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(Press photos available upon request)

ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE PRESENTS
An FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training Production: *ROMEO & JULIET*

New Stages Tour Explores: IS LOVE A TENDER THING?

(Sarasota, FL) – Asolo Repertory Theatre presents its 2013 *New Stages* Tour, an FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training production of ***ROMEO & JULIET***, adapted from the play by William Shakespeare. This 45-minute version includes post-show discussions at each performance. As its fourth touring season begins, *New Stages* will travel to schools and community organizations across the state of Florida. Last year, over 18,000 audience members were reached throughout the state, with 60 performances at 45 venues. This new adaptation of ***ROMEO & JULIET*** by Lauryn E. Sasso and Dmitry Troyanovsky, and directed by Troyanovsky, will embark on a two month tour beginning October 1, 2013. Performances can be scheduled by contacting the Education and Outreach staff at Asolo Rep.

Special Opening Night public performances in the Cook Theatre will be held on October 3 at 6:00 pm & 8:30 pm with a reception between performances, which is included in the ticket price.

This world-premiere adaptation of the Bard's most beloved romantic tragedy introduces a new generation to the tale of star-crossed lovers who, in defiance of their families and amidst the animosity of friends, risk everything to be together for love. ***ROMEO & JULIET*** asks how do we recognize love? Is it fast and fleeting? Is it passionate and desirable? Is it soft and palpable? Is love a tender thing?

"This year's *New Stages* production of ***ROMEO & JULIET*** continues the work of Asolo Rep's American Character Project into its second year," Producing Artistic Director Michael Donald Edwards remarks. "As Asolo Rep has deepened its examination of the American Character several themes have emerged, running throughout the season. One of the most powerful is the theme of family – in all its many forms – and Shakespeare's vibrant classic is a powerful take on family drama. There is no 'family feud' more well-known than the one between the Montagues and the Capulets, and the play – particularly in this potent new adaptation – allows us to explore such conflicts and consider both their root causes and potential resolutions."

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“Romeo and Juliet do what normal teenagers do: fall head over heels for each other. Love, it turns out, may be just as perilous as hatred,” says director and co-adapter Dmitry Troyanovsky. “Shakespeare masterfully shows us how two ordinary adolescents, surrounded by inept adults and hapless caregivers, can self-destruct due to a series of disastrous, if understandable, choices. This should, in no way, make us see the story in cynical terms. Stripped of lofty clichés, **ROMEO & JULIET** becomes a story about real people – touching, funny, awkward, self-dramatizing, rash, confused, and tenderly alive.” Co-adapter, and Resident Dramaturg for Asolo Rep, Lauryn E. Sasso adds, “**ROMEO & JULIET** is possibly one of the most well-known and beloved plays in the Shakespeare canon, but the process of crafting this adaptation has allowed us to highlight its most dynamic elements and make a familiar text new and exciting all over again.”

ROMEO & JULIET aims to introduce the *New Stages* program to more audiences than any previous tour. “In conversations with teachers and students, the title most frequently requested for future performances was **ROMEO & JULIET**,” says Asolo Rep’s Education and Outreach Director, Kathryn Moroney. “The unprecedented curiosity and enthusiasm to meet these two most famous of Shakespeare’s young characters offers the potential for a truly powerful encounter between the artists and students.” To help this production reach as many students as possible, Asolo Rep’s Education and Outreach department offers a special discount to schools/community venues booking more than one performance.

Regarding this particular production of **ROMEO & JULIET** for *New Stages*, Moroney says, “Our production seeks to introduce characters who are very like the young people we will meet in our audiences: characters in contemporary dress, characters who look like our families and their friends. This story doesn’t unfold long ago and far away; our cast could have just stepped from the audience, or in from the street in 2013. We relish the chance to introduce a Romeo and Juliet who don’t emerge from a vault or a museum, but who seem to live in our own times and experiences.”

New Stages ensures people of all backgrounds, especially young people, have the experience of live theatre. *New Stages* reaches new and wider audiences through Asolo Rep’s continuing partnership with the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs. *New Stages* will be in residence from October 28 – November 1 at the South-Miami Dade Cultural Arts Center, performing **ROMEO & JULIET** for schools and the public as part of the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs *Shadow Interpreted Theatre Program* and *Open Access Theatre Series*. *The Shadow Interpreted Theatre Program* utilizes trained American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters in a “shadow” performance literally paired alongside the **ROMEO & JULIET** actors, creating an art form seamlessly integrated into the live performance.

The acting company members of **ROMEO & JULIET** are enrolled in the Florida State University/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training, a three-year graduate program culminating in a Master of Fine Arts degree. Only 12 students are chosen each year from thousands who audition in four cities nationwide. Actors are provided with rigorous training in a professional theatre environment, including membership in the Asolo Repertory Theatre acting company during their third year. Asolo Rep presents the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training Production of **ROMEO & JULIET** to highlight the skills of the third-year acting company, all of whom will be seen in the upcoming Asolo Rep main stage season. Graduates of the program have appeared on and off Broadway, in regional theatres, in feature films and on television. *U.S. News and World Report* consistently places FSU's graduate theatre programs in its top-tier rankings, one of the few public university programs so honored.

In 2013 Asolo Rep's Education and Outreach program was awarded for the second year in a row WEDU's *Be More Enriched Arts & Culture Award* for their "spirit of adventure and exploration through education in the arts." Asolo Rep subsidizes the costs of the *New Stages* touring program through charitable contributions from foundations, corporations and individual donors. For more information on how to support *New Stages*, please contact Tricia Mire, Development Director at 941.351.9010 x 4700.

ROMEO & JULIET – Fact Sheet:

Teachers receive study guides to prepare their students for the performances. Classes can also participate in special online pre-show and post-show workshops. **Please note: While *ROMEO & JULIET* will be performed mostly in high schools, its themes are inclusive for audiences ranging from middle school-aged students to senior citizens.**

- ❖ **Touring information for *ROMEO & JULIET*:** This production begins its tour of performances at schools, organizations and unique venues across the state on Tuesday, October 1, 2013. To schedule a performance, call 941.351.9010 ext. 3306.

- ❖ **Ticketing information for *ROMEO & JULIET* on Thursday, October 3 Opening Night:** For single tickets to the Opening Night public performances in the Cook Theatre on October 3 at 6:00 pm or 8:30 pm, call the box office at 941.351.8000, toll-free at 800.361.8388. All seats are \$25 for the October 3 performances and include access to the special Opening Night reception. **Tickets for *ROMEO & JULIET* will be on sale starting Wednesday, September 11.**

Selected Artistic Biographies (in alphabetical order):

Lauryn E. Sasso (Co-Adapter / Resident Dramaturg) is in her eighth season with Asolo Rep. Lauryn received her BA in Theatre Studies from Wellesley College and her MFA in Dramaturgy from UMass Amherst. She has also studied with Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, MA and the National Theater Institute at the O'Neill Theater Center in Waterford, CT. Previously, she has worked at Perishable Theatre in Providence, R.I. and with the SPF Summer Play Festival in NYC. During her tenure at Asolo Rep, she has served as dramaturg for the theatre's main stage productions and education tours. Highlights from prior seasons include: *Doubt*; *The Winter's Tale*; *The Perfume Shop*; *The Life of Galileo*; *The Last Five Years*; *Bonnie & Clyde*; *La Bête*; *Twelve Angry Men*; *Boeing, Boeing*; *Las Meninas*; *Deathtrap*; *Antigone Now*; *The Innocents*; *My Fair Lady*; *Once in a Lifetime*; *God of Carnage*; *Yentl*; *Hamlet: Prince of Cuba*; *Fallen Angels*; *Hamlet Redux*; *Macbeth*; *1776*; *You Can't Take It With You*; *Glengarry Glen Ross*; *The Heidi Chronicles*; *Clybourne Park* and *The Game's Afoot*. In addition to her work co-adapting *Romeo & Juliet* with director Dmitry Troyanovsky, this season she is serving as dramaturg for *Romeo & Juliet*; *Show Boat*; *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*; *Other Desert Cities*; *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*; *The Grapes of Wrath*; and *Hero: The Musical*. She is the moderator for the theatre's ongoing discussion series, *Inside Asolo Rep*, and co-founded the theatre's blog, "Unscripted". She has also been the Festival Coordinator for Asolo Rep's *Unplugged* Festival of New Work since its inception in 2010.

Dmitry Troyanovsky (Director / Co-Adapter) is a theatre director and teacher. His recent directing credits include the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training's production of *Macbeth* and *Hamlet Redux* (both w/Stephanie Fleischmann). He has done a version of Strindberg's *The Ghost Sonata* with other theatre students in Shanghai. Notable projects here: FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training's productions of *Antigone Now*, Sophie Treadwell's *Machinal*, and Euripides' *The Bacchae*. Other productions: Presnyakov Brothers' *Terrorism*, *The Discreet Charm of Monsieur Jourdain* (based on Moliere's work), *Strings Attached: Serenade for Two* (a new play/concert commissioned by the 92 Street Y in New York), Vassily Sigarev's *Plasticine*, Alexander Ostrovsky's *The Forest*, Nikolai Erdman's *The Suicide*, Frank Wedekind's *Spring Awakening*, *Doctor Caligari is Coming to Town* (w/Gabe Geltzer), Andrey Bely's *Petersburg* (w/ Stephanie Fleischmann), and Dürrenmatt's *The Visit*, and the Russian language premiere of Shepard's *Fool for Love* at the famed Pushkin Theatre in Moscow. He led workshops and developed new material at institutions such as the Segal Theatre Center (CUNY), Baryshnikov Arts Center, American Repertory Theatre Institute, SoHo Rep Summer Camp, St. Petersburg State University (Russia), Fisher Arts Center at Bard College, Brown University, and Shanghai Theatre Academy and American Lyric Theatre. In addition to theatre, he's created installation and performance art projects such as *Herzstück* at the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University. He is an MFA graduate of the American Repertory Theatre Institute for Advanced Theatre Training/Moscow Art Theatre School at Harvard University. Dmitry taught at NYU's Tisch School for the Arts, Fordham University, and Bard College. Currently, Dmitry teaches acting and directing at Tulane University in New Orleans. He's also the co-director of the NewGeneRussian educational workshop (NY), promoting Russian theatre heritage and the Stanislavsky-based approach to acting.

Production Staff: Producing Artistic Director - Michael Donald Edwards; Managing Director - Linda DiGabriele; FSU/Asolo Conservatory Director/Associate Artistic Director of Asolo Rep - Greg Leaming; Director and Co-Adapter-Dmitry Troyanovsky; Co-Adapter and Resident Dramaturg - Lauryn E. Sasso; Costume Designer - June Elisabeth Taylor; Sound Designer - Matthew Parker; Voice & Dialect - Patricia Delorey;

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Fight Director - Bruce Lecure; Stage Management Consultant - Erin MacDonald; Stage Manager - Lauren Baston; Stage Manager - Janell Williams; Technical Director FSU/Asolo Conservatory - Chris McVicker; Properties Manager - Marlenn Marotte Whitney; Education and Outreach Director - Kathryn Moroney; Education and Outreach Specialist - Tiffany Ford; Education and Outreach Apprentice - Kimberly Wiczer-Haupt; Literary Apprentice - Austen Anderson

Touring Company: (The 3rd year class of the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training – is divided into two touring companies called “Team Montague” and “Team Capulet”):

Team Montague

Romeo – **Jefferson McDonald**

Juliet – **Lucy Lavelly**

Benvolio/Capulet – **Cale Hauptert**

Montague/Mercutio/Friar Laurence/Apothecary – **Zlatomir Moldovski**

Tybalt/Nurse/Balthasar – **Maxey Whitehead**

Team Capulet

Romeo – **Ben Williamson**

Juliet – **Kristen Lynne Blossom**

Benvolio/Friar Laurence – **Tori Grace Hines**

Tybalt/Nurse/Balthasar – **Brian Nemiroff +**

Montague/Mercutio/Apothecary – **Reginald Robinson**

Capulet – **Amanda Mullen**

+ Appears courtesy of Actors' Equity Association

New Stages tour is sponsored in part by:

Florida Department of State Division of Cultural Affairs; Publix Super Markets Charities, Inc; Charles Henry Leach II Foundation; Asolo Repertory Theatre Guild; Cordelia Lee Beattie Foundation; Mandell and Madeleine Berman Foundation; Linnie E. Dalbeck Memorial Foundation Trust; Andrew R. Ferrell Foundation; Harold C. and Jacqueline F. Bladel Foundation and Plantation Community Foundation.



Now in its 55th season, **Asolo Repertory Theatre** is one of America's leading regional theatres. 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 classic works, and provocative new musical theatre experiences. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Michael Donald Edwards and Managing Director Linda DiGabriele, Asolo Rep with its ambitious theatrical offerings and ground-breaking education, outreach and audience development programming, exists to present a diverse mix of theatrical work of the highest artistic standards and enthusiastically engages audiences to continually ensure its lasting legacy for future generations.

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