SEATTLE – June 24, 2015 – The 2015 Intiman Theatre Festival kicks off July 10 - August 2 at 12th Ave Arts on Capitol Hill with an innovative restaging of Tennessee Williams’ *Orpheus Descending*, featuring a diverse ensemble of eight nationally renowned actors who breathe new life into some of Williams’ most honest and deeply emotional text.

After a workshop performance last summer, CityArts’ Gemma Wilson called the *Orpheus Descending* cast “one of the strongest acting ensembles I’ve seen in a long time… a reminder of the heartstopping power of beautiful theatre.”

Previews for *Orpheus Descending* begin Wednesday, July 8; media are welcome at all opening weekend performances, July 10 – 12; closing is Sunday, August 2. Single tickets and discount festival passes are on sale now at intiman.org or call (206) 315-5838.

*Orpheus Descending* features Ugandan actress Kemiyondo Coutinho (American Conservatory Theater, National Theatre of Uganda) as Lady Torrance, a lonely immigrant shopkeeper held hostage by her falling marriage and tragic past.

Charlie Thurston (Resident Artist, Trinity Repertory Company) plays opposite her as Valentine Xavier, a mysterious musician who arrives in Lady’s shop and quickly descends into the hell of a surprisingly hot-tempered southern town.

Seattle native Ryan Purcell (Associate Artistic Director, Magic Theatre) directs this bold, new staging of a rarely seen Williams classic – a modern retelling of the ancient Greek legend in which
Orpheus descends into hell to rescue his beloved Eurydice. While remaining true to the original script, Purcell’s production infuses pop music and contemporary trends to change the lens used to view this important piece of the American theatre canon.

*Orpheus Descending* also features **Elise LeBreton** (*A Christmas Carol, Trinity Repertory Company*), **Richard Prioleau** (*Love’s Labour’s Lost, Actor’s Theatre of Louisville*), **Rebecca Gibel** (*Melancholy Play, Trinity Repertory Company*), **Grant Chapman** (*The End, Guthrie Theatre*), **Max Rosenak** (*Bad Jews, Magic Theatre*), and **Tiffany Nichole Greene** (*Angela’s Justice, Theater for the New City*).

*Orpheus Descending* highlights a new addition to Intiman Theatre’s programming: as Intiman’s first **Company-in-Residence**, The Williams Project - led by Ryan Purcell - receives fiscal sponsorship, mentoring in all aspects of nonprofit arts management, and support in establishing a local audience base.

“Providing a home for artists who seek to produce socially relevant theatrical work, and who want to celebrate diversity in casting on stage, is a priority for Intiman,” said Producing Artistic Director **Andrew Russell**. “I am thrilled to introduce Ryan Purcell and this incredible group of actors to our festival company, audience, and community.”

A Franklin High School graduate, Purcell’s first experience watching professional theatre was Intiman’s 1998 production of Williams’ *The Glass Menagerie*. Purcell returned to Intiman in 2012 as Associate Director for *Miracle!*, and directed a workshop presentation of *Orpheus Descending* during the 2014 festival.

Support for the 2015 Intiman Theatre Festival is generously provided by Seattle Met, Edelman, 4Culture, SeattlePI.com, Hafer Family Foundation, Shubert Foundation, The Stranger, CityArts, Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, BECU, and a dedicated community of individual supporters.

For interviews, information, and high-resolution photography, please contact Christine Bateman by email or call (206) 726-5104.

**Cast (in alphabetical order)**

- **Grant Chapman**: Sheriff Talbot, Dolly, Ensemble
- **Kemiyondo Coutinho**: Lady Torrance
- **Rebecca Gibel**: Vee Talbot, Ensemble
- **Tiffany Nichole Greene**: Beulah Binnings
- **Elise LeBreton**: Carol Cutrere
- **Richard Prioleau**: David Cutrere
- **Max Rosenak**: Jabe Torrance, Conjure Man, Woman
- **Charlie Thurston**: Valentine Xavier

**Creative Team**

- **Director**: Ryan Purcell
- **Designer**: Ryan Dunn
About Intiman Theatre

Intiman is a professional and socially progressive theatre that produces an annual theatre festival that is exciting, relevant to our time, and as diverse as the community in which we live.

In 2014, Intiman presented a 20th anniversary production of both parts of Tony Kushner's epic *Angels in America*; and won a *Seattle Times* Footlight Award for Top Mainstage Play.

In 2013, Intiman won the *Seattle Times*’ Footlight Awards for Best New Musical and Great Performances for its production of *Stu for Silverton*, a new musical about the first openly transgender mayor in America heralded by the *Times* as “groundbreaking.”

Another 2013 festival play, *Trouble in Mind* – written in 1955 by celebrated African-American playwright Alice Childress – had one reviewer weeping through the curtain call, calling it theatre that “bring[s] us face-to-face with our collective humanity.”

For more information, visit intiman.org and follow Intiman on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

About The Williams Project

The Williams Project is a new Seattle-based theatre collective that strives to make theatrical excellence accessible to diverse and engaged audiences. The writing of Tennessee Williams shapes The Williams Project’s vision of theatrical excellence, striving to create theatre that is:

- Entertaining enough to make everyone feel welcome and a part of the community;
- Ambitious enough to risk humiliating failure;
- Powerful enough to move people to love each other more, even in the face of the temporary nature of theatre and life.

While performing *Orpheus Descending* in the 2015 Intiman Theatre Festival, The Williams Project will also build two other productions: an interactive re-imagining of an interactive re-imagining of Tennessee Williams’ *The Glass Menagerie* and a visceral production of *In the Blood* by Suzan Lori-Parks. Learn more at thewilliamsproject.org.

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