

Warehouse Theatre's season unveiled

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When Mike Sablone, Warehouse Theatre's new producing artistic director began thinking about what plays he wanted to stage for his first full season, he thought about Warehouse's tagline of "intense, intimate, unexpected."

"That helped me start planning out a season that's exciting, engaging and entertaining," Sablone said. "I think the best thing about being a theater

artist is the opportunity to put on productions that are both exciting and applicable to a community. And so for the '17-'18 season, I've selected shows that are not only excellent in their own rights, but are also relevant to what's happening right now in Greenville."

The productions will tackle subjects ranging from gentrification to

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gay marriage, and the lineup will include works by such iconic writers as William Shakespeare ("Much Ado About Nothing") and Eugene O'Neill ("A Moon for the Misbegotten.")

The 2017-2018 season opens in September with Pulitzer Prize-winning drama "Clybourne Park," written by Bruce Norris.

This play explores the subject of gentrification over the course of five decades, focusing on one house in Chicago, which happens to be the same house that was featured in Lorraine Hansberry's 1959 drama "A Raisin in the Sun."

The second production of the season will be "The Cake" by Bekah Brunstetter, which tells the story of a woman who returns to her North Carolina hometown and asks her late mother's best friend to bake a wedding cake. The friend balks when she realizes that the young woman wants the cake for her wedding to another woman.

"It's such an amazing play," Sablone said. "Bekah's writing is so strong. It's tender, it's beautiful, it's sensitive, it's funny, it's moving. It's the kind of play that will make you both laugh and cry, sometimes at the same time while watching it."

Brunstetter is a writer for the hit TV series "This is Us," and "that sort of tonal ability that can make you laugh and cry within the span of an hour, is something that Bekah has in



Mike Sablone is the producing artistic director for Warehouse Theatre, which announced its 2017-2018 season

spades. And I think this play is a great introduction to her writing for Greenville."

Warehouse is one of the first four theaters in the country to have the opportunity to produce the play, Sablone said.

"A Moon for the Misbegotten" opens in January, and it will mark Warehouse's first time producing an O'Neill play in 30 years, he said.

Next up will be Annie Baker's Pulitzer Prize-winning drama "The Flick," set in an old-fashioned movie theater.

The play focuses on the employees who work at the theater and their conversations, which seem mundane on the surface but which mask much deeper subjects and emotions.

"Annie Baker's writing really has this skill and depth to it that also maintains the quirkiness that sort of grounds the play and makes it fun. But she also has this abil-

ity, her writing almost transcends time, so her writing about the end of the 35mm projector screen. And the march of time is something that I'm really interested in," Sablone said.

Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing," opening in April 2018, will be the first Main Stage Shakespeare production at Warehouse since the 2014-2015 season.

Sablone is especially excited to stage "Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson," which will close out the season in June 2018.

A decade ago, while working with Center Theatre Group in Los Angeles, Sablone helped to develop the musical, which played on Broadway in 2010 and 2011.

The Tony Award-nominated musical envisions the seventh U.S. president as a rock star, and it illustrates the American democratic process and how things

may seem different 200-plus years later, but are more similar than it may seem on the surface, Sablone said.

The play "repurposes" (Jackson) as a rock star, America's first homegrown celebrity president. From his humble Tennessee upbringing through him being elected president. It's 100 fast-paced, devilishly funny minutes. Later, we discover how inspiring the people is easy, but governing is hard."

Although Sablone has only been in his role at Warehouse for a few months, he's excited for Greenville audiences to see the season he has planned.

"I feel like when you view the season as a whole, it'll be the equivalent of a playwriting and acting master class, each balancing light moments with moving drama. But above all, I think they're all just flat-out entertaining."