

**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***  
**April 26, 2018**

## **Asolo Rep Announces New Five-Year Contracts for Producing Artistic Director Michael Donald Edwards and Managing Director Linda DiGabriele**



Photo by John Revisky  
[High-res downloadable photo](#)

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**(SARASOTA, April 26, 2018)** — Asolo Repertory Theatre proudly announces that Producing Artistic Director **Michael Donald Edwards** and Managing Director **Linda DiGabriele** will continue their tenure for five more years at the theatre, through the 2022 - 2023 season.

Their new contracts signify both Mr. Edwards' and Ms. DiGabriele's dedication to oversee Asolo Rep's five-year "Staging Our Future" strategic plan, announced in October 2017. This five-year plan includes fulfilling the vision for the Robert and Beverly Koski Production Center Campus, which includes the acquisition of new properties located next to the existing production center (1009 Tallevast Road). This new campus will include space for additional rehearsal rooms, sound production, physical therapy and more.

The "Staging Our Future" facilities plan also features the establishment of the Herman and Sharon Frankel Asolo Rep Annex, providing much-needed office and meeting space, and upgrades to Asolo Rep's Mertz Theatre, including the Muriel O'Neil Fund for the Performing Arts of Community Foundation of Sarasota County Sound System, which was installed in fall 2017.

"The growth, both artistic and fiscal, and local and national acclaim that this institution has experienced under the tremendous leadership of Michael Donald Edwards and Linda DiGabriele is truly remarkable," said Dr. Larry Haspel, Asolo Rep Board President. "They are a partnership

in the truest sense of the word, and I am thrilled that Asolo Repertory Theatre, one of Sarasota's most treasured cultural gems, will remain in their very capable hands for the next five years."

Under their dynamic leadership, the theatre has reached many paramount milestones. Their joint achievements include the creation of the Robert and Beverly Koski Production Center, a 45,000 square foot state-of-the-art scenic production facility that was dedicated in 2012. Since Mr. Edwards' first season as Producing Artistic Director (2006 - 07), The theatre's endowment has grown from less than \$3 million to \$21 million, and the overall annual operating budget from \$5.5 million to \$10.1 million. Asolo Rep also established the Margot and Warren Coville Guest Artist Housing and made investments in the Mertz Theatre stage modernization.

The theatre also sent two productions to Broadway, *A Tale of Two Cities* (2008) and *Bonnie & Clyde* (2011), and produced world premieres including *Beatsville* (2017), *Josephine* (2016), *Hero: The Musical* (2014), and *Noah Racey's Pulse* (2013), as well as *Jungle Book*, which premieres in June 2018. Under their leadership, Asolo Rep also embarked on a highly successful five-year artistic initiative, the American Character Project, which launched in 2012 and examined and celebrated the extraordinary people, culture, history and experiences that make America unique. Asolo Rep has also forged relationships with prominent theaters throughout the country, collaborating with Arena Stage, the Old Globe, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Seattle's 5th Avenue Theatre and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

Michael Donald Edwards is currently in his twelfth season as Producing Artistic Director of Asolo Rep. A Garland and Drama Logue Award-winning director, Mr. Edwards was previously the associate artistic director of Syracuse Stage and served as artistic director of Shakespeare Santa Cruz. At Asolo Rep he has directed *Disgraced*, *Our Betters*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Clybourne Park*, and more. He has directed at Cleveland Play House, Indiana Repertory Theatre, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Old Globe, the Metropolitan Opera and more.

Linda DiGabriele has been Managing Director of Asolo Rep since 1994 and has worked at the theatre for 44 years. She previously served as administrative director, director of touring programs and stage manager. She has served on the advisory panel for the National Endowment for the Arts and the John F. Kennedy Center's Theater for Young Audiences. She is currently on the executive committee for the League of Resident Theatres (LORT).

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## ABOUT ASOLO REP

Now in its 59th season, Asolo Repertory Theatre is recognized as one of the premier professional theatres in America and one of the largest in the Southeastern United States. One of the few select theatres in the nation that performs in true rotating repertory, Asolo Rep's highly skilled acting company and extensive craftsmanship bring to life this unique performance method that gives audiences the opportunity to see multiple productions in the span of a few days. Asolo Rep presents up to 10 productions each season including contemporary and classic works and provocative musical theatre experiences. A theatre district in and of itself, Asolo Rep is committed to expanding its reach into the community, furthering its collaboration with the best theatre artists working in the industry today and cultivating new artists through its affiliation with the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Michael Donald Edwards and Managing Director Linda DiGabriele, Asolo Rep's ambitious theatrical offerings and ground-breaking education and community programming engage audiences and ensure its lasting legacy for future generations.

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For more information, visit [www.asolorep.org](http://www.asolorep.org)

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