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The 5th Avenue Theatre Presents Second Annual NextFest: A Festival of New Musicals

October 4 – 22, 2016

Featuring 10 New Musicals in Various Stages of Development

(Thursday, July 28, 2016 – SEATTLE, WA) — The 5th Avenue Theatre is proud to present the second annual **NextFest: A Festival of New Musicals**. The company's rehearsal halls will be brimming with activity this fall as new musicals take shape in readings and intensives, brought to life by local and Broadway talents.

"We are so excited to be hosting our second NextFest and supporting new musicals and new musical theater writers," says 5th Avenue Theatre Producing Artistic Director Bill Berry. "The 5th is committed to making sure that future generations will be able to enjoy relevant and compelling musical theater, and this year's festival celebrates the richness and breadth of storytelling that is possible in musical theater"

Over the last few years, The 5th Avenue Theatre New Works Program has been cultivating teams of local writers through its two-year program, the Seattle Writers Group, as well as partnering with successful and aspiring composers, lyricists and book writers nationwide. Last summer, The 5th proudly brought a new kind of festival to Seattle's vibrant arts community—**NextFest: A Festival of New Musicals**. Taking place in the historic theater's rehearsal halls and studios **October 4-22, 2016**, NextFest is a celebration of new musicals at various stages of development ranging from a first read-through of new text and music all the way to a staged studio presentation.

NextFest will not be open to the general public. However, festival passes are a benefit of Circles Membership. To learn more about becoming a Circles Member, please call 206-625-1418 and ask for the Circles Office. Special thanks to the NextFest Creators Beth and Buzz Porter and Cynthia Stroum for their leadership and support. Additional thanks to the Alhadeff Family for their ongoing support of the New Works Program.

The Projects of NextFest 2016:

29-Hour Readings:

29-Hour Reading provides 29 hours of collaborative interaction between the writers,

creative team and a company of actors, culminating in a read and sing through of the material.

Havana Music Hall

Book: Carlos Murillo

Music & Lyrics: Richard Kagan

After Luis' Cuban-exile father dies unexpectedly, a window to his past opens when he discovers an old flyer for a long-vanished Havana nightclub among left behind artifacts. Driven by a deep desire to connect with his Cuban roots, Luis embarks on a life-changing journey to Havana. He encounters the last living survivors of Havana Music Hall, the legendary nightclub that ignited Havana in the days before the revolution and is key to unlocking his own origin story. An epic, spectacular tale featuring a score that's sure to make the audience shake their hips, Havana Music Hall crashes pre-Revolution Cuba up against the uncertain-yet-hopeful present, telling a universal tale of finding home.

Intermission

Book: Jerry Zucker

Music & Lyrics: Alan Zachary & Michael Weiner

The year is 1911. An auction is being held on the stage of the Paris Opera House. One of the items for sale is a music box with the figure of a mechanical monkey... Wait, no, sorry... that's *Phantom of the Opera*. I always get them confused. *Intermission!* is more like the musical theater version of *Airplane!* It's the story of two dim-witted brothers who make their way to Potku-Potku (a tiny monarchy located somewhere) after receiving an email from someone they don't know claiming that money has been left to them by a relative they never even knew they had. Eventually (of course) they each fall in love, get caught up in a military coup, join a band of non-violent revolutionaries, and have to save the country. Don't try to make sense of it; it's not that kind of theater. Just tuck your brains under your seat and enjoy the show!

The Long Game

Book & Lyrics: Andrew Russell

Music & Lyrics: Rich Gray

The Long Game (formerly *The Fourth Estate*) is an unconventional new American musical that unpacks government secrets, questions American history, and celebrates the power of the press by imagining two female journalists and their controversial subjects on the same stage: Dorothy Kilgallen and Jack Ruby, and Laura Poitras and Edward Snowden.

Pump Up the Volume

Book & Lyrics: Jeremy Desmon

Music: Jeff Thomson

Pump Up The Volume centers on mild-mannered teenager Mark Hunter, who secretly moonlights as shock jock 'Hard Harry' on his FM pirate radio station. When Harry exposes corruption and discrimination in his local high school, he becomes a hero to his peers, and invokes the wrath of his principal and the authorities who try to silence him.

Writers Group:

The Writers Group is a 2-year program providing eight writers the opportunity to attend bi-weekly meetings to share and discuss their work in progress. They also receive staff-level access to 5th Avenue projects, space and equipment, along with a small stipend and a showcase of their work each year. At the end of the first year, the 5th Avenue New Works Program produces a writing intensive for each team with the goal of nurturing their musical in the making. At the end of the second year, the 5th Avenue New Works Program produces a reading of four full-length musicals written by teams formed from within the group.

A writing intensive provides Writers Group teams with artistic support, time and space necessary to achieve their specific goals for their new musical. Along with a director, the writing team will spend five full days writing, ending with a table read of their work in progress. Table reads are an opportunity to hear work read aloud by a group of actors in order to experience and evaluate their work.

Writers participating in writing intensives and table reads are Cynthia L. West, Douglas Lyons, Ethan Pakchar, Reggie Jackson, Stephen Newby, Andrew Russell, Richard Andriessen, John Longenbaugh, Bruce Monroe, Brendan Healy, Orlando Morales, Keri Healey and Anne Eisendrath.

10-Minute Musical Project for Teens:

The 5th Avenue Theatre's Inaugural 10-minute Musical Project involves Washington state students ages 14-19 in the process of creating new musical theater works. Students will play a variety of roles: composer, lyricist, playwright, stage manager, director, music director and marketer. Students will participate in workshops throughout the summer, culminating in a two-week long intensive rehearsal process and a staged reading presented as a part of NextFest.

About The 5th Avenue Theatre's New Works Program:

The 5th Avenue Theatre's commitment to new musicals runs much deeper than the fully realized productions audiences see onstage. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Bill Berry and The Alhadeff Family Director of New Works and Music Supervisor Ian Eisendrath, the New Works Program fosters the creation of new musicals in each phase of development through writer's retreats, table readings and workshops. The New Works Program creates specially-crafted development programs for each show that comes under its care, and is committed to creating a positive and safe environment that supports the unique needs of each project. Every year, the program culminates in a concentrated period

of development called “NextFest: A Festival of New Musicals,” bringing new musicals from around the country to rehearsal halls at The 5th and across Seattle.

The New Works mission is to advance the art form of musical theater through the creation and production of the next generation of musicals; to support and respond to the specific needs of individual projects throughout each phase of development; and to create integrated, dynamic partnerships between The 5th Avenue Theatre and writers of new musicals in Seattle, across the country, and around the world.

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.

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For Media Access:

Levels of press access will be determined in early September of 2016. If you are interested in receiving media passes to NextFest, please let us know your level of interest and how you are considering covering the festival. We will follow up in the fall with mutually beneficial levels of access where possible.