

# ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE

PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MICHAEL DONALD EDWARDS • MANAGING DIRECTOR LINDA DIGABRIELE



Jungle Book Photos/Art Available by Visiting:  
<https://asolorep.smugmug.com/Jungle-Book/>

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

June 29, 2017

## Asolo Rep Announces its Final 2017-18 Season Production: The World Premiere of **JUNGLE BOOK**

(SARASOTA, June 29, 2017) — Asolo Repertory Theatre proudly announces its final production of its 2017-18 season: the world premiere of **JUNGLE BOOK**, a boldly re-imagined family friendly stage adaptation of Nobel Prize-winner Rudyard Kipling's classic novel. From the creators of Asolo Rep's June 2017 hit production of *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, **JUNGLE BOOK** will have its world premiere at Asolo Rep in June 2018. It will be presented by Kidoons and WYRD Productions in association with The 20K Collective, produced by **Jeff Lord**, co-created and co-directed by **Craig Francis** and **Rick Miller**.

**JUNGLE BOOK** takes the same multimedia theatrical approach as *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea*: to re-imagine a classic story through modern eyes. The play will incorporate poetry from the original novel and, through the use of immersive video and interactive technology, will transport audiences to the world's jungles. From Mowgli the Man-cub, Baloo the bear, Kaa the Snake, and more, **JUNGLE BOOK** will bring the characters audiences know and love to life while also introducing some of the other colorful inhabitants of Kipling's books, and of today's urban jungle.

"Although the Mowgli stories in Kipling's *The Jungle Book* and *The Second Jungle Book* have been often adapted for film and TV, there are also other stories in the books about different animals from around the world that we can't wait to introduce to Sarasota, including *The White Seal*, which chronicles an Alaskan fur seal and his journey to meet the

-more-

wisest creature in the seas: a manatee," said co-creator and co-director Rick Miller. "The whimsical and soulful stories, poems and songs that Kipling assembled in *The Jungle Book* cover a great deal of territory, both thematically and geographically."

The design team includes some of Canada's most talented artists. **Astrid Janson** (Set, Props and Costume Design), winner of the prestigious Siminovitch Award for Theatre Design; multiple Dora Award winners **Debashis Sinha** (Sound and Music Design) and **André du Toit** (Lighting Design); as well as **Irina Litvinkeno** (Video Design) whose work was seen at Asolo Rep in *Twenty Thousand Leagues*.

"On stage, a small cast will take on a variety of roles," said co-creator and co-director Craig Francis. "Besides telling stories as the central **JUNGLE BOOK** characters, they can also manipulate lights, shadows, and fabric to create different natural, unnatural and theatrical environments. Our constant, immersive video and sound design will connect our onstage and online worlds."

"Our drive to present highly imaginative, innovative and fresh programming for all ages began in 2016 with *Hetty Feather*," said Asolo Rep Producing Artistic Director **Michael Donald Edwards**. "With the success of our June 2017 production of *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, Asolo Rep's annual family friendly production is well on its way to becoming a beloved staple for Sarasota families. I am thrilled to continue the momentum with the world premiere of **JUNGLE BOOK**, from the same brilliant team that brought our audiences aboard the Nautilus Submarine in *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*. Set in the lush jungles of the world, this stunning production takes Rudyard Kipling's beloved stories and brings them to life with a jaw dropping multi-media twist."

Asolo Rep is committed to making the month of June a time for families, so much so that its board of directors voted to designate a gift of \$84,000 that the theatre received in fall 2016 as a beneficiary of the Joy McCann Culverhouse Charitable Remainder Trust, to producing a family-oriented show in June 2017, 2018 and 2019. These funds, as well as a major gift received from **Edie Winston**, are making it possible for Asolo Rep to develop **JUNGLE BOOK** for the stage.

"We must develop a love for the arts in our younger generations from a very young age," said Asolo Rep supporter Edie Winston. "It inspires a lifelong love and dedication to theatre that they then pass on to their children. I am passionate about this cause because I have seen firsthand the entrancement that children experience when they see live theatre for the first time. It is truly special."

---

## **SELECTED CREATIVE TEAM**

Co-Creator/Co-Director..... Craig Francis\*

Co-Creator/Co-Director.....Rick Miller\*

Scenic, Prop & Costume Designer.....Astrid Janson

Lighting Designer.....André du Toit  
Sound and Music Designer.....Debashis Sinha  
Video Designer..... Irina Litvinkeno

\*Kidoons and WYRD Productions engage, under the terms of the Independent Theatre Agreement, professional Artists who are members of Canadian Actors' Equity Association. Backstage and Crew are members of IATSE Local 412.

---

## **SELECTED ARTISTIC BIOS**

(In Alphabetical Order)

**CRAIG FRANCIS** (Co-Creator/Co-Director) is a writer, performer, visual artist and storyteller whose works have been enjoyed by millions of children worldwide. Co-creative director of the Kidoons Network and an accomplished cartoonist, he is the creator of animated series including Jerry Muskrat's *The Greatest Lakes Adventure*, Grandfather Frog's *Water Wonderful World* with museums and historic sites nationwide. He is a co-producer and stage manager with the hit show *BOOM* (Kidoons/WYRD Productions) and the co-creator with Rick Miller of new theatrical productions: *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea*, the Star Wars/ Game of Thrones parody *GAME of CLONES*, *Frankenstein* (with Paul Van Dyck), and the upcoming *Jungle Book* and *Rose Red*. Craig has developed marketing for performing arts centers, illustrated several books, and appeared as a guest on CBC, CTV, Global, and Showtime. His voices can be heard in animated series and video games.

**RICK MILLER** (Co-Creator/Co-Director) is a Dora and Gemini award-winning writer/director/ actor/musician/educator who has performed on five continents and who Entertainment Weekly called "one of the 100 most creative people alive today." He has created and toured solo shows such as *MacHomer*, and (w. Daniel Brooks) *Bigger Than Jesus* and *HARDELL*. With Robert Lepage, he has collaborated on *Geometry of Miracles*, *Zulu Time*, *Lipsynch*, and on the film *Possible Worlds*. As the artistic director of WYRD Productions and co-creative director of the Kidoons Network, Rick has most recently developed the stage shows *BOOM*, *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea*, and *GAME of CLONES*, as well as several web series that educate, enlighten, empower, and entertain young people. He also teaches an interdisciplinary class at the University of Toronto called "The Architecture of Creativity." Ricks is from Montreal, and lives in Toronto with his wife Stephanie Baptist and their two daughters.

---

## **TICKETS**

**Season subscriptions for the 2017-18 season are on sale now and available by visiting the Asolo Rep Box Office**, located in the lobby of the theatre, 5555 N. Tamiami Trail in Sarasota, by calling 941.351.8000 or 800.361.8388 or online at [www.asolorep.org](http://www.asolorep.org). Single tickets will go on sale in September 2017.

###

**Media Contact:**

Sasha Goodrich

Public Relations Manager

941.351.9010 x4800

[Sasha\\_Goodrich@asolo.org](mailto:Sasha_Goodrich@asolo.org)