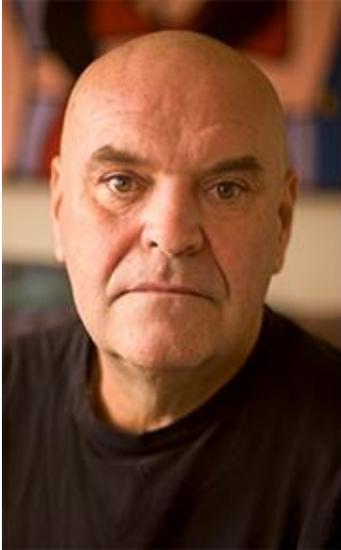


ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE

PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MICHAEL DONALD EDWARDS • MANAGING DIRECTOR LINDA DIGABRIELE



FOR HIGH-RES PHOTOS OF JACK WILLIS, VISIT:

<https://asolorep.smugmug.com/Jack-Willis/>

For Immediate Release
September 19, 2016

**JACK WILLIS, ORIGINAL STAR OF *ALL THE WAY* AND
THE GREAT SOCIETY, TO REPRIS HIS ACCLAIMED PORTRAYAL
OF PRESIDENT LBJ IN *THE GREAT SOCIETY*
THIS JANUARY AT ASOLO REP**

"The ultra-talented Jack Willis portrays LBJ with a deep and penetrating understanding of the role and gives a disciplined, layered, and nuanced performance."

– DC Metro Theater Arts

(SARASOTA, September 19, 2016) – Asolo Repertory Theatre proudly announces that acclaimed actor Jack Willis will portray President Lyndon Baines Johnson in its production of Robert Schenkkan's political drama ***THE GREAT SOCIETY***. Chronicling the second chapter of President LBJ's divisive presidency, the highly charged sequel to Tony Award®-winner *All the Way* runs January 11 through April 2 at Asolo Rep. Mr. Willis originated the role of LBJ in the world premieres of both *All the Way* and ***THE GREAT SOCIETY*** at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Mr. Willis replaces the previously announced Nick Wyman.

Mr. Willis, whose portrayal of LBJ was hailed as "galvanic" by *The Seattle Times*, also starred as LBJ in the Arena Stage April 2016 production of *All the Way*. An FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training graduate, he has appeared on Broadway in *Julius Caesar*, *The Crucible*, *Art* and *The Old Neighborhood*. Off-Broadway he has been seen in *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *World of Mirth*, *The Iphigenia Cycle* and *Valhalla*. He has appeared in more

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than 200 productions worldwide and has been a company member at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Arena Stage, American Conservatory Theatre, American Repertory Theatre, Trinity Repertory Company and Dallas Theater Center.

On the heels of Asolo Rep's wildly successful 2015-16 season production of *All the Way*, **THE GREAT SOCIETY** continues Robert Schenkkan's profound exploration of President Lyndon Johnson's turbulent years in the White House. Besieged by political opponents, Johnson summons all his political wives to advance his vision of a Great Society. Despite deep division over the Vietnam War and ongoing civil rights battles, Johnson championed the most ambitious effort ever to test what American government is capable of achieving. By looking back, **THE GREAT SOCIETY** examines who we are, asks how we got here, and dreams of what we could yet become.

"Jack Willis is not only one of the best actors that I've ever had the pleasure of working with, but he is one of the great American actors, period," said Bill Rauch, Artistic Director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. "His President Johnson is a force of nature -- fierce, funny, heroic and so human even in tragedy. Having originated the lead role in both parts of Robert Schenkkan's powerful plays, Jack has honed his performance as LBJ for the past five years. Asolo Rep audiences are in for a stunning experience with **THE GREAT SOCIETY**."

"We are thrilled that the immensely brilliant Jack Willis will star as LBJ in our production of **THE GREAT SOCIETY**, Robert Schenkkan's electrifying political masterpiece," said Michael Donald Edwards, Producing Artistic Director of Asolo Rep. "As he is an FSU/Asolo Conservatory graduate, this will be an exciting homecoming for both Jack and for the theatre. With Jack leading the acting company, our patrons will have the extraordinary opportunity to experience this remarkable story through the man who originated the role."

ABOUT JACK WILLIS

JACK WILLIS' Broadway credits include *Julius Caesar*, *The Crucible*, *Art* and *The Old Neighborhood*. Off-Broadway credits include *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *World of Mirth*, *The Iphigenia Cycle* and *Valhalla*. He has appeared in more than 200 productions worldwide and been a company member at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, where he originated the role of President Lyndon Baines Johnson in both *All the Way* and *The Great Society*, Arena Stage, American Conservatory Theater, American Repertory Theater, Trinity Repertory Company and Dallas Theater Center. Film/TV credits include *Toy Story 3*, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, *The Cradle Will Rock*, *The Out-of-Towners*, *Love Hurts*, *I Come in Peace*, *Problem Child*, *Law & Order*, *Ed* and *Dallas*. He is a proud graduate of the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training.

TICKETS

Single tickets for Asolo Rep's 2016-17 season are on sale now for subscribers and donors (at the Angel level or higher). Single tickets will go on sale for the general public online on Saturday, October 1 at 12:01am and at the box office and by phone on Monday, October 3. Season subscriptions and tickets are available by calling or visiting Asolo Rep's Box Office, located in the lobby of the theatre, 5555 N. Tamiami Trail in Sarasota; 941.351.8000 or 800.361.8388, or online at www.asolorep.org. Box office hours through November 1 are Monday through Friday 10am-5pm.

SPONSORS

Asolo Rep is able to present **THE GREAT SOCIETY** because of the generosity of its sponsors. Corporate sponsors for **THE GREAT SOCIETY** are Plumbing Today, Innovative Dining and Williams Parker. Asolo Rep 2016-17 Major Season Sponsors are Florida State University, Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, The Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, Designing Women Boutique, Woman's Exchange, Inc., The Huisking Foundation, and Sunset Cadillac of Bradenton. 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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Media Contact:

Sasha Goodrich

Public Relations Manager

Sasha_Goodrich@asolo.org

941.351.9010 x4800