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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Haunting new play *Franklin*, by Samantha Noble,
to launch Nov. 30-Dec. 16 at Perseverance Theatre**

JUNEAU, Alaska – A scientist and a songwriter hunt for answers in *Franklin*, a world-premiere play by Samantha Noble, launching Nov. 30-Dec. 16 at Perseverance Theatre, Alaska's professional regional theatre company. The production, directed by Hannah Wolf (Juneau bred, a 2018 O'Neill Center National Directing Fellow), features original music by Juneau-based indie composer Marian Call.

Anchored in two eras on the same unforgiving Arctic seas, *Franklin* centers on two determined women forced to share a cabin aboard a modern-day research vessel. Caught bridging the gap between fact and story, art and science, the analytical Caroline and the intuitive Kira find themselves as trapped as the icebound crew of the 1840s expedition to find the Northwest Passage. Echoes from Franklin's doomed journey lead the women through layers of history towards the lost ships, revealing that the truth can only be found when we listen to all sides of the story.

The cast of *Franklin* includes Victoria Bundonis (last seen on the Perseverance stage as Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd*); Michaela Escarcega (*Azteca*), Travis Morris, Zebadiah Bodine, Connor Chaney, and Skyler Ray-Benson Davis. The creative team includes E.B. Brooks (costumes), Art Rotch (scenic design), Mike Inwood (lighting), and Lucy Peckham (sound).

Escarcega, a New York-based actor/director making her Perseverance Theatre debut as Kira, appreciates the complexity of the characters Noble has created: as *Franklin* unfolds, the audience learns that everyone on board harbors secrets and conflicts of their own, mysteries beyond even the fathoms-deep wrecks of *Terror* and *Erebus* (both recently recovered in real life). The songwriter Kira, for instance—joining Caroline's mission on a grant-funded residency—is sometimes torn between honoring her indigenous roots, expressing her own creativity, and simply staying afloat as an artist.

"I can identify with that," admits Escarcega. "I'm 25, which I guess means I'm going through a quarter-life crisis—and so is my character... Alaska is really a beautiful breathing space for me to be having my identity crisis through my work."

Kidding aside, the actor says it's a privilege to bring Noble's fascinating play to life on the Perseverance stage, with director Hannah Wolf at the helm: "I love Hannah's passion for new work."

A Boston-based writer and playwright, Samantha Noble developed *Franklin* through the Kennedy Center and National New Play Network's MFA Playwrights' Workshop. *Franklin* later received a workshop production as part of Boston Playwright's Theatre's 2016-2017 season—but this Juneau staging represents the play's official debut. The production will travel to Anchorage after the holidays and perform at the Alaska Center for Performing Arts, Jan. 11-20.

Franklin continues Perseverance's 40th anniversary season, which opened this fall with Thornton Wilder's iconic play *Our Town* (running in Anchorage through Nov. 25), and will

feature another world premiere, *Whale Song*, by Cathy Tagnak Rexford (Inupiaq); the musical *Guys and Dolls*, by Frank Loesser, Joe Swerling and Abe Burrows; and Steve Martin's bawdy comedy *The Underpants*. In addition, Anchorage audiences will enjoy *A Christmas Carol* Dec. 14-29, and several smaller Alaska communities will play host to Perseverance's acclaimed touring production of *The Winter Bear*, by Anne Hanley. See below for the Juneau and Anchorage main stage season dates, and please refer to our website, www.ptalaska.org, for show descriptions, ticket prices, and other details.

Subscriptions for both cities' season remaining lineups are still available at www.ptalaska.org or by calling 907-463-TIXS (8497). For single tickets in Anchorage, please visit www.Centertix.com or call 907-263-ARTS (2787).

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Juneau show info

***Franklin*, by Samantha Noble**

Synopsis: A scientist and a songwriter hunt for answers in the world-premiere play *Franklin*. Caught bridging the gap between fact and story, art and science, the analytical Caroline and the intuitive Kira find themselves as trapped as the icebound crew of the 1840s expedition to find the Northwest Passage. Secrets, lies, and truths are revealed as the ice breaks around them.

Run: Nov. 30-Dec. 16 at Perseverance Theatre, 914 Third Street in Douglas. There will be Pay-What-You-Can previews at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 27, and Thursday, Nov. 29.

Show times: 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays-Saturdays and 4 p.m. Sundays.

Tickets: \$30-\$39 for adults, \$25-\$34 for seniors and military, \$15-\$21 for students; reserve seats at www.ptalaska.org or by calling 907-463-TIXS (8497).

Sunday Dec. 2 and Thursday Dec. 6 performances are Pay-What-You-Can.

Wednesday, Dec. 5 is Juneau Arts Night, with 50 percent off all tickets.

Q&A with the playwright: A talkback with Samantha Noble and the *Franklin* company will follow the Sunday, Dec. 2 performance.

Parent advisory: *Franklin* contains strong language, sexual references, and some violence and is not recommended for children under age 12.

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Perseverance Theatre's 2018-19 Juneau Season:

Our Town, by Thornton Wilder

Art Rotch, director

October 5 – November 4, 2018

Franklin, by Samantha Noble

Hannah Wolf, director

November 30 – December 16, 2018

Whale Song, by Cathy Tagnak Rexford

Madeline Sayet, director

February 1 – 23, 2019

Guys and Dolls, Music and lyrics by Frank Loesser, Book by Joe Swerling and Abe Burrows
Shona Osterhout, director; Rob Cohen, musical director; Ricci Adan, choreographer
March 15 – April 14, 2019

The Underpants, by Steve Martin, adapted from the play *Die Hose* by Carl Sternheim
Teresa K. Pond, director
May 17 – June 16, 2019

Perseverance Theatre's 2018-19 Anchorage Season:

Our Town, by Thornton Wilder
Art Rotch, director
November 9 – 25, 2018

A Christmas Carol, by Arlitia Jones and Michael Evan Haney, based on the book by Charles Dickens
Teresa K. Pond, director
December 14 – 29, 2018

Franklin, by Samantha Noble
Hannah Wolf, director
January 11 – 20, 2019

Whale Song, by Cathy Tagnak Rexford
Madeline Sayet, director
March 8 – 17, 2019

Guys and Dolls, Music and lyrics by Frank Loesser, Book by Joe Swerling and Abe Burrows
Shona Osterhout, director; Rob Cohen, musical director; Ricci Adan, choreographer
May 3 – 12, 2019