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Folger Theatre commissions *Confection*, an immersive theater performance, created by New York's Third Rail Projects

**World premiere event staged in the private Reading Rooms of the Folger
that considers the decadence and disparity in food**

Limited run of 38 performances, March 4 – 24, 2019

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(WASHINGTON, DC) – **Folger Theatre** presents the world premiere of ***Confection***, an immersive theater piece imagined and performed by New York's acclaimed theater company, **Third Rail Projects**. ***Confection*** is conceived and written by **Zach Morris**, directed and choreographed by **Zach Morris**, with **Tom Pearson** and **Jennine Willett**, and created in collaboration with the company. Commissioned by Folger Theatre in association with *Before 'Farm to Table': Early Modern Foodways and Cultures*, ***Confection*** is a rollicking rumination on opulence, inequity, and teeny-tiny desserts.

Inspired by the rich collection of the Folger Shakespeare Library and by Folger Theatre's concurrent production of *Nell Gwynn*, **Third Rail Projects'** embraced accounts of the extravagant banquets and sumptuous feasts held by the aristocracy of the late 17th-century, the period of *Nell Gwynn*, as a springboard, ***Confection*** is a multi-sensory dance and theater performance that contemplates cultures of consumption and poses the questions: How much does sweetness cost and what are we willing to devour to slake our appetites?

Folger's Artistic Producer **Janet Alexander Griffin** said "This commissioned work showcases Folger's intention to create art inspired by the extraordinary treasures in the library's collections and to give scholars and artists the opportunity to inspire each other in amazing ways."

In this 45-minute experience, audiences are granted access to the Folger's private Reading Rooms, as the performance winds its way through the striking spaces, and are invited to savor bite-sized delights by local pâtissiers.

This special production will be presented in the splendor of the Folger's Paster and Sedgwick-Bond Reading Rooms from **March 4 through 24, 2019**, routinely reserved for scholars' work and not part of the Folger open to the public.

"As makers of site-specific and experiential theater, our company has a deep love of conducting rigorous research into attendant thematic topics of any new work and the architecture of the site in which it is located," says **Zach Morris**. "It was a particular delight to work alongside the Folger staff to delve into the collection. Through this process, we discovered breathtaking, jaw-dropping, and sometimes chilling accounts of the practicality and politics of food during the Early Modern era. ***Confection*** is a research-fueled romp that aims to summon emanations from these texts and make manifest the corporeal cost of decadence and disparity."

Folger Theatre's production of ***Nell Gwynn*** is on stage January 29 through March 10, 2019. The Olivier Award-winning comedy sensation from London by Jessica Swale, commissioned by Shakespeare's Globe and produced by the Folger in its American East Coast premiere, follows an orange seller from the streets of Drury Lane as she becomes the darling of the Restoration theater—and the favorite mistress of Charles II.

Confection also runs during the exhibition ***First Chefs: Fame and Foodways from Britain to the Americas***, on display in the Folger's Great Hall January 19 through March 31, 2019. *First Chefs* tells the stories of the named and unnamed heroes of early modern food culture, and juxtaposes the extravagance of an increasingly cosmopolitan and wealthy upper class against the human cost of its pleasures.

Tickets at \$40 - \$60 are available online at www.folger.edu/theatre or by calling the Folger Box Office at **(202) 544-7077**. There is a maximum capacity of 50 audience members per performance.

Before 'Farm to Table': Early Modern Foodways and Cultures is the inaugural project in a Mellon initiative in collaborative research, convened by the Folger Institute.

ARTISTIC DIRECTORS:

Zach Morris (*Director / Third Rail Projects' Co-Artistic Director*) is co-creator of the immersive theater hits *Then She Fell*, *The Grand Paradise*, *Sweet & Lucky*, and most recently *Ghost Light* at Lincoln Center Theater's Claire Tow Theater. Zach's work includes site-specific performance, multimedia installation art and environments, and experiential performance. He is particularly interested in creating projects that place contemporary art and performance in non-traditional contexts. Zach has been honored with numerous awards, including a Chita Rivera award, two BESSIE awards, and was recently named as one of the 100 most influential people in Brooklyn culture by *Brooklyn Magazine*. His work has been presented nationally and internationally with the support of numerous grants, commissions, and residencies and he has had the pleasure of teaching, mentoring, and creating new platforms to support the work of artists both at home and abroad. Zach holds a BFA in Directing from Carnegie Mellon University.

Tom Pearson (*Director / Third Rail Projects' Co-Artistic Director*) is a writer, director, and choreographer. He is best known for his original works for theater, including the long-running immersive theater hits *Then She Fell* and *The Grand Paradise*. He is also the director of the Global Performance Studio, Third Rail's international program for cultural listening and exchange. He holds an MA in Performance Studies from New York University, and is the recipient of two Bessie Awards for choreography, a Kingsbury Award for writing from Florida State University, and an IllumiNation Award from the Ford Foundation and the National Museum of the American Indian for his work in Native Theater. Pearson was recently named among the 100 most influential people in Brooklyn culture by *Brooklyn Magazine* and awarded artist fellowships in Russia from CEC Artslink; in the U.S. from the Center for the Arts, Wesleyan University; and in Italy from the Bogliasco Foundation. His published work is available at tompearsonnyc.com.

Jennine Willett (*Director / Third Rail Projects' Co-Artistic Director*) is a director, choreographer, educator, and creative consultant. She is co-creator of the critically-acclaimed immersive theater productions of *Then She Fell* and *The Grand Paradise* in Brooklyn, *Ghost Light* in Lincoln Center Theater's Claire Tow Theater, and *Learning Curve*, a collaboration with Albany Park Theater Project in Chicago. At the helm of Third Rail's education initiatives, she has worked with numerous academic intuitions and arts organizations nationally and internationally, teaching courses that attract artists of many disciplines and cultivating a learning environment that encourages experimentation and collaboration. She has been honored with two BESSIE Awards, a Chita Rivera Award, and was named as one of the 100 most influential people in Brooklyn culture by *Brooklyn Magazine*.

CAST:

Elizabeth Carena (*Performer*) has collaborated on more than a dozen productions with Third Rail Projects, including *Behind the City*, *Ghost Light*, and *The Grand Paradise*. She has worked with multimedia artists Shaun Irons and Lauren Petty, filmmakers Yael Zeevi and Kathleen Harty, and is an original member of the NYC rock band Mother Feather. She works as a freelance business administrator and holds a BA in Theater from Fordham University at Lincoln Center. www.elizabethcarena.com

Alberto Denis (*Performer*), a company member of Third Rail Projects since 2011, has been an original collaborating cast member of several of the company's preeminent works including their ongoing Bessie Award-winning *Then She Fell* originating the role of Lewis Carroll (currently also playing the role of Doctor), *The Grand Paradise* which ran for 11 months in 2016 to critical acclaim originating the role of the Activities Director (and subsequently playing the role of Dad), and most recently in the sold out 73-show run of *Ghost Light* at Lincoln Center in 2017. Throughout this time, he has also supported his burgeoning career as international male burlesque sensation GoGo Gadget, with featured performances at almost 7 years of the New York Boylesk Festivals, featured in the 2012, 2013 & 2016 London Burlesque Festivals, performances in Boston, New York City, Denver, Toronto, Paris, Stockholm and Vienna. He continues to perform regularly with *Then She Fell*, recently completing his 1100th performance, and is featured in the company's documentary film *Between Yourself And Me* which premiered last July at the Dance on Camera Festival at Lincoln Center. www.about.me/albertodenis

Joshua Dutton-Reaver (*Performer*), a graduate of Florida State University with a BFA in Dance, has been collaborating with Third Rail Projects since 2013 on over a dozen immersive and site-specific works and works as the company's Manager of Marketing & Communications. His Third Rail Projects debut was as the White Rabbit in *Then She Fell* (BESSIE Award), which he has recently completed his 900th show. Since joining the company, Joshua has also originated roles in the critically acclaimed shows *Ghost Light* (Chita Rivera Award), *The Grand Paradise*, and many smaller projects across the US. In 2016, Joshua also traveled to St. Petersburg, Russia to assist in the creation of *As Time Goes By* with the company. Along with his work with the company, Joshua has freelanced as a technologist since 2011 helping arts organizations create digital content such as websites, promotional videos, graphic design, and more.

Justin Lynch (*Performer*) is from Kingston, Jamaica. He has performed with Christopher Williams Dances, The Metropolitan Opera, The Bang Group, Elisa Monte Dance, the Austrian-French-Belgian performance collective Superamas, as well as in Third Rail Projects' productions of *Then She Fell*, *The Grand Paradise*, and *Behind the City*. Justin studied the piano at the Royal College of Music and Boston University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in Music, holds a J.D. from Columbia Law School, and leads a double life as a lawyer. He was a danceWEB scholar at ImPulsTanz (Vienna) in 2017.

Marissa Nielsen-Pincus (*Performer*) is a performing artist, teacher, founding member and Associate Artistic Director of Third Rail Projects. Since 2001, she has been a collaborating artist on TRP's work including *Then She Fell*, *The Grand Paradise*, *Ghost Light*, and *Behind the City*. In addition to performing, Marissa has assistant directed and has led the rehearsal directing teams for *Then She Fell* and *The Grand Paradise*, as well as being a member of the directing team for *Learning Curve*, TRP's collaboration with the Chicago youth theater company, Albany Park Theater Project. This year, she was the recipient of the *Back Apartment Residency Fellowship* from CEC ArtsLink in St. Petersburg, Russia. Marissa teaches performance skills and somatic work. She is also a certified Body-Mind Centering® Practitioner.

CREATIVE TEAM:

Dan Daly (*Assistant Scenic Designer*) is a Brooklyn based scenic designer who has held positions at the Williamstown Theatre Festival, the Hangar Theatre, and the Winnepesaukee Playhouse. Previously with Third Rail Projects, Dan was the assistant scenic designer for *Behind the City*. Selected NYC credits: *The Good Girl* (59E59 Theaters), *Toe Pick* and *Brideshead Obliterated* (Dixon Place), *Leaving Brooklyn* (Queens Theatre), *Old Names for Wildflowers* (The Tank), *The Great God Brown* (Target Margin Theater at The Brick), *Pie Shop Play* (Corkscrew Festival at Paradise Factory), and *The Glowing Boot* (United Solo Festival). Selected additional credits: *Spring Awakening*, *Side Show*, and *Carousel* (The Boston Conservatory), *Patience; or Bunthorn's Bride*, *L'assedio di Calais*, and *Giovanna d'Arco* (Odyssey Opera), and *Dark Sisters* (Pittsburgh Opera). MFA: Carnegie Mellon University. www.dandalydesign.com

Karen Young (*Costume Designer*) is a New York-based costume designer who has designed clothes for numerous dance, experimental theater, and video art projects. For Third Rail Projects, she has designed the costumes for the highly acclaimed immersive shows *Then She Fell* and *The Grand Paradise*, among others. Her design work for dance is included in the repertoires of the Martha Graham Dance Company, Alvin Ailey, Kyle Abraham, Brian Brooks, Lucinda Childs, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Sonya Tayeh, Paul Taylor Dance Company, American Ballet Theater, Ballet Basel, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Acosta Danza Cuba, and Miami City Ballet. She recently designed Wendy Whelan's show *Restless Creature* and Geoff Sobelle's award-winning physical theater show *Home*. Collaborations with visual artists include costume design for the video works of Eve Sussman, Matthew Barney, Michelle Handelman, David Michalek, and Toni Dove. karenyoungcostume.com

Sean Hagerty (*Sound Designer*) has collaborated with Third Rail Projects on over ten productions, including *Then She Fell*, *Ghost Light* (Lincoln Center), *Behind the City*, *The Grand Paradise*, *Sweet & Lucky* (DCPA), *Midnight Madness*, *Roadside Attraction*, *House 17*, and *Steampunk Haunted House*. Other theatrical credits include sound and music for the off-Broadway revival of *Around the World in 80 Days* (Davenport Theatre), *Hit the Body Alarm* (Performing Garage), *Anthem the Musical* (Lynn Redgrave Theater), *4 Chambers* (A@R), *Symphony of Shadows* (Dixon Place), *The Fall to Earth* (59E59), and *Hound of the Baskervilles* (Penguin Rep, Weston Playhouse). Interactive projects include performances at Le Poisson Rouge, Webster Hall, Hudson Opera, Harvestworks, and Issue Project Room. www.seanhagerty.com

Kristina Vnook (*Stage Manager*) is a New York-based freelance stage manager and production manager. Previous work with Third Rail Projects: *Behind the City*, *Then She Fell*, *The Grand Paradise*, *House No. 17*, *Ghost Light* at Lincoln Center's Claire Tow Theater, as well as the documentary film *Between Yourself And Me*. Other favorite New York credits include *Nutcracker Rouge* (Company XIV), *Ferdinand: Boylesque Bullfight* (Company XIV), *America Is Hard To See* (Life Jacket Theatre Co.), *Residue* (Becky Radway Dance Projects), *The Mad Ones* (Prospect Theatre Company), *The Orion Experience* (XL Nightclub, Dixon Place), *35MM* (Galapagos Art Space), *Rated RSO* (Joe's Pub, NYMF), *Yeast Nation: the triumph of life* (Fringe), and *Kicking A Dead Horse* (The Public).

About Folger Theatre and Folger Shakespeare Library:

The **Folger Shakespeare Library**, opened in 1932, featured the first replica in North America of an Elizabethan theater, a 250-seat space designed to suggest the inn-yard playing spaces. Founders Henry and Emily Folger envisioned it as a place for the performance of plays in Shakespeare's style, and the first nationally televised broadcast of a Shakespeare play in the U.S. was *Julius Caesar* from the Folger stage in 1949. Director of Public Programs **Janet Alexander Griffin** established **Folger Theatre** in 1991 and has since, as Artistic Producer, produced more than twenty-five seasons of Shakespeare, other plays from the period, and new works, including commissions, inspired by the period. Folger Theatre premiered the original *Shakespeare for My Father*, Lynn Redgrave's reminiscence of her theatrical family, as well as Roger Rees' *What You Will*; co-produced Teller and Aaron Posner's magical *Macbeth*, released on video; was the first Washington venue to present a production from Shakespeare's Globe from London; and has collaborated with the Classical Theatre of Harlem, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Guthrie, Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival, and other theaters across the country.

Since 1991, Folger Theatre has been honored by the Helen Hayes Awards with 30 awards and 147 nominations for excellence in acting, direction, design, and production—including the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Resident Play in 2007 for *Measure for Measure*, 2011 for *Hamlet* (a year in which all three of Folger's theatrical productions were nominated in that category), 2013 for *The Taming of the Shrew*, and most recently, for the 2016 staging of *Sense and Sensibility* (which garnered four Helen Hayes Awards).

Folger Shakespeare Library is a renowned center for scholarship, learning, culture, and the arts. Home to the world's largest Shakespeare collection and a primary repository for research material from the early modern period (1500-1750), Folger Shakespeare Library is an internationally recognized research library offering advanced scholarly programs in the humanities; a national leader in how Shakespeare is taught in grades K-12; and an award-winning producer of cultural and arts programs—theatre, music, poetry, exhibits, lectures, and family programs. A gift to the American people from industrialist Henry Clay Folger, Folger Shakespeare Library—located one block east of the U.S. Capitol—opened in 1932 and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Learn more at www.folger.edu.

About Third Rail Projects:

Third Rail Projects has been hailed as one of the foremost companies creating site-specific, immersive, and experiential performance. The company is led by Artistic Directors **Zach Morris**, **Tom Pearson**, and **Jennine Willett**, and is dedicated to re-envisioning ways in which audiences engage with contemporary performance. The company's currently running, award-winning immersive hit ***Then She Fell***, was named as one of the "Top Ten Shows of 2012" by Ben Brantley of *The New York Times* and acclaimed as one of the best theater experiences of 2013 by *Vogue*. They have made work in New York and nationally since 2000 with projects including ***Ghost Light*** at Lincoln Center, the immersive theater hit ***The Grand Paradise*** in Brooklyn, ***Sweet & Lucky*** with Denver Center for the Performing Arts, and ***Learning Curve*** in Chicago with Albany Park Theater Project, as well as internationally through the Global Performance Studio (GPS), which combines the company's creative and educational offerings through a program of cultural listening and exchange. Third Rail Projects been the recipient of several prestigious awards, including: two New York Dance and Performance (Bessie) Awards; a Chita Rivera Award for Choreography; several fellowship awards including two CEC Artslink Back Apartment Residencies (Russia); a Theater Fellowship from the Bogliaco Foundation (Italy); an IllumiNation Award from the Ford Foundation and National Museum of the American Indian; and more. Third Rail Projects' artistic directors were recently named among the 100 most influential people in Brooklyn culture by *Brooklyn Magazine*. Visit thirdrailprojects.com to learn more.

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