



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 20, 2013

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ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE SPARKS DEBATE ON RACE AND REAL ESTATE WITH *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Award-Winning Play Spins Events and Characters of *A Raisin in the Sun*;

Companion Documentary Theatre Piece *Faces of Change* Explores Issues on Local Level

(SARASOTA, February 20, 2013) — In yet another bold artistic move, Asolo Repertory Theatre leads off their Spring Rep 2013 Season with the exhilarating comedy *Clybourne Park*, the razor-sharp Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize winning play about race, real estate, and urban revitalization. Written by provocateur playwright Bruce Norris, *Clybourne Park* tells the story of the same suburban Chicago home and its inhabitants that are at the center of Lorraine Hansberry's classic drama, *A Raisin in the Sun*. The first act takes place in 1959 when a white family agrees to sell their Clybourne Park home to an African-American family, much to the mortification of the neighborhood's all-white residents. Act two fast forwards to 2009 and examines the decision to re-sell the house to a white family moving into what has now become a predominantly black neighborhood, this time with plans for demolition. Bruce Norris' writing is funny, poetic, biting satiric and tremendously thought-provoking. The play's lightning-quick repartee will leave the audience reeling with laughter, in shock, and reconsidering what it means to call a place home.

Clybourne Park opens on Friday, March 15 with an 8 p.m. curtain. Opening night will be preceded by two preview performances on March 13 and 14 at 8 p.m. Michael Donald Edwards, Producing Artistic Director for Asolo Rep now in his seventh season, directs the show, which runs through May 2.

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"I'm very excited about staging *Clybourne Park* at Asolo Rep. Owning property is central to our concept of the American Dream, and including this play as part of our inaugural American Character season gives it a particular resonance," said Edwards. "The conversation about drawing racial lines in American neighborhoods is difficult, but we need to have it. This play represents perspectives from both sides and encourages communication on the issue, which is a positive thing. We can learn a lot from each other."

Clybourne Park premiered Off-Broadway on February 21, 2010 to critical acclaim at Playwrights Horizon in New York City, and was followed by stagings at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company in Washington, D.C. and the Royal Court Theatre in London (which moved its production to the West End in 2011). It premiered on Broadway on April 19, 2012 at the Walter Kerr Theatre and ran for a limited 16-week engagement. *Clybourne Park* won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 2011 and the Tony Award for Best Play in 2012, and it has consistently drawn rave reviews from the media. *The New York Times* called it "Vital, sharp-witted and ferociously smart," *Entertainment Weekly* said it was "A theatrical treasure... Indisputably, uproariously funny," *The New York Post* found it to be "Funny as hell... The Theater shakes with gales of laughter," and *The Hollywood Reporter* labeled it "A savagely funny and insightful time bomb."

The cast for the Asolo Rep production --- each of whom plays dual roles, one in each era --- includes members of its resident acting company as well as guest artists from Chicago. Annabel Armour, a three-time Jefferson Award winner in her first season with Asolo Rep, plays the roles of Bev, the naïve 1950's housewife, and Kathy, a lawyer who argues for a building code variance in 2009. Also from Chicago in her first season is castmate Tyla Abercrombie, who plays the roles of Francine, a mild-mannered domestic servant, and Lena, the outspoken second act homeowner. Douglas Jones plays Russ, Bev's tortured husband, and Dan, a handyman preoccupied with digging up a dead crepe myrtle tree in the home's backyard. David Breitbarth is Karl Lindner, the leader of the local homeowners association that wants to protect the racial identity of his neighborhood (a character borrowed from Hansberry's play), and Steve, the prospective homebuyer who wants to build a McMansion at 406 Clybourne Street. Members of the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training third-year class round out the cast. Jesse Dornan appears as Jim and Tom, Christopher Wynn plays Albert and Kevin, Sarah Brown is Betsy and Lindsey, and Jacob Cooper plays the role of Kenneth.

"I'm thrilled to be working with such a talented cast and skilled creative team at Asolo Rep to bring this provocative material to life," said Edwards. "We believe that this production, both highly entertaining and appalling funny, will ignite passionate debate throughout the local community."

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The creative team for the production is a mix of seasoned Asolo Rep veterans and fresh talent. Dane Laffrey, a graduate of Australia's National Institute of Dramatic Art in his second season with Asolo Rep, designs the costumes and the set for *Clybourne Park*. Laffrey's recent work includes productions at Lincoln Center Theatre, Roundabout Theatre Company, Second Stage Theatre, and SoHo Rep. Dan Scully, a New York-based lighting and projection designer in his fifth season with Asolo Rep, is responsible for the projections used in the show. Scully is the resident lighting designer for the Abraham in Motion dance company, with whom he won a 2010 Bessie Award for his work on *The Radio Show*. Scully previously designed projections for *The Life of Galileo* and *Las Meninas* for Michael Donald Edwards at Asolo Rep. New to Asolo Rep is lighting designer Jennifer Schriever, a New York-based professional with international credentials. Schriever's recent work abroad includes Britten Opera's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Marinsky Theatre in Russia and *The Pearl Fishers* in London for the English National Opera.

In anticipation of lively audience response to the play and the hot-button social issues it raises, Asolo Rep will host pre-show discussions before each performance. Led by prominent members of the local community, the discussions will touch on how the play's themes of gentrification, racism, sexism, social elitism, and marginalization impact Sarasota and the surrounding Gulf Coast region. The discussions will be held on the mezzanine of the theatre.

Inspired by the production of *Clybourne Park*, Asolo Rep is also presenting *Faces of Change*, an original documentary theatre piece distilled from 25 hours of interviews conducted with residents of Newtown, Sarasota and Bradenton that details the changes they've witnessed in their own neighborhoods through the past five decades. *Faces of Change* was performed at the Cook Theatre on Feb. 1 and 2 and at the North Sarasota Library on Feb. 7 to a standing room-only audience. Due to demand, Asolo Rep plans to schedule more performances of *Faces of Change* during *Clybourne's* run.

In addition, Asolo Rep's Education and Outreach Department is also producing a reading of *A Raisin in the Sun* in cooperation with The West Coast Black Theatre Troupe in the Mertz Theatre on Monday, April 22. Tickets for this special event are \$15-\$20 and can be reserved through the Asolo Rep Box Office. "The production of *A Raisin in the Sun* last year by West Coast Black Theatre Troupe was spectacular. By having this reading during our run of *Clybourne Park*, we give audiences the chance to experience both works side by side, and provide more perspective to the conversation about race and changes that have occurred in this country over the past 50 years," said Brian Hersh, Asolo Rep's Director of Education and Outreach.

CAST

in order of appearance

DOUGLAS JONES*	Russ/Dan
ANNABEL ARMOUR*	Bev/Kathy
TYLA ABERCRUMBIE*	Francine/Lena
JESSE DORNAN+	Jim/Tom
CHRISTOPHER WYNN	Albert/Kevin
DAVID BREITBARTH*	Karl/Steve
SARAH BROWN	Betsy/Lindsey
JACOB COOPER	Kenneth

*members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors in the United States

+appears courtesy of Actors' Equity Association

TICKETS

Ticket prices for all performances range between \$20 to \$72. Tickets can be purchased at the Asolo Repertory Theatre Box Office in person or by calling 800.361.8388 or 941.351.8000. Tickets can also be purchased online at www.asolorep.org. The Asolo Repertory Theatre and Box Office are located in the FSU Performing Arts Center adjacent to the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art at 5555 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL 34243. Parking is free.

Asolo Repertory Theatre Spring 2013 Box Office Hours:

Monday: 10a.m.-4p.m.
Tues.-Sat.: 10a.m.-8p.m.
Sunday: 10a.m.-2p.m.

SCHEDULED PERFORMANCES

March 13, 8 p.m. - Preview #1	April 13, 2 p.m.
March 14, 8 p.m. - Preview #2	April 17, 8 p.m.
March 15, 8 p.m. - Opening Night	April 18, 2 p.m.
March 19, 7:30 p.m. – Tuesday Talkback	April 20, 8 p.m.
March 20, 8 p.m.	April 21, 2 p.m. – Meet the Actors
March 22, 8 p.m.	April 24, 8 p.m.
March 30, 8 p.m.	April 25, 2 p.m.
April 3, 2 p.m.	April 26, 8 p.m.
April 4, 8 p.m.	April 27, 2 p.m.
April 6, 8 p.m.	April 28, 2 p.m.
April 9, 7:30 p.m. – Tuesday Talkback	April 30, 7:30 p.m. – Tuesday Talkback
April 10, 2 p.m.	May 1, 2 p.m.
April 12, 8 p.m.	May 2, 8 p.m. - Closing Night

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SPECIAL PUBLIC PROGRAMMING FOR *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Asolo Rep plans special performances of *Clybourne Park* with additional entertainment and educational programming tied to the show.

Inside Asolo Rep

March 27, 2013

11 a.m. - 12 noon in the Cook Theatre

Get a glimpse of what goes on behind the curtain with this special event featuring director Michael Donald Edwards and other creative artists from the production. Tickets are \$5 for the panel discussion only (and free for Guild Members and Donors) and may be purchased through the box office.

Meet the Actors

April 21, 2013

Audience members will have the opportunity to interact with the cast during a moderated talkback immediately following the 2 p.m. matinee.

Tuesday Talkbacks

March 19, April 9, and April 30, 2013

The audience is invited to join a cast and a creative team member for a moderated talkback on the mezzanine immediately following the 7:30 p.m. performance.

SPONSORS

Asolo Repertory Theatre is able to bring *Clybourne Park* to the stage because of the generosity of our corporate sponsors and individual supporters. Corporate sponsors for *Clybourne Park* are Sarasota Magazine and Bright House Networks. Season sponsors are Florida State University, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Comcast, Designing Women Boutique, Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, and The Woman's Exchange, Inc. Paid for in part by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax revenues. Sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.

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