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“Memphis” to Land on Broadway!

Hit of Seattle’s 5th Avenue Theatre Finds a Place on the Great White Way

SEATTLE, WA –The producers of *Memphis*, the new musical about the early days of rock and roll, announced today that they have secured a theater, and an opening date, for a Broadway run. With a book and lyrics by Joe Pietro and music and lyrics by Bon Jovi band member David Bryan, the blues-and-rock-infused production will open at The Shubert Theatre on September 23, where Noel Coward’s *Blithe Spirit* starring Rupert Everett and Angela Lansbury is currently playing.

The show tells the story of Huey Calhoun, a white DJ living in Memphis in the 1950s whose unstoppable enthusiasm for “race records” helps bring black music across the color line, while his love for the black singer Felicia leads them across the same line with tragic results.

The musical enjoyed rave reviews and large and enthusiastic audiences when it played the La Jolla Playhouse and Seattle’s own 5th Avenue Theatre earlier this year. The *Seattle Times* described it as “bursting at the seams with big vocal talent, a soulful tone and attitude, and enough human wattage to power a city block,” while the *Seattle Weekly* says “the music of *Memphis* sizzles like soul food on a hot griddle.” Seattle’s own Chad Kimball, who starred as Huey, came in for particular praise, with the *Seattle P.I.* calling him “a shuffling whirlwind who tears up his own fragile earth, hunched and gangling with a slurring, honky-tonk drawl,” and the *Times* declaring that “his reedy, sturdy tenor pipes work just fine, on such rousing anthems as ‘Music of My Soul’ and ‘Tear Down the House.’”

“Our audience went crazy for *Memphis*,” says The 5th’s Producing Artistic Director David Armstrong. “Not since *Hairspray* had we seen this kind of response to a brand new musical. *Memphis*’s combination of dynamic music, exciting staging, and moving story really got Seattle buzzing about the show—and they haven’t stopped yet.”

The move marks another successful cross-continental leap from the stage of The 5th Avenue to Broadway, following in the steps of other successful productions including *Hairspray*, *The Wedding Singer* and the show that opened the 2008-2009 Season, *Shrek*. The show that opens our 2009-2010 Season is another brand new musical, *Catch Me If You Can*, based on the Dreamworks film and featuring the same creative team behind *Hairspray*.

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 Managing Director Marilyn Sheldon and Producing Artistic Director David Armstrong, 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.

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

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