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Washington Ensemble Theatre Announces New Leadership Team, to Begin June 2020

Maggie L. Rogers Named Artistic Director and Erin Bednarz Named Producing Director

(January 14, 2020—SEATTLE) **Washington Ensemble Theatre** (WET) and its Board of Directors announced today an executive leadership transition already underway that will be finalized by June 2020. Current Artistic Director **Samie Spring Detzer**, who was the first sole Artistic Director of the company, and Managing Director **Jeffrey Azevedo** will transition away from their company leadership roles but continue to curate **The GUSH Series**, WET's program for visiting contemporary performance. **Maggie L. Rogers** will become the company's next Artistic Director and **Erin Bednarz** will become Producing Director. **Rogers**, who joined WET in 2016 as Literary Manager and Resident Dramaturg, will be the second sole Artistic Director of WET. Her recent credits with the company include directing *Everything You Touch* and the upcoming *The Strange Case of Dr. Cher & Mr. Donna*. WET's leadership team will be rounded out with the appointment of **Maria Manness** as Managing Director.

WET has operated under a variety of leadership and organizational models over the past 16 years. This current transition further highlights how WET embraces non-traditional models in favor of what serves the company and its members best, contributing to the continued success and considerable growth since its founding.

"Washington Ensemble Theatre is uniquely and historically collaborative, prioritizing challenge as a motivational tool," said **Bednarz**, who will assume the role of Producing Director in June of this year. "Our shift toward a less traditional structure will promote these values and further integrate our patrons and community members with ways they too can collaborate with us. Current leadership has successfully deemed WET a sustainable company during their term, and with such foundation set before us we aim to identify our next steps of growth."

Since assuming their leadership roles in 2016, **Detzer** and **Azevedo** helped transition the company into its residency at 12th Avenue Arts and developed a number of multidisciplinary programs including **ReSET**, **Six Pack Series**, and [The GUSH Series](#). They also nearly doubled the operating budget, which secured WET's name as Seattle's home for thrilling and unforgettable contemporary theatre.

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“Washington Ensemble Theatre has been my home for the last eight years and I am forever grateful to this company for giving me and my collaborators the space, time, and resources needed to become the artist administrator I am today,” added **Detzer**. “I have had the great privilege of leading this company, along with my brilliant and multi-talented friend **Jeffrey Azevedo**, for the last four years, and I am so proud to usher in a new and exciting structure and vision led by four incredible women.”

“For 16 years, WET has been Seattle’s go-to company for scrappy, daring new work, and I am honored to continue the legacy of giving emerging artists and seasoned vets the playground to create and dream wildly,” said **Rogers**, who will assume the role of Artistic Director in June of this year. “I look forward to starting a long term conversation with our adventurous audiences and to facilitate the ways in which we can grow together.”

About the Incoming Leadership

Maggie L. Rogers is a Seattle based director, Gregory-nominated sound designer, and fat activist who proudly hails from Louisville, Kentucky. She is WET's Literary Manager and Resident Dramaturg, Resident Director at The Horse in Motion, and the Company Dramaturg for Cherdonna Shinatra's company DONNA. www.rogersmaggie.com

Erin Bednarz holds over a decade of Seattle based artistic involvement with past and current contributions to LiveGirls Theatre, Seattle Fringe Festival, 14/48 projects, and Cheat Day Collective (4 Culture Grant Recipient). Erin is co-founder of Umbrella Project, and works nationally in sound design, dramaturgy, performance, production, and music. As DJ play__pranks, she plays nostalgia pop + dance hall around the bar scene in Seattle. She teaches Advanced Sound Design at Cornish College of the Arts and holds a Gregory Award in Outstanding Sound Design. Her late band Hearts Are Thugs earned a 2014 RAW Artist Award and was featured on The CW + Alaska Airlines' *Band In Seattle*.

Maria Manness is an enabler of the performing arts through the use of her management background, building and craft skills, and love of spreadsheets. She has been the Production Manager of Washington Ensemble Theatre since 2013. Outside of WET, some recent collaborators include Kitten n' Lou, Alice Gosti, Tim Smith-Stewart & Jeffrey Azevedo, and Coriolis Dance. She is a teaching artist of technical theater, and in the last year has taught at The Center School, Village KIDSTAGE, and Scriber Lake High School.

About the Outgoing Leadership

Samie Spring Detzer is an interdisciplinary artist, a graduate of Cornish College of the Arts, and a notorious fast talker. For the last 8 years Samie has worked at Washington Ensemble Theatre where she became the company's first ever sole Artistic Director in 2015, leading the company through some of its most critically acclaimed seasons to date. Detzer was previously ACT Theatre’s Literary Manager, during her time there she helped develop the nationally recognized ACT|One New Play Festival. Samie is the Director of External Relations at On the Boards. She is a proud (and vocal) advocate of #shoutyourabortion.

Jeffery Azevedo is a Seattle-based theatre artist and Washington Ensemble Theatre’s Managing Director. He was seen most recently in Washington Ensemble Theatre’s productions of *Teh Internet is Serious*

New Leadership Team | Washington Ensemble Theatre

Business, *Cherdonna's Doll's House* and *The Things Are Against Us*. He is currently developing *Salvage Rituals* with his long time collaborator Tim Smith-Stewart to premiere in the winter of 2020 at On The Boards, where they are current artists in residence. Together they have created installations and performances at On the Boards, PICA (PDX), The Henry Art Gallery, Risk/Reward (PDX), Velocity Dance Center, Fresh Oysters Performance (MSP), The Seattle Center Next50 Festival, and the Lofi Arts Festival. He holds degrees in Make Believe and Electricity from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

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, Bobbin Ramsey, Tristan Roberson, Joceline Wynn, Jenn Oaster, Ryan Dunn, Maggie L. Rogers, Sophie Franco, Rachel Guyer-Mafune, Erin Bednarz, Kiki Abba, Sienna Mendez, Ben Swenson-Klatt, Brian Dang, and Minna Lee.

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