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**Every'buddy' wants to see  
*ELF – The Musical*  
At The 5th Avenue Theatre this Holiday Season!**

*Book by Thomas Meehan and Bob Martin*  
*Music by Matthew Sklar; Lyrics by Chad Beguelin*  
*Directed by Eric Ankrim; Choreography by Denis Jones*  
**November 30-December 31, 2012**

(Thursday, November 1, 2012 – SEATTLE, WA) Buddy the Elf is bringing the North Pole to Seattle this holiday season when ***ELF – The Musical*** takes over **The 5th Avenue Theatre**. Following in a long tradition of phenomenal holiday shows at The 5th, *ELF* is a magical wintery treat that the whole family can enjoy. Under the direction of Seattle's theatrical superstar **Eric Ankrim** (in his 5th Avenue directorial debut), a cast of spectacular local talent will bring the denizens of Christmastown to life. This hysterical blockbuster will feature Seattle's singing and dancing wunderkind **Matt Owen** as Buddy, the iconic Christmas groupie, alongside Broadway's **Kendra Kassebaum** as his true love, Jovie. Owen and Kassebaum are joined by Broadway vet **Kim Huber**, and Seattle stars **Seán G. Griffin, Allen Fitzpatrick, Cynthia Jones, Nick DeSantis, and Jessica Skerritt**, among many others.

***ELF – The Musical*** plays **November 30 – December 31, 2012** (press opening December 6) at **The 5th Avenue Theatre** (1308 5th Ave, Seattle, WA 98101). Tickets (starting at \$43.00) may 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 has a tradition of producing a spectacular musical treat for families at the holidays" said Executive Producer and Artistic Director David Armstrong. "Whether it's a brand new musical, like *A Christmas Story, The Musical*, an old favorite, like *White Christmas*, or something unexpected and magical, like *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella*, audiences know they can expect something wonderful at The 5th. We know *ELF – The Musical* will fit perfectly in that tradition of fantastic holiday shows."

Called "a splashy, peppy, sugar-sprinkled holiday entertainment" by the *New York Times*, *ELF – The Musical* follows the magical tale of Buddy, a human raised by elves at the North Pole. Buddy sets off to the Big City to find his real dad, and through his unwavering

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devotion to all things Christmas, he rescues his father from the naughty list, finds true love, and saves Santa and the spirit of Christmas. *ELF – The Musical* boasts a number of catchy new show tunes, including “Sparklejollytinklejingly,” “World’s Greatest Dad,” “Never Fall in Love (With an Elf),” and “Just Sing.”

### **About the Director**

Tacoma native **Eric Ankrim** is one of the hottest celebrities in Seattle’s theater scene at present, and will make his 5th Avenue directorial debut at the helm of *ELF – The Musical*. Ankrim recently appeared in The 5th’s hit production of *RENT* and served as the show’s associate director. He directed the sensational hit *Spring Awakening* at Balagan Theatre, which was remounted after a completely sold-out initial run. Previously, Ankrim adapted, directed, and starred in *Dr. Horrible’s Sing-a-Long Blog* (Footlight Award) at Balagan, which was remounted at ACT Theatre. Currently he is directing *Avenue Q* at Balagan and will soon take on *TRAILS* at Village Theatre.

“Aside from being a brilliant performer, Eric has made a great name for himself as a director in our Seattle theater community” said Producing Director Bill Berry. “We’re thrilled to support his growth and know that he’s more than ready to create magic onstage with *ELF*.”

Ankrim takes over the director’s chair after several sensational performances on the stage. He starred last season in The 5th’s production of *Rodgers & Hammerstein’s Oklahoma!* and in The 5th Avenue/ACT collaboration, *First Date*. Other 5th Avenue credits include *Into the Woods*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, and *Miss Saigon*. His dual role in *The Gypsy King* at Village Theatre was a sensational hit, and he was widely acclaimed for his performance as Peter in *Peter Pan* at Seattle Children’s Theatre.

### **About the Cast**

The talented triple threat **Matt Owen** stars as Buddy, who is every inch an elf, even at six foot one. No stranger to The 5th Avenue stage, the Edmonds native has performed at the theater previously in roles including Will Parker in *Oklahoma!*, Chip in *On the Town*, Older Patrick in *Mame*, The Soldier in *Sunday in the Park*, and Ambrose in *Hello Dolly*. Other regional credits include *Yankee Doodle Dandy* at TUTS Houston, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* at North Shore. As a playwright, Owen’s new work titled *The Girl in the Park* premiered in the 2010 New York Fringe Festival to great acclaim.

Starring opposite Owen as Jovie, is **Kendra Kassebaum**. She returns to her chosen home, Seattle, to share in the magic of the holidays after performing in *Leap of Faith* on Broadway. No stranger to magic, Kassebaum originated the role of Glinda in the first national tour of *Wicked*, played the role on Broadway, and reprised it for a year and half sit-down production at San Francisco’s Orpheum Theatre. Other Broadway credits include *Assassins* (the Broadway, Tony-winning production), *RENT*, and *A Little Night Music*. Holiday audiences at The 5th will recognize Kassebaum as the Fairy Godmother in last season’s *Cinderella*. She has also performed at The 5th in productions of *The Secret Garden*, *Company*, and *A Little Night Music*.

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**Seán G. Griffin** takes the stage in *ELF* as Santa Claus. Truly a member of Seattle's theatrical royalty, Griffin has performed in 150 productions over the last 50 years. At The 5th, he has appeared in *Disney's Aladdin*, *Mame*, *West Side Story*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, and *My Fair Lady*. Griffin has worked with all of the professional theaters in Seattle, as well as many major repertory companies across the US, and performed in six Broadway productions. He also has toured nationally and internationally, and has several films, television series, and commercials to his credit.

**Allen Fitzpatrick** and **Kim Huber** join the cast as Walter and Emily Hobbs. Fitzpatrick was last seen at The 5th in *Damn Yankees* as Coach Van Buren, a role he performed on Broadway in 1994 opposite screen legend Jerry Lewis. Other Broadway appearances include *Les Misérables*, *Memphis*, *42nd Street*, *Driving Miss Daisy*, and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, among others. At The 5th, Fitzpatrick was a hit as Sweeney in *Sweeney Todd* (Footlight Award), and has appeared in 5th Avenue productions including *Titanic*, *Oklahoma!*, and *Cinderella*, to name a few. He is artistic director of Iclike Creek Theatre Festival. Kim Huber returns to The 5th Avenue stage where she appeared previously as Belle in *Beauty and the Beast* and Maria in *The Sound of Music*, as well as roles in *Pippin* and *1776*. She starred on Broadway as Belle in *Beauty and the Beast* and appeared in the original casts of *Sunset Boulevard* and *Marie Christine*.

**Noah Barr** and **Grayson Smith** will alternate as young Michael Hobbs. Barr returns to The 5th where he appeared in the children's choir of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Additionally, he has performed in many shows at Studio East in Kirkland, including playing the role of Charlie Bucket in *Willy Wonka*. Smith makes his 5th Avenue debut as Michael Hobbs, and has performed previously around Eastern Washington in productions of *Peter Pan*, *The Sound of Music*, and *A Christmas Carol*.

**Cynthia Jones** returns to The 5th Avenue stage as the Store Manager. The award-winning actor, singer, and voice-over artist made her 5th Avenue debut in last season's *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella* as The Queen. Other regional credits include roles at Seattle Rep, ACT Theatre, Intiman, the Goodman, Arizona Theater Company, and the Mark Taper Forum.

**Nick DeSantis** and **Jessica Skerritt** will appear as Mr. Greenway and Deb. DeSantis was most recently seen in *Titanic: The Concert* at The 5th, as well as in *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Disney's Aladdin*, and *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella*. He has performed many times at Village Theatre and ArtsWest, among others. Skerritt returns to The 5th where she performed previously in *Cinderella* and *Guys and Dolls*. She was a hit as Ulla in Village Theatre's recent production of *The Producers*.

Filling out the Big City and the North Pole as the ensemble are **Blaine Boyd**, **Gabe Corey**, **Taryn Darr**, **Sarah Rose Davis**, **Christian Duhamel**, **Richard Gray**, **Charlie Johnson**, **Nikki Long**, **Greg McCormick Allen**, **Trina Mills**, **Corinna Lapid Munter**, **Brandon O'Neill**, **Katherine Strohmaier**, **Carolyn Willems Van Dijk**. The children's ensemble includes **Jack Fleischmann**, **Victoria Alkin**, and **Emily Brooks**. **Kirsten deLohr Helland** joins the cast as the standby for Jovie.

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### **About the Music Director**

This is **Andy Grobengieser's** 5th Avenue Theatre debut. Recently he has worked on Broadway with *Ghost The Musical*, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*, and *Lestat*. His national tours have included *Shrek The Musical*, *Disney's The Lion King*, *White Christmas*, *Altar Boyz*, *Miss Saigon*, *Les Misérables*, *Smokey Joe's Cafe*, and *Grease*. Regionally, he has lent his talents to *Radio City Christmas Spectacular* and *It Shoulda Been You* (George Street Playhouse). Grobengieser has small-town Midwestern roots (Altamont, IL) but now calls New York City home.

### **About the Choreographer**

Choreographer **Denis Jones** made his 5th Avenue Theatre debut as the choreographer of last season's dance spectacular, *Damn Yankees*, a co-production with Paper Mill Playhouse in New Jersey. His other Paper Mill productions include *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 benefit concerts of *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 Scoundrels*. He is also an accomplished performer with Broadway performance credits including *Grease*, *Chicago*, *Little Me*, *The Full Monty*, and *Never Gonna Dance*.

### **The Design Team**

The design team for *ELF – The Musical* includes **Matthew Smucker** (Set Design), **David C. Woolard** (Costume Design), **Mary Pyanowski** (Hair and Makeup Design), **Tom Sturge** (Lighting Design), and **Tony Smolenski IV** (Sound Design). Also on the team are **Makaela Pollock** (Assistant Director), **Nikki Long** (Assistant Choreographer) **Faith Seetoo** (Associate Music Director and Associate Conductor), **Christian DeAngelis** (Associate Lighting Design), and **Montana Tippett** (Assistant Set Design).

### **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 14 new musicals. Five have moved on to Broadway premieres, earning a combined 14 Tony Awards, including two for Best Musical (*Hairspray* and *Memphis*). 5th Avenue premieres number six (*Saving Aimee – now called Scandalous: The Life and Trials of Aimee Semple McPherson*) and seven (*A Christmas Story: The Musical*) will celebrate their Broadway openings in November 2012. 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 C. Griffin and Producing Director Bill Berry, The 5th Avenue Theatre attracts an annual attendance of

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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 Theater, the Student Matinee Program, and Spotlight Nights. These programs serve 65,000 students each year.

For more information about The 5th Avenue Theatre, its season and its programs, please visit [www.5thavenue.org](http://www.5thavenue.org).

### **FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

**WHAT:** Buddy the Elf is bringing the North Pole to Seattle this holiday season when *ELF – The Musical* takes over **The 5th Avenue Theatre**. Following in a long tradition of phenomenal holiday shows at The 5th, *ELF* is a magical wintery treat that the whole family can enjoy. Under the direction of Seattle's theatrical superstar **Eric Ankrim** (in his 5th Avenue directorial debut), a cast of spectacular local talent will bring the denizens of Christmastown to life. This hysterical blockbuster will feature Seattle's singing and dancing wunderkind **Matt Owen** as Buddy, the iconic Christmas groupie, alongside Broadway's **Kendra Kassebaum** as his true love Jovie. Owen and Kassebaum are joined by Seattle stars **Seán G. Griffin**, **Allen Fitzpatrick**, **Kim Huber**, **Cynthia Jones**, **Nick DeSantis**, and **Jessica Skeritt**, among many others.

**WHEN:** *Previews: November 30-December 5, 2012*  
Opening Night: Thursday, December 6, 2012 (press night)  
Closing Performance: Monday, December 31, 2012  
*\*Show times vary; please visit the website for details.*  
*\*No performances on 12/25/12.*

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

**TICKETS:** For single tickets (starting at \$43) and information, please visit [www.5thavenue.org](http://www.5thavenue.org) or call the Box Office at (206) 625-1900. Tickets may also be purchased at (888) 5TH-4TIX.

Special thanks to The 5th Avenue Theatre 2012/13 season co-sponsors Safeco Insurance and US Bank, and media sponsor *The Seattle Times*. Additional thanks to production sponsors Macy's and People's Bank, as well as our hospitality sponsor, the Washington Athletic Club.

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