



Press Contact: Rachel Liuzzi
rliuzzi@5thavenue.org
(206) 971-7934

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

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Broadway, West End and Film Sensation Lorna Luft to Star in The 5th Avenue Theatre's New Production of *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*

November 24 – December 31, 2017

Music & Lyrics by Irving Berlin

Book by Gordon Greenburg and Chad Hodge

Co-Directed by David Armstrong and James A. Rocco

Choreographed by James A. Rocco

(Thursday, October 26, 2017—SEATTLE) This holiday season **Lorna Luft**, the beloved performer and daughter of film and television icon Judy Garland, will star as Louise in **The 5th Avenue Theatre's** new production of ***Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn***, which began rehearsals this week. Luft joins a phenomenal cast of local and national talent including the previously announced **Eric Ankrim**, **Sarah Rose Davis**, **Matt Owen** and **Taryn Darr** for a dazzling winter treat that is perfect for the whole family. Also new to the cast is 5th Avenue favorite **Richard Gray** as Danny Reed as well as **Caden Brauch** and **Kristoffer Holtan**, who will alternate the role of Charlie Winslow. The 5th Avenue's staging is the first production of ***Holiday Inn*** post-Broadway and will be co-directed by **James A. Rocco** and 5th Avenue Theatre Executive Producer and Artistic Director **David Armstrong**. Rocco will also choreograph.

Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn plays **November 24 – December 31** (press opening Friday, December 1) at The 5th Avenue Theatre (1308 5th Avenue, Downtown Seattle). Tickets can be purchased at www.5thavenue.org, by phone at **206-625-1900** or at the Box Office at **1308 5th Avenue in Downtown Seattle**.

"It's very meaningful for me to be part of this production," said **Luft**, who makes her 5th Avenue debut with ***Holiday Inn***. "I'm grateful that I get to spend the holiday season immersed in the legendary music of Irving Berlin, a truly iconic composer and lyricist. As Jerome Kern said, 'Irving Berlin has no place in American music. He is American music.' I look forward to working with this exceptionally talented cast to bring this joyful musical to life in Seattle for the holidays."

Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn is a glorious new musical (inspired by the Oscar-winning film) that features 20 timeless Irving Berlin songs, including "White Christmas," "Easter Parade" and "Blue Skies." In this holiday delight, Jim leaves the bright lights of show business to settle down on a

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farm in Connecticut—but he finds the simple life is not as simple as he thought. Called “Heartfelt musical eggnog” by the *New York Observer*, ***Holiday Inn*** is a heartwarming treat, sure to put your whole family in the best of holiday spirits. This staging will feature the acclaimed sets and costume designs from the recent Broadway production.

About the Cast

Lorna Luft makes her 5th Avenue Theatre debut as Louise. Born to Judy Garland and producer Sid Luft, Luft began her career on her mother’s TV show. Her theater credits include *Promises, Promises*; *Snoopy*; *Extremities*; *Guys and Dolls*; *Grease*; *Mame*; *Little Shop of Horrors*; *Girl Crazy*; *Gypsy*; *The Wizard of Oz* and *Pack of Lies*. She has been seen on television and in film in *Grease 2*; *Where the Boys Are* ('84); *Trapper John, M.D.* and *Murder, She Wrote*. Luft co-produced *Life with Judy Garland*, the Emmy-winning miniseries based on her memoir *Me and My Shadows*. She celebrates her mother’s songbook in a one-woman show and CD, *Songs My Mother Taught Me*.

Eric Ankrim returns to the 5th Avenue Theatre stage to star as Jim Hardy. Ankrim appeared earlier this season as Harry Houdini in *Ragtime*. Select 5th Avenue Theatre credits include *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, *Rodgers & Hammerstein’s Oklahoma!*, *Rodgers & Hammerstein’s Carousel*, *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*, *RENT*, *Into the Woods*, *The Rocky Horror Show* and *Miss Saigon*. He made his Broadway debut in *First Date*, a production that began at The 5th and was seen in *Come From Away* (Seattle Rep). Ankrim’s work as a director includes The 5th’s hit productions of *Grease* and *ELF – The Musical* as well as *American Idiot* at ArtsWest.

Taryn Darr stars as Lila Dixon. She was last seen at The 5th as Mae in *The Pajama Game*. Her other 5th Avenue Theatre credits include *A Chorus Line* (Val), *White Christmas* (Judy), *Catch Me If You Can*, *A Christmas Story*, *ELF*, *Paint Your Wagon* and *Monty Python’s Spamalot*. She has performed regionally in *Chicago* (Roxie), *South Pacific* (Nellie), *Legally Blonde* (Brooke) and the New York City lab for *Something Rotten!*.

Sarah Rose Davis returns to The 5th to star as Linda Mason. Davis starred last season as Gladys in *The Pajama Game* and *Holiday Inn* marks her 23rd show with The 5th. Some of her favorite 5th Avenue Theatre credits include *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (Rosemary), *Paint Your Wagon* (Lotta), *A Chorus Line* (Maggie), *Grease* (Frenchy), *RENT* (Mark’s Mom), *A Christmas Story* (Mrs. Schwartz), *Carousel* and *Jasper in Deadland* (Hel). Her regional credits include *Funny Girl* (Fanny Brice) at Village Theatre and *Beatsville* (Betty) directed by Bill Berry at Asolo Repertory Theatre.

Matt Owen joins the cast to star as Ted Hanover, which marks his 20th show at The 5th. Previous roles at The 5th include *ELF* (Buddy), *Rodgers & Hammerstein’s Oklahoma!* (Will Parker), *Monty Python’s Spamalot* (Sir Robin), *A Room with a View* (Freddy) and many more. His regional credits include *Yankee Doodle Dandy* at Theatre Under the Stars and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* at North Shore Music Theatre. As a writer, Owen’s play *The Girl in the Park* premiered in the 2010 New York Fringe Festival to great acclaim. Owen also hosts an online travel show called *Matt’s Travel Tips*.

Richard Gray returns to the 5th Avenue Theatre stage as Danny Reed. Gray has spent the past several holiday seasons at Seattle Children’s Theatre in *James and the Giant Peach*, *Dick Whittington*, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and is excited

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to be back at The 5th. His previous 5th Avenue Theatre credits include *The Music Man*, *Monty Python's Spamalot*, *A Room With a View* and 5th Avenue/ACT Theatre co-productions of *First Date*, *Assassins* and *Murder for Two* (Gregory Award winner). Most recently, he was seen as *The Nance* at ArtsWest.

Caden Brauch and **Kristoffer Holtan** will alternate the role of Charlie Winslow.

The ensemble will feature the incredible talents of **Tate Busby**, **Kate E. Cook**, **Gabriel Corey**, **Alex Crozier**, **Jade Solomon Curtis**, **Lauren Du Pree**, **Paul Flanagan**, **Nik Hagen**, **Laura Elizabeth Henning**, **Jordan Jackson**, **Emily Ann Johnson**, **Danielle Kelsey**, **Cyana Paolantonio**, **Richard Peacock**, **Tia Petersen**, **Jonathan Luke Stevens**, **Joel Walker** and **Carolyn Willems Van Dijk**.

About the Co-Directors

David Armstrong is the Executive Producer and Artistic Director of The 5th Avenue Theatre where he has directed acclaimed productions of *The Secret Garden*; *Paint Your Wagon*; *Candide*; *Oliver!*; *Sweeney Todd*; *Hair*; *Hello, Dolly!*; *Mame*; *White Christmas*; *A Little Night Music*; *A Room with A View*; *Company*; *The Rocky Horror Show*; *Pippin*; *Jaques Brel is Alive and Well* and *Living in Paris* and *Anything Goes*. On Broadway, he directed the musical *Scandalous*, which he staged at The 5th under the title *Saving Aimee*. His direction and choreography have been seen at many leading regional theaters including The Kennedy Center, Ordway Center, Cincinnati Playhouse, Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera, St. Louis Rep, Dallas Summer Musicals, Ford's Theater and Paper Mill Playhouse. As a playwright, he created the book for The 5th's world premiere musical *Yankee Doodle Dandy!* and for two musicals for Theatreworks/USA: *Gold Rush!*, which premiered at New York's Kaye Playhouse and *A Christmas Carol*, which played Off- Broadway at New York's famed Lucille Lortel Theatre.

James A. Rocco returns to The 5th to co-direct and choreograph *Holiday Inn*. Previous 5th Avenue Theatre credits include *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Pirates*, *White Christmas*, *Sound of Music*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Wonderful Town*, *Singin' in the Rain*, and *Yankee Doodle Dandy!*. His Broadway credits include *CATS*, *Wind in the Willows*, *The Wizard of Oz* and his Off-Broadway credits include *Streakin'!* (created with Albert Evans), *Nite Club Confidential* and *Sweeney Todd*. Regionally he has directed and choreographed over 100 productions including *33 Variations*, *As Bees in Honey Drown*, *Damn Yankees*, *A Christmas Story*, *Grey Gardens*, *Love Janis* (Ivey Award), *In the Heights*, *Guys and Dolls* (CT Critics Circle Award) and *Smokey Joe's* (CT Critics Circle Award). His film/TV credits include *There Are No Words* (2 million viewers), *Galaxy Express* (3 million viewers) and *The World We Create* (Regional Emmy Nominee). He has worked on the recordings of *And The Night Stood Still* (FMB Top 40 Hit), Smithsonian Gershwin Series, Revisited Series and concerts at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. He was the lead singer for *Duke Ellington's Sophisticated Ladies*, *Herbie Hancock's Super Stars*. He received a Broadway Salutes award in 2013 and is the writer and host of *Broadway Songbook Series* (with Jeffrey Scott).

About the Music Director

Caryl Fantel makes her 5th Avenue debut. She has received numerous awards including Carbonell, Best Music Direction, *Passion* and Silver Palm, Outstanding Work throughout the 2016 South Florida season. Her Off-Broadway credits include *Theda Bara and the Frontier Rabbi* at MUFTI and *Stars of David* (Assoc. MD). She has worked at Carnegie Hall as Youth Choir Accompanist and regionally on dozens of productions including *Assassins* (Carbonell

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nomination), *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Spring Awakening*, *Carousel*, *Beehive* and *Summer Shorts*. She has music directed staged readings of *The Secret Garden*, *Man of La Mancha*, *Zorba!* and many new works. Fantel serves as Music Director for the annual South Florida Carbonell Awards. She has performed for Broadway's Beth Malone, Liz Callaway, Tovah Feldshuh, Lee Roy Reams, Daisy Eagan, Liz Larsen, John Bolton and others. Fantel—a private teacher and adjunct professor, audition and college prep coach, workshop presenter and Broward County Cultural Council member—is also working on multiple pieces currently in development, including *La Dottoressa*, a new musical about Maria Montessori.

About the Creative Team

Holiday Inn showcases scenic design by **Anna Louizos**, costumes based on the designs of **Alejo Vietti** and coordinated by **Cathy Meacham Hunt**, lighting design by **Duane Schuler**, sound design by **Christopher Walker** and hair and makeup design by **Mary Pyanowski Jones**. This production also features orchestrations by **Larry Blank**, vocal and dance arrangements by **Sam Davis**, additional dance and vocal arrangements by **Bruce Pomahac** and additional arrangements by **Albert Evans** and **Kat Sherrell**.

Additional staff includes **Charlie Johnson** (assistant director), **Alexander Gil Cruz** (assistant choreographer), **Michael Matlock** (associate music director), **Connie Yun** (assistant lighting designer), **Brendan Patrick Hogan** (assistant sound designer), **Jeffrey K. Hanson** (production stage manager) and **Rachael Dorman** and **Lisa Gornet** (assistant stage managers).

About the Writers

Irving Berlin (*Music & Lyrics*) had a life that spanned more than 100 years, wrote a catalogue that boasts over 1,000 songs and ultimately epitomized Jerome Kern's famous maxim that "Irving Berlin has no place in American music—he is American music." He wrote scores to 13 Broadway musicals, contributed to seven revues, wrote songs for 12 classic Hollywood movie musicals and created many of the most well-known popular songs of the twentieth century. Born in Russia, he immigrated to the Lower East Side, where he started as a singing waiter and soon became a lyricist, composer and music publisher. An intuitive businessman, Irving Berlin was a co-founder of ASCAP, founder of his own music publishing company and builder of the Music Box Theatre to house his *Music Box Revues*. For his paean to his beloved country, "God Bless America," he established a fund which receives all revenues from the song and distributes it to the Boy and Girl Scouts.

Gordon Greenberg (*Book*) recently directed the acclaimed West End revival of *Guys and Dolls*, which premiered at the Chichester Festival Theatre and transferred to the Savoy Theatre, where it received six Olivier nominations, and then to the Phoenix starring Rebel Wilson, while continuing on UK and international tours. Other work includes *Working* (revised with Lin-Manuel Miranda) for the Old Globe, Broadway in Chicago and 59E59 (Drama Desk); *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris* (Outer Critics, Drama Desk, Drama League nominations); Williamstown; Paper Mill; Signature; Goodspeed; Huntington; Dallas Theater Center; Asolo; New York Stage and Film; and co-writing the movie musical *Scramble Band* for the Disney Channel. Current projects include *The Secret of My Success* for Universal (director/co-writer), *Tangled* for Disney (director), *Port-au-Prince* (writing with Kirsten Childs for The New Group), *Heart of Rock and Roll* (Huey Lewis), *Assisted Loving* (by Bob Morris) and co-writing *Emerald City Music Hall*, a new movie musical for Nickelodeon. Born in Texas and raised in New York, Greenberg has appeared as an actor on Broadway, Off-Broadway and on television. He

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attended Stanford University, R.A.D.A. and NYU Film School. Greenberg is a member of the Dramatists Guild.

Chad Hodge (*Book*) is the creator, showrunner and executive producer of TNT's new drama series *Good Behavior* starring Michelle Dockery (*Downton Abbey*). Hodge created and executive-produced the hit FOX series *Wayward Pines*. Prior to that, he created NBC's *The Playboy Club* starring Laura Benanti. Film projects include *The Darkest Minds* for 20th Century Fox, based on the *New York Times* bestselling trilogy by Alexandra Bracken, and *Anita*, about the notorious singer and orange juice spokeswoman Anita Bryant. Hodge grew up in Chicago and graduated magna cum laude from Northwestern University. He lives in Los Angeles.

For Calendar Editors

WHEN: *Previews begin Friday, November 24, 2017*
Opening Night: Friday, December 1, 2017 (press night)
Closing Performance: Sunday, December 31, 2017
Performance times vary. Please visit www.5thavenue.org for details.

WHERE: **The 5th Avenue Theatre** (1308 5th Avenue, Downtown Seattle)

TICKETS: Please visit www.5thavenue.org or call the Box Office at (206) 625-1900 for tickets (starting at \$29).

Special thanks to production sponsor Premera Blue Cross, contributing sponsor Macy's and restaurant sponsor Il Fornaio. Additional thanks to 5th Avenue Theatre 2017/18 season sponsors ArtsFund, U.S. Bank and Alaska Airlines.

About The 5th Avenue Theatre

The non-profit 5th Avenue Theatre is the nation's premier incubator for new musical theater. Since 2001, the Seattle-based company has produced 18 new musicals. To date, nine (including the sensational hit *Disney's Aladdin*) have moved on to Broadway premieres, earning a combined 15 Tony Awards®, including two for Best Musical (*Hairspray* and *Memphis*). The 5th Avenue Theatre is also known for its world class, critically acclaimed new productions of musicals chosen from both the contemporary canon and the Golden Age of Broadway.

Unique in its Chinese-inspired design, this 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 Artistic Director Bill Berry, this non-profit theater company attracts an annual attendance of more than 300,000, including over 20,000 subscribers—one of the largest theater subscriptions in North America.

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 programs. For more information about The 5th Avenue Theatre, its season and its programs, please visit www.5thavenue.org.

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