



\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\*  
January 10, 2018

**TONY® WINNER FRANK GALATI HELMS *RHINOCEROS***  
**Runs February 7 - April 14**

**"The magic of this piece is that it is just as believable as it is ludicrous, just as chilling as it is humorous. Ionesco allows the audience to escape reality in order to see the world in a brand new way."**

**— Michael Donald Edwards, Asolo Rep Producing Artistic Director**

**(SARASOTA, January 10, 2018)** — Asolo Repertory Theatre continues its rep season with Eugène Ionesco's *RHINOCEROS*. It is directed by two-time Tony Award-winner **Frank Galati**, who, with the support of the Ionesco estate, has streamlined the script from the original three acts to two, making it more relevant to today's audience. The satirical comic masterpiece previews February 7 and 8, opens February 9 and runs in rotating repertory through April 14 in the Mertz Theatre, located in the FSU Center for the Performing Arts.

A farce, a tragedy, a brilliant experiment for the mind, *RHINOCEROS* is both a wildly fresh satire and a poetic reminder of the consequences of following the herd. In a quaint French village, the townspeople are mysteriously and inexplicably transforming. One by one, they are forced to confront their own humanity, morality, and individuality. A master of absurdist theatre, Ionesco penned *RHINOCEROS* in the aftermath of World War II, and its exploration of the dangers of conforming and losing one's voice remain just as poignant and powerful today as ever.

"I am always intrigued by what production will spark Frank Galati's genius imagination each season, and was thrilled when we landed on the rarely seen **RHINOCEROS**," said Asolo Rep Producing Artistic Director Michael Donald Edwards. "The magic of this piece is that it is just as believable as it is ludicrous, just as chilling as it is humorous. Ionesco allows the audience to escape reality in order to see the world in a brand new way."

Asolo Rep Associate Artist Frank Galati helms this newly imagined production. One of today's foremost American theater artists, Galati received two Tony Awards for adapting and directing *The Grapes of Wrath*. He was subsequently nominated for a Tony Award for his triumphant direction of *Ragtime*. Galati was also nominated for an Academy Award® for his screenplay (with Lawrence Kasdan) of *The Accidental Tourist*. At Asolo Rep he directed *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, *Both Your Houses*, *1776*, *My Fair Lady*, *Twelve Angry Men*, and more.

"In streamlining the script, it was my goal to make the play land with a contemporary audience," said Director Frank Galati. "I hope that this swift new production will galvanize our audiences and bring renewed interest in this brilliant, timely play and in Ionesco's value in the history of world theatre."

**David Breitbarth** leads the cast as the apathetic and disheveled Berenger, a disgruntled office worker with a drinking problem. Breitbarth, who also plays Burbage in *Shakespeare in Love* at Asolo Rep this season, has appeared in more than 75 productions at Asolo Rep. **Matt DeCaro**, who played President LBJ in *The Great Society* at Asolo Rep last season, plays Gene. DeCaro also plays Tilney/Sir Robert de Lesseps in *Shakespeare in Love*. **Laura Rook** plays Daisy, Berenger's love interest. Rook also portrays Viola de Lesseps in *Shakespeare in Love*.

**RHINOCEROS** features **Brandon Dahlquist** (Wessex in *Shakespeare in Love*) as Botard, **Matt McGee** (Lambert/Wabash in *Shakespeare in Love*) as Café Owner/Mr. Papillion, **Matt Mueller** (Kit Marlowe in *Shakespeare in Love*) as Dudard, and **Peggy Roeder** (Queen Elizabeth in *Shakespeare in Love*) as Mrs. Boeuf. The cast also features **Dustin Babin**, **Andrew Bosworth**, **Christopher Carlson**, **Anthony J. Hamilton**, **Amy Helms**, **Nolan Fitzgerald Hennelly** and **Amber Lageman**.

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**CAST**  
*(In order of appearance)*

MATT MCGEE\*.....Café Owner/Mr. Papillion  
DAVID BREITBARTH\*.....Berenger  
MATT DECARO\*.....Gene  
ANDREW BOSWORTH.....Waiter  
AMY HELMS.....Housewife  
LAURA ROOK\*.....Daisy  
DUSTIN BABIN.....Townsperson  
CHRISTOPHER CARLSON.....Townsperson  
ANTHONY J. HAMILTON.....Townsperson  
NOLAN FITZGERALD HENNELLY.....Townsperson  
AMBER LAGEMAN.....Townsperson  
BRANDON DAHLQUIST\*.....Botard  
MATT MUELLER\*.....Dudard  
PEGGY ROEDER\*.....Mrs. Boeuf

\*Members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

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**SELECTED CREATIVE TEAM**

Director.....FRANK GALATI  
Scenic/Costume Designer.....ROBERT PERDZIOLA  
Lighting Designer.....CHRIS OSTROM  
Sound Designer.....JOE CERQUA  
Hair/wig and make-up designer.....MICHELLE HART

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## SELECTED ARTISTIC BIOS

(In Alphabetical Order)

**DAVID BREITBARTH\*** (Burbage, *Shakespeare in Love*; Berenger, *Rhinoceros*) Over 75 productions at Asolo Rep include: *The Little Foxes*, *The Great Society*, *All The Way*, *Both Your Houses*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Clybourne Park*, *God of Carnage*, *Once in a Lifetime*, *Twelve Angry Men*, *The Front Page*, *The Immigrant*, world premieres of *Men of Tortuga* and *Perfect Mendacity*, *The Winter's Tale*, *A Few Good Men*, *Laughing Stock*, *A Flea in Her Ear*, *Rounding Third*, *Art*, *Hobson's Choice*, and *Nicholas Nickleby*. Broadway 1st National Tour: *Spring Awakening*. Off-Broadway: *Short Change*, *Perfect Crime*, *Fluorescent Hunger*, and *This Hard Life*. Los Angeles: *Life in the Trees* (West Coast premiere) and *David's Mother*. Film and television: *Frasier*, *Taken!*, *Law & Order*, and *Fame*. He has appeared regionally around the country and is a member of Florida Repertory Theatre's Ensemble of Theatre Artists. David is a proud 2013 Lunt-Fontanne Fellow selected by the prestigious Ten Chimneys Foundation.

**MATT DeCARO\*** (Tilney/Sir Robert de Lesseps, *Shakespeare in Love*; Gene, *Rhinoceros*) was seen last season as LBJ in *The Great Society* and Oscar in *The Little Foxes*. Most recently he enjoyed a 4 month run as Winston Churchill and Harold Wilson in *The Audience* at Chicago's TimeLine Theatre. Though a Chicagoan, he has been fortunate to play in theaters across the country including Lincoln Center, Manhattan Theatre Club, Goodman Theatre, the Guthrie Theater, Steppenwolf Theatre, The Old Globe Theatre, San Francisco's A.C.T., and internationally on world stages in Dublin, Toronto and Wuzhen, China. Some favorite roles include the Judge in David Mamet's *Romance*, Dave Moss in *Glengarry Glen Ross*, Boss Mangan in *Heartbreak House*, Boolie in *Driving Miss Daisy*, and Fa Hai in Mary Zimmerman's *The White Snake*. His TV and film credits include *The Wise Kids*, *Eagle Eye*, *Prison Break*, *House*, and *The Office* among many others.

**FRANK GALATI** (Director, *Rhinoceros*) is a member of the Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago. His adaptation of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* opened the theatre's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary season. Over the years, he has received nine Joseph Jefferson Awards for his work in Chicago theatre. Here at Asolo Rep he has directed *The Little Foxes*; *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*; *Both Your Houses*; *Philadelphia, Here I Come*; *1776*; *My Fair Lady*; *Twelve Angry Men*. He has directed at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Rep, Mark Taper Forum, Long Wharf Theatre, Chicago Opera Theatre, San Francisco Opera, Dallas Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, The Metropolitan Opera, The Stratford Festival in Canada, and the Roundabout Theatre in New York. For 20 years he was an Associate Director at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago. He won two Tony Awards in 1990 for his adaptation and direction of the Steppenwolf production of *The Grapes of Wrath* on Broadway and was nominated again in 1998 for directing *Ragtime* on Broadway. In 1989, Mr. Galati was nominated for an Academy Award for his screenplay (with Lawrence Kasdan) of *The Accidental Tourist*. In 2000 he was inducted into The American Academy of Arts & Sciences. Mr. Galati is a Professor Emeritus in the Department of Performance Studies at Northwestern University. He lives in Sarasota.

**LAURA ROOK\*** (Viola de Lesseps, *Shakespeare in Love*; Daisy, *Rhinoceros*) is thrilled to be making her Asolo Rep debut with such an exciting season. Ms. Rook is based in Chicago where favorite credits include: *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Othello*, *Henry V*, *Romeo and Juliet* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); *The Liar* (Writers Theater); *Skylight* (Court Theater). Regionally, she has worked for the past six seasons at American Players Theatre where highlights include *Three Sisters*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Mary's Wedding*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Seagull*, and *Troilus and Cressida*. She has also worked regionally at the Illinois Shakespeare Festival, and with Montana Shakespeare in the parks and schools. LauraRook.com

## **PUBLIC PROGRAMMING**

**Tuesday Talkbacks**  
**February 13, 27**  
**Asolo Rep's Mezzanine**

Join us for an intimate post-show discussion with featured actors or guests following every Tuesday performance of **RHINOCEROS**.

**Meet the Actors**  
**Sunday, February 18**  
**Asolo Rep's Mertz Theatre**

Immediately following the 2pm matinee, ask questions and learn more from members of the cast in a facilitated discussion.

**Inside Asolo Rep: *RHINOCEROS* and *ROE***  
**Wednesday, February 28 at 11am**  
**Cook Theatre**

**Panel discussions are \$5; and free for all donors and Asolo Rep Guild Members**

Get rare insights into the artistic process, hear directly from the people responsible for producing **RHINOCEROS** and **ROE**, and engage in stimulating discussion inspired by the plays' themes and issues.

**Inside Asolo Rep is sponsored by Designing Women Boutique, Observer Media Group and Hotel Indigo.**

**OUT@AsoloRep: *RHINOCEROS***

Thursday, March 22 at 6:30pm; show starts at 7:30pm

Asolo Rep's Mezzanine

Contact Asolo Rep's Box Office for subscription and ticket information

Now in its eighth season, OUT@AsoloRep is Sarasota's premier cultural event connecting local Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities with fantastic theatre. Enjoy a pre-show reception and learn about participating LGBT organizations, and gain personal insight into **RHINOCEROS** from the creative team and cast members.

**OUT@AsoloRep is sponsored by Morton's Gourmet Market & Catering, CAN Community Health and Sabal Palm Bank.**

**The Scoop**

One hour prior to every performance of **RHINOCEROS**

Arrive one hour before curtain to hear the ideas and inspirations that contributed to the making of **RHINOCEROS** (Opening Night, February 9, is excluded.)

## **TICKETS**

Tickets for **RHINOCEROS** and the entire 2017-18 Asolo Repertory Theatre season are on sale now. Tickets for **RHINOCEROS** start at \$27.

To purchase tickets, call 941.351.8000 or 800.361.8388, visit [www.asolorep.org](http://www.asolorep.org), or visit the Asolo Repertory Theatre Box Office, located in the lobby of the theatre. Asolo Repertory Theatre is located at 5555 North Tamiami Trail in the Florida State University Center for the Performing Arts.

The Box Office is open Monday 10am – 5pm, Tuesday – Thursday 10am - 7:30pm, Friday – Saturday 10am – 8pm, and Sunday 10am – 2pm. The box office closes at 5pm when there are no evening performances and phone lines close one hour prior to the start of any performance. Season subscription packages are also available online and by visiting or calling the box office.

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## **SPONSORS**

Asolo Rep is able to present **RHINOCEROS** because of the generosity of its sponsors. Corporate sponsors for **RHINOCEROS** are Sun Hydraulics, Hampton Inn and Suites and Louies Modern. Asolo Rep 2017-18 Major Season Sponsors are Florida State University, Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, The Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, Designing Women Boutique, William H. Donner Foundation, Woman's Exchange, Inc., the Huisking Foundation, and Sunset Cadillac of Bradenton. Asolo Rep's artistic programs are paid for in part by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax revenues. Asolo Rep is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.

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## **About Asolo Repertory Theatre**

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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