



**For Immediate Release**

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## **History Theatre Celebrates 40 Years of Making History 2017-2018 Season features national icons and trailblazers!**

SAINT PAUL, MN – History Theatre’s 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season is everything that History Theatre has meant to Minnesota and the community over the years. “We hope to inspire, inform and entertain with this brilliant idea of telling real stories of our real diverse American experience,” shared Ron Peluso, History Theatre Artistic Director.

The 2017-2018 Season will include *three world premieres* beginning October 7 with ***All the Way***, the Tony Award-winning Broadway play by Robert Schenkkan, that offers a riveting behind-the-scenes look at President Lyndon B. Johnson’s turbulent first year in office after the assassination of John F. Kennedy. A delightfully charming slice of 1920s Minnesota is offered in ***Coco’s Diary: A Christmas Gift to Remember*** (opens November 25).

The 2018 half of the season will kick off with the annual **Raw Stages: New Works Festival** in January (dates and titles will be announced in August 2017). Since 1995, Peluso has commissioned, developed and premiered more than 80 new works at History Theatre. “This high-wire act has been made possible with a strong base of patrons who love History Theatre, a dedicated staff, a strong board of directors and a talented core of Twin Cities artists on the stage and off.”

The world premiere of ***A Crack in the Sky*** will open February 10. Harrison David Rivers and Ahmed Ismail Yusef will share Yusuf’s epic journey from Somali to the U.S. who, inspired by Maya Angelou, discovers the power of the written word. In March, History Theatre in collaboration with Collide Theatrical Dance Company will premiere ***Dance ‘Til You Drop*** (opens March 24) by Carson Kreitzer and choreographer Regina Peluso. This electrifying new work will explore the psychology of the dance marathons - what motivated people to participate in this crazy endeavor? What drew in the spectators? How far can we push the human body and spirit?

The final show of the season is a new musical about the “lord” of the con, ***Lord Gordon Gordon*** (opens May 5). *Glensheen* collaborators Jeffrey Hatcher and Chan Poling have crafted a twistedly bizarre tale of Lord Gordon Gordon who wanders into Minnesota and causes such a stir that he nearly ignites a war with Canada. This world premiere features Mark Benninghofen as Lord Gordon with Jen Peden, Adam Qualls, Jim Ramlet, Gary Briggie, Randy Schmeling, Eric Morris, Austene Van, and Jen Maren.

2017-18 season passes are on sale now. Single performance tickets will go on sale to the general public July 10, 2017. Additional discounts for all performances are available for groups of 10 or more. More information is available by calling the History Theatre box office at **651-292-4323** or going online to **[www.historytheatre.com](http://www.historytheatre.com)**.

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## **History Theatre's 2017-2018 Season**

### **All the Way**

October 7-29, 2017

REGIONAL PREMIERE | Tony Award-winning Broadway Play

By Robert Schenkkan | Directed by Ron Peluso

**1963.** The day that JFK was assassinated in Dallas, Lyndon Baynes Johnson (LBJ) became the 37th President of the United States. The country was in shock and yet the business of the nation continued. The top priority was the Civil Rights Act, and in this Tony Award-winning Broadway play, LBJ, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Minnesota's Hubert H. Humphrey take on a Congress divided on this hot button matter of policy. The KKK bombed black churches, Freedom Riders disappeared into the night, George Wallace held a tight grip on Alabama, and Bobby Kennedy posed a challenge to LBJ in the coming election and tensions ran high.

Critical acclaim:

- "With cinematic sweep with an eye toward teasing out our parallels to our current gridlock. Schenkkan traces the first year of LBJ's presidency." – *Entertainment Weekly*
- "...jaw dropping political drama." – *Variety*

*Featuring Pearce Bunting as LBJ, Shawn Hamilton as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Andrew Wheeler as Hubert H. Humphrey*

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### **Coco's Diary: A Christmas Gift to Remember**

November 25-December 23, 2017

Adapted for the stage by Ron Peluso and Bob Beverage

Directed by Ron Peluso

**1927.** Clotilde "Coco" Irvine, was given a diary for Christmas in which she faithfully chronicles the ups and downs of her rollercoaster year. She pens, "This is to be my most private account of everything that happens to me. No one must read further under pain of death! A curse shall befall any who disregard this warning! Everything is quite different in my life because of boys!"

Coco is a bright, adventurous, wickedly funny heroine who is constantly in a fix at home and school "through no fault of my own!"

This wonderful History Theatre revival features some of the greatest songs of the 1920s. It's a charming, funny and delightful entertainment for the entire family.

Critical acclaim:

- "The diary of young Coco Irvine dances off the page in this charming piece of entertainment." – Graydon Royce, *Star Tribune*

*Featuring Andrea Wollenberg, Jake Endres, and Dora Dolphin & Arden Michalec as young Coco Irvine*

## **A Crack in the Sky**

### **From Somalia to the U.S.A.**

February 10-March 4, 2018

World Premiere Drama

By Harrison David Rivers and Ahmed Ismail Yusuf

Directed by Faye Price

**1984.** A young shepherd boy stands in front of his mother to tell her of the decision he has made in the night. He has had enough of the nomadic life, of herding goats and sheep, and is leaving to seek out a better life. With that, he sets off on an adventure that takes him on the road less traveled from Somalia to Minnesota. It's the epic tale of Ahmed Ismail Yusuf who, inspired by Maya Angelou, discovers the power of the written word.

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## **Dance 'Til You Drop**

### **A Dance Theater Experience**

March 24-April 15, 2018

World Premiere

Book by Carson Kreitzer

Choreography by Regina Peluso

Directed by Anya Kremenetsky

Musical direction by Doug Rohde

Created in collaboration with Collide Theatrical Dance Company

**1933.** The Stock Market Crash of 1929 left thousands of people out in the cold. These were desperate times that called for desperate measures - hence, the rise of the dance marathon fad! Here in Minneapolis, Callum deVillier and Vonnie Kuchinski won't stop until they set a World Record and go home with the prize money. After all, how hard could it be to dance for a few hours... days... weeks... months? This electrifying new work will explore the psychology of the dance marathons - what motivated people to participate in this crazy endeavor? What drew in the spectators? How far can we push the human body and spirit?

Did You Know: Dancers had to stay in motion 24 hours a day, with a 15-minute break every hour to sleep.

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## **Lord Gordon Gordon**

May 5-June 3, 2018

World Premiere

book by Jeffrey Hatcher

music & lyrics by Chan Poling

musical arrangements by Robert Elhai

directed by Ron Peluso

choreography by Tamara Kangas Erickson

musical direction by Andrew Fleser

**1871.** An imposter going by the name of Lord Gordon Gordon wanders into Minnesota and causes such a stir that he nearly ignites a war with Canada. A fake. A fraud. A snake-charmer. This con-artist would dazzle and swindle his way into the hearts and wallets of some very well-to-do Minnesotans and then

take them on a journey as twistedly bizarre as Glensheen. Hold on tight and take this wacky, wickedly funny, and musically smart journey through the exploits of Lord, "Oh, Lordy!" Gordon Gordon!

Did You Know: Lord Gordon Gordon (a.k.a. Lord Glencairn, Hon. Mr. Herbert Hamilton, George Gordon, George Hubert Smith, and John Herbert Charles Gordon), confidence man, swindler, and robber of the robber barons, sometimes jokingly referred to as Lord of the Con.

From the creators of *Glensheen*!

*Featuring Mark Benninghofen as Lord Gordon, Jen Peden as Mrs. Beldon, Adam Qualls as The Valet, Jim Ramlet, Gary Briggie, Randy Schmeling, Eric Morris, Austene Van, and Jen Maren*

January 2018

**RAW STAGES: New Works Festival**

Titles, playwrights, and directors will be announced and posted online after August 1, 2017. Raw Stages Festival will consist of four readings of scripts-in-progress featuring professional actors and directors. The readings will be performed History Theatre, 30 E. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, St. Paul.

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Performances are generally scheduled Thursdays, Friday and Saturdays at 7:30pm; Sundays and select Saturdays at 2pm and most Thursdays at 10am. (All titles and performance times are subject to change).

Season passes are on sale now. Single tickets for all performances will go on sale July 10, 2017 to the general public. Discounts on single tickets and season passes are available for Seniors (60+) and Young Adults (19-30 years). Student tickets (college students and under) are always \$15 for all performances. Additional discounts for all performances are available for groups of 10 or more. More information is available by calling History Theatre box office at 651-292-4323 or visiting [www.historytheatre.com](http://www.historytheatre.com).

**For interviews or photos, please email [pr@historytheatre.com](mailto:pr@historytheatre.com).**  
*(Please note that all performance and dates are subject to change.)*

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# history theatre

Telling the stories of Minnesota, the Midwest  
and the American Experience for 40 years

## OUR MISSION

History Theatre entertains, educates, and inspires through creating, developing, and producing new and existing works that explore Minnesota's past and the diverse American experience. Its work provides a unique lens which links our past to the present, explores our common heritage, and illuminates our understanding of what it means to be American. History Theatre is a three-time IVEY Award-winning theater, and is recognized nationally as a leader in producing historical work.

## THE ARTISTIC WORK

Each year History Theatre produces a season filled with excellent plays and musicals while developing new scripts through workshops and staged readings. Since 1978, the company has staged 116 world premieres, working with nationally recognized playwrights such as Jeffrey Hatcher, Kevin Kling, Eric Simonson, Craig Wright, Frank McCourt, Doris Baizley, Melanie Marnich, Kim Hines, John Olive, and Kira Obolensky. From a charming look at the innocence of youth in *Coco's Diary* to an urban musical celebration of the Twin Cities in *Snapshots: Life in the City*, and from the music of the iconic Judy Garland in *Beyond the Rainbow* to the an exploration of one of the most pivotal years in modern history in *1968: The Year That Rocked the World*, History Theatre moves audiences to rediscover, reexamine, and respect every piece of their history.

For more about History Theatre,  
visit [www.HistoryTheatre.com/about](http://www.HistoryTheatre.com/about)

30 East Tenth Street | Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101  
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**ACCESSIBILITY:** History Theatre is equipped with an FM hearing enhancement system. Large-print and braille playbills are available at the box office. We offer ASL interpreted and Audio Described performances. We have complimentary wheelchairs for those patrons who need extra assistance into the building. The handicap-accessible entrance is on Cedar St. Just inside the entrance is an elevator that will take patrons to the theatre level.

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