

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****
December 23, 2019

Asolo Rep Proudly Presents *THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT*

The 2018 Broadway Hit Runs January 22 - March 19

(SARASOTA, December 23, 2019) — Asolo Rep proudly continues its winter repertory season with the recent Broadway sizzling hit dramedy ***THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT***, by **Jeremy Kareken & David Murrell** and **Gordon Farrell**. Directed by Asolo Rep Associate Artistic Director **Celine Rosenthal**, ***THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT*** previews January 22 and 23, opens January 24 and runs through March 19 in rotating repertory in the Mertz Theatre, located in the FSU Center for the Performing Arts.

At a high-end, struggling magazine, millennial fact-checker, Jim, is eager to prove he has what it takes to his demanding editor, Emily. His first assignment: to fact check a groundbreaking essay by a famous author that offers a glimmer of hope to the publication's future, reeling from dwindling circulation and shrinking ad sales. But as he dives into the article, he discovers that the essay is riddled with inaccuracy after inaccuracy, and so begins the heated battle between truth and fact and right and wrong.

THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT is remarkably pertinent – it hits right on the pulse of what is going on today in the world of media and politics,” said Asolo Rep Producing Artistic Director **Michael Donald Edwards**. “It is one of the best plays I’ve seen recently, packed with razor-sharp dialogue and unexpected twists and turns that will keep audiences laughing, guessing and gasping. It also marks the perfect mainstage debut for our brilliant Associate Artistic Director, Celine Rosenthal.”

Tracy Michelle Arnold (Emily) returns to Asolo Rep, where she previously portrayed Regina in *The Little Foxes* (2017) and Mary in *Roe* (2018). She has appeared in more than 60 productions at American Players Theatre, including Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Arkadina in *The Seagull* and Linda in *Death of a Salesman*.

As a freshman at Harvard, **Derek Speedy** (Jim) was named one of *Variety*'s 110 Students to Watch “who represent the future of film, media and entertainment.” He was last seen as Jim in *Lifespan* at its regional premiere at the Gloucester Stage Company opposite Academy Award®-nominee Lindsay Crouse.

Gene Weygandt (John) has appeared on Broadway in *Big* and *Wicked* and in the national tours of *A Christmas Carol* and *Wicked*. His film credits include *The Birdcage* and *The Babe* and his television credits include *Empire*, *Chicago Fire*, *Boss*, *Home Improvement* and more.

Director Celine Rosenthal is in her second season as Associate Artistic Director of Asolo Rep. She is a Tony®-nominated producer for *Leap of Faith* and *Seminar*. Her work has been seen at the Tristan Bates Theatre in London, NYMF, New York City Center, MMAC, 54 Below, 59E59, Abingdon Theatre, and in the Broadway's Future Songbook Series at Lincoln Center. Her recent projects include *Chicago* at Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis and *A Doll's House* at The Studio Theatre.

"This play asks a simple question; 'what is truth?' Is it OK for storytellers to take poetic license? Is that dangerous or is that art?" said Director Celine Rosenthal. "**THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT** tackles difficult topics with humor, which is vital. If we can't look at ourselves and laugh, analyze our behavior, and perhaps change our perspective then I think we're lost. That's why this play is important right now: it's not just talking about something, it's helping us laugh about it."

CAST

(In Order of Appearance)

TRACY MICHELLE ARNOLD*.....EMILY
DEREK SPEEDY*.....JIM
GENE WEYGANDT*.....JOHN

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

SELECTED CREATIVE TEAM MEMBERS

Director.....Celine Rosenthal
Scenic Designer.....Brian Prather
Costume Designer.....Jen Caprio
Lighting Designer.....Andrew F. Griffin
Sound Designer.....Emily Auciello
Projection Designer.....Alex Basco Koch
Hair/Wig & Make-up Designer.....Michelle Hart

SELECTED ARTISTIC BIOS

TRACY MICHELLE ARNOLD* (Emily) Asolo Rep credits include Regina in *The Little Foxes* and Mary in *Roe*. She makes her artistic home at American Players Theatre (APT), where she has performed in 60 productions since 1999. Favorite APT roles include Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Arkadina in *The Seagull*, Hesione in *Heartbreak House*, Marguerite in *Exit the King*, and Linda in *Death of a Salesman*. Regional credits include Nora in *A Doll's House, Part 2* at Indiana Rep; Juliana in *The Other Place* at Forward Theatre; Brooke in *Other Desert Cities* at Goodman Theatre; and Amanda in *Private Lives* at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre.

CELINE ROSENTHAL (Associate Artistic Director; Director) is an NYU Tisch alum, Tony-nominated producer (*Leap of Faith*, *Seminar*), and a New Georges Jammer. The recipient of directing fellowships at Manhattan Theatre Club and Asolo Rep, as well as an SDCF Observership. Her work has been seen at the Tristan Bates Theatre in London, NYMF, New York City Center, MMAC, 54 Below, 59E59, Abingdon Theatre, and in the Broadway's Future Songbook Series at Lincoln Center. Recent projects include *Chicago* at Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis; *A Doll's House* at The Studio Theatre, *Drowning in Cairo* at The National Queer Theater; the FSU/Asolo Conservatory production of *Motherf***er with the Hat*, and last season's Asolo Rep Educational Touring production of *The Tempest*. www.celinerosenthal.nyc

DEREK SPEEDY* (Jim) was last seen as Jim in the regional premiere of *Lifespan* at the Gloucester Stage Company opposite Academy Award-nominee Lindsay Crouse. He is a recent graduate of Harvard University where he was a four-year cast member of the (in)famous Hasty Pudding Theatricals. Freshman year, he was named one of *Variety's* 110 Students to Watch "who represent the future of film, media and entertainment." Credits include: *Dogfight*, *Assassins*, *Polaroid Stories*, *Into the Woods*, and *Pericles*. Training: Harvard University, Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, Williamstown, and Stagedoor Manor.

GENE WEYGANDT* (John) Broadway: *Big*, *Wicked*. Regional: *Something Rotten*, *42nd Street*, *Rock of Ages*, *Annie*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Xanadu*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Me and My Girl*, *The Light in the Piazza*, *Show Boat*. Film: *The Birdcage*, *The Babe*. Television: *Empire*, *Chicago Fire*, *Boss*, *Home Improvement*, *Murphy Brown*, *Cybill*, *Coach*, *Drew Carey*, *Ellen*, *Betrayal*, *The Beast*, *USA High*, *University Hospital*. Mr. Weygandt is the lead vocalist with *SoundTracks of a Generation: The Van Morrison Show*, a commercial voice actor you've heard hundreds of times, a BMW motorcycle enthusiast, and part-time bank robber.

PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

The Scoop (FREE)

Arrive one hour before curtain to hear the ideas and inspirations that contributed to the making of *THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT* (Opening Night, January 24, is excluded.)

Sunday Salon (FREE)
Sunday, January 26
Asolo Rep's Mezzanine

Reflect on your experience through a lively and informative post-show discussion following select Sunday matinees in the Mertz and Cook Theatres. Featuring members of Asolo Rep's Artistic Department and special guests.

***THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT* IllumiNation Event**

Tuesday, January 28 at 6:30pm; performance at 7:30pm
Pre-show reception and a post-show community conversation held on the Mezzanine
Performance in the Mertz Theatre
Contact Asolo Rep's Box Office for series package information and single performance tickets.

A stimulating series of theatre and conversation exploring the topical and social themes threaded throughout our season. IllumiNation events begin one hour prior to curtain with a reception on the mezzanine, continue with the performance, and conclude with a conversation.

The IllumiNation series is made possible, in part, with support from the Koski Family Foundation, Morton's Gourmet Market & Catering, and The Observer.

Inside Asolo Rep: MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS and THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT

Tuesday, February 4 at 11am
Cook Theatre
10:30am: Enjoy coffee and light bites by Muse at the Ringling, and visit the Designing Women Boutique Pop-Up Shop
Panel discussions are \$5; and free for all donors at the Cherubim Angels level and higher and Asolo Rep Guild Members.

Get rare insights into the artistic process, hear directly from the people responsible for producing *MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS* and *THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT* and engage in stimulating discussion inspired by the plays' themes and issues. **Inside Asolo Rep is sponsored by Muse at the Ringling, Designing Women Boutique and The Observer.**

OUT@AsoloRep: *THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT* [Sold Out]

Thursday, February 6 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 10th 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, and gain personal insight into *THE SOUND OF MUSIC* from the creative team and cast members.

OUT@AsoloRep is sponsored by Morton's Gourmet Market & Catering, CAN Community Health and Sabal Palm Bank.

Herald-Tribune Talkbacks

Through the Eyes of a Critic

Tuesday, March 17

Following the performance, stay for an insightful conversation with *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* Arts Editor and Theater Critic Jay Handelman.

TICKETS

Tickets for ***THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT*** start at \$33. Subscriptions for the season are also on sale.

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 open Monday 10am – 5pm, 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 ***THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT*** because of the generosity of its sponsors. The corporate sponsors for ***THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT*** are the Sarasota Herald-Tribune, Sarasota Magazine and The Resort at Longboat Key Club, with additional support from the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.

Asolo Rep 2019-20 Major Season Sponsors are Florida State University, the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Community Foundation of Sarasota County, the Huisking Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, Designing Women Boutique, The Exchange, and Sunset Cadillac of Bradenton. Asolo Rep's artistic programs are paid for in part by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax revenues.

ABOUT ASOLO REP

Now in its 61st season, Asolo Repertory Theatre is recognized as one of the premier professional theatres in America and one of the largest in the Southeastern United States. One of the few select theatres in the nation that performs in true rotating repertory, Asolo Rep's highly skilled acting company and extensive craftsmanship bring to life this unique performance method that gives audiences the opportunity to see multiple productions in the span of a few days. Asolo Rep presents up to 10 productions each season including contemporary and classic works and provocative musical theatre experiences. A theatre district in and of itself, Asolo Rep is committed to expanding its reach into the community, furthering its collaboration with the best theatre artists working in the industry today and cultivating new artists through its affiliation with the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Michael Donald Edwards and Managing Director Linda DiGabriele, Asolo Rep's ambitious theatrical offerings and ground-breaking education and community programming engage audiences and ensure its lasting legacy for future generations. www.asolorep.org

Media Contact:

Sasha Goodrich

Public Relations Manager

941.351.9010 x4800

Sasha_Goodrich@asolo.org