

ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE

For Immediate Release
Friday, December 11, 2015

Asolo Rep Announces Final Show of its 2015-16 Season: the U.S. Premiere of U.K. Sensation *Hetty Feather* in June 2016

"An utterly magnificent show"
— *Evening Standard*

(SARASOTA, December 11, 2015) — Asolo Repertory Theatre proudly announces the final production of its 2015-16 season, the U.S. premiere of the U.K. phenomenon **HETTY FEATHER**, Jacqueline Wilson's wildly popular U.K. novel adapted into a thrilling theatrical masterpiece by Emma Reeves. A 2015 Olivier Award nominee for Best Family Entertainment, **HETTY FEATHER** will have one preview on Thursday, June 2 at 7pm, open Friday, June 3 at 7pm and run through Sunday, June 26 in the Mertz Theatre, located in the FSU Center for the Performing Arts. Asolo Rep's production will feature the entire West End cast, starring Phoebe Thomas as Hetty. Sally Cookson, who directed the West End production, will direct Asolo Rep's production.

Charles Dickens meets Orphan Annie meets Cirque du Soleil in this smashing new play that has taken the U.K. by storm. Based on Jacqueline Wilson's best-selling novel, *Hetty Feather* is a feisty young 19th century redhead with an indomitable imagination and a zest for adventure. Left at the not-so-tender mercies of the Foundling Hospital as a baby, Hetty's quest to find her true home takes her from the English countryside to the traveling circus to the mean streets of London, all by way of thrilling aerial and circus feats, live music and spectacular story-telling. A true celebration of the random nature of life, this is a must-see theatrical adventure for all ages.

"I have been producing theatre in the West End and around the English provinces for 25 years and no other production of mine has ever had such fantastic reviews," said Kenny Wax, producer of **HETTY FEATHER**. "We have now played two West End Summer seasons, both hugely successful, and by the time we arrive in Sarasota, we will have toured to every major city in the U.K. To have the opportunity now to bring our extraordinary show over to play at Asolo Rep is very special indeed, made even more exciting by Sarasota's historic association with the Ringling Brothers Circus. I don't think a story about a feisty little girl who wants to run away to join the circus could find a more suitable home in the U.S. in which to premiere."

"It is very exciting to present the U.S. premiere of **HETTY FEATHER**, a beloved U.K. theatre sensation now completing a hugely successful run on London's West End," said Asolo Rep's Producing Artistic Director Michael Donald Edwards. "We look forward to welcoming families and patrons of all ages to this coming-of-age story filled with music, circus magic, and a lot of heart."

Tickets for **HETTY FEATHER** will go on sale on Friday, December 11, 2015 at 10am online and at the Asolo Rep Box Office. Tickets start at \$18. There will be a special family ticket package discount, with 15 percent off tickets for a family of four. Two tickets must be for patrons under the age of 18. Throughout the run, all Saturday morning (10:30am curtain) performances will also be discounted.

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CAST

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| Phoebe Thomas | Hetty Feather |
| Matt Costain | Jem/Matron Bottomly |
| Sarah Goddard | Peg/Ida |
| Nik Howden | Saul |
| Mark Kane | Gideon |
| Nikki Warwick | Madame Adeline |
| Seamas H. Carey | Musician |
| Luke Potter | Musician |

HETTY FEATHER Performance Schedule

Wednesdays: 2pm and 7pm curtain

Thursdays: 7pm curtain

Fridays: 7pm curtain

Saturdays: 10:30am and 3:30pm curtain

Sundays: 1pm and 5:30pm curtain

Asolo Rep 2015-16 Season

November 10–December 27

WEST SIDE STORY

Based on a Conception of Jerome Robbins

Book by Arthur Laurents

Music by Leonard Bernstein

Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Directed by Joey McKneely

Choreography reproduced by Joey McKneely

January 6–April 9

ALL THE WAY

By Robert Schenkkan

Directed by Emily Sophia Knapp

Based on the original production directed by Bill Rauch

January 13–February 25

LIVING ON LOVE

By Joe DiPietro

Based on the play *Peccadillo* by Garson Kanin

Directed by Peter Amster

January 20–April 10

AH, WILDERNESS!

By Eugene O'Neill

Directed by Greg Leaming

March 9–April 17

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER

By Todd Kreidler

Based on the screenplay by William Rose

Directed by Frank Galati

March 30–April 24

DISGRACED

In the Historic Asolo Theater

By Ayad Akhtar

Directed by Michael Donald Edwards

April 27–May 29

JOSEPHINE

World Premiere

Book by Ellen Weston and Mark Hampton

Music by Stephen Dorff

Lyrics by John Bettis

Based on an original story by Kenneth Weissman

Based on the book *Remembering Josephine* by Stephen Papich

Directed and choreographed by Joey McKneely

June 2 - 26

HETTY FEATHER

U.S. Premiere

Based on the book by Jacqueline Wilson

Adapted for the stage by Emma Reeves

Directed by Sally Cookson

TICKETS

Tickets for **HETTY FEATHER** will go on sale on Friday, December 11, 2015 at 10am online and at the Asolo Rep Box Office. Tickets start at \$18. 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 10am – 4pm, Tuesday – Thursday 10am - 7:30pm, Friday – 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.

SPONSORS

Asolo Rep is able to present **HETTY FEATHER** thanks to the generosity of its sponsors. **HETTY FEATHER** is sponsored by Energy Today, Grapevine Communications, Biz(941), and WSRQ. Asolo Rep 2015-2016 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.,

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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