

ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE

PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MICHAEL DONALD EDWARDS MANAGING DIRECTOR LINDA DIGABRIELE



For Immediate Release

December 5, 2014

Adventure Awaits in Asolo Repertory Theatre's Production of Thornton Wilder's *The Matchmaker*

"*The Matchmaker* is a match – many matches – made in heaven."
- *The National Post*

(SARASOTA, December 5, 2014) — Asolo Repertory Theatre kicks off its 2014-15 rep season with three-time Pulitzer Prize winner Thornton Wilder's uproarious romantic comedy, ***THE MATCHMAKER***. Directed by Peter Amster, the play opens Friday, January 9, 2015 at 8pm, with previews Tuesday, January 6 at 7:30 pm, Wednesday, January 7 and Thursday, January 8 at 8pm. ***THE MATCHMAKER***, which was adapted into the Tony Award®-winning musical *Hello, Dolly!*, runs in rotating rep through Saturday, April 11, 2015.

Set at the dawn of the 20th century, ***THE MATCHMAKER*** chronicles an eccentric band of characters as they frolic through New York City in search of love, fortune and adventure. When the brusque and affluent merchant Horace Vandergelder wants a wife, he seeks the assistance of sprightly matchmaker Dolly Gallagher Levi. He intends to marry Irene Molloy, a widowed, disenchanted milliner, but Dolly

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has already secretly concocted a plan to marry him herself. Vandergelder's madcap employees Cornelius and the young Barnaby are never far from their boss' quest for a wife, leaving a sticky trail of shenanigans along the way.

"Some might ask why Asolo Rep would not just do *Hello, Dolly!*" said Amster. "Well, it turns out that the play offers pleasures and insights into the American character that the musical does not. Dolly Gallagher Levi, as conceived by Wilder, is every bit as deliciously sly, witty, and entertaining as Jerry Herman and Michael Stewart's Dolly, but she's more than that. She's a shrewd philosopher, with many truths to share with us about character and economics. Things don't always go her way."

Peggy Roeder, who played Madge, Sonia, and Ma Joad in last season's *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, and *The Grapes of Wrath*, stars as the magnetic Dolly Levi. Steve Hendrickson, who played Andrew McNair in Asolo Rep's 2012-13 season production of *1776*, plays Horace Vandergelder.

Celebrated American author Thornton Wilder penned two Pulitzer Prize winning plays: *Our Town* and *The Skin of Our Teeth*, and his novel *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* received the Pulitzer Prize in 1928. Wilder also wrote the screenplay for Alfred Hitchcock's 1943 film *Shadow of a Doubt*.

Set designer Russell Metheny, who has designed the sets for Asolo Rep's productions of *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*, *1776*, *My Fair Lady* and *Twelve Angry Men*, brings Wilder's world of turn of the century Yonkers and New York City to life with an imaginative set that reflects the upbeat, highly active feel of the play.

"It was important to design the sets for **THE MATCHMAKER** to allow a continuous fluid non-stop action," said Metheny. "The first two acts are designed to move from one to the other without stopping, in view, to keep the action, energy of the performances and story flowing. As the first act ends the set rides upstage away from the audience's view as the Act 2 set rides on from both sides of the stage. In this transition we travel as if we took the train from Yonkers to Manhattan, accented by a vista of a bustling elevated train station."

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Infused with joyful original music composed by Gregg Coffin, ***THE MATCHMAKER*** merrily continues the third season of Asolo Rep's American Character Project, a five-year celebration of this country's diverse culture and people. This season, a common thread of money, power and sex weaves through each production. The central theme of Wilder's longest-running Broadway play is to take chances and embrace love and adventure, which remains a core American value.

"Filled with wit and wisdom, ***THE MATCHMAKER*** is a brilliant comedy that evokes a 19th century version of Match.com," said Michael Donald Edwards, producing artistic director of Asolo Rep. "At the same time it captures the heart of the human dilemma we understand so well in America: how to achieve financial security while at the same time experiencing the unbridled joy of living in the moment."

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Steve Hendrickson*	Horace Vandergelder
Paul Herbig	Ambrose Kemper
Brian Owen	Joe Scanlon/Gypsy Musician
Tyla Abercrombie*	Gertrude
Buddy Haardt*	Cornelius Hackl
Andrea Adhoff	Ermengarde
Douglas Jones*	Malachi Stack
Peggy Roeder*	Dolly Levi
Owen Teague*	Barnaby Tucker
Olivia Williamson	Mrs. Molloy
Allie Henkel	Minnie Fay
David Breitbarth*	Cab Man
Matthew R. Olsen	Rudolf
Matt Andersen	August
Michael Frishman	Waiter
Jory Murphy	Waiter
Carolyn Michel*	Miss Flora Van Huysen
Gracie Lee Brown	Miss Van Huysen's Cook

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

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SELECTED CREATIVE TEAM MEMBERS

Director	Peter Amster
Scenic Designer	Russell Metheny
Costume Designer	Virgil C. Johnson
Lighting Designer	Paul Miller
Sound Designer	Matt Parker
Composer	Gregg Coffin

SELECTED ARTISTIC BIOS

(in alphabetical order)

PETER AMSTER SEVENTH SEASON (Director, *The Matchmaker*) returns to Asolo Rep where he directed *Vanya and Sonya and Masha and Spike*, *You Can't Take it With You*, *Fallen Angels*, *Deathtrap*, *The Perfume Shop*, *This Wonderful Life*, and choreographed *1776*. In Chicago, he was nominated for Joseph Jefferson Awards for directing *Once on This Island*, *The World Goes Round*, *The Rothschilds* (Apple Tree Theatre), and *Pride and Prejudice* (Northlight Theatre). Other Chicago area theatres include Steppenwolf, The Goodman, The Court, Live Bait, Pegasus, and Route 66. Regional theatres include the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Utah Shakespeare Festival, American Conservatory Theater, Syracuse Stage, Geva Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theatre, American Repertory Theater, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Peninsula Players, Weston Playhouse, Maltz Jupiter Theatre, and Laguna Playhouse. Peter has directed and choreographed operas for the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago Opera Theater, Skylight Opera in Milwaukee, and Light Opera Works in Evanston, IL.

STEVE HENDRICKSON* GUEST ARTIST, SECOND SEASON (Horace Vandergelder) made his 2012 Asolo Rep debut as Andrew McNair in *1776*. He reprised the role in the 2013 remount at the American Conservatory Theater. He's appeared at Barrington Stage, Syracuse Stage, the Folger, Chicago and Orlando Shakespeare Theatres, Arizona Theatre Company, The Old Globe, Cincinnati Playhouse, and Florida Stage. At home in Minneapolis he has appeared at the Skylark Opera, Park Square, Guthrie, Jungle, CTC, Chanhassen, History, and Pillsbury House Theatres. Awards include a 2000 CityPages Best Actor Award for *Threepenny Opera* (Macheath), 2003 and 2005 Star-Tribune Best Actor Awards for *Camelot* (Arthur) and *Merchant of Venice* (Shylock), and 2005 and 2009 Ivey Awards for *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *Tyrone and Ralph*. In 2001 he became the first performer to receive Dayton-Hudson Distinguished Artist Fellowship. He's the founder of Audio-Visceral Productions at <http://audio-visceral.com>.

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PEGGY ROEDER* GUEST ARTIST, FIFTH SEASON (Dolly Levi) has appeared at Asolo Rep in *The Grapes of Wrath*; *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*; *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*; *You Can't Take It With You*; and *My Fair Lady*. Favorite roles nationally include *The Dresser* (Steppenwolf), *Romeo and Juliet* (Goodman), *The Clean House* (Milwaukee Rep), *Kabuki Macbeth* (Chicago Shakespeare), *The Cider House Rules* (Atlantic Theater Company), *The How and the Why* (Etopia Productions), *The Big Meal* (ATC), *Cabaret* (Peninsula Players), *Float* (About Face), *The Busy World is Hushed* (Next). Her work has garnered four Jeff Awards, three Artisan Awards, two After Dark Awards. Film and TV credits include *Groundhog Day*, *Road To Perdition*, *Were the World Mine*, *Stranger Than Fiction*, *Star Trek: DS9*, *Law & Order*.

PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

Tuesday Talkbacks

January 6, February 3, March 24, 2015 (following the 7:30pm performance)

Asolo Rep's Mezzanine

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

Meet the Actors

Sunday, February 8, 2015

(Following the 2pm matinee)

Asolo Rep's Mertz Theatre

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

TICKETS

Tickets for ***THE MATCHMAKER*** and the entire 2014-2015 Asolo Repertory Theatre season are on sale now. Tickets for ***THE MATCHMAKER*** start at just \$22. 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 open Monday 10am – 4pm, Tuesday 10am – 7:30pm, Wednesday - Saturday 10am – 8pm, and Sunday

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10am – 2pm. The box office closes at 5pm 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 ***THE MATCHMAKER*** because of the generosity of its sponsors. Corporate sponsors for ***THE MATCHMAKER*** are The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee, Tidewell Hospice, Morton's Gourmet Market & Catering, ABC 7, The Observer 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, The Woman's Exchange, Inc., and Tropical Cadillac. 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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