



For Immediate Release

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LOCAL ARTISTS TO COLLABORATE WITH TAYLOR MAC DURING NEW ENGLAND PREMIERE PERFORMANCE

Artist Residency Co-Presented by FirstWorks and Brown Arts Initiative Offers New Opportunities to Engage with Acclaimed Performer and Playwright

Providence, R.I. (September 5, 2019) – FirstWorks and the Brown Arts Initiative at Brown University (BAI) co-present MacArthur Fellow and Tony-nominated performer and playwright Taylor Mac in an artist residency taking place on Brown campus September 12-15, 2019. The residency is built around a performance of Taylor Mac’s *A 24 Decade History of Popular Music (Abridged)* on September 14 at The VETS (1 Avenue of the Arts, Providence).

The New England premiere of *A 24 Decade History of Popular Music (Abridged)* launches with pre-show FirstWorks “JumpStart” performances by local artists to welcome audience members to the venue. The sounds and revelry of The **Extraordinary Rendition Band (ERB)**, an open band of brass, reeds and drums will fill the air outside the VETS lobby as audience members arrive. ERB, Providence’s own award-winning activist street band, features over 30 musicians and dancers.

The nonprofit choral group **RPM Voices of Rhode Island** will also perform starting at 7:15 PM in The VETS Gallery. Committed to the preservation of African American folk traditions and cultural expressions through choral music, this statewide chorus brings together unique voices that embody the state’s diverse population.

A highlight of the Taylor Mac performance will feature local vocalist **Victoria Ruiz**, a self-described “Chicana Punk Rocker”, who will join Mac on stage. Ruiz is the vocalist for Providence-based bands Downtown Boys and Malportado Kids. The singer, writer and activist’s work has been featured in *Rolling Stone*, *The New Yorker*, *SPIN* and *The New York Times*. Ruiz sings in both English and Spanish, and her energy and activism are apparent in lyrics reflecting on societal borders that exist in the form of white privilege and institutionalized racism.

FirstWorks and BAI have added an opportunity to learn about the creative process behind *A 24 Decade History of Popular Music* from Mac’s costume designer, **Machine Dazzle**. In a free talk on his collaboration with Mac entitled “Artist in the Role of Costume Designer”, Dazzle will reveal how he found inspiration in forgotten, dismissed or buried details of America’s past which led to the creation of the wearable works of art donned by Mac in his acclaimed performances. A component of the artist’s residency, the talk will take place on September 13 at 3:00 p.m. at Brown University’s Granoff Center for the Creative Arts in the Martinos Auditorium (154 Angell Street). The event is free and open to the public but registration is required and can be made at arts.brown.edu.

The Taylor Mac residency kicks off a season-long FirstWorks initiative titled “Raise Your Voice”, designed to amplify diverse voices and celebrate differences through the performing arts. The initiative will bring world-class artists to Rhode Island for in-depth residencies featuring K-12 educational matinees, artist-led workshops for students and older adults, film screenings and community engagement programming designed to generate empathy through the arts.

The Providence Department of Art, Culture + Tourism, a long-standing partner of FirstWorks, has been a key supporter of “Raise Your Voice”. Their commitment provides Providence’s talented artists with a platform to shine and develop their artistic practice through the Taylor Mac residency and throughout FirstWorks’ season.

Taylor Mac’s residency is also funded in part by the New England Foundation for the Arts, Rhode Island Council for the Humanities (National Endowment for the Humanities), National Endowment for the Arts, and Brown University’s Office of the President.

A 24-Decade History of Popular Music is produced by Pomegranate Arts (Executive Producer, Linda Brumbach; Associate Producer, Alisa Regas) and Mac’s company Nature’s Darlings.

NOTE: Audience participation occurs during the Taylor Mac performance. Additionally, performance and residency events may include mature content and are intended for adult audiences.

The Taylor Mac artist residency includes the following events:

September 12, 5:30 p.m. Keynote Lecture by Taylor Mac

Martinos Auditorium, Granoff Center for the Creative Arts, 154 Angell Street

Mac will deliver a lecture titled “What’s Gonna Happen?” It speaks to the artist’s vision of the theater in uncertain times and how it can be an essential catalyst for meaningful conversation and positive change. Free and open to the public, advance registration is required. Tickets are first-come, first-served at arts.brown.edu.

*****Just Announced****

September 13, 3:00 p.m. Machine Dazzle: Artist in the Role of Costume Designer

Martinos Auditorium, Granoff Center for the Creative Arts, 154 Angell Street

Machine Dazzle will speak about his ongoing collaboration with performance artist Taylor Mac. Dazzle will reveal how he found inspiration in forgotten, dismissed or buried details of America’s past which lead to the creation of the wearable works of art worn by Mac in his acclaimed *A 24-Decade History of Popular Music*. Free and open to the public, advance registration is required. Tickets are first-come, first-served at arts.brown.edu.

September 14, 8:00 p.m. A 24-Decade History of Popular Music (Abridged)

The VETS, 1 Avenue of the Arts

Tickets for this one-night event are available for purchase now from \$29 to \$69 at first-works.org or by calling The VETS Box Office at 401-421-ARTS (2787). The main box office is located in the Providence Performing Arts Center at 220 Weybosset Street. Student discount pricing is available; please call FirstWorks at 401-421-4278.

September 15, 10:30 a.m. Panel Discussion

Fishman Studio, Granoff Center for the Creative Arts, 154 Angell Street

Taylor Mac will participate in a discussion with Sean F. Edgecomb, assistant professor of theater at CUNY College of Staten Island, and David Román, professor of English and American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California, moderated by Kareem Khubchandani, assistant professor of theater, dance and performance studies at Tufts University. Free and open to the public, advanced registration required at arts.brown.edu.

About Taylor Mac

Taylor Mac (who uses “judy,” lowercase *sic*, not as a name but as a gender pronoun) is one of the world’s leading theater artists. A playwright, actor, singer-songwriter, performance artist, director and producer, and “Critical darling of the New York scene” (*New York* magazine), judy’s work has been performed in hundreds of venues including New York City’s Town Hall, Lincoln Center, Celebrate Brooklyn, The Public Theatre, and Playwrights Horizons, as well as London’s Hackney Empire and Barbican, Washington D.C.’s Kennedy Center, LA’s Ace Theater (through UCLA’s Center for the Art of Performance), Chicago’s Steppenwolf Theatre, the Sydney Opera House, The Melbourne Festival (Forum Theater), Stockholm’s Sodra Theatern, the Spoleto Festival, and San Francisco’s Curran Theater and SF MoMA.

judy is the author of many works of theater including the forthcoming *Prosperous Fools*, and the previously produced works, *A 24-Decade History of Popular Music*, *Hir*, *The Walk Across America for Mother Earth*, *Comparison is Violence*, *The Lily’s Revenge*, *The Young Ladies Of*, *Red Tide Blooming*, *The Be(a)st of Taylor Mac*, *Cardiac Arrest or Venus on a Half-Clam*, *The Face of Liberalism*, *Okay*, *Maurizio Pollini*, *A Crevice*, and *The Hot Month*. Taylor Mac’s Tony-nominated *Gary*, *A Sequel to Titus Andronicus* debuted on Broadway this spring.

Sometimes Taylor acts in other people’s plays (or co-creations). Notably: Shen Teh/Shui Ta in The Foundry Theater’s production of *Good Person of Szechwan* at La Mama and the Public Theater, in the City Center’s Encores production of *Gone Missing*, Puck/Egeus in the Classic Stage Company’s *A Midsummer’s Night Dream*, and in the two-man vaudeville, *The Last Two People on Earth* opposite Mandy Patinkin and directed by Susan Stroman.

Mac is a MacArthur Fellow, a Pulitzer Prize Finalist for Drama and the recipient of multiple awards including the Kennedy Prize, a NY Drama Critics Circle Award, a Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, a Guggenheim, the Herb Alpert in Theater, the Peter Zeisler Memorial Award, the Helen Merrill Playwriting Award, two Bessies, two Obies, two Helpmanns, and an Ethyl Eichelberger Award. An alumnus of New Dramatists, judy is currently a New York Theater Workshop Usual Suspect and the Resident playwright at the Here Arts Center.

<http://taylormac.org/>

About Machine Dazzle

MACHINE DAZZLE has been dazzling stages via costumes, sets, and performances since his arrival in New York in 1994. Credits include Julie Atlas Muz’s *I Am The Moon And You Are The Man On Me* (2004), Big Art Group’s *House Of No More* (2006), Justin Vivian Bond’s *Lustre* (2008) and *Re:Galli Blonde* (2011), Chris Tanner’s *Football Head* (2014), Soomi Kim’s *Change* (2015), Pig Iron Theater’s *I Promised Myself To Live Faster* (2015), *Bombay Ricky* (Prototype Festival 2016), Opera Philadelphia’s *Dito and Aeneas* (2017) and Spieglerworld’s *Opium* (Las Vegas 2018). With Taylor Mac, Machine has collaborated on several projects including *The*

Lily's Revenge (2009), *Walk Across America For Mother Earth* (2012) and the Pulitzer Prize-Nominated *A 24-Decade History of Popular Music* (2016-Present). Conceptualist-as-artist meets DIY meets "glitter rhymes with litter," *Machine* was a co-recipient the 2017 Bessie Award for Outstanding Visual Design and the winner of a 2017 Henry Hewes Design Award.

About FirstWorks

FirstWorks is a non-profit based in Providence, Rhode Island whose purpose is to build the cultural, educational and economic vitality of its community by engaging audiences with world-class performing arts and education programs. Since 2004, FirstWorks festivals, performances and programs have attracted more than 600,000 participants. The FirstWorks Arts Learning Program reaches over 4,000 students from public and charter schools across Rhode Island with transformative, arts-based learning experiences. FirstWorks is Founding Partner for PVDFest, collaborating with the City of Providence to produce an international arts celebration held each June that in 2019 drew 130,000 visitors to Providence to experience music, art and spectacular performances. Visit first-works.org to learn more.

About Brown Arts Initiative

The Brown Arts Initiative (BAI) at Brown University seeks to cultivate creative expression and foster an interdisciplinary environment where faculty and students learn from one another and from artists and scholars in a wide range of fields across the campus and around the world. A consortium of six arts departments and two programs that encompass the performing, literary and visual arts, BAI works collaboratively to enhance curricular and co-curricular offerings, directly engage students with prominent artists working in all genres and media, and supports a diverse program of concerts, performances, exhibitions, screenings, lectures and symposia each year. BAI takes full advantage of the University's Open Curriculum and builds on Brown's reputation as a destination for arts exploration, contributing to cultural enterprise through the integration of theory, practice and scholarship with an emphasis on innovation and discovery that results from rigorous artmaking and experimentation.

BAI comprises and integrates History of Art and Architecture; Literary Arts; Modern Culture and Media; Music; Theatre Arts and Performance Studies; Visual Art; the David Winton Bell Gallery; and Rites and Reason Theatre/Africana Studies. www.arts.brown.edu

About Pomegranate Arts

For the past twenty years, Pomegranate Arts has worked in close collaboration with a small group of contemporary artists and arts institutions to bring bold and ambitious artistic ideas to fruition. Founder and Director Linda Brumbach, along with managing director Alisa E. Regas, produced the Olivier Award-winning revival of *Einstein on the Beach*, the multi-award-winning production of Taylor Mac's *A 24-Decade History of Popular Music*, the Drama Desk Award-winning production of *Charlie Victor Romeo* and *Available Light* by John Adams, Lucinda Childs and Frank Gehry among others. Since its inception, Pomegranate Arts has produced over 30 major new performing arts productions and tours for Philip Glass, Laurie Anderson, Lucinda Childs, Dan Zanes, London's Improbable, Sankai Juku, Batsheva, and Bassem Youssef and collaborated on new productions with the Kronos Quartet, Leonard Cohen, Robert Wilson, and Frank Gehry. Together with Taylor Mac/Nature's Darlings, Pomegranate Arts produced and developed *A 24-Decade History of Popular Music*.

<https://www.pomegranatearts.com/>