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**Month Day, 2018** – National Players, America’s longest-running touring theatre company, performs ***The Crucible*** by Arthur Miller at **\*VENUE\*** on **DAY OF WK, MONTH DAY at 0:00 AM/PM**. Admission is $XX. National Players is the professional touring program of Olney Theatre Center in Olney, Maryland.

**National Players** is an entirely **self-contained and self-sustaining tour**, meaning that the ensemble members who act in the plays also serve as the tour’s stagehands, electricians, truck drivers, wardrobe crew, stage managers and much more. It is an ensemble of true “theatre-makers” in the fullest sense of the word.

In Arthur Miller’s classic, no one is safe as a reign of terror rips through 1692 Salem. Led by Abigail Williams, a group of girls who claim to have seen the Devil hurl out charges of witchcraft, sending those who won't confess to the noose. When the accusing finger points to his wife, John Proctor is forced to confront his past and determine his future.

Miller's searing drama, inspired by the McCarthy era, comes to vivid new life in the National Players' bare-knuckle staging. A piercing look at what can happen when truth is bent to political convenience, ***The Crucible*** is a powerful story for our time.

***The Crucible*** is directed by **Jason King Jones**, Olney Theatre Center’s Senior Associate Artistic Director and Artistic Director of National Players. Previous directing credits for National Players include: *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Of Mice and Men*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Animal Farm*, *A Comedy of Errors*, *The Tempest* and *The Odyssey* (which he also adapted). In addition to productions at Olney Theatre Center, he has directed at Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, Boston University, InCite Arts Festival, Kennedy Center/ACTF, Shakespeare Center Los Angeles, NJ REP, Public Theatre of Kentucky.

“***The Crucible* has never been more relevant.** Yes, Arthur Miller wrote it 65 years ago about a series of events that occurred in the 17th Century, but the play’s themes resonate with deafening clarity in America’s present moment,” **says Director, Jason King Jones**. “Miller wrote *The Crucible* as a metaphor for the McCarthy hearings and the intense fear they created: fear that enemies were lurking in plain sight, fear that America’s identity as a nation was threatened from within, fear that the innocent were getting sucked into the vortex of McCarthy’s witch hunt. I believe we are in the midst of a gigantic cultural reckoning, one as yet unresolved. Americans across the political system have felt disempowered by events of the past few years, and that sense of disempowerment has led to a host of movements. In my observation these movements are all pieces of a greater reckoning that will continue to radically transform the landscape of American society.”

**Hugh Raup** plays the tortured protagonist John Proctor, while **Zoe Wohlfeld** plays his wife Elizabeth Proctor as well as the young Betty Parris. **Cedrick L. Riggs, Jr.** plays the conflicted Reverend Hale and **Benjamin DeCamp Cole** the self-righteous Reverend Parris, while **Josh Bierman** plays the irascible Giles Corey. **Jamie Boller** tackles the role of Abigail Williams, the ringleader of the young girls standing in judgement, as well as playing Judge Hawthorne. **Alice Kabia** plays the enslaved servant Tituba as well as the commanding Judge Danforth. **Deidre Staples**, **Alanna McNaughton** and **David Reece Hutchinson** portray multiple residents of Salem, Massachusetts.

Implementing Jones’ vision for this taught, touring production is **Charlie Calvert** (Set Design), **Jeannette Christensen** (Costume Design), **Roc Lee** (Sound Design), and **Sarah Tundermann** (Lighting Design).

Jason King Jones and National Players company are available for advance interviews.

**ABOUT NATIONAL PLAYERS**

Established in 1949 and based at Olney Theatre Center since 1952, National Players is America’s longest-running touring company. Founded on the principle of prioritizing areas with limited access to theatre, National Players company consists of 10 early-career theatre artists who spend 10 months touring the United States with their three-play repertory to a variety of diverse populations and venues from performing arts centers, universities, but also public schools, rural community centers, and penitentiaries. National Players also acts as an educational ambassador, teaching theatre-related courses to students of all ages and backgrounds. Though it travels thousands of miles and serves tens of thousands of people each year, National Players always comes home to Olney, Maryland. www.nationalplayers.org

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**ABOUT OLNEY THEATRE CENTER**

Olney Theatre Center for the Arts produces, presents and tours extraordinary performances for a diversity of audiences, and educates and inspires the next generation of theater-makers. We strive every day to unleash the creative potential of our artists and audiences, and in so doing, become a nationally-prominent destination for the most impactful theater performance and education. In the past five years, Olney Theatre has twice won the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Musical Production and produced 8 world premieres. Olney Theatre places a priority on engaging our community by ensuring that we remain affordable, accessible and inviting to new and returning audiences.

Since 1952, National Players has been the touring program of Olney Theatre Center as part of its mission to incubate and educate the next generation of theatre artists and audiences. Located just north of Washington, D.C. in arts-rich Montgomery County, Maryland. Olney Theatre Center is led by Artistic Director Jason Loewith and Managing Director Debbie Ellinghaus.

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