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Washington Ensemble Theatre Produces new Sensory Installation *amber*

September 10 - 27, 2021

Created by Markeith Wiley and dani tirrell

(Friday, August 20, 2021—SEATTLE) Washington Ensemble Theatre (WET) will produce its first installation piece *amber* in the Mainstage Theatre at 12th Avenue Arts this September. **Markeith Wiley** and **dani tirrell** are crafting a journey through the shadows of the disco era presented as a generative sensory installation. In this 30-minute multimedia experience, lights and sounds will guide small groups as they explore a series of immersive spaces. Revisit a transformative decade, reflect on the untold stories of the era, and join a dance party to celebrate self-expression in all its glory.

amber will be open to audiences **September 10 - 27, 2021** at **12th Avenue Arts** (1620 12th Avenue in Capitol Hill). Tickets are on sale now at www.washingtonensemble.org.

“Is it too on-the-nose to say that The Ensemble is thrilled to be back presenting audiences with an in-person experience?” asked WET’s artistic director **Maggie L. Rogers**. “In usual WET fashion, we’re keeping our designers and our audiences on their toes and offering our first ever sensory installation. In a series of firsts (including a pandemic season and producing a feature length film), why not do something else we’ve never done before?”

This is the first in-person presentation produced by WET during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since March 2020, The Ensemble embraced the opportunity of a collective pause to shift towards producing accessible, digital content. In October 2020, WET produced **Vote Art Vote**, a collection of newly conceived performances from eleven Seattle artists in response to the 2020 election season directed by **Raja Feather Kelly** and co-curated by **dani tirrell**. Then, in May 2021, WET artistic director **Maggie L. Rogers** helmed WET’s first feature length film **The Doll Pit** starring **Cherdonna Shinatra** in a solo dance piece.

Rogers continues, “With *amber*, **Markeith Wiley** and **dani tirrell** are at the helm to create an installation that explores the disco era. They are two of Seattle’s most ground-breaking choreographers and artists, and past collaborators of The Ensemble. Using their multi-disciplinary backgrounds, they are shining a light on

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the silent truths of the 70s. Beyond the neon lights, iconic music, and dance floors, issues including homophobia, racism, and a rising AIDS crisis cast dark shadows on this transformative decade. The title *amber* was chosen by Markeith and dani to reflect the energy, spiritual confidence, and safety we hope to create in this space as we navigate the full story of this time period.”

“Utilizing WET’s signature technical design talent in new ways, we’re excited to offer audiences an opportunity to let go of their current day-to-day and experience a WET production in a whole new way. Lights and sounds will guide small groups through a series of rooms in an intimate, sensory-forward immersive environment. And then, get your chance to dance on a WET stage (but don’t slip and fall!) as we celebrate the unforgettable music of the era. As we continue to keep COVID protocols and safety measures in place, we are more than ready to welcome audiences back into 12th Ave Arts for something we know will be weird, profound, and deeply human.”

About Markeith Wiley

California native Markeith Wiley (they/them) is a multi-dimensional art maker, who creates out of necessity. Their vast movement vocabulary spans a lifetime of influences from break dancing to musical theater & all in between. Markeith is also a curator, sound designer, DJ Dark_Wiley & a community activist. Wiley has been an arts educator in Seattle since 2009 teaching at Rainier Dance Center as the director of hip hop/street styles dance, choreographing with Seattle Children’s Theatre & teaching at Markeith’s alma mater Cornish College of the Arts. Markeith has performed, collaborated or created work with Kitten N Lou, dani tirrell, On the Boards, the CD Forum, Velocity Dance Center, Gibney Dance (NYC), Cal State San Luis Obispo & many others.

About dani tirrell

dani tirrell (Seattle, WA) Seattle’s Mayor Arts Award recipient 2019, is A Black, Queer choreographer, dancer, and movement guide. dani has guided people in Detroit and Seattle as well as sharing movement practices in other cities in the United States. Currently dani is the curator for Central District Forum for Arts and Ideas (Seattle). dani is the host and co-creator of several online talk programs Sunday Dinner, The Living Room, and Intimate Conversations.

dani is the founder and current artistic director of The Congregation, a movement/art group. dani is currently teaching at Northwest Tap Connection and University of Washington Seattle and Bothell campuses. dani has created work for Dance This (Northwest Tap Connection), Strictly Seattle (advance/professional track), Seattle Repertory Theater, Nina Simone Four Women (Directed by Valerie Curtis-Newton).

dani is an Arts Matter Fellow, Artists Trust Fellow (Seattle) and 4Culture Arc Fellow (Seattle). dani is the Artist in Residence at Velocity Dance Center (2020/2021) and one of 6 Artists in Residence at On the Boards (Seattle, WA)

dani’s production of Black Bois (On the Boards and Seattle Theater Group) was a locally critically acclaimed work that produced sold out shows in Seattle and is in development for a documentary film. In 2019 dani was the recipient of an Artist Trust Fellowship Award and a Dance Crush Award for Black Bois (performance). dani also received a 2018 Arts Matter Fellowship grant. dani current work FagGod in

collaboration with Anastasia Renee and Naa Akua was presented in the Central District Forum for Arts and Ideas 2019/2020 season. dani's new work 46, is a photo exhibit styled, staged, and photographed by dani. This work can be found online under dani's Instagram profile.

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 2021/2022 Ensemble is Maggie L. Rogers, Erin Bednarz, Maria Manness, Joceline Hitchcox-Lain, Tristan Roberson, Jenn Oaster, Ryan Dunn, Sophie Franco, Rachel Guyer-Mafune, Kiki Abba, Sien Mendez, Ben Swenson-Klatt, and Brian Dang.

Thanks to our 2021/22 season sponsors ArtsWA, National Endowment for the Arts, ArtsFund in partnership with Washington State Department of Commerce, 4Culture, Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, The Raynier Foundation, and media sponsor *The Stranger*.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS

WHEN

Opening Night: Friday, September 10, 2021

Closing Day: Monday, September 27, 2021

SHOW TIMES

Thursdays 1-5, 6-10pm

Fridays 1-5, 6-10 pm

Saturdays 1-5, 6-10 pm

Sundays 1-5 pm

Mondays 4-8 pm

Audience size is limited to groups of 10 people for a 30 minute experience.

COVID INFO

Masks are required for the duration of the experience. Further information about COVID safety protocols can be found on our website.

WHERE

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

amber | Washington Ensemble Theatre

TICKETS

Please visit www.washingtonensemble.org to purchase tickets. \$5-25. Ticketing is timed for entry and online advance purchase is recommended.

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