



For Immediate Release
October 13, 2014

Rodgers and Hammerstein's **SOUTH PACIFIC**
Opens Asolo Rep's 2014-15 Season

(SARASOTA, October 13, 2014) — Asolo Repertory Theatre launches its 2014-15 season with ***SOUTH PACIFIC***, Rodgers and Hammerstein's glorious classic that poetically captures the sweet intricacies of wartime romance. The original 1949 Broadway production, based on the Pulitzer Prize winning novel, "Tales of the South Pacific," by James A. Michener, garnered 10 Tony Awards®, including a still unprecedented sweep of all four acting categories. The acclaimed 2008 Lincoln Center Theater production received seven Tony Awards, the most of any musical revival. Directed by Rob Ruggiero (Asolo Rep's *Show Boat* 2013), ***SOUTH PACIFIC*** opens **Friday, November 14, 2014 at 8pm**, with previews **Tuesday, November 11 at 7:30pm** and **Wednesday, November 12** and **Thursday, November 13, 2014 at 8pm**. The 1950 Pulitzer Prize for Drama winner will run

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through the holiday season and close **Sunday, December 28, 2014.**

Come away to a lush, remote island in the South Pacific during World War II where U.S. Navy officers, Seabees and nurses discover and embrace unfamiliar people and cultures in a place so very far from home. Cockeyed optimist Nellie Forbush, a nurse from Little Rock, Arkansas, falls deeply in love with Frenchman Emile De Becque, a widowed plantation owner who has lived on the island for many years. But their enchanted love story is threatened by Emile's mixed-race children and Nellie's racist roots that she so deeply wants to outgrow. Ivy League hero Lt. Joseph Cable must also face his own moral compass when he becomes enraptured with Liat, a beautifully frail island girl.

"The work of Rodgers and Hammerstein is timeless," said director Rob Ruggiero. "***SOUTH PACIFIC*** is remarkable in its expression of a very strong and, in its time, very progressive message on racism. The musical's unforgettable characters and relationships, great humor and extraordinary music have made ***SOUTH PACIFIC*** an engaging and moving classic since 1949. I'm thrilled to direct this brand new, richly intimate production."

The brightest stars from Broadway and London's West End lead this fresh, talented cast. Loretta Ables Sayre (Bloody Mary) originated the role of Bloody Mary in the Lincoln Center revival of ***SOUTH PACIFIC*** and received a Tony nomination for her performance. Ben Davis (Emile De Becque) appeared as Gaylord Ravenal in Asolo Rep's 2013 hit production of *Show Boat* and recently appeared on Broadway in *Violet* alongside Sutton Foster. Kelly Felthous (Nellie Forbush) performed the role of Glinda in the national tour of *Wicked*. Anthony Festa (Lt. Joseph Cable) recently starred as Tony in *West Side Story* on the West End.

The production's exotic island will come to life with a magnificent revolving set designed by Michael Schweikardt.

"The turntable provides the show with a sweeping grandeur that reflects the epic landscape of the South Pacific, and it allows the show to flow in a seamless and cinematic way that perhaps wasn't technically possible in the time in which the show was written," said Michael Schweikardt. "Different facets of the set provide

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different locations, but seeing it revolve from place to place provides a continuity that shows us how interconnected we all are – no one is an island."

SOUTH PACIFIC is studded with the most unforgettable songs of all time, including "Some Enchanted Evening," "There is Nothin' Like a Dame," "Bali Ha'i" and "I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Out-a My Hair." The glorious score will be brought to life by a richly intimate eight-piece orchestra, led by music director William Waldrop. This grand production will feature all-new orchestrations created especially for Asolo Rep by Brad Haak, who is the music director of the highly anticipated spring 2015 Broadway premiere of *An American in Paris*.

Asolo Rep is proud to host military personnel, veterans and their families at the first preview performance of **SOUTH PACIFIC**. All current military and veterans receive one free ticket and a second ticket for a guest at just \$10. Two additional family members can receive half-price tickets. As a longstanding Blue Star Theatre, Asolo Rep will offer a discount of 20 percent off up to four tickets for veterans and current military personnel throughout the run of **SOUTH PACIFIC** and for all of the theatre's productions.

SOUTH PACIFIC kicks off the third season of Asolo Rep's American Character Project, a close examination of this country's political, social and historical anatomy. This Rodgers and Hammerstein classic, which boldly premiered in 1949 just four years after the conclusion of WWII, explores the increasingly relevant themes of racism and the cruelties of war. The musical aptly follows last season's *Show Boat*, which examined similar social themes at an earlier point in U.S. history, and the 2012 production of *1776*, in which America's founding fathers vehemently debated the equality and rights of its prospective citizens.

"**SOUTH PACIFIC**'s heroine, Nellie, is a true emblem of America's involvement in World War II and the remarkable social change that was just around the corner for our country," said Michael Donald Edwards, producing artistic director of Asolo Rep. "We are thrilled to rediscover and present this extraordinary American musical theatre masterpiece that not only examines highly charged social issues but also features some of the most exquisite music ever written."

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CAST

(in order of appearance)

Zachary Jones	Jerome
Sophia Cavalluzzi	Ngana
Gregory L. Williams*	Henry/James Hayes, sailor
Kelly Felthous*	Ensign Nellie Forbush
Ben Davis*	Emile De Becque
Loretta Ables Sayre*	Bloody Mary
Matthew Amira*	Seabee Morty Wise
Ryan Cavanaugh*+	Bob McCaffrey, sailor
Steven Grant Douglas	Seabee Bill Whitmore/Lt. Buzz Adams
Benjamin Howes*	Luther Billis
Jeffrey Todd Parrott	Professor
Matt Faucher*	Stewpot
Anthony Festa*	Lt. Joseph Cable
Jim Sorensen*	Cmdr. William Harbison
Peter Reardon*	Capt. George Brackett
Meggie Cansler*	Ensign Dinah Murphy
Laura Gepford	Ensign Genevieve Marshall, nurse
Willow Schneider	Ensign Cora Macrae, nurse
Autumn Ogawa*	Liat

Matthew Amira*, Meggie Cansler*, Ryan Cavanaugh*+,
Steven Grant Douglas, Matt Faucher*, Laura Gepford, Willow Schneider,
Gregory L. Williams*.....Islanders, Party Guests, Pilots, Radio Operators, French Girls

Patrick Enright	Jerome Alternate
Milaan T. Smith	Ngana Alternate

Gracie Lee Brown	Female Swing
Brian Owen	Male Swing

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

+ = *Dance Captain*

SELECTED CREATIVE TEAM MEMBERS

Director	Rob Ruggiero
Orchestrations & Arrangements	Brad Haak
Music Direction	William Waldrop
Set Design	Michael Schweikardt
Costume Design	Leon Dobkowski
Lighting Design	John Lasiter
Sound Design	Michael Miceli

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SELECTED ARTISTIC BIOS

(In Alphabetical Order)

LORETTA ABLES SAYRE* GUEST ARTIST, FIRST SEASON (Bloody Mary) NYC and Broadway debut as Bloody Mary in Lincoln Center Theater's revival of **SOUTH PACIFIC** (Tony Award nomination and Theatre World Award) and London debut at Barbican Theatre, and U.K. tour. Theater: Bloody Mary in **SOUTH PACIFIC** (The MUNY) (Paper Mill Playhouse), *Wrestling Ernest Hemingway* (Hawaii Theatre), *You Somebody* (Diamond Head Theater), *Dreamgirls* (Hawaii Theatre), *Song for the Navigator* (Honolulu Theater for Youth - U.S. tour including Kennedy Center and Australia.) Concerts: opening for the Beach Boys, Kenny Loggins, James Brown, Four Tops. TV: *Hawaii Five-0*, *Beyond the Break*, *North Shore*, *Hawaii*, *Baywatch Hawaii*, *The Byrds of Paradise*. Movies: *Sex and the City 2*, dress. www.LorettaAblesSayre.com

BEN DAVIS* GUEST ARTIST, SECOND SEASON (Emile De Becque) Starred in London this summer as Fred Graham in *Kiss Me, Kate* as part of the BBC Proms at Royal Albert Hall. Billy, *Anna Nicole the Opera* (BAM, Lincoln Center); Brom Broeck, *Knickerbocker Holiday*. Broadway: *The Preacher*, *Violet*, Mr. Lindquist, u/s Carl-Magnus, Fredrik, *A Little Night Music*; Javert & Enjolras, *Les Miserables*; Trevor Graydon, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*; Marcello, Baz Luhrmann's *La Boheme* (2003 Tony Honor). Tour: *Galahad*, *Spamalot*. Regional: Emile de Becque, *South Pacific* (The MUNY); Capt. Von Trapp, *The Sound of Music* (Paper Mill Playhouse) and Ravenal, *Show Boat* (Goodspeed & Asolo Rep). Film/TV: Mozart's *The Magic Flute* directed by Sir Kenneth Branagh, *30 Rock*, and *Numb3rs*. Visit www.BenjaminJayDavis.com

KELLY FELTHOUS* GUEST ARTIST, FIRST SEASON (Nellie Forbush) most recently performed both the roles of Glinda and Nessarose in the national tour of *Wicked*. Kelly also originated the role of Gloria in *Flashdance* and Eva in *Bring it On*. Other favorite credits include *Grease* (Marty), *Seussical* (Mayzie), *Legally Blonde* (Elle), *A Chorus Line* (Val), *Boeing-Boeing* (Gloria), *Singin' in the Rain* (Kathy), *Gypsy* (June), *Urinetown* (Little Sally). Alumna of NYU/CAP21.

ANTHONY FESTA* FIRST SEASON (Lt. Joseph Cable) starred as Tony in *West Side Story* on London's West End as well as the UK and International tour of the production. Other credits include the recent revival of *Bare* in NYC, *How Deep is*

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the Ocean at NYMF, *Billy Elliot*, *Hairspray* and *The Full Monty*. Mr. Festa was also recently seen in the Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall presentation of Andrew Lipka's *I Am Harvey Milk*. www.AnthonyFesta.net

ROB RUGGIERO GUEST DIRECTOR, THIRD SEASON (Director) directed *Ella* at Asolo Rep in 2007 and last season's *Show Boat*. On Broadway, Rob directed *Looped* (starring Valerie Harper), and *High* (starring Kathleen Turner); both productions toured nationally. Off-Broadway he conceived and directed the original musical revue *Make Me a Song: The Music of William Finn* (Drama Desk/Outer Critics Circle Nominations). Rob is also the Producing Artistic Director of TheaterWorks in Hartford, CT. At TheaterWorks, he has directed more than 50 productions, and recently conceived a new holiday comedy, *Christmas on the Rocks*. Rob's work has been seen at regional theaters around the country, including multiple shows at Goodspeed Musicals, where he recently completed an acclaimed 50th anniversary revival of *Fiddler on the Roof*. This spring he will direct *Fiddler on the Roof* in Athens, Greece. www.RobRuggiero.com

SOUTH PACIFIC PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

Inside Asolo Rep: SOUTH PACIFIC

Wednesday, November 5 at 11am

Asolo Rep Mezzanine

Tickets are \$5. Free for donors and Guild members.

Discover what it takes to bring this Pulitzer Prize winning musical to the stage. This insightful program will feature the musical's director, Rob Ruggiero, and music director, William Waldrop. Asolo Rep's Literary Manager and Dramaturg Lauryn Sasso will guide this illuminating panel discussion. Inside Asolo Rep is sponsored by Observer Media Group and Hotel Indigo

Veterans Celebration at SOUTH PACIFIC

Tuesday, November 11 at 7:30pm; pre-show activities beginning at 6:30pm

Asolo Repertory Theatre

Asolo Rep is proud to host military personnel, veterans and their families at the first preview performance of **SOUTH PACIFIC**. All current military and veterans

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receive one free ticket and a second ticket for a guest at just \$10. Two additional family members can receive half-price tickets. A special ensemble from the Sarasota High School Mighty Sailor Band will perform from 6:50pm to 7:20pm to honor those who have served and continue to serve this nation. The outdoor pre-show celebration is free and open to the public. Discounted tickets for the 7:30pm performance of ***SOUTH PACIFIC*** are available by visiting or calling the box office.

Family Day at *SOUTH PACIFIC*

Saturday, November 22 at 2pm; pre-show activities begin at 11:30am

Asolo Repertory Theatre

Tickets are \$60 for a family of four; two tickets must be for patrons under the age of 18. Additional tickets for children under age 18 are available for \$12.

Dance in the "***SOUTH PACIFIC*** Music Video" to upbeat, re-mixed versions of the musical's classic hits. Learn simple choreography and then perform in this sure-to-go-viral music video. This family friendly event will also feature interactive activities exploring the world of the musical prior to the performance and a post-show discussion with the cast.

Carefully Taught: Singing Social Change

Sunday, December 14 at 7pm

FSU Center for the Performing Arts

Cook Theatre

Tickets are \$15

Sample songs from the last century of American musical theatre and listen for the sounds and sparks of change in this intimate educational performance.

ONGOING PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

The Scoop

One hour prior to every performance of ***SOUTH PACIFIC***

Asolo Rep's Mezzanine

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Arrive one hour before curtain to hear the ideas and inspirations that contributed to the making of ***SOUTH PACIFIC***.

Tuesday Talkbacks

Every Tuesday performance

Asolo Rep's Mezzanine

Join us for an intimate post-show discussion with featured actors or guests following every Tuesday performance of ***SOUTH PACIFIC***.

Meet the Actors

Sunday, November 30 at 2pm

Asolo Rep's Mertz Theatre

Immediately following the 2pm matinee, ask questions and learn more from members of the cast at this intimate discussion.

TICKETS

Tickets for ***SOUTH PACIFIC*** and the entire 2014-2015 Asolo Repertory Theatre season are on sale now. To purchase tickets, call 941.351.8000 or 800.361.8388, visit www.asolorep.org, or visit the Asolo Repertory Theatre Box Office, located in the lobby of the theatre. Asolo Repertory Theatre is located at 5555 North Tamiami Trail in the Florida State University Center for the Performing Arts. The box office is currently open Monday – Friday, 10am – 5pm. Box office hours in season, beginning October 29, are Monday 10am – 4pm, Tuesday 10am - 7:30pm, Wednesday – Saturday 10am – 8pm, and Sunday 10am – 2pm. The box office closes at 4pm when there are no evening performances and phone lines close one hour prior to the start of any performance. Season subscription packages are also available online and by visiting or calling the box office.

SPONSORS

Asolo Rep is able to present ***SOUTH PACIFIC*** because of the generosity of its sponsors. Corporate sponsors for ***SOUTH PACIFIC*** are Sarasota Magazine, Herald-Tribune Media Group, SNN Suncoast News Network, Hyatt Place,

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Michael's on East, 107.9 WSRZ, and Gulf Coast Community Foundation. Asolo Rep's major season sponsors are Florida State University, Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Designing Women Boutique, The Shubert Foundation, Publix Super Markets Charities, The Woman's Exchange, Inc., Tropical Cadillac, and Community Foundation of Sarasota County. Asolo Rep's artistic programs are paid for in part by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax revenues. Asolo Rep is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.

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