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**The 5th Avenue Theatre Produces *Disney's The Little Mermaid* This Holiday Season**

*The dazzling production marks the Northwest  
Premiere of the Disney classic.*

**November 23-December 31, 2016**

*Music by Alan Menken; Book by Doug Wright,  
Lyrics by Glenn Slater and Howard Ashman;  
Directed by Glenn Casale; Choreographed by John MacInnis*

(TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2016—SEATTLE, WA) A spectacular new production of ***Disney's The Little Mermaid*** kicks off at **The 5th Avenue Theatre** this holiday season. Featuring the critically acclaimed work of Director **Glenn Casale**, this beloved tale of a young mermaid's coming-of-age adventure is told like never before. Previously announced casting includes Seattle's own **Diana Huey** as Ariel and **Matthew Kacergis** as Prince Eric, with Broadway's **Jennifer Allen** as Ursula and **Steven Blanchard** as King Triton. **Melvin Abston, Connor Russell** and **Jamie Torcellini** join the cast as Sebastian, Flounder and Scuttle. The 5th Avenue's production will go on to play engagements in cities including **Orlando, Cincinnati, Atlanta** and **Louisville**, among others.

"The 5th Avenue Theatre has a tradition of producing a spectacular musical treat for families at the holidays, and *The Little Mermaid* is no exception," said Executive Producer and Artistic Director **David Armstrong**. "Audiences will be transported through the magic of live theater to a kingdom under the sea and drawn into a story that, at its heart, is about family, adventure and a young girl coming-of-age. Everyone from young children with their parents and grandparents to young adults who loved the 1989 film will delight in this stunning musical."

***Disney's The Little Mermaid*** plays **November 23-December 31, 2016** (press opening Thursday, December 1) at The 5th Avenue Theatre (1308 5th Avenue, Seattle). For single tickets (starting at \$36) and information, please visit [www.5thavenue.org](http://www.5thavenue.org), call (206) 625-1900 or visit the Box Office. Groups (10 or more) may call (888) 625-1418.

This timeless Disney musical is based on the hit animated 1989 Disney film *The Little Mermaid*, which was loosely based on the Hans Christian Anderson tale. The show follows headstrong Ariel, no longer content to live on the ocean floor under her father, King Triton's

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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. The film earned three Academy Award® nominations and four Golden Globe nominations, winning the awards for Best Song ("Under the Sea") and Best Score in both ceremonies. The soundtrack won the Grammy Award for Best Album for Children and the Grammy Award for Best Score Soundtrack Album for A Motion Picture, Television or Other Visual Media.

The Broadway production appeared in 2007 under Director Francesca Zambello. In 2012, Director Glenn Casale was invited to re-imagine the show, making significant plot changes, introducing aerial elements and featuring a new set design by Bob Crowley that emulates a pop-up book. Casale's changes are reflected in this production.

### **About the Cast**

Seattle's own **Diana Huey** stars as Ariel. Her 5th Avenue credits include *Jasper in Deadland*, *RENT*, *MAME* and Adventure Musical Theater. Her regional work includes performances at Village Theatre, ACT Theatre, Seattle Children's Theater, Signature Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Flat Rock Playhouse, Prospect Theatre and Playwrights Horizon. Huey has been seen on TV in *Leverage*, *The Glee Project* and is heard on TV as *New Day Northwest's* theme-song singer. She is a Helen Hayes Award Winner for Best Leading Actress for Signature Theatre's *Miss Saigon*.

**Matthew Kacergis** makes his 5th Avenue debut as Prince Eric. His work has been seen at Village Theatre in *Les Misérables* (Marius), *Billy Elliot* (Tony), *Chasing Nicolette* (Aucassin) and *Anne of Green Gables* (Gilbert Blythe). Other regional credits include *Pride and Prejudice* (Mr. Wickham) at La Mirada Theatre, *Parade* (Frankie/Young Soldier) and *The Civil War* ("Tell My Father") at Ford's Theatre, *Spring Awakening* (Melchior) and *Cinderella* (Prince Christopher) at Olney Theatre Center. Additionally, Kacergis was seen in *Aladdin: A Musical Spectacular* (Aladdin) at Disney's California Adventure and *Fiddler On The Roof* (Fyedka) at the Ogunquit Playhouse. TV/Film: *Veep*. He can be heard on the cast recording of *A Walk On The Wild Side*.

**Jennifer Allen** joins the cast as Ursula in her 5th Avenue debut. Her Broadway credits include starring and co-starring roles in *Bridges of Madison County*, *Sister Act* (Mother Superior), *Memphis*, *A Catered Affair*, *Cats* (Grizabella), *Little Me*, *Guys and Dolls* (Miss Adelaide) and *City of Angels*. Allen has been seen in National Tours of *Ragtime* (Emma Goldman), *Jerome Robbins' Broadway* (Ma and Tessie Tura) and *Cabaret* (Sally Bowles). Regionally, she has worked at the Williamstown Theater Festival, Goodspeed Opera House and Paper Mill Playhouse.

**Steven Blanchard** makes his 5th Avenue debut as King Triton. His Broadway credits include *Beauty and the Beast* (Gaston and the Beast), *Camelot* and *The Three Musketeers*. Off-Broadway, he was seen in *Johnny Guitar* and *Frankenstein*. Blanchard's national tours include *Phantom of the Opera*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Camelot*, *The Little House on the Prairie* and *Newsies*. His TV credits include *Ed*, *Third Watch*, *Law & Order*, *Sunset Beat*, *Police Story*, *Another World*, *One Life to Live*, *Guiding Light* and *Rapmaster Ronnie* for HBO. Blanchard's regional work includes performances at

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Paper Mill Playhouse, St. Louis Rep, Madison Square Garden, Guthrie Theatre, TUTS and more.

**Melvin Abston** returns to The 5th Avenue as Sebastian. He was previously seen in *Memphis* at The 5th, and appeared on Broadway in *Sister Act* (Broadway and first national tour) and *The Lion King* (Broadway and national tour). Abston's regional performances have been seen at TUTS, Zach Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, La Mirada, Pasadena Playhouse, Chicago Theatre, Goodman Theatre and more. His film and TV work includes *Solace*, *Gotham*, *Raising Hope*, *Touch*, *Weeds*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Chuck*, *ER* and more.

**Connor Russell** joins the cast as Flounder. His 5th Avenue credits include *Disney's Aladdin*, *A Chorus Line*, and *Hairspray Anniversary Concert*. Russell has been seen regionally at The Old Globe (Quentin in *October Sky*), The Smith Center (*Idaho! The Comedy Musical*), Pittsburgh CLO (*A Christmas Carol*), Arkansas Rep (*White Christmas*), Village Theatre (*The Who's Tommy*) and Capital Rep (*Gypsy*). His film work includes Paul in *The Hinterlands* (IAWTV Award nomination for Best Leading Actor), *Brand Upon the Brain* (Toronto Film Festival/New York Film Festival) and *Truth Slash Fiction* (SeriesFest 2016 Winner).

**Jamie Torcellini** makes his 5th Avenue debut as Scuttle. He was seen on Broadway in *Billy Elliot*, *Man of La Mancha*, *Little Johnny Jones*, *Cats*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Jerome Robbins' Broadway* and *Me and My Girl*. Torcellini's TV and film credits include *ER*, *Law & Order*, *The Jamie Foxx Show*, *Stuart Little*, *Aladdin*, *Tarzan*, *Mrs. Santa Claus* and *Pocahontas 2*.

This stellar cast is joined by **Brandon Roach** as Flotsam, **Frederick Haggren** as Jetsam/Prince Eric Cover, **Allen Fitzpatrick** as Grimsby and **Dane Stokinger** as Chef Louis. Also swimming under the sea are **Kristin Burch**, **Venny Carranza**, **Lisa Karlin**, **Michael McGurk**, **Amanda Minano**, **Taylor Niemeyer**, **Becca Orts**, **Marco Ramos**, **Robbie Roby**, **James Shackelford**, **Brian Steven Shaw**, **Momoko Sugai** and **Brenna Wagner**.

### **About the Director**

**Glenn Casale** revisits *Disney's The Little Mermaid* as Director. Casale directed the 1999 Tony Award-nominated and Emmy Award-winning *Peter Pan* starring Cathy Rigby. Casale was brought on to re-imagine *Disney's The Little Mermaid*, introducing aerial effects and plot revisions that are reflected in this production. Additional directing credits include a new production of *Dragapella* (nominated for Drama Desk and Lucille Lortel Awards for Best Production), *Beauty and The Beast* and *Peter Pan* (Broadway and National Tour). His TV work includes *The Faculty* and *The Wayans Bros*.

### **About the Choreographer**

**John MacInnis'** choreography credits include European productions of *Disney's The Little Mermaid* and *Beauty and the Beast*. He was associate choreographer of *Something Rotten!*, *Aladdin* and *The Book of Mormon* on Broadway. MacInnis was director and choreographer of the Olympic Medals Ceremonies for the 2002 and 2010 Olympic Winter

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Games. He was the director/choreographer of *The Radio City Christmas Spectacular* including the first international production in Mexico City, Mexico. He has been seen on stage in *Curtains*; *Thoroughly Modern Millie*; *Kiss Me Kate*; *Steel Pier*; *How to Succeed in Business...*; *Guys and Dolls*; *Jerome Robbins' Broadway* and *Me and My Girl* on Broadway.

### **About the Music Director**

**Colin R. Freeman** has over 30 theater credits in both US and UK including: *Annie*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Anything Goes*, *Assassins*, *Cats*, *Cinderella*, *Chess*, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*, *Forever Plaid*, *Grease*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Gypsy*, *Harmony*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *My Fair Lady*, *Sweet Charity* and *The Wizard of Oz*. His varied concert work has taken him from recording for the BBC to conducting many of the principal U.S. and Canadian symphony orchestras including the Pittsburgh, Rochester, Ottawa, Calgary, Utah, St. Louis and Minnesota symphony orchestras. Freeman has worked as an arranger and orchestrator for Lorna Luft, Barry Manilow, Rod Stewart and Hal Linden among others. He is a Los Angeles Ovation Award winner, and Desert Theatre League winner for Best Musical Direction.

### **About the Creative Team**

The production features flying sequence choreography by **Paul Rubin**, original scenic design by **Kenneth Foy** and original costume design by **Amy Clark** and **Mark Koss**, lighting design by **Charlie Morrison**, sound design by **Ed Chapman**, original soundscape design by **Gareth Owen**, and hair and wig design by **Leah Loukas**. The design team also includes assistant lighting designers **John Burkland** and **Gary Echelmeyer** and costume coordinator **Nichole Hull**. Additional staff includes associate director **Michael Heitzman**, associate choreographer **Robbie Roby**, associate music director **R.J. Tancioco**, assistant flying sequence choreographer **Ashley Anderson** and keyboard programmer **Jim Harp**. **Michael McEowen** is the production stage manager with assistant stage managers **Rachel Bury** and **Hannah Wichmann**.

Special thanks to The 5th Avenue Theatre 2016/17 season sponsors ArtsFund, U.S. Bank and Alaska Airlines. Additional thanks to contributing sponsor Macy's, media sponsor The Seattle Times, and the production's restaurant sponsor, Il Fornaio.

### **About The 5th Avenue Theatre**

The non-profit 5th Avenue Theatre is the nation's premier incubator for new musical theater. 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

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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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