

ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE

PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MICHAEL DONALD EDWARDS • MANAGING DIRECTOR LINDA DIGABRIELE



*****EMBARGOED until Monday, March 20 at 4:30pm*****

**ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE AND THE FSU/ASOLO CONSERVATORY
FOR ACTOR TRAINING PROUDLY ANNOUNCE THEIR 2017-18 SEASONS:**

**ASOLO REP 2017-18 SEASON: "STAGING OUR WORLD"
SEASON HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE TONY® WINNER *EVITA*;
REGIONAL PREMIERE OF *SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE***

(SARASOTA, March 20, 2017) — On Monday, March 20, 2017, Asolo Rep and the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training proudly announced their 2017-18 seasons in the Mertz Theatre, located in the FSU Center for the Performing Arts.

The 2016-17 season marks the culmination of Asolo Rep's celebrated American Character Project, an extensive five-year exploration of who we are as a nation and the defining political, cultural, and historical elements that make this country unique. On the heels of and in response to the critical and public acclaim the Project garnered, Asolo Rep's **2017-18 Season: STAGING OUR WORLD** will continue to explore the American voices that are vital to amplify, while also sharing stories through a global lens.

The season launches on November 15 with Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's Tony Award winning masterpiece ***EVITA***. Josh Rhodes, who helmed Asolo Rep's 2016 smash hit production of *Guys and Dolls*, will direct and choreograph this timeless, blazing musical, featuring one of the most iconic pop rock scores ever penned for the stage. Winner of seven Tony Awards, including best musical and best score, ***EVITA*** chronicles the electric rise and fall of Eva Perón, who used her beauty and charisma to climb from her poverty-stricken roots on the outskirts of Buenos Aires to become the powerful and polarizing First Lady of Argentina at the age of 27. ***EVITA*** runs through December 30 in the Mertz Theatre.

Asolo Rep kicks off its repertory season on January 10 with the regional premiere of ***SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE***, the sweeping adaptation of Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard's stunning Academy Award® winning film that starred Gwyneth Paltrow, Joseph Fiennes, and Dame Judi Dench. ***SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE*** presents an imagined tale of

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Will Shakespeare, his greatest muse, and the extraordinary romance that inspired one of the world's most enduring love stories. Presented by special arrangement from Disney Theatrical Productions, and in collaboration with Chicago Shakespeare Theater, **SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE** will be directed by acclaimed Chicago-based director Rachel Rockwell and runs in rotating rep through March 28.

The rep season continues on January 17 with **MORNING AFTER GRACE**, a new play that had its world premiere in 2016 at the Purple Rose Theatre Company in Michigan. Penned by playwright Carey Crim, a fresh voice for the American stage, and directed by Asolo Rep Associate Artist Peter Amster (Asolo Rep: *Born Yesterday*, *Living on Love*, *The Matchmaker*, and more), this unconventional new comedy is set in a not-so-distant Florida retirement community, where Angus and Abigail have woken up together after unexpectedly hooking up at a funeral. Hilarious and heart-warming, **MORNING AFTER GRACE** reminds us that it is never too late to take a chance on love.

In February, Asolo Rep will proudly present Eugène Ionesco's **RHINOCEROS**, directed by two-time Tony Award winner and Academy Award nominee Frank Galati. In a small French village, the townspeople are conforming. One by one, they transform until there is just one man, now an outsider, left standing. A master of absurdist theater, Ionesco penned **RHINOCEROS** in the aftermath of World War II, and its themes of the dangers of conforming and losing one's voice remain just as poignant and powerful today as ever. **RHINOCEROS** runs in rotating rep from February 7 through April 14.

The season continues in March with **ROE**, Lisa Loomer's strikingly timely play about *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark 1973 case that legalized abortion, changed the face of women's rights, and divided a nation. With women's rights front and center in today's headlines, **ROE** sheds light on the difficult choices women make and the passion each side has for its cause. **ROE** will be directed by Lavina Jadhvani, who assisted director Bill Rauch during the play's world premiere at Oregon Shakespeare Festival in 2016, and will run in rotating rep from March 14 through April 14.

Directed by Greg Leaming, Asolo Rep Associate Artistic Director and Director of the FSU/Asolo Conservatory, Obie Award-winner Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' **GLORIA** opens April 6 in the Cook Theatre. A group of burnt-out millennials can't manage to get ahead at one of New York's most esteemed cultural magazines — and they're not afraid to spend their days voicing their complaints to one another. When a seemingly normal day at the office turns out to be anything but, these aspiring journalists are given inspiration in a way they never expected. A Pulitzer Prize-finalist and one of *The New York Times* Best Theater Picks of 2015, **GLORIA** runs through April 29.

A re-imagined version of Terrence McNally, Stephen Flaherty and Lynn Ahrens' great American musical **RAGTIME** starts performances May 1 at Asolo Rep. An epic story about immigration, class, race and love at the dawn of the 20th Century, Minneapolis Director Peter Rothstein has artfully stripped down this originally massive production to reveal its surprisingly intimate core. A collaboration with Seattle's 5th Avenue Theatre, **RAGTIME** runs through May 27 in the Mertz Theatre.

There will also be an exciting summer family production to close Asolo Rep's 2017-18 season, to be announced very soon.

“At this time, when the world needs a sense of cohesion and shared values, Asolo Rep is deeply committed to telling the stories that make people feel that they *need* to come to the theatre – the stories that we must hear again and again, and also experience in new ways,”

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said Producing Artistic Director Michael Donald Edwards. "From the passion that fuels *EVITA*, to the artist yearning for inspiration in *SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE*, the idea of love having no expiration date in *MORNING AFTER GRACE*, the cautionary tale of conformity in *RHINOCEROS*, the urgency of women's rights in *ROE*, the isolation of the modern workplace in *GLORIA*, and the power of immigrant voices in *RAGTIME*, the 2017-18 Season, **STAGING OUR WORLD**, is about championing the artists and stories that could not be more crucial."

In October and November 2017, Asolo Rep will present the eighth annual educational tour, an FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training production of *JULIUS CAESAR*, the enduring story of personal responsibility and political consequence. *JULIUS CAESAR* will be directed by James Dean Palmer. The tour brings condensed, re-interpreted 45-minute adaptations of classic literature to schools and community venues throughout the state.

The FSU/Asolo Conservatory kicks off its season in November with Sophocles' *OEDIPUS*, the story of one viciously egotistical ruler who discovers how dangerously seductive political power can be and how impossible it is to escape the lure of destiny. In January, the Conservatory presents Stephen Adly Guirgis' wild anarchic comedy, *THE MOTHERF***ER WITH THE HAT*. Jackie has just been released from prison and promises to get clean and sober, but when he suspects his girlfriend Veronica of cheating on him, he loses control once again in this high-octane verbal cage match about love, fidelity and misplaced haberdashery.

The Conservatory season continues in February with Jean Anouilh's brittle, acerbic comedy, *THE REHEARSAL*, a brilliant piece of wit tempered with a dark and disturbing view of the upper class. In April, the Conservatory will once again join forces with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens to present Shakespeare's brilliant comedy about love gone awry, *MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING*, outdoors at Selby Gardens.

"Our upcoming Conservatory season represents the best of world theatre, from classic Greek tragedy to wildly profane contemporary comedy, all chosen to present to the community the new company of actors working at the Conservatory," said Greg Learning, Director of the FSU/Asolo Conservatory. "It's the kind of high energy, eclectic season that Sarasota has come to expect from us – and we think it's the perfect season to demonstrate the remarkable skills of these young actors who have come from around the country to study with us and prepare themselves to take on the role they are being trained for, as the future leaders of the American theatre."

Season subscriptions for the 2017-18 season are on sale now and available by visiting the Asolo Rep Box Office, located in the lobby of the theatre, 5555 N. Tamiami Trail in Sarasota, by calling 941.351.8000 or 800.361.8388 or online at www.asolorep.org. Single tickets will go on sale in September 2017.

2017-18 Asolo Repertory Theatre Season

ASOLO REP | FSU/ASOLO CONSERVATORY FOR ACTOR TRAINING presents

JULIUS CAESAR

Touring Schools and Community Venues

SEPTEMBER 26-NOVEMBER 19, 2017

By WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Directed by JAMES DEAN PALMER

JULIUS CAESAR endures as a provocative examination of personal responsibility against the backdrop of great political consequences. In a fast-paced adaptation both intimate and ruthless, the next generation will have the chance to ask how each of us must weigh the greater good against the advice of friends, the roar of public opinion, the strategic advantages, the personal costs, and the compass of our own hearts.

EVITA

NOVEMBER 18–DECEMBER 30

Previews November 15-17

Lyrics by TIM RICE

Music by ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER

Directed and Choreographed by JOSH RHODES

The crowning dramatic achievement of Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, winner of seven Tony Awards®, including Best Musical and Best Score, ***EVITA*** is among the most passionate and memorable works in musical theatre history. Eva Perón used her beauty and charisma to rise from her poverty-stricken roots on the outskirts of Buenos Aires to become the powerful and controversial First Lady of Argentina at the age of 27. She won international acclaim and adoration as a champion of the poor, while glamour, power and greed made her the world's first major political celebrity. With an electrifying score inspired by Latin, pop and jazz including the riveting anthem, "Don't Cry for Me Argentina," this iconic musical is set to dazzle with a spectacular new staging at Asolo Rep.

SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE

JANUARY 13–MARCH 28

Previews January 10-12

Based on the screenplay by MARC NORMAN and TOM STOPPARD

Adapted for the stage by LEE HALL

Directed by RACHEL ROCKWELL

Tom Stoppard and Marc Norman's brilliant seven time Academy Award® winning film, including Best Picture, bursts to life on the Asolo Rep stage. Promising young playwright Will Shakespeare is tormented by writer's block while two competing theatre managers are demanding new comedies replete with romance, adventure and maybe a funny bit with a dog. To his rescue comes the beautiful and vibrant Viola, Will's greatest admirer and the inspiration he's been longing for. But Viola has a secret and Will finds himself star-cross'd. This sweeping romantic comedy is a love letter to the arts, as Viola proclaims: "I will have poetry in my life. And adventure. And love. Love above all."

MORNING AFTER GRACE

JANUARY 19–MARCH 4

Previews January 17 & 18

By CAREY CRIM

Directed by PETER AMSTER

Hilarious and heart-warming, this unconventional new comedy tackles love, loss, and coming to terms with growing old. After hooking up at a funeral, Angus and Abigail find themselves waking up the next morning wrapped in sheets on his sofa. Strangers just the day before, Abigail thinks she may finally be ready to take another chance on love, but Angus has a few issues to work through first. Enter neighbor Ollie, formerly a baseball player for the Detroit Tigers who now enjoys golf and yoga. Nothing is as it seems with this trio and every disclosure reveals a new perspective. Set in a nearby Florida retirement community, this charming and big-hearted comedy takes us on an unexpected journey toward a new lease on life.

RHINOCEROS

FEBRUARY 9-APRIL 14

Previews February 7 & 8

By EUGÈNE IONESCO

Translated by DEREK PROUSE

Directed by FRANK GALATI

A farce. A tragedy. A brilliant experiment for the mind. Brace yourself for an exhilarating experience staged by two time Tony Award winner Frank Galati. Berenger is a simple man with a simple life. He has a regular job, drinks too much, and has a flirtatious relationship with his coworker Daisy. But his day is interrupted by a rhinoceros charging through town – then another and another. Berenger begins to ponder the ramifications of literally following the herd. Written just after World War II, **RHINOCEROS** is still considered a masterpiece of absurdist theatre, where the world is incomprehensible and anything a writer can imagine can happen. Don't miss this hilarious satire about mass culture, conformity, and integrity.

ROE

MARCH 16-APRIL 14

Previews March 14 & 15

By LISA LOOMER

Directed by LAVINA JADHWANI

As the U.S. adjusts to a new administration and millions of women march in solidarity around the world, **ROE** emerges at a pivotal time in our nation's history. The lawyer: a young, brilliant, courageous woman arguing *Roe v. Wade* before the Supreme Court. The plaintiff: a hard-living, single woman who, in 1969, found herself poor and pregnant for a third time. The landmark 1973 case legalized abortion, but also began unforeseen transformations for these women, mirroring the polarization in American culture. With shocking turns and surprising humor, *Roe* illuminates the difficult choices women make and the passion each side has for its cause.

RAGTIME

MAY 4-27

Previews May 1-3

Book by TERRENCE MCNALLY

Music by STEPHEN FLAHERTY

Lyrics by LYNN AHRENS

Directed by PETER ROTHSTEIN

A collaboration with Seattle's 5th Avenue Theatre

It's the dawn of the 20th century in New York ... a time of enormous change, of new ideas, and the world is moving to the music of ragtime. This epic Tony Award winning musical depicts the struggles, successes, hopes and dreams of a white, upper-middle class family in New Rochelle, an African-American musician and his girlfriend in Harlem, and a Jewish immigrant and his daughter on the Lower East Side. Interwoven with their stories are the newsmakers of the era including Harry Houdini, Booker T. Washington, J.P. Morgan and Henry Ford. Minneapolis director Peter Rothstein has re-envisioned this originally massive musical into an innovative, highly theatrical production that, in today's world, resonates to the very heart.

ADDITIONAL 2017-18 PRODUCTIONS:

GLORIA

In the COOK THEATRE

APRIL 6-29

Previews April 4 & 5

By BRANDEN JACOBS-JENKINS

Directed by GREG LEAMING

Style. Status. Success. A group of twenty-something editorial assistants are pursuing it all at one of New York's most esteemed cultural magazines. But declining readership, diminishing advertising revenue and forced layoffs have employees tense and combative behind their cubicle walls. When a seemingly normal day at the office turns out to be anything but, these aspiring journalists are given inspiration in a way they never expected. A Pulitzer Prize finalist and one of *The New York Times* Best Theater Picks of 2015, this hilariously dark and shocking play takes audiences on an unpredictable, unnerving journey to a simple and very human insight.

SUMMER FAMILY PRODUCTION

June 8-30

Previews June 6 & 7

Asolo Rep continues its commitment to present world class, family friendly productions each June. To be announced very soon!

2017-18 FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training Season

OEDIPUS

November 1 - November 19
Preview October 31
By Sophocles
Directed by Greg Leaming

Long considered one of the greatest plays ever written, performed by the entire second year acting ensemble, *Oedipus* is the story of one very flawed hero discovering the awful burden of power and the impossibility of ignoring the whims of fate. Oedipus, the king of Thebes, promises to find the cause of a plague that ransacks the city, only to discover just how complicit he has been in destroying his own community.

THE MOTHERF*ER WITH THE HAT**

January 3 – January 21
Preview January 2
By Stephen Adly Guirgis

Jackie has just been released from prison and promises to get clean and sober, but when he suspects his girlfriend Veronica of cheating on him, he loses control once again. Profane, edgy and absolutely hilarious, **THE MOTHERF***ER WITH THE HAT** is a twisted comedy that turns out to have a lot to say about relationships. *The Wall Street Journal* declared: "Don't let the stupid title put you off. If you do, you'll miss one of the best new plays to come to Broadway in ages."

THE REHEARSAL

February 21 – March 11
Preview February 20
By Jean Anouilh

A group of very wealthy socialites gather to present a production of a Marivaux play and enlist the help of Lucile, a poor young girl hired as nanny for the household. Love blossoms quickly, but is soon ruthlessly destroyed by those who feel their barely adequate existence is threatened. At once a brilliant boulevard farce and a dark, disturbing morality play, penned by one of the great writers of contemporary European theatre.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

April 18 – May 6
Preview April 17
By William Shakespeare

The Bard's most mature comedy with some of his most memorable characters, *Much Ado About Nothing* will be performed in the glorious Marie Selby Botanical Gardens by the entire ensemble of second year graduate actors. Benedick and Beatrice are sworn enemies until the impending marriage of Beatrice's cousin Hero, at which point disdain turns into enormous and unexpected passion. **MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING** is a wild comedy that poignantly delves into issues of honor, shame and politics.

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MEDIA CONTACT

Sasha Goodrich
Public Relations Manager
941.351.9010 x4800
sasha_goodrich@asolo.org

