

ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE

REGIONAL PREMIERE



GOOD NIGHT, OSCAR

Written by **DOUG WRIGHT**
Directed by **PETER AMSTER**

APRIL 2 - 26, 2025

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ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE

25th SEASON

MOVIN' OUT

CONCEIVED, DIRECTED AND CHOREOGRAPHED
BY TWYLA THARP. BASED ON THE SONGS AND
MUSIC BY BILLY JOEL.

ALL IS CALM: THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE OF 1914
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY PETER ROTHSTEIN

PRIMARY TRUST

BY EBONI BOOTH

THE MIRROR CRACK'D

BY AGATHA CHRISTIE
A NEW ADAPTATION BY RACHEL WAGSTAFF

THE UNFRIEND

BY STEVEN MOFFAT

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF

BOOK BY JOSEPH STEIN, LYRICS BY SHELDON
HARNICK, MUSIC BY JERRY BOCK

MARIE AND ROSETTA

BY GEORGE BRANT

LADY DISDAIN

BY LAUREN M. GUNDERSON

HOPE, & ROCK
HEART & N' ROLL

1	MOVIN' OUT
2	ALL IS CALM The Christmas Truce of 1914
3	PRIMARY TRUST
4	AGATHA CHRISTIE THE MIRROR CRACK'D A NEW ADAPTATION BY RACHEL WAGSTAFF
5	US PREMIERE THE UNFRIEND
6	FIDDLER ON THE ROOF
7	MARIE & ROSETTA
8	ROLLING WORLD PREMIERE LADY DISDAIN

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ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE

Peter Rothstein Producing Artistic Director

Ross Egan Managing Director

Proudly Present

GOOD NIGHT,
OSCAR

By **DOUG WRIGHT**
Directed by **PETER AMSTER**

Scenic and
Costume Design
ROBERT PERDZIOLA

Lighting Design
DAWN CHIANG

Sound Design
MATTHEW PARKER

Hair, Makeup
and Wig Design
MICHELLE HART

Stage Manager
KAITLIN KITZMILLER*

Assistant Stage Manager
BETH KOEHLER*

Voice and Dialect Coach
PATRICIA DELOREY

Dramaturg
JAMES MONAGHAN

New York Casting
MURNANE CASTING
CHAD MURNANE, CSA
AMBER SNEAD, CSA

The author wishes to thank the Hermitage Artist Retreat in Sarasota County for their support during the writing of *Good Night, Oscar*.

Directors are members of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society; Designers are members of the United Scenic
Artists Local USA-829; Backstage and Scene Shop Crew are members of IATSE Local 412.

Originally Produced on Broadway by Grove Entertainment, Barbara Whitman, Hazy Mills Productions, Yonge Street
Theatricals, Frank Marshall, Rich Entertainment Group, Jeremiah J. Harris

Good Night, Oscar received its World Premiere at Goodman Theatre in Chicago, Illinois, on March 21, 2022
Robert Falls, Artistic Director Roche Schuller, Executive Director

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• Susan and Charles Wilson • Mary Lou and Edward* Winnick

*In memoriam

GOOD NIGHT, OSCAR SPONSORS



CAST
IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

JONATHAN ACOSTA≠	Max Weinbaum
JASMYN ACKAH	Ensemble
SASHA ANDREEV*	Jack Paar
DAVID BREITBARTH*	Bob Sarnoff
JOHN LEGGETT	Ensemble
CATHERINE LUCIANI	Ensemble
ASHLEY MCCAULEY MOORE	Ensemble
IBUKUN OMOTOWA	Alvin Finney
AYDA OZDOGANLAR	Ensemble
HARRIS MILGRIM*	George Gershwin
GAIL RASTORFER*	June Levant
MAX ROLL *	Oscar Levant
BRIAN ZANE≠	Ensemble

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

UNDERSTUDIES

UNDERSTUDIES NEVER SUBSTITUTE FOR LISTED PLAYERS UNLESS
A SPECIFIC ANNOUNCEMENT FOR THE APPEARANCE IS MADE AT THE TIME OF THE
PERFORMANCE.

FOR ALVINYA FINNER: Jasmyn Ackah, FOR JUNE LEVANT: Moriel Behar, FOR OSCAR LEVANT: Trent Dahlin,
FOR JACK PAAR: John Leggett, FOR MAX WEINBAUM: Edgardo Solorio, FOR BOB SARNOFF: Patrick Vest,
FOR GEORGE GERSHWIN: Brian Zane
FOR ENSEMBLE: Brandon Billings, Alan Kim, James Austin Ridley, Dani Treviño, Katrina Vélez, Zoé Zervas

MUSIC CREDITS

“Rhapsody In Blue”
By George Gershwin

“Blame It On My Youth”
Words and Music by Edward Heyman and Oscar Levant;
© UNIVERSAL POLYGRAM INT. PUBLISHING, INC. (ASCAP)

“Embraceable You”
Words and Music by Ira Gershwin and George Gershwin,
© 1930, IRA GERSWHIN MUSIC (GMR) AND WC MUSIC
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MUSIC ADMINISTERED BY WARNER GEO METRIC MUSIC,
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“Everything’s Coming Up Roses”
Words and Music by Stephen Sondheim and Jule Styne,
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“I Got Rhythm”
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“Summertime”
Words and Music by Ira Gershwin, Dorothy Heyward and
DuBose Heyward, and George Gershwin, © 1935

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1925-2025

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JONATHAN ACOSTA (Max Weinbaum) graduated from Texas State University in 2022 with a BFA degree in Performance and Production. He is currently getting his MFA in Acting at the FSU/Asolo Rep Conservatory for Actor Training. He'd like to thank his family for their love and support, and his friends for the love and

laughs. Select credits include: Eliades in *Anna in the Tropics*, The Mayor in *Escobar's Hippo* by Franky D. Gonzalez (Repetorio NYC), Rafael in *Clyde's* by Lynn Nottage (FSU/Asolo Rep), and Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* (FSU/Asolo Rep).



JASMYRN ACKAH (Ensemble, understudy Alvinya Finney) is an actress and singer, born and raised in the heart of New York City. She is a recent graduate of Temple University, majoring in the Acting concentration. Her most recent credits include: Ensemble in *Anna in the Tropics* Clyde in *Clyde's* by Lynn Nottage,

Mercutio in *Romeo & Juliet*, and Irina in *Three Sisters* by Anton Chekhov. Jasmyrn would like to thank her family and friends for their unwavering support and love and would especially like to thank her grandmother Sonia who always pushed for her to follow her passions and knows she is cheering her on from above.



SASHA ANDREEV (Jack Paar) has been seen at Asolo Repertory Theatre in *Twelve Angry Men: A New Musical*, *Intimate Apparel*, *Inherit the Wind*, *Ragtime* and most recently in *All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914*, in which he performed on national tour, Off-Broadway, with Theatre

Latté Da, and on PBS. Regional credits include: Guthrie Theater, Repertory Theater of St. Louis, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Mixed Blood Theater, History Theatre, and Theatre de la Jeune Lune. On screen he recently appeared in *A Taste of Love* (Hallmark Channel) and *Stranger Things* (Netflix). He's been seen as host of *Curb Appeal* (HGTV) and *Operation Build* (A&E), as a tech expert on home shopping networks in the US and abroad, and in numerous commercials and films. IG: SashaAndreevNow



DAVID BREITBARTH (Bob Sarnoff) Over 85 productions at Asolo Repertory Theatre include: *Murder on the Orient Express* (also Old Globe; San Diego), *Rhinoceros* (also A.C.T.; San Francisco), *Inherit the Wind*, *The Little Foxes*, *Both Your Houses*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Clybourne*

Park, *God of Carnage*, *Twelve Angry Men*, *The Immigrant*, *Men of Tortuga*, *A Flea in Her Ear*, *Art*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, and 70 others. Broadway 1st National Tour: *Spring Awakening*. Film and television: *Frasier*, *Taken*, *Law & Order*, and *Fame*. He is 13 years an ensemble member at Florida Repertory Theatre and has numerous appearances regionally around the country. David is a 2013 Lunt-Fontanne Fellow selected by the prestigious Ten Chimneys Foundation.



JOHN LEGGETT (Ensemble, u/s Jack Paar) This is John's second season with Asolo Repertory Theatre! John was seen on the Mertz stage in the ensemble of *Ken Ludwig's Lady Molly of Scotland Yard*, and as a Fight Swing in *The Three Musketeers*! John is a Third Year MFA Candidate in Florida State University's

Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training. Recent Credits include: Piknik Theatre's *Complete Works [Abridged]* (Daniel as Self) and *Patches: A New Musical* (Will), Asolo Conservatory's *Romeo and Juliet* (Tybalt) and Chekhov's *The Three Sisters* (Baron Tuzenbach). @johnnyleggs



CATHERINE LUCIANI (Ensemble) Catherine is excited to be working again with Asolo Repertory Theatre while completing her MFA Acting journey with FSU/Asolo Conservatory. She was previously seen in Asolo Rep's *Anna in the Tropics*, *The Three Musketeers* (understudy Sabine) and FSU's: *The*

Three Sisters; Miss Julie; *Romeo and Juliet*. Other credits include: *All About Image/We are the Elite* (NY Fringe Festival); *Nevermore* (Old Sturbridge Village); *The Panto Games*; *Fall River Axe Murders* (Imaginary Beasts); *Sisters* (Keeler Tavern Museum); *The Independents*; *Julius Caesar*; (Curtain Call).



ASHLEY MCCAULEY MOORE (Ensemble) is a union actor originally from North Carolina, by way of Los Angeles CA. She is currently in her final year at the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training. Ashley is returning to the Asolo Repertory Theatre having appeared in *Anna in the Tropics*, *Much*

Ado About Nothing as Hero/Don Jon. Her recent work includes: *Shakespeare & Company's Comedy of Errors* as The Courtesan/Balthazar, *Romeo and Juliet* as Juliet, and Lynn Nottage's *Clyde's* as Letitia.



IBUKUN OMOTOWA (Alvin Finney) is a conservatory trained actor who most recently appeared as Montrellous in *Clyde's* and Lord Capulet in *Romeo and Juliet*. Of note, Ibukun was awarded 2024 Best Performer in a Play by Broadway World Sarasota. With roots in the Atlanta Film Scene,

featuring in award winning independent films, theater has become a new love for the up-and-coming artist. Previously, Ibukun obtained his B.A. in History and Molecular Biology from Harvard University.



AYDA OZDOGANLAR (Ensemble) is delighted for her second season with the Asolo Repertory Theatre, where her previous roles include Featured Singer/Ensemble in *Ken Ludwig's Lady Molly of Scotland Yard*, Swing/understudy Cynthia Weil in *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* and understudy Margret

in *Silent Sky*. She attended Carnegie Mellon University, where she received her B.S. in Biology and Minor in Drama with a dramaturgical focus. Recent credits include: Regan in *Lear* and Jane in *Pride and Prejudice* at the Texas Shakespeare Festival, as well as Irina in *Three Sisters*, Kristin in *Miss Julie*, and Benvolia in *Romeo and Juliet*. @ayda_831



HARRIS MILGRIM (George Gershwin) is thrilled to make his Asolo Repertory Theatre debut! Selected credits: BROADWAY: *Tootsie* (OBC), *Cats* (2016 Revival OBC); OFF-BROADWAY: *Grand Hotel*, *Call Me Madam*, *Paint Your Wagon*, *Piece of My Heart*. NATIONAL TOUR: *West Side Story 1st National* (u/s

Tony). WORLD PREMIERS: *The Honeymooners* (Dylan Casey); *Secondhand Lions* (Bruno); REGIONAL: *Frozen* (Hans), *West Side Story* (Tony), *The World Goes 'Round'* (Man #1), *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (Benjamin), *Joseph...Dreamcoat* (Reuben), *Smokey Joe's* (Michael), *Altar Boyz* (Abraham). Thanks to HCKR, Murnane Casting, my dear friends and family and B for all their support. For Lance. IG: @harrismilgrim



GAIL RASTORFER (June Levant) has appeared at Asolo Repertory Theatre in *Heidi Chronicles*, *The Game's Afoot* and *You Can't Take It With You*. Theatre includes: *Murder On the Orient Express* (Milwaukee Rep), *Women In Jeopardy* (Arizona Theatre Co), *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* (Indiana

Rep & Syracuse Stage), *Mousetrap* (Maltz Jupiter Theatre), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (Drury Lane Oakbrook), *Ten Chimneys* (Cleveland Playhouse). TV/Film: *911*, *American Horror Story*, *Emperor of Ocean Park*, *Being the Ricardos*, and over a dozen national commercials. In 2023, Gail took a musical adaptation of her play, *Hello Kitty Must Die*, to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.



MAX ROLL (Oscar Levant) is proud to be making his Asolo Repertory Theatre debut! Broadway: *The Hills of California*, *An Enemy of the People*, *Good Night, Oscar*. Off Broadway: *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. Regional: *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Canada: *2 Pianos 4 Hands*. UK: *Much*

Ado About Nothing, *Twelfth Night*, *The Great Gatsby*. Narrator of multiple audiobooks. Endless gratitude to Henderson Hogan. Proud graduate of the Yale School of Drama. Love to Mum, Dad, Peachii and Munchie.

THE CAST



BRIAN ZANE (Ensemble, Understudy Gershwin) Brian last worked at Asolo Repertory Theatre in the ensemble of *Ken Ludwig's Lady Molly of Scotland Yard* and as an understudy for *The Three Musketeers* and *Incident at Our Lady of Perpetual Help*. Other regional credits include: *Master Class* (Timeline Theatre Company), *Clyde's* (FSU/Asolo Conservatory), *Far from Heaven* and *City of Angels* (Porchlight Music Theatre), *The Tempest* (Virginia Shakespeare Festival), *South Pacific* and *Anything Goes* (Music Theater Works), *Noises Off* and *The Fantasticks* (Crossroads Repertory Company), *One Flew Over a Cuckoo's Nest* (Connective Theatre Company). Thanks to Mary and Gracie.



MORIEL BEHAR (Understudy June) is making her Asolo Repertory Theatre debut and delighted to be here! National tours: *Little Women*, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. Recent regional: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Titania/Hippolyta), *The Sound of Music* (Baroness Elsa Schraeder).

Originally from Seattle, Moriel holds her BFA in Drama and Musical Theatre from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. When not performing, Moriel runs marathons and drinks a lot of coffee. Thanks to Chondra at FSE, Hannah at Serendipity, Jon at home. morielbehar.com, @momo_behar.



BRANDON BILLINGS (Understudy Ensemble) is beyond ecstatic to begin his MFA training at the renowned FSU/Asolo Conservatory. From Colorado, Brandon has performed in *The River Bride* and understudied for *Noises Off* (Arvada Center); *The Cherry Orchard* (Miners Alley Performing Arts Center); *The Inheritance Parts 1 & 2*, *The One-Act Play That Goes Wrong*, *The Hombres* (Vintage Theatre). WWW.BRANDONBILLINGS.NET



TRENT DAHLIN (Understudy Oscar) is making his Asolo Repertory Theatre debut! He has played major roles at top regional theaters, including five seasons at the Utah Shakespeare Festival—Feste (*Twelfth Night*), Gardiner (*Henry VIII*), and many more - and three seasons at TheatreSquared - *A Christmas Carol* (Fred/Young Scrooge). Catch him co-leading his first feature film, *Mission Stories* (Deseret). He recently played Jerry Lee Lewis (*MDQ*) and is excited to understudy another iconic pianist in *Good Night, Oscar*.



ALAN KIM (Understudy Ensemble) is excited to be at Asolo Repertory Theatre. His credits include *Peter Pan*, *Wolf Play* (Rec Room Arts), *Medea* (Classical Theatre Company), *King Lear*, *Cymbeline* (Houston Shakespeare Festival), *Edith Can Shoot Things* and *Hit Them* (Thunderclap Productions), and *Peaches* (Mildred's Umbrella Theater Company). He could not have gotten here without his mother's endless love. IG: @alan.dhk



JAMES AUSTIN RIDLEY (Understudy Ensemble) is excited to make his Asolo Repertory Theatre debut. Seen before at the Indianapolis Fringe Festival in **Check Your F*&^ing Email**. A first-year student at FSU/Asolo Conservatory, he looks forward to engaging with Sarasota's vibrant arts community. IG: @austinrid



EDGARDO SOLORIO (Understudy Max Weinbaum) is delighted to be making his Asolo Repertory Theatre debut! Edgardo most recently Played Prince Charming in *Cinderella*. Edgardo has also found joy in performing in *Dancing Home* (San Francisco Youth Theater) and consistently with the African American Shakespeare Company in the San Francisco Bay Area. Enamored by the support of family, friends, and mentors. Thank you!



DANI TREVINO (Understudy Ensemble) is thrilled to be making her Asolo Repertory Theatre debut! Dani's most recent projects are *A Beautiful Day in November on the Banks of the Greatest of the Great Lakes as Cheesecake* (The Public Theater of San Antonio) and Mother Courage in *Mother Courage and Her Children* (TSU). Many thanks to Belinda, Kelley, and Jonathan for their support.



KATRIANA VÉLEZ (Understudy Ensemble) most recently participated for a second consecutive year in the Puerto Rican and International Theater Festival, playing Fabiola in *El Olor del Popcorn*. During a previous edition of the same festival, she co-produced *Fefu and Her Friends*, where she also performed as Cecilia. Her film credits include Katelina in *Neon*. Special thanks to Candu Management! IG: @Katrianaalexa



PATRICK VEST (Understudy Bob Sarnoff) is delighted to be working with the wonderful people at Asolo Repertory Theatre! Patrick received his MFA in acting from the Alabama Shakespeare Festival. His regional theatre credits include: *Henry VIII* and *Much Ado About Nothing* at Utah Shakespeare. *Almost Maine*, *Taking Sides*, and *Moonlight and Magnolias* at The Rubicon. He also played Iago for Nebraska Shakespeare. Aside from acting, Patrick is a fight choreographer and a father of two.



ZOÉ ZERVAS (Understudy Ensemble) is delighted to return to Asolo Repertory Theatre after understudying in the Ensemble of *Ken Ludwig's Lady Molly of Scotland Yard*. Her past credits include: Caius Cassius in *Julius Caesar*, Marmee in *Wheaton's Conservatory Opera* mainstage production of *Little Women: The Musical*, Ruth in *The Ruth Project*, credits in Spoon River, and worked for three years with the Wheaton Park District's Shakespeare in the Park productions, including *Twelfth Night*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Henry IV, Part 1*. In her spare time, she loves to read, dance, and bake bread!

DOUG WRIGHT

(Playwright) is a Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning playwright and screenwriter. His Broadway credits include: *War Paint*, *Hands on a Hardbody*, *Grey Gardens*, and *I Am My Own Wife* (Tony Award, Pulitzer Prize). Off-Broadway credits include: *Posterity*, *Unwrap Your Candy* and *Quills*. Films include: *Quills* (Paul Selvin Award) and the upcoming *The Burial* starring Jamie Foxx and Tommy Lee Jones. He is the former president of the Dramatists Guild of America and a member of SAG-Aftra, SDC and the WGA.





PETER AMSTER (Director) is thrilled and grateful to be returning to Asolo Rep, having been a guest director, choreographer and performer there for 15 years. He directed such shows as *Three Musketeers*, *Morning After Grace*, *Born Yesterday*, *Living on Love*, *The Matchmaker*, *You Can't Take It With You*, and *Murder on the Orient Express*. He also directed *Dead Man's Cell Phone* for the MFA program, choreographed *1776*, and crooned some tunes on the outdoor stage in *We Need a Little Christmas*. He has been directing and choreographing theatre and opera for over 50 years. In Chicago, he directed and choreographed at the Goodman Theatre, Court Theatre, Northlight, Apple Tree, Route 66, Live Bait, the Lyric Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, Chicago Symphony, and Steppenwolf. Elsewhere in the United States, he directed at the The Old Globe, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Utah Shakespeare Festival, American Players Theatre, Peninsula Players, Weston Playhouse, Indiana Repertory Theatre, the Maltz Jupiter Theatre, Cleveland Play House, Syracuse Stage, Laguna Playhouse, and most recently, Gulfshore Playhouse in Naples. He taught theatre, opera, and performance studies at Northwestern University, Louisiana State University, CalArts, Columbia College, and Roosevelt University.

DAWN CHIANG (Lighting Design) On Broadway, Dawn was the lighting designer for *Zoot Suit* and the co-designer for *Tango Pasion*. She also co-designed five productions for *City Center's Encores!* Series, and was resident lighting designer for the New York City Opera at Lincoln Center. Off Broadway, she designed *Little Girl Blue*, *Robin and Me*; and productions for the Roundabout Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club. Dawn has designed the lighting at numerous regional theaters including Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Syracuse Stage, the Guthrie Theater, the Mark Taper Forum, Alliance Theatre, South Coast Repertory and Denver Center Theatre Company. She was awarded USITT's Distinguished Achievement Award in Lighting Design and Technology, and Broadway World's Best Lighting Design (Off Broadway).

PATRICIA DELOREY (Voice and Dialect Coach) Asolo Repertory Theatre favorites include: *Knoxville* (World Premiere), *Silent Sky*, *Crazy For You*, *Cabaret*, *Sweat*, *The Cake*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Gloria*, *Ragtime*, *Rhinoceros*, *Roe*, *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*, *The Great Society*, *Josephine* (World Premiere), *All The Way*, *West Side Story*, *Sotto Voce*, *Other Desert Cities*, *The Grapes of Wrath*,

Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, *Clybourne Park*, *The Innocents* (World Premiere), *Twelve Angry Men*, *Bonnie & Clyde* (World Premiere), *Doubt*, *Equus*. Other credits include: *Judith* (World Premiere, Urbanite Theatre), *Pitmen Painters* (American Stage Theatre), *The Smuggler* (Urbanite Theatre), Studio Six's production of *Plasticine* (The Baryshnikov Arts Center), *Saturday Night Fever* (Royal Caribbean International Cruises), *Stone Cold Dead Serious* (World Premiere, American Repertory Theatre), and *Nocturne* (World Premiere, American Repertory Theatre).

ROSS EGAN (Managing Director) is the Managing Director at Asolo Repertory Theatre. Ross' arts administration career began in Chicago where he was a co-founder of Jeff award-winning Refuge Theatre Project. Ross has served as Managing Director at Barter Theatre, the nation's longest-running professional theatre, and as Director of Marketing & Operations at Illinois Shakespeare Festival. Ross holds a BFA in acting from Michigan State University and an MBA from Illinois State University. He lives with his family in Lakewood Ranch and proudly serves as a den leader for the Boy Scouts of America.

MICHELLE HART (Hair, Wig, and Makeup Design) designs for Asolo Repertory Theatre and FSU/Asolo Conservatory. Other credits: Sarasota Ballet; Palm Beach Dramaworks; freeFall Theatre; Urbanite Theatre; Florida Studio Theatre; West Coast Black Theatre Troupe; Banyan Theatre; Ruth Eckerd Hall; Venice Theatre; Dorset Theatre, Barrington Stage and Open Stage Theatre. She has also done hair and/or make-up for Joan Rivers, Doris Roberts, Martin Short, Jane Russell, Arlene Dahl, Soledad Villamil, Jane Pauley, Richard Dreyfuss, Castille Langdon, Christopher Higgins, Mary Mara, Heather Robb, Lauren Sweetser, Justin Long, Paul Downs, Douglas Sills and Nia Hills; music videos: "Second Chance" by Shinedown, "Reverse Cowgirl" by T-Pain; film and television: *Lady Of The Manor*, *Paradise, FL*. and *The Real Stephen Blatt*.

KAITLIN KITZMILLER (Stage Manager) is excited to make her Asolo Repertory Theatre debut. Previous regional credits include: Goodman Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Paramount Theatre, Drury Lane Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Resident Ensemble Players, Theatre Silco and Peninsula Players. Kaitlin is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association.

BETH KOEHLER (Assistant Stage Manager) is thrilled to join Asolo Repertory Theatre for the first time! Regional credits include: *Inherit the Wind*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Matchbox Magic Flute*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Who's Tommy* (Goodman Theatre), *Where We Stand*, *Or*, and *Bad Dates* (Portland Stage Company). She was a Stage Management Apprentice at Portland Stage Company, a Goodman Theatre Floor Manager, and graduated from Northwestern University as part of the Theatre Management Module.

JAMES MONAGHAN (Dramaturg) is currently the Programs Director for the Hermitage Artist Retreat and was previously the literary manager and dramaturg at Asolo Rep. Prior to moving to Florida, James wrote about theatrical design as the Tow Foundation Fellow in the Roundabout Theatre Company Archives, created a one-on-one theatrical experience for the National Theatre of Croatia in Rijeka, and worked in the literary department of PlayCo. He has been a resident artist at the Catwalk Institute, featured in the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas' newsletter, and directed a digital production of Spring Awakening with the Georgetown Gilbert and Sullivan Society. He holds an MFA from Columbia University and a BFA with honors from NYU and is originally from Houston, TX.

MATTHEW PARKER (Sound Design) received his B.F.A. in Theatre Production Design and Technology from Ohio University. He was the resident sound designer at Monomoy Theatre in 1990. He has worked sound and special effects at The Flat Rock Theatre in North Carolina on such shows as *I Hate Hamlet*, the world premiere of *Gilligan's Island: The Musical* and others in the 1992 season. Since 1993, Matthew has designed sound for many of Asolo Rep's productions. In addition, he wrote and performed the musical scores for *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *Nicholas Nickleby*. Outside the theatre world he has designed and programed the show control system for Livingston's Amusements Bazooka Ball arena and produced virtual expositions for the National Watercolor Society.

ROBERT PERDZIOLA (Scenic and Costume Design) For the Asolo Repertory Theatre; *Knoxville*, *Rhinoceros*, *A Doll's House, Part 2*, *Born Yesterday*, and *Living on Love*. Robert has designed sets and costumes for American Ballet Theatre, Bolshoi Ballet, Boston Ballet, Finnish National Ballet, Kyoto Performing Arts Center, Latvian National Ballet, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Opera Australia, Opera Boston, Metropolitan Opera, Opera Monte Carlo, Saito

Kinen Festival, San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Ballet, Santa Fe Opera and the Stratford Shakespeare Festival. Among these designs have been *Capriccio* and *Il pirata* for the Met, Arabella for Opera Australia, and *Anna Karenina* for Florida Grand Opera. In 2025 his designs will be featured in *La Traviata* in Kyoto, as well as *The Flames of Paris* in Tokyo.

PETER ROTHSTEIN (Producing Artistic Director) is the Producing Artistic Director for Asolo Repertory Theatre where he directed the world premiere of *Ken Ludwig's Lady Molly of Scotland Yard*, *All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914*, *Twelve Angry Men: A New Musical*, *Inherit The Wind*, *Man of La Mancha*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *Ragtime*. He works extensively as a director of theater, musicals, opera, and new work development. For 25 years Rothstein served as the Founding Artistic Director of Theater Latté Da, a Minneapolis-based company dedicated to new and adventurous music-theater. Other collaborations include the Guthrie Theater, Children's Theatre Company, Ten Thousand Things, and Seattle's 5th Avenue, as well as the Minnesota Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Florida Grand Opera, and Chicago Opera Theater. Rothstein is the creator of *All Is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914*, which had its Off-Broadway debut in 2018 receiving the Drama Desk Award for Unique Theatrical Experience and has been seen around the globe airing on PBS. Rothstein served on the board of directors for the National Alliance for Musical Theatre, Alive and Kickin', and the Twin Cities' Ivey Awards. He holds degrees in music and theater from St. John's University and an MFA in Directing from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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OSCAR IN RHAPSODY: LEVANT, GERSHWIN, AND THE MUSIC THAT BINDS THEM

BY JAMES MONAGHAN

Oscar Levant was born on December 27, 1906, into a first-generation immigrant family where old-and-new-world values constantly vied for supremacy. Max, his father, was a jeweler, and Annie, his mother, from whom Oscar inherited his barbed humor, raised the children. Both parents were devoutly religious as well as classical music lovers, but Max was strident that music was merely a hobby and his sons would become doctors. The family was apparently blessed with musical gifts however and Harry, the oldest son, moved to New York to become a pit violinist and respected Broadway conductor. Even Benjamin Levant, who did become a urologist, was Oscar's first piano teacher; though Oscar quickly outgrew him, giving public concerts as early as elementary school.

Oscar first heard George Gershwin as a pit pianist in 1918 at the age of twelve. Oscar recorded little about the show, but the piano quickly captured and sustained his attention, later reporting "I had never heard such fresh, brisk, unstudied, completely free and inventive playing..." Any hint of a the two pianists' inextricable future straddling the worlds of concert and popular music didn't have much of a chance to take root when Max succumbed to the pneumonia that had been threatening him for years only a few days before Oscar's fifteenth birthday. This left Annie alone to raise the children still in the house. Free to push Oscar towards her vision of his life as a concert pianist, she moved him to New York City to pursue his classical training

"IF IT WASN'T FOR GEORGE,
I COULD HAVE BEEN A
PRETTY GOOD MEDIOCRE
COMPOSER."

— OSCAR LEVANT IN "AN AMERICAN IN PARIS"

under the auspices of acknowledged master Zygmunt Stojowski.

The city had its influence on the impressionable young man with a penchant for late nights, Tin Pan Alley, and an irresistible attraction to the lights and ladies of Broadway. Oscar drifted further and further from his life as a concert pianist. He made a living playing for a string of the day's prominent band leaders, including Ben Bernie and Paul Whiteman, but "Rhapsody in Blue" shattered Oscar's world by uniting these two previously opposed strains: the classical and the popular, the old and the new. While he missed the February 12, 1924 premiere at Aeolian Hall, he would become the first pianist (after Gershwin) to record the track in 1927.

Legend has it Oscar didn't make a lasting impression on Gershwin at their first meeting. Introduced by bandmate and frenemy Phil Charig, Oscar was only 18 at the time and tongue tied in front of his idol. Luckily, he would have more opportunities, and it wasn't long before Oscar would supplant Charig at the second piano in the Gershwin apartment. From

this most intimate position Levant would play alongside George on countless occasions deep into the night, both the early sketches of many of Gershwin's soon-to-be hits and classical music they were both passionate about. Ultimately, this led to Levant being a leading interpreter of Gershwin during his lifetime, occasionally joining him on the same bill.

The two were close enough that Levant was among the select few around George in his final days. Though he wasn't present when, on July 11, 1937, George Gershwin did not survive the operation that attempted to remove the malignant tumor from his brain, it is evident that Levant was irreparably impacted by the loss.

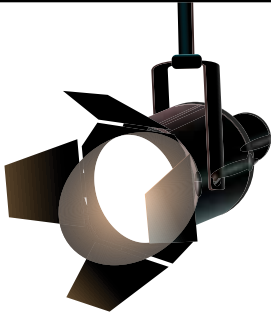
So frequently did Oscar portray essentially himself on screen, that it's telling to hear him say in *Humoresque*: "It's not what you are, but what you don't become that hurts." He was deeply aware of his failure to rival Gershwin as a composer, and he was too talented not to have been as keenly aware of his limitations as a classical pianist. When Levant died in 1972, his legacy fell into obscurity within a few years, his virtuosic abilities unable to leave as lasting an impression as his autobiographical on-screen personas as a surly piano man sidekick. Terry Teachout's devastatingly accurate summation of Oscar's life in "The Man Who Wasn't Gershwin: Oscar Levant... Classical Musician?" captures it well: "...the popular culture that he embraced paid Oscar Levant to turn himself into a grotesque self-caricature. He—and we—deserved better."

Gershwin—whose life was cut tragically short—and Levant—whose life lasted long enough to conquer the new mediums of radio, recorded sound, "talkies," and to write several critically acclaimed

memoirs, yet somehow leave a less substantial legacy—shared a complicated, deeply fruitful relationship for which the music they shared may be the best evidence. But even that does not go far enough. Oscar dedicates a moving and humorously self-lacerating journey of nearly 70 pages to the relationship in his memoir, *A Smattering of Ignorance*, entitled "My Life: The Story of George Gershwin," which makes it clear that his connection to Gershwin goes well beyond his love and appreciation for the music the man made, as unfathomably deep as that clearly was. Oscar concludes "...I find pitifully small solace in the other cliché panegyrics whose one unison refrain was: 'But his music lives on.' I detest this self-derived omniscience... No quantity of music could compensate for the loss of his corporeal presence, the cessation of his creative being—especially when we could have had both."



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Asolo Rep is grateful to have the Wilsons as Co-Producers of two shows this season: *All is Calm* and *Good Night, Oscar*. Their love for Asolo Rep is expressed not only by their financial support, but also by their support of our partnership with the FSU/Asolo Conservatory and Charlie’s dedicated service as Asolo Rep Board Treasurer, Chair of the Finance Committee, and Member of the Endowment Trustees.

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