



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **IRON CROW THEATRE ANNOUNCES NEW ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS AND A DARINGLY REENVISIONED PRODUCTION OF JONATHAN LARSON'S *RENT***

DR. NATKA BIANCHINI, NEW MANAGING DIRECTOR; BROADWAY PLAYWRIGHT JAMES MAGRUDER, NEW BOARD MEMBER; APRIL FORRER, NEW GENERAL MANAGER.

"The company has been my artistic home for several years now, and I cannot wait to work with Sean and April to continue the growth and expansion of the last few years and bring the company to new heights." - **Dr. Natka Bianchini, Managing Director**

"After watching the Baltimore theater scene from the sidelines for the last fifteen years, I'm tremendously excited to go behind the scenes again by joining the Board of Directors at Iron Crow Theatre. Their mission and core values are sound; their leadership is impressive; and most important to me, they strive for artistic excellence with a wide-ranging, contemporary queer repertory." - **James Magruder, Broadway Playwright, New Board Member**

"We've assembled one of our most talented casts to date and are looking forward to our strongest season opening yet!" - **Sean Elias, Artistic Director**

**BALTIMORE, Maryland** - Monday, December 4, 2023: Iron Crow Theatre announced today that Dr. Natka Bianchini has been appointed Managing Director, reporting directly to the Board of Directors. Bianchini has been involved with the company since 2018 as a Resident Artist and Board Member, directing four critically acclaimed and award-winning productions with Iron Crow Theatre. In addition, Dr. Bianchini currently heads the theatre program at Loyola University, is a graduate of the HERS leadership institute, is an associate with the Center for International Theatre Development, and is the founding Vice President of the Edward Albee Society. Dr. Bianchini has published two books on American theatre, directed more than forty productions in her career, and received her doctorate in drama from Tufts University.

"I am so honored to be named Managing Director of Iron Crow Theatre. I have been a theatre professional for my entire twenty-plus-year career, fifteen of them here in Baltimore, and Iron Crow Theatre has consistently created relevant, important, artistically excellent productions that build community," said newly appointed Managing Director Natka Bianchini. "The company has been my artistic home for several years now, and I

cannot wait to work with Sean and April to continue the growth and expansion of the last few years and bring the company to new heights.”

“Natka Bianchini has been an instrumental force at Iron Crow Theatre as we’ve worked tirelessly to bring professional quality productions to Baltimore,” said Artistic Director Sean Elias. “There is no greater gift to an Artistic Director than to work alongside a fellow artist who understands both the business and the creation of art. I have no doubt that Iron Crow Theatre’s future is bright as Natka lends her exceptional talents to the organization in this new way.”

Board President Jessica Lanzillotti said: “I believe we will continue to thrive under Natka’s leadership.”

April Forrer, Iron Crow Theatre’s previous Managing Director, will move into the role of General Manager, reporting to the Managing and Artistic Directors. “Serving as Managing Director has been an honor, but my true happiness comes from being able to work alongside our remarkable artists on the award-winning productions we produce,” said April Forrer. “In my new role, one I’m highly familiar with, I will have more freedom to contribute to the artistry that brings me such joy!”

“April has worked tirelessly during her five-year tenure as Managing Director of Iron Crow Theatre, and I know we all are so grateful to her for her time and dedication. I am thrilled to continue working alongside her,” said Artistic Director Sean Elias.

In Iron Crow Theatre’s ongoing commitment to expansion and artistic excellence, Broadway playwright James Magruder has been appointed to the Board of Directors effective immediately. Magruder, a playwright, author, and translator, is best known for his work on the Broadway musicals *Triumph of Love* (book writer) and *Head Over Heels* (Adaptor). His translation, “Three French Comedies” (Yale University Press, 1996) was named an “Outstanding Literary Translation of the Year” by the American Literary Translators Association. He has also published two novels and a short story collection. He is a six-time recipient of the Maryland State Arts Council Individual Artist Award and a five-time fellow of the MacDowell Colony. Magruder received his doctorate in dramaturgy and dramatic criticism at the Yale School of Drama and has taught at the Yale School of Drama and Swarthmore College.

“After watching the Baltimore theater scene from the sidelines for the last fifteen years, I’m tremendously excited to go behind the scenes again by joining the Board of Directors at Iron Crow Theatre. Their mission and core values are sound; their leadership is impressive; and most important to me, they strive for artistic excellence with a wide-ranging, contemporary queer repertory. On a more personal level, ICT did an amazing job in December 2022 with the Baltimore premiere of *Head Over Heels*, a musical I’d co-written with Jeff Whitty and the Go-Go’s. They topped that two months later with a mind-blowing production of Madeleine George’s *Hurricane Diane*. In these monumentally challenging

times for creative collaboration, Iron Crow Theatre has become an essential player in the Baltimore arts biosphere," Magruder said.

The theatre will open their latest season, The Season of the Unorthodox, with a daringly reenvisioned production of Jonathan Larson's RENT. Experience the pop culture phenomenon and electrifying pulse of Jonathan Larson's masterpiece! Set against the raw canvas of New York City's Lower East Side at the height of the squatter movement and decimated by the ravages of HIV/AIDS, drugs, and homelessness, RENT is a celebration of love, a testament to human resilience, and a rallying cry for seizing the moment and making your dreams a reality.

"I can't wait to bring this iconic queer musical back to Baltimore in production that centers authenticity, queerness, and the truthful dire socio-political forces at play in this piece," said Artistic Director Sean Elias. "We've assembled one of our most talented casts to date and are looking forward to our strongest season opening yet!"

### CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

Featuring **Nicholas Miles**<sup>+</sup> as Angel Dumott Schunard.

**Carter Crosby** as Roger, **Natalia Fyfe** as Mimi, **Jeremy Allen Crawford** as Mark, **Terrell Chambers** as Collins, **Rachel Cahoon** as Maureen, **Breanne Sensenig** as Joanne, **Anwar Thomas** as Benny, and ensemble members **Landon Black**, **Jessica Ramon**, **Sam Slottow**, **Tyler White**, and **Teddy Wright**.

Book, Music, and Lyrics by **Jonathan Larson**. Directed by **Sean Elias**<sup>\* +</sup>. Assistant direction and choreography by **Quae Simpson**<sup>\* +</sup>. Musical direction by **Rachel Sandler** with intimacy direction and Safer Spaces training provided by **Shawna Potter**<sup>+</sup>. Stage management provided by **Heather Johnston** with assistant stage management provided by **Monique Chambers**. Set design by **Thomas Jenkeleit** with technical direction by **Bruce Kapplin**<sup>+</sup> and **Jericho Stage**, lighting design by **Thomas P. Gardner**<sup>+</sup>, costume design by **Camille Lerner**, and sound design by **Brad Ranno**.

\* Denotes member of Actors' Equity Association, the professional union for actors and stage managers in the United States. // + Denotes Iron Crow Theatre Resident Artist.

### PERFORMANCES & TICKETS

Tickets are available for purchase online at [www.ironcrowtheatre.org/rent](http://www.ironcrowtheatre.org/rent). All performances take place at the historic Baltimore Theatre Project located at 45 West Preston Street, Baltimore, MD 21201. All programming follows the performance schedule outlined below:

#### **Friday, January 19**

8:00 PM opening performance of *RENT*

Complimentary Opening Night Reception to follow.

**Saturday, January 20**

8:00 PM performance of *RENT*

**Sunday, January 21**

3:00 PM performance of *RENT*

**Friday, January 26**

8:00 PM performance of *RENT*

Performance dedicated to Jonathan Larson with "Seasons of Love" audience sing-a-long

**Saturday, January 27**

8:00 PM performance of *RENT*

**Sunday, January 28**

3:00 PM performance of *RENT*

**Friday, February 2**

8:00 PM performance of *RENT*

**Saturday, February 3**

8:00 PM performance of *RENT*

**Sunday, February 4**

3:00 PM closing performance of *RENT*

**INDIVIDUAL TICKET PRICES FOR *RENT***

Tickets are available for purchase online at [www.ironcrowtheatre.org/rent](http://www.ironcrowtheatre.org/rent).

On Stage: \$65

With only 8 seats on stage, you'll be one of the few with the best seats in the house - right in the middle of all the action!

Front Orchestra: \$45

Rear Orchestra: \$35

Side Orchestra: \$25

A lottery ticket system will be implemented for all performances. Lottery winners receive best available seating at \$25 per ticket day of performances. More information can be found at [www.ironcrowtheatre.org/rent](http://www.ironcrowtheatre.org/rent).

Any individual with difficulty attending a production at the ticket prices set are encouraged to reach out to the theatre directly at [boxoffice@ironcrowtheatre.org](mailto:boxoffice@ironcrowtheatre.org) as additional discounts and sponsorship opportunities may be available.

Iron Crow Theatre is a proud member of the Playwrights Welcome program providing free tickets to members of the professional dramatists union, the Dramatists Guild of America.

IRON CROW THEATRE is Baltimore's award-winning professional queer theatre and produces queer theatre for a queer city, celebrating the renegade and the unorthodox in all of us.

PRESS/MEDIA INQUIRES  
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**IRON CROW THEATRE**  
Baltimore's Award-Winning Professional Queer Theatre

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