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For Immediate Release

Near West Theatre Selects Trinidad Snider as New Artistic Director
Snider to take the reins as 42nd season begins at community theatre in Gordon
Square Arts District

CLEVELAND (June 20, 2019) – Near West Theatre (NWT) today announces the hiring of Trinidad Snider as Artistic Director, effective June 26, 2019. Snider will lead the artistic vision and initiatives of Near West Theatre, in partnership with Executive Director Mike Obertacz, as the two collaborate to offer a robust season of musical theatre productions, theatre education and choral programs, and events that are inclusive, accessible and transformational for participants and audiences alike. Together, Snider and Obertacz will steward the theatre into a new era following the retirement of two of Near West Theatre’s beloved community members: founder and former Executive Director Stephanie Morrison Hrbek and Bob Navis, Jr., Artistic Director of 40 years.

“This is truly a full circle moment for me,” says Snider. “Near West Theatre has been a part of my life for three decades because its mission is one that speaks so clearly to the type of artist and person I strive to be. At Near West, we create a safe, welcoming environment open to anyone, where people from all backgrounds and experience levels can come together to create professional quality art. No matter your age, race, sexual orientation, economic status, physical or mental challenges or experience level, you’re at home at Near West Theatre. As I work with Mike, I look forward to building on the legacy of Stephanie and Bob while fostering the next generation of Near West Theatre talent and driving our mission forward.”

Snider first came to Near West Theatre in 1989 for a teen production of “Fame,” followed by performances in various shows on the NWT stage over the next 20 years. Her excellence as an artist also was developed through education at the Cleveland School of Performing Arts and Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati, as well as extensive work as a director and performer in the Northeast Ohio community, including experience directing adults, teens and children. Most recently, she served as a Teaching Artist with The Musical Theater Project, where she taught the Kids Love Musicals and intergenerational programs, plus helped create and facilitate the Creative Aging Program focused on seniors and the arts.

“This moment is a real homecoming for Trinidad,” says Obertacz. “She started her journey at Near West Theatre and has grown to become a force in the Greater Cleveland theatre scene. Her exceptional artistic talent will be an incredible asset to our community, but most importantly, she also is an expert on our mission, process and commitment to community building and the healing power of the arts. She has carried our mission through her work elsewhere, and it is time to welcome her home to lead us into the next era of creating transformational theatre arts experiences for our community.”

Snider’s background also includes serving as the Business Director for The Memorial Opera House in Indiana, where she helped the organization rebuild and achieve financial success, as well as roles in human

resources and customer service with Marriott and InterContinental Hotels. This unique combination of deep artistic experience and business acumen will serve her exceedingly well in her new role.

“The search committee and board of trustees could not be happier to welcome Trinidad as our next Artistic Director,” notes Board President Steve Beiting. “With her long history with Near West Theatre, as well as her wealth of both artistic talent and business knowledge, she’s ideally suited to build upon our past while helping us transition into our future. We’re confident she will live and breathe our mission as she works diligently to serve our community every day.”

Trinidad’s hire comes on the heels of Near West Theatre’s recently adopted three-year strategic plan, which will expand mission-centric productions, programs, and events while improving organizational infrastructure. A recent recipient of a state capital budget grant, in partnership with the Gordon Square Arts District and its institutions, Near West Theatre will begin construction on a new production and program space in the fall of 2019.

Photography available for download: <http://nearwesttheatre.org/posts/near-west-theatre-selects-trinidad-snider-as-new-artistic-director>

About Near West Theatre

Near West Theatre is a grassroots, intergenerational community theatre based in the Gordon Square Arts District in Cleveland, Ohio. Founded in 1978, Near West Theatre’s mission is to build loving relationships and engage diverse people in strengthening their sense of identity, passion, and purpose, individually and in community, through accessible, affordable, and transformational theatre arts experiences. For more information, visit nearwesttheatre.org.