



**\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\*  
February 15, 2018**

**ASOLO REP PRESENTS LISA LOOMER'S ROE  
DIRECTED BY LAVINA JADHWANI;  
Runs March 14 - April 15**

**“Rousing entertainment. A big play with big ideas.”  
— Mail Tribune**

**(SARASOTA, February 15, 2018)** — Asolo Rep continues its record-breaking season with Lisa Loomer's *ROE*, a poignant new play that humanizes and examines both sides of one of the most polarizing Supreme Court cases of all time: *Roe v. Wade*. Asolo Rep is proud to be only the fourth theater in the country to be granted the rights to this must-see production. Directed by **Lavina Jadhvani** and based on the original production directed by Oregon Shakespeare Festival's Artistic Director **Bill Rauch**, *ROE* previews March 14 and 15, opens March 16, and runs in rotating repertory through April 15 in the Mertz Theatre, located in the FSU Center for the Performing Arts.

Hero. Villain. Advocate. Sinner. Saint. Norma McCorvey, who unexpectedly became the face of the pro-choice movement as symbolic plaintiff "Jane Roe," could be any of the above. But just as the country remains divided on this anything but black and white case, so did Norma, as she went from staunch pro-choice champion to ardent pro-life crusader throughout the course of her life. For attorney Sarah Weddington, the case was a chance for her to guarantee and protect a woman's right to choose to have an abortion by law — little did she know it would open up a can of worms to be debated by politicians, judges and activists for decades. Loomer's *ROE* cuts through the headlines to deliver a clever, comic and powerful portrayal of the two women at the center of it all.

"What drew me to this piece was not just its tremendous contemporary purchase, but the surprising wit and humor that Lisa Loomer brilliantly infused into this acclaimed, thought-provoking play," said Asolo Rep Producing Artistic Director Michael Donald Edwards. "**ROE** reveals that out of the court room and the public eye, Norma, Sarah and the other impassioned women were just human beings fighting for what they believed in."

**ROE** premiered at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in 2016 and was co-produced with Arena Stage and Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Playwright Lisa Loomer's other plays include *Living Out*, *The Waiting Room*, *Distracted*, *Café Vida*, *Homefree*, *Expecting Isabel*, which Asolo Rep produced in 2007, *Two Things You Don't Talk About at Dinner*, *Birds*, and *Bocón!* A two-time winner of the American Theatre Critics Award, Loomer's work has been produced at the Kennedy Center, Seattle Rep, Denver Theater Center, Trinity Repertory, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, and, in New York, at the Roundabout, the Vineyard, Second Stage, INTAR, and The Public. Globally, her work has been produced in Mexico, the Middle East and Europe.

Director **Lavina Jadhvani**'s work has been seen throughout the country at theaters including Actors Theatre of Louisville, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Phoenix Theatre, Teatro Vista, Remy Bumppo Theatre Company, and more. She served as the assistant director for the world premiere of **ROE** at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Arena Stage and Berkeley Rep.

"Lisa Loomer has said from the start that her goal in writing **ROE** was to include all audience members — whatever your point of view is on this issue, it should be represented, and represented authentically," said Director Lavina Jadhvani. "I love that this play does not aim to convert anyone. Rather, what is proposed in the text — and the goal this production is centered around — is to build empathy."

**Terri Weagant** plays Norma McCorvey. In Sarasota, she was last seen in *Bo-Nita* at Urbanite Theatre. She has also worked at Seattle Shakespeare Company, Seattle's ACT Theatre, 14/48 Projects, Book It Repertory Theatre, Consolidated Works, CHAC, and the Radial Theater Project. Jefferson Award-nominee **Bri Sudia** plays Sarah Weddington. Her Chicago credits include *Wonderful Town*; and *Ah, Wilderness!* (Goodman Theatre); *Sweeney Todd* (Paramount Theatre); *The Taming of the Shrew*; *Tug of War*; *Greatest Hits*; *The Tempest* and more (Chicago Shakespeare Theater). She has also performed at Utah Shakespeare Festival, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, and the Arkansas and Texas Shakespeare Festivals.

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**CAST**  
*(In order of appearance)*

BRI SUDIA\* .....Sarah Weddington  
TERRI WEAGANT\* .....Norma McCorvey  
KEDREN SPENCER≠ .....Aileen/Barbara/Uma/Pregnant Woman 3/Ensemble  
COLLEEN LAFEBER.....Linda Coffee/Judy/Pregnant Woman 1/Ensemble  
MARY ELLEN EVERETT.....Helen/Pregnant Woman 2/Ronda/Ensemble  
TRACY MICHELLE ARNOLD\* .....Molly/Mary/Ensemble  
MICHELLE ARAVENA\* .....Ofelia/Connie Gonzalez  
DAVID LIVELY\* .....Doctor Kennedy/Henry Wade/Justice Blackmun/Ensemble  
JORDAN BROWN\* .....Henry McCluskey/Robert Flowers/Abortion Doctor/Ensemble  
NATE BURGER\* .....Ron Weddington/Flip Benham/Floyd/Ensemble  
GIORDANA SPAGNOLO.....Melissa/Emily  
JADE TURNER.....Roxy

\*Members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

≠Appears courtesy of Actors' Equity Association

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**SELECTED CREATIVE TEAM**

Director.....LAVINA JADHWANI  
Based on the Original production by BILL RAUCH  
Scenic Designer.....RACHEL HAUCK  
Costume Designer.....TRACY DORMAN  
Lighting Designer.....TESS JAMES  
Sound Designer and Composition.....PAUL JAMES PRENDERGAST  
Video Designer.....WENDALL K. HARRINGTON  
Hair/wig and make-up designer.....MICHELLE HART

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## SELECTED ARTISTIC BIOS

(In Alphabetical Order)

**LAVINA JADHWANI** (Director, **ROE**) is elated to be making her Asolo Rep debut. Her directing credits include work at Actors Theatre of Louisville, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Phoenix Theatre, Teatro Vista, Remy Bumppo Theatre Company, Silk Road Rising, Victory Gardens Theater, and Writers Theatre. As an adaptor, she has tackled both South Asian epics (*The Ramayana*, *Shakuntala*) as well as Western classics like *Uncle Vanya*. Up next: Lavina will direct the Chicago premiere of Qui Nguyen's *Vietgone* at Writers Theatre. Graduate of The Theatre School at DePaul University (MFA, Directing), Carnegie Mellon University (BFA, Scenic Design; Masters, Arts Management). [www.lavinajadhvani.com](http://www.lavinajadhvani.com)

**BRI SUDIA\*** (Sarah Weddington, **ROE**) makes her Asolo Rep debut! Chicago credits include: *Wonderful Town* (Jeff Award Nomination) and *Ah, Wilderness!* (Goodman Theatre); *Sweeney Todd* (Jeff Award nomination, Paramount Theatre); *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Tug of War*, *Greatest Hits*, *The Tempest*, *Pericles*, *Sondheim's Road Show* and *Red Velvet* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater). Regional credits include three seasons at the Utah Shakespeare Festival, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, and the Arkansas and Texas Shakespeare Festivals. Ms. Sudia holds an MFA in acting from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a degree in sign language interpreting the deaf.

**TERRI WEAGANT\*** (Norma McCorvey, **ROE**) is thrilled to be making her Asolo Rep debut. In Sarasota, she was last seen in the solo show *Bo-Nita* at Urbanite Theatre. She has worked with such companies as Seattle Shakespeare Company, ACT Theatre, 14/48 Projects, Book It Repertory Theatre, Consolidated Works, CHAC, and the Radial Theater Project. She has performed in many parts of the US, Canada, Australia and the Czech Republic. Terri is producer/co-director of the documentary film "Above the Bamboo Room," which will premiere in Haines, Alaska in 2018.

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## PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

### The Scoop

One hour prior to every performance of **ROE**

Arrive one hour before curtain to hear the ideas and inspirations that contributed to the making of **ROE** (Opening Night, March 16, is excluded.)

### Inside Asolo Rep: **RHINOCEROS** and **ROE**

Wednesday, February 28 at 11am

Cook Theatre

Panel discussions are \$5; and free for all donors and Asolo Rep Guild Members

Get rare insights into the artistic process, hear directly from the people responsible for producing **RHINOCEROS** and **ROE**, and engage in stimulating discussion inspired by the plays' themes and issues.

Inside Asolo Rep is sponsored by Designing Women Boutique, Observer Media Group and Hotel Indigo.

**Meet the Actors**  
**Sunday, March 18**  
**Asolo Rep's Mertz Theatre**

Immediately following the 2pm matinee, ask questions and learn more from members of the cast in a facilitated discussion.

***ROE IllumiNation Event***  
**Wednesday, March 21 at 6:30pm**  
**Pre-show reception and a post-show community conversation held on the Mezzanine**  
**Performance in the Mertz Theatre**  
**Contact Asolo Rep's Box Office for series package information and single performance tickets.**

A stimulating series of theatre and conversation exploring the topical and social themes threaded throughout our season. IllumiNation events begin one hour prior to curtain with a reception on the mezzanine, continue with the performance, and conclude with a conversation. IllumiNation also includes the ***Faces of Change performance on April 9 at 7pm in the Cook Theatre***, with additional performances in the Sarasota community on Sunday, April 8 at 7pm at Fogartyville Peace Education & Action Center, Tuesday, April 10 at 7pm at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota, and Thursday, April 12 at 7pm at The SOURCE Productions.

**IllumiNation is sponsored by Morton's Gourmet Market & Catering and Capstan Financial Consulting Group**

**Tuesday Talkbacks**  
**March 27, April 3, 10**  
**Asolo Rep's Mezzanine**

Join us for an intimate post-show discussion with featured actors or guests following every Tuesday performance of *ROE*.

**OUT@AsoloRep: *ROE***  
**Thursday, April 12 at 6:30pm; show starts at 7:30pm**  
**Asolo Rep's Mezzanine**  
**Contact Asolo Rep's Box Office for subscription and ticket information**

Now in its eighth season, OUT@AsoloRep is Sarasota's premier cultural event connecting local Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities with fantastic theatre. Enjoy a pre-show reception and learn about participating LGBT organizations, and gain personal insight into *ROE* from the creative team and cast members.

**OUT@AsoloRep is sponsored by Morton's Gourmet Market & Catering, CAN Community Health and Sabal Palm Bank.**

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## **TICKETS**

Tickets for **ROE** and the entire 2017-18 Asolo Repertory Theatre season are on sale now. Tickets for **ROE** start at \$27.

To purchase tickets, call 941.351.8000 or 800.361.8388, visit [www.asolorep.org](http://www.asolorep.org), or visit the Asolo Repertory Theatre Box Office, located in the lobby of the theatre. Asolo Repertory Theatre is located at 5555 North Tamiami Trail in the Florida State University Center for the Performing Arts.

The Box Office is open Monday 10am – 5pm, Tuesday – Thursday 10am - 7:30pm, Friday – Saturday 10am – 8pm, and Sunday 10am – 2pm. The box office closes at 5pm when there are no evening performances and phone lines close one hour prior to the start of any performance. Season subscription packages are also available online and by visiting or calling the box office.

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## **SPONSORS**

Asolo Rep is able to present **ROE** because of the generosity of its sponsors. The corporate sponsor for **ROE** is Sarasota Magazine. Asolo Rep 2017-18 Major Season Sponsors are Florida State University, Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, The Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, Designing Women Boutique, William H. Donner Foundation, Woman's Exchange, Inc., the Huisking Foundation, and Sunset Cadillac of Bradenton. Asolo Rep's artistic programs are paid for in part by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax revenues. Asolo Rep is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.

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## **About Asolo Repertory Theatre**

Now in its 59th season, Asolo Repertory Theatre is recognized as one of the premier professional theatres in America and one of the largest in the Southeastern United States. One of the few select theatres in the nation that performs in true rotating repertory, Asolo Rep's highly skilled acting company and extensive craftsmanship bring to life this unique performance method that gives audiences the opportunity to see multiple productions in the span of a few days. Asolo Rep presents up to 10 productions each season including contemporary and classic works and provocative musical theatre experiences. A theatre district in and of itself, Asolo Rep is committed to expanding its reach into the community, furthering its collaboration with the best theatre artists working in the industry today and cultivating new artists through its affiliation with the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Michael Donald Edwards and Managing Director Linda DiGabriele, Asolo Rep's ambitious theatrical offerings and ground-breaking education and community programming engage audiences and ensure its lasting legacy for future generations.

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