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The Company of The 5th Avenue Theatre's *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* Begins Rehearsals This Week

Complete casting announced for this stellar swinging musical theater hit with Fosse-inspired choreography and '60s pop art design.

January 28 - February 21, 2016

Music and Lyrics by Frank Loesser

Book by Abe Burrows, Jack Weinstock and Willie Gilbert

Directed by Bill Berry; Choreographed by Bob Richard

(Tuesday, December 29, 2015 – SEATTLE, WA) The uproariously funny satire on corporate ladder-climbing, ***How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying***, starts rehearsals this week at **The 5th Avenue Theatre**. This Pulitzer Prize and multi-Tony Award®-winning musical takes place in TV's *Mad Men* era, following window washer J. Pierrepont Finch's journey from mail room to the top of the World Wide Wicket Company, all with the help of a cunning guide book. A sharp-witted send-up of the corporate rat race that will keep audiences rolling in the aisles, ***How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*** is gracing **The 5th Avenue** stage for the first time.

Tacoma native **Eric Ankrim** stars as J. Pierrepont Finch alongside Bellevue belle **Sarah Rose Davis** as Rosemary. They are joined by **Allen Fitzpatrick** as J. B. Biggley, **Allen Galli** as Mr. Twimble/Wally Womper, **Cristin Hubbard** as Miss Jones, **Adam Standley** as Bud Frump, **Sarah Rudinoff** as Smitty, **Jessica Skerritt** as Hedy La Rue and **Jeff Steitzer** as Bert Bratt. Swinging tunes like "Company Way," "Brotherhood of Man" and "I Believe In You" are accompanied by slinky Fosse-inspired choreography and a spectacular set design inspired by pop artist Piet Mondrian. Under the direction of **The 5th Avenue** Producing Artistic Director **Bill Berry** with choreography by **Bob Richard** and music direction by **Dan Pardo**, this high energy show will have audiences rolling in the aisles.

"We are thrilled to bring this landmark musical to our stage for the very first time," said 5th Avenue Executive Producer and Artistic Director **David Armstrong**. "This show is a true classic created by absolute masters of the musical theater. And even though it's subject

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matter is the corporate rat race of the 1960's, I feel certain that the show's characters and situations will still resonate hilariously in our contemporary world of Amazon, Boeing, and Microsoft.

How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying runs **January 28 – February 21, 2016** (press night Thursday, February 4, 2016) at **The 5th Avenue Theatre** (1308 5th Avenue, Seattle). For single tickets (starting at \$29) and information, please visit 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 ticket buyers (10 or more) may call (888) 625-1418.

About The Cast

Bright eyed and sly, J. Pierrepont Finch is played by **Eric Ankrim**, a Tacoma native and 5th Avenue veteran. He has performed with The 5th many times—most notably as Curly in *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!*, as well as roles in *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Carousel*, *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well & Living in Paris* (a co-production presented at ACT – A Contemporary Theatre), *RENT*, *Into the Woods*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Miss Saigon* and 5th Ave/ACT co-production *First Date*. Ankrim made his Broadway debut in 2013 in the cast of *First Date* after the show successfully moved on from its Seattle debut. Ankrim was seen most recently in Seattle Rep's critically-acclaimed *Come From Away* and performs frequently at ACT, Village Theatre and Seattle Children's Theatre. An accomplished director, Ankrim helmed The 5th's recent hit productions of *Grease* and holiday hit *ELF – The Musical*. His immersive production of *American Idiot* at ArtsWest this summer was wildly successful.

Hopeless romantic Rosemary Pilkington is played by the versatile and vivacious **Sarah Rose Davis**. Davis starred in The 5th's recent productions of *Grease* as Frenchie and *A Chorus Line* as Maggie. Additional 5th Avenue credits include *Rodgers & Hammerstein's The Sound of Music*, *Jasper in Deadland*, *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Carousel* and many others. Local audiences will also remember Davis from her starring role as Fannie Bryce in last season's *Funny Girl* at Village Theatre. Davis came to The 5th's attention as a high school student when she was nominated for (and received) a 5th Avenue Award.

Allen Fitzpatrick joins the cast as J.B. Biggley, boisterous owner of the World Wide Wicket Company. Fitzpatrick has performed in 19 productions at The 5th, including *Rodgers & Hammerstein's The Sound of Music*; *A Christmas Story*, *The Musical*; *A Room with a View*; *Monty Python's Spamalot*; *Oliver!*; and "Sweeney" in *Sweeney Todd*, for which he received a Footlight Award for Stellar Performance. His 16 Broadway credits include favorites such as *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Memphis*, *Les Misérables* and *42nd Street*. In addition to his 40 years onstage, Fitzpatrick founded the Icicle Creek New Play Festival (ICNF) and the People's Theatre of Frankford in Philadelphia. He has appeared in many television shows and national commercials and enjoys teaching and directing in the Seattle area.

Sarah Rudinoff plays Smitty, World Wide Wicket secretary and Rosemary's closest confidant. Rudinoff is a 5th Avenue favorite who is known for her roles as Ruth in *Wonderful*

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Town, Hildy in *On the Town* and a wicked stepsister in *Cinderella*. She has performed in most local theatres and her solo work (*Broad, Go There* and *The Last State*) has toured the Adelaide Festival, PICA's TBA Festival, HBO Workspace and the Warhol Museum. Rudinoff's new solo work *NowNowNow* will premiere at On the Boards in March 2016.

Joining the steno pool are **Jessica Skerritt** as Hedy La Rue and **Cristin Hubbard** as Miss Jones. **Jessica Skerritt** was last seen this season as Baroness Elsa Schraeder in The 5th Avenue's production of *Rodgers & Hammerstein's The Sound of Music*. Other 5th Avenue credits include *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Carousel*, Mother in *A Christmas Story*, *The Musical*; *Hairspray in Concert* and many others. Local audiences will remember Skerritt's performance as Audrey in *Little Shop of Horrors* in a co-production between The 5th Avenue and ACT Theatre, for which she won a Gypsy Rose Lee Award and a *Seattle Times* Footlight Award for the role. **Cristin Hubbard** makes her 5th Avenue debut as Miss Jones. Hubbard's Broadway credits include *The Phantom of the Opera* and *The Pirate Queen* with regional credits including roles in *A Little Night Music*, *The Man of La Mancha* and *The Boyfriend* directed by Julie Andrews at the Goodspeed Opera House.

The staff of the World Wide Wicket Company includes **Adam Standley** as Bud Frump, **Allen Galli** as Mr. Twimble/Wally Womper and **Jeff Steitzer** as Bert Bratt. **Standley**, a founding member and Associate Artistic Director of Satori Group, a new works ensemble in Seattle, makes his 5th Ave debut with this production. Standley has also appeared on the stages of the Intiman, ACT, Seattle Children's Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Theatre and the Washington Ensemble Theatre. **Allen Galli** last appeared at The 5th Avenue as Rusty Charlie in *Guys and Dolls* with other 5th Avenue credits including *White Christmas*, *Into the Woods*, *West Side Story* and *Anything Goes!* Additional local work includes Seattle Children's Theatre, Village Theatre, Seattle Rep, ACT, Intiman, Book-It and Seattle Shakespeare Company. **Jeff Steitzer** has been seen most recently at The 5th Avenue in *Little Shop of Horrors* and *The Music Man*. His Broadway credits include *Mary Poppins* and the revival of *Inherit the Wind* with Christopher Plummer and Brian Dennehy. Steitzer also performed in the world premier of *Five Presidents* and *Kiss Me, Kate* at Hartford Stage and the Old Globe. He has been seen in films, on TV and heard in countless commercials, audio books and in all of the Microsoft HALO games.

Rounding out the workforce, the ensemble includes **Greg McCormick Allen**, **Kyle Bernbach**, **Kristin Burch**, **Kyle Robert Carter**, **Gabriel Corey**, **Taryn Darr**, **Lauren Du Pree**, **Paul Flanagan**, **Nik Hagen**, **Alexandria Henderson**, **Nicholas Kim**, **McKayla Marso**, **Trina Mills**, **Taylor Niemeyer**, **Emily Johnson**, **Richard Peacock**, **Matthew Posner**, **Aaron Shanks**, and **Dane Stokinger**.

About the Director

Producing Artistic Director Bill Berry returns to direct *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* after staging the critically-acclaimed *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Carousel* and the wildly popular *Little Shop of Horrors* (co-production with ACT Theatre) which received the *Seattle Times* Footlight Award for Best Musical of 2014. Berry is the Producing Artistic Director of The 5th Avenue Theatre, where he has directed notable

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productions of *On the Town*, *West Side Story* (Footlight Award), *Wonderful Town* (Footlight Award), *Smokey Joe's Café* and *The Wizard of Oz*. He also directed *On the Town* at Paper Mill Playhouse. His re-imagined production of *Cabaret* received awards in St. Paul and Houston and has been performed at The 5th Avenue Theatre, The Ordway, the American Musical Theatre of San Jose and Theatre Under The Stars.

About the Choreographer

Bob Richard returns to The 5th Avenue Theatre where he has previously choreographed hit productions of *Oliver!*, *The Music Man*, *West Side Story*, *On the Town*, and *Cabaret*, among others. His work has been seen on Broadway in *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* Additionally, he has choreographed for multiple television shows and events including *LazyTown*, *The Tonight Show*, *The Today Show* and *The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade*. He has choreographed all over the country at theaters including North Shore Music Theatre, The Old Globe Theatre, Theatre Under the Stars and the Ordway Performing Arts Center. He has been the resident choreographer at Sacramento Music Circus for the last 14 years, staging more than 30 productions. He is the founding artistic director of The American Musical Theatre Dance Company.

About the Music Director

Dan Pardo is a classically trained pianist with a passion for musical theater and vocal jazz who frequents the Seattle area. Trained at West Chester University of Pennsylvania and music apprentice at Goodspeed Musicals, Pardo is now based out of Brooklyn. His recent work includes assistant conducting *Amazing Grace: A New Broadway Musical* as well as music directing *The Oliver Experiment*, a workshop and premier in New York City. Pardo first worked with The 5th as rehearsal accompanist for *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Carousel* in 2015.

About the Creative Team

The production features original scenic design by **Tom Sturge** and **David Sumner** and original costume design by **Rose Pederson**. The design team also includes lighting designer **Robert Aguilar**, sound designer **Justin Stasiw** and hair and wig designer **Mary Jones**. Additional staff includes assistant director **Henry Nettleton**, associate choreographer **Chryssie Whitehead** and associate sound designer **Kevin Heard**. The production features orchestrations by **Bruce Monroe**, with additional music staff including associate music director **Chris Ranney**. **Jeffrey K. Hanson** is the production stage manager with assistant stage managers **Jessica Bomball** and **Erin Zatloka**.

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

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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 CALENDAR EDITORS

WHAT: The Pulitzer Prize-winning and multi-Tony Award®-winning musical comedy hit ***How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*** is taking the stage for the first time at **The 5th Avenue Theatre**. J. Pierrepont 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 will star Tacoma native **Eric Ankrim** as J. Pierrepont Finch alongside Bellevue belle **Sarah Rose Davis** as Rosemary under the direction of 5th Avenue Producing Artistic Director **Bill Berry**. Audiences will love this swingin’ tune-filled musical set in the era of TV’s *Mad Men*, featuring sexy Fosse-inspired choreography by **Bob Richard** and a set design inspired by pop artist Piet Mondrian. *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* boasts an exhilarating score including “I Believe in You,” “Brotherhood of Man,” and “The Company Way.” Power, sex, ambition, greed... it’s just another day at the office in this classic satire of big business.

WHEN: *Previews Begin: January 28, 2016*
Opening Night: Thursday, February 4, 2016 (press night)
Closing Performance: Sunday, February 21, 2016
Performance times vary. Please visit www.5thavenue.org for details.

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

TICKETS: Please visit www.5thavenue.org or call the Box Office at (206) 625-1900. Tickets (starting at \$29) may also be purchased at (888) 5TH-4TIX.

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