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**The 5th Avenue Theatre Announces 35th Anniversary Season;  
2015/16 includes Current Hits, Classics and World Premieres,  
Plus *Matilda The Musical* and *A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder***

(Friday, January 30 – SEATTLE, WA) With nearly 2000 subscribers in attendance, **The 5th Avenue Theatre** Executive Producer and Artistic Director **David Armstrong** revealed the season line-up for this celebrated theater's **8-show 2015/16 season**. Opening with the hotly-anticipated Broadway hit *Matilda The Musical*, the organization's 35th Anniversary Season is filled with treasures of the musical theater canon, as well as new musicals making their debut on our stage. Said Armstrong, "Our 15/16 Season promises to be even bigger and better than ever before—with eight thrilling musicals to delight and beguile you. You will be swept away on a wave of gorgeous melodies and unforgettable lyrics created by a pantheon of the Musical Theater's supreme masters, and meet three exciting new songwriting teams that I believe are destined to join their illustrious ranks. And you will experience captivating stories that are at turns romantic, hilarious, moving, filled with mystery, and loaded with enchantment -- and running the gamut from low comedy to high drama.

The 2015/16 season opens with the Seattle premiere of *TIME Magazine's* #1 show of the year, the West End and Broadway hit, ***Matilda The Musical (August 18-September 6, 2015)***, produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Dodgers. Winner of 50 international awards including 4 Tony Awards® and a record-breaking seven Olivier Awards including Best Musical, ***Matilda The Musical*** is based on the beloved novel by best-selling author Roald Dahl (*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Fantastic Mr. Fox*). It is the story of an extraordinary girl who dreams of a better life. Armed with a vivid imagination and a sharp mind, Matilda dares to take a stand and change her destiny. ***Matilda The Musical*** is directed by Tony Award winner **Matthew Warchus** (*God of Carnage*), who helms this production with a book by Tony Award-winning playwright **Dennis Kelly** and music and lyrics by Australian comedian, musician and composer **Tim Minchin**. The production has sets and costumes by Tony Award winner **Rob Howell**, with choreography by **Peter Darling**, orchestrations, additional music and musical supervision by **Christopher Nightingale**, lighting by Tony Award winner **Hugh Vanstone**, and sound by **Simon Baker**. The *Wall Street Journal* says, "The makers of *Matilda* have done the impossible—triumphantly! It is smart, sweet, zany and stupendous fun."

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Next up is the world premiere of **Waterfall (October 1-25, 2015)**. The 5th Avenue Theatre is thrilled to join with **Pasadena Playhouse** in presenting the U.S. premiere of **Waterfall**, an epic new Broadway musical love story featuring a distinguished international creative team. **Waterfall** will debut on Broadway in 2016. This is the 18th new musical to be presented by The 5th Avenue Theatre. **Waterfall** marks a groundbreaking collaboration between American and Asian theatrical artists. The musical, based on a contemporary classic Thai novel *Behind the Painting* by Sriburapha, features book and lyrics by Tony Award winner **Richard Maltby Jr.** (*Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Miss Saigon*) and music by Oscar winner and two-time Tony Award nominee, **David Shire** (*Baby, Big*, written in collaboration with Richard Maltby Jr.). The production will be choreographed by Tony Award-nominee **Dan Knechtges** (*Xanadu*) and directed by Broadway and Thai theatrical impresario **Tak Viravan**. Thai superstar **Bie Sukrit Wisetkaew** will make his American stage debut in **Waterfall**. From his discovery in 2006 on the Thai television talent contest, "The Star," Bie has become one of Asia's most famous and recognizable young talents, starring on stage, screen and television. Bie created the role of Noppon in the musical *Behind the Painting*, the earlier version of **Waterfall**.

**Rodgers & Hammerstein** will captivate this Christmas when The 5th Avenue Theatre presents **The Sound of Music (November 24, 2015-January 3, 2016)**, on our stage for the first time in 10 years. Long before Julie Andrews sang from the mountaintops in this now-famous 1965 film, **The Sound of Music** captured the imagination of theatergoers worldwide. This story of the young governess Maria, who brings much-needed tenderness and joy to the Von Trapp family, has everything—romance, danger, bravery, and love. **The Sound of Music** is one of the most beloved musicals in the Rodgers & Hammerstein cannon, and with good reason. Who could forget such memorable songs as "My Favorite Things," "Do Re Mi," "Climb Ev'ry Mountain," and of course, "The Sound of Music"? This year marks the 50th anniversary of the iconic film. Directed by **David Bennett**, this production will be mounted with typical 5th care and dedication, with a full orchestra, stunning sets and costumes, and of course, a stellar cast of Seattle favorites.

The 5th Avenue Theatre rolls out the new year with the splashy 60's work-place musical delight: **How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying (January 28-February 21, 2016)** in its first ever appearance at The 5th. With music and lyrics by **Frank Loesser** (*Guys and Dolls*) and a book by **Abe Burrows** (*Guys and Dolls*), **Jack Weinstock**, and **Willie Gilbert**, this is a show where the title says it all! J. Pierpont Finch is a man on a mission: to achieve stunning success at the World Wide Wicket Company while doing as little as possible to deserve it. This musical satire of corporate ladder-climbing and office hanky-panky opened on Broadway in 1961 and ran for a remarkable 1,417 performances, earning seven Tony Awards, the Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Musical, and the 1962 Pulitzer Prize for drama. Audiences will love this tune-filled comic gem boasting an exhilarating score including "I Believe in You," "Brotherhood of Man," and "The Company Way." Directed by 5th Avenue Theatre Producing Artistic Director **Bill Berry**, this stellar production will star Tacoma native **Eric Ankrim** as J. Pierpont Finch. Power, sex, ambition, greed... it's just another day at the office in this classic satire of big business.

Next up, The 5th Avenue pays homage to election year with the thrilling Stephen Sondheim/John Weidman musical **Assassins (March 3-May 15, 2016)**. Directed by incoming ACT

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Artistic Director **John Langs**, this 6th co-production with ACT— A Contemporary Theatre takes place in the shooting gallery of a tawdry carnival, where audiences find themselves in the company of some of the most notorious figures in American history—the assassins who tried (and in some cases succeeded) to kill the president. John Wilkes Booth, Lee Garvey Oswald, Lynette “Squeaky” Fromme, John Hinkley and others reveal the stories of their troubled lives and deadly deeds. Created by one of the undisputed masters of musical theater, this powerful work is by turns funny, dark, and haunting. *The New York Times* says, “It is Mr. Sondheim’s score that continues to beguile, astonish, unsettle.” And *Talking Broadway* says the characters “audaciously toe the line between brilliance and madness.” But perhaps Sondheim said it best himself: “As far as I’m concerned, the show is perfect. Immodest that may sound, but I’m ready to argue it with anybody.”

Love blossoms at The 5th Avenue Theatre with ***Sleeping Beauty Wakes (March 29-April 17, 2016)***, the fantastical new musical from the Jonathan Larson Award-winning composer/lyricist husband and wife duo **Brendan Milburn** and **Valerie Vigoda** (two members of the pop rock trio GrooveLily) with an inventive book by **Rachel Sheinkin** (*The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*). The premise is this: what if after dozing peacefully for a millennium or so, Sleeping Beauty awoke to find herself in a modern-day sleep disorder clinic. But when a handsome young orderly (with an unusual form of narcolepsy) falls in love with the sleeping princess, fantasy and reality collide and medicine becomes permanently intertwined with a healthy dose of magic. With beguiling characters, hypnotic lyrics, and a rocking score, ***Sleeping Beauty Wakes*** delves into the mystical space between dreaming and waking in an unexpected twist on the classic tale.

As spring rolls into Seattle, a sweeping saga of the mythic American West rolls into The 5th Avenue Theatre in a brand new “revisal”: ***Paint Your Wagon (June 2-26, 2016)***. This lusty musical is filled with some of the greatest songs **Fredrick Lerner** and **Alan J. Lowe** ever wrote for the stage, including “They Call the Wind Maria,” “I’m On My Way,” “I Talk to the Trees,” and “I Was Born Under a Wand’rin’ Star.” Now, audiences can experience this Gold Rush musical as it has never been seen before, with a brand new book by celebrated playwright **Jon Marans** under the direction of 5th Avenue Theatre Artistic Director **David Armstrong**. Set in 1849, the frenzy of the Gold Rush has brought a wagon train of unlikely and diverse companions to the Sacramento River Valley. When gold is found unexpectedly, claims are staked, partnerships are forged, and overnight a bustling town is born that soon finds a leader in fur trapper Ben Rumson. The musical tells an inspiring story of America through Rumson City as its citizens come together, tear themselves apart, and come together again, all in the name of that precious yellow metal, gold.

The season closes with the arrival of Tony Award winner ***A Gentleman’s Guide to Love & Murder (July 12-31, 2016)***. Getting away with murder can be so much fun... and there’s no better proof than the knock-‘em-dead hit show that’s earned unanimous raves and won the 2014 Tony Award for Best Musical—***A Gentleman’s Guide to Love & Murder***. Coming direct from New York, where a most gentlemanly NPR critic said he’d “never laughed so hard at a Broadway musical,” ***Gentleman’s Guide*** tells the uproarious story of Monty Navarro, a distant heir to a family fortune who sets out to jump the line of succession...by *any* means necessary. All the while he’s got to juggle his mistress (she’s after more than just love), his fiancée (she’s his cousin, but who’s keeping track?), and the constant threat of

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landing behind bars! Of course, it will all be worth it if he can slay his way to his inheritance...and be done in time for tea. Directed by **Darko Tresnjak**, ***Gentleman's Guide*** features book and lyrics by **Robert L. Freedman** with music and lyrics by **Steven Lutvak**. The *Hollywood Reporter* raves, "***Gentleman's Guide*** restores our faith in musical comedy," and *The New York Times* cheers, "It will lift the hearts of all those who've been pining for what seems a lost art form." ***A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder*** will have you *dying* with laughter.

### **About The 5th Avenue Theatre**

The non-profit 5th Avenue Theatre is acclaimed as one of the nation's leading musical theater companies and is especially renowned for its production and development of new works. Since 2002, the Seattle-based company has produced 17 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 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 25,000 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](http://www.5thavenue.org).

Special thanks to The 5th Avenue Theatre 2015/16 season co-sponsors Artsfund, U.S. Bank, *The Seattle Times*, and official airline Delta Airlines.

### **FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

The 5th Avenue Theatre's 2015/16 Season includes:

#### ***Matilda the Musical***

August 18-September 6, 2015

1st National Tour

Directed by: Matthew Warchus

Book: Dennis Kelly

Music & Lyrics: Tim Minchin

#### ***Waterfall***

October 1-25, 2015

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A 5th Avenue Theatre co-production with Pasadena Playhouse, Broadway-bound world premiere

Book and lyrics: Richard Maltby Jr.

Music: David Shire

Choreography: Dan Knechtges

Directed by: Tak Viravan

***Rodgers & Hammerstein's The Sound of Music***

November 24, 2015-January 3, 2016

A 5th Avenue Theatre Production

Music: Richard Rodgers

Lyrics: Oscar Hammerstein

Book: Russell Crouse and Howard Lindsay

Directed by: David Bennett

***How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying***

January 28-February 21, 2016

A 5th Avenue Theatre Production

Music and Lyrics: Frank Loesser

Book: Abe Burrows, Jack Weinstock, and Willie Gilbert

Directed by: Bill Berry

***Assassins***

March 3-May 15, 2016

A 5th Avenue Theatre co-production presented at ACT – A Contemporary Theatre

Music and Lyrics: Stephen Sondheim

Book: John Weidman

Directed by: John Langs

***Sleeping Beauty Wakes***

March 29-April 17, 2016

A New Musical Produced by The 5th Avenue Theatre

Book by Rachel Sheinkin

Music by Brendan Milburn

Lyrics by Valerie Vigoda

***Paint Your Wagon***

June 2-26, 2015

A 5th Avenue Theatre Production

Music: Fredrick Loewe

Book and Lyrics: Alan J. Lerner

New Book: Jon Marans

Directed by: David Armstrong

***A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder***

July 12-31, 2016

Book and Lyrics: Robert L. Freedman

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Music and Lyrics: Steven Lutvak  
Director: Darko Tresnjak

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

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:**

**Online -- Beginning Friday, January 30, at 10 PM**

- Visit [www.5thavenue.org](http://www.5thavenue.org)

**By Phone -- Beginning Saturday, January 31, at 10 AM**

- Call 206-625-1900 or Toll-free 888-5TH-4TIX (584-4849)

**In Person -- Beginning Saturday, January 31, at 10 AM**

- Visit the Box Office at 1308 5th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101

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