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CUTTING BALL THEATER
ANNOUNCES 2016-17 SEASON
Acclaimed SF theater celebrates 18th season

SAN FRANCISCO (May 11, 2016) - San Francisco's cutting-edge **Cutting Ball Theater** proudly announces the lineup for its 18th season. The main stage season opens in October with **Avant GardARAMA!**, a festival of seven short experimental plays, featuring Bay Area directors, followed by Henrik Ibsen's **HEDDA GABLER**, directed by Yury Urnov. The season closes with Jean Racine's **PHÈDRE**, directed by Cutting Ball Producing Associate Artistic Director Ariel Craft, in a new translation by Founding Artistic Director Rob Melrose. The entire 2016-17 season will be staged in San Francisco at the Cutting Ball Theater in residence at EXIT on Taylor (277 Taylor Street at Ellis). **Memberships on sale now; single tickets on sale June 13.** For information about season memberships, tickets, and information, the public may visit **cuttingball.com** or call **415-525-1205**.

"Cutting Ball's 18th season champions two of drama's most radical female protagonists: Henrik Ibsen's Hedda Gabler and Jean Racine's Phèdre. These two women, who rail against what society pushes them to do, exemplify a line-crossing boldness that sits at the core of Cutting Ball's identity," said incoming Artistic Director Paige Rogers. "As an experimental theater, we are committed to refusing the boundaries of modern dramatic form, charting new territory in poetic, abstract, resonate performance. Breaking the rules is an integral part of our practice. Rededicating ourselves to this identity, we've programmed a season rooted in and inspired by the act of rule-breaking."

Continued Rogers, "The 2016-17 season marks Cutting Ball's eighteenth year of creating work and also marks my first season as Artistic Director. I look forward, in this coming year of programming, to defying our audiences' expectations of Cutting Ball. As with our previous seasons, nurturing an appreciation and appetite for the non-traditional is our ultimate goal."

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In chronological order, The Cutting Ball Theater 2016-17 season is as follows:

Avant GardARAMA!

October 5 – October 23, 2016

Cutting Ball Theater opens its 18th season with **Avant GardARAMA!** For the first time since 2008, **Avant GardARAMA!** returns with a raucous anthology production of short, sharp experimental works helmed by some of the Bay Area's most enterprising directors. An eclectic collection of pieces, the **Avant GardARAMA!** festival encourages audiences to embrace wildness, unpredictability, and different directorial voices.

HEDDA GABLER

By Henrik Ibsen

Directed by Yury Urnov

January 19 – February 26, 2017

Press opening: January 23

Hedda has returned from her honeymoon with a sigh of ennui, burdened by a husband who fails to ignite or enthrall her, and a new life that fails to impress. When old acquaintances come knocking, she discovers a direction and purpose in manipulating the fates of those around her with callous abandon, leading to disastrous ends. Visionary director **Yury Urnov** (*Ubu Roi*) returns to Cutting Ball to tackle one of Ibsen's most revered plays and one of theater's most riveting protagonists.

PHÈDRE

Written by Jean Racine

In a new translation by Rob Melrose

Directed by Ariel Craft

April 20 – May 21, 2017

Press opening: April 24

Cutting Ball closes its 18th season with Jean Racine's **PHÈDRE**, directed by Producing Associate Artistic Director **Ariel Craft**. Phèdre used to be a devoted wife and a model mother. Now her secret desires are becoming harder to hide as her resolve cracks and an attraction to her maturing stepson becomes inescapable and all-consuming. Impossible passions and absolute taboos combust in this classic dramatic tragedy, first staged in Paris in 1677. Dating back to Ancient Greece, **PHÈDRE** remains the reigning champion and golden standard for salacious and scandalous familial dysfunction.

Co-founded in 1999 by theater artists Rob Melrose and Paige Rogers, **Cutting Ball Theater** presents avant-garde works of the past, present, and future by re-envisioning classics, exploring seminal avant-garde texts, and developing new experimental plays. In addition to producing West Coast Premieres and re-imagining various classics, Cutting Ball Theater has produced nine World Premieres and seven World Premiere translations. Cutting Ball received the 2008 *San Francisco Bay Guardian* Goldie award for outstanding talent in the performing arts, and was voted "Best Theater Company" in the 2010 *San Francisco Bay Guardian* Best of the Bay issue. The company also earned the Best of SF award in 2006

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and “Best Experimental Theater Company” in 2012 from *SF Weekly*, and the 2013 inaugural Acker Award for “Achievement in the Avant-Garde”. Cutting Ball was selected by *San Francisco* magazine as Best Classic Theater in 2007 and was featured in the February 2010, 2012, December 2014 and January 2015 issues of *American Theatre Magazine*. In 2012, Cutting Ball was awarded a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to fund a three-year residency for playwright Andrew Saito. The American Theatre Wing, best known as the creator of the Antoinette Perry “Tony” Awards, awarded the company a 2013 National Theatre Company grant.

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FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

SCHEDULE:

Avant GardARAMA!

October 5 – October 23, 2016

HEDDA GABLER

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Directed by Yury Urnov

January 19 – February 26, 2017

PHÈDRE

Written by Jean Racine

In a new translation by Rob Melrose

Directed by Ariel Craft

April 20 – May 21, 2017

All dates and titles subject to change

All main stage performances Thursday at 7pm, Friday at 8pm, Saturday at 8pm, and Sunday at 5pm

WHERE:

The Cutting Ball Theater in residence at EXIT on Taylor, 277 Taylor Street (at Ellis), San Francisco

TICKETS:

Memberships on sale May 9, single tickets on sale June 13. For information about season memberships, the public may contact boxoffice@cuttingball.com. For tickets or more information, the public may visit cuttingball.com or call **415-525-1205**; group discounts and student rush tickets available. Pay What You Can tickets are available to Tenderloin neighborhood residents for all productions.

The Cutting Ball Theater's 2016-17 season is made possible in part by Bloomberg Philanthropies, Grants for the Arts / San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Mental Insight Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, The Kenneth Rainin Foundation, The RHE Charitable Foundation, The San Francisco Arts Commission, The San Francisco Foundation, The Zellerbach Family Foundation, Northern California Community Loan Fund / Community Arts Stabilization Trust and Season Producers John and Paula Gambs, Ken Melrose, Velia Melrose, Erik Blachford and Maryam Mohit, and Dave and Kate Yrueta.

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