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Initial Casting Announced for The 5th Avenue Theatre's Production of the Iconic and Beloved Musical *West Side Story*

May 31 – June 23, 2019

Music by Leonard Bernstein; Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Book by Arthur Laurents

Based on a conception of Jerome Robbins

Directed by Bill Berry

Original Choreography Reproduced by Bob Richard

Music Direction by Matt Perri

Presented in association with Spectrum Dance Theater

(Wednesday, April 17, 2019—SEATTLE) **The 5th Avenue Theatre** has announced initial casting for ***West Side Story***, the sweeping tale of young lovers caught between prejudice and warring street gangs in what is one of the most important and powerful musicals of all time. The 5th is excited to introduce **Rebbekah Vega-Romero**, who makes her 5th Avenue Theatre debut to star as Maria, and welcome back **CJ Eldred** (The 5th: *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Aladdin*) to star opposite her as Tony. The multi-talented cast also features **Danielle Gonzalez** (National Tour: *Saturday Night Fever*, *Flashdance*) as Anita, Seattle local **Sophie Franco** (Intiman: *Native Gardens*) as Rosalia, **Karma Jenkins** (MUNY: *The Wiz*) as Consuela, **Iliana Garcia** (Orlando Shakespeare Theater: *In the Heights*) as Fransisca, and **Dan Lusardi** (Flat Rock Playhouse: *Gypsy*) as Riff, all making their 5th Avenue Theatre debuts. Returning to The 5th is **Alexander Gil Cruz**, (The 5th: *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*, Associate Choreographer) making his stage debut as Bernardo, **Seán G. Griffin** (*The Secret Garden*, *Aladdin*) as Doc, and **Richard Gray** (*Murder for Two*, *Spamalot*, *The Music Man*) as Officer Krupke. Additional casting, which includes members of **Spectrum Dance Theater**, will be announced at a later date.

The 5th Avenue Theatre's Producing Artistic Director **Bill Berry**, who helmed The 5th's most recent production of the musical in 2007, will direct this beloved tale once again. The iconic choreography by **Jerome Robbins** will be taught to the cast by returning choreographer **Bob Richard** (*Mamma Mia!*, *The Pajama Game*, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*).

Playing **May 31 – June 23, 2019** (press opening Friday, June 7), single tickets for *West Side Story* are on sale now at www.5thavenue.org, by phone at **206.625.1900**, or in person at the **Box Office** at 1308 5th Avenue in Downtown Seattle.

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West Side Story at The 5th Avenue Theatre

The 5th Avenue Theatre is calling on the full breadth and depth of its artistic resources to stage an unforgettable production of *West Side Story*. This is musical theater as only The 5th can do it: with a cast of 45 of the finest performers ever to grace its stage, a 25-piece orchestra and the highest levels of talent and artistic dedication bar none. The dancing will bring you to the edge of your seat; the music will resonate deep in your soul; the story will lift you to the heights of passion.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS

WHEN: *Previews begin Friday, May 31, 2019*
Opening Night: Friday, June 7, 2019 (press night)
Closing Performance: Sunday, June 23, 2019
Tuesdays – Thursdays at 7:30pm
Fridays at 8:00pm
Saturdays at 2:00pm and 8:00pm
Sundays at 1:30pm and 7:00pm (no 7:00pm performance on June 23)

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

TICKETS: Please visit www.5thavenue.org or call the Box Office at 206.625.1900 for tickets (starting at \$29).

About The 5th Avenue Theatre

The 5th Avenue Theatre is one of America's leading musical theater companies. We enrich the community we love with the art form we love—giving the Pacific Northwest a front-row seat to original powerhouse productions that go on to light up marquees and audiences all the way to Broadway. From the page to the stage, we bring passion and epic scale to every musical we create. With big talent. Bigger-than-life productions. And did we mention dazzle? As a nonprofit theater company and our region's largest performing arts employer, we spread the joy of great musicals with people of all ages across our region and state. Each year, we reach 75,000 young people through our nationally acclaimed education programs. Programs designed to develop new musicals ensure that the next generation of great musicals will be there to tell the stories that captivate tomorrow's audiences. On the national stage, we are a leading voice for the power of this American art form to lift the human spirit.

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

Special thanks to *West Side Story* production sponsor Bank of America and restaurant sponsor Wild Ginger. Additional thanks to 2018/19 season sponsors ArtsFund, U.S. Bank, and Alaska Airlines.

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