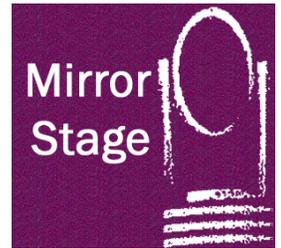


For Immediate Release

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In Expand Upon round five, Mirror Stage takes aim at Gun Control

[Seattle, WA—February 7, 2020] Theatre That Gets People Talking, Mirror Stage’s **Expand Upon** series engages the community in meaningful dialogue, while enabling local artists to develop artistic responses to important issues. The community selects a theme, and Mirror Stage commissions two local playwrights to each develop a short play, using the same multi-generational, multi-racial cast. For **Expand Upon** round five, the community selected the theme Gun Control, and Mirror Stage commissioned ***The Memory Bus*** by Amontaine Aurore, and ***In My Good Christian Neighborhood*** by Sienna Méndez, with dramaturgy by Marquicia Dominguez.

The plays are presented in tandem, as simply staged readings—actors are on their feet, scripts in hand, no music stands—encouraging audiences to create their own imagined world inhabited by the play’s characters. Focusing on the text intensifies audience engagement and empathy, connecting people more deeply to perspectives other than their own. A moderated discussion with artists and audience exploring the issues raised in more depth follows every performance. Directed by Suzanne M. Cohen, **Expand Upon: GUN CONTROL** features local Seattle actors Angie Bolton, Anuheia Brown, Eloisa Cardona, Rachel Permann, Jonathan Keyes, Mario Martinez, Kevin Shannon, and Andy Tran.

Performances of **Expand Upon: GUN CONTROL** will be will be May 2 & 3 at Yaw Theater, and May 9 & 10 at the Isaac Studio Theatre—Saturdays at 8:00pm and Sundays at 2:00pm. Admission is \$15; \$10 for students and seniors. Every performance has 10 Pay-What-You-Can rush tickets (\$1 minimum). Yaw Theater is located at 6520 5th Ave S in the Georgetown neighborhood of Seattle. It is part of Equinox Studios Art Collective and is located in Studio 118 in The Factory. The Isaac Studio Theatre is located at 212 N 85th St in the Greenwood neighborhood of Seattle. For more information, please visit <https://mirrorstage.org>.

The United States has 120.5 guns per 100 people, or about 393,347,000 guns, which is the highest total and per capita number in the world. Nearly one in four Americans (22%) own one or more guns (35% of men and 12% of women). America’s pervasive gun culture stems in part from its colonial and revolutionary roots, as well as a history of frontier expansion. The Second Amendment of the United States Constitution states: “A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.” Proponents of stricter gun control laws believe the Second Amendment was intended for militias; that gun violence would be reduced; and that a majority of Americans, including gun owners, support new gun restrictions. Opponents counter that the Second Amendment protects an individual’s right to own guns; that guns are needed for self-defense against a range of threats from local criminals to foreign invaders; and that gun ownership deters crime.

About Amontaine Aurore, playwright—*The Memory Bus*

Amontaine Aurore is a writer, actor, director, and author of numerous plays which have been presented on stages in Seattle, New York, and abroad. Her solo play, *Free Desiree* was named by Indie Theater Now as one of the Best New Plays of the 2013 New York Fringe Festival. In 2017 her play, *Don’t Call it a Riot!* was a finalist in the Bay Area Playwrights’ Festival, and had its world premiere in 2018. Amontaine is the recipient of artist grants from Artist Trust, Seattle Office of Arts and Culture, 4Culture, and the Puffin Foundation. She has been a writer-in-residence at the Hedgebrook Writers’ Retreat, and was named a finalist for the 2019 Emerald Prize in playwriting.

About Sienna Méndez, playwright—*In My Good Christian Neighborhood*

Sienna Méndez is a multi-disciplinary theatre artist who has been based in Seattle for about three years and hails from Houston, Texas and San Juan, Puerto Rico. Their plays, which include [*A willow and no window*,], *Boson* (finalist: The Scratch), *Joke Scarcity*, and *Ozark National Forest* have been seen at Cornish College of the Arts and Seattle’s Mirabella as well as recognized on New Play Exchange. Their short play, *somos un bosquejo* was published through Cornish’s *In Other Words* in 2018. As an actor, Sienna has been seen at Seattle Children’s Theatre, Seattle Public Theatre, Book-It Repertory Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, and The Scratch, and was recently the dramaturg and assistant director of Washington Ensemble Theatre’s *Dance Nation*. Sienna is a teacher of playwriting and new play development at various elementary schools in the North Seattle area, and a board member of Seattle’s newest theatre group The Collective We. They hold a BFA in Original Works from Cornish College of the Arts.

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About Mirror Stage: Originally founded in 1991, Mirror Stage is a small professional theatre company reflecting the diversity of the community on stage in high quality, progressive, thought-provoking productions that play it smart without always playing it safe. The mission of Mirror Stage is to use the power of theatre to challenge assumptions, bias and prejudice, increasing equity and inclusion while encouraging more thoughtful reflection on today’s issues. We nurture unique artistic voices while providing opportunities for newly emerging artists to work alongside more seasoned professionals. More at <https://mirrorstage.org>.

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