

ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE

For Immediate Release
Monday, September 14, 2015

Asolo Repertory Theatre Proudly Presents IllumiNation: A Series of Performances and Events Promoting Cross-cultural Conversations in the Community

(SARASOTA, September 14, 2015) — Asolo Repertory Theatre is proud to announce **IllumiNation**, a new series of performances and events promoting cross-cultural conversations in the community. Held on select Tuesday performances throughout the 2015-16 season, **IllumiNation** evenings will begin with a cocktail hour at 6:30pm, continue with that evening's performance at 7:30pm and conclude with a moderated panel discussion where audience members can further explore the topical and social issues that they have just seen played out on stage.

The series aims to engage audiences that reflect not only the dynamic and diverse characters on stage but also the Sarasota and Bradenton communities as a whole, and to promote open cross-cultural conversations. Many of Asolo Rep's 2015-16 season productions focus on topics that have a direct impact on the African-American, Latino, Muslim and Jewish communities and feature an infusion of actors and characters of diverse ethnicities. In order to effectively reach these audiences, Asolo Rep is working closely with an IllumiNation Advisory Committee, comprised of community pillars who are committed to broadening the diversity of the theatre. New College of Florida will serve as a project partner for the series and will also help to develop Asolo Rep's public programming throughout the season.

This season's **IllumiNation** series begins on November 17 with *West Side Story*, the groundbreaking Broadway musical featuring choreography by the legendary Jerome Robbins and an unforgettable score by Leonard Bernstein and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim. The series continues on February 2 with *All The Way*, the 2014 Tony Award® winner for Best Play that chronicles the first chapter of "accidental" President Lyndon Baines Johnson's administration and his drive to pass the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964. On March 29, **IllumiNation** audiences will re-discover the classic film *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* with a fresh adaptation for the stage. On April 12, the **IllumiNation** evening will feature *Disgraced*, Pulitzer Prize-winner Ayad Akhtar's provocative new drama about a Muslim-American lawyer's struggle to thrive in a post 9/11 world. The final **IllumiNation** event of the season will be held on May 10 and will spotlight *Josephine*, a world premiere, Broadway-bound original new musical about the intoxicating African-American icon Josephine Baker.

"As we enter the fourth season of our American Character Project and the ongoing exploration of who we are as a nation, this powerful initiative gives us the opportunity to look at some of the most challenging and enduring questions we face as Americans today," said Producing Artistic Director Michael Donald Edwards. "Our stage reflects a vivid cross section of the American people, and it is our goal for our audiences and the conversations surrounding the work to also encompass these diverse perspectives."

Series ticket packages are available now for three or all five of the **IllumiNation** evenings and

-more-

IllumiNation
Page 2 of 3

begin at \$150. Single tickets to **IllumiNation** performances are now available at the box office and by phone for donors (at the Angel level or higher) and subscribers. The pre-performance cocktail reception is free for series ticket package holders and \$10 for single ticket holders to that evening's performance. The post-performance discussion is free and open to any audience member of that evening's production.

Single tickets go on sale to the general public online only beginning Saturday, September 26 at 12:01am and by phone and at Asolo Rep's Box Office beginning Monday, September 28 at 10am. For tickets and subscriptions, call 941.351.8000, visit the box office, located in the lobby of the theatre at 5555 N. Tamiami Trail in Sarasota, or visit www.asolorep.org.

Five Performance Package:

Section A Seating: \$315

Section B Seating: \$240

Three Performance Package:

Section A Seating: \$195

Section B Seating: \$150

The IllumiNation series is sponsored by Morton's Gourmet Market & Catering.

2015-16 IllumiNation Series

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

Tuesday, November 17 at 6:30pm

Pre-show reception and a post-show discussion will be held on Asolo Rep's Mezzanine

Performance will be held in the Mertz Theatre

All The Way

By Robert Schenkkan

Directed by Emily Sophia Knapp

Based on the original production directed by Bill Rauch

Tuesday, February 2 at 6:30pm

Pre-show reception and post-show discussion will be held on Asolo Rep's Mezzanine

Performance will be held in the Mertz Theatre

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner

By Todd Kreidler

Based on the screenplay by William Rose

Directed by Frank Galati

Tuesday, March 29 at 6:30pm

Pre-show reception and post-show discussion will be held on Asolo Rep's Mezzanine

Performance will be held in the Mertz Theatre

Disgraced

By Ayad Akhtar

Directed by Michael Donald Edwards

-more-

Tuesday, April 12 at 6:30pm

Pre-show reception held on Asolo Rep's Mezzanine

Performance and post-show discussion will be held in the Historic Asolo Theater

Josephine

Book by Ellen Weston and Mark Hampton

Music by Stephen Dorff

Lyrics by John Bettis

From an original story by Kenneth Weissman

Based on the book *Remembering Josephine* by Stephen Papich

Directed and choreographed by Joey McKneely

Tuesday, May 10 at 6:30pm

Pre-show reception and post-show discussion will be held on Asolo Rep's Mezzanine

Performance will be held in the Mertz Theatre

###

Media Contact

Sasha Fields

Public Relations Manager

941.351.9010 x 4800

Sasha.Fields@asolo.org