

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Perseverance Theatre presents the WORLD PREMIERE of Vera Starbard's *OUR VOICES WILL BE HEARD*

DECEMBER 28, 2015 - Juneau – Perseverance Theatre presents the world premiere of *Our Voices Will be Heard*, a powerful testimony of a mother's fierce love for her young daughter and the lengths she will go to protect her - even at great personal cost.

Drawing upon the strengths of Alaska Native culture, Tlingit/Dena'ina playwright Vera Starbard creates a compelling case for ending the destructive cycle of child sexual abuse by recognizing the power of one's own voice. Using the lens of fiction and the palette of Alaska Native storytelling, Starbard draws from her own life a mother-daughter journey that reveals how generations face issues of family violence—and how their decisions impact the people they love. Resiliency and hope become strong overarching themes as *Our Voices Will Be Heard*'s all-Native cast weaves together legend and truth to deliver a profound call for prevention, healing and forgiveness.

Production Schedule and Tickets

The production runs from Jan. 15 – Feb. 7, 2016, on the Perseverance Theatre Mainstage located at 914 Third Street in Douglas, Alaska. Tickets are available now at Hearthside Books and the Juneau Arts and Humanities Council online at PTalaska.org, or by calling 907-463-TIXS (8497).

There are three pay-as-you-can previews:

Sunday, Jan. 10, 4 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 13, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday Jan. 14, 7:30 p.m.

There are two pay-as-you-can performances:

Sunday, Jan. 17, 4 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 21, 7:30 p.m.

After closing in Juneau, *Our Voices Will Be Heard* will also be performed in Hoonah and Anchorage in February.

Cast and Crew

Motivated by the truths in this story, and the courage of the playwright to tell it, the production has inspired an unusually significant and diverse collaboration of partners.

Playwright Vera Starbard has a long history of writing both personally and professionally. She began editing newspapers in 2000 and has made writing and editing part of her work since, including during recent years in the field of public relations. Starbard completed a historical fiction book in 2010 with an award from the Rasmuson Foundation. She has received numerous other awards for writing and editing from the Public Relations Society of America, Alaska Professional Communicator's Society, Alaska Women's Press Club and the Alaska Federation of Natives. She is the editor of First Alaskans Magazine, and *Our Voices Will Be Heard* is Starbard's debut play.

Director Larissa FastHorse has produced such plays as *Average Family*, *Teaching Disco Squaredancing to Our Elders: a Class Presentation* and *Cherokee Family Reunion*. As a playwright, she has written commissions for Cornerstone Theatre Company, Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis, AlterTheater, Kennedy Center Theatre for Young Audiences, Native Voices at the Autry and Mountainside Theatre. FastHorse has developed plays with Arizona Theater Company, the CenterTheatre Group Writer's Workshop and Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor. She was awarded the NEA Distinguished New Play Development Grant, American Alliance for Theatre and Education Distinguished Play Award, Inge Residency, Sundance/Ford Foundation Fellowship, Aurand Harris Fellowship, and numerous Ford and NEA grants. She is a current member of the Playwright's Union and Theatre Communications Group's board of directors, and is an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Lakota Nation.

The all-Native cast is comprised of a diverse group of talented theatre, film and television actors from Alaska and the Lower 48. Alaskan actors include Tlingit actors Erin Tripp, DeAndre Howard King, Leetta Gray and Frank Katasse of Juneau, Yup'ik storyteller and actor Jack Dalton from Anchorage. Ojibway/Turtle Clan Oneida actor Dylan Carusona visits from New York City, along with Cherokee actor Robert Vestal and Iroquois actress Erika Stone from Los Angeles. Aleut actress Jane Lind returns to Perseverance Theatre from Montana.

The creative team includes Tlingit artists: Rico Worl, Northwest Coast Visual Artist; and Ed Littlefield, composer and sound designer. Alaskan artists include Akiko Nishijima Rotch as scenic designer; Art Rotch as lighting designer; and Rick Silaj, associate costume designer. Out of town costume designer Meg Zeder joins the team from New York City.

Our Voices Will Be Heard Fact Sheet

WHAT: Perseverance Theatre presents *Our Voices Will Be Heard* by Vera Starbard, directed by Larissa FastHorse.

WHEN: January 15 – February 7 (Opening Night: 7:30 p.m., Friday, January 15). Performance times: 7:30 p.m., Thursdays-Saturdays and 4 p.m., Sundays with an extra performance 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, February 3. There will be three pay-as-you-can previews: 4 p.m., Sunday, January 10 and 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, and Thursday, January 13, 14. There will also be two pay-as-you-can performances: 4 p.m., Sunday, January 17 and 7:30 p.m., Thursday, January 21. The production will also play February 2016 in Anchorage.

CAST AND CREW

Litaa – Erika Stone

Kutaan – Erin Tripp

Shanaa – Jane Lind*

Ta – Robert Vestal*

Wanadoo – Leetta Gray

Sagu – DeAndre Howard King

Jinahaa – Frank Katasse

Narrator – Jack Dalton

Scenic Design— Akiko Nishijima Rotch

Costume Design— Meg Zeder

Lighting Design— Art Rotch

Sound Design— Ed Littlefield

Northwest Coast Visual Artist – Rico Worl

Dance Choreographer – Larissa FastHorse

* Actors Equity member

WHERE: Perseverance Theatre Mainstage, 914 Third Street, Douglas, Alaska, 99824.

TICKETS: Tickets to *Our Voices Will Be Heard* are now on sale and range from \$16-\$37. Call 907-463-TIXS (8497) for discounted tickets for groups of ten or more. For ticket reservations, call the Perseverance Theatre Box Office at 907-463-TIXS (8497), go to www.perseverancetheatre.org, or pick them up at Hearthside Books or the JACC.

PR: Tom Robenolt, Perseverance Theatre 907-364-2421 ext. 226 or tom@ptalaska.org. (This phone number and email are not for publication.)

PHOTOS: Email tom@ptalaska.org for photo availability or to schedule a photo shoot.

Perseverance Theatre 2015-2016 Season Sponsors are: Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Atwood Foundation, Benito and Frances C. Gaguine Foundation, Charlotte Martin Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Shubert Foundation, Alaska State Council on the Arts, The City & Borough of Juneau, The Juneau Arts & Humanities Council, Alaska Airlines, Juneau Empire, 800 KINY - 630 KJNO – MIX 106 - TAKU 105 - 1330 KXJ, KTOO-KXLL-KRNN, Anchorage Dispatch News, Alaska Experience Theatre, Alaska Public Media, and Anchorage Press.

Sponsors for Our Voices Will Be Heard are: KTOO (above the title sponsor), Alyeska Pipeline, Coeur Alaska-Kensington Mine, Juneau Emergency Medical Associates, Holland-America Princess, and SEARHC.

Founded in 1979, Perseverance has grown to produce a season of classical, contemporary and new plays, including over 70 world-premiere productions, for audiences in Juneau and Anchorage, reaching 24,000 attendees annually, employing over 400 artists from across Alaska, and engaging 200 volunteers. Perseverance Theatre believes theatre going creates community by fostering empathy, relationships and communication skills, thereby creating more vital and cohesive communities. Perseverance Theatre's mission is to create professional theatre by and for Alaskans. For more information on Perseverance Theatre visit www.ptalaska.org, or follow Perseverance Theatre on facebook/[PerseveranceTheatre](https://www.facebook.com/PerseveranceTheatre).

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