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## **A Hot Rod Full of Seattle Talent Races Onstage This Summer in The 5th's All New Staging of *Grease***

***Fresh Faces, Familiar Friends, and The Dusty 45s Will Rock Rydell High***

*Book, Music, and Lyrics by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey  
Directed by Eric Ankrim; Choreographed by Chryssie Whitehead;*

**July 9 - August 2, 2015**

(Thursday, May 14, 2015 – SEATTLE) The American musical sensation, ***Grease***, will send audiences cruisin' through the days of pajama parties, sock hops, and drive-ins with an exuberant cast of Seattle's freshest faces and favorite performers at **The 5th Avenue Theatre** this summer. **Eric Ankrim** directs a cast led by newcomers **Bryan Gula** as Danny Zuko, **Solea Pfeiffer** as Sandy Dumbrowski and **Saxton Jay** as Kenickie. Returning to The 5th are **Kirsten deLohr Helland** as the gum-smacking Rizzo and **Sarah Rose Davis** as beauty-school dropout Frenchie. A rocking band centered around **Billy Joe Huels and the Dusty 45s** will have audiences dancing in the aisles. Follow the whole gang as they hand-jive their way through their senior year with unforgettable songs like "Beauty School Dropout," "Hopelessly Devoted," "Greased Lightnin'," and "You're the One that I Want." This musical favorite will overjoy audiences of any generation.

***Grease*** plays **July 9-August 2, 2015** (press opening Thursday, July 16) at The 5th Avenue Theatre (1308 5th Avenue, Seattle). For single tickets (starting at \$29) and information, please visit [www.5thavenue.org](http://www.5thavenue.org), call the Box Office at (206) 625-1900 or visit the Box Office at 1308 5th Avenue in Downtown Seattle. Tickets may also be purchased at (888) 5TH-4TIX. Group tickets buyers (10 or more) may call (888) 625-1418.

"*Grease* is an all-American classic of the theater canon that took off like a skyrocket when it opened on Broadway, launching the careers of dozens of celebrities, including John Travolta and Richard Gere," said Executive Producer and Artistic Director David Armstrong. "Our production features many of Seattle's rising talents who are sure to become regulars on stages throughout the region and join the ranks of Seattle's theatrical royalty."

### **About The Cast**

**Bryan Gula** leads this exuberant cast at The 5th as the love-struck greaser Danny Zuko. A recipient of the Broadway World Award for his performance in Balagan's *Spring Awakening*,

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Gula is a veteran of The 5th Avenue's Rising Star Project, appearing in RSP productions of *Oklahoma!* and *The Music Man*. He also appeared in The 5th Avenue's production of *RENT*. Gula is an entrepreneur and informatics student at the UW who recently launched a start-up company.

Joining him as the sweet high school newcomer, Sandy Dumbrowski, is **Solea Pfeiffer**, who has appeared locally in shows at Book-It, Seattle Rep, and Balagan. She is currently pursuing a BFA in Musical Theater at the University of Michigan where she appeared in *Romeo and Juliet* and *Beehive*. Pfeiffer just returned from studying at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London where she played Pandarus in *Troilus and Cressida*.

Fresh from her star turn as Siren in *Lizard Boy* at The Seattle Repertory Theatre, **Kirsten deLohr Helland** returns to The 5th to play the strong and sassy Betty Rizzo, leader of the Pink Ladies. Helland is a familiar face for 5th Avenue audiences who have seen her in *ELF—The Musical*, *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Oklahoma!*, *The Pirates of Penzance* and *RENT*.

**Saxton Jay** makes his 5th Avenue debut as Rizzo's rebellious boyfriend and Danny Zuko's best friend, Kenickie. He is a student at Cornish College of the Arts and appeared in *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, and *Li'l Abner* at Icon Theater.

The versatile and vivacious **Sarah Rose Davis** has had a busy season at The 5th, most recently playing a multitude of roles in *Jasper in Deadland* and *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Carousel*. Her performance as Maggie in *A Chorus Line* was a huge hit with 5th Avenue patrons. In *Grease*, she plays the hapless beauty school dropout, Frenchie. Local audiences will also remember Davis from her starring role as Fannie Bryce in last season's *Funny Girl* at Village Theatre.

As the spicy and flirtatious Cha Cha, **Andi Alhadeff** returns to The 5th after playing Persephone and others in *Jasper in Deadland*. Previously, she appeared at The 5th in *RENT* (Joanne), *Oliver!*, and (as a child) in *The Sound of Music*. She appeared in the Off-Broadway production of *Jasper in Deadland* and has appeared in workshops and readings for *Eastland*, *The Noteworthy Life of Howard Barnes*, *We Foxes*, and *A Single Girl's Guide*.

**Jordon Bolden**, currently studying acting at Carnegie Mellon University, will play Sonnie. Bolden previously appeared at The 5th in *Hairspray in Concert* and *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella* and at Village Theatre in shows including *Footloose*, *The Producers*, and *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

**Kody Bringman**, who plays Doody, makes his 5th Avenue debut after performing throughout the Puget Sound in roles as diverse as Andrew Jackson in *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* at ArtsWest and Link Larkin in *Hairspray* for Seattle Musical Theatre. He has also been seen at Balagan, Village Theatre, Tacoma Musical Playhouse, and in Olympia at both Harlequin Productions and Capital Playhouse.

**Kyle Robert Carter** just finished a run as Virgil and others in *Jasper in Deadland* at The 5th. He portrayed Benny in the national tour of *In The Heights*, a role he also played at Village Theatre. Off-Broadway, he was seen in *Storyville* and he holds a B.A. from the University of Notre Dame. In *Grease*, Carter plays the roles of Teen Angel and the emcee of the prom, Vince Fontaine.

**Meaghan Foy** plays the hopelessly enthusiastic Patty Simcox. Her previous appearances at The 5th include Val in *A Chorus Line*, Alice in *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* and in the ensemble of *Memphis*. She has also performed at Seattle Children's Theatre, Village Theater, and Second Story Repertory.

**Justin Huertas** just completed a successful run of *Lizard Boy* at Seattle Rep, a show in which he wrote, composed, and starred. Huertas plays the ultimate nerd, Eugene, in *Grease*. His performance credits include appearances at Village Theater, Washington Ensemble Theater and Contemporary Classics. Huertas toured with the Broadway National Tour of *Spring Awakening* as a cellist.

**Marianne Owen** makes her 5th Avenue debut in *Grease* despite a busy Seattle acting career spanning two decades. A regular at ACT Theatre, she was most recently seen as Sonia in *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* and as Big Mama in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Owen will play the strict but lovable English teacher at Rydell High, Miss Lynch.

**Sarah Russell** returns to The 5th to play Jan. She was previously seen in *Hairspray in Concert* and *RENT*. She also appeared in *Rosie the Riveter* as part of Adventure Musical Theater (The 5th Avenue's school touring company) as well as shows at Couer d'Alene Summer Theatre, Seattle Musical Theatre, and Studio East.

**Patrick Shelton** will play Roger. He was last seen at The 5th in *RENT* and *Hairspray in Concert* and has played roles at Village Theatre in several shows and workshops.

**Joell Weill** plays Marty. A recent graduate of Carnegie Mellon University, this is her first production at The 5th. Past productions include *Big River* and *Ragtime* at Coeur d'Alene Summer Theatre, as well as *The Wiz* and *Once on this Island* at Carnegie Mellon University.

### **About the Director**

Tacoma native **Eric Ankrim** is one of the busiest performers and directors in Seattle. He made his 5th Avenue directorial debut at the helm of *ELF—The Musical* and he has also served as Associate Director for *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Carousel* and Assistant Director for *RENT*. He directed the sensational hit *Spring Awakening* at Balagan Theatre, which was remounted after a 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. He has also directed *Avenue Q* at Balagan and *TRAILS* at Village Theatre.

Most recently, Ankrim competed a highly successful run as part of the all-star ensemble of The 5th Avenue/ACT Theatre co-production of *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well & Living in*

*Paris*. He will be remembered by 5th Avenue audiences in two of Rodgers and Hammerstein's classic shows, as Curly in *Oklahoma!* and Jigger in *Carousel*. His other 5th Avenue credits include *First Date* (which he also followed to Broadway), *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 Choreographer**

**Chryssie Whitehead** served as associate director and associate choreographer for The 5th Avenue/ACT Theatre's co-production of *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well & Living in Paris*. Whitehead is also a busy performer and thrilled 5th Avenue audiences with her roles as Cassie in *A Chorus Line* and Lola in *Damn Yankees!* She also has extensive experience on Broadway and with national touring companies, and her resume includes numerous appearances in television and film.

### **About the Music Director**

**R.J. Tancioco** most recently served as the music director for The 5th Avenue's latest production, *Jasper in Deadland* and as musical supervisor for Seattle Rep's production of *Lizard Boy*. His credits as music director and conductor extend throughout the Seattle area, including ArtsWest, Village Theatre, Balagan, and Contemporary Classics. For The 5th, he also served as musical director and/or conductor for *Little Shop of Horrors*, *RENT*, *Hairspray in Concert*, *Cabaret*, *Dreamgirls*, *Smokey Joe's Café*, and *HAIR*, among others. A 2010 Gypsy Rose Lee award recipient, Tancioco is a vocal coach, arranger, composer, and enjoys educating youth for theatre and cultivating new musicals.

### **About the Band**

Following two classic performances at The 5th—as Buddy Holly in *Buddy* and as the hilarious Elvis-like Pharaoh in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*—**Billy Joe Huels** returns to play bandleader, Johnny Casino. He will lead his real-life band, **The Dusty 45s**, onstage as well. An engaging and charismatic front man, Huels not only plays a blazing guitar but also sets the trumpet on fire—literally.

**The Dusty 45s** were voted by the readers of *The Seattle Weekly* as the best local band three years in a row and have thrilled crowds for over a decade. They opened for multiple Grammy Award-winning singer Adele and served as the back-up band for “The Queen of Rockabilly,” Miss Wanda Jackson, as she toured in support of her critically-acclaimed Jack White-produced record, *The Party Ain't Over*. With a deep discography, thousands of miles on the tour van odometer, and a committed fan base, **The Dusty 45s** are a fiery group that will bring the rocking sounds of *Grease* to vibrant life. The band includes Jerry Battista on lead guitar, Kelly Van Camp on drums, Robin Cady on upright bass, and Arthur Migliazza on the keyboards.

### **About the Creative Team**

The design team includes set designer **Christopher Mumaw**, costume designer **Harmony Arnold**, lighting designer **Tom Sturge**, sound designer **Tony Smolenski**, and hair and make up designer Mary Jones. Additional staff includes assistant director **Adam Quinn**, associate choreographer **Trina Mills**, associate music director John Callahan and assistant

lighting designer **Tristan Roberson**. **Jeffrey K. Hanson** is the production stage manager and **Shellie Stone** and **Rachel Bury** serve as assistant stage managers.

### **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).

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### **FOR CALENDAR EDITORS**

**WHAT:** The American sensation, ***Grease***, will send audiences cruisin' through the days of pajama parties, sock hops, and drive-ins with an exuberant cast of Seattle's freshest faces and favorite performers at **The 5th Avenue Theatre** this summer. The closing production of the 2014/15 season, this rollicking tale of the kids from Rydell High was a box office phenomenon on Broadway and London's West End and paired megastars John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John in the hit 1978 film version. **Eric Ankrim** will direct a cast led by newcomers **Bryan Gula** as Danny Zuko, **Solea Pfeiffer** as Sandy Dumbrowski and **Saxton Jay** as Kenicke. Returning to The 5th are **Kirsten deLohr Helland** as the gum-smacking Rizzo and **Sarah Rose Davis** as beauty-school dropout Frenchie. A rocking band centered around **Billy Joe Huels and the Dusty 45s** will have audiences dancing in the aisles. Follow the whole gang as they hand-jive their way through their senior year with unforgettable songs like "Beauty School Dropout," "Hopelessly Devoted," "Greased Lightnin'," and "You're the One that I Want." This musical favorite will overjoy audiences of any generation.

**WHEN:** *Previews: July 9-15, 2015*  
Opening Night: Thursday, July 16, 2015 (press night)  
Closing Performance: Sunday, August 2, 2015 (matinee)

**SHOW** Tuesdays & Wednesdays – 7:30 PM  
**TIMES:** Thursdays & Fridays – 8:00 PM  
Saturdays – 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM  
Sundays – 1:30 PM & 7:00 PM

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

**TICKETS:** For single tickets (starting at \$29) 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 2014/15 season sponsors ArtsFund, U.S. Bank, *The Seattle Times*, and Delta Airlines, our official airline. Thanks also to our restaurant sponsor Hard Rock Café.

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