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ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE
FLORIDA'S PREMIER PROFESSIONAL THEATRE • SARASOTA

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Asolo Rep Education & Outreach Hosts First Annual Theatre Arts Education Luncheon

(SARASOTA, Fla.)- Asolo Repertory Theatre will be hosting the first Theatre Arts Education Luncheon on Thursday, February 9, 2012 at 11:30 a.m. The luncheon will be held at Michael's On East, and is sponsored by Herald-Tribune Media Group and Sabal Trust Company - the largest employee-owned trust company in Florida. All proceeds will go to support Asolo Rep's progressive Education & Outreach programs for youth. Special honorees include Gulf Coast Community Foundation and Warren and Margot Coville, for their transformative support of Asolo Rep's education programs.

Asolo Rep's Education & Outreach works with schools and communities to ensure all students have access to experience, discuss, and create live, quality theatre. Through its mission, Asolo Rep has assessed that most local high school students have not seen a live performance, even in a region as artistically vibrant as Sarasota/Manatee. The luncheon will bring awareness of this issue, and garner support to broaden Asolo Rep's outreach to schools.

Asolo Rep serves over 10,000 young people a year in Sarasota/Manatee and throughout Florida, giving middle and high school students access to professional live theatre, all with ties to classroom curriculum. The luncheon is chaired by Pat Anderson, Betty-Jean Bavar and Stephanie Shaw and co-hosted by the Asolo Rep Theatre Guild. The money raised at the luncheon will support Asolo's New Stages touring program, Mainstage student matinees, in-school residencies and student journalism program.

Co-chair Bavar stated, "This is the first official fundraiser we've had...it's a very committed, wonderful community of people." Bavar also commended the work of Asolo Rep Director of Outreach and Education, Brian Hersh. "Brian has done such wonderful work [with] bringing the schools to Asolo. You watch kids come to Asolo and see some of the productions...you look at their faces and it's wonderful."

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The Education Committee has seen the benefits of the outreach within the community and is working hard with the Asolo Rep staff to change the face of theatre and arts education in the Tampa Bay area and beyond. Committee member David Voss said, "Bringing the shows to them is a key element. Many students can't travel or don't have transportation, so the New Stages program that brought the plays to the schools has been enormously helpful. For many students that was their first exposure to live theatre."

Individual tickets for the luncheon are \$75 and premium tickets are \$150. Tables are available for \$750 and premium sponsor tables are \$1,500. Online tickets are available at www.asolorep.org/educationluncheon or by contacting Laura Wood, Special Events Manager, at Laura_Wood@asolo.org or 941.351.9010 x4712.

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Now in its 53rd season, Asolo Repertory Theatre is widely recognized as one of the premier professional theatres in the Southeastern United States. One of the few true repertory companies in the nation, Asolo Rep presents a diverse repertoire of newly commissioned plays, bold reinterpretations of contemporary and classical works, and provocative new musical theatre experiences each season. With its ambitious theatrical offerings and groundbreaking education, outreach and audience development programming, Asolo Rep is more vibrant and its work more relevant than ever before.