

# ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE

PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MICHAEL DONALD EDWARDS    MANAGING DIRECTOR LINDA DIGABRIELE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 6, 2015**

## **The World Premiere of *LUCK BE A LADY* Brings Together Broadway Cast and Creative Team at Asolo Rep, Opens May 1, 2015**

"Loesser hit the jackpot more than once in a career that extended from the Great Depression to the year Neil Armstrong walked on the moon. ... With Loesser you always got both – the 'wisdom and truth' and the tangy cool martini wit. Long may his songs be sung."

– David Lehman for *The New York Times*

(SARASOTA, April 6, 2015) — Asolo Repertory Theatre continues its groundbreaking 2014-15 season with the world premiere of ***Luck Be a Lady: The Iconic Music of Frank Loesser***. Conceived and directed by Drama Desk Award-winner Gordon Greenberg (Irving Berlin's *Holiday Inn*, Chichester's *Guys & Dolls*), ***Luck Be a Lady: The Iconic Music of Frank Loesser*** opens **Friday, May 1 at 8pm** and runs through **Sunday, May 24**, with previews **Tuesday, April 28 at 7:30pm**, and **Wednesday, April 29** and **Thursday, April 30 at 8pm**. This brand new musical tells the nostalgic story of love, loss and life through the glorious songs of Frank Loesser, the legendary composer and lyricist of the Tony Award®-winning Broadway classic *Guys and Dolls*, the Tony and Pulitzer-Prize winning hit *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, *The Most Happy Fella*, and more.

Set in the early 1950s in an abandoned nightclub, the show finds a group of lost souls, three men and three women, looking for connection through the music of

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their youth. The production features thrilling new choreography by Denis Jones (Broadway's *Honeymoon in Vegas*) that evokes the swing/ballroom style that ruled the era. In addition to the six characters on stage, there will also be a six-piece band, led by music director Sinai Tabak (Dallas Theater Center's *Les Misérables*) with members of the cast occasionally playing instruments alongside the musicians. Neil Douglas Reilly (orchestrations: Off Broadway's *Stars of David*; orchestrations associate: Broadway's *Rocky*) breathes new life into Loesser's classic songs with brand new re-imagined orchestrations and arrangements.

***Luck Be a Lady***'s world premiere performance brings many Broadway veterans to Asolo Rep. The cast's female stars include Tony nominee Louise Pitre (Donna Sheridan [original] in Broadway's *Mamma Mia!*; Mama Rose in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's *Gypsy*); Mary Michael Patterson (Christine Daaé in Broadway's *The Phantom of the Opera*); and Stephanie Umoh (Sarah [original] in the Broadway revival of *Ragtime*). The cast's male principles are Erik Altemus (Lewis [original] in the Broadway revival of *Pippin*); James David Larson (Roundabout Theatre Company's *Into the Woods*); and W. Joseph Matheson (Willie Conklin in the Los Angeles Company of *Ragtime*).

"Frank Loesser is one of the kings of the American musical theatre. His heyday is known as the golden era of musical theatre – and, in fact, a golden era for America itself. His work reflected that uniquely American sense of optimism, growing out of adversity. Like America's journey from the Depression to war to prosperity, Loesser's characters move beyond their given circumstances to protect the possibility of a happy ending," said Conceiver/Director Gordon Greenberg. "This show uses some of his best loved and most celebrated songs from Broadway and Hollywood to tell a simple but rich story of lost souls reunited in an abandoned nightclub. Each song evokes powerful memories for them and pushes them closer together, as they re-live pivotal moments in their lives. It's amazing how differently a well-known song registers when sung in an unexpected way."

Throughout his remarkable career, Loesser penned dozens of heartwarming, unforgettable songs for both the stage and film. He received an Academy Award® for his holiday favorite, "Baby, It's Cold Outside," from the film *Neptune's Daughter*. His rich canon of hits includes some of the most treasured classics of all time, including "Heart and Soul," "I Hear Music," and "Luck Be a Lady," which are

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all featured in this brand new musical.

"The highest caliber of artists straight from Broadway have come to Asolo Rep to create the world premiere of this brand new musical," said Producing Artistic Director Michael Donald Edwards. "Frank Loesser's timeless songs, characters and musicals continue to resonate – touching audiences all over the world. ***Luck Be a Lady*** spotlights the remarkable breadth of Mr. Loesser's inspiring work, from his popular hits, to the charming *Guys and Dolls*, to the clever and moving *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. It is an honor to share this celebration of an American icon with our patrons."

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## **PUBLIC PROGRAMMING**

### **The Scoop**

One hour prior to every performance of ***Luck Be a Lady*** (Opening Night May 1 excluded)

Arrive one hour before curtain to hear the ideas and inspirations that contributed to the making of ***Luck Be a Lady***.

### **Tuesday Talkbacks**

April 28, May 5, 12, 19

Asolo Rep's Mezzanine

Join us for an intimate post-show discussion with featured actors or guests following every Tuesday performance of ***Luck Be a Lady***.

### **Meet the Actors**

Sunday, May 10

Asolo Rep's Mertz Theatre

Immediately following the 2pm matinee, ask questions and learn more from members of the cast.

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**CAST**

(In Alphabetical Order)

Erik Altemus*	Man #3
James David Larson*	Man #2
W. Joseph Matheson*	Man #1
Mary Michael Patterson*	Woman #3
Louise Pitre*	Woman #1
Stephanie Umoh*	Woman #2

*\*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**

Conceiver/Director	Gordon Greenberg
Choreographer	Denis Jones
Orchestrator & Arranger	Neil Douglas Reilly
Music Director	Sinai Tabak
Scenic Designer	Wilson Chin
Costume Designer	Andrea Lauer
Lighting Designer	Paul Miller
Sound Designer	Kevin Kennedy
Hair/Wig & Make-up Designer	Michelle Hart

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**SELECTED ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES**

(In alphabetical order)

**ERIK ALTEMUS\*** GUEST ARTIST, FIRST SEASON (Man # 3) is thrilled to be making his Asolo Rep debut. He made his Broadway debut as an original company member in Diane Paulus' Tony Award-winning revival of *Pippin* where he created the role of Lewis and understudied the title character. He was also seen in the Off-Broadway production of *The Fantasticks* as Matt (The Boy) and most recently as Rocky in *The Rocky Horror Show* at The Bucks County Playhouse. His film credits include Brandon in HBO's *The Miraculous Year* (Directed by Kathryn Bigelow), Newman in *The Newman Shower* (American Film Institute) and various commercials. [www.erikaltemus.com](http://www.erikaltemus.com)

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**GORDON GREENBERG** FOURTH SEASON (Conceiver & Director) Asolo Rep: *Yentl*; *Working*; *Barnum*. Other recent work: *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn* (co-author & director, Goodspeed, Universal Stage Productions); *Guys & Dolls* (Chichester Festival Theatre, U.K., U.S. National Tour); *Working* (Drama Desk Award, Off-Broadway, Broadway in Chicago, Old Globe); *Jacques Brel ...* (Drama Desk, Drama League, Outer Critics Award nominations); *Johnny Baseball*(Williamstown); *Scramble Band* (Co-Writer, Disney Channel original movie); *Rags*(Roundabout, workshop); *Single Girls Guide* (Dallas Theatre Center); *Band Geeks!* (Goodspeed Musicals); *Pirates!* (Paper Mill, Huntington, Goodspeed Musicals); *The Baker's Wife* (Paper Mill, Goodspeed Musicals); *Happy Days*(National Tour); *Peter Pan* (National Tour). Upcoming: *Secret of My Success*(Universal); *Tangled* (Disney); *Single Girls Guide* (Fifth Avenue). Gordon is the director of new musical development for the acclaimed New Group in New York. Education: Stanford University, NYU Film School, Lincoln Center Directors Lab.

**DENIS JONES** FIRST SEASON (Choreographer) Recent credits include *Paint Your Wagon* (NY City Center *Encores!*), *Honeymoon in Vegas* (Broadway), *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn* (Goodspeed Opera House), *Piece of My Heart* (Signature Theatre), *Forum* (Williamstown Theatre Festival), *Disaster!* (St. Luke's), and *Damn Yankees* (Paper Mill Playhouse, 5th Ave). Denis is the recipient of two Carbonell Awards for his work at the Maltz Jupiter Theatre. Upcoming projects include *The Tempest* (Shakespeare in the Park) and *Moonshine: That Hee-Haw Musical*(Dallas Theater Center).

**JAMES DAVID LARSON\*** GUEST ARTIST, FIRST SEASON (Man #2) is thrilled to be making his Asolo Rep debut. In New York, he was recently seen in Roundabout Theatre Company's *Into the Woods*, and Off Broadway's *Atomic*. His national tour credits include lead roles in Monty Python's *Spamalot*, *The Buddy Holly Story*, and *Bunnicula*. He recently starred in a national Burlington Coat Factory commercial, as well as the short films, *Endless Us* and *You Are Here*.  
[www.JamesDavidLarson.com](http://www.JamesDavidLarson.com)

**W. JOSEPH MATHESON\*** GUEST ARTIST, FIRST SEASON (Man #1) is proud to make his Asolo Rep debut alongside his wife, Louise. His Canadian and US theatre credits include Larry (*Company*), von Trapp (*Sound of Music*), Callahan

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(*Legally Blonde*), *The Proprietor (Assassins)*, *Homère (The Flood Thereafter)*, *Conklin (Ragtime)*, *Doolittle (My Fair Lady)*, *Rooster (Annie)*, *Charlemagne (Pippin)*, and both the Shaw and Stratford Festivals. Most recently he created the role of Paulo in *Paulo and Daphne*. His TV and film credits include *Orphan Black*, *Sworn to Silence*, *The State Within*, and *Nothing Too Good for a Cowboy*.

**MARY MICHAEL PATTERSON\*** GUEST ARTIST, FIRST SEASON (Woman #3) is thrilled to be making her Asolo Rep debut. She was most recently seen starring on Broadway as Christine in *The Phantom of the Opera*. Other credits include the Broadway revival of *Anything Goes*, Liesl in *The Sound of Music* (Carnegie Hall), Marianne Dashwood in the world premiere of *Sense and Sensibility: The Musical* (Denver Center), Judy Haynes in *White Christmas* (Syracuse Stage), and Kathy Seldon in *Singin' in the Rain* (Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera, Music Theatre of Wichita). Go Blue! [www.marymichaelpatterson.com](http://www.marymichaelpatterson.com)

**LOUISE PITRE\*** GUEST ARTIST, FIRST SEASON (Woman #1) is making her debut at Asolo Rep. She is best known for her starring role in the Broadway production of *Mamma Mia!* Other recent roles include Mama Rose in *Gypsy* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater) and Mame in *Mame* (Goodspeed Musicals). In Toronto she recently starred as Joanne in *Company*, Toad in *A Year with Frog and Toad*, Ma/Mayor in *Toxic Avenger*, Fantine in *Les Misérables* (Toronto, Montreal, Paris), Piaf in *Piaf*, and Mrs. Johnstone in *Blood Brothers*, among others. She has 5 recordings and is heard on cast recordings of *Les Misérables* (Paris production) and *Kristina* (Carnegie Hall). [www.louisepitre.com](http://www.louisepitre.com)

**NEIL DOUGLAS REILLY** FIRST SEASON (Orchestrator & Arranger) recently contributed orchestrations for *Little Dancer* at the Kennedy Center. New York credits include: *Clinton* (Orchestrations), *Rocky* (Orchestration Associate), *Stars of David* (Orchestrations), *Ahrens & Flaherty: Nice Fighting You* (Orchestrations/Co-Producer of Album), and *Journey On*, a NY Pops Concert in honor of Ahrens & Flaherty (music supervisor, orchestrations). Neil was the arranger for both of Josh Franklin's albums, and is the composer of *Loch Lomond* with Maggie Herskowitz and *Gods and Kings* with Austin Ruffer. Neil has written orchestrations for performances by Norm Lewis, Lea Salonga, David Hyde Pierce, Stephanie J. Block, Jeremy Jordan, Audra McDonald, Brian Stokes Mitchell, Boyd Gaines, Tiler

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Peck, Jason Danieleley, Marin Mazzie, Bobby Steggert, Annaleigh Ashford, Mary Testa, Liz Callaway, and many more. Thanks to Jack, Ross, and Taylor.  
neildouglasreilly.com

**STEPHANIE UMOH\*** GUEST ARTIST, FIRST SEASON (Woman #2) is excited to be making her Asolo Rep debut. She starred in the Broadway revival of *Ragtime* (Sarah) and Off Broadway in *Falling for Eve* (Eve). Other NYC credits include *Tin Pan Alley Rag* (Freddie/Treemonisha), *Clyde & Bonnie* (Mona), and many more. Notable regional credits include *The Color Purple* (Nettie); *The Music Man* in concert (Marian); *Pal Joey* (Linda); *Johnny Baseball* (Daisy); *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Mary); *Caroline, or Change* (Emmie); *A Christmas Carol* (Lily/Belle); *Aida* (Aida), and more. Film/TV: *The NY 22*; *Big Words*. She was awarded the 2009-2010 Theatre World Award for Outstanding Broadway Debut.

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### **TICKETS**

Tickets for ***Luck Be a Lady*** and the entire 2014-2015 Asolo Repertory Theatre season are on sale now. Tickets for ***Luck Be a Lady*** start at just \$22. To purchase tickets, call 941.351.8000 or 800.361.8388 or visit [www.asolorep.org](http://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 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 ***Luck Be a Lady*** because of the generosity of its sponsors. Corporate sponsors for ***Luck Be a Lady*** are Cool Today, ABC 7, Residence Inn, Herald Tribune Media Group and Style. 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

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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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