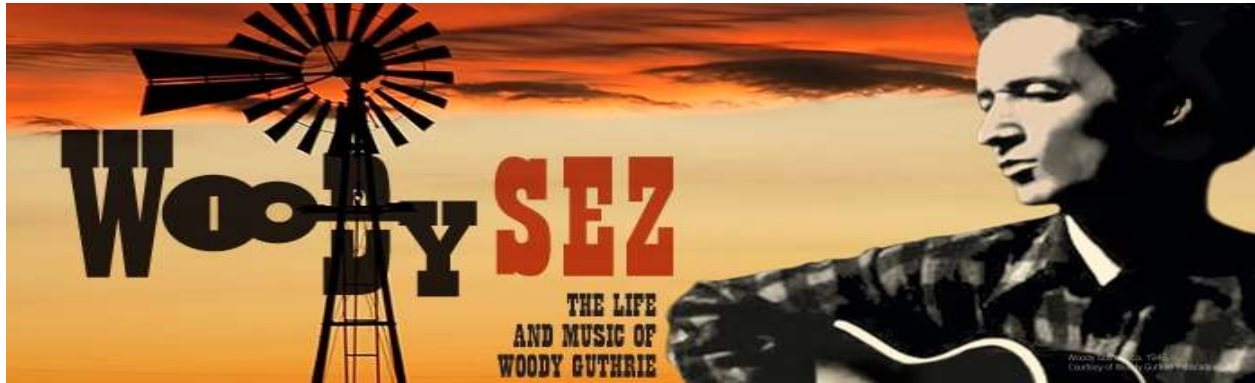


# ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE

PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MICHAEL DONALD EDWARDS MANAGING DIRECTOR LINDA DIGABRIELE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 4, 2015

***Woody Sez: The Life and Music of Woody Guthrie***  
**Opens May 30, 2015 at Asolo Rep**

(SARASOTA, May 4, 2015) — Asolo Rep is thrilled to present ***Woody Sez: The Life and Music of Woody Guthrie***, an exuberant musical featuring the unforgettable songs of the father of American folk music. Directed by Nick Corley and devised by David M. Lutken with Nick Corley and Darcie Deaville, Helen J. Russell, and Andy Teirstein, ***Woody Sez*** has one preview on Friday, May 29, opens **Saturday, May 30 at 8pm** and runs through Sunday, June 21 in the Mertz Theatre in the FSU Center for the Performing Arts.

***Woody Sez*** spotlights the toe-tapping, heartfelt music of this revolutionary singer/songwriter, including "This Land is Your Land," "The Ballad of Tom Joad," and "Goin' Down That Road Feelin' Bad." Four actor/musicians play 20 different musical instruments in this jubilant celebration of Woody Guthrie's music and the social justice that his songs inspired. Guthrie was hailed as the "the original folk hero; a man who, in the '30s and '40s, transformed the folk ballad into a vehicle for social protest and observation and in so doing, paved the way for Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen and a host of other folk and rock songwriters" by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

***Woody Sez*** premiered at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2007 and has since toured Munich, Berlin, Chicago, Boston, Washington, D.C., and London's West End. This musical event, which has been nominated for Joseph Jefferson and

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## **Woody Sez**

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Helen Hayes Awards, recently toured the Cleveland Play House, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, and TheaterWorks Hartford, as well as stops in the Middle East and China.

Cast-led Hootenannies will follow every Sunday matinee, where patrons will have the unique opportunity to play their own instruments at hour-long jam sessions on the mezzanine level of the theatre's lobby. Hootenannies are free and open to those who do and do not have tickets to that day's performance. They will start 20 - 30 minutes after the matinee performance ends, and are open to music enthusiasts of all ages and abilities.

"**Woody Sez** is about the man and his songs," said deviser and cast member David Lutken. "We've made it our job to sing and play Woody's tunes in the style of his times. It creates a real link for the audience to his life, his passions, flaws, and to his spirit. The cast doesn't imitate or impersonate Woody or his family or cohorts; we play and sing the way we know how, as they did (and still do, some of them)."

"Woody Guthrie's inspirational music provided an uplifting and soulful soundtrack during America's most trying periods, from the Great Depression to World War II and beyond," said Producing Artistic Director Michael Donald Edwards. "His politically and socially charged songs continue to give hope and a voice to the voiceless as they struggle to survive in America today. It is thrilling to present this award-winning musical event, which promises to be hugely entertaining, with lots of humor and deeply felt emotion. It is a celebration of the American spirit."

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### **CAST**

**(In Alphabetical Order)**

Darcie Deaville

David Finch\*

David M. Lutken\*

Helen Jean Russell\*

*\*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

<b>Deviser</b>	David M. Lutken
<b>Co-Deviser</b>	Nick Corley
<b>Co-Deviser</b>	Darcie Deaville
<b>Co-Deviser</b>	Helen Jean Russell
<b>Co-Deviser</b>	Andy Teirstein
<b>Director</b>	Nick Corley
<b>Music Director</b>	David M. Lutken
<b>Associate Director</b>	Sherry Lutken
<b>Scenic Designer</b>	Luke Cantarella
<b>Costume Designer</b>	Jeffrey Meek
<b>Lighting Designer</b>	Seth Reiser

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## SELECTED ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

(In alphabetical order)

**NICK CORLEY\*** FIRST SEASON (Director, Co-Deviser) Co-wrote the award winning *Woody Sez* presented in London's West End, Edinburgh, Germany, Israel, China, and across America. NY productions include *Flight* (SDC/Callaway Directing Nom.), *About Face* (NYMF Best Director Nom.), *Tall Grass*, *Tim and Scrooge*, and *Mother Russia* (Carnegie Hall). Regionally he co-wrote and directed *A Young Lady of Fashion* (Fulton Opera House) and *Eliot Ness...in Cleveland* (Denver Theatre Center). Other directing credits include St. Louis Rep, Houston's Alley Theatre, Adirondack Theater Festival, A.R.T., Fulton Opera House, and Vermont's Commons Group. Acting credits include Broadway (*You Can't Take It With You*, *Drood*, *Mary Poppins*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *She Loves Me*), Off-Broadway, regional (Yale Rep, Syracuse Stage, Paper Mill Playhouse, etc.), film (*Kissing Jessica Stein*), recordings, and television.

**DARCIE DEAVILLE** FIRST SEASON (Cast Member/Co-Deviser) Darcie has played in many parts of the world, from the Yukon to the Yucatan, the Wild West to the Far East. Now in Austin, Texas, she's well known for her fiery fiddling and singing her own American roots based songs. Darcie has played with artists such as Ani DiFranco, Tom Paxton, David Lindley, and Eliza Gilkyson. A multi-instrumentalist, Darcie was the first woman (and first Canadian) to enter the

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## **Woody Sez**

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National Guitar Flatpicking Championships in Winfield KS, emerging as a top 10 finalist. A writer, producer, musical director and coach, Darcie's theatre work includes her one-woman play, *Tornado in Slo Mo*, multiple productions of *Woody Sez*, *Woody Guthrie's American Song*, *Cottonpatch Gospel*, and *Always, Patsy Cline*. The latest of her five CDs is called *Livin' on the Lucky Side* (Taller Dog Music). Darcie is currently in a band called the Austin Lounge Lizards.

**DAVID FINCH\*** FIRST SEASON (Cast Member) Most recently Mr. Finch played the harmonica and the part of the Mock Turtle in the L.A. Philharmonic's production of Unsuik Chin's Opera, *Alice In Wonderland*. He reprised the role at the Barbican in London with the BBC Symphony. He performed *Cabaret* on Broadway and in the West End *Woody Sez*. He's played beside artists as diverse as Alan Cumming, Serj Tankian, Tony Bennett, Amanda Palmer, Kylie Minogue and Dee Snider. He's also toured nationally/internationally with *Cabaret* and *Fame the Musical*. Off-Broadway credits include *Allegro*, *Fame on 42<sup>nd</sup> St.*, and *Spring Storm*. Please visit [dhfinch.com](http://dhfinch.com).

**DAVID M. LUTKEN\*** FIRST SEASON (Cast Member, Music Director/Deviser). Broadway credits include *Inherit the Wind*; *Ring of Fire*; *The Civil War* and *The Will Rogers Follies*. Mr. Lutken has performed at Carnegie Hall, the 92<sup>nd</sup> St. Y and Lincoln Center, Off-Broadway, across Great Britain, Europe, the Middle East, China and in American regional theaters in a variety of productions: *Man of La Mancha*, *Dark of the Moon*, *A Month in the Country*, *Stand By Your Man*, *Southern Comfort*, *Buddy*, *Big River*, and his original show, *Woody Sez* for which he won the Helen Hayes Award and the Joseph Jefferson Award for Best Actor.

**HELEN JEAN RUSSELL\*** FIRST SEASON (Cast Member/Co-Deviser). Helen is making her Asolo Rep debut. Her affiliation with Woody Guthrie began in Florida in 1994. She has since toured Austria, Italy and the Czech Republic performing Mr. Lutken's Guthrie-inspired show for children, *This Land is Your Land*. She joined *Woody Sez* for its 2007 debut in Edinburgh and for productions throughout the US, UK, Europe, the Middle East and China. In 2012, Helen was nominated for a Helen Hayes Award for her work in the show. At home in New York City, her debut album *Holly Days* was released in 2008. A second one is in the works.

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## **PUBLIC PROGRAMMING**

### **Woody Sez Hootenanny**

Asolo Rep's Mezzanine

Following each Sunday matinee: May 31; June 7, 14, 21

Cast-led Hootenannies will follow every Sunday matinee, where patrons will have the unique opportunity to play their own instruments at hour-long jam sessions on the mezzanine level of the theatre's lobby. Hootenannies are free and open to those who do and do not have tickets to that day's performance. They will start 20 - 30 minutes after the matinee performance ends, and are open to music enthusiasts of all ages and abilities.

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## **TICKETS**

Tickets for **Woody Sez** and the entire 2014-2015 Asolo Repertory Theatre season are on sale now. Tickets for **Woody Sez** start at just \$22. To purchase tickets, call 941.351.8000 or 800.361.8388 or visit [www.asolarep.org](http://www.asolarep.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 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.

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## **SPONSORS**

Asolo Rep is able to present **Woody Sez** because of the generosity of its sponsors. Corporate sponsors for **Woody Sez** are Grapevine Communications, BIZ 941, WSRQ and BMO Bank. 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

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