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**Asolo Repertory Theatre Announced the Early Success of its Endowment Matching Challenge Grant on October 29, 2013**

(SARASOTA, October 30, 2013) — Asolo Repertory Theatre announced yesterday that two anonymous donors have put forth a matching challenge for Asolo Rep’s Endowment in partnership with Gulf Coast Community Foundation. The Challenge is the next major component of Asolo Rep’s Campaign for Excellence. The mission of the Campaign is to secure debt-free facilities and equipment essential to Asolo Rep’s mission, and to build and strengthen the theatre’s endowment. The priority of the Campaign over the last three to four years has been capital projects. With the onset of the Matching Challenge, the focus has been shifted to building Asolo Rep’s endowment in order to protect these investments and expand the theatre’s artistic and educational possibilities.

“Growing Asolo Rep’s endowment has been our personal passion since becoming part of the leadership,” said Edward and Mary Lou Winnick, Asolo Rep’s Campaign for Excellence Co-Chairs. “We are so fortunate to have this opportunity to leverage the matching grant, so we can protect the investments that we and so many others have made in this cherished institution and national treasure.”

“A well-funded endowment is essential to support Asolo Rep’s current activities, to expand our outreach in the community, and to continue to break new ground artistically. With a current annual operating budget of \$8 million, Asolo Rep anticipates even further growth. There has never been a more important time in our history to protect Asolo Rep so that we can provide even more compelling theatrical experiences for our current audiences, and the audiences we’re building for the future,” said Linda DiGabriele, Asolo Rep’s Managing Director.

Asolo Repertory Theatre’s Endowment Matching Challenge Grant officially began in the summer of 2013. The goal of the Challenge, which will end June 30, 2018, is to raise \$6 million in outright endowment gifts, which will result in \$2 million from the Matching Grant. The grant will match \$1 for every \$3 Asolo Rep raises, and the minimum gift to be matched is \$5,000.

“Asolo Rep is one of our region’s most essential non-profits, serving local residents and attracting visitors and seasonal residents through world-class theater, helping to educate our youth, and impacting the local economy,” said Teri A Hansen President/CEO of Gulf Coast Community Foundation. “We are delighted that we can partner with our donors to support Asolo Rep in building its endowment and becoming an even stronger organization, fiscally and artistically.”

Asolo Repertory Theatre is one of the premier professional theaters and one of the few repertory theaters in the country. Asolo Rep is in the second year of its five-year American Character Project, an ambitious exploration of the cultural, political and historical attributes that define the U.S.

“Through the generosity of donors throughout our community, Asolo Rep’s endowment has nearly doubled to \$7 million in the last few years, and now provides essential funds to support our programs and operations. We are grateful that through the Matching Challenge, we anticipate more than doubling the endowment again, to at least \$15 million by June 2018. It is exciting to imagine all that will be made possible through the generosity of our patrons,” said Tricia Mire, Asolo Rep’s Development Director.

Asolo Rep has raised \$1,110,000 toward the match, leveraging \$366,300 in matching funds. The first gift



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toward meeting the goals of the Matching Challenge was for \$1 million, from an anonymous donor. Charles Huiscking made a gift of \$100,000. Linda DiGabriele, Asolo Rep's Managing Director, and Michael Donald Edwards, Asolo Rep's Producing Artistic Director, have each pledged \$5,000.

The success of the Campaign for Excellence's capital projects has already deeply impacted all aspects of Asolo Rep. Donor contributions have provided Asolo Rep with the opportunity to purchase and renovate the Robert and Beverly Koski Production Center, which houses Asolo Rep's Joan Armour Mendell Scenic Studio, Ted and Jean Weiller Rehearsal Hall, prop shop and additional production and administrative spaces. Additional funds are pledged for Phase II of the Koski Center.

Through the Campaign for Excellence, Asolo Rep has purchased and eliminated mortgages of 10 condominiums that comprise the Margot and Warren Coville Guest Artist Housing. The theatre has also implemented the Tessitura software system organization-wide through major grants from the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation and the William G. and Marie Selby Foundation. Additionally, through a major grant from the Charles O. Wood, III and Miriam M. Wood Foundation, Asolo Rep has modernized the production infrastructure and equipment in the Mertz Theatre.

"The Endowment Matching Challenge Grant ensures that Asolo Rep will remain a local, state-wide, and national cultural pillar for generations to come," said Michael Donald Edwards, Asolo Rep's Producing Artistic Director. "Now, more than ever, these investments are crucial to Asolo Rep's growth and pursuit of bold, innovative and exciting artistic opportunities."

"Asolo Repertory Theatre is producing theatre at a level comparable to top destinations like New York City and London," said Robert Bartner, Asolo Rep's Board President. "By building the endowment, we have the opportunity to further develop and expand this growth, and to stay at the forefront of the country's top regional theaters."

For more information about Asolo Rep's Endowment Matching Challenge Grant, the Campaign for Excellence and how to contribute, please contact Asolo Rep's Development Director at 941.351.9010 ext. 4700 or [tricia\\_mire@asolo.org](mailto:tricia_mire@asolo.org)

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