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## **The 5th Avenue Theatre's Timely Production of *Kiss Me, Kate* Inspires Conversations about Gender Equality**

**April 6 – 29, 2018**

*Music & Lyrics by Cole Porter*  
*Book by Samuel & Bella Spewack*  
*Directed by Alan Paul*  
*Choreographed by Michele Lynch*

(Tuesday, February 20, 2018—SEATTLE) This spring **The 5th Avenue Theatre** will stage ***Kiss Me, Kate***, the Cole Porter musical inspired by William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. ***Kiss Me, Kate*** will be directed by **Alan Paul** and choreographed by **Michele Lynch**, who both worked on a previous production of the show at Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, D.C. in the fall of 2015.

A significant work in the canon of great musical theater, *Kiss Me, Kate* puts the story of two (formerly married) feuding stars in the 1940s in the spotlight. As they swing from love to loathing and back again, their behind-the-scenes battles spill on to the stage. Viewed through a contemporary lens, the story of *Kiss Me, Kate* and its characters, particularly this starring couple, illuminate long-standing historic issues of gender equality, reminding us of how far we have come and how far we still have to go – all at a time when we are actively addressing this subject on a national scale. The 5th Avenue Theatre's production seeks to inspire conversation and debate on these issues while dazzling audiences with a world-class Broadway caliber production of this time-honored American work.

"When we decided to produce *Kiss Me, Kate* nearly two years ago we had no idea it would open at a time when issues of gender equality and the power dynamics between women and men would so dominate our culture," said 5th Avenue Theatre Executive Producer and Artistic Director **David Armstrong**. "It is Shakespeare who, very appropriately to this discussion, asserted that the very purpose of theater is 'to hold the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.' *Kiss Me, Kate* could not be more pertinent to 'the very age and body' of our time."

Leading the cast as Lilli Vanessa/Katherine is **Cayman Ilika**, who is known in Seattle for her portrayal of Patsy Cline in *Always... Patsy Cline* at Centerstage and her performances in *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris* and *Vanities* (5th Avenue Theatre/ACT Theatre co-productions) and at Village Theatre in *Mary Poppins*. She is joined by Broadway star

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**Ben Davis** who makes his 5th Avenue Theatre debut as Fred Graham/Petruchio. Davis's Broadway credits include *Les Misérables*, *Violet*, *A Little Night Music* and *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. Broadway's **Clyde Alves** (*The Music Man*, *Wicked*, *Hairspray*) and **Robyn Hurder** (*Grease*, *The Wedding Singer*) return to the roles of Bill Calhoun/Lucentio and Lois Lane/Bianca after previously performing in the Shakespeare Theatre Company production.

Playing **April 6-29, 2018** (press opening Friday, April 13, 2018), tickets for *Kiss Me, Kate* start at \$29 and are on sale now. They can be purchased at **[www.5thavenue.org](http://www.5thavenue.org)**, by phone at **206-625-1900** or at the Box Office at **1308 5th Avenue in Downtown Seattle**.

The 5th Avenue Theatre's production of *Kiss Me, Kate* is part of **Seattle Celebrates Shakespeare**, a city-wide festival that honors the work of one of the world's most renowned playwrights. A multi-Tony Award®-winning Cole Porter masterpiece that set the standard for great musicals and then broke the mold, *Kiss Me, Kate* is a play-within-a-play inspired by William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. This sparkly sensation is, at its core, a true battle of the sexes. A charming leading man and his superstar ex-wife are starring in a production of the Bard's famous play. Both on stage and off, they revel in combat and romance. Who comes out on top? We're thinking you'd better "brush up your Shakespeare..."

#### **FOR CALENDAR EDITORS**

**WHEN:** *Previews begin Friday, April 6, 2018*  
Opening Night: Friday, April 13, 2018 (press night)  
Closing Performance: Sunday, April 29, 2018

**SHOW TIMES:** Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays – 7:30 PM  
Fridays – 8:00 PM  
Saturdays – 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM  
Sundays – 1:30 PM & 7:00 PM

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

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

Special thanks to production sponsor Umpqua Bank, contributing sponsor Seattle Office of Arts & Culture and restaurant sponsor Outlier. Additional thanks to The 5th Avenue Theatre's 2017/18 season sponsors ArtsFund, U.S. Bank and Alaska Airlines.

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