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***Is God Is*, Aleshea Harris's Sweeping Spaghetti Western, Kicks Off Washington Ensemble Theatre's 2019/20 Season**

September 6 - 23, 2019

By Aleshea Harris

Directed by Lava Alapai

Produced in Partnership with The Hansberry Project

(Monday, August 12, 2019—SEATTLE) **Washington Ensemble Theatre** will begin its 2019/20 Season with the West Coast premiere of ***Is God Is***, the Spaghetti Western-inspired play by **Aleshea Harris** that centers on the contemporary myths and stories of black women, considers the futility and desperation that comes from cyclical violence, and asks why stories of revenge feel so good and so bad. The cast features an incredible lineup of Seattle-based actors. **Kamaria Hallums-Harris** (WET: *99 Ways to Fuck a Swan*) and **Brace Evans** (WET: *Cherdonna's Doll's House*) return to the WET stage as Racine and Chuck Hall/Man. Making their WET debuts are **Maya Burton** as Anaia, **Charles Antoni** as Riley, **Tre Scott** as Scotch, and **Laura Steele** as Angie. **Lava Alapai**, who makes her Seattle debut to direct, calls *Is God Is* "unapologetically black without the lens of whiteness." WET is proud to partner for a second time with **The Hansberry Project**, a professional black theatre company dedicated to the artistic exploration of African American life, history, and culture. WET and The Hansberry Project's first collaboration was the production of *The Motherfucker with the Hat* in 2016. *Is God Is* had its world premiere at Soho Rep in 2018 and was a New York Times Critic's Pick.

"I tend to shy away from violence in media—I am not normally drawn to blood, gore, or revenge, but *Is God Is* changed that for me," said WET's Artistic Director **Samie Spring Detzer**. "I have come to terms with the fact that a revenge fantasy is something I believe many of us need to see right now. A high-octane, scorched-earth, modern fable about reclaiming your future and at times destroying the past is the story I believe Seattle needs to see, and *Is God Is* delivers that."

Is God Is plays **September 6 - 23, 2019** at **12th Avenue Arts** (1620 12th Avenue in Capitol Hill). Single tickets and season subscriptions are on sale now at www.washingtonensemble.org.

Aleshea Harris's quasi-fable *Is God Is* embraces the indomitable power of women scorned. Inspired by Spaghetti Westerns and Afro-punk, this electrifying play follows twin sisters who go on a killing spree to exact revenge on their creator. Called a "gratifying, lurid new play" by *The New York Times*, *Is God Is* hits

the sweet spot of gritty and powerful fun that honors the magic of black women. *Is God Is* is the winner of the 2016 Relentless Award from the American Playwriting Foundation.

About the Director

Lava Alapai is originally from Okinawa, Japan and grew up in Honolulu, Hawaii where she learned and fell in love with Bunraku puppetry, theatre, and photography. She graduated with an MFA in acting from California Institute of the Arts and has been creating theatre in Portland for more than a decade. She is a proud member of the Stage Directors & Choreographers Society (SDC).

About the Playwright

Aleshea Harris is a playwright, performer and educator who received an MFA in Writing for Performance from California Institute of the Arts. Her work has been presented many places, including: the Costume Shop at American Conservatory Theater, Playfest at Orlando Shakespeare Theater, VOXfest at Dartmouth, the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, The Theatre @ Boston Court, L'École de la Comédie de Saint-Étienne, National Drama Center in France and in the 2015 anthology, *The BreakBeat Poets: New American Poetry in the Age of Hip-Hop*. Harris has been commissioned by American Conservatory Theater (*Crack.Rumble.Fly.*, 2016) and CalArts' Center for New Performance/La Comedie de Saint-Etienne (*The Gap*, ongoing). Aleshea is a MacDowell Fellow, Hedgebrook Alum and winner of the American Playwriting Foundation's 2016 Relentless Award in honor of Philip Seymour Hoffman for her play *Is God Is*.

About the Creative Team

Is God Is features scenic design by **Lex Marcos**, lighting design by **Ryan Dunn***, costume design by **Ricky German**, sound design by **Kyle Thompson**, properties design by **Jenny Burkey**, fight choreography by **Ian Bond**, with stage management by **Alison Kozar**. Additional staff includes **Marquicia Dominguez** (dramaturg).

*Member of Washington Ensemble Theatre

About Washington Ensemble Theatre

Through collaborative artistic leadership, Washington Ensemble Theatre fearlessly creates audacious stories for adventurous Seattle audiences. A resident company at 12th Avenue Arts in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood, WET is committed to maintaining an environment wherein its members, as well as artists from the community, are challenged to grow through its work as an ensemble. For more information about Washington Ensemble Theatre, please visit www.washingtonensemble.org.

The 2019/20 Ensemble is Samie Spring Detzer, Jeffrey Azevedo, Maria Manness, Rachel Liuzzi, Bobbin Ramsey, Tristan Roberson, Joceline Wynn, Jenn Oaster, Ryan Dunn, Maggie Rogers, Sophie Franco, Rachel Guyer-Mafune, and Erin Bednarz.

Thanks to 2019/20 season sponsors 4Culture and Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, Portage Bay Café, and media sponsor *The Stranger*.

For Calendar Editors

Is God Is | Washington Ensemble Theatre

WHEN

Pay What You Can Preview: Thursday, September 5, 2019
Opening Night: Friday, September 6, 2019 (press opening)
Closing Day: Monday, September 23, 2019

SHOW TIMES

Thursdays - Mondays at 7:30 PM (no performance September 9)
There will be a matinee performance at 2:00 PM on Sunday, September 22

WHERE

12th Avenue Arts (1620 12th Avenue in Capitol Hill)

TICKETS

Please visit www.washingtonensemble.org to purchase tickets.

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