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THEATRE RHINOCEROS AND WORD FOR WORD PRESENT

Three On a Party

By Gertrude Stein, Tennessee Williams and Armistead Maupin

Directed by Delia MacDougall and John Fisher

May 16 – June 7, 2009

(previews May 13-15)

Theatre Rhinoceros, Mainstage

2926 16th Street (16 St. BART)

San Francisco, CA 94103

THEATRE RHINOCEROS and WORD FOR WORD present *Three On a Party*, opening on Saturday May 16 at 8 PM (press night), on Theatre Rhinoceros, Mainstage in San Francisco (previews May 13-15). **Three On a Party** features three stories by some of the most important queer writers of the twentieth century, *Two On a Party* by Tennessee Williams, *Miss Furr and Miss Skeene* by Gertrude Stein, and *Suddenly Home* by the Bay Area's very own Armistead Maupin.

Three on a Party charts both a history of queerness in the twentieth century and the slow coming out of this thing called "same-sex marriage." Directed by Delia MacDougall (*Miss Furr and Miss Skeene*) and John Fisher (*Two on a Party* and *Suddenly Home*) the **Three On a Party** cast includes Brendan Godfrey,* and Ryan Tasker; with Sheila Balter*, and JoAnne Winter* both Charter Members of Word for Word; JoAnne is founding member and Artistic Director of Word for Word (*member of Actors Equity Association).

Three On a Party continues its run Wednesdays-Sundays, **May 16 – June 7** at Theatre Rhinoceros, Mainstage in San Francisco. (previews May 13-15) Performances are 8 PM Wed.-Sat., with 3 PM matinees on Sundays, (except Sun. May 17 at 7 pm.) Wed-Thurs. \$20; Fri. and Sun \$30; Sat \$35; Previews \$15 Student/Senior \$5 discount.

Sun. May 17, 7 PM: AN EVENING WITH ARMISTEAD MAUPIN (\$30-50).

Fri. May 22: POST SHOW DISCUSSION with Gertrude Stein expert Hans Gallas.

For information and reservations visit Theatre Rhinoceros at www.TheRhino.org Word for Word at www.zspace.org or call (415) 861-5079.

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Three On a Party -add one

Armistead Maupin has called Stein and Williams “the king and the queen” of LGBT writing, but he is unarguably the third of America’s great queer literary royal family. On **Sunday May 17, 7 PM** join the company for **An Evening with Armistead Maupin** in conversation with the audience and **Theatre Rhinoceros** Artistic Director John Fisher following the performance. (Tickets \$30-50). On **Friday May 22** following the performance there will be a post show discussion with Gertrude Stein expert and collector Hans Gallas.

From Stein’s Dadaesque tale of two lesbians in 1910, to Williams’ richly written fantasy of unbridled sex in the straight laced fifties, to the hilarious shenanigans of Maupin’s very San Francisco extended family in the 1990s, **Three on a Party** takes a literary journey across time and genre as it amuses, titillates and lays bare the passions of gay men and women. **Gertrude Stein’s “Miss Furr and Miss Skeene”** is set in 1910 America and Paris. Stein’s subtle, experimental word portrait is the saga of two women’s lives, exploring their entry into the Bohemian world and the change between them as lovers and as devotees of life outside artistic and sexual convention. In **Tennessee Williams’** short story **"Two on a Party"** a very unlikely couple takes a sexual road trip in this startling picture of the sexual mores of the 1950’s. When Cora meets Billy they are just a couple of hungry predators on a couple of New York bar stools. But soon, they find a bond in their ravenous lust for men. A heartbreaking tale of companionship, and certainly one the funniest and fun filled stories Williams ever set to paper, conveying all the heat, whimsy and aching desire of the Master’s great plays, *The Glass Menagerie* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

In the wake of Harvey Milk and liberation comes a story of responsibility and commitment, **Armistead Maupin’s "Suddenly Home"** which tells the story of Tess, a woman doubting her romantic relationship. She looks for guidance from her brother and his boyfriend and sees in their relationship the true meaning of love. America’s master narrator of “the gay life” turns his pen to a tale of same-sex marriage. Laced with all his familiar wit, compassion and love of San Francisco, Maupin’s tale captures Baghdad by the Bay at a time of dramatic change, the late 1980’s. Maupin’s little family struggles to find answers to life’s confusing propositions.

Director Delia MacDougall (*Miss Furr and Miss Skeene*) is an actor and director working mainly in San Francisco for the past twenty years. Delia is a founding member of three San Francisco theater companies. Delia has been a part of the Intersection’s resident theater company, Campo Santo, since its beginnings directing their second production, the world premiere of Erin Cressida Wilson’s *Hurricane*. Most recently she directed the world premiere of Denis Johnson’s *Purvis* at the Intersection for the Arts.. Other world premieres with Campo Santo include Naomi Iizuka’s *17 Reasons (Why)* and *The Language of Angels*, (*nomination: Critics Circle Award best production*). She also directed the West Coast premiere of Naomi’s *Polaroid Stories* (*Winner: Backstage West: Best Director/Ensemble*) and for the Harbor Theater the west coast premiere of Jose Rivera’s *Sonnets for and Old Century*. Delia has directed over ten productions for Word for Word and the Z Space studio since 1996. Original Word for Word productions with premieres at the Magic Theater in San Francisco include: *Immortal Heart*, (*Winner: Critics Circle Award: Production/ Director /Ensemble*) *Oil! The Ride*, *Winesburgh Ohio*, (*Winner: Critics Circle Award: Production /Director*) *Mrs. Dalloway’s Party* and *The Confessions of Madame Psyche*.

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Three On a Party -add two

Director John Fisher (“Two on a Party” and “Suddenly Home”) is now in his seventh year as the Executive Director of The GLAAD Media Award Winning Theatre Rhinoceros. He is also a nationally produced playwright and director. His plays include *The Joy of Gay Sex*, which was performed in New York City, and *Medea: The Musical* which was produced on HBO. Recent projects include *Ishi:*

The Last of the Yahi at Theatre Rhino and *Red Scare on Sunset* at ACT. John is the only two-time winner of the Will Glickman Playwright Award, and a recipient of the NEA Grant, a GLAAD Media Award, two *L.A. Weekly* Awards, a Garland Award, two Cable Car Awards, a *San Francisco Bay Guardian* Goldie Award, and ten Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Awards. John holds a Ph.D. in Dramatic Art from the University of California, Berkeley, but you don't have to call him Doctor, and he has taught at UC Berkeley, UC Santa Cruz and, for the past two years, at the Yale School of Drama. He makes his home in the Haight-Ashbury District with his life-partner Michael. He met Michael in his college dorm in 1982.

Armistead Maupin (*Tales of the City Series, The Night Listener*) was one of the first of a new breed of openly gay authors; his appeal has always resided in his inclusiveness as a storyteller. For over thirty years his beloved characters from 28 Barbary Lane in the *Tales of the City* series have cut an unprecedented path through popular culture—from a groundbreaking newspaper serial to six internationally best-selling novels to a Peabody Award-winning miniseries starring Olympia Dukakis and Laura Linney. Maupin was born in Washington, D.C., in 1944 but grew up in Raleigh, North Carolina. A graduate of the University of North Carolina, he served as a naval officer in the Mediterranean and with the River Patrol Force in Vietnam. Maupin worked briefly as a reporter for a newspaper in Charleston, South Carolina, before being assigned to the San Francisco bureau of the Associated Press in 1971. The climate of freedom and tolerance he found in his adopted city inspired him to come out publicly as homosexual in 1974. Two years later he launched his "*Tales of the City*" serial in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the first fiction to appear in an American daily for decades.

Maupin is the author of nine novels, including the six-volume *Tales of the City* series, *Maybe the Moon*, *The Night Listener* and, in 2007 he revisited one of his most beloved *Tales* characters in *Michael Tolliver*. Three miniseries starring Olympia Dukakis and Laura Linney were made from the first three novels in the *Tales* series. *The Night Listener* became a feature film starring Robin Williams and Toni Collette. *Lives*, a musical adaptation of *Tales of the City* is in the works from Jeff Whitty and Jason Moore (creators of the Tony award-winning hit *Avenue Q*), set to bow on Broadway in 2009. He is currently working on his next novel, *Mary Ann in Autumn*. Maupin lives in San Francisco with his husband, Christopher Turner.

Theatre Rhinoceros (John Fisher, Artistic Director), America's longest running (29 years) professional queer theatre, remains committed to founder Allan Estes' original vision of developing and producing works of theatre that enlighten, enrich, and explore both the ordinary and extraordinary aspects of our queer community.

Word for Word Performing Arts Company is an ensemble whose mission is to tell great stories with elegant theatricality, staging performances of classic and contemporary fiction. Founded in 1993 by Susan Harloe and JoAnne Winter, Word for Word believes in the power of the short story to provide solace, compassion, and insight into our daily lives. We bring stories from diverse cultures to our diverse communities, and develop future audiences' love for the printed and spoken word. Word for Word is a program of the Z Space Studio.

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Three On a Party -add three

Z SPACE STUDIO strives to fuel the development of American theater on a national level by nurturing new voices, new works, and new opportunities in the San Francisco Bay Area. We fulfill the function by supporting a culturally and aesthetically diverse community of theater artists working together to develop Bay Area Theater and theater audiences. Led by Executive Director Lisa Steindler, the Z Space Studio has become one of the nation's leading laboratories for the development of new voices, new works and new directions in American theater. The Z Space Studio employs hundreds of artists each year in the process of developing new works through its three

principle programs: Word for Word, Z Plays, and Youth Arts. Since the founding of the Z Space Studio in 1993, the Studio and the Bay Area artists served have racked up an impressive list of awards and other notable achievements, including the Helen Hayes Award, the Kesselring Prize, the MacArthur Award, and two Pulitzer nominations. In 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005, and 2008, Z-produced projects have landed in the San Francisco Chronicle's "10 Best Theater Events of the Year" list.

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CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

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Three On a Party By Gertrude Stein, Tennessee Williams and Armistead Maupin
May 16 – June 7, 2009 Theatre Rhinoceros, Mainstage

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Previews May 13-15

WHERE: Theatre Rhinoceros, Mainstage
2926 16th Street (16 St. BART)
San Francisco, CA 94103

TIME: 8:00 PM Wed-Sat, 3 p.m. Sundays*
* except Sunday, May 17, 7 PM only

INFO: (415) 861-5079

TICKETS:

Wed.-Thurs. \$20; Fri. & Sun. \$30; Sat. \$35; Previews \$15 Student/Senior \$5 discount

**For information and reservations visit Theatre Rhinoceros at www.TheRhino.org
Word for Word at www.zspace.org or call (415) 861-5079.**

SPECIAL EVENTS: AN EVENING WITH ARMISTEAD MAUPIN -

Sunday May 17. 7 PM Armistead Maupin in conversation with Theatre Rhinoceros Artistic Director John Fisher following the performance of **Three On a Party**. Tickets \$30-50.

POST SHOW DISCUSSION on Friday May 22 with Gertrude Stein expert Hans Gallas.

Photo Editors: pictures will be available for download at www.TheRhino.org
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Additional Biographical Materials:

Thomas Lanier Williams (1911-1983) was born in Columbus, Mississippi. The second of three children, his family life was full of tension. His parents, a shoe salesman and minister's daughter, often engaged in violent arguments that frightened his sister Rose. Williams would care for Rose (who suffered from schizophrenia and who had a frontal lobotomy with the permission of their mother) throughout much of her adult life.

In 1927, Williams got his first taste of literary fame when he took third place in a national essay contest sponsored by The Smart Set magazine. In 1929, he was admitted to the University of Missouri, planning to become a playwright. But his degree was interrupted when his father forced him to withdraw from college and work at the International Shoe Company. He returned to

university, and in 1937, he had two of his plays (Candles to the Sun and The Fugitive Kind) produced. In 1938, he graduated from the University of Iowa. After failing to find work in Chicago, he moved to New Orleans and changed his name from "Tom" to "Tennessee, the state of his father's birth. In 1939, the young playwright received a \$1,000 Rockefeller Grant, and a year later, Battle of Angels was produced in Boston.

In 1944, The Glass Menagerie had a very successful run in Chicago and a year later burst its way onto Broadway. Elia Kazan (who directed many of Williams' greatest successes) said of Tennessee: "Everything in his life is in his plays, and everything in his plays is in his life." The Glass Menagerie won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for best play of the season. Williams followed this major critical success with several other Broadway hits including A Streetcar Named Desire, Summer and Smoke, The Rose Tattoo, and Camino Real. He received his first Pulitzer Prize in 1948 for A Streetcar Named Desire, and reached an even larger world-wide audience in 1950-51 when The Glass Menagerie and A Streetcar Named Desire were made into major motion pictures. Later plays also made into films include Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (for which he earned a second Pulitzer in 1955), Orpheus Descending, and Night of the Iguana.

In 1947, Tennessee Williams met and fell in love with Frank Merlo. Merlo, a second generation Sicilian American who had served in the U.S. Navy in World War II, was a steadying influence in Williams' chaotic life. But in 1961, Merlo died of lung cancer and the playwright went into a deep, ten-year depression. For much of this period, he battled addictions to prescription drugs and alcohol.

On February 24, 1983, Tennessee Williams died in New York at his residence at the Hotel Elysee. He is buried in St. Louis, Missouri. In addition to twenty-five full length plays, Williams produced dozens of short plays and screenplays, two novels, a novella, sixty short stories, over one-hundred poems and an autobiography.

Gertrude Stein was born February 4, 1874 in Allegheny, PA, now Pittsburgh. She spent her early childhood in Europe until the family moved to Oakland in 1880. Her father owned one of San Francisco's cable car lines. Both of her parents died by the time she was in her late teens; for a short time she lived in San Francisco before moving East to attend Radcliffe. (After her father's death the cable car line was sold, providing the income that would sustain Gertrude and her siblings well into the 1930s). Gertrude's studies at Radcliffe included psychology and pre-med. Though she entered Johns Hopkins to study medicine, in 1903 she sailed to Paris to join her brothers, Leo and Michael. The Steins soon became prominent collectors of modern art including works of Picasso, Matisse and Braque. The Saturday salon at 27 rue de Fleurus was the place to be for young artists of the time.

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Three On a Party; Bio. -add one

Here Gertrude began writing, influenced both by her study of psychology as well as the works of the artists she met. She published Three Lives in 1909, and though it is stylistically conventional, it contains elements of what would become her signature style of repetition and word-play. She met Alice Toklas, a San Francisco native, in 1907 and the two were partners to the end of Gertrude's life: nearly 40 years.

At this time she was also working on The Making of Americans, a family saga loosely based on her own family. Completed in 1911, the 1000 page book did not find a publisher until more than 10 years later and then only 500 copies were printed. For the next 20 years, finding publishers for her works continued to be problematic due to her unconventional style. Nonetheless, young writers including Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway and Thornton Wilder flocked to Stein and were greatly influenced by her. In 1933 with the publication of The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, Gertrude Stein finally had a bestseller. The success of The Autobiography brought Gertrude and Alice back to the United States in 1934 for their only return visit-a seven month tour. In 1935, they reached San

Francisco, where Gertrude received the key to the city. This tour prompted Random House to promise annual publication of one Stein book, regardless of content.

As World War II loomed, Gertrude's friends encouraged her to send her manuscripts to Yale University where they became the foundation of the largest collection of Stein/Toklas memorabilia in the world. Gertrude and Alice remained in Nazi-occupied France during the war; Gertrude died in 1946 at the age of 72. Alice lived nearly 20 years longer, continuing to foster Gertrude's legacy, including the publication of all of unpublished works with Yale University Press.

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