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2011-2012 SEASON | ASOLOREP.ORG

**ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE**  
FLORIDA'S PREMIER PROFESSIONAL THEATRE • SARASOTA

**For Immediate Release:** March 5, 2012

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## **Asolo Repertory Theatre Presents *The American Character* and the 2012-2013 season**

### **2012-2013 Season will kick off Five Year *American Character* Project**

(SARASOTA, Fla.)- Producing Artistic Director Michael Donald Edwards and Managing Director Linda DiGabriele are pleased to announce Asolo Repertory Theatre's 54<sup>th</sup> season, containing four Pulitzer Prize winning plays, Three Tony Award® winners and one world premiere, all centering around the theme ***The American Character***.

***The American Character*** Project will examine and celebrate the extraordinary people, culture, history and experiences that make our country unique. It will serve as a guiding, artistic principle for Asolo Rep over the next five seasons. The 2012-2013 season will feature an all ***American Character*** season, and the following four seasons will feature select productions that explore, embody, and attempt to define what it truly means to be an American. The project will also increase the commitment to new American playwriting, and Asolo Rep will produce at least one world premiere each season.

***The American Character*** Project is a five year artistic initiative that poses a series of galvanizing questions: what is the American character? How did it come to be? What is its nature? How has it evolved into what it is now? Where is it going?" said Producing Artistic Director Michael Donald Edwards. "It's impossible to ever concretely define such a vast, far-reaching concept as the American character, but that is *precisely* why it is worth exploring. These questions provide a gateway to a truly collaborative experience that we will share with our audiences. We will be examining every facet of the American character – the character of the nation, the character we each possess as individuals, and the characters that populate the productions on our stages. The end goal of this project is to deepen our collective understanding of what it means to be living in this country at this point in time, and how we got here, and where we will go from here. We are not searching for a single answer to these questions - we want many answers. In fact, there are as many answers as there are people in our audiences, there are as many answers as there are creative artists working on our productions. Each person brings a different element of what it means to be American or have an American experience – they bring *their* American character to the work we're doing."

Michael Donald Edwards has assembled a creative advisory group of extraordinary American theatre artists who are already deeply informing the programming for the American Character Project. The group consists of Tony Award®-

winning director Frank Galati, Pulitzer Prize winning playwrights Lynn Nottage and Nilo Cruz, and artistic director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival Bill Rauch. “They are true creative companions,” says Edwards, “Providing exciting ideas and inspiring our whole organization as we embark on this journey.”

The 2012-2013 season will feature all shows centered around ***The American Character***, beginning with the hit musical, ***1776***, directed by Tony Award®- winner Frank Galati. A brilliant and visionary high-spirited musical, ***1776*** follows John Adams of Massachusetts, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, and Richard Henry Lee and Thomas Jefferson of Virginia as they attempt to convince the members of the second Continental Congress to vote for freedom from the shackles of the British monarchy by signing the Declaration of Independence. The *New York Times* said “***1776*** is a most striking, most gripping musical. I recommend it without reservation. It makes even an Englishman’s heart beat faster...” and the original production won three Tony Awards® for Best Musical, Best Featured Actor and Best Direction.

The 2013 Repertory Season will bring four Pulitzer Prize winning plays in a row to Asolo Rep, beginning with Kaufman and Hart’s ***You Can’t Take it With You***, directed by Peter Amster (of Asolo Rep’s *Deathtrap* and *Fallen Angels*). The definitive Kaufman and Hart production and winner of the 1937 Pulitzer Prize, ***You Can’t Take it With You*** sheds light on commerce, family and the American Dream in a message that’s still applicable to today.

Opening next in repertory is David Mamet Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award® winner ***Glengarry Glen Ross***. A harsh look at patriarchies and the need for money in a 1980’s Real Estate office, Mamet’s characters stop at nothing to get ahead with a profit. With a gift for natural dialogue and a realistic portrayal of these men’s struggles, Mamet creates “crackling tension...ferocious comedy and drama” (*New York Times*). This production will be directed by the Artistic Director of New York’s Keen Company, Carl Forsman (of Asolo Rep’s *A Few Good Men*).

Third in the Rep lineup is Wendy Wasserstein’s ***The Heidi Chronicles***, winner of the Pulitzer Prize and two Tony Awards® for Best Play and Featured Actor. ***The Heidi Chronicles*** tells the coming of age story of Heidi Holland, a successful art historian, as she tries to find her bearings in a rapidly changing world. Directed by Cleveland Play House’s Associate Artistic Director Laura Kepley, this production is funny, touching, and a moving examination of the progress of a generation, from the socially activist sixties to the success-oriented eighties- a time during which the status of American women underwent profound, and sometimes unsettling, change.

The final Pulitzer Prize winner of the repertory season will be Bruce Norris’ ***Clybourne Park***, directed by Producing Artistic Director Michael Donald Edwards. Told from the perspective of the white couple that sells their house to the black family in Lorraine Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun*, ***Clybourne Park*** gives a modern twist to the issues of racism, housing and the dream for a better life. The 2011 Pulitzer Prize for Drama winner, ***Clybourne Park*** has seen success in London and at American theatres including Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago and Playwrights Horizons in New York City. This production will travel to the South Miami-Dade Cultural Center for a week of performances after it concludes at Asolo Rep.

Asolo Rep is also presenting a world premiere as part of ***The American Character*** Project. To ensure the highest quality of work is presented to our community, Asolo Rep is conducting a thorough search for just the right piece, and so cannot reveal the title at this time. Because of UNPLUGGED, Asolo Rep's new play festival, the choices of cutting-edge work are growing, and we look forward to letting you know what piece we will be premiering soon.

The final repertory production will be Ken Ludwig's (*Of Lend Me a Tenor*) Sherlock Holmes-esque production of ***The Game's Afoot***. The murder mystery comedy sets the scene in a snowy Connecticut mansion where American star William Gillette (best known for his iconic portrayal of Sherlock Holmes), invites his co-stars from his current production for a Christmas Eve celebration. When one of the guests is murdered, Gillette employs the persona of the master detective he's made famous on the stage. This is only the second production, the first having been produced at Cleveland Play House. ***The Game's Afoot*** will be directed by Associate Artistic Director Greg Leaming.

This summer will also feature ***Pulse***, a new dance musical created by and starring Broadway performer Noah Racey. ***Pulse*** will be directed by *Bonnie & Clyde* director and Tony Award® nominee Jeff Calhoun.

The final summer musical will be announced at a later date and will begin June 21.

Alongside its season, Asolo Rep will also present UNPLUGGED, a festival of new play readings performed by the 2012-2013 acting company, and Asolo Rep presents an FSU/Asolo Conservatory production of *The Tragedy of Macbeth* as its New Stages 2012 tour.

## Asolo Repertory Theatre 2012-2013 Season

### The American Character

Our 2012-2013 season launches a five-year project featuring select productions that explore, examine and celebrate the extraordinary people, culture, history and experiences that make this country unique.

#### NEW STAGES

### ***The Tragedy of Macbeth***

Asolo Repertory Theatre presents an  
FSU/Asolo Conservatory Production  
October 2 & 3 in the Cook Theatre  
Touring October and November

Tempted by the prophecies of three witches, Macbeth's ambition to be King of Scotland leads him into a world of evil, deceit, and murder. Shakespeare's classic masterpiece gets a powerful and imaginative new look in this 60-minute adaptation that will tour throughout Florida, creating opportunities for performance and dialogue within our communities.

### **1776**

Music and lyrics by Sherman Edwards  
Book by Peter Stone  
Directed by Frank Galati  
November 16-December 22

A brilliant and visionary high-spirited musical that movingly and often hilariously captures the great galvanizing moment in the American Story: the signing of the Declaration of Independence. As it turns out, giving birth to the U.S. wasn't exactly easy, but Ben Franklin, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and the other original revolutionaries were determined to bring this country into being. **1776** celebrates these proud, frightened, uncertain, irritable, charming, often petty, and ultimately noble figures, who were determined to do the right thing for a fledgling nation, against all the odds.

***You Can't Take It With You***

By George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart

Directed by Peter Amster

January 4-April 20

When this 1937 Pulitzer Prize-winner debuted to instant acclaim during the Great Depression, it was clear that Kaufman and Hart had come up with the perfect remedy for the nation's troubles: laughter and optimism. So it's no surprise that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it's still one of the funniest and most endearing plays around. The action centers on the zany inhabitants of the Vanderhof household—a joyous madhouse populated by lovable eccentrics, artists and anarchists. But when granddaughter Alice falls in love with the son of a Wall Street banker, mayhem ensues as values and philosophies collide.

***Glengarry Glen Ross***

By David Mamet

Directed by Carl Forsman

January 11-February 28

David Mamet's scalding comedy/drama tackles one of the most elusive topics in all of American literature: the pursuit of the American dream. A contemporary classic that became a celebrated film, this 1984 Pulitzer Prize-winner examines a group of cutthroat Chicago real estate agents who will do anything to close the deal. With a gift for natural dialogue and a realistic portrayal of these men's struggles, Mamet creates "crackling tension...ferocious comedy and drama" (*New York Times*). Contains strong/mature language.

***The Heidi Chronicles***

By Wendy Wasserstein

Directed by Laura Kepley

January 19-March 20

If you were a woman finding your way in the world between the 1960s and 1980s, you might think that this play was all about you. After surviving three decades of juggling her career and her personal life, baby boomer art historian Heidi Holland looks back at her quest to "have it all" and tries to figure out what's missing now that she's actually got it. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award for Best Play, Wasserstein's funny and touching play still mirrors the emotional trials faced by all of us as we try to figure out the big question: What should we do with our lives?

***Clybourne Park***

By Bruce Norris

Directed by Michael Donald Edwards

March 15-May 2

This "buzz-saw sharp new comedy" (*The Washington Post*) cleverly spins the events of *A Raisin in the Sun* to tell an unforgettable new story about race and real estate in America. In one house on two afternoons, fifty years apart, two couples pack up to move. In 1959, a white couple is confronted by neighbors who don't want them to sell their house to a black family. Fast forward to 2009 and the stakes have changed, but the debate is strikingly familiar. This 2011 Pulitzer Prize-winning social comedy reveals how far our ideas about race and gentrification have evolved—or have they?

**World Premiere (To Be Announced)**

To be presented in the Historic Asolo Theater  
Opening March 22, 2012

***The Game's Afoot***

By Ken Ludwig  
Directed by Greg Leaming  
March 29-May 12

Master of comedy and mayhem Ken Ludwig (*Lend Me a Tenor*) fills his latest play with double-crosses, triple-crosses, gunplay, lies, deceit, disguise, and sex. What do you expect? They're actors. As iconic American actor William Gillette takes his bows after playing Sherlock Holmes at the Palace Theatre, a shot rings out, wounding him in the arm. While recuperating at home, Gillette invites his co-stars to his elaborate Connecticut mansion for a Christmas Eve celebration. When one of the guests is found murdered, this labyrinth comedy-mystery-thriller unfolds in glorious 1930s style.

***Noah Racey's PULSE, A New Dance Musical***

A World Premiere  
Directed by Jeff Calhoun  
May 23-June 16

From the opening breath of this 90-minute dance musical, you'll be wrapped in the artistry that is true American song and dance. Racey and his New York Song & Dance company take us on a joyous trip from the wonderfully ridiculous to the exquisitely sublime as they remind us that it isn't the smoke, mirrors, or special effects that move us most in theatre, but the simple gift of a song and a dance. Using rhythm as a common denominator, the company will sing, tap, drum and virtually float their way through American music from the classics of vaudeville to the dance hits of today, as well as original music created specifically for the production.

**Summer Production (To Be Announced)**

This spectacular final show of our season will be announced soon. We'll keep you informed...you're going to love it!

**The 2012- 2013 Florida State University/Asolo Conservatory 2012- 2013 Season**

The FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training also announced its 2012–2013 season, which features some of the country's most talented acting students performing in a series of four plays in The Cook Theatre at the FSU Center for the Performing Arts. In addition to the second year class season, third year Conservatory students perform on the Asolo Rep mainstage with the professional company.

***Twelfth Night***

by William Shakespeare  
October 30-November 18

A young woman finds herself adrift in a foreign country and masquerades as a boy to keep herself safe. The only problem is she finds herself falling head over heels in love with her new employer, a wealthy young man who decides to send her as an emissary to his own beloved! One of Shakespeare's best known comedies, full of music, laughter and the high drama of young love, starring the entire second year student body of the FSU/Asolo Conservatory.

***The Aliens***

by Annie Baker  
January 1- January 20

In a back lot behind a Vermont coffee shop, two social outcasts befriend an innocent young employee from the shop. In doing so they teach him about friendship, commitment and what it means to grow into manhood in this very funny and ultimately very moving play.

***Stop/Kiss***

by Diana Son

February 19-March 10

Two young women in New York spend a quiet evening together talking about their boyfriends and life. In the process, as they sense a growing, unspoken attraction for each other, an innocent kiss results in a savage gay-bashing, resulting in a complex story about hatred, love, and the difficulties of living life fully.

***Candida***

by George Bernard Shaw

April 9-28

A minister's wife must choose between a passionate young poet who is smitten with her, and her older but far more reliant husband. A sparkling comedy about love, passion and the liberated woman by one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most vibrant playwrights.

Tickets for Asolo Repertory Theatre's 2012-2013 season and the FSU/Asolo Conservatory season are available through the Asolo Repertory Theatre box office by calling 941-351-8000 or toll-free, 800-361-8388. Tickets are also available online at [www.asolarep.org](http://www.asolarep.org).

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Asolo Theatre, Inc. (AKA: Asolo Repertory Theatre) is funded in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, and is paid for in part by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax revenues, the Gulf Coast Community Foundation and the Shubert Foundation, Inc. Funding is also received through the efforts of various support groups and the generosity of individuals, corporations and foundations.