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**ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE PROUDLY PRESENTS WORLD PREMIERE OF NOAH RACEY'S *PULSE***

**New Song & Dance Spectacular is Brainchild of Hooper/Tapper, Singer, and Choreographer**

**Noah Racey; Production is Directed by Broadway's Jeff Calhoun (*Newsies*)**

**(SARASOTA, May 7, 2013)** — Extending this season's hot streak of productions that make bold artistic statements, Asolo Repertory Theatre is thrilled to present Noah Racey's *Pulse*. A song and dance celebration that harkens back to the golden age of hoofing, *Pulse* is written, conceived, and choreographed by Broadway song and dance man Noah Racey in collaboration with Broadway director and two-time Tony Award nominee Jeff Calhoun. *Pulse* opens on Thursday, May 23 with an 8 p.m. curtain. Opening night will be preceded by two preview performances on Tuesday, May 21 at 7:30 p.m. and May 22 at 8 p.m. The show runs through June 16, 2013 in Asolo Rep's Mertz Theatre located in The FSU Center for the Performing Arts.

"I believe that *Pulse* is one of the most electrifying projects to ever appear on the American musical stage, and everyone at this theatre is so incredibly excited to be having its world premiere at Asolo Rep," said Michael Donald Edwards, Asolo Repertory Theatre's Producing Artistic Director.

"I'm most excited about exposing audiences to song and dance that is as good and as accomplished as I have ever seen. The cast is comprised of the best song and dance men and women in America today," said Jeff Calhoun. "I believe that Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly, the Nicholas Brothers, and Sammy Davis, Jr. would be proud of Noah Racey's *Pulse*."

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Noah Racey is an award-winning Broadway actor, singer and dancer as well as a director, choreographer, musician, and songwriter who's developed his career as a song and dance man in the great tradition of those who have come before him. His Broadway career launched in 2001 with a revival of *Follies*, and his work as an associate choreographer on *Thoroughly Modern Millie* led to a Tony Award for choreographer Rob Ashford. For ten years, Racey has served as the resident director/choreographer of the critically-acclaimed *Broadway by the Year* series.

"All the people in the world understand the universal language of song and dance," said Racey, who has taken his brand of entertainment to more than 15 countries. "*Pulse* explores a wide range of dance styles in American culture, using rhythm as a common denominator. *Pulse* melds classic hoofing and Broadway-style vocals with a modern approach to the presentation of song and dance. The result is an entirely new style of performance."

The common denominator of rhythm to which Racey refers comes naturally to him, and was developed through Racey's lifelong experience as a drummer. His drumming began when his father gave him a snare at age three. After years of banging away, he graduated to hand drums, playing in drum circles and marching bands until he found theater in high school and switched his focus to acting.

According to Racey, his personal recipe for tap, which incorporates drumming, body percussion and rhythmic tapping, is what sets the style in *Pulse* apart from anything else on Broadway. Beloved songs like "Under My Skin," "Pick Yourself Up," "Once in Love with Amy," and "Drum Crazy" are reinterpreted along with other classics by Racey and the five other singer/dancers that make up the cast. While modern and rhythmic in nature, Racey emphasizes that his style of dance remains elegant and true to its roots. "In *Pulse*, the performers are also musicians using their bodies as instruments, telling a story through the beat of song and dance," added Racey. The dancers' shoes will each have individual microphones to amplify the sound of the tapping, and the dancing will take place on a specially constructed, sprung floor that when lit, will give the illusion that it is floating in air, adding to the magic of the performance.

"I'm constantly surprised by Noah's attention to detail and his ability to continue refining the routines. Just when I think a number is finished, Noah adds a small detail that inevitably heightens and deepens the work," said Calhoun. "It's been a joy watching Noah and the cast of *Pulse* perfect these incredibly intricate dances.

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### **The Cast**

While there is no storyline in *Pulse*, the personalities of the individual dancers become known through their performances --- each one of them a world-class artist in their own right. Lauralyn McClelland is a lithe, graceful dancer from the Midwest with a background in ballet that brings to mind visions of Cyd Charisse. When newcomer and New York City native Frances Bradley sings and dances, she likens comparisons to Sarah Vaughan, a performer who possessed one of the most wondrous voices of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Anthony J. Russo and Christopher Erk bring extensive technical tap expertise and athleticism to the floor, both having toured internationally with *Tap Dogs* and Rasta Thomas' *Tap Stars*. The elegant Danny Gardner, a member of the national touring company of *Singin' In the Rain*, evokes the image of a young Fred Astaire. The music accompanying the performers will be created by a live, six-piece band that includes drums, keyboards, percussion, bass, guitar, and reeds.

### **The Creative Team**

The creative team behind *Pulse* is a mega-talented mix of Asolo Rep newcomers and veterans. In his second season with Asolo Rep, longtime Calhoun collaborator Tobin Ost bears responsibility for the look and style of the show as the Set and Costume Designer. A Yale "whiz kid," according to Calhoun, Ost earned a Tony nomination for his set design in Calhoun's production of *Newsies* in 2012. Ost also created the set and costume design for Calhoun's most recent Broadway show, *Jekyll & Hyde*, as well as for *Bonnie & Clyde*, which had its pre-Broadway run at Asolo Rep during the 2010-2011 season and later went on to Broadway. Lighting Designer Michael Gilliam makes his Asolo Rep debut with *Pulse*, as does Steve Orich, the Orchestrator, and Ross Patterson, the Arranger. Gilliam worked with Calhoun on *Bonnie & Clyde* on Broadway and lit Calhoun's Tony Award winning production of Dead West's *Big River*. Orich is best known for his contributions to *Jersey Boys*, for which he received a Tony nomination for Best Orchestrations. For the past 12 years, Patterson has been the arranger and musical director for the critically acclaimed *Broadway by the Year* concert series at The Town Hall in New York City, as well as for the *Broadway Unplugged* series. Aaron Gandy is the Music Director for *Pulse* and is in his first season with Asolo Rep. Gandy's New York credits include *The Lion King*, *Urinetown*, and *The Shaggs*. Sara Brians, Racey's Associate Choreographer also in her first season with Asolo Rep, was the Resident Choreographer for *Billy Elliot, the Musical* on Broadway and in Chicago and Toronto. Kevin Kennedy, in his sixth season with Asolo Rep, is the Sound Designer. Kennedy worked with Calhoun at Asolo Rep on *Bonnie & Clyde* pre-Broadway. Earlier this season, he designed the sound for *1776* and *Glengarry Glen Ross*. Other Asolo Rep credits include *My Fair Lady*, *Perfect Mendacity*, and *Deathtrap*.

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## **The Backstory**

Growing up in Pittsburgh, successful Broadway director Jeff Calhoun followed the Steelers and the Pirates on television, but he got an equal amount of joy tuning in to see Arthur Duncan tap dance every Sunday night on *The Lawrence Welk Show*. He also loved going to the movies to see Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly, Sammy Davis Jr., Dick Van Dyke, Ken Berry, Ray Bolger and Donald O'Connor hoof and croon the classics. To Calhoun, a student of tap himself, there was nothing more American than song and dance.

The first time Calhoun laid eyes on Noah Racey, it was 10 years ago and Racey was starring in *Never Gonna Dance* on Broadway. Calhoun was amazed to discover a modern incarnation of his boyhood heroes in Racey. Much to his own surprise, Calhoun did something he never did before: he wrote Racey a fan letter. In the letter Calhoun fessed up to his obsession with song and dance men, and mentioned how serendipitous it would be if one day they could work together on a new show. They decided to meet. Once Calhoun and Racey were face to face, they realized how much they had in common. Both were excellent tap dancers. Both worked extensively on Broadway. Both were mentored and deeply influenced by the legendary Tommy Tune. Both desired to bring the classic song and dance style of years gone by back into vogue. Their commonalities brought them together, and their desire to reshape the American dance scene led them to develop this new song and dance spectacular, Noah Racey's *Pulse*.

### **CAST**

in alphabetical order

FRANCES BRADLEY\*

CHRISTOPHER ERK

DANNY GARDNER\*

LAURALYN McCLELLAND\*

NOAH RACEY\*

ANTHONY J. RUSSO\*

\*members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors in the United States

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**MUSICIANS**

Drums	JON BERGER
Reeds	TERI BOOTH
Bass	TJ GLOWACKI
Guitar	TOM JEMMOTT
Keyboards	MIKAL MANCINI
Percussion	JASON YUDOFF

**MUSICAL NUMBERS\*\***

Prologue/"Nothing New Beneath the Sun"	Noah, Danny, Chris, Anthony, Lauralyn, Frances
"Educate Your Feet"	Chris, Danny
"Sweet Pea"	Noah, Danny, Jason, Frances
"Pick Yourself Up"	Anthony, Lauralyn
"Once In Love With Amy"	Noah
"Exactly Like You"	Noah, Lauralyn, Frances
"The Old Soft Shoe"	Noah, Danny, Chris, Anthony, Lauralyn, Frances
Audience Participation	Noah, Danny
"Necessity"	Lauralyn, Danny
"Under My Skin"	Frances, Noah, Danny, Chris, Anthony, Jason
"Money Mash"	Noah, Danny, Chris, Anthony, Lauralyn, Frances
"EET"	Lauralyn, Frances, Chris, Anthony, Danny
"You Can Love Yourself"	Noah, Jason, Chris, Anthony, Danny
"Baby I'm A Fool"	Noah, Lauralyn
"Drum Crazy"	Jason, Noah, Jon, Chris, Anthony
"Sunny Side of the Street"	Noah, Danny, Chris, Anthony, Frances, Lauralyn

\*\*Working List, Subject to Change Before Show Opens

**TICKETS**

Ticket prices for all performances range from \$20 to \$72. Tickets can be purchased at the Asolo Repertory Theatre Box Office in person or by calling 800.361.8388 or 941.351.8000. Tickets can also be purchased online at [www.asolorep.org](http://www.asolorep.org). The Asolo Repertory Theatre and Box Office are located in the FSU Performing Arts Center adjacent to the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art at 5555 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL 34243. Parking is free.

Asolo Repertory Theatre Spring 2013 Box Office Hours:

Monday: 10a.m.-4p.m.

Tues.-Sat.: 10a.m.-8p.m.

Sunday: 10a.m.-2p.m.

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**SCHEDULED PERFORMANCES**

May 21, 7:30 p.m. - First Preview	June 5, 2 p.m.
May 22, 8 p.m. - Second Preview	June 5, 8 p.m.
May 23, 8 p.m. - Opening Night	June 6, 8 p.m.
May 24, 8 p.m.	June 7, 8 p.m.
May 25, 2 p.m.	June 8, 2 p.m.
May 25, 8 p.m.	June 8, 8 p.m.
May 26, 2 p.m.	June 9, 2 p.m.
May 28, 7:30 p.m.	June 11, 7:30 p.m.
May 29, 2 p.m.	June 12, 2 p.m.
May 29, 8 p.m.	June 12, 8 p.m.
May 30, 8 p.m.	June 13, 8 p.m.
May 31, 8 p.m.	June 14, 8 p.m.
June 1, 2 p.m.	June 15, 2 p.m.
June 1, 8 p.m.	June 15, 8 p.m.
June 2, 2 p.m.	June 16, 2 p.m. - Closing Day
June 4, 7:30 p.m.	

**SPECIAL PUBLIC PROGRAMMING FOR *PULSE***

Asolo Rep plans a special performance of *Pulse* with additional entertainment and educational programming tied to the show for families.

***Pulse* Family Day**

**Saturday, June 1 at 1 p.m.**

*Pulse* cast member Chris Erk and others will be performing tap dance demonstrations on the mezzanine of the theatre. Fun food for kids of all ages and parents will be available at the snack bar. Tickets for families are available for the 2 p.m. matinee at the very special price of four tickets for \$50.

**SPONSORS**

Asolo Repertory Theatre is able to bring *Pulse* to the stage because of the generosity of our corporate sponsors and individual supporters. Corporate sponsors for *Pulse* are Gulf Coast Community Foundation; Williams Parker Harrison Dietz & Getzen, Attorneys at Law; ABC 7; Grapevine Communications, and WSMR 89.1 Classical. Season sponsors are Florida State University, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Comcast, Designing Women Boutique, Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, and The Woman's Exchange, Inc. Paid for in part by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax revenues. Sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.

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