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## Producing Artistic Director Michael Lluberes moves on from FIM Flint Repertory Theatre, returns to New York theatre scene

**Flint, Mich.** – Michael Lluberes, the founding producing artistic director of FIM Flint Repertory Theatre, is leaving the theatre after more than six years of service. Lluberes plans to pursue freelance directing and writing opportunities. Managing Director Nicole Samsel has been appointed interim artistic director and managing director.

Known for developing and directing world premieres and bold new takes on the classics, Lluberes has led the theatre to become one of the most innovative and award-winning theatres in the state. Highlights of Lluberes' tenure include conceiving and directing the world premiere of the new LGBTQ+ version of *The Fantasticks*, rewritten with original book writer and lyricist Tom Jones, *Flint Mural Plays*, a sweeping project featuring 25 world premiere short audio plays based on murals around the city of Flint by Mando Alvarado, Hunter Bell, Rebecca Gilman, Lauren Gunderson, Greg Kotis, Craig Lucas, Douglas Lyons, Eliana Pipes, Harrison David Rivers, Josh Wilder and more; the two-piano version of *Ragtime; Death of a Salesman*, starring Lewis J. Stadlen; and most recently the sold-out, extended run of *Godspell (In a Pool)*, which broke records for Flint Rep.

Lluberes also created the annual New Works Festival, which has developed more than 30 new plays and musicals. World premieres produced over the last six years include James Anthony Tyler's *Into the Side of a Hill*, Karen Saari's *Rain on Fire*, Gordon Leary and Julia Meinwald's *The Magnificent Seven*, Nandita Shenoy's *The Future Is Female...*, Josh Wilder's *Wrong River*, Alex Moggride's *The Boatman*, Wally Pleasant's *Songs About Stuff* and the TYA musical *Riddle of the Trilobites*, which transferred Off-Broadway to The New Victory Theatre in New York City.

"First and foremost, we wish Michael the very best – he has many exciting opportunities and creative mountains to climb," said FIM President and CEO Rodney Lontine. "I am personally thankful for his help, expertise and imagination as we envisioned and have grown the Flint Repertory Theatre. Over the last six years, Michael and the Flint Rep have created many memorable and magical theatre experiences for our community and we all can be proud of these accomplishments. I look forward to the next great chapter of the Flint Rep in Nicole's very qualified hands, as she serves as interim artistic director."

"Working with Michael over the past three seasons at Flint Rep has been an incredible honor and a pleasure," said Samsel. "He is a truly visionary director and theatre maker who has dedicated himself fully to establishing and growing Flint into an artistic home for so many. Our team will miss his creativity, passion, and humor, but looks forward to not only continuing but building upon the incredible foundation he has built here."

Lluberes stated, "Founding this professional theatre in the city I love has been the greatest honor of my life. I'm so proud of the innovative, risk-taking, joyous work we've done together over the past six years. Thank you to the amazing staff, board, donors, sponsors, adventurous audiences and all of the incredible artists who call Flint Rep home. I'm leaving the theatre in the more-than-capable hands of managing director Nicole Samsel. I know the theatre will flourish under her stewardship and I'm so excited to see what happens next!"

Lluberes will end his run at Flint Repertory Theatre Dec. 11. He plans to return to New York.

*Founded in 2018, FIM Flint Repertory Theatre is a professional, not-for-profit theatre in the city of Flint and one of the artistic producing programs of FIM. Flint Rep is dedicated to providing the city of Flint and surrounding communities with highly imaginative, thought-provoking theatre that is challenging, entertaining and inspiring for everyone. FIM is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization and equal opportunity employer providing programs and services without regard to race, ethnicity, creed, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, sexual identification, age, disability, height, weight, veteran status, family status or marital status.*

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