

For Immediate Release
February 14, 2018

ELEVATOR REPAIR SERVICE PRESENTS WORLD PREMIERE OF KATE SCELSA'S *EVERYONE'S FINE WITH VIRGINIA WOOLF*, DIRECTED BY JOHN COLLINS, JUNE 1–24

Biting Parody Of Celebrated Drama Is Loving Homage And Feminist Take-Down

Elevator Repair Service
Artistic Director, John Collins
Producing Director, Ariana Smart Truman
presents
Everyone's Fine With Virginia Woolf
Written by **Kate Scelsa** for **Elevator Repair Service**
Directed by **John Collins**

Preview performances: **June 1, 2, 6–9 at 8pm; June 2, 9, 10 at 2pm**

Opening: **Tuesday, June 12 at 7pm**

Regular performances through June 24: **Wednesday–Saturday at 8pm; Saturday & Sunday at 2pm**

Abrons Arts Center (466 Grand Street, Manhattan)
Tickets: \$25–\$75; everyonesfine.com; 212-352-3101

Elevator Repair Service, “one of the city’s few truly essential theater companies” (*New York Times*), is pleased to present the world premiere of ***Everyone's Fine With Virginia Woolf***, a new play written by longtime company member **Kate Scelsa** and directed by Elevator Repair Service Artistic Director **John Collins**. A sharp-witted parody of a celebrated American drama, *Everyone's Fine With Virginia Woolf* is, in turns, loving homage and fierce feminist take-down. In her incisive and hilarious reinvention of Edward Albee’s classic *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, Scelsa slyly subverts the power dynamics of the original play’s not-so-happy couple. In the end, no one will be left unscathed by the ferocity of Martha’s revenge on an unsuspecting patriarchy.

Founded in 1991 and known for a rich body of ensemble-driven theatrical works, Elevator Repair Service develops pieces over a period of many months to years. On rare occasions, including with 2015’s *Fondly, Collette Richland* by Sibyl Kempson, the ensemble applies its highly collaborative technique to the work of a contemporary writer.

“I’m not a writer and, usually, I’m depending on exciting material finding its way into our rehearsals by free association, serendipity or happy accident,” said Collins. “But secretly with Kate, we’ve had a playwright embedded in the company for fifteen years. Kate knows the company so intimately and has written a play that not only channels their brilliance, but expertly critiques this iconic masterpiece. She tears it up and then rebuilds it. This is Martha’s revenge.”

One week after graduating from Sarah Lawrence College in 2002, Scelsa joined Elevator Repair Service. First she was an intern, then the office manager and finally a celebrated performer (including *Gatz*, *The Sound and the Fury* and *The Select*). Scelsa is also a novelist. In fact, much of the first draft of her acclaimed young adult novel, *Fans of the Impossible Life*, was literally written as Scelsa sat in her onstage cubicle during performances of the eight-hour *Gatz*.

“*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* is one of my favorite plays of all time,” said Scelsa. “And today we can look at a character like Martha through such a different lens. She has continued to capture our collective imagination for

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so many years because she is iconic, in some ways we can even see her as feminist, but at the end of Albee's play she is destroyed by this idea of motherhood, of not living up to this very traditional idea of what it means to be a woman. I'm interested in asking how can we reconcile Martha's destruction with our love of this character, and what does it say about Albee that he felt the need to destroy her? This kind of questioning homage, along with my desire to write a very passionate love letter to the company that has been my theatrical home for the past fifteen years, resulted in this play."

The cast for *Everyone's Fine With Virginia Woolf* features Elevator Repair Service veterans and includes **Annie McNamara** as Martha, **April Matthis** as Honey, **Mike Iveson** as Nick, **Vin Knight** as George, and **Lindsay Hockaday** as Carmilla. The creative team includes **Louisa Thompson** (sets), **Kaye Voyce** (costumes), **Ryan Seelig** (lights), **Ben Williams** (sound), **Amanda Villalobos** (props), **Maurina Lioce** (production stage manager) and **Ariana Smart Truman** (producer).

Performances of *Everyone's Fine with Virginia Woolf* will take place June 1–24 (see above schedule) at Abrons Arts Center, located at 466 Grant Street in Manhattan. **Critics are welcome as of Thursday, June 7 for an opening on Tuesday, June 12 at 8pm.** Tickets are \$55-\$65, June 1–10 general admission; \$65-\$75, June 12–24 general admission; \$40 for most seats on Sunday matinees, \$40 for artists, \$25 for students; and \$20 general rush. Tickets can be purchased by visiting everyonesfine.com or by calling 212-352-3101.

About the Cast

ANNIE McNAMARA (*Martha*) With ERS: *Gatz* (The Public); *The Sound and The Fury* (NYTW). Other selected credits: *Iowa* (Playwrights, Lortel Nomination); *A Map of Virtue* (13P); *Tania in the Getaway Van* (Pool Plays); *That Pretty Pretty* (Rattlestick); *God's Ear* (New Georges); *We're Gonna Be Okay* (Humana/ATL); *The Music Man* (Sharon Playhouse); *Rapture, Blister, Burn* (Huntington). Film & TV: *Blue Jasmine*; "Orange is the New Black" (recurring); "The Knick"; "Mozart in the Jungle". Clubbed Thumb, where she is an affiliated artist: *The World My Mama Raised*; *The Tomb of King Tot*; *41-derful*; *Lay Me Down*, *Justin Timberlake*; *U.S. Drag*. National and international touring with Elevator Repair Service.

APRIL MATTHIS (*Honey*) With ERS: *The Sound and the Fury*; *Fondly*, *Collette Richland*, *Measure for Measure*. Off-Broadway: *Signature Plays/Funnyhouse of a Negro* (Signature); *Antlia Pneumatica*, *Iowa* (Playwrights Horizons); *The Insurgents* (Labyrinth); *On the Levee* (LCT3); *Lear* (Soho Rep); *Melancholy Play* (13P); Ma-Yi, New Georges. Regional: *Little Bunny Foo Foo* (Actors Theatre of Louisville), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Yale Rep), Ralph Lemon's *Scaffold Room* (Walker Art Center), Humana Festival. Film/TV: *Wendell and the Lemon*, *Black Card* (YouTube), "Instinct" (CBS). Ruth Maleczek Award, Obie Award for Sustained Excellence of Performance.

MIKE IVESON (*Nick*) With ERS: *Gatz*; *Arguendo*; *The Sound and the Fury*; *Fondly*, *Collette Richland*; *The Select* (*The Sun Also Rises*); *Measure for Measure*. Other recent off-Broadway: New Georges' Obie-winning *A Beautiful Day in November on the Greatest of the Great Lakes*; *The World My Mama Raised* (Clubbed Thumb); *How to Get Into Buildings* (New Georges). TV: "Orange Is the New Black." mikeiveson.com

VIN KNIGHT (*George*) With ERS: *Measure for Measure*; *Fondly*, *Collette Richland*; *Shuffle*; *The Select* (*The Sun Also Rises*); *The Sound and the Fury*; *No Great Society* and *Gatz*. Other stage credits include *The Music Man* (Sharon Playhouse), *Spam* (JACK), *Our Man in Havana* (Portland Stage), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (2013 Broadway revival), *Marie Antoinette* (ART and Yale Rep), *The Temperamentals* (Barrow Group) and *U.S. Drag* (Clubbed Thumb). Film and TV credits include "Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt," "Bull," "The Blacklist," "Homeland," "Younger" and *Robot Stories*. He is a graduate of Yale University.

LINDSAY HOCKADAY (*Carmilla*) With ERS: as performer: *Gatz* (2012); *Shuffle*; *Fondly*, *Collette Richland*; *The Select* (*The Sun Also Rises*) (tours); *Measure for Measure*. Hockaday is also ERS's Associate Producer and Director of Education Programs. She performs with Sibyl Kempson's 7 Daughters of Eve Theater & Performance Company. She teaches theater in NYC public schools in association with The Kitchen and has produced with

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Richard Maxwell and New York City Players. MA in Performance Studies from UT Austin.

About the Creative Team

JOHN COLLINS (*Director*) is the Artistic Director and founder of Elevator Repair Service. Since 1991, he has directed or co-directed all of the company's productions. Collins is the recipient of a 2014 Doris Duke Artist Award, a 2010 Guggenheim Fellowship in Drama and Performance Art and a 2011 United States Artists Donnelley Fellowship. In 2010, he received the Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Director and the Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Director for ERS' production of *Gatz*. Recent ERS projects include *Measure for Measure* at The Public Theater and *The Select (The Sun Also Rises)* at Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington DC. His writing about theater and sound design can be found in two recently published books, *Theatre Noise: The Sound of Performance* (Cambridge Scholars, 2011) and *Encountering Ensemble* (Methuen Drama, 2013). Collins was born in North Carolina and raised in Georgia. He holds a combined degree in English Literature and Theater Studies from Yale.

KATE SCELSA (*Playwright*), in addition to performing in many ERS shows (including *Gatz*, *The Sound and the Fury* and *The Select*), is also a noted author. Her young adult novel *Fans of the Impossible Life* was a Fall 2015 Indie Next pick, a Junior Library Guild pick, a 2016 Rainbow List Top Ten Pick, received a starred review in Publishers Weekly, and has been translated into nine languages. Kate's work for theater has been seen in NYC at Dixon Place, Galapagos, the SoHo Playhouse, BAX, and The Bushwick Starr. Her ongoing podcast "The Kate and Vin Scelsa Podcast" chronicles the history of New York radio through her father's storied fifty-year career as a legendary free-form radio DJ. Kate is a 2016-2017 New Georges Audrey Resident, a Lambda Literary LGBTQ Writers in Schools author, a part-time tarot reader, and her band The Witch Ones can be found re-posting kitty memes on Instagram at @thewitchones.

LOUISA THOMPSON (*Set Designer*) is a designer and a creator of theatrical work for young audiences. With ERS: *Gatz*. As Lead Artist she created *Washeteria* a site-specific all-ages event. Other Off-Broadway: *[sic]* and *Blasted* (Obie and Hewes awards) at Soho Rep. NY credits: Signature Theatre; The Play Company; Target Margin Theater; Clubbed Thumb; Rattlestick Playwrights Theater; Theatreworks USA; Playwrights Horizons; The Foundry Theater Company. Regional credits: Berkeley Repertory Theatre, The Kirk Douglas Theater, Arden Theatre; Bard Summerscape, The McCarter Theatre, The Papermill Playhouse, La Jolla Playhouse; The Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis. Yale School of Drama (MFA). Rhode Island School of Design (BFA). Associate Professor in the Hunter College Department of Theatre.

KAYE VOYCE (*Costume Designer*) With ERS: *Measure for Measure*. Broadway: *Significant Other*, *The Real Thing*, *The Realistic Joneses*, *Shining City*. Recent Off-Broadway: *Hamlet* (The Public Theater); *A Home at the Zoo*, *The Antipodes*, *Signature Plays*, *The Wayside Motor Inn* (Signature Theatre); *Mourning Becomes Electra* (Target Margin Theater); *Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again* (Soho Rep); *After the Blast*, *The Mystery of Love & Sex*, *4000 Miles* (Lincoln Center Theater). Other recent: Richard Maxwell's *Paradiso*, *The Evening*, *Parts I and II*, *Isolde*, *Neutral Hero*. Trisha Brown's final dances: *Toss* and *Rogues*.

RYAN SEELIG (*Lighting Designer*) With ERS: *Measure for Measure* (co-design). Select lighting design credits include: *The Rehearsal Artist* (Michelle Ellsworth), *Clytigation: State of Exception* (Michelle Ellsworth), *They Themselves and Schmerm* (Becca Blackwell), *Goner: A Void* (Ondine Geary), *The B-Sides* (The Wooster Group), *The Town Hall Affair* (co-design The Wooster Group), *Life Does Not Live* (James Sprang), *Kentucky* (EST) and *Losing Tom Pecinka* (MGF). Seelig is also Michelle Ellsworth's Production Manager and Lighting Supervisor for The Wooster Group. www.ryanseelig.com

BEN WILLIAMS (*Sound Designer*) With ERS (as Sound Designer & performer): *Fondly*, *Collette Richland*, *The Select (The Sun Also Rises)*, *Gatz*; as performer: *Arguendo*, *The Sound and the Fury*, *Shuffle*, *No Great Society*. New York: *Mind on Heaven* (creator, performer); *This is the Color* (Lily Whitsitt); *Raw Bacon from Poland* (Christina Masciotti); *The Terrifying* (Julia Jarcho and minor theater); *When a Priest Marries a Witch*

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(Suzanne Bocanegra). Awards for sound design: 2012 Obie, 2012 Lucille Lortel, 2012 LADCC.
www.benwilliamsdotcom.com

AMANDA VILLALOBOS (*Properties Designer*) is a designer, fabricator and performer. With ERS: *Measure for Measure* (The Public Theater), *Fondly*, *Collette Richland* (NYTW). Broadway design: *Amélie*, *A New Musical* (Walter Kerr). Off-Broadway design includes *Hand to God* (Berkeley Rep) and *Ghost Rings* (NYLA). TV puppet design and performance: "Late Night with Seth Meyers." Performance credits include *The Pee-wee Herman Show on Broadway* (Stephen Sondheim Theatre), *Let Us Now Praise Susan Sontag* (Abrons Arts Center) and *Arias with a Twist*. www.avpuppets.com

ARIANA SMART TRUMAN (ERS Producing Director) has worked with Elevator Repair Service in various capacities since 2003, and on staff since 2006; as the Producing Director she produces all the company's work, including *Measure for Measure*, recently at The Public Theater. She has collaborated with many of downtown's finest performing artists, ensembles and institutions including Mike Iveson, Yehuda Duenyas, Collapsible Giraffe, Radiohole, The Wooster Group, HERE Arts Center and Soho Rep. For ART/NY she teaches workshops on touring theater, and in 1996 with Kate Valk she co-founded The Wooster Group's Summer Institute, a free performance workshop for NYC youth.

About Elevator Repair Service

ELEVATOR REPAIR SERVICE (ERS) is a New York City-based company that creates original works for live theater with an ongoing ensemble. The company's sources range from found material (transcripts of trials, old movies, YouTube videos) to literature and conventional plays (both classical and contemporary). Founded in 1991, ERS has authored an extensive body of work that includes 19 original theatrical productions. These have earned the company a loyal following and made it one of New York's most highly acclaimed experimental theater companies. ERS recently concluded a sold-out run at The Public Theater of their *Measure for Measure*. The company's best-known work, *Gatz* (2006) is a word-for-word enactment of *The Great Gatsby* set in a mysterious low-rent office and presented in an eight-hour performance by a cast of 13. Along with *The Sound and the Fury* (2008) and *The Select (The Sun Also Rises)* (2010), *Gatz* forms a trilogy of work based on great American novels from the early 20th century. In 2015, ERS remounted *The Sound and the Fury* at the Public Theater for a successful 10-week run. Later that same year the company premiered an original stage play created in collaboration with playwright Sibyl Kempson, *Fondly, Collette Richland*, at New York Theatre Workshop. These productions share a commitment to risk-taking and reinvention, blending unusual texts with innovations in theatrical form. The finished works feature ERS's signature dynamic performance style and playful sense of humor coupled with a rigorous commitment to psychologically complex performances. ERS leads workshops called "Making Theater without a Script" around the world; this spring a weekend-long workshop will be conducted in New York City April 14-15. Visit elevator.org/workshops for information.

About Abrons Arts Center

The Abrons Arts Center is the OBIE Award-winning performing and visual arts program of Henry Street Settlement. Abrons supports the creation and presentation of innovative, multi-disciplinary work; cultivates artists in all stages of their practice with educational programs, mentorships, residencies and commissions; and serves as an intersection of engagement for local, national and international audiences and arts-workers.

Each year the Abrons offers over 250 performances, 12 gallery exhibitions and 30 residencies for performing and studio artists, and 100 different classes in dance, music, theater, and visual art. The Abrons also provides New York City public schools with teaching artists, introducing more than 3,000 students to the arts. For more information: www.abronsartscenter.org.

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