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**TWO RIVER THEATER CONTINUES ITS SEASON WITH SHAKESPEARE'S *PERICLES*,
FEATURING A FULL SCORE OF ORIGINAL MUSIC AND LYRICS BY RINDE ECKERT,
CHOREOGRAPHED BY DAN KNECHTGES AND DIRECTED BY DAVID SCHWEIZER**

The cast includes J. Clint Allen, Philippe Bowgen, Rinde Eckert, Ellen Harvey, Kevin Mambo, Nikki Massoud, and Mary Testa. Multi-instrumentalist Eckert will be joined by an on-stage band including Music Director Ian Axness and guitarist Will Bernard

Performances: Saturday, April 16 - Sunday, May 8, 2016

Opening: Friday, April 22, 2016 at 8pm

RED BANK, NJ — Two River Theater, under the leadership of Artistic Director John Dias and Managing Director Michael Hurst, announces the full cast and creative team for its production of Shakespeare's *Pericles*, featuring original music and lyrics by multidisciplinary artist Rinde Eckert, who also plays *Gower/Old Pericles*. *Pericles* is choreographed by Tony nominee Dan Knechtges (*Lysistrata Jones*, *Xanadu*) and directed by acclaimed theater and opera director David Schweizer, whose past collaborations with Eckert include the Obie Award-winning *And God Created Great Whales* and *Horizon*, winner of the Lucille Lortel Award.

Performances will begin in Two River's Rechnitz Theater, 21 Bridge Avenue, on Saturday, April 16 and continue through Sunday, May 8. The opening night performance is Friday, April 22 at 8pm. Tickets are available from 732.345.1400 or tworivertheater.org. The lead production sponsor is Investors Bank.

The first of the Late Romances, this version of *Pericles* is set in a dive bar at the end of the world, where a group of barflies and musicians gather to tell Shakespeare's epic story of adventure, loss, redemption, and miraculous resurrections. With more than 40 songs and continuous underscoring, Eckert and the

on-stage band will play an eclectic assortment of instruments including hammered dulcimer, toy piano, and steel drum.

The ensemble, all of whom will play multiple roles, includes J. Clint Allen (*The Comedy of Errors*), Philippe Bowgen (*The Changeling*), Pulitzer Prize nominee and Grammy Award winner Rinde Eckert (*And God Created Great Whales*), Ellen Harvey (*How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*), Kevin Mambo (*Two River's Seven Guitars, Fela!*), Nikki Massoud (*Zealot*), and two-time Tony Award nominee and Obie winner Mary Testa (*First Daughter Suite, Xanadu*). The Music Director is Ian Axness and the guitarist is Will Bernard.

"I've always really loved *Pericles*. But it's one of Shakespeare's plays that has frustrated his fans," says Artistic Director John Dias. "It's glorious and there are moments in it that are hilarious and others exquisite and heartbreaking. But it's also the play that is most obviously the result of a quirky collaboration with another playwright (or two). It begs for the strong hand of an interpretive team of theater artists who love it for the splendor of its quirks while working to bring its disparate selves together. I'd argue that Rinde Eckert and David Schweizer are the collaborators with whom Shakespeare wishes he'd written *Pericles*!"

Rinde Eckert (Gower/Old *Pericles*, Composer, Lyricist, Orchestrations) is an acclaimed writer, composer, librettist, musician, performer, and director. His virtuosic command of gesture, language and song takes the total theater artist moves beyond the boundaries of what a 'play,' a 'dance piece,' an 'opera' or 'musical' might be, in the service of grappling with complex issues. His theater writing/performing credits include the Obie Award-winning *And God Created Great Whales*, a collaboration with David Schweizer that had three Off-Broadway runs.

David Schweizer (Director) made his New York debut at the age of 24 at Lincoln Center opening the brand-new Mitzi Newhouse Theater with his radical version of Shakespeare's *Titus and Cressida* for producer Joseph Papp. He has been directing innovative new theater, performance, and opera works for more than 30 years both nationally and internationally. His recent projects include *A Streetcar Named Desire* for Tulsa Opera, *Candide* for Long Beach Opera, and *Next to Normal* for Center Stage.

Dan Knechtges (Choreographer) is a Tony-nominated director and choreographer working in theater, opera, concert dance, television, film, and music videos. His Broadway credits include *Lysistrata Jones* (direction and choreography), *Xanadu* (directed by Chris Ashley, Tony nomination, Drama Desk nomination), and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (directed by James Lapine).

The creative team includes scenic designer Caleb Wertenbaker, costume designer Gabriel Berry, lighting designer Christopher Akerlind, and sound designer Ryan Rumery. The wig designer is Cookie Jordan and the casting is by Jack Doulin + Sharky.

Ticket Information

Ticket prices range from \$37 to \$65, 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. Please note that several of these events are off-site from Two River Theater.

Open Rehearsal: Wednesday, March 23 at 7pm in the Rechnitz Theater
David Schweizer, Rinde Eckert, and cast members from *Pericles* will explore select scenes from the play in this free event, which will be followed by dessert and coffee in the lobby.

TEDxNavesink Conference: “The Power of the Blank Page,” a talk by Rinde Eckert, Saturday, April 9 at Monmouth University
For information or to purchase tickets, patrons should visit <http://tedxnavesink.com/>.

Shakespeare 101 with John Dias, Monday, April 18 at 7pm at Monmouth County Library Headquarters, Manalapan
Two River Artistic Director John Dias is an expert on the work of William Shakespeare and a professor on the topic at Columbia University. In this free talk, Dias will offer insight into the writer many consider the greatest playwright of all time.

Book Club: *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho, Sunday, April 24 at 5:30pm in the Victoria Mastrobuono Library (following the 3pm performance)
Literary Manager Anika Chapin will lead a discussion of *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho, the story of a young man who follows a prophecy around the world. In conjunction with *Pericles*, the Book Club will discuss literary journeys and how far you have to go to discover who you really are.

“Adventure and Growth in Shakespeare’s *Pericles*” with guest speaker Sue Starke, PhD, Associate Professor of English at Monmouth University, on Thursday, April 28 at 6:30pm in the Victoria Mastrobuono Library
This event is presented as part of the Conversation + Play salon series curated by The Navesink (producers of the TEDxNavesink conference) and Two River Theater. Tickets for this event are \$50 and include the salon (exclusive pre-show event with talk, food, and drink) and the 8pm performance of *Pericles*; to purchase tickets, patrons should call 732.345.1400 or visit www.tworivertheater.org and use the promo code NAVESINK50.

Audience Extras

Before Play and Lobby Display
Audiences will learn more about *Pericles* 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, April 27 at 7pm; Sunday, May 1 at 3pm; and Wednesday, May 4 at 1pm.

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, May 4 at 1pm, and an open-captioned performance is scheduled for Saturday, May 7 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, April 16 at 8pm
Sunday, April 17 at 3pm
Wednesday, April 20 at 1 pm and 7pm
Thursday, April 21 at 8pm
Friday, April 22 at 8pm (Opening Night)
Saturday, April 23 at 3pm and 8pm
Sunday, April 24 at 3pm
Wednesday, April 27 at 1pm and 7pm
Thursday, April 28 at 10am (student matinee) and 8pm
Friday, April 29 at 8pm
Saturday, April 30 at 3pm and 8pm
Sunday, May 1 at 3pm
Wednesday, May 4 at 1pm and 7pm
Thursday, May 5 at 10am (student matinee) and 8pm
Friday, May 6 at 8pm
Saturday, May 7 at 3pm and 8pm
Sunday, May 8 at 3pm

Sponsorship

The lead production sponsor for *Pericles* is Investors Bank. *Inside Two River* is sponsored by The William T. Morris Foundation. The *Before Play* series is sponsored by Zager Fuchs, PC.

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, Meridian Health/Riverview Medical Center, The Stone Foundation of New Jersey, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Saker ShopRites, Investors Foundation, The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey,

Springpoint Senior Living Foundation at the Atrium at Navesink Harbor, Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Wells Fargo, William T. Morris Foundation, US Trust, Brookdale Community College, and many other generous foundations, corporations and individuals.

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Two River Theater, under the leadership of Artistic Director John Dias and Managing Director Michael Hurst, creates great American theater performed by award-winning artists. We produce American and world masterpieces, and new plays and musicals. Two River Theater offers new-play commissions and artistic development activities that support the most adventurous artists in the American theater; invites its audience to be part of the creative process through readings and open rehearsals; and cultivates students and young people to participate in innovative arts-education programs and become a new generation of theatergoers. Founded in 1994 by Joan and Dr. Robert M. Rechnitz, Two River Theater is easily accessible by car, train, or bus, with great restaurants and shopping within walking distance of the theater. For more information, visit tworivertheater.org or call 732.345.1400.