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Tacoma Arts Live’s Professional Regional Theater Production
TRIBES – A Comedic Drama that Explores Communication
Eight Shows at Theater on the Square – November 4 – 21

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SPONSORS: ARTSFund, Korsmo Construction, National Endowment for the Arts, Pacific Office Automation, Point Ruston, Tacoma Creates, Theater Angels, Washington State Arts Commission, and Wells Fargo

TACOMA, WASH.— Tacoma Arts Live’s Professional Region Theater production of the British comedic-drama TRIBES by Nina Raine will open for a preview night on Thursday, November 4 at 7:30 p.m. plus seven additional performances between November 5 – 21 at Tacoma’s Theater on the Square. Tickets start at $19 and are on sale now.

TRIBES was “put on ice” just prior to its scheduled opening in March 2020, and now will be revived as the first production, in-person for Tacoma Arts Live’s 2021-22 Season.

Winner of the 2012 Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Play, TRIBES follows the story of Billy, the deaf adult child of a hearing family where love and dysfunction merge. Despite the family’s discouragement from using sign language to communicate, Billy has adapted to the family’s raucous, quirky, politically incorrect worldviews and unconventional ways. Ultimately, Billy breaks the family circle to find new perspectives on being truly heard and understood, particularly upon meeting Sylvia, a hearing woman born to deaf parents who is now slowly going deaf herself. Billy is torn between her biological family and her newfound place in the bigger world.

Director Louis Hobson will be working alongside Associate Director and Deaf/Hard of Hearing Community Liaison Melanie Gladstone. The professional cast and crew is brimming with Pacific Northwest talent:

Michelle Mary Schaefer, Billy
Madison Willis, Sylvia
Jonathan Swindle, Daniel
Isabel Bennett, Ruth
Mari Nelson, Beth
Anders Bolang, Christopher
Tacoma Arts Live and Brett Carr, Co-Producers
Monique Otter-Johnson, Stage Manager
Lex Marcos, Set Design
Niclas Olsen, Lighting Design
Mikel Michener, Visual Design
Naarah McDonald, Costume Design
Jen York, Prop Master
Kim Izenman, Charge Artist
Don Littrell, Sound
Chris Berryman, Lead Carpenter

Instead of traditional translation of American Sign Language being staged from the wings, interpreters and screens with supertitles will be blended in to the stage production to create an inclusive theater experience.

Tacoma Arts Live’s Professional Regional Theater Program intends to produce a season of great plays with a conscience, engage empathy, challenge complacency, and inspire audiences to live in thoughtful inquiry. Each play is carefully chosen with the support of the Theater Angels and Theater Cohorts group.

Tickets to TRIBES are $19, $29, and $39 and are on sale now. To purchase tickets, call Tacoma Arts Live Box Office at 253.346.1721, visit in person at Tacoma Armory – 1001 S Yakima Ave., or online at www.TacomaArtsLive.org.

More information: TRIBES | Regional Theater Productions | Theater Angels

TRIBES is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc.

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Tacoma Arts Live’s mission is to energize the community through live performance. Founded in 1979, Tacoma Arts Live is a non-profit organization recognized for leadership in presenting world-class performing artists and providing one of the largest arts access and education programs in Washington State. Learn more at TacomaArtsLive.org.