



5th Avenue Media Contact:
Bridget Summers
bsummers@5thavenue.org
(206) 260-2174 (direct)

ACT Media Contact:
Mark Siano
mark.siano@acttheatre.org
(206) 292-7660 (x 1339)

***The 5th Avenue Theatre and ACT – A Contemporary Theatre
Are Taking This Relationship All the Way – To Broadway!***

“First Date” Makes A Date With Broadway

The 5th Avenue Theatre’s Ninth New Musical To Open in New York;
First Date Begins Previews at the Longacre Theatre in July 2013

(Thursday March 7, 2013 – SEATTLE, WA) ***First Date***, the smash hit new musical produced in collaboration between Seattle’s **The 5th Avenue Theatre** and **ACT – A Contemporary Theatre** is scheduled for a Broadway opening in the summer of 2013. Produced by **Junkyard Dog Productions**, the same producers who brought the Tony Award-winning hit *Memphis* to Broadway, ***First Date*** will mark the Broadway debut of The 5th Avenue’s Producing Director **Bill Berry**, who will direct the production. Casting will be announced at a later date. ***First Date*** begins performances at Broadway’s Longacre Theatre (220 W. 48th St.) on **July 9, 2013**. Opening night is set for Sunday, August 4.

“After a sold-out ten-week run in Seattle 2012, there can be no doubt that ***First Date*** is a hit,” said 5th Avenue Executive Producer and Artistic Director **David Armstrong**. “***First Date*** represents the ninth of 14 new musicals produced by The 5th since 2002 to go on to a Broadway debut – an amazing achievement for any regional theater.”

Of Berry’s Broadway debut, 5th Avenue Managing Director **Bernadine Griffin** said “We couldn’t be prouder of Bill and his many accomplishments here at The 5th and now onto Broadway. Bill and the creative team have been working on this show with Junkyard Dogs for more than two years and it has been wonderful to watch the show grow under his guidance.”

First Date was originally co-produced by The 5th Avenue Theatre and ACT – A Contemporary Theatre and ran from March 10 to May 20, 2012. *Variety* called ***First Date*** “Flat-out ingenious!” and *The Seattle Times* said ***First Date*** is “Terrific – snappy and irreverent!” The production was awarded four *Seattle Times* Footlight Awards, including Best Musical.

“The partnership between ACT and The 5th Avenue is truly unique,” said ACT Artistic Director **Kurt Beattie**. “What’s exciting about the partnership between our two great

Media Contact: Bridget Summers Public Relations Manager
The 5th Avenue Theatre • 1308 5th Avenue Seattle, Washington 98101
email bsummers@5thavenue.org • tel 206.260.2174 • fax 206.292.9610

organizations is that it enables both companies to produce works we wouldn't have been able to do previously, and ***First Date*** is a perfect example of that." ACT Executive Director **Carlo Scandiuzzi** added "We were so thrilled at what a huge hit *First Date* turned out to be in Seattle. It was clear from the way audiences loved this show that it was destined for a great future."

"This show was developed in Seattle. It had its world premiere in Seattle. Now this gem is going on to a Broadway opening, and that wouldn't be happening without Seattle," said Junkyard Dogs Producer **Kenny Alhadeff**. His wife and fellow producer **Marleen Alhadeff** adds "The beautiful thing about this show is, not only is it hilarious, but it has the ability to touch the heart. Almost every person has been on a first date. How often do you have the opportunity to be a part of the life of a show that touches so many?" In addition to Junkyard Productions, Marleen and Kenny Alhadeff are The 5th Avenue Theatre's Producing Partners.

First Date is Broadway's new musical comedy about the most dangerous human endeavor in existence – the dreaded blind date. When tightly wound Aaron is set up with cool girl Casey, a quick drink turns into a hilarious dinner served with sides of Google background checks, fake emergency phone calls, a slew of bad boy and uptown girl exes, and some seriously saucy chemistry. Set in a jaded city full of missed connections, their unpredictable evening unfolds in real time. Can this mismatched pair turn what could be a dining disaster into something special before the check arrives, or will it all lead to just another table for one?

Seattle's Bill Berry makes his Broadway debut at the helm of ***First Date***. He is the producing director of The 5th Avenue Theatre where he has directed productions of *The Music Man*, ***First Date***, *RENT*, *West Side Story*, *Wonderful Town*, and *Smokey Joe's Café*, garnering great public and critical acclaim and three *Seattle Times* Footlight Awards. His work as a freelance director was seen in the noteworthy production of *On the Town* at Paper Mill Play House. His award-winning re-imagined production of *Cabaret* has been performed at The Ordway Theatre, American Musical Theatre San Jose, Theatre Under the Stars, and The 5th Avenue Theatre.

First Date has a book by **Austin Winsberg** (*Gossip Girl*) and music and lyrics by **Michael Weiner** and **Alan Zachary** (*Secondhand Lions*), who also make their Broadway debuts with this production. Choreography is by **Josh Rhodes** (Broadway's *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella*).

Scenic design is by **David Gallo**, costume design by **David Woolard**, lighting design by **Mike Baldassari**, and sound design by **Kai Harada**. Musical supervision, vocal and incidental arrangements are by **Dominick Amendum**. **August Eriksmoen** will orchestrate. Casting is by **Telsey + Co**. ***First Date*** is produced by **Junkyard Dog Productions** (**Randy Adams, Marleen and Kenny Alhadeff, Sue Frost**), in association with **Stem Productions, Susan W. and James C. Blair Family LP, Alex and Katya Lukianov**, and **Linda and Bill Potter**.

Tickets for ***First Date*** are available on Monday, March 18, 2013 through Audience Rewards and go on sale to the general public on Monday, April 1, 2013. The performance schedule is as follows: Tuesday-Saturday at 8 PM, Saturday at 2 PM and Sunday at 3 PM and 7 PM. After August 4, 2013 the performance schedule is Tuesday at 7 PM, Wednesday-Saturday at 8 PM, Saturday at 2 PM and Sunday at 3 PM and 7 PM. Tickets range from \$35 to \$137 and can be purchased at www.Telecharge.com (212.239.6200).

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. To date, seven have moved on to Broadway premieres, including the recent debuts of *Scandalous: The Life and Trials of Aimee Semple McPherson* (formerly *Saving Aimee*) and *A Christmas Story, The Musical!* These seven Broadway musicals have earned a combined 14 Tony Awards, including two for Best Musical (*Hairspray* and *Memphis*). Two more have been announced for Broadway – *Disney's Aladdin* (Spring of 2014) and now *First Date* (July, 2013). 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 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.

For more information about The 5th Avenue Theatre, its season and its programs, please visit www.5thavenue.org.

About ACT – A Contemporary Theatre

A theatre of new ideas dedicated to raising consciousness through theatre, ACT produces contemporary work with promising playwrights and local performing artists. Founded in 1965 and located in the heart of downtown Seattle, ACT serves as a cultural engine that makes plays, dance, music, and film that touch and challenge us. Because contemporary life demands examination, ACT is driven to inspire and strengthen our diverse community through works that advance our understanding of human life. With more than 100,000 people who attend shows annually, ACT is an interactive community where artists and the public witness, contemplate, and engage in dialogue on today's thought-provoking issues, ideas and art, presented with intelligence, insight, and humor. For more information visit www.acttheatre.org

Media Contact: Bridget Summers Public Relations Manager
The 5th Avenue Theatre • 1308 5th Avenue Seattle, Washington 98101
email bsummers@5thavenue.org • tel 206.260.2174 • fax 206.292.9610