



Monday, June 21, 2010
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Contact: John Longenbaugh
(206) 625-1418, jlongenbaugh@5thavenue.org

Contact Info for Publication:
206-625-1900 / 888-5TH-4TIX (584-4849) or www.5thavenue.org

2010 Gala Breaks All Records!

“A Night at The 5th” raises \$478,000, honors 30 years of history for Seattle’s premier home of musical theater

SEATTLE – The 5th Avenue Theatre celebrated its 30th Anniversary with *A Night At The 5th*, the Theatre’s annual Fundraising Gala, on Saturday June 19. During a glamorous evening of food, fun and entertainment, the generous patrons of The 5th gave more than twice as much money as last year’s event, and celebrated the end of a acclaimed season whose highlights included four Tonys for the co-production with La Jolla Playhouse of last season’s *Memphis*, the world-premiere of *Catch Me if You Can* and critically-acclaimed productions of Bernstein’s *On The Town* and *Candide*.

Throughout an evening that included both a live and silent auction the event raised \$478,000, making this year’s Gala the most successful for The 5th ever, a remarkable achievement given the continued depressed state of the local and national economy. Patrons praised the event for its elegance and sheer entertainment value, which included a company of Seattle’s brightest musical theater talent gave a live performance that included a medley of songs drawn from the Theatre’s history, including a stand-out duet by *White Christmas* child stars Lauren Carlos and Drea Gordon, who performed that show’s duet “Sisters” complete with fans.

The evening also gave the Theatre a chance to pay tribute to the ‘Leading Lady of The 5th,’ Marilynn Sheldon, who served as the Theatre’s founding Managing Director up till her retirement last year, as well as the civic and business leaders behind the Theatre’s transformation from movie palace to Seattle’s magnificent home of live musical theater. Sheldon was lauded by her former colleagues in a moving ceremony that honored her 30 years of commitment to The 5th.

Managing Director Bernadine C. Griffin gave credit for the success of the event to the Gala committee and the board of The 5th, and particularly to board member and event chair Bonnie Towne. “Bonnie, or ‘The General’ as I like to call her, gave a year of her life to this organization, and we’re indebted to her leadership, determination and grace,” she said. She also singled out for praise The 5th’s Producing Partners Kenny and Marleen Alhadeff, who were on hand to triumphantly wave the “Best Musical” Tony they’d recently received in New York for *Memphis*, and live auction organizers Brad Goode and Sharon Friel. (The Fund-a-Need auction on its own

raised more than \$148,000, five times what was raised just a year ago.) “I couldn’t be happier that the hard work of these people and the generosity of our supporters paid off in such a spectacular fashion,” Griffin added.

Season subscriptions to The 5th Avenue’s 2010-2011 Season are available by calling 206-625-1900/toll-free 888-5TH-4TIX (584-4849), at our website at www.5thavenue.org, and in person at the box office at 1308 5th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101.

The 5th Avenue Theatre is Seattle’s premier musical theater. In 1980, the non-profit 5th Avenue Theatre began producing and presenting top-quality live musical theater for the cultural enrichment of the Northwest community. The 5th Avenue Theatre maintains a subscription audience of over 25,000 and an annual attendance of more than 287,000. It ranks among the nation’s largest and most respected musical theater companies. The Theatre is committed to encouraging the next generation of theatergoers through its 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. Unique in its Chinese-inspired design, the exquisite theater opened in 1926 as a venue for vaudeville and film. Today, under the leadership of Executive Producer and Artistic Director David Armstrong, Managing Director Bernadine C. Griffin and Producing Director Bill Berry, The 5th Avenue Theatre continues to achieve the highest standards in all aspects of artistic endeavors and facility operations, while preserving its artistic, architectural and historic legacy. Visit www.5thavenue.org.

Special thanks to The 5th’s 2011 Season Co-Sponsors Safeco Insurance and US Bank.

Please contact **John Longenbaugh**, Public Relations Manager, at **(206) 625-1418** with questions or to schedule individual interviews.

###