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## Washington Ensemble Theatre celebrates 18th Season with “System Failure”

Back In-Person and Ready to Take Our Capitalistic Society to Task

(December 7, 2021 — SEATTLE, WA) **Washington Ensemble Theatre** has announced a four-event lineup for its **2022 Spring Season**, which includes their fan-favorite new work showcase, a rebellious and hell-raising fundraiser, a rollicking surrealist comedy presented in-person at 12th Avenue Arts, and a weekend of locally grown world premiere dance pieces. The season, which marks The Ensemble’s 18th year as a producing theatre company in Seattle, is themed “System Failure,” and will summon the audience’s inner insurgent to spark rebellion and inspire change.

“Over the past two years, the systems that hold our society together revealed just how fragile and, frankly, chaotic they are,” said **Erin Bednarz (she/her), Producing Director**. “The government, health care, capitalism, personal safety, education, etc. have all been turned upside down and we’re left trying to make sense of the broken pieces left behind. ‘Why were these systems built this way?’ ‘What role do artists play in joining the reckoning and starting to rebuild?’ Our Ensemble is investigating all of these surfacing questions and the role that making art can play at this moment in time.” **Maggie L. Rogers (she/her), Artistic Director**, continued “We have learned that after living through such aggressive structural failure, it’s not about returning to ‘normal.’ Turns out, ‘normal’ was the problem. While so many systems have failed us, fortunately the human spirit has not. If we can believe in each other and the possibility of change, we can start to pick up the pieces and make something new. We have sought out artists to eloquently speak to this and we hope Seattle is excited to join us.”

The Ensemble will open its season with its popular **Six Pack Series in January**—a literary event that invites Seattle-based writers, poets, playwrights, and performers to showcase work based on a curated theme. This will be WET’s first in-person event since March of 2020.

Back in action after last year’s killer virtual gala, WET will hold their **2022 System Failure Gala** in two parts. The in-person event will be hosted by Rogers and Bednarz on **Feb 19th at Block 41** in Seattle’s

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Belltown neighborhood, and feature cross-disciplinary, interactive art-performances by Seattle artists. On **February 24th**, Rogers and Bednarz will appear virtually for WET patrons and fans who prefer to attend digitally.

From **April 15 - May 7, 2022**, The Ensemble will fully produce the West Coast premiere of Trish Harnetiaux's full length play ***Tin Cat Shoes***. In what the *New York Post* calls "a delight in three acts," a troop of shoe store employees blessed with the "Can-Do" American spirit embark on a journey of personal expansion. But when "work is your life" and systems break down, all that remains is you, a casino, and the truth. Told with **blisteringly quick humor and a lot of heart**, this play explores the capitalist society we inhabit and how to find enlightenment within it. Maggie L. Rogers, Artistic Director, will direct. She previously directed *The Doll Pit* and *Everything You Touch*. *Tin Cat Shoes* will also feature Ensemble members Kiki Abba (she/her), Rachel Guyer-Mafune (she/her) on stage, and Ryan Dunn (he/him) designing lights.

Closing out the season, WET will present **reSET the weekend of May 13-14**. In what SeattleDances calls, "a place for Seattle dancers to play, adventure, and perform," this popular interdisciplinary program provides opportunities for dancers and choreographers to make and perform pieces inspired by the elaborate theatrical sets of WET's mainstage productions. Curated by Mark Haim, Babette Pendleton, and Alice Gosti, this year's reSET will occur on the set of The Ensemble's mainstage production of *Tin Cat Shoes*.

#### 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, The Ensemble 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 The Ensemble, please visit [www.washingtonensemble.org](http://www.washingtonensemble.org).

The 2021/2022 Ensemble is Maria Manness (she/her), Tristan Roberson (he/him), Joceline Wynn (she/her), Ryan Dunn (he/him), Maggie Rogers (she/her), Rachel Guyer-Mafune (she/her), Sophie Franco (they/them), Erin Bednarz (she/her), Ben Swenson-Klatt (they/them), Kiki Abba (she/her), Sien Mendez (they/them), and Brian Dang (they/them).

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#### FOR CALENDAR EDITORS

### **Six Pack Series**

January 25-26, 2022

12th Avenue Arts

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Six Pack Series is back for its in-person return! Six Seattle artists from all forms and genres are invited to present a brand new work based on a common theme chosen by the evening's hosts. Super chill and highly interactive, this showcase is a chance for audiences to learn about cool new artists, have a laugh, maybe shed a tear in your crying hanky, and cheer on these new works in progress. Six Pack has featured artists like Markeith Wiley, Sara Porkalob, Peter Richards and Jéhan Òsanyin and the plan is to keep handing the mic over to Seattle's up-and-coming artists. Cheers!

## **System Failure Gala**

February 19, 2022

In-Person at Block 41 Seattle

February 24, 2022

Virtual Event

WET is back with an on-brand killer party to raise hell - and funds - to celebrate a season of plays that question authority, decimate capitalism, and awaken the insurgent inside you. Join in-person, in the digital realm, or even watch-party-style. Pick your platform and your posse to venture into an evening of art, resiliency, and a kick-ass good time.

## ***Tin Cat Shoes***

April 15 - May 7, 2022

By Trish Harnetiaux

Directed by Maggie L. Rogers

{West Coast Premiere}

A troop of hyper-enthusiastic shoe store employees with the "Can-Do" American spirit set off on an expedition into the great PNW for some deep self-exploration. But when things go awry and the "work is your life" mentality is fallible, all that's left is the truth and nachos. Trish Harnetiaux's spirited adventure-comedy of epic proportions takes surprising turns at every bend in the road and explores our pitiful confidence in The System.

## **reSET**

May 13 - 14, 2022

12th Avenue Arts

Choreographers and dancers don't often have opportunities to utilize complex or fully-realized sets. With this in mind, Washington Ensemble Theatre provides opportunities for Seattle dancers to make and perform world premiere pieces on the elaborate theatrical sets of its mainstage productions. Curated by Mark Haim, Babette Pendleton, and Alice Gosti, the first reSET was performed on the set of The Tall Girls in 2015 and has been happening at least once a year ever since.

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