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**MEDIA PAGE:** [**www.northcoastrep.org/press**](http://www.northcoastrep.org/press)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, PLEASE:**

**NORTH COAST REPERTORY LAUNCHES SEASON 40**

**WITH COMEDIC, POIGNANT *DANCING LESSONS***

**A LIVE PRODUCTION**

**Written By Mark St. Germain**

**Featuring Leilani Smith and Christopher M. Williams**

**Directed By Richard Baird**

**Performances begin September 8**

**Running through October 3, 2021**

Solana Beach, Calif. – North Coast Repertory Theatre is ringing in the New Season with Mark St. Germain’s entertaining and charming ***DANCING LESSONS.*** Two highly offbeat neighbors, a Broadway dancer and a science professor, forge an unexpected friendship as they face physical and emotional challenges. Filled with laughs and the intricacies of the human condition, we witness their journey of discovery and personal triumph as they come to realize that sometimes the most profound experiences can occur when least expected.

Richard Baird directs Leilani Smith\* and Christopher M. Williams\* on North Coast Rep’s mainstage. Audiences will see a full theatrical production with Choreography by Cate Caplin, sets by Scenic Designer Marty Burnett, Light Design Matt Novotny, Costumes by Elisa Benzoni, and Sound & Media Design Aaron Rumley and Prop Design Philip Korth. Cindy Rumley\* is the Stage Manager. Reserve your tickets now to this heartfelt play that has had audiences and critics cheering from coast to coast.

\*The actor or stage manager appears through the courtesy of Actors’ Equity Association. For photos, go to [www.northcoastrep.org/press](http://www.northcoastrep.org/press).

***DANCING LESSONS*** previews begin Wednesday, September 8th. Opening Night on Saturday, September 11, at 8pm. It will play Wednesdays at 7pm, Thursdays through Saturdays at 8pm, Friday (Sept 10), Wednesday (Sept 29), Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2pm with Sundays at 7pm through October 3rd. North Coast Repertory Theatre is located at 987 Lomas Santa Fe Drive, Solana Beach, CA 92075. Tickets: Previews - $54, Week Nights/Wed. & Sat. Matinees - $60; Sat. Eve. & Sun. Mat. $65; Sun Night - $57. There will be a talkback with actors and director on September 10th after the performance. Seniors, Students, Military & Educators - $3 off admission. Call 858-481-1055, or visit [www.northcoastrep.org](http://www.northcoastrep.org) to purchase tickets.

***DANCING LESSONS*** *performs live on stage* from September 8 through October 3, 2021. Tickets are $51-$65 and can be purchased at [www.northcoastrep.org](http://www.northcoastrep.org) or calling the Box Office (858) 481-1055.

**FACT SHEET:**

 **WHAT: NORTH COAST REPERTORY THEATRE presents**

 ***DANCING LESSONS***

**By Mark St. Germain**

 **Directed by** **Richard Baird**

**CAST:** Meilani Smith\* and Christopher M. Williams\*

**WHERE:** North Coast Repertory Theatre

987 Lomas Santa Fe Drive

 Solana Beach, CA 92075

**SCHEDULE:** **Previews:** **September 8, 2021**

 **Closes: October 3, 2021**

 **Wed. @ 7pm, Thurs-Sat @ 8PM; Sat & Sun @ 2PM, Sun @ 7pm**

 **Preview Matinee @ 2pm, Friday, September 10, 2021**

 **Wednesday Matinee @ 2pm, September 29, 2021**

 **Talkback with cast & director: Friday, September 10, 2021**

**PRICES:** Previews (including Fri Mat) $54.00

 Sat. Evening & Sunday Matinee $65.00

 Wed. – Fri. Evening $60.00

 Wed. & Sat. Matinee $60.00

 Sunday Evening $57.00

**DISCOUNTS:**  Seniors, Students, Military & Educators $3.00 off admission.

**BIOS**

**MARK ST. GERMAIN** (Playwright) has written for film television and the stage. He is a recipient of the Outer Critics Circle Award, the Lucille Lortel Award and the Off Broadway Alliance Award. Mark has written the plays *Freud’s Last Session*, *Camping With Henry and Tom, Forgiving Typhoid Mary*, (Time Magazine’s “Year’s Ten Best”) and *Becoming Dr. Ruth*, the story of Dr. Ruth Westheimer. Other plays include *Best Of Enemies, Ears On A Beatle, Scott And Hem, Dancing Lessons, Best Of Enemies, Relativity and Out Of Gas On Lover’s Leap.* His play *Eleanor*, commissioned by Florida Studio Theater, premiered there and was presented this season at the Barrington Stage Company. *The Crossing*, a musical, will premiere at Barrington Stage in September, 2021. His play *Becoming Dr. Ruth* will be touring with Actress Tovah Feldshuh.With Randy Courts, he has written the musicals *The Gifts Of The Magi, Johnny Pye and Jack’s Holiday* (Playwrights Horizons). His musical*,  Stand By Your Man*, The Tammy Wynette Story was created for Nashville’s Ryman Theater. With John Markus wrote the comedy with music, *The Fabulous Lipitones*.Mark  is a member of the Dramatists Guild, the Writer’s Guild East and an Associate Artist at the Barrington Stage Company where a theater is named for him.His book, “WALKING EVIL, *How Man’s Best Friend Became My Worst Enemy”,* is available on Amazon.

**RICHARD BAIRD** (Director) is an award winning actor, director and producer.  As director:  *Amadeus, A Walk in the Woods* and *Of Mice and Men* (North Coast Repertory Theatre), *An Experiment with an Air Pump* (Backyard Renaissance), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Intrepid Theatre), *Edward II* (Diversionary Theatre), *As You Like It* and *The Winters Tale* (Southwest Shakespeare Company), *Richard II* (Poor Players/Sedona Shakespeare), *The Changeling* (OSF Blackbox), and over 20 productions for Poor Players Theatre Company which he founded in 2001.  Artistic Director of New Fortune Theatre since 2014 where he co-directed *Henry V* and *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and where he directed *The Birthday Party*.   Mr. Baird has appeared as an actor on many stages across the country.  He has appeared in fifty productions of Shakespeare plays.

**CHRISTOPHER M. WILLIAMS\***(EVER) is an actor, director, producer, stage manager, teacher and fight choreographer. He is currently the Associate Artistic Director at North Coast Rep. Select acting credits include: Off Broadway: *Rothschild and Sons*(The York). Regional: *The Outsider, How the Other Half Loves, Holmes and Watson*, *Laughter on the 23rd Floor, The Tempest, Lend Me a Tenor, Don’t Dress for Dinner*(North Coast Rep); A *Moon for the Misbegotten, The Drawer Boy*(AZ Theatre Co); *Noises Off!, Comedy of Errors*(Phoenix Theatre); *Noises Off!*(Idaho Shakes); *Angels in America: Part 1 & 2, Lobby Hero*(Actors Theatre);*Beau Jest, Jest a Second*(AZ Jewish Theatre); *Hamlet, A Funny Thing...Forum, Oliver!, Julius Caesar, Othello, Henry V*(SW Shakespeare). On screen credits include: “Terriers,” “The Incredible Adventures of JoJo,” “Island of Lost Girls.” He also played Jacob and was a producer of the WWII feature film, “Walking with the Enemy,” starring Ben Kingsley and Jonas Armstrong.

**LEILANI SMITH\*** (Senga Quinn) Born in Osan City, Korea as an Air Force Brat to Ok Cho Kim and Claude Smith Sr. Leilani went on to earn her black belt as the first female instructor to do so at Rifkin Pro Karate. She's recently guest starred in 4 out of 5 episodes on the television miniseries "Trace" as Captain Laurel Johnson streaming on Amazon Prime and VIM Media. Received "Best Ensemble" at the 2016 NAACP Theatre Awards for "Flyin' West" where she portrayed Fannie Mae as well as receiving another nom for the same category in 2018 for "HOME" playing over 10+ characters. She appeared opposite Sally Field and Tyne Daly in "Hello My Name is Doris" as well as other productions on television, film and stages across L.A. I am thrilled to finally come to NCRT through Christopher, David and Richard. Instagram @leilanimariesmith / <https://mslanilei.wixsite.com/leilanismith>

**CINDY RUMLEY\*** (Stage Manager) Credits include: *Another Roll of the Dice, All in the Timing, Holmes & Watson, A Funny Thing..., How The Other Half Loves, Last of the Red Hot Lovers, The Spitfire Grill, Laughter on the 23rd Floor, Ain’t Misbehavin’, Way Downriver; William Faulkner’s ‘Old Man’, Chapatti, Side By Side By Sondheim, Freud’s Last Session, Mandate Memories, Dames at Sea, Two By Pinter,* and *Visiting Mr. Green* with North Coast Rep. Cindy holds an M.F.A in stage management from UC Irvine.

**DESIGN TEAM**

**CATE CAPLIN** (Choreographer) has produced, directed and choreographed over 200 productions and her work has been seen on television, in films, music videos, commercials and in theatrical venues world-wide from the Paris Opera House to the Broadway Stage. She is a 34 times Regional and International Theatrical Ballroom Dance Champion, a published writer and an acting and dance coach.  Cate wrote and directed her first feature film, “Mating Dance” which won an Accolade Award and she has been the recipient of a Garland Award, a Women In Theatre Red Carpet Award, multiple LA Stage Alliance Ovation, Eddon and Scenie Awards and an Award of Excellence from the LA Film Commission for her work as a Writer, Director, Choreographer and Producer.  Cate is a Directing member of Actors Studio West, an Associate Member of SDC, and was most recently honored to receive Playwright Arena’s “Lee Melville Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Los Angeles Theatre Community.”

**MARTY BURNETT** (Set Design) Resident Designer at North Coast Rep since 1992, with more than 200 designs to his credit. Other design venues include Sahara and Hacienda hotels in Las Vegas, Claridge Hotel, Atlantic City and Drury Lane Chicago.

**ELISA BENZONI** (Costume Design) is thrilled to be working on her fourth season at North Coast Rep including numerous Craig Noel nominated productions. Elisa has also worked on over a hundred productions across Southern California with theatres such as The Old Globe, La Jolla Playhouse, Geffen Playhouse, South Coast Repertory Theatre, Laguna Playhouse, San Diego Repertory Theatre, Diversionary Theatre and New Village Arts. Being Italian born, Elisa has also had the opportunity to work and perfect her craft in Europe. Elisa holds a costume design M.F.A. from UCSD where she currently is an adjunct professor. www.elisabenzoni.com

**MATT NOVOTNY** (Light Design) is pleased to be designing another show for North Coast Rep, where he has designed close to forty shows over the past seven years. Matthew is currently the Lighting Designer in Residence for San Diego Musical Theatre as well as North Coast Rep, and his work can be seen at a wide variety of theatres across San Diego. Matthew holds a B.A. in Technical Theatre from San Diego State and a master’s degree in Lighting Design from Boston University. Matthew is married to his beautiful wife Amanda, with 5 AMAZING children: Ragan, Harper, Heston, Maddex and Harrison .

**AARON RUMLEY** (Sound & Multimedia) has worked on over 120 shows at North Coast Rep, over 50 as a stage manager, and over 20 as a designer.

**PHILLIP KORTH** (Props) is an actor, writer, craftsman, and educator. He earned BAs in Acting and Creative Writing from Western Michigan University and his MFA in Acting from the University of Connecticut. He is a Veteran of the United States Marine Corps and served two tours of duty in Iraq. In addition to designing and managing props for NCRT, Phillip is also the Education Associate at The Theatre School @ North Coast Rep.

North Coast Repertory Theatre,under the artistic leadership of David Ellenstein since 2003,is a professional Equity theatre founded in 1982 by Olive and Tom Blakistone. Currently celebrating its 40th season, North Coast Rep has received critical acclaim from media and audiences alike, and has evolved into one of the area’s leading performing arts organizations. North Coast Rep prides itself on employing the majority of its actors from Actors’ Equity Association for its high quality, award-winning productions, and staging works by established and emerging playwrights. Throughout its history, North Coast Rep has created a platform where artist and audience thrive through the intimacy of live theatre, recognizing the power of theatre to challenge complacency, revitalize the imagination, nurture the unexpected, and embrace the variety and diversity in our lives.

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