

ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE



For Immediate Release

Thursday, December 17, 2015

Asolo Repertory Theatre Proudly Presents
Tony Award, Pulitzer and Nobel Prize Winner Eugene O'Neill's
Nostalgic Coming-of-Age Comedy *Ah, Wilderness!*

(SARASOTA, December 17, 2015) — Asolo Rep continues its 2015-16 season with quintessential American playwright Eugene O'Neill's sentimental comedy ***AH, WILDERNESS!***, directed by Greg Leaming, associate artistic director of Asolo Rep and the director of the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training. The Tony Award®, Pulitzer and Nobel Prize® winner's sole comedy previews on Wednesday, January 20 and Thursday, January 21 at 8pm, opens Friday, January 22 at 8pm and runs in rotating repertory through Sunday, April 10 in the Mertz Theatre, located in the FSU Center for the Performing Arts.

Travel back to a time of innocence – July 4, 1906 in a quaint seaside Connecticut town where the Miller family eagerly awaits the festivities and fireworks of the holiday. The family's rebellious teenage son, Richard, is less concerned with the celebration and more preoccupied with the thrills and pains of his very first love with the beautiful Muriel. But when Muriel's strict father vehemently disapproves of Richard's unorthodox courting, Richard embarks on the adventure of a lifetime where he experiences his first taste of freedom and adulthood.

Asolo Rep favorites David Breitbarth, who is beginning his 20th season with the theatre, and Denise Cormier, who played Margie Walsh in last season's hit production of *Good People*, star as the patriarch and matriarch of the family, Nat and Essie Miller. FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training third-year MFA student Tom Harney plays the spirited Richard, and 30-year Asolo Rep company member Douglas Jones portrays the Miller family's drunken uncle, Sid Davis. Peggy Roeder, who dazzled audiences last season as Dolly Levi in *The Matchmaker*, plays Nat's sister, Lily.

Eugene O'Neill, who is best known for his tragic works, is the first and only American playwright to win the Nobel Prize for Literature and the only playwright to win four Pulitzer Prizes for Drama. His most famous works include *Strange Interlude*, *Anna Christie*, *Beyond the Horizon*, *Desire Under the Elms*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, and *Long Day's Journey into Night*. ***AH, WILDERNESS!*** continues the fourth season of Asolo Rep's American Character Project, a compelling five-year examination of this country's social, economic and political facets, past, present and future. This nostalgic comedy artfully reflects on early 20th-century America and a simpler way of life.

-more-

AH, WILDERNESS!

Page 2 of 6

"**AH, WILDERNESS!** takes place before World War I, at a time when the entire nation was still young and naïve. It's a vision of a world long gone, full of music from the period, the kind of parlor songs that speak of innocent relationships, and would have been heard in most every home across the country," said Director Greg Leaming. "It is most definitely a sweet, romantic portrait of a family, of a pair of kids ready to enter adulthood, and even of a nation just on the brink of maturity."

"We could not explore the American Character without touching on Eugene O'Neill," said Michael Donald Edwards, producing artistic director of Asolo Rep. "This play presents an idyllic version of America that implies its promise, and Richard Miller represents every young person who is struggling to find a voice. If there is one person responsible for creating what we understand American theatre to be, it is Eugene O'Neill."

CAST

(In Order of Appearance)

Ryan Modjeski	Tommy Miller
Kelsey Petersen	Mildred Miller
Joe Knispel	Arthur Miller
Denise Cormier*	Essie Miller
Peggy Roeder*	Lily Miller
David Breitbarth*	Nat Miller
Douglas Jones*	Sid Davis
Tom Harney	Richard Miller
William Dick*	Dave McComber
Kim Stephenson	Nora
Kevin Barber	Wint Selby
Lisa Egan Woods	Belle
Chris Alexey Diaz	Bartender
Mark Comer	Salesman
Lilianna Solum	Muriel McComber
Evan Reynolds White+	Ensemble

* = Members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

+Appears courtesy of Actors' Equity Association

SELECTED CREATIVE TEAM MEMBERS

Director	Greg Leaming
Scenic Designer	Steven C. Kemp
Costume Designer	Tracy Dorman
Lighting Designer	Anthony Pearson
Sound Designer	Matthew Parker
Music Director	Darren Server
Hair/Wig & Make-Up Designer	Michelle Hart
Voice & Dialect Coach	Patricia Delorey

-more-

SELECTED ARTISTIC BIOS

(In Alphabetical Order)

DAVID BREITBARTH* ASSOCIATE ARTIST, TWENTIETH SEASON (Governor George Wallace, Representative James Corman, Senator Mike Mansfield, Walter Reuther, Witness #1, Ensemble, *All the Way*; Nat Miller, *Ah, Wilderness!*) Over 75 productions at Asolo Rep include: *Both Your Houses*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Clybourne Park*, *God of Carnage*, *Once in a Lifetime*, *Twelve Angry Men*, *The Front Page*, *The Immigrant*, world premieres of *Men of Tortuga* and *Perfect Mendacity*, *The Winter's Tale*, *A Few Good Men*, *Laughing Stock*, *A Flea in Her Ear*, *Rounding Third*, *Art*, *Hobson's Choice*, and *Nicholas Nickleby*. Broadway 1st National Tour: *Spring Awakening*. Off-Broadway: *Short Change*, *Perfect Crime*, *Fluorescent Hunger*, and *This Hard Life*. Los Angeles: *Life in the Trees* (West Coast premiere) and *David's Mother*. Film and television: *Frasier*, *Taken!*, *Law & Order*, and *Fame*. He has appeared regionally around the country and was recently named a member of Florida Repertory Theatre's Ensemble of Theatre Artists. David is a proud 2013 Lunt-Fontanne Fellow selected by the prestigious Ten Chimneys Foundation and he is married to the actress Kate Hampton, of whom he is also proud.

DENISE CORMIER* GUEST ARTIST, SECOND SEASON (Lady Bird Johnson/Katharine Graham/Katharine St. George, Ensemble, *All the Way*; Essie Miller, *Ah, Wilderness!*) Asolo Rep: *Good People*, *Our Betters*. Ms. Cormier appeared in the first national Broadway tour of *The Graduate*. Regionally she has appeared in *Good People* (Repertory Theatre of St. Louis), *Clybourne Park* (Northern Stage), *Diary of Anne Frank* (Indiana Repertory), *Intimate Apparel* (Actors Theatre of Louisville/Cleveland Play House), *Annapurna* (Magic Theatre) and seasons at Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival and Theatre at Monmouth. Film and TV credits: *The Affair*, *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, *Six Degrees*, *Mermaids*, *In Dreams* and *The Big Gay Musical*. Graduate of Shakespeare Theatre Company ACA @ GWU. www.denisecormier.com

TOM HARNEY THIRD YEAR STUDENT, FIRST SEASON (Norwegian King, Butler, FBI (digger), Delegate, Barber, Secret Service, Ensemble, *All the Way*; Richard Miller, *Ah, Wilderness!*) is thrilled to make his Asolo Rep debut! Last year he performed on the Cook stage in *The Water Engine*, *As You Like It*, and *The Cherry Orchard*. He would like to thank his family, as well as Maurie Richards & Jack Kesler, and The Foster & Martha Harmon Scholarship fund. He also would like to send a special thank you to Angel Hissom.

DOUGLAS JONES* ASSOCIATE ARTIST, THIRTIETH SEASON (Sid Davis, *Ah, Wilderness!*) Asolo Rep credits: Malachi Stack, *The Matchmaker*, Solomon Fitzmaurice, *Both Your Houses*; SB O'Donnell, *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*; Pa Joad, *The Grapes of Wrath*; Kirby, *You Can't Take it With You*; Shelley Levine, *Glengarry Glen Ross*; Russ, *Clybourne Park*; Polonius/Gravedigger, *Hamlet, Prince of Cuba*; Painter, *Las Meninas*; Bejart, *La Bête*; Juror #10, *Twelve Angry Men*; Argan, *The Imaginary Invalid*; Camille, *The Winter's Tale*; General Burgoyne, *The Devil's Disciple*; Roger, *Perfect Mendacity*; Turai, *The Play's the Thing*; Frank, *Equus*; Dyson, *Lady*. Other Asolo Rep credits include *Amadeus*, *Men of Tortuga*, *A Few Good Men*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Darwin in Malibu*, *Enchanted April*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *You Never Can Tell*, *Art*, and *A Flea in Her Ear*. Other favorites: *The Zoo Story*, *Uncle Vanya* and *The Clean House*. Seasons elsewhere: CenterStage, The Cleveland Play House, Milwaukee Rep, California Shakespearean Festival, Stage West, Cincinnati Playhouse, Huntington Theatre, American Stage, Queens Playhouse, The Playmakers, The Straz Center, the Maltz Jupiter Theatre, Florida Studio Theatre, and four plays Off-Broadway. Doug trained at Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London.

AH, WILDERNESS!

Page 4 of 6

GREG LEAMING ELEVENTH SEASON (Director, FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training; Associate Artistic Director, Asolo Rep; Director, *Ah, Wilderness!*) For Asolo Rep, he has directed his own translation/adaptation of *Anything to Declare?* as well as *Good People*, *Other Desert Cities*, *The Game's Afoot*, *Boeing Boeing*, *Hearts*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, *The Play's the Thing*, and the world premiere of Jason Wells' *Men of Tortuga*. For the Conservatory, he has directed *The Actor's Nightmare/The Real Inspector Hound*, *The Water Engine*, *The School for Lies*, *Twelfth Night*, *Cloud Nine*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Pericles*, *Blue Window*, *Murder by Poe* and *The Mystery Plays*. His play *The Patsy*, adapted from George Feydeau's *Le Dindon*, premiered in September at Resident Ensemble Players in Delaware. He was the Director of Artistic Programming for Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven, CT, as well as Acting Artistic Director for the 2001-2002 season. There he directed, among others, the world premieres of *Going Native*, *Abstract Expression*, *The Third Army*, *Syncopation*, and *An Infinite Ache* (also for Stamford Theatre Center, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park and Merrimack Repertory Theatre). Other credits include numerous productions around the country, including the world premieres of *Losing Father's Body*, *Church of the Sole Survivor*, Jeffrey Hatcher's *The Turn of the Screw*, as well as many other productions at Hartford Stage Company, Portland Stage Company, Contemporary American Theater Festival, Philadelphia Drama Guild, Clarence Brown Theatre Company, Stage West, Shakespeare Sedona, Southwest Shakespeare, and Banyan Theater Company.

PEGGY ROEDER* GUEST ARTIST, SIXTH SEASON (Lily, *Ah, Wilderness!*) has appeared at Asolo Rep in *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, *The Matchmaker*, *Good People* and *My Fair Lady*. Other favorites include *The Dresser* (Steppenwolf), *Romeo and Juliet* (Goodman), *The Clean House* (Milwaukee Rep), *Kabuki Macbeth* (Chicago Shakespeare), *The Cider House Rules* (Atlantic Theatre Company), *The How and the Why* (Etopia Productions), *The Big Meal* (ATC), *Outside Mullingar* (Peninsula Players), *Float* (About Face), *The Busy World is Hushed* (Next). Her work has garnered four Jeff Awards, three Artisan Awards, and two After Dark Awards. Film and TV credits include *Groundhog Day*, *Road to Perdition*, *Were the World Mine*, *Stranger than Fiction*, *Star Trek: DS9*, *Law & Order*.

AH, WILDERNESS! PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

Inside Asolo Rep: *LIVING ON LOVE & AH, WILDERNESS!*

Wednesday, January 27 at 11am

Asolo Rep's Mezzanine

Panel discussions are \$5 and free for all donors and Asolo Rep Guild Members

Get rare insights into the artistic process, hear directly from the people responsible for producing *LIVING ON LOVE* and *AH, WILDERNESS!*, and engage in stimulating discussion inspired by the plays' themes and issues.

Inside Asolo Rep is sponsored by Hotel Indigo and the Observer

OUT@AsoloRep: *AH, WILDERNESS!*

Wednesday, March 16 at 6:30pm; show starts at 7:30pm

Asolo Rep's Mezzanine

Contact Asolo Rep's Box Office for subscription and ticket information

Now in its seventh season, OUT@AsoloRep is Sarasota's premier cultural event connecting local Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities with fantastic theatre. Enjoy a pre-show reception and learn about participating LGBT organizations, gain personal insight into *AH, WILDERNESS!* from the creative team and cast members, and mingle with the actors and other

-more-

AH, WILDERNESS!
Page 5 of 6

OUT attendees after the performance.

OUT@AsoloRep is sponsored by U.S. Trust, Visit Sarasota County, Morton's Gourmet Market & Catering, Community Foundation of Sarasota County - Our Sarasota Fund and McCauley Brown Fund, and Watermark Media.

The Scoop

One hour prior to every performance of **AH, WILDERNESS!**
Asolo Rep's Mertz Theatre, orchestra level

Arrive one hour before curtain to hear the ideas and inspirations that contributed to the making of **AH, WILDERNESS!**.

Tuesday Talkbacks

February 16 & March 1
Asolo Rep's Mezzanine

Join us for an intimate post-show discussion with featured actors or guests following every Tuesday performance of **AH, WILDERNESS!**

Meet the Actors

Sunday, January 24 at 2pm
Asolo Rep's Mertz Theatre

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

TICKETS

New this Season: Start times for Wednesday & Thursday performances will be moved one-half hour earlier to 1:30pm and 7:30pm. All preview performances will begin at 8pm.

Tickets for **AH, WILDERNESS!** and the entire 2015-2016 Asolo Repertory Theatre season are on sale now. Tickets for **AH, WILDERNESS!** start at \$24. To purchase tickets, call 941.351.8000 or 800.361.8388, visit 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 currently open Monday 10am – 4pm, Tuesday – Thursday 10am - 7:30pm, Friday – 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.

SPONSORS

Asolo Rep is able to present **AH, WILDERNESS!** because of the generosity of its sponsors. Corporate sponsors for **AH, WILDERNESS!** are Tidewell Hospice, First Security Investments, LLC of Southwest Florida, Morton's Gourmet Market & Catering, and 92.1 The Coast. Asolo Rep 2015-2016 Major Season Sponsors are Florida State University, Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, The

AH, WILDERNESS!

Page 6 of 6

Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, Designing Women Boutique, Woman's Exchange, Inc., and Sunset Cadillac of Bradenton. 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.

###

MEDIA CONTACT

Sasha Fields
Public Relations Manager
941.351.9010 x4800
sasha_fields@asolo.org