

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Monday, 20-August-2018  
Kill Date: Monday, 08-Oct-2018

# STRAWBERRY THEATRE | WORKSHOP

**TO RESERVE PRESS COMPS:**

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"PRELUDE TO A KISS"  
REPLACES "RECKLESS" AT  
STRAWBERRY THEATRE WORKSHOP

**Exchange of Playwright Craig Lucas  
titles initiated by artists in rehearsal**

With careful deliberation, Strawberry Theatre Workshop has elected to change its fall production to Craig Lucas' *Prelude to a Kiss*. The new title will feature the same core artistic team behind *Reckless* and be ready for a Sep-8 opening at 12th Ave Arts.

This adjustment allows Strawshop to present an important playwright's theatrical voice with unconditional support. Lucas' *Reckless* is a beautiful and meaningful play, but some aspects of the story have not aged well. Specifically, the use of American Sign Language as a means of deception and plot points surrounding the Disabled community do not reflect contemporary sensibilities.

Part of the Strawshop mission statement reads, "Our collective includes our work, our audience, and our neighborhood. To be a good neighbor is to be a relevant neighbor, a responsible neighbor, and a vocal neighbor." The Seattle Deaf and Disabled communities are part of our neighborhood, and Strawshop's work must reflect that. The conversation that Seattle Theatre is having with Deaf and Disabled artists and audiences is constructive, and any foray Strawshop makes into that conversation should be respectful, receptive, and compassionate. As the cast and crew worked on *Reckless*, concerns about the material grew more complex, and they realized that this production was not the best way to responsibly engage in that discussion.

Director **Greg Carter** and his cast now turn their full attention to *Prelude to a Kiss*. Only through the versatility and talents of the ensemble that includes **MJ Sieber, Anastasia Higham, and Galen Joseph Osier**, would success over such a short time frame be possible. Strawshop presents *Prelude* with enthusiasm and heart, and hopes the community will embrace it.

*Prelude to a Kiss* is Craig Lucas' most popular play; it was nominated for both a Tony Award and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1990; it was made into a film featuring Meg Ryan and Alec Baldwin in 1992. The story centers around a newlywed husband (Sieber), who has to consider whether his beautiful young wife (Higham) has changed bodies with a terminally ill septuagenarian (Osier) on their honeymoon.

Like *Reckless*, *Prelude* is a comic fantasy that serves as an allegory for deeper issues. In *Reckless*, Rachel was stripped of her privilege and thrown into a world of unpredictability that represented the world of homelessness and addiction. In *Prelude*, Peter must discover if his love for his partner transcends the sudden loss of physical beauty and vitality. It was written as a response to the ravages of AIDS.

## Additional points (FAQ)

- Strawshop was not pressured into changing its programming. The feedback received from Deaf and Disabled neighbors was respectful and supportive of artistic risk-taking.
- The questions raised by our consultants were the same questions the ensemble had at its first meeting. Like many 20th century plays, *Reckless* presents obstacles in production today that the playwright may not have intended. They serve as a distraction to his larger ideas about love and redemption.
- *Reckless* includes a paraplegic character who fakes being Deaf to increase her disability benefits and earn her husband's attention. Pooty is among a half dozen characters who are seeking redemption from reprehensible choices, but unlike the others, the victims of her offensive actions are not represented. If there were an actual Deaf character in the play, and audiences could see how Pooty's actions impacted them, the arc of the story would be different. There is no way to provide that context without rewriting the play.
- This change in direction was the result of an organic creative process. After unpacking the play through two weeks of rehearsal, we were blocked as to how to realize *Reckless* without hurtful impact.
- Strawshop will be able to honor its contracts with all seven of the performers cast in *Reckless*, by offering them new roles in *Prelude to a Kiss*. Because of a change in rehearsal schedule, three members of the original design team have had to step away. Consistent with director Greg Carter's preferred style (*9 Circles*, *Our Town*, *The Laramie Project*), *Prelude* is presented with an emphasis on story and language, so the condensed rehearsal schedule does not present many complications.
- Strawshop is in a rare position to be able to consider a change of this kind, so late in the process. The company benefits from a loyal and empathetic audience, who values the mission, and considers agility crucial for making timely artistic contributions.

## Listing Information

Title: *Prelude to a Kiss*

Written by: **Craig Lucas**

Directed by: **Greg Carter**

Performed by: **MJ Sieber**

**Anastasia Higham**

**Galen Joseph Osier**

**Ray Tagavilla**

**Marianna de Fazio**

**Brandon Felker**

**Rachel Guyer-Mafune**

Designed by: **Craig Wollam**

**Adam Zopfi Hulse**

**Greg Carter**

**Evan Price**

Opens: **Saturday, September 8, 2018**

Plays: **Thu-Fri-Sat and Mon, 7:30 pm**

NO PERFORMANCE MONDAY SEPTEMBER 10

Venue: **Mainstage Theatre at 12th Ave Arts**

Address: **1620 12th Ave, Capitol Hill, Seattle**

Ticket Prices: **\$36 General, \$24 Mondays**

Phone Sales: **1-800-838-3006**

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