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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 11, 2017

TWO RIVER THEATER CONTINUES ITS 2017/18 SEASON WITH THE WORLD PREMIERE OF *EL COQUÍ ESPECTACULAR* AND *THE BOTTLE OF DOOM: A SUPERHERO PLAY*, A PLAY ABOUT LATINO IDENTITY IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA, WRITTEN BY MATT BARBOT AND DIRECTED BY JOSÉ ZAYAS

FEATURED IN THE CAST ARE GABRIEL DIEGO HERNÁNDEZ, OLIVIA NEGRÓN, FLOR DE LIZ PEREZ, CESAR J. ROSADO, AND BRADLEY TEJEDA

Performances: Saturday, January 6 - Sunday, February 4, 2018

Opening: Friday, January 12, 2018 at 7pm

RED BANK, NJ — Two River Theater, under the leadership of Artistic Director John Dias and Managing Director Michael Hurst, continues its 2017/18 Season with *El Coquí Espectacular and the Bottle of Doom: A Superhero Play*, a world-premiere play by Matt Barbot, directed by José Zayas. Performances will begin in Two River’s Marion Huber Theater, 21 Bridge Avenue, on **Saturday, January 6** and continue through **Sunday, February 4**. The opening night performance is **Friday, January 12 at 7pm**. Tickets are available from 732.345.1400 or tworivertheater.org. The lead production sponsor is Bank of America and the media partner is Scooter Dudes.

Employing deft use of the superhero/comic book genre, *El Coquí Espectacular and the Bottle of Doom* explores questions of individual and national identity—including what it means to be “Latino” or “not Latino enough”—in contemporary America. The play tells the story of Alex, an unemployed young comic book artist still wrestling with the death of his father, a policeman, in the line of duty. Adrift in his career and his life, he decides to see what it’s like to be a superhero, and begins to dress up as his creation *El Coquí Espectacular* (a Puerto Rican superhero who gets his power from a vejigante carnival mask and his name from a tree frog) and fight crime in his neighborhood of Sunset

Park, Brooklyn. Meanwhile, his responsible older brother Joe is encouraging Alex to join him at his advertising agency, where Joe works selling sugary soda to Latino consumers. When Joe is fired from a project, the two, with the help of a young photographer named Yesica, hatch a plan: to debut *El Coquí* at the Puerto Rican Day Parade and prove themselves to the world.

El Coquí Espectacular and the Bottle of Doom was a finalist in the 2014 Repertorio Español Nuestras Voces competition, and won the Kennedy Center's Darrel Ayers Award for Outstanding Student-Written Play for Young Audiences, as well as the Kennedy Center's Latinidad Award for Outstanding Play Written by a Student of Latino/Hispanic Heritage. It was also a finalist in Repertorio Español's 2013 Nuestras Voces competition.

The cast of *El Coquí Espectacular and the Bottle of Doom* includes **Gabriel Diego Hernández** (El Chupacabra/Junior), **Olivia Negrón** (Patricia), **Flor De Liz Perez** (Yesica), **Cesar J. Rosado** (Joe), and **Bradley Tejada** (Alex).

The creative team includes scenic designer **Arnulfo Maldonado**, costume designer **Ásta Bennie Hostetter**, lighting designer **Zach Blane**, sound designer **Jane Shaw**, and projections/animation designer **Alex Koch**. The fight direction is by **UnkleDave's Fight-House**, the casting is by **Jack Doulin + Sharky**, and the stage manager is **Terri K. Kohler**.

"Matt Barbot is a playwright with a unique and exciting voice," says Artistic Director John Dias. "Super-smart, super-cheeky and super-honest, his *El Coquí* examines what it means to be Latino in America in a deeply personal and very funny way. What is a wannabe hero to do when he's considered a 'sorta-Rican:' raised in America by immigrant parents, feeling disconnected from the Latino community (and barely speaking Spanish), but still seen as Latino by the majority of the country. It's a play for all of us who long to connect to our roots, embrace our culture and let our inner superheroes soar."

El Coquí Espectacular and the Bottle of Doom was introduced to Red Bank audiences when it was read as part of the theater's 2016 Crossing Borders (Cruzando Fronteras) festival of new Latino plays.

Ticket Information

Ticket prices range from \$40 to \$70, with discounts available for groups, seniors, and U.S. military personnel, their families, and veterans. A limited number of \$20 tickets are available for every performance; \$20 tickets may be partial view. Tickets for patrons under 30 are \$20 and include the best available seats at every performance. Tickets are available from tworivertheater.org or 732.345.1400.

Inside Two River

Inside Two River is a series of events specially curated for each Two River Theater production. For more information or to reserve seats, patrons should visit tworivertheater.org or call 732.345.1400.

El Coquí Mobile

Getting there is half the fun! Hop around town to Red Bank's many restaurants, bars and shops in the *El Coquí Mobile*! This luxury scooter, fully equipped for the winter with heated seats and weather-proof flaps, will be seen throughout Red Bank with our show's artwork and hashtag #SpotTheFrog starting mid-December through February 4. Ready to scoot when you are, just text the Scooter Dudes at 732.784.3011 with your name, Red Bank location, number of riders, pickup time and destination and your ride will be ready in 10-15 minutes.

Book Club: *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Diaz, Monday, January 29 at 6:30pm in the Victoria J. Mastrobuono Library

In this celebrated 2007 novel, an overweight Dominican boy living in New Jersey is obsessed with sci-fi, fantasy, falling in love, and the curse that has plagued his family for generations. In connection with *El Coquí Espectacular and the Bottle of Doom*, the Two River Book Club will discuss the experiences of immigrants in America who feel caught between two cultures, and don't fully fit in with either. This event is free and open to the public. **To reserve a spot, interested patrons should call 732.345.1400 or visit www.tworivertheater.org.**

Audience Extras

Before Play and Lobby Display

Audiences will learn about *El Coquí Espectacular and the Bottle of Doom* in Two River's Before Play lecture series, which takes place 45 minutes prior to every performance, and Lobby Display.

Post-Play Conversations

Discussions with the cast and a member of Two River's Artistic staff will take place on Wednesday, January 17 at 1pm; Sunday, January 21 at 3pm; and Wednesday, January 24 at 7pm.

Accessibility

Working with Google, Two River has created and launched a virtual tour of its facility, which lives on Google Maps and tworivertheater.org. This virtual tour provides an additional level of support and benefit for patrons who use wheelchairs or require other assistance by allowing them to virtually come through the theater's front doors and view the space in detail in advance of their visit.

An audio-described performance is scheduled for Wednesday, January 21 at 1pm, and an **open-captioned performance** is scheduled for Saturday, February 3 at 3pm. Tickets are available at a discounted rate of \$25 for patrons using these services. To reserve wheelchair-accessible seating or tickets to a performance listed above, patrons should call 732.345.1400 or e-mail boxoffice@trtc.org.

Calendar

Saturday, January 6 at 8pm
Sunday, January 7 at 3pm
Wednesday, January 10 at 1 pm and 7pm
Thursday, January 11 at 8pm
Friday, January 12 at 7pm (**Opening Night**)
Saturday, January 13 at 3pm and 8pm
Sunday, January 14 at 3pm
Wednesday, January 17 at 1pm and 7pm
Thursday, January 18 at 10am (student matinee) and 8pm
Friday, January 19 at 8pm
Saturday, January 20 at 3pm and 8pm
Sunday, January 21 at 3pm
Wednesday, January 24 at 1pm and 7pm
Thursday, January 25 at 10am (student matinee) and 8pm
Friday, January 26 at 8pm
Saturday, January 27 at 3pm and 8pm
Sunday, January 28 at 3pm
Wednesday, January 31 at 1pm and 7pm
Thursday, February 1 at 10am (student matinee) and 8pm
Friday, February 2 at 8pm
Saturday, February 3 at 3pm and 8pm
Sunday, February 4 at 3pm

Sponsorship

The lead production sponsor for *El Coquí Espectacular* and *the Bottle of Doom* is Bank of America and the media partner is Scooter Dudes. Inside Two River is sponsored by The William T. Morris Foundation.

Two River Theater is supported in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, Monmouth University, The Shubert Foundation, The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, Riverview Medical Center, The Stone Foundation of New Jersey, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, The Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, Springpoint Senior Living Foundation at The Atrium at Navesink Harbor, Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Jorgensen Foundation, US Trust, Wells Fargo, William T. Morris Foundation, Kessler Foundation, Investors Foundation, The John Ben Snow Foundation, VNA Health Group, Brookdale Community College, and many other generous foundations, corporations and individuals.

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Since its founding in 1994, Two River Theater has been committed to creating great American theater by developing and producing work by some of the country's leading artists. We are proud to be viewed as a vital cultural resource in the community of Red Bank, New Jersey. Through 10 theatrical productions each year (including world premieres, musicals, classics and theater for young audiences) and 40+ annual events happening around Monmouth County, we produce exceptional theater and cultivate engaged audiences. Two River Theater is under the leadership of Artistic Director John Dias and Managing Director Michael Hurst. For more information, visit tworivertheater.org or call 732.345.1400.