



A Contemporary Theatre

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## ***Vanities Is Back!***

*Hit play from the 1970s returns as a new musical*

**SEATTLE, WA**—The 5th Avenue Theatre and ACT—A Contemporary Theatre are proud to announce the Northwest premiere of *Vanities: A New Musical*, running at ACT from February 4 to May 1, 2011.

With a book by Jack Heifner (who wrote the original play) and music and lyrics by David Kirshenbaum, *Vanities: A New Musical* focuses on the friendship of three women, beginning in the final days of the Kennedy administration in the early '60s. As it moves across the decades, the three change from naïve cheerleaders into sophisticated middle age, and their relationship is tested both by the world and each other.

The original comedy-drama version of *Vanities* ran for five years off-Broadway from 1976 to 1980, and has been staged in virtually every city and town across America (and most countries around the world) since. This new version has had productions at TheatreWorks in Palo Alto, The Pasadena Playhouse and New York's Second Stage Theatre in 2009. Both Heifner and Kirshenbaum will be on hand during rehearsals as they continue to workshop the show.

Kurt Beattie, ACT's Artistic Director, is taken with the show's continuing relevance. "*Vanities* is a significant work. It investigates, it entertains and it engages. And it conveys a truth about humanity that doesn't address a particular sex."

Seattle-based actors, Cayman Ilika, Jennifer Sue Johnson and, Billie Wildrick will play Kathy, Joanne and Mary, three women who journey from high school innocence in the early '60s of the Kennedy era to maturity in the "me-centered" '80s. "It's a tough role in any form," says the show's director, 5th Avenue Artistic Director and Executive Producer David Armstrong. "These women really need to act, and they also really need to sing. And they need to age 20 years on stage, and still be believable!"

The production of *Vanities: A New Musical* marks a new chapter in cooperation between The 5th Avenue and ACT, who had previously worked together on 2001's *A Little Night Music*. The show will be presented in ACT's Falls Theatre—an intimate space that perfectly suits the needs of this three-woman musical—and costumes and sets are also being constructed at ACT.

Ticket for *Vanities* are available by calling 206-625-1900/toll-free 888-5TH-4TIX (584-4849), at the box office at 1308 5th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101, or online at [5thavenue.org](http://5thavenue.org). Special thanks to The 5th's 2010-11 season co-sponsors Safeco Insurance and US Bank.

### **More about The 5th Avenue Theatre**

Winner of two Tonys (for *Hairspray* and *Memphis*), The 5th Avenue Theatre is one of the nation's premier incubators for new musicals. In the past decade it has produced 10 world premiere musicals, six of which have gone on to Broadway productions, as well as producing contemporary and classic musicals lauded by critics and audiences alike.

Unique in its Chinese-inspired design, this exquisite theater opened in 1926 as a venue for vaudeville and film. In 1980, the non-profit 5th Avenue Theatre began producing and presenting top-quality live musical theater. Today, under the leadership of Executive Producer and Artistic Director David Armstrong, Managing Director Bernie Griffin and Producing Director Bill Berry, The 5th Avenue Theatre attracts an annual attendance of more than 287,000 and ranks among the nation's largest and most respected musical theater companies.

In addition to its main stage productions, The 5th Avenue Theatre is also committed to encouraging the next generation of theatergoers through its extensive Educational Outreach Program which includes: The Adventure Musical Theatre Touring Company, The 5th Avenue High School Musical Theatre Awards, the Student Matinee Program, and Spotlight Nights. For more information about the Theatre, its season and its programs, please visit [5thavenue.org](http://5thavenue.org).

Please contact **John Longenbaugh**, Public Relations Manager, at **(206) 625-1418** with questions.

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