

ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE

PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MICHAEL DONALD EDWARDS • MANAGING DIRECTOR LINDA DIGABRIELE



For Immediate Release

Updated June 3, 2016

ASOLO REP PRESENTS THE U.S. PREMIERE OF U.K. SENSATION *HETTY FEATHER*

"Ingenious. *HETTY FEATHER* gives *Matilda* a run for its money"
— *The Telegraph*

(SARASOTA, June 3, 2016) — Asolo Repertory Theatre proudly presents the final production of its record breaking 2015-16 season, the U.S. premiere of the U.K. phenomenon *HETTY FEATHER*, Dame Jacqueline Wilson's wildly popular U.K. novel adapted into a thrilling theatrical masterpiece by Emma Reeves. Asolo Rep's production of this 2015 Olivier Award nominee for Best Family Entertainment will feature the original direction by Sally Cookson. *HETTY FEATHER* is a Rose Theatre Kingston Production presented by Kenny Wax, William Archer & Stage Presence. The U.S. premiere of *HETTY FEATHER* at Asolo Rep is supported by The Hetty Feather Group led by Bob Bartner. *HETTY FEATHER* will have one preview on Thursday, June 2 at 7pm, open Friday, June 3 at 8pm and run through Sunday, June 26 in the Mertz Theatre, located in the FSU Center for the Performing Arts.

-more-

Charles Dickens meets Orphan Annie meets the circus in this smashing new play that has taken the U.K. by storm. Based on Dame Jacqueline Wilson's best-selling novel, *Hetty Feather* is a feisty young 19th century redhead with an indomitable imagination and a zest for adventure. Left at the not-so-tender mercies of the Foundling Hospital as a baby, Hetty's quest to find her true home takes her from the English countryside to the traveling circus to the mean streets of London, all by way of thrilling aerial and circus feats, live music and spectacular story-telling. A true celebration of the random nature of life, this is a must-see theatrical adventure for all ages.

HETTY FEATHER author Dame Jacqueline Wilson was named a Waterstones Children's Laureate winner in 2005. She has sold more than 38 million books in the U.K. alone, and her books have been translated into 34 languages around the world.

"I'm thrilled that the stage play **HETTY FEATHER** is going to be in Florida! I absolutely love this brilliant adaptation of my book," said Dame Jacqueline Wilson. "It's so imaginative and exciting and has been a huge hit here in the U.K., with more than 300 performances so far. I've watched it at least 10 times, and at every show the audience got totally involved, laughing, crying, and gasping at the amazing circus skills. It's had any number of well-deserved five star reviews and I'm positive American families will LOVE this great show."

"I have been producing theatre in the West End and around the English provinces for 25 years and no other production of mine has ever had such fantastic reviews," said Kenny Wax, producer of **HETTY FEATHER**. "We have now played two West End Summer seasons, both hugely successful, and by the time we arrive in Sarasota, we will have toured to every major city in the U.K. To have the opportunity now to bring our extraordinary show over to play at Asolo Rep is very special indeed, made even more exciting by Sarasota's historic association with the Ringling Brothers Circus. I don't think a story about a feisty little girl who wants to run away to join the circus could find a more suitable home in the U.S. in which to premiere."

"It is very exciting to present the U.S. premiere of **HETTY FEATHER**, a beloved U.K. theatre sensation that has just completed a hugely successful run on London's West End," said Asolo Rep's Producing Artistic Director Michael Donald Edwards. "We look forward to welcoming families and patrons of all ages to this coming-of-age story filled with music, circus magic, and a lot of heart."

HETTY FEATHER is recommended for ages 7 and up. Family packages can be purchased for a family of three or more at 15% off the total ticket price (2 members of the family must be 18 and under). The **HETTY FEATHER** family discount is only available by phone or in person at the box office. Proof of age must be shown when picking up tickets. 50% off discount tickets for students and children are not available for **HETTY FEATHER**.

HETTY FEATHER Performance Schedule

HETTY FEATHER performances will begin earlier to accommodate families.

Wednesdays: 2pm and 7pm curtain

Thursdays: 7pm curtain

Fridays: 7pm curtain; Opening Night performance will begin at 8pm

Saturdays: 3:30pm curtain

Sundays: 1pm and 5:30pm curtain

CAST

Hetty.....	Chloe Mantripp
Jem/Matron Bottomly.....	Matt Costain
Peg/Ida.....	Sarah Goddard
Gideon.....	Mark Kane
Saul.....	Nik Howden
Madame Adeline.....	Nikki Warwick
Musician.....	Seamas H. Carey
Musician.....	Luke Potter

SELECTED CREATIVE TEAM MEMBERS

Director.....	Sally Cookson
Composer.....	Benji Bower
Designer.....	Katie Sykes
Lighting Designer.....	Aideen Malone
Sound Designer.....	Leigh Davies
Aerial Director.....	Gwen Hales
Costume Supervisor.....	Jennie Falconer

SELECTED ARTISTIC BIOS (In Alphabetical Order)

SALLY COOKSON (Director) is an associate artist of Bristol Old Vic where productions have included: *Sleeping Beauty*, *Jane Eyre* (which transferred to the National Theatre, London), *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*, *Peter Pan*, *Treasure Island*, *Aesop's Fables*, *Pains of*

HETTY FEATHER

Page 4 of 6

Youth, Pericles, Strange Case and *The Visit*. Sally's ongoing collaboration with Travelling Light Theatre has resulted in her directing over 10 productions for the company, including the Olivier nominated *Cinderella, Boing!, Cloudland, Bob The Man on The Moon, How Cold My Toes, Shadow Play, Clown, Lenny, Home* and *Papa Please Get The Moon For Me*. Work for Tobacco Factory theatre includes *101 Dalmatians, Cinderella, The Ugly Duckling, Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*. Her other theatre work includes *Romeo and Juliet* (Rose Theatre Kingston), *Varmints* (Sadler's Wells), *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* (Kenny Wax and Nick Brooke), *Lost and Found* (Polka Theatre), *Stick Man, Aesop's Fables, Tiddler and Other Terrific Tales* (Scamp Theatre), *Sapling Song, As Far As I Can Sea* (National Trust), *The Mermaid And The Mirror* (Half Moon) and *Jump* (Myrtle Theatre).

MATT COSTAIN (Jem/Matron Bottomly) Theatre credits include: *Romeo and Juliet* (Rose Theatre Kingston), *Hetty Feather* (Rose Theatre Kingston, UK Tour and Vaudeville Theatre West End Transfer), *War Horse, The Birds* (National Theatre), *Wendy & Peter Pan, Henry IV Pts 1 & 2, Henry V, Henry VI Pts 1, 2 & 3, Richard III* (Royal Shakespeare Company), *Macbeth, Pericles, Man Falling Down* (Shakespeare's Globe Theatre), *The Tempest* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre), *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Dr. Faustus, The Master and Margarita* (Chichester Festival Theatre), *Treasure Island* (Theatre Royal Haymarket), *Monkey!* (West Yorkshire Playhouse), *Papa Please Get The Moon For Me* (Bristol Old Vic), *The Thought That Counts* (Theatre Rites at The Barbican), *Jason And The Argonauts* (BAC), *Love Indeed* (Bandbazi Tour), *The Millennium Show* (The Dome/02). Directing and Movement Direction includes: For The RSC: *Wendy & Peter Pan* (Aerial Consultant) and *The Histories* (Aerial Director); For The National Theatre: *The Birds* (Aerial Director); For Secret Cinema: *The Empire Strikes Back, Brazil, One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest, Blade Runner* (Performance Director); For The Generating Company at the Barbican Theatre: *Storm* (Director); For London 2012 Olympics: Opening Ceremony (Aerial Captain); For Kingdom of Dreams, New Delhi: *Zangoora* (Aerial Consultant).

SARAH GODDARD (Peg/Ida) is delighted to be in Florida with *Hetty Feather!* Other family theatre credits include *Cinderella* (West Yorkshire Playhouse), *Them With Frozen Tails* (Nottingham Lakeside, Network of Stuff), *Jack* (Tutti Frutti/York Theatre Royal), *The Borrowers, The Emperor's New Clothes* (Mac Birmingham) and shows with Tall Stories. Recently she has been working with director Sarah Davey of bold & saucy theatre company on a trilogy of new plays with the working title *How To Be a Woman*. Other credits include: Mistress Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* (OSC), Katherine in *The Taming of The Shrew* (The Orange Tree), Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Sprite), Roxane in *Cyrano* (OSC), *The Steppe Brothers* (Rejects Revenge), Cassandra in *Agamemnon* (AOD), Maria in *Twelfth Night* (bold & saucy theatre company), Mephistopheles in *Dr. Faustus* (Brute Farce), Rossignol in *Marat/Sade* (Arcola). Sarah has also worked on a fair bit of physical, devised and site specific theatre with various innovative companies, including *The Clock Stopped at 8:19* (Connect), *Bluebeard* in Brompton Cemetery, and Ken Campbell's 24 hour *The Warp*. She also works as a drama practitioner in various settings and is associate producer for Penny Dreadful Theatre.

NIK HOWDEN (Saul) has had a varied selection of roles in radio, television and theatre. TV credits include appearances in *Ashes to Ashes, Doctor Who* ('Vincent and the Doctor'), *Grandpa in my Pocket* for CBeebies, and Stan Laurel in the BBC4 film *Stan*. Recent theatre credits include Eddie the Eagle in *Fly Eddie Fly* (Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham) and Stick Man in *Stick Man* (Spiegel Tent, Edinburgh). In the last year, Nik has also worked with Street Theatre Company, Fair Play Comedy, Mask Theatre Company, Vamos, and is a regular contributor to Bristol's comedy improvisation company, 'Instant Wit'.

-more-

HETTY FEATHER

Page 5 of 6

MARK KANE (Gideon) is an accomplished actor and trained at Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama. His stage credits include *The Merchant of Venice* (Shakespeare's Globe); *Cinderella: A Fairytale* (Tobacco Factory); *Stick Man* (Scamp Theatre); *The Ugly Duckling* (Travelling Light); *Julius Caesar* (Barbican); and *Scenes From An Execution, Dumbstruck, Flora the Red Menace* and *Twelfth Night* (Dundee Repertory Theatre). TV and film credits include *Four Africans* (Self Help Productions); *Heartbeat* (Yorkshire TV); and *Pregnancy* and *Witches* (Discovery Channel).

CHLOE MANTRIPP (Hetty) is a versatile circus performer with strong roots in theatre and comedy. She spent two years specializing in aerial and acrobalance at Circomedia, a world-renowned center for contemporary circus and physical theatre, and has worked professionally in circus theatre since graduating. She explores her passion for aerial apparatus with handmade latex masks that she both designs, creates, and performs in. Companies Chloe has worked with include *Hetty Feather* U.K. tour and West End, 10 Degrees South West, The Good-Fer-Nothing Circus, Gypsy Disco. Film includes *The Beast In The Basement* (Palm Tree Entertainment). She also performed at the International Slapstick Festival in 2013.

NIKKI WARWICK (Madame Adeline) was part of the original *Hetty Feather* company at the Rose Theatre Kingston, on tour and at the Vaudeville Theatre. Alongside theatre Nikki has worked extensively in aerial circus, cabaret and physical theatre. Nikki was joint artistic director of Puppertual Motion, a successful circus-cabaret company. Recent theatre credits include *Trolls* (Pickled Image Theatre/Tobacco Factory Theatres), *Musicians of Bremen* (The Rude Mechanical Theatre Company), *Everyman* (Splendid Productions), *Little Red* (Soap Soup Theatre Company - The Brewhouse, Taunton), *Free Folk* (Welsh Fargo Stage Company), *Limelight Revue* (Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts). Circus-theatre companies she has worked with in the U.K. and Australia include Cirque Bijou, Swamp Circus, Invisible Circus, Vulcana, Trix Circus and Rock and Roll.

DAME JACQUELINE WILSON (Author, *Hetty Feather*) is one of Britain's most outstanding writers for young readers. Known for her contemporary stories many featuring feisty characters like the enduring Tracy Beaker, she has also used historical settings for many recent books including the hugely popular *Hetty Feather* series. Over 38 million copies of her books have been sold in the U.K. alone and they have been translated into 34 languages. Jacqueline has been honored with many of the UK's top awards including the Guardian Children's Fiction Award, the Smarties Prize and the Children's Book of the Year. She was the Children's Laureate from 2005-2007 and is the Chancellor of Roehampton University. She also holds Honorary Doctorates from the Universities of Kingston, Bath, Winchester and Dundee.

TICKETS

Tickets for **HETTY FEATHER** start at just \$18. To purchase tickets, call 941.351.8000 or 800.361.8388, visit www.asolorep.org or visit the Asolo Repertory Theatre Box Office, located in the lobby of the theatre. Asolo Repertory Theatre is located at 5555 North Tamiami Trail in the Florida State University Center for the Performing Arts. The box office is currently open Monday 10am – 4pm, Tuesday – Thursday 10am - 7:30pm, Friday – Saturday 10am – 8pm, and Sunday 10am – 2pm. The box office closes at 5pm when there

-more-

HETTY FEATHER

Page 6 of 6

are no evening performances and phone lines close one hour prior to the start of any performance. Season subscription packages are also available online and by visiting or calling the box office.

HETTY FEATHER is recommended for ages 7 and up. Asolo Rep will offer special family ticket packages for families of four at 15 percent off the total ticket price (two members of the family must be 18 and under). The **HETTY FEATHER** family discount is only available by phone or in person at the box office. Proof of age must be shown when picking up tickets. Asolo Rep's fifty percent off student and child discount is not available for **HETTY FEATHER**.

SPONSORS

Asolo Rep is able to present **HETTY FEATHER** because of the generosity of its sponsors. Corporate sponsors for **HETTY FEATHER** are SunTrust Foundation, Energy Today, Grapevine Communications, 941 CEO, and WSRQ. Asolo Rep 2015-2016 Major Season Sponsors are Florida State University, Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, The Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, Designing Women Boutique, Woman's Exchange, Inc., and Sunset Cadillac of Bradenton. Asolo Rep's artistic programs are paid for in part by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax revenues. Asolo Rep is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.

###

Media Contact:

Sasha Fields
Public Relations Manager
941-351-9010 ext. 4800
sasha_fields@asolo.org