

# ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE

PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MICHAEL DONALD EDWARDS MANAGING DIRECTOR LINDA DIGABRIELE



\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\*

February 26, 2015

**Pulitzer Prize Winner Nilo Cruz's *Sotto Voce***  
**Opens Thursday, April 2 in the Historic Asolo Theater**

"Beautifully written ... It's the perfect quest." — The New York Theatre Wire

(SARASOTA, February 26, 2015) — Pulitzer Prize- and Greenfield Prize-winner Nilo Cruz's exquisite new play ***Sotto Voce*** opens **Thursday, April 2, 2015 at 8pm** in the Historic Asolo Theater and runs through **Sunday, April 26**, with previews on **Tuesday, March 31 at 7:30pm** and **Wednesday, April 1 at 8pm**. This hauntingly beautiful metaphysical love story will be directed by Melissa Kievman, who previously directed *Searching for Eden: The Diaries of Adam and Eve*, and *The Blonde, The Brunette and The Vengeful Redhead*, and *Expecting Isabel* at Asolo Rep. ***Sotto Voce*** premiered in February 2014 at New York's Theater for the New City, and had a brief yet celebrated run the following month at Miami-Dade County Auditorium's On.Stage Black Box theater. The title of Mr. Cruz's new work is an Italian musical term that means to speak in a soft manner with purpose.

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## **Sotto Voce**

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Cruz captures the resiliency of true love and the power of memories in this spiritual masterpiece. German-born novelist Bemadette Kahn lost her one true love when he fled Nazi Germany aboard the SS *St. Louis*, a ship carrying 937 Jewish immigrants seeking refuge in Cuba. Cuba and the United States tragically turned the ship away, leaving the ship's passengers to return to Europe where many perished in Nazi concentration camps. Her heartbreak resurfaces when a young Jewish Cuban writer contacts the now 80-year-old reclusive, lovelorn Bemadette to research the ship's ill-fated voyage. Their relationship slowly evolves into a transcendent romance based on her memories of the boy she never stopped loving.

Olivier Award-winning actress Kathryn Hunter, who was the first British female to ever professionally portray the title role in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, stars as the wistful Bemadette. On screen, Ms. Hunter played Arabella Figg in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. SUNY Purchase Acting Conservatory graduate Marcel Mascaró and Cuban-American stage and television actress Hannia Guillen star alongside Hunter.

Cuban-born Nilo Cruz was the first Latino to win the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 2003 for his Tony-nominated play *Anna in the Tropics*. He crafted the Spanish translation for Asolo Rep's 2012 production of *Hamlet, Prince of Cuba*. In 2014 Mr. Cruz was awarded the prestigious Greenfield Prize and commissioned to write a brand new play, which will soon be read for the first time at Asolo Rep.

“Nilo Cruz is one of the great American playwrights writing today, and we are thrilled to present his gorgeous, poetic play, **Sotto Voce**, one of the most original pieces we’ve ever produced at Asolo Rep,” said Producing Artistic Director Michael Donald Edwards. “The galvanizing idea behind Mr. Cruz’s new masterpiece is the tragedy of the SS *St. Louis* but what it truly focuses on is the complicated and erotically charged relationship between the solitary Bemadette and the young Cuban writer desperate to meet her.”

**Sotto Voce** continues the third season of Asolo Rep's five-year American Character Project. The play artfully depicts several different American immigration stories throughout the 20th Century and the dawn of the 21st Century.

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“**Sotto Voce** tells the beautiful, intimate story of the impossible convergence of three individuals – all of whom travelled far from their respective homelands for possibilities in America,” said director Melissa Kievman. “The risks that each have taken in pursuit of safety and prosperity, freedom of expression or inspiration are incalculable and reflect the same kind of intrepid tenacity, resourcefulness, sacrifice, and vision that America, one could say, was built upon. The people who populate **Sotto Voce** have each experienced what one describes as the ‘merciless face of America’ and yet they are all, in the spirit of the American character, passionate dreamers.”

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## **CAST**

(in order of appearance)

Marcel Mascaró*	Saquiél/Ariel
Kathryn Hunter*	Bemadette
Hannia Guillen*	Lucila/Nina

*\*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**

Director	Melissa Kievman
Scenic Designer	Adrian W. Jones
Costume Designer	Michiko Kitayama Skinner
Lighting Designer	Matthew Richards
Projection Designer	Robert Figueira
Composer / Sound Designer	Erik T. Lawson

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## **SELECTED ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES**

(In alphabetical order)

**HANNIA GUILLEN\*** GUEST ARTIST, FIRST SEASON (Lucila/Nina, *Sotto Voce*) is a Cuban-American stage and television actress. She studied at Prometeo Theater at Miami-Dade College under Teresa Maria Rojas. Right out of school she landed a guest star role in *Burn Notice*, which thanks to casting director Ellen Jacoby, she

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turned into a recurring role on the soap opera *Passions*. She now resides in New York and works out of Repertorio Español, where she currently stars in *Our Little Girl's Getting Married*, *Doña Flor*, *In The Time of the Butterflies*, and *Blind Date*, for which she received an A.C.E. award. Other theater credits include: *The Repetition*, *The Color of Desire*, and *A Bicycle Country*.

**KATHRYN HUNTER\*** GUEST ARTIST, FIRST SEASON (Bemadette, *Sotto Voce*)

An internationally renowned award-winning actress and director, Kathryn trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, has worked with leading companies worldwide, and is a founder-member of the Theatre De Complicite Company. Her many credits include title roles in *Richard III*, *King Lear*, *Antony & Cleopatra*, *Celestina*, *Yerma*, *Donna Rosita*, *Spoonface Steinberg*, *The Skriker* (Time Out Best Actress Award), *Mother Courage*, *The Visit* (Olivier Award for Best Actress), and the acclaimed solo performance *Kafka's Monkey*. Recent theatre credits include, *The Valley of Astonishment*, *Cards*, *Fragments*, *A Tender Thing*, *The Bee*, and Julie Taymor's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Film and television credits include, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, *All or Nothing*, *Orlando*, *The Baby of Macon*, *Rome*, *Silent Witness*, *Grushko*, *Maria's Child*, and *The Tale of Tales*. Directing credits include, *My Perfect Mind* (Young Vic/New York/UK Tour), *Othello* (Royal Shakespeare Company), *The Birds* (RNT), *Comedy of Errors* and *Pericles* (Globe Theatre).

**MELISSA KIEVMAN** THIRD SEASON (Director, *Sotto Voce*) is thrilled to be back at Asolo Rep where she directed *Searching for Eden: The Diaries of Adam and Eve* by James Still and *The Blonde*, *The Brunette* and *The Vengeful Redhead* by Robert Hewitt. Kievman has developed and directed new work in New York at The Atlantic Theater Company, The Lucille Lortel for Theaterworks USA, Ars Nova, Soho Rep, and regionally at La Jolla Playhouse, Syracuse Stage, Great Lakes Theater Festival/Cleveland Public Theater, ACT Seattle, O'Neill Theater Center, Portland Center Stage, Hangar Theater, Geva Theater, Roadworks Chicago, and at The Gate Theater in London. Melissa is on the Directing Faculty of the Brown University/Trinity Rep Program, was a recipient of the NEA/TCG Fellowship for Directors and is a graduate of NYU Playwrights Horizons and Northwestern.

**MARCEL MASCARÓ\*** GUEST ARTIST, FIRST SEASON (Saquiel/Ariel, *Sotto Voce*) is thrilled, blessed and excited to be making his Asolo Rep debut. His

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previous credits include Eddie in *Tango* at the Robert Moss Theater, and Doctor in *Alveoli* as part of the Strawberry One Act Festival. Marcel graduated two years ago from SUNY Purchase Acting Conservatory with a BFA. Purchase credits include *Hedda Gabler* (Jorgen Tesman), *Rock & Roll* (Max), *Peer Gynt* (Peer, Hussein, Borehead), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Leonato), and many more.

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## **PUBLIC PROGRAMMING**

### **Inside Asolo Rep**

#### **Sotto Voce**

Wednesday, March 25 at 11am

FSU Center for the Performing Arts

Cook Theatre

Tickets for Inside Asolo Rep are \$5 for the general public and free for donors and Asolo Rep Guild Members.

Explore the exquisite world of **Sotto Voce** with director Melissa Kievman. This interactive panel discussion will be guided by Asolo Rep's dramaturg/literary manager Lauryn Sasso.

**Inside Asolo Rep is sponsored by the Observer Media Group and Hotel Indigo.**

### **The Scoop**

One hour prior to every performance of **Sotto Voce** (Opening Night April 2 excluded)

Historic Asolo Theater

Arrive early to hear the ideas and inspirations that contributed to the making of **Sotto Voce**.

### **Tuesday Talkbacks**

March 31, April 7, April 14, April 21 2015

Historic Asolo Theater

Join us for an intimate post-show discussion with featured actors or guests following every Tuesday performance of **Sotto Voce**.

### **Meet the Actors**

Sunday, April 12, 2015

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

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## **TICKETS**

Tickets for **Sotto Voce** and the entire 2014-2015 Asolo Repertory Theatre season are on sale now. Tickets for **Sotto Voce** start at \$15. To purchase tickets, call 941.351.8000 or 800.361.8388, 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 **Sotto Voce** because of the generosity of its sponsors. Corporate sponsors for **Sotto Voce** are Treviso, Mezzacorona Wine, Hampton Inn Sarasota / Bradenton Airport and Brighthouse Networks. 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 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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