper Lee Award* in 2008, is perhaps best known for her plays *Boy Gets Girl* and *The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter*. In *Spinning Into Butter*, her 1999 play that debuted at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago, Gilman digs deep into political correctness and unexamined white racism through the lens of a fictional liberal arts college in Vermont experiencing ongoing racist attacks on a black student. The title of the play is taken from the book *Little Black Sambo* by Scottish author Helen Bannerman, a controversial children's story in which the main character, Sambo, is chased into a tree by tigers who then run in circles until they turn into butter. With *Spinning Into Butter*, Bag&Baggage

opens their new home by rededicating themselves to a focus on social justice, equity, and inclusion. *Spinning Into Butter* stars new Resident Artist Kymberli Colbourne (Ahab in *Moby Dick*, *Rehearsed* and Mrs. Robinson in *The Graduate*) in the lead role of Sarah Daniels. *Spinning Into Butter* runs from September 7 through the 24, 2017 at The Vault Theater & Event Space.



October sees a radical turn for the farcical with the return of the "ladies" of Farndale Avenue in a show with the longest title in B&B history, *The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society's Production Of "Murder At Checkmate Manor"* by David McGillivray and Walter Zerlin, Jr. The *Farndale Avenue* series is perhaps best known as being...well...terrible. Intentionally horrible, actually. In the series, a group of English community theatre actors desperately attempt to put on high quality theatre, but are ultimately defeated by their own complete lack of talent and ineptitude. B&B produced *The Farndale...Christmas Carol* in 2012 to rave reviews, and is bringing the "women" back together for a crack at an Agatha Christie style murder mystery for Halloween. Patrick Spike returns as the be-spectacled Mrs. Reece, with Sean Powell reprising the role of accident prone and

medication-reliant Mercedes Blower. "The *Farndale* series is really the great-grandmother of recent farce hits like *The Play That Goes Wrong* and even *Noises Off*," said Palmer, who directs the show. "As we say, bad theatre can be such a drag!" *Farndale...Murder At Checkmate Manor* runs from October 12 through the 31, 2017 at The Vault Theater and Event Space.



B&B's 2017 holiday show is a revival of the company's most popular production ever, *Charles Dickens Writes A Christmas Carol*, which puts Dickens himself center-stage. "This production, which we performed in 2010 and 2011, imagines what it must have been like in Dickens' London study on the night he wrote his novella, and is inspired by Dickens' own writings about the process," said Palmer, who adapted the script and also directs. "Dickens said that the idea for *A Christmas Carol* struck him so powerfully that he retired immediately to his study and *wept, and laughed, and wept again* while he spoke aloud to the characters in the story." Taking place on a fictional Christmas Eve, Scrooge, Cratchit, and Tiny Tim all argue and bicker with Dickens himself while attempting to rewrite the story to their own ends. *The Oregonian* called the production "charming and powerful," and

Willamette Week said, "this production brings farcical humor and delightful new life to scenes that had, until now, become mere wintery routine!" *Charles Dickens Writes A Christmas Carol* stars B&B Resident Actor Peter Schuyler as Dickens and Kymberli Colbourne as Scrooge, and runs from November 30 through December 23, 2017 at The Vault Theater & Event Space.



B&B's 2018 begins with the solo directorial debut of Cassie Greer, longtime Resident Actor and recently appointed Associate Artistic Director, who takes on one of the most compelling and chilling thrillers written in the past 30 years, Ariel Dorfman's *Death and the Maiden*. Set in a South American country with a violent, fascist history, *Death and the Maiden* is a haunting mystery that asks powerful questions about revenge, politics, and the enduring nature of human evil.

Perhaps best known as a film starring Sir Ben Kingsley and Sigourney Weaver, and directed by Roman Polanski, *Death and the Maiden* was originally performed at the Royal Court Theatre in London and won the Olivier Award for Best New Play in 1992. "Although written nearly 30 years ago, this play has so much to say to contemporary audiences, particularly given our own current political climate," said Greer. "I am humbled to have this great classic as my directorial debut for Bag&Baggage." *Death and the Maiden* runs from March 8 through the 25, 2018 at The Vault Theater & Event Space.



The final production of the 17/18 Season is one of the most beloved English plays ever written, and an ideal vehicle for B&B's Resident and Associate Artists, Noel Coward's *Blithe Spirit*. Filled with otherworldly charm and spectral hijinks, *Blithe Spirit* tells the story of novelist Charles Condomine who, while gathering information for his new book, summons the spirit of his dead wife Elvira, setting up a series of madcap misadventures filled with Coward's trademark wit and repartee.

Blithe Spirit stars a cast of B&B favorites, including Jessi Walters as Elvira, Andrew Beck as Charles, Cassie Greer as Ruth, and Arianne Jacques as Edith the maid. The production runs from May 10 through the 27, 2018 at The Vault Theater & Event Space.

B&B has a range of ticket options available for audiences, including two different Season Subscriptions: a Platinum Pass which includes tickets to all six productions, and a Pick Four Pass, which provides one ticket to any four productions. Season Tickets are available online at bagnbaggage.org or by calling the Box Office at 503 345 9590. "Given that our new venue has fewer seats than our previous venue, we want to make sure everyone books their tickets as early as possible," said Palmer. "In fact, we expect most of these productions to be completely sold out so time is of the essence."

More information on Bag&Baggage Productions and the line-up of shows for the 2017-2018 Season can be found online at bagnbaggage.org.

###

ABOUT BAG&BAGGAGE PRODUCTIONS: Bag&Baggage Productions is Hillsboro's only professional theatre company. B&B is committed to innovative and provocative new interpretations of the classics of American and English drama, bringing surprising new insight to stories and writers from our past. Led by Hillsboro native Scott Palmer, B&B is one of the largest non-profit cultural organizations in Hillsboro, has gained an international reputation for excellence, and regularly attracts audiences of more than 18,000 to the company's six-show season.