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SPOTLIGHT ON KATHIE LEE GIFFORD AND HER NEW MUSICAL *SAVING AIMEE*

Upcoming 5th Avenue Spotlight Night features Kathie Lee Gifford, Composers David Pomeranz and David Friedman and the Star-Studded Cast of *Saving Aimee*

7:00 PM, September 10, at The 5th Avenue Theatre

(Friday, September 2, 2011 – SEATTLE, WA) Seattle audiences will have the exciting and free opportunity to meet Emmy Award-winning television star **Kathie Lee Gifford** when she previews her new musical *Saving Aimee* to the Emerald City at **7:00 PM, Saturday, September 10**, at **The 5th Avenue Theatre** (1308 5th Avenue) as a part of the company's popular Spotlight Night series. Hosted by 5th Avenue Theatre Executive Producer and Artistic Director **David Armstrong**, The *Saving Aimee* Spotlight Night will offer audiences a captivating overview of the remarkable true story of 1920s faith-healer and media darling Aimee Semple McPherson. The evening includes enlightening interviews with the show's creators and stars and a sneak peek at the soul-stirring music of *Saving Aimee*.

The highlight of the evening will be a lively and enthralling interview with the creative team behind *Saving Aimee* – two-time Emmy Award-winning host of the 4th hour of the *Today Show* **Kathie Lee Gifford** (book, lyrics and contributing composer) and veteran composers **David Pomeranz** and **David Friedman**. Drawing on her life-long fascination with Aimee Semple McPherson, Kathie Lee Gifford created *Saving Aimee* as a labor of love over the past decade. The musical premiered in 2007 at Signature Theatre in Washington D.C., and has since undergone several revisions before coming to The 5th Avenue Theatre. Gifford is not new to musical theatre. She wrote the book and lyrics for the Off-Broadway musical *Under the Bridge* with composer David Pomeranz, and a musical for young audiences entitled *KeyPin.It.Real* with composer David Friedman. Most recently she has written the lyrics to a new musical adaptation of the classic film, "*It's A Wonderful Life*."

Audiences will meet the star-studded cast of *Saving Aimee* including two-time Tony Award nominee **Carolee Carmello** (Broadway's *The Addams Family*, *Parade*, *Mamma Mia!*) who stars as Aimee and the incomparable Tony Award-winner **Judy Kaye** as Aimee's mother (Broadway's *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Mama Mia!*, *Souvenir*). Seattle stars **Brandon O'Neill** and **Charles**

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Leggett join the conversation along with New York stage celebrities **Ed Watts** and **Ed Dixon**.

In addition to some outstanding musical excerpts from the show performed by the cast, audiences will be treated to performances of hit songs by exceptional *Saving Aimee* composers David Pomeranz and David Friedman. Each has penned chart-topping songs for a host of stars ranging from Barry Manilow and Bette Midler to Donna Summer, Richie Sambora, Freddie Mercury, and Allison Kraus.

Matthew Sutton, author of the recent book *Aimee Semple McPherson and the Resurrection of Christian America* will deliver a fascinating recap of the true life and times of Aimee Semple McPherson. Sutton is a professor at Washington State University, Pullman.

McPherson was a 1920s celebrity evangelist who rose from the life of a spirited farm girl to become the founder of a church attended by thousands. Hounded by the press, plagued by rumors of scandalous affairs, and driven to addiction by her frenetic lifestyle, this thrice-married media maven disappeared for five weeks in 1926. Aimee claimed she was kidnapped, but the newspapers accused her of staging a cover-up for her affair with a married man. The scandal surrounding the true nature of Aimee's disappearance ballooned into the trial of the century.

Hosted by The 5th Avenue Theatre's Executive Producer and Artistic Director David Armstrong, Spotlight Night gives theater patrons a peek behind the curtain at the history, lore, and creation of upcoming shows at The 5th. To reserve free tickets to Spotlight Night, the public may visit: <http://www.5thavenue.org/show/saving-aimee-spotlight> or call the Box Office at (206) 625-1900.

Saving Aimee plays September 30-October 29 (*press opening October 20*) at The 5th Avenue Theatre (1308 5th Avenue, Seattle). Tickets (starting at \$29.00) 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.

Special thanks to The 5th's 2010-11 season co-sponsors Safeco Insurance, *The Seattle Times*, and US Bank.

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