For Immediate Release
March 15, 2021

Photos are available HERE.

Writers Theatre to produce
The Last Match online
Written by Anna Ziegler
Dance-choreographed by Steph Paul
Directed by Keira Fromm

April 28, 2021 – May 30, 2021

Glencoe, IL – Writers Theatre, under the leadership of Artistic Director Michael Halberstam and Executive Director Kathryn M. Lipuma, continues its 2021 online programming with Anna Ziegler’s The Last Match, directed by Keira Fromm. The Last Match will be filmed by HMS Media this spring in The Gillian Theatre before streaming online.

Single tickets will go on sale to the general public in early April, and will be available by calling the Box Office at 847-242-6000 and online at writerstheatre.org.

The cast includes: Kayla Carter (Mallory), Heather Chrisler (Galina), Ryan Hallahan (Tim), and Christopher Sheard (Sergei).

The creative team includes: Steph Paul (Choreographer), William Boles (Scenic Designer), Noël Huntzinger (Costume Designer), Christine Binder (Lighting Designer), Pornchanok Kanchanabanca (Sound Designer & Composer), Rachel Watson (Props Designer), Bobby Kennedy (Dramaturg) and Eva Breneman (Dialect Coach). Natalie Cohen is the Assistant Stage Manager, and Rebecca Pechter is the Stage Manager.

With all the passion and tension of a U.S. Open tennis final, The Last Match serves up a thrillingly theatrical look at what motivates our greatest ambitions and fuels our strongest desires.

When a young Russian tennis phenom and an American superstar in his prime meet at center court, it’s a tough call whether the greatest drama is playing out off the court or on! As theswift action volleys between primetime tennis matches and the most pivotal moments in the personal lives of the competitors and their equally driven romantic partners, sharp and insightful playwright Anna Ziegler (Photograph 51) draws you inside the minds of all four as they face challenges in sport, life and love. What results is a fast-paced and moving montage exploring family, the sacrifices we make for success and the legacy we leave behind.

Chicago director Keira Fromm brings her finely tuned vision to this gripping drama, staged in the intimate Gillian Theatre. You won’t want to miss this engrossing, rapid-fire take on what it means to finally achieve greatness, only to be left wanting more. In The Last Match, there is much more than just a championship on the line!

“I am delighted to welcome back Keira Fromm to Writers Theatre and to finally bring her beautiful production of Anna Ziegler’s The Last Match to audiences,” comments Artistic Director Michael Halberstam.
**About the Artists**

Anna Ziegler’s (Playwright) play *Photograph 51*, produced on the West End starring Nicole Kidman and directed by Michael Grandage, won London’s 2016 WhatsOnStage award for Best New Play. It has been produced around the country and the world, most recently in Hamburg, Rome, and Stockholm. Her play *The Last Match* premiered at The Old Globe Theatre and was nominated for the 2016 San Diego Theatre Critics Circle Outstanding New Play award. *Boy*, which premiered off-Broadway in a Keen Company / Ensemble Studio Theatre co-production, was nominated for the 2016 Outer Critics Circle John Gassner Award. *A Delicate Ship* was produced at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park and the Playwrights Realm and was a New York Times and Time Out Critic’s Pick. Anna holds commissions from Second Stage Theatre, The Geffen Playhouse and Seattle Rep. Oberon Books has published a collection of her work entitled *Anna Ziegler: Plays One*. She holds a BA from Yale and an MFA from NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts.

Keira Fromm (Director) is a Jeff Award-nominated director, as well as a casting director and teacher based in Chicago. Favorite recent directing credits include: *Top Girls* by Caryl Churchill (Remy Bumppo Theatre Company), *A Doll’s House* by Ibsen translated by Simon Stephens (American Players Theatre), *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* by Lauren Gunderson (TheatreSquared), the Chicago premieres of *Dada Woof Papa Hot* by Peter Parnell, *Bull in a China Shop* by Bryna Turner, *Significant Other* by Joshua Harmon, *Bright Half Life* by Tanya Barfield, *A Kid Like Jake* by Daniel Pearle (all at About Face Theatre), the U.S premiere of *hang* by debbie tucker green (Remy Bumppo), *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Gynecologic Oncology Unit at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center of New York City* by Halley Feiffer (Route 66 Theatre Company), *The Columnist* by David Auburn (American Blues Theater), *How the World Began* by Catherine Treischmann (Rivendell Theatre Ensemble), *Luce* by J.C Lee (Next Theatre), *Charles Ives Take Me Home* by Jessica Dickey (Strawdog), *The How and the Why* by Sarah Treem (TimeLine Theatre), *Broadsword* by Marco Ramirez (Gift Theatre), *Fallow* by Kenneth Lin (Steep Theatre) and *Lobby Hero* by Kenneth Lonergan (Redtwist Theatre.) Keira is an Artistic Associate with About Face Theatre. She received her M.F.A. from The Theatre School at DePaul University, B.F.A. from Boston University, is an alumna of Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab and a proud member of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, the professional director’s union. Keira is also a frequent guest director at DePaul, as well as Roosevelt University.

Kayla Carter (Mallory) returns to Writers Theatre where she previously appeared in *Smart People*. Other Chicago credits include *Mansfield Park* (Northlight), *How To Catch Creation* (Goodman) and

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**Other Chicago Credits**

Kayla Carter

Roosevelt University.

Society, the professional director’s union. Keira is also a frequent guest of

M.F.A. from Lonergan Ramirez (Gift Theatre),

Dickey Auburn Center of New York City

*Thing Happened on the Way to the Gynecologic Oncology Unit at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer*

About Face Theatre), the U.S premiere of *Other*

premieres of *Theatre)*,

Bumppo Theatre Company),

based in Chicago.

Keira Fromm

Yale and an MFA from NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts.

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**Halberstam.** *The Last Match* is ostensibly about tennis, but it is also about the process of aging, the navigation of a relationship amidst an all-consuming passion, the toll of obsessive commitment to work on family and the things we do in order to feel young, current and important. Our superb team at Writers Theatre and HMS Media working closely with Actors’ Equity Association have managed the seemingly impossible task of facilitating live rehearsals and a shooting process that will both celebrate the innate theatricality of the play but use the medium of film to bring audiences into an even more intimate relationship with the production. It is pure Writers Theatre and I can’t wait to share it with you.”

“Being away from the play for a year has brought it into sharper focus for me. For a long time I’d been thinking of *The Last Match* primarily as a sports drama about the nature of ambition, and the lengths we go to feel relevant. Ever since the pandemic hit and our industry has been shuttered, I’ve been more focused on the theme of reckoning in the play, and how we address major shifts in our lives. Do we let them derail and destroy us, or do we use them as growth opportunities to reevaluate and redefine ourselves?,” comments director **Keira Fromm.** “Like the characters in the play, we’re all in a period of self-examination and endeavoring to live our lives with greater purpose. At the heart of *The Last Match* is a reminder that we’re only alive for precious little time and it’s incumbent upon us to be thoughtful and purposeful in how we spend that time.”

**ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

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Kayla Carter (Mallory) returns to Writers Theatre where she previously appeared in *Smart People*. Other Chicago credits include *Mansfield Park* (Northlight), *How To Catch Creation* (Goodman) and
work with the Shakespeare Project of Chicago. Regional credits: River City (NNPN World Premiere, Actor's Theatre of Charlotte, Phoenix Theatre Indianapolis), the World Premiere of The Patron Saint of Losing Sleep and Passing Strange (Actor's Theatre of Charlotte). Film/TV: Knives and Skin (dir. Jennifer Reeder), Chicago Med (NBC) and APB (Fox). She is a graduate of University of North Carolina School of the Arts.

Heather Chrisler (Galina) has recently been seen in Chicago in Howards End (Remy Bumppo), Twilight Bowl (Goodman Theatre, Jeff Nomination—Best Ensemble, Chris Jones Top Ten Performances of 2019 Honorable Mention), Miss Julie (Victory Gardens, Chris Jones Top Ten Performances of 2018), Small Mouth Sounds (A Red Orchid, Jeff Nomination—Best Ensemble), Machinal (Greenhouse, Jeff Nomination—Best Performer, Chris Jones Top Ten Performances of 2017) and good friday (Oracle Productions, Jeff Nomination Ensemble). Chrisler is an Artistic Associate at First Folio Theatre where she has been seen in Mary's Wedding, Captain Blood and The Madness of Edgar Allan Poe. First Folio is also producing Chrisler's adaptation of Little Women in their 2019/20 Season. Regionally she has been seen at The Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Door Shakespeare, Riverside Theatre and Portland Center Stage. Television credits include Chicago P.D. (NBC). Chrisler holds an MFA from Ohio University.

Ryan Hallahan (Tim) returns to Writers Theatre where he previously performed in Witch, The Real Thing, A Streetcar Names Desire and a reading of Our Few and Evil Days. Selected theater credits include Pass Over, Straight White Men (Steppenwolf), A Misummer Night’s Dream, Pericles, Cyrano de Bergerac (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), Posh (Steep Theater; Jeff Award Winner, Best Ensemble) and The Body of an American (Stage Left; Jeff Award Nominee, Actor in a Principal Role) and Octagon (Jackalope Theatre), as well as work with The Goodman, Definition Theater, and Broken Nose. Film and television credits include Pass Over (Amazon Studios, dir. Spike Lee), Working Man, Chicago Med and Chicago Fire (NBC). He is the author of three full length plays: Off The 77, The Grand Opening of the Chino Valley Death House and Anna Lee. He is represented in Chicago by Actors Talent Group, and currently resides in Los Angeles with his beautiful girlfriend and their insane dog.

Christopher Sheard (Sergei) returns to Writers Theatre where he previously appeared in Arcadia. Chicago credits include The Winte’rs Tale, A Christmas Carol (Goodman Theatre), Nell Gwynn, Short Shakes! A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Short Shakes! Macbeth, Short Shakes! Romeo and Juliet (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), An Octoroon, A Doll’s House (Definition Theatre Company, where he is an Ensemble Member), Puff: Believe it or Not (Remy Bumppo), The Columnist (American Blues Theater), Spill (TimeLine Theatre Company), Steppenwolf Theatre and Windy City Playhouse. Regionally, he has performed with Third Avenue Playhouse, Great River Shakespeare Festival and four seasons with American Player’s Theatre, where some favorite roles include Romeo, Konstantin and Loud Stone. TV/Film credits include Blame it on Toby (Fox on a Hill Productions). He received his MFA from The University of Illinois and his BA from Florida State.

HMS Media is a critically acclaimed, 20-time Emmy Award® winning media production company which creates broadcast and digital content for, with and about arts, education and social service organizations, whose subjects and clients include Broadway shows, national tours and resident performing companies and not-for-profit institutions. Broadcast projects include Great Performances: Chicago Voices, The Hip Hop Nutcracker, Get Happy: Angela Ingersoll Sings Judy Garland, First You Dream: The Music of Kander & Ebb, Dance For Life, A Christmas Carol: The Concert, Through The Night, Steppenwolf Theatre: 25 Years on the Edge, Second To None, Celtic Woman: Emerald, Songs On The Road To Freedom, Dance From The Heart, Just Passing Through, Why Am I Hiding, Jump Rhythm Jazz Project: Getting There, Billy Sunday, Our City Our Shakespeare and three specials each with Under The Streetlamp and River North Dance Chicago. HMS’ Broadway show and tour clients include Hamilton, Mean Girls, Jagged Little Pill, Dear Evan Hansen, Waitress, The Band’s Visit, Anastasia, Wicked, Jersey Boys, Beautiful, The Book of Mormon, Fun Home, Hugh Jackman: Back on Broadway, Kinky Boots, On The Town, Ragtime, Motown: The Musical, Billy Elliot, West Side Story,

ABOUT WRITERS THEATRE
For 29 years, Writers Theatre has captivated Chicagoland audiences with inventive interpretations of classic work, a bold approach to contemporary theatre and a dedication to creating the most intimate theatrical experience possible.

Under the artistic leadership of Michael Halberstam and the executive leadership of Kathryn M. Lipuma, Writers Theatre has grown to become a major Chicagoland cultural destination with a national reputation for excellence, being called the top regional theatre in the nation by The Wall Street Journal. The company, which plays to a sold-out and discerning audience of more than 60,000 patrons each season, has garnered critical praise for the consistent high quality and intimacy of its artistry—providing the finest interpretations of both classic and contemporary theatre in its two intensely intimate venues.

In February 2016, Writers Theatre opened a new, state-of-the-art facility. This established the company's first permanent home—a new theatre center in downtown Glencoe, designed by the award-winning, internationally renowned Studio Gang Architects, led by Founder and Design Principal Jeanne Gang, FAIA, in collaboration with Theatre Consultant Auerbach Pollock Friedlander. The new facility has allowed the Theatre to continue to grow to accommodate its audience, while maintaining its trademark intimacy. The new facility resonates with and complements the Theatre’s neighboring Glencoe community, adding tremendous value to Chicagoland and helping to establish the North Shore as a premier cultural destination.

Find Writers Theatre on Facebook at Facebook.com/WritersTheatre, follow @WritersTheatre on Twitter or @Writers_Theatre on Instagram. For more information, visit www.writerstheatre.org.

Fact Sheet / The Last Match

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<th>Title:</th>
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Schedule: April 28, 2021 – May 30, 2021

Tickets: Tickets will go on sale to the public in early April. Call the Box Office at 847-242-6000; www.writerstheatre.org

The Last Match will be available to WT Classic Subscribers at no additional charge. Dates and other details will be provided to Subscribers in March.

Up Front Flex Members and Pay As You Go Members who would like to watch The Last Match will be able to reserve their $35 Member ticket by calling the Box Office starting in late March. Dates and other booking details will be provided to Members in March.

Prices: Ticket prices are based on number of viewers in your household:
Solo: $40
Duo: $65
Trio: $85
Ensemble (4+): $100

All prices are subject to regular per-ticket fees.

Accessibility: Closed Captioning will be available on all performances. Audio Description will be available on demand during the full run. Patrons will be able to select the AD performance when purchasing their ticket.

Box Office: Call the WT Box Office at 847-242-6000; www.writerstheatre.org

For the safety of our employees and patrons, Writers Theatre will continue to operate all WT Box Office business remotely. Associates will be available to take your call, Monday – Saturday, 12-5pm. The Writers Theatre Box Office located in our Theatre Center in downtown Glencoe will remain closed until further notice to encourage social distancing, as well as continue to ease the Village’s renovation of Tudor Court.

Writers Theatre is pleased to welcome back BMO Harris Bank for 2020/21 as the distinguished Season Sponsor, marking the Bank’s tenth consecutive year as season sponsor.

Notes of Interest
The Last Match was cancelled due to the pandemic just days before its first scheduled preview in March 2020. The set remained in place in The Gillian Theatre. The Last Match began rehearsals again in February 2021 and will be filmed by HMS Media.

Anna Ziegler also wrote Photograph 51, produced on the West End starring Nicole Kidman and directed by Michael Grandage. It has been produced around the country and the world, seen in Chicago at Court Theatre. Her play BOY was produced by TimeLine Theatre.
Ziegler, a tennis player in her youth, was inspired to write *The Last Match* following tennis great Andy Roddick’s on court retirement speech at the 2012 U.S. Open.

Director Keira Fromm is working with Writers Theatre for the first time. She has worked extensively in Chicago theater as a director and casting director. She is an Artistic Associate at About Face Theatre.

Heather Chrisler (Galina) is making her Writers Theatre debut. Kayla Carter (Mallory) and Christopher Sheard (Sergei) previously appeared at Writers in *Smart People* and *Arcadia*, respectively.

Choreographer Steph Paul most recently worked on the acclaimed *How to Defend Yourself* at Victory Gardens. She is a Resident Director of Albany Park Theater Project and an Artistic Associate of Chicago Dance Crash.

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