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Major League Lineup Steps up to the Plate for *Damn Yankees* at The 5th Avenue Theatre April 21 – May 20, 2012

Book by George Abbott and Douglas Wallop;
Music & Lyrics by Richard Adler and Jerry Ross;
Adapted from Wallop's 1954 novel *The Year the Yankees Lost the Pennant*
Directed by Mark S. Hoebee; Choreography by Denis Michael Jones
A Co-Production with Paper Mill Playhouse

(Monday, March 19, 2012 – SEATTLE, WA) Dust off the home plate! ***Damn Yankees*** is headed to **The 5th Avenue Theatre!** This sinfully funny musical comedy is the story of an aging baseball fan who makes a deal with the Devil so his beloved hometown team can beat the Yankees in the race for the pennant. From the songwriting team of *The Pajama Game*, ***Damn Yankees*** is filled with hit songs including “Two Lost Souls” and the sultry favorite, “Whatever Lola Wants, Lola Gets.” **Paper Mill Playhouse** knocked this one out of the park, with *The New York Times* declaring the show “a first-rate, frequently thrilling revival.” Now the grand-slam production will slide into Seattle this April. The creative team includes direction by **Mark S. Hoebee** (Paper Mill’s Producing Artistic Director), music direction by **Ben Whiteley**, and choreography by **Denis Michael Jones**.

“*Damn Yankees* is one of the great musicals of the Golden Era of Broadway,” said 5th Avenue Theatre Executive Producer and Artistic Director David Armstrong. “We’re very excited to bring this show to our stage for the first time, complete with major league talent from a mix of Broadway and Seattle musical theater all-stars.”

This Faustian tale will feature a line-up of power hitters from Seattle and Broadway including **Hugh Hastings** as aging baseball enthusiast Joe Boyd, **Christopher Charles Wood** as Young Joe Hardy, **Patti Cohenour** as the baseball widow Meg Boyd, **Hans Altwies** as Mr. Applegate (the Devil in disguise), and **Chryssie Whitehead** as the legendary seductress Lola. **Allen Fitzpatrick** and **Nancy Anderson** join the roster as Coach Benny Van Buren and Gloria Thorpe, ace reporter.

Damn Yankees plays **April 21 – May 20, 2012** (press opening April 26) at **The 5th Avenue Theatre** (1308 5th Ave, Seattle, WA 98101). Tickets (starting at \$19.00) may be purchased at www.5thavenue.org, by phone at 206-625-1900, or at the Box Office at 1308 5th Avenue in downtown Seattle.

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About the Cast

Christopher Charles Wood is going to bat as young all-star Joe Hardy, the Senator's homerun hero. Wood recently starred as Melchior in the national tour of *Spring Awakening* and has enjoyed success performing in tours and regional houses across the nation in *Curtains*, *Crazy For You*, *Gypsy*, *Annie*, *Smokey Joe's Café*, *Forever Plaid*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, *The Civil War*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Annie*, and *Chicago*, among others.

Tony and Drama Desk nominee (not to mention Pacific Northwest treasure) **Patti Cohenour** will play Meg Boyd, a wife deserted by her husband for the thrills of America's greatest pastime. This three-time Seattle Footlight Award-winner has a career spanning opera, Shakespeare, musical theater, and everything in between. She made her Broadway debut in *A Doll's House* and has since performed on the Great White Way as Signora Naccarelli in *The Light in the Piazza* at Lincoln Center, Mother Abbess in the 1997 Broadway revival of *The Sound of Music*, Christine Daaé in *The Phantom of the Opera*, Rosa Bud in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, and Mary Jane Wilkes in *Big River*. At The 5th Avenue Theatre alone, her extensive credits include *Sunday in the Park with George*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Most Happy Fella*, *1776*, and *The Secret Garden*.

The devil's seductress Lola will be played by saucy New York starlet **Chryssie Whitehead**. This true triple-threat recently appeared with Neil Patrick Harris in New York Philharmonic's production of *Company*, after having made her Broadway debut as Kristine in the revival of *A Chorus Line*. She has been featured on multiple TV series including *Grey's Anatomy*, *The Mentalist*, *In Plain Sight*, *Boston Public*, and many others. Whitehead's notable silver screen appearances include *Revenge of the Bridesmaids* and *RiffRaff*, as well as a turn as Julia Stiles' dance double in *Save the Last Dance*.

Bringing the heat as the deal-doling Applegate (the devil in disguise) is one of Seattle's finest actors, **Hans Altwies**, who is making his 5th Avenue debut. He has held multiple starring roles locally at New Century Theatre Company (where he is co-artistic director), Seattle Repertory Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Wooden O, Intiman, Seattle Children's Theatre, ACT, as well as Shakespeare Santa Cruz. Altwies is the recipient of the 2010 Gregory Award for Best Actor, and recently wowed audiences in the title role in SCT's production of *Robin Hood*.

Hugh Hastings is stepping up to the plate as Joe Boyd, an aging baseball fan so desperate for his team to win that he makes a deal with the Devil: his very soul in exchange for his transformation into the athletic young ballplayer the team needs. A Seattle-based actor since 1980, Hastings is thrilled to keep playing on his home turf. He has performed roles with Village Theatre, The 5th Avenue Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, ACT, Empty Space, Seattle Shakespeare Company, and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, to name a few. Hastings also has taught acting for such organizations as the University of Washington, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Seattle Children's Theatre and The 5th Avenue Theatre. Most recently, he played Buffalo Bill in *Annie Get Your Gun* at Village Theatre, Tiger Brown in *The Threepenny Opera* at Seattle Shakespeare Company, and Hector P. Valenti in *Lyle the Crocodile* at Seattle Children's Theatre.

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Allen Fitzpatrick plays hardball in *Damn Yankees* as Coach Benny Van Buren, a role he played on Broadway in 1994 opposite Jerry Lewis. A true triple-threat, Fitzpatrick has also performed on Broadway in *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Memphis*, *Sweet Smell of Success*, and *42nd Street*, among others. He has performed in five national tours, including *Sunset Boulevard*, starring as Max opposite Petula Clark. Fitzpatrick returns immediately to The 5th after performing in both *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!* and *Cinderella*. His previous 5th Avenue appearances include *Sweeney Todd*, *Candide*, *On the Town*, *Memphis*, and *Cabaret*, among many others. He is the artistic director of Icicle Creek Theatre Festival.

Joining the roster as the reporter Gloria is **Nancy Anderson** in her 5th Avenue Theatre debut. Anderson has performed on Broadway in *Wonderful Town* and *A Class Act*, and has performed in London in *Kiss Me Kate*, for which she received an Olivier Award. She has performed Off-Broadway in *Fanny Hill*, *Jolson & Co.*, *Ionescopade*, and *Yank!*, and has toured in productions of *Kiss Me Kate* and *Doctor Dolittle*.

Filling out the roster are Seattle favorites including **Carol Swarbrick** as Sister, **Julie Briskman** as Doris, **Richard Ziman** as Mr. Welch, **Bob De Dea** as the Commissioner, and **Beth DeVries** as Miss Weston. The ensemble is stacked with major league talent, including **David Alewine**, **Blaine Boyd**, **Scott Brateng**, **Gabe Corey**, **Daniel Cruz**, **Sarah Rose Davis**, **Christian Duhamel**, **Michael Paul Ericson**, **Eric Esteb**, **Kasey Nusbickel**, **Matthew Posner**, **Dane Stokinger**, and **Vaden Thurgood**.

About the Director

Mark S. Hoebee is the producing artistic director of Paper Mill Playhouse where he joined the artistic team in 2000. He has directed Paper Mill productions of *Dreamgirls*, *The Will Rogers Follies*, *Victor / Victoria*, *The King and I*, *Miss Saigon*, *Grease*, *Harold and Maude: The Musical* with Estelle Parsons, *Hello, Dolly!* starring Tovah Feldshuh, *Romance / Romance*, *Meet Me in St. Louis*, *Disney's High School Musical*, *The Full Monty* featuring Elaine Stritch, *Smokey Joe's Café*, and *Peter Pan*, as well as many national tours and regional productions. Under his leadership, Paper Mill recently launched the 25th Anniversary tour of *Les Misérables*, and premiered *Disney's Newsies*. Hoebee performed in more than 10 Broadway and national tour productions and has served as an adjunct professor in the Dance and Theatre Department at Northwestern University. He currently sits on the board of the New Jersey Theatre Alliance.

About the Choreographer

Choreographer **Denis Michael Jones** started *Damn Yankees* in New Jersey, having choreographed the Paper Mill productions of *Smokey Joe's Café*, *Disney's High School Musical* and *Meet Me in St. Louis*. He served as dance coach/associate choreographer on the MTV reality series *Legally Blonde the Musical: the Search for Elle Woods*. Jones choreographed Broadway's *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, *A Wonderful Life*, *On the Twentieth Century*, and the national tour of *Legends* starring Joan Collins and Linda Evans. He served as the director of Broadway Bares from 2005 to 2007 and was the associate choreographer to Jerry Mitchell for Broadway's *Legally Blonde* and *Dirty Rotten*

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Scoundrels. He is also an accomplished performer, with Broadway performance credits including *Grease*, *Chicago*, *Little Me*, *The Full Monty*, and *Never Gonna Dance*.

About the Music Director

Ben Whiteley joins the Paper Mill team as music director. Whiteley received both a bachelor's and a master's degree from the University of Michigan in voice and in opera performance. Whiteley conducted *Cats* for six years on Broadway, and has worked on many national tours including *Falsettos*, *Grand Hotel*, *Big*, *The Full Monty*, and *Spamalot*. For twelve years, he was the associate music director for the ENCORES! Series at City Center in New York. He has done various other projects including two concerts at Carnegie Hall: one a salute to Betty Comden and Adolph Green, and the other a salute to Alan Jay Lerner.

The Design Team

The design team for *Damn Yankees* includes **Rob Bissinger** (Set Design), **Alejo Vietti** (Costume Design), **Tom Sturge** (Lighting Design), and **Andrew G. Luft** (Sound Design). Also on the team are **Brandon Ivie** (Associate Director), **Matt Hohensee** (Associate Music Director), **Kim Craven** (Associate Choreographer), **Bruce Monroe** (Orchestrations and Additional Arrangements), **Christian DeAngelis** (Associate Lighting Designer), and **Thomas LeGalley** (Assistant Costume Designer).

About the Writers

Songwriting team **Richard Adler** and **Jerry Ross** first collaborated on the revue *John Murray Anderson's Almanac*. Subsequently, the duo premiered *The Pajama Game* on Broadway in 1954, which went on to win the Tony Award for Best Musical. Almost exactly one year later, *Damn Yankees* hit the Great White Way and equaled *The Pajama Game's* success. Many of Adler and Ross songs hit the radio waves with two soaring to #1 on the charts. The partnership was cut short due to Ross's untimely death at age 29 in 1955. At the time of his death, he had the number one and number two shows running on Broadway. In 1982, Ross was admitted posthumously to the Songwriters Hall of Fame.

Adler went on to write alone and with other partners, but besides a Tony nomination for *Kwamina*, his writing success never matched his career with Ross. During the Kennedy and Johnson years, Adler was appointed White House Consultant of the Arts and staged many "Presidentials." Over his lifetime, he received four Pulitzer nominations, two Variety Critics Awards, an Emmy, the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Southampton Cultural Center and the University of North Carolina, and an Honorary Doctorate in Music and Theater from Wagner College, among other distinctions.

Book writer **George Abbott** (1887-1995) was a director, author, performer and producer whose distinguished career in the American theater spanned more than seven decades and earned him the title of "Mr. Broadway." Over the years, Abbott's contribution to the Broadway musical was immense. He introduced the fast-paced, tightly integrated style that influenced so many actors, dancers, singers, and particularly fellow directors such as Jerome Robbins and Bob Fosse. At the age of 106, George Abbott advised director Jack

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O'Brien on the revisions to his original book for the 1994 Broadway revival of *Damn Yankees*.

Abbott was involved as a director, producer or writer with such memorable musicals *Wonderful Town*, *Me and Juliet*, *The Pajama Game*, *Once Upon a Mattress*, *Fiorello!*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Flora the Red Menace*, and *How Now, Dow Jones* among many others. Over his lifetime, Abbott received multiple Tony Awards, the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers Award of Merit (1965), and the 1959 Pulitzer Prize for Drama for *Fiorello!*

About The 5th Avenue Theatre

The 5th Avenue Theatre is one of the nation's premier incubators for new musical theater. Since 2002, the celebrated company has produced 13 new musicals. Five have moved on to Broadway premieres, earning a combined 14 Tony Awards, including two for Best Musical (*Hairspray* and *Memphis*). The 5th Avenue Theatre is also known for its world class, critically acclaimed 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. 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 Bernadine 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 Awards Honoring High School Musical Theatre, the Student Matinee Program, and Spotlight Nights. For more information about The 5th Avenue Theatre, its season and its programs, please visit www.5thavenue.org.

Special thanks to The 5th Avenue Theatre 2011-12 season co-sponsors Safeco Insurance and US Bank, and media sponsor *The Seattle Times*. Additional thanks to *Damn Yankees* production sponsors Puget Sound Energy, the Washington State Arts Commission, the Mayor's Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs, and Encore Media Group.

About Paper Mill Playhouse

Paper Mill Playhouse, currently under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Mark S. Hoebee and Managing Director Todd Schmidt, opened its doors in Millburn, New Jersey, in 1938 and has been consistently recognized for the high-quality artistry of its reimagined

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musicals, as well as its commitment to supporting the development of new works and emerging artists. A nationally renowned center for musical theater education and performance, Paper Mill Playhouse boasts award-winning arts education, artist training, and outreach programs that impact more than 50,000 students each year. Paper Mill Playhouse productions have gone on to Broadway – including the critically acclaimed, new Disney musical, *Newsies* – as well as national tours, television broadcasts on Showtime and PBS, and original cast recordings.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: Dust off the home plate! *Damn Yankees* is headed to **The 5th Avenue Theatre!** This sinfully funny musical comedy is the story of an aging baseball fan who makes a deal with the Devil so his beloved hometown team, the Senators, can beat the Yankees in the race for the pennant. From the songwriting team of *The Pajama Game*, *Damn Yankees* is filled with hit songs including “Two Lost Souls” and the sultry favorite, “Whatever Lola Wants, Lola Gets.” After an out-of-the-park success at New Jersey’s **Paper Mill Playhouse**, the grand-slam production will slide into Seattle with a team of all-stars this April. The creative team includes direction by **Mark S. Hoebee** (Paper Mill’s Producing Artistic Director), music direction by **Ben Whiteley**, and choreography by **Denis Michael Jones**.

This Faustian tale will feature a line-up of power hitters including **Hugh Hastings** as aging baseball enthusiast Joe Boyd, **Christopher Wood** as Young Joe Hardy, **Patti Cohenour** as the baseball widow Meg Boyd, and **Hans Altwies** as Mr. Applegate (the Devil in disguise). **Chryssie Whitehead** will play the legendary seductress Lola. **Allen Fitzpatrick** and **Nancy Anderson** join the roster as Benny Van Buren and Gloria.

WHEN: **April 21 – May 20, 2012**
Previews: April 21 – April 25, 2012
Opening Night: April 26, 2012 (*press night*)
Closing Performance: May 20, 2012

SHOW TIMES: Tuesdays & Wednesdays – 7:30 PM
Thursdays & Fridays – 8:00 PM
Saturdays – 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM
Sundays – 1:30 PM & 7:00 PM
No performances 5/15 or 5/16
Added performance on 5/10 at 1:30 PM

WHERE: **The 5th Avenue Theatre** (1308 5th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101)

TICKETS: Single tickets start at \$19.00. For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit www.5thavenue.org or call the Box Office at (206) 625-1900. Tickets may also be purchased by calling (888) 5TH-4TIX.

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