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**MOSAIC THEATER COMPANY OPENS 2022-23 SEASON WITH *THE TILL TRILOGY*,
IFA BAYEZA'S GROUNDBREAKING SERIES CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF
CIVIL RIGHTS ICON EMMETT TILL**

Trio of plays—including a world premiere—receive innovative staging in rotating repertory for the very first time; productions paired with citywide Reflection Series

Mosaic Theater Company commences its first season helmed by Artistic Director Reginald L. Douglas with **Ifa Bayeza's highly anticipated theatrical anthology *The Till Trilogy*, on stage October 4 - November 20, 2022**. The three-play cycle honors the life and legacy of Emmett Till, with Bayeza training a contemporary lens on a flashpoint in American history. **The plays that comprise *The Till Trilogy* are *The Ballad of Emmett Till***, on the journey of the boy from his home in Chicago to Money, Mississippi; ***Benevolence***, on the ripple effects of the murder throughout the Delta region and beyond; **and world premiere *That Summer in Sumner***, focusing on the quest for justice led by a group of Black journalists. *The Till Trilogy* will be directed by **Talvin Wilks**.

The productions will be staged simultaneously, in rotating repertory, for the very first time, with 10 actors playing 75 characters. Tickets are available at mosaictheater.org.

The murder of Emmett Till remains one of the most pivotal moments in American history and ignited the modern Civil Rights Movement. Rooted in poetic, lyrical, and compassionate language, this landmark undertaking brings to life the indomitability of Till's spirit, the tragedy of his death, a historic miscarriage of justice, and the indelible impact of his legacy.

The Till Trilogy continues a rich collaboration between playwright Bayeza and director Wilks, who also led Penumbra Theatre's acclaimed productions of *The Ballad of Emmett Till* and *Benevolence*.

Additionally, **Mosaic is partnering with more than 20 organizations on the companion *Reflection Series***, a citywide series of concerts, readings, and panels that offer audiences to creatively engage with themes of justice and activism. More information below.

The Till Trilogy is made possible by extraordinary support from The Roy Cockrum Foundation. Additional funding is from the National Endowment for the Arts and the CrossCurrents Foundation.

PLAYS IN THE TILL TRILOGY

The Ballad of Emmett Till

With music, magic, and humor, *The Ballad of Emmett Till* introduces Emmett, or “Bo,” a boisterous Chicago adolescent teeming with curiosity and excited about his summer trip to Mississippi. On this mythic journey, his fateful encounter at a country store changes his life and our nation forever.

That Summer in Sumner (world premiere)

Drawn from courtroom transcripts, news accounts, and government records, world premiere *That Summer in Sumner* reimagines the Mississippi trial of the accused killers of Emmett Till and the quest of a team of African-American reporters to uncover the truth and get new evidence before the Jim Crow court. With palpable energy, *That Summer in Sumner* takes audiences along for the ride on the reporters’ perilous—and sometimes hilarious—journey.

Benevolence

A poignant and powerful look into the ripple effects of Emmett Till’s murder, *Benevolence* follows two couples—one Black and one white—as they struggle with their knowledge of the killing and the toll it takes on their lives and love. With rich language and harrowing honesty, *Benevolence* invites audiences to reflect upon how our collective history still resonates in our personal lives today.

ABOUT IFA BAYEZA

Ifa Bayeza is an award-winning playwright, director, novelist, and educator. Described as “breathtaking,” “staggering,” “extraordinarily lyrical,” and “triumphant,” her literary style and transcendent themes veer from the intimate to the mythic and compel us to re-examine the deeply embedded ideas we attach to race and gender. Plays include *The Till Trilogy* (*The Ballad of Emmett Till*, *That Summer in Sumner*, and *Benevolence*), reimagining the saga of 1955 Civil Rights icon Emmett Till; *String Theory*, on the 1839 Amistad slave ship survivors; *Welcome to Wandaland*, a childhood memoir; and *Infants of the Spring*, adapted from the classic Harlem Renaissance novel. She has written three musicals: the World War I love story *Charleston Olio*, a Fred Ebb Award finalist; *Bunk Johnson*, a blues poem on the legendary Jazz originalist, commissioned by the National Trust for Historic Preservation; and *KID ZERO*, a theater for young audiences hip-hop operetta. Her novel *Some Sing, Some Cry* was co-authored with her sister, Ntozake Shange. A 2022 MacDowell fellow, Bayeza was a finalist for the 2020 Herb

Alpert Award in Theatre and for the 2020 Francesca Primus Prize. In 2018, she was the inaugural Humanist-in-Residence at the National Endowment for the Humanities. Honors for *The Ballad of Emmett Till* include the Edgar Award, the Backstage Garland Award, and fellowships from the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center and Brown University. A graduate of Harvard University, Bayeza received her MFA in Theater from University of Massachusetts Amherst. *The Till Trilogy* marks her debut in the nation's capital and at Mosaic Theater Company.

ABOUT TALVIN WILKS

Talvin Wilks is a playwright, director, and dramaturg based in Minneapolis and New York City. His plays include *Tod, the boy, Tod*, *The Trial of Uncle S&M*, *Bread of Heaven*, *An American Triptych*, *Jimmy and Lorraine: A Musing*, and *As I Remember It* with Carmen de Lavallade. Directing credits include: *The White Card*, *This Bitter Earth*, *Benevolence*, *The Ballad of Emmett Till* (Penumbra Theatre), *The Peculiar Patriot* (National Black Theatre/Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company), *Parks* (History Theatre), *Cannabis: A Viper Vaudeville* (HERE Arts Center/La MaMa), and *The Till Trilogy* (Mosaic Theater Company). Dramaturgy credits include: *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* (Broadway revival/Tony nominated); *Dreaming Zenzile* (New York Theater Workshop); *Between the World and Me* (The Apollo Theater); *Scat!* and *Walking with 'Trane* (Urban Bush Women); *ink*, *BLACK GIRL: Linguistic Play*, *Mr. TOL E. RAnCE* (Camille A. Brown and Dancers); and *In a Rhythm, A History, Necessary Beauty, Landing/Place*, and *Verge* (Bebe Miller Company). He is a newly-tenured Associate Professor in the Theatre Arts & Dance Department, University of Minnesota/Twin Cities and is a 2020 McKnight Theater Artist Fellow and a 2022 McKnight Presidential Fellow.

ABOUT THE TILL TRILOGY REFLECTION SERIES

In conjunction with *The Till Trilogy*, Mosaic will lead a pioneering series of citywide events about the plays' themes in *The Till Trilogy* Reflection Series. Produced in partnership with over 20 cultural organizations, this series of events offers audiences in every ward of Washington, DC and beyond opportunities to engage with the themes of justice and activism explored in the plays.

Partner organizations include: the ACLU; Anacostia Community Museum; Arena Stage; Atlas Performing Arts Center; Busboys & Poets; DC Public Library; Eaton DC; Folger Shakespeare Library; Ford's Theatre; Gallaudet University; Georgetown University; Hill Center; Howard University; Imagination Stage; Library of Congress; National Parks Conservation Association; Olney Theatre Center; Round House Theatre; Shakespeare Theatre Company; Signature Theatre; Theater Alliance; THEARC Theater; Theater J and the Edlavitch Jewish Community Center of Washington, DC; Theatre Washington; Washington National Opera; Washington Performing Arts; and Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company.

The Reflection Series is generously underwritten by the National Endowment for the Humanities, Humanities DC, and Leslie Scallet Lieberman & Maury Lieberman.

Events in *The Till Trilogy* Reflection Series include:

Activating Justice Through Theater: *The Till Trilogy* Sneak Peek and Discussion featuring playwright **Ifa Bayeza**, **Amir Ali** of the MacArthur Justice Center, **Judith Browne Dianis** of the Advancement Project, and **Anita Gonzalez** of Georgetown University's Racial Justice Institute

Wednesday, Aug 31 at 7PM

Etlavitch DC Jewish Community Center

Behind the Scenes at *Fences*: Pre-show Discussion about Art & Representation with Psalmayene 24, Director of Professional Growth Systems at Montgomery County Public Schools **Yolanda Stanislaus**, and co-founder of the Arts Administrators of Color network **Ariel Elizabeth Davis**

Friday, Sept 2 at 6PM

Olney Theatre Center

***The Till Trilogy* Sneak Peek and Discussion—a conversation with Ifa Bayeza and Dr. Melanie Adams** of the Anacostia Community Museum

Saturday, Sept 10 at 2PM

Anacostia Community Museum

Live! at the Library

Reflections from the Past, Present and Future featuring playwright **Ifa Bayeza**, the **Washington National Opera**, and **Howard University**

Thursday, Sept 22 at 7PM

Library of Congress

Race, Racial Justice, & Their Intersections with Art: A Conversation and Reading w/ Poet Terrance Hayes, Moderated by poet **Teri Ellen Cross Davis**

produced in collaboration with Folger Shakespeare Library and Hill Center's Benjamin Drummond Emancipation Day Celebration

Tuesday, September 27 at 7PM

Hill Center at the Old Naval Hospital

Blue Chakra Lounge Spoken Word and Open Mic Event

produced in collaboration with Aggrey Co and the Eaton Hotel

Thursday, Sept 29 at 7 PM

Eaton Hotel DC

Georgetown University's Racial Justice Institute presents South African artists Refiloe Lepere and Itumeleng Moeketsi

Sunday, Oct 2 at 7PM

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library (DC Public Library)

Shakespeare Theatre Company's Shakespeare Hour Live

Wednesday, Oct 12 at 7PM

Virtual event

Post-Show Conversation

Standing on the Frontlines: Black Mothers as Civil Rights Leaders

produced in collaboration with Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company and featuring the Coalition of Concerned Mothers and Harriet's Wildest Dreams

Saturday, October 15 following 3PM matinee

Atlas Performing Arts Center

Ford's Theatre's Cabinet Conversations: The Emmett Till Antilynching Act

Thursday, Oct 20 at 4PM

Virtual event

Post-Show Conversation

Telling Our Own Story: The Power of Black Journalism, featuring Dorothy Gilliam and Dr. Natalie Hopkinson of Howard University

Saturday, Oct 22 following 3PM matinee

Atlas Performing Arts Center

Post-Show Conversation

The Push for the Emmett Till National Park

produced in collaboration with the National Parks Conservation Association and featuring Dr. Alan Spears

Saturday, Oct 29 following 3PM matinee

Atlas Performing Arts Center

Post-Show Conversation

Reflections on Justice In Our City

produced in collaboration with ACLU DC

Saturday, Nov 5 following 3PM matinee

Atlas Performing Arts Center

Post-Show Conversation

Chicago Connections

Saturday, Nov 12 following 3PM matinee

Atlas Performing Arts Center

Art as Response to Tragedy Professional Development Curriculum for Educators

Ongoing, provided by Imagination Stage

The Signature Show featuring an original song inspired by *The Till Trilogy*

Date TBD

Signature Theatre

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mosaic Theater aligns its safety protocols with those of the Atlas Performing Arts Center and Theatre Washington. Effective September 1, 2022, patrons will need to wear masks while attending a Mosaic performance, except while eating or drinking in designated locations. Masks must be worn regardless of vaccination status. Proof of vaccination will no longer be required.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Press Performance: Press are invited to experience *The Till Trilogy* beginning Saturday, October 8. Seats are being held for “press weekend” on Saturday, October 15 at 3PM (*The Ballad of Emmett Till*) and 8PM (*That Summer in Sumner*) and on Sunday, October 16 at 3PM (*Benevolence*). Email press@mosaictheater.org to reserve tickets to any or all performances in *The Till Trilogy*.

Tickets: Tickets are \$50-\$64 and can be purchased at mosaictheater.org.

Location: Sprenger Theatre at Atlas Performing Arts Center, 1333 H Street NE, Washington, DC 20002

Performances: Productions in *The Till Trilogy* will be on stage October 4 - November 20, 2022. *The Till Trilogy* previews will be held Tuesday, October 4 through Thursday, October 6 at 7:30PM. Thereafter, performances will be held on: Wednesdays at 8PM, Thursdays at 11AM and 8PM, Fridays at 8PM, Saturdays at 3PM and 8PM, and Sundays at 3PM.

Box Office: The Box Office can be reached at (202) 399-7993 or boxoffice@atlasarts.org from 11AM - 5PM Monday through Friday, or two hours prior to a performance.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

The Till Trilogy: The Ballad of Emmett Till; That Summer in Sumner, and Benevolence

By Ifa Bayeza

Directed by Talvin Wilks

October 4 - November 20, 2022

Tickets at mosaictheater.org

ABOUT THE MOSAIC THEATER COMPANY OF DC

Mosaic Theater Company of DC produces bold, culturally diverse theater that illuminates critical issues, elevates fresh voices, and sparks connection among communities throughout our region and beyond.

Under the leadership of the newly appointed Artistic Director Reginald L. Douglas and Managing Director Serge Seiden, Mosaic produces plays that spark conversation and connections amongst the DC Metro area’s diverse communities and sees itself as a neighbor and partner with those communities. By sharing stories that both entertain and enlighten, Mosaic uses art to

build empathy amongst diverse people united by the magic of theater and hopes to build community by reflecting the people and the many cultures that call DC home.

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