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**The 5th Avenue Theatre Announces 2016/17 Season  
Featuring Five Musicals Never Before Seen At The 5th  
Including a World Premiere, Plus 2015 Tony Award®-winner *Fun Home***

*The 2016/17 Season will begin in October following extensive lobby renovation and expansion plus the installation of a new sound system.*

(Sunday, March 6, 2016 – 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 its **7-show 2016/17 season**. “This year, we are proud to celebrate the 90th anniversary of this historic theater in Downtown Seattle with a spectacular season that truly covers the breadth and depth of our great indigenous art form—The Musical,” said Armstrong. “This season will include seven exciting new musicals—five of them never before seen on our stage, including three Northwest premieres and one world premiere. Five of the musicals in this season are inspired by acclaimed works of literature, both classic and contemporary. And women are front and center this season as writers, composers, lyricists, directors, choreographers, and as central characters in the stories we will tell.”

“The season will start a little later than normal,” Armstrong added, “with the first performances taking place in October. And there’s an exciting reason for that! Our beloved theater turns 90 this fall and has been showing its age. Keeping in mind our responsibility as stewards of this historic venue and the comfort the 300,000 patrons who walk through our doors each year, The 5th is making a major investment in improving our facilities. We believe this will move us into the Next Stage of great musical theater at The 5th and will radically improve our patron experience.” This summer, The 5th Avenue Theatre will kick off the Next Stage campaign by replacing its aging sound system as well as expanding the lobby and adding additional restrooms, all to be complete before the first performance of the 2016/17 season.

The 2016/17 season opens with one of the most epic and enduring musicals of all time, ***Man of La Mancha* (October 7-30, 2016)** with book by **Dale Wasserman**, lyrics by **Joe Darion** and music by **Mitch Leigh**. Not seen on The 5th Avenue stage for 20 years, this glorious tribute to the resilience of the human spirit will be helmed by an all female creative team including director **Allison Narver**, whose work on The 5th Avenue stage includes the critically-acclaimed *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, and choreographer **Maria Torres** (associate choreographer of Broadway’s *On Your Feet*). Featuring stirring classic songs

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including “The Impossible Dream” and “Dulcinea,” *Man of La Mancha* is a multi-Tony Award-winning theatrical masterpiece that first debuted on Broadway in 1965. It has since been revived four times and is performed around the world in fifteen languages. Inspired by one of the greatest novels in Western literature, *Man of La Mancha* enters the mind and world of the mad knight Don Quixote as he pursues his quest for the impossible dream. In a tale told by Cervantes himself, Quixote is against all odds, a man who sees good and innocence in a world filled with darkness and despair.

This holiday season, audiences will take a trip to the tropics at The 5th with **Disney’s *The Little Mermaid* (November 23-December 31, 2016)**. Headstrong Ariel is no longer content to live on the ocean floor under her father, King Triton’s rule. Convinced she’ll only find happiness on land, she sets off to find a world where she belongs, battling a cruel sea witch and finding true love along the way. Based on the beloved 1989 animated film, this magical family treasure features a book by **Doug Wright** with music by **Alan Menken** and lyrics by **Howard Ashman** and **Glenn Slater**. All of the familiar Academy Award-winning hits including “Kiss the Girl,” “Part of Your World,” and the dazzling show stopper, “Under the Sea,” are present in this fairytale production, in addition to new songs written for the stage. *Disney’s the Little Mermaid* opened on Broadway in 2008 and was revamped for a production at Paper Mill Playhouse in 2013. The 5th’s production will utilize the new book and score, and will feature the Paper Mill’s colorful costumes, beautiful pop-up book inspired set designs, and stunning special effects that can only be described as pure magic. This stunning holiday production be directed by **Glenn Casale**.

The 5th Avenue Theatre rolls out the new year with that swinging musical theater classic, ***The Pajama Game* (February 9-March 5, 2017)** a musical that “goes down as easily and intoxicatingly as spiked lemonade at a summer picnic” (*The New York Times*), directed by 5th Avenue Producing Artistic Director **Bill Berry**. In this Golden Age of Broadway hit making its 5th Avenue debut, a labor furor over a 7 ½ cent pay raise at a pajama plant complicates the course of true love for Sid Sorokin, the new factory superintendent, and Babe Williams, the feisty firebrand heading the Union Grievance Committee. The show that defined Fosse style with seductive dance numbers like “Steam Heat” and “Hernando’s Hideaway,” this critically acclaimed musical won three Tony Awards including Best Choreography and Best Musical when it opened in 1954. The brassy, jazzy score includes the timeless hits “Hey There” and “There Once Was a Man” performed by a sensational Seattle cast. *The Pajama Game* features a book by **George Abbott** and **Richard Bissell** with music and lyrics by **Richard Adler** and **Jerry Ross**, and is based on the popular novel **7 ½ Cents** by **Richard Bissell**.

In its seventh annual co-production with **ACT – A Contemporary Theatre**, The 5th will present the Northwest premiere of ***Murder for Two* (March 25-June 4)**, a side-splitting musical comedy to die for! Everyone is a suspect in *Murder for Two*—a drop-dead funny musical murder mystery with a twist: One actor investigates the crime; the other plays all the suspects—and they both play the piano! A zany blend of classic musical comedy and madcap mystery, this ninety-minute whodunit is a highly theatrical duet loaded with killer laughs. Called “ingenious” by *The New York Times*, *Murder for Two* is the perfect blend of murder, music and mayhem. *Murder for Two* has a book by **Kellen Blair** and **Joe Kinosian**

with music by **Joe Kinosian** and lyrics by **Kellen Blair**. The show had its world premiere in 2011 at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre where it extended four times and ran for more than six months. *Murder for Two* opened Off-Broadway at New World Stages in October 2013 to great critical acclaim. It was hailed as “A charmingly frenetic new musical comedy” by *Entertainment Weekly* and “a hilarious musical whodunit” by the *New York Observer*.

Spring blooms at The 5th Avenue Theatre with a hauntingly beautiful new presentation of ***The Secret Garden (April 14-May 6, 2017)***, a co-production with Washington D.C.’s Tony Award-winning **Shakespeare Theatre Company** directed by 5th Avenue Executive Producer and Artistic Director **David Armstrong**. With book and lyrics by Pulitzer Prize-winner **Marsha Norman** and music by **Lucy Simon**, this captivating show will mesmerize audiences of all ages and transport you to a world where beauty and love blossom, and a forgotten seed of life can still flourish. Based on the beloved novel by **Frances Hodgson Burnett**, *The Secret Garden* follows recently-orphaned ten year old Mary Lennox, a young girl who is sent to live with her estranged uncle on the Yorkshire moors. When she discovers the key to her deceased aunt’s secret garden, Mary unearths a renewed sense of spirit for herself and her sickly cousin, bringing the weary estate and its occupants back to exuberant life with the full force of spring. This astonishing and magnificent hit premiered on Broadway in 1991, running for 709 performances and making Daisy Egan, who starred as Mary, the youngest female Tony Award winner in Broadway history (Best Performance by a Featured Actress in a Musical). A recent limited engagement concert featured Daisy Egan as Martha, Sydney Lucas (of *Fun Home* fame) as Mary Lennox, and Ramin Karimloo as Archibald Craven, among many other dazzling Broadway stars, and was described by the *New York Times* as “a steady journey from clammy darkness into blazing light.”

The 5th is thrilled to welcome two of the quirkiest and most endearing best friends in pop culture history to the stage when it presents the world premiere of the totally awesome new musical, ***Romy & Michele’s High School Reunion (June 8-July 2, 2017)***, based on the 1997 cult hit film. This bubbly ‘90s confection features a book by **Robin Schiff** who penned the screenplay, with music and lyrics by **Gwendolyn Sanford** and **Brandon Jay**. The show features a creative team including *Rock of Ages*’ director **Kristin Hanggi** and choreographer **Kelly Devine**. Romy and Michele are two inseparable best friends whose relationship is put to the test when they invent fake careers to impress people at their 10-year class reunion. Regularly featured in media roundups of the top tales of female friendships including *Cosmopolitan*, *Indiewire*, *Popsugar*, *Bustle* and more, the story of *Romy & Michele* is, like, totally the coolest thing since the invention of Post-its®. This will be the 18th new musical that The 5th has produced over the past 16 years.

The season closes with the arrival of Tony Award winner ***Fun Home (July 11-30, 2017)***. Every once in a while a musical comes along that surprises, moves and excites audiences in ways only a truly landmark musical can. One of the most remarkable productions ever to hit Broadway, *Fun Home* is the winner of five 2015 Tony Awards including Best Musical. Based on **Alison Bechdel**’s best-selling graphic memoir, *Fun Home* features music by **Jeanine Tesori**, book and lyrics by **Lisa Kron** and direction by **Sam Gold**, whose work on this production earned them the Tony Awards for Best Score, Best Book and Best Direction. The musical made Broadway history as the first show written only by women to ever win

Best Musical. Lisa Kron and Jeanine Tesori also became the first female writing team to win Best Score. A refreshingly honest musical about seeing your parents through grown-up eyes, “*Fun Home* is extraordinary, a rare beauty that pumps fresh air into Broadway” (*New York Times*).

### **About the 2016/17 Sponsors**

The 5th Avenue Theatre thanks its 2016/17 season sponsors Arts Fund and U.S. Bank, and welcomes new 2016/17 season sponsor Alaska Airlines, which has expanded its decade-long support of the theater.

“Alaska Airlines is thrilled to be a season sponsor for The 5th Avenue Theatre’s 2016/17 Season,” Shaunta Hyde, Managing Director of Community Relations and Corporate Giving said. “Their vibrant productions and commitment to quality make the company a gem for the Pacific Northwest, providing opportunities to local artists and schools throughout the region. Congratulations on announcing your new season and we look forward to spectacular performances delivered by outstanding talent from a theatre we are proud to support.”

### **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 2001, 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).

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**FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

The 5th Avenue Theatre's 2016/17 Season includes:

***Man of La Mancha***

October 7 - 30, 2016

Book by: Dale Wasserman

Music by: Mitch Leigh

Lyrics by: Joe Darion

Directed by: Allison Narver

Choreographed by: Maria Torres

***Disney's The Little Mermaid***

November 23 - December 31, 2016

Music by: Alan Menken

Lyrics by: Doug Wright

Directed by: Glenn Casale

***The Pajama Game***

February 9 - March 5, 2017

Music & Lyrics by: Richard Adler & Jerry Ross

Book by: George Abbott & Richard Bissell

Based on the novel *7 ½ cents* by: Richard Bissell

Directed by: Bill Berry

***Murder for Two***

**A Co-Production with ACT-A Contemporary Theatre**

March 25 - June 4, 2017

Book by: Joe Kinosian & Kellen Blair

Lyrics by: Kellen Blair

Music by: Joe Kinosian

***The Secret Garden***

**A Co-Production with D.C.'s The Shakespeare Theatre Company**

April 14 - May 6, 2017

Book & Lyrics by: Marsha Norman

Music by: Lucy Simon

Based on the novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett

Directed by: David Armstrong

***Romy and Michele's High School Reunion***

**World Premiere**

June 8 - July 2, 2017

Music & Lyrics by: Gwendolyn Sanford & Brandon Jay

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Book by: Robin Schiff  
Directed by: Kristin Hanggi  
Choreographed by: Kelly Devine

***Fun Home***

July 11 - 30, 2017

Music by: Jeanine Tesori  
Books & Lyrics by: Lisa Kron  
Based on the graphic novel by: Alison Bechdel  
Directed by: Sam Gold

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

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:**

**Online – Beginning Sunday, March 6, at 10 PM**

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

**By Phone – Beginning Monday, March 7, at 10 AM**

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

**In Person – Beginning Monday, March 7, at 10 AM**

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