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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RALEIGH, NC

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**QUEER, BIPOC, AND WOMEN ARTISTS BRING "MARAT/SADE" TO THE POLITICAL STAGE
WITH MUSICIAN AL RIGGS**

A new production of *The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton Under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade* by Peter Weiss will be presented live and in-person July 23 - August 8 at St John's Metropolitan Church in Raleigh, NC. It is produced by St. John's MCC and directed by Dustin Britt. It is produced by special arrangement with Dramatic Publishing Company. The revolution will not be streamed.

We welcome interviews, production previews, and performance reviews, and invite members of the press to contact us with any questions or with interview inquiries. To secure press comp tickets, please go to MaratSade.com, where you can set your own ticket price.

ABOUT THE PLAY

In the early 19th century, the religious leadership of the Asylum of Charenton allowed infamous inmate and aberrant author the Marquis de Sade to perform theatrical "experiments" on the other patients. The meta-fictional musical *Marat/Sade* brings you--the audience--into the asylum for a barbarous performance where Sade's loyal company gives the Charenton administration more than it bargained for. Through song, comedy, eroticism, and violence, Peter Weiss's play poses challenging questions about economic oppression, blind patriotism, press censorship, and body autonomy.

After a brief premiere in West Berlin in 1964, *Marat/Sade* was promptly translated into English by Geoffrey Skelton with a verse adaptation by Adrian Mitchell for the Royal Shakespeare Company. Under the direction of Peter Brook, the notoriously shocking production incorporated dramatic elements of both Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre and Antonin Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty. A year later, its Broadway run would earn it Tony Awards for Best Play and Best Director.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

After Bare Theatre's production of *Marat/Sade* closed in March 2020--after a brief but critically acclaimed weekend of pre-lockdown performances--director Dustin Britt began forming a new, independent production with revised staging, updated designs, and some recasting. As our community has been thrown into tremendous upheaval over the last year, and the #BlackLivesMatter movement has received more public attention than ever, Britt has developed a bolder, more defiant production, challenging both the cast and the audience to examine systems of oppression from new angles, highlighting the play's underlying themes of forced assimilation, imprisonment, religious manipulation, healthcare inequality, white supremacy, and gender inequity--bolstered by a reimagined ending.

This production proudly presents an original score by Durham-based musician al Riggs, performed live by the cast, who serve as both singers and instrumentalists. Read more about the score in this 2020 interview between arts critic Byron Woods, director Dustin Britt, and composer al Riggs: indyweek.com/culture/stage/al-riggs-bare-theatre-marat-sade

ABOUT THE TEAM

This new production features Natalie "Nat" Sherwood as bathtub-bound journalist Jean-Paul Marat, Simon Kaplan as the villainous Marquis de Sade, and Rosemary Richards as the Angel of Assassination, Charlotte Corday. Our production team features women, queer artists, BIPOC artists, and artists with disabilities. Each of these groups is also represented in our cast, which is predominantly female or nonbinary. We hope that relevance, relatability, and representation will attract new audiences and stimulate conversation.

Marat/Sade also features performances by Jessica Flemming as Kokol/Rossignol, Rachel Potters Nunn as Simonne Evrard, Douglas Kapp as The Herald, Germôna Sharp as Jacques Roux, Jill Cromwell as Duperret, Jennifer Daly as Coulmier, Rylee Davis as The Nurse, Katie Judge as Cucurucu, and al Riggs as Polpoch.

The production is directed by Dustin Britt with musical direction by al Riggs, scenic designs by Katie Judge, costume and puppet designs by Victoria Bender, choreography by Maggie Hatfield, fight choreography by Benjamin Penninger-Tarleton, intimacy choreography by Heather J. Strickland, and stage management by Naveed Moeed.

Director **Dustin Britt** has been a Triangle-based theatremaker for more than twenty years as an actor, stage manager, designer, music director, playwright, educator, arts journalist, and director with over a dozen theatre companies. He has directed productions for Seed Art Share (*The Miracle Worker*), Sonorous Road (*No Contest, A Teller's Tale*), North Raleigh Arts and Creative Theatre (*Heathers*, asst. director), and Bare Theatre (*ShakesBeer, ShakesBeer II: The Bard Strikes Back, Timon of Athens, ShakesQueer*, and their 2020 production of *Marat/Sade*). Dustin has completed extensive training with Theatrical Intimacy Education, is certified in Mental Health First Aid, and holds a Master of Arts in Special Education from East Carolina University.

Composer and musical director **al Riggs** is a professional singer-songwriter based in Durham, NC. As well as operating Horse Complex Records, they have performed at large-scale festivals, recorded with popular musicians nation-wide, toured nationally with The Mountain Goats, and appeared on numerous podcasts under their own name, as VAXXERS, and as Criswell Brushes. Al served as musical director, arranger, and lead guitarist for Seed Art Share's 2018 production of *The Miracle Worker*. *Marat/Sade* is their first full theatrical score. Their music has received critical acclaim worldwide and they recently graced the cover of IndyWeek: indyweek.com/music/features/al-riggs-bile-bone

ABOUT THE PRODUCER

St. John's MCC is the oldest of thirteen Metropolitan Community Churches that make up the MCC Southern Hospitality Network. St. John's generously opened their doors to this production as both a rehearsal space and performance venue. They did the same for Bare Theatre's production of *Timon of Athens* in 2019, also directed by Dustin Britt. Under the guidance of Rev. Vance Haywood, their leadership team, volunteer staff, and membership continue to nurture creative endeavors in a way that few organizations can or will.

Inclusion at St. John's Metropolitan Community Church is evident in many aspects across the congregation; including racial diversity with people of European, African, Asian, Hispanic, and Indigenous American heritage; and gender diversity with women, men, nonbinary, and transgender people. They welcome people from all socioeconomic strata and their congregation ranges from infants in arms to young adult to middle-aged to vibrant members in their 70s and 80s.

Performance Details

Dates:

- ★ Friday, July 23
- ★ Saturday, July 24
- ★ Sunday, July 25
- ★ Friday, July 30
- ★ Saturday, July 31
- ★ Sunday, August 1
- ★ Friday, August 6
- ★ Saturday, August 7
- ★ Sunday, August 8

Times:

Performances begin at 7:00pm with doors opening at 6:30pm. The show runs approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes with a 10-minute intermission.

Venue:

St. John's Metropolitan Community Church 622 Maywood Ave, Raleigh, NC 27603 stjohnsmcc.org
Free street parking is available.

Tickets:

PAY WHAT YOU CAN -- ticket buying options will allow the audience members to set their own price.

Tickets can be purchased at www.maratsade.com starting Monday, June 28.

A digital playbill will also be available at that website in the coming weeks.

Due to social distancing requirements, seating is limited to 20 attendants per performance, so advanced purchases are strongly encouraged. Masks are required for audience members. All cast and crew are COVID-vaccinated.

Appropriate for ages 16+.

Sensory Warning: loud voices and music, close proximity to performers.

Content Warning: fake weapons, graphic descriptions of torture and sexual acts. Depictions of physical violence, murder, mental and emotional distress, injections and medication use, and attempted sexual assault. Simulated blood.

THE PERSECUTION AND
ASSASSINATION OF JEAN-PAUL

MARAT

AS PERFORMED BY THE INMATES OF THE ASYLUM OF CHARENTON
UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
THE MARQUIS DE

SADE

by PETER WEISS
original score by al Riggs



ST. JOHN'S MCC, RALEIGH
Friday, Saturday, & Sunday @ 7PM
JULY 23rd thru AUGUST 8th



St. John's
Metropolitan Community Church

English translation by Geoffrey Skelton. Verse adaptation by Adrian Mitchell. Produced by special arrangement with THE DRAMATIC PLAY COMPANY, Woodstock, IL.

MORE INFO @ maratsade.com