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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Project Dawn
An Inspired-By-Real-Life Story
September 22 – October 29, 2017 (Press Opening September 29)

ATLANTA – Karen Hartman’s gritty, gripping, and shockingly funny play *Project Dawn* receives its National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere in Atlanta at Horizon Theatre this September. Go behind the bench in this inspired-by-real-life story of the women on both sides of the law in *Project Dawn*, an innovative court designed to transform the lives of women who want to leave the commercial sex trade. In this daring and vital tour de force, seven actresses double as women convicted of prostitution and Court staff. As part of a National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere, this provocative play probes the thin lines between freedom and slavery, activism and obsession. Whether you are to the left or the right, *Project Dawn* will gnaw at your heart and open your eyes to see clearly what’s happening in your own backyard. The play is sponsored by Kristen and Jordan Siltan, the National New Play Network and the AIDS Healthcare Foundation. Performances begin September 22 and run through October 29 (press opening on September 29th) on the intimate Horizon Theatre stage in Little Five Points/Inman Park.

Project Dawn is inspired by the real-life work of Dawn’s Court in Philadelphia, PA. Based on extensive observation and research, the play follows the high-stakes lives of the women in the program as well as the Court staff over several months. The powerhouse, all-female cast, including audience favorites Carolyn Cook, Lane Carlock, Maria Rodriguez-Sager and Marianne Fraulo, shifts roles back and forth, making it clear that either character subset could have landed on the other side of our justice system. Horizon Co-Artistic/Producing Director Lisa Adler directs *Project Dawn* with a team of Suzi-Award-Winning designers. Horizon will be scheduling post-show discussions with experts in the field who are knowledgeable about sexual exploitation and trafficking in Atlanta and Georgia. See our website for updated speaker schedule.

Performances are Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday at 8 PM, Saturday at 3 PM and 8:30 PM, and Sunday at 5 PM (see details below) at Horizon Theatre in Little Five Points/Inman Park (1083 Austin Avenue NE, Atlanta, GA. 30307). Shows start Friday, September 22nd at 8:00pm and runs through October 29th. Press opening is Friday, September 29th at 8:00pm. No Saturday matinee September 23rd. The play includes adult situations. We recommend that audience members be at least 16 years old. Tickets start at \$25, but prices rise as performances sell out, so get your tickets early. Tickets and more information are available at www.horizontheatre.com or 404.584.7450.

The Story

Lives are changing in Project Dawn Court. In a worn Philadelphia courtroom, 14 women prepare for their monthly session. Seven of these women are court staff. Fierce, determined, and underfinanced, they are the founders, supporters, leaders, employees, advocates, and sponsors of Project Dawn Court. Seven are defendants with multiple prostitution convictions, but Project Dawn has offered each an alternative to prison if they want it. The program requires months of rehab, therapy, and regular reports to the court. Graduate the program and the charges are dropped; don't comply and face maximum sentencing for each.

Challenging as it may be, Project Dawn and those who run it present a hopeful pathway for these women to restructure their lives. The staff is on a mission. Committed public defender Gwen spends night and day working with her clients, while taking care of four kids at home. Gwen founded the program with Kyla, the African-American lesbian DA with a quicksilver legal mind. Compassionate court therapist Ruth forms personal bonds with the girls of the court as she helps them learn to grow and trust again. Nia, hyper-competent court coordinator, keeps things running, while bright-eyed intern Noelle brings youthful idealism into the court. At the bench sits the Honorable Judge Roberta Kaplan. She's compassionate, patient, and an old school Jewish liberal, Philadelphia style. This underdog, under-resourced team work together to tackle their city's sex trade industry with an approach unlike any it has seen before.

Their clients are a diverse community. Saucy, sullen, or sweet, these women are leaving behind the challenging, but familiar lives they have lead for years. Sugary-sweet Latina Lola fights addiction and disease, trying her best to earn the privilege to visit her estranged mother in California. Cassie works hard to stay sober so she can get the hip surgery she badly needs, while muslim Krystal combats her mental health issues to stay on track. Former crack-princess Shondell is determined to graduate the program and become the grandmother her family needs. After a brave escape from a cruel kidnapper, young Ashlee searches for her power spark and hope for the future. Tracy, who used to lead a major drug cartel, has a signature swagger and thinly veiled pride in her criminal past. Nonetheless, she hopes to leave that past behind and open her own tattoo shop. While each faces her own unique challenges, they are united by the strength and perseverance that keep them moving.

"Karen's play has the opportunity to further a community dialogue and address the root causes of commercial sexual exploitation through a story that takes us deep into that world. Audiences

won't leave this play without changing their perspective of prostituted persons and how the criminal justice system can be an agent of change," says director Lisa Adler. This inspiring collection of intertwining stories will open eyes and touch hearts. **Join the brave women of Project Dawn on their journeys towards dignity and self-sufficiency, and perhaps find something new to consider about the world and culture that surround us all.**

More about the Play and Playwright

Project Dawn is making its National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere at Horizon. The play will receive premieres at professional theatres in three cities nationwide over the next year. The first was at People's Light and Theatre in the Philadelphia area this past June, Horizon is second, and Unicorn Theatre (Kansas City, MO) will be third next winter. Karen Hartman is an award-winning playwright and librettist whose work has been supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Helen Merrill Foundation, a Daryl Roth "Creative Spirit" Award, a Hodder Fellowship, a Jerome Fellowship, a Fulbright Scholarship to Jerusalem, a New Dramatists residency, and Core Membership at the Playwrights Center.

"I started with the idea of the Underground Railroad. I wanted to know how a person transitions from legal property to a free human being. What happens in a safe house? As a contemporary equivalent, I met with the founders of Dawn's place... I sat in on that monthly court all year. I spoke with participants and with staff members. It was a humbling, deeply moving, sometimes excruciating line of inquiry, with surprisingly frequent comic moments," Hartman says. The research process took a year, and the writing took another. **"In Project Dawn Court I found ritual, action, stakes, and humanity. That was the play."**

Karen Hartman has four productions of three world premiere plays in the 2016/17 season: Roz and Ray at Seattle Repertory Theater and Victory Gardens, The Book of Joseph at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, and Project Dawn at People's Light. Roz and Ray and Project Dawn both received Edgerton Foundation New Play Awards, and all three plays have productions planned in the 2017/18 season. In 2014-15, Ms. Hartman held the Playwright Center's McKnight Residency and Commission for a nationally recognized playwright. Her play SuperTrue was on the 2015 Kilroy's List of the top unproduced plays by women. She is one of five writers of The Antigone Project, with productions off-Broadway, at Baltimore's Rep Stage, and upcoming at Portland's Profile Theater. Goldie, Max, and Milk premiered at Florida Stage and was nominated for the Steinberg/American Critics Award (Best New American Regional Play) and the Carbonell Award (Best New Play in Florida). Gum, which premiered at Baltimore's Center Stage, has seen dozens of productions at theaters and universities across the country and in Europe. Her many other works include Goliath (Dorothy Silver New Play Prize); Leah's Train (Weissberger Award Finalist); Going Gone (N.E.A. New Play Grant); Girl Under Grain (Best Drama in NY Fringe); Wild Kate (adapted from Moby Dick) and her Euripides adaptation Troy Women, which has become a staple of college theaters. Ms. Hartman's plays have been performed in New York at the Women's Project, National Asian American Theatre Company, P73, and Summer Play Festival, and at regional theaters including Cincinnati Playhouse, Dallas Theater Center, the Magic, and elsewhere. They are published by Theater Communications

Group, Dramatists Play Service, Playscripts, Autumn House Press, Backstage Books, and NoPassport Press.

Cast and Creative Team

Horizon's production will be in the steady hands of Horizon Co-Artistic and Producing Director, Lisa Adler, who will direct this timely and powerful play. She has directed or dramaturged more than 60 plays at Horizon and founded the New South Play Festival of plays from, for, and about the contemporary South. Critically-acclaimed productions of *Time Stands Still* (Suzi Award Winner for Outstanding Production of a Play), *Third* by Wendy Wasserstein, *The Clean House* by Sarah Ruhl, *In Darfur* by Winter Miller, *9 Parts of Desire* by Heather Raffo, *The Syringa Tree* by Pamela Gien, *Boy Gets Girl* by Rebecca Gilman, *Quills* by Doug Wright, and *Skylight* by David Hare, all directed by Ms. Adler, were voted top productions of their year by local media. She dramaturged and/or directed many of Horizon's New South Play Festival world premieres, including *Night Blooms* by Margaret Baldwin, *The Perfect Prayer* by Suehlya El-Attar, *The Waffle Palace* and *Charm School* by Larry Larson and Eddie Levi Lee, and *Freed Spirits* by Daryl Lisa Fazio. She is an alumna of the Lincoln Center Director's Lab in NYC and holds a holds a BFA in Acting from the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, where she also returned for post-graduate study in directing.

Horizon Theatre brings *Project Dawn* to Little Five Points with a powerhouse, all-female cast which includes **Lane Carlock** (*Stupid F**ing Bird* at Actor's Express; *My Name is Asher Lev* at Theatrical Outfit), **Carolyn Cook** (*The City of Conversation* and *Time Stands Still* at Horizon; *Lombardi* at Aurora; *August: Osage County* at Alliance), **Bobbi Lynne Scott** (*Bluest Eye* at Horizon), **Marianne Fraulo** (*The Perfect Prayer* at Horizon; *Wit* at Aurora), **Maria Sager** (*Grand Concourse* and *The Book Club Play* at Horizon; *In the Heights* at Theatrical Outfit), **Christy Clark** (*Blackberry Daze* and *Cowgirls* at Horizon), and **Brooke Owens** (*Anne Boleyn* at Synchronicity; *James and the Giant Peach* at Georgia Ensemble Theatre). See below for character descriptions.

Back for yet another show, Horizon's resident designers, the multiple Suzi Award winning **Moriah and Isabel Curley-Clay**, are tackling the set for the world of Project Dawn Court with resident lighting designer **Mary Parker** lighting their way. Returning after her recent successes in *Blackberry Daze* (Horizon) and *Eclipsed* (Synchronicity) Suzi Award Winner **Nyrobi Moss** will design the costumes allowing the cast to swiftly switch back and forth on both sides of the law.

Tickets and More

Project Dawn runs September 22 through October 29 (Press Opening September 29) at the Horizon Theatre in Little Five Points/Inman Park. (1083 Austin Avenue NE, Atlanta, GA 30307, corner of Euclid and Austin Avenues). Performances run Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at 8:00pm, Saturdays at 3pm and 8:30pm, and Sundays at 5:00pm, beginning September 22, 2017 and are currently scheduled to run through October 29, 2017. No Saturday matinee Sept. 23rd.

Tickets start as low as \$25 (plus sales fees) and are on sale now. Prices change based on availability and demand, so buy early for the best prices! Internet convenience fee added to all

online orders. No refunds, exchanges, or late seating. Tickets and information are available at 404.584.7450 or www.horizontheatre.com.

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The Summary

Project Dawn

Gritty, gripping, and shockingly funny, go behind the bench in this inspired-by-real-life story of the women on both sides of the law in Project Dawn, an innovative court designed to transform the lives of women in the sex trade. In this daring and vital tour de force, seven actresses double as women convicted of prostitution and Court staff. **Whether you are to the left or the right, *Project Dawn* will gnaw at your heart and open your eyes to see clearly what's happening in your own backyard.**

Playwright

Karen Hartman

Project Dawn Creative Team

Director	Lisa Adler
Asst. Director	Lauren Morris
Scenic Designer	Moriah & Isabel Curley-Clay
Light Designer	Mary Parker
Stage Manager	Julianna M. Lee*
Costume Designer	Nyrobi Moss
Props Master	Natalie Parker
Props Supervisor	Kathryn Muse

The Cast

Cassie/Gwen	Lane Carlock
Kyla/Shondell	Bobbi Lynne Scott
Judge Kaplan/Bonnie	Marianne Fraulo*
Nia/Lola	Maria Sager
Ruth/Krystal	Christy Clark*
Sister Carol/Tracy	Carolyn Cook*
Noelle/Ashlee	Brooke Owens

*Member of the Actors Equity Association

Seven women play 14 characters. Each doubles as a participant and a staff member in the Project Dawn Court:

Ashlee/Noelle – white, early 20s. Ashlee is sullen, almost catatonic. Noelle is a fresh-faced intern and aspiring lawyer.

Krystal/ Ruth– black, 40s. Krystal wears an Islamic veil sometimes. She’s chatty. Ruth is the senior therapist for the program. Christian but works in many modalities.

Cassie/ Gwen – white, Gwen is 40s, Cassie 30s. Cassie has a hip injury, uses a cane. Gwen is the public defender who co-founded the program with Kyla. Open hearted, sharp-witted mother of four, on overload.

Bonnie/ Judge Roberta Kaplan – white, late 50s. Bonnie is a graduate of the program, now a motivational speaker. The Judge is dry, sometimes wry, but never to the point of mocking the women. An old school Jewish liberal, Philadelphia style, which means she blends with Quakers. Judge Kaplan is an amateur opera singer.

Lola/ Nia – Latina, 30s or 40s. Lola is curvy, sweet, may speak with a slight accent. Nia is the hyper vigilant court coordinator, excellent rapport with staff and participants.

Shondell/ Kyla – black, 40s. Shondell is a grandma. She wears an eye patch. Kyla is the DA, or prosecuting attorney. She is a butch woman, sometimes mistaken for male in off hours. Ivy League background, political aspirations.

Tracy/ Sister Carol – white, actor is 40s. Tracy (40ish) ran a major drug cartel, has a swagger the other women lack. Sister Carol is an elderly activist nun who founded and runs Dawn’s Place, a residency for former prostitutes. At 80, she is full of righteous rage. She is not a court regular.

Dates: September 22 – October 29, 2017, Press Opening – September 29, 2017

Days and Times: Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 8 PM, Saturday at 3 PM and 8:30 PM, and Sunday at 5 PM. No Saturday September 23rd.

Prices: Tickets range from \$25 to \$45. Discounts are offered for groups of 10 or more. Prices change based on availability and demand, so buy early for the best prices! 8.9% sales fees will be added to all ticket orders. Internet convenience fee added to all online orders. No refunds or exchanges.

Tickets and info: www.horizontheatre.com or 404-584-7450.

Press Photos

Press photos are available for download at (AFTER SEPTEMBER 1):

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/horizontheatre/albums/>

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About Horizon Theatre Company

Horizon Theatre Company connects people, inspires hope and promotes positive change through contemporary theatre and the stories of our times for our diverse community. We produce professional area and world premieres of smart, funny and provocative contemporary plays. We also develop the next generation of diverse artists and audiences. For more information about tickets, group sales, or to receive a season brochure, call 404.584.7450 or visit horizontheatre.com.

Major funding is provided by the City of Atlanta Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners, the Metropolitan Atlanta Arts Fund, and The Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta. We are grateful for our play and program corporate sponsors: the Turner voices initiative of Turner Broadcasting and Macy's.