

# ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE

PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MICHAEL DONALD EDWARDS • MANAGING DIRECTOR LINDA DIGABRIELE



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\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\*

August 31, 2016

**Asolo Rep Announces Final Production of its 2016-17 Season:  
TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA;  
Adventure Awaits in this Stunning Theatrical Re-Imagination  
of Jules Verne's Classic Deep Sea Tale**

"Real feast for the senses. This is brilliant theatre." – CBC Radio

(SARASOTA, August 31, 2016) — Asolo Rep proudly announces the final production of its 2016-17 season: **TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA**, the stunning new theatrical re-imagination of Jules Verne's classic deep sea tale created by Craig Francis and Rick Miller, who will direct Asolo Rep's production, and presented by Canada's family-focused entertainment production company Kidoons and WYRD Productions. **TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA** comes to life on stage by way of visually striking multimedia storytelling, with vivid projections that will take the audience on the voyage of a lifetime. Previews are Wednesday, June 7 and Thursday, June 8 at 7pm, opening night is Friday, June 9 at 7pm and the production runs through Sunday, July 2 in

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**TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA**  
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the Mertz Theatre, located in the FSU Center for the Performing Arts.

Magnificent sea creatures! A spectacular submarine! Time travel! Take a plunge into the pages of Jules Verne's classic science fiction story and get swept away in this dazzling multisensory experience. Our modern-day storyteller Jules finds himself transported on board the Nautilus submarine, where he joins the mysterious Captain Nemo on a journey to the depths of the sea. Brought to stunning life through a mix of unforgettable characters, eye-popping projections and interactive technology, this time-honored tale explores our place in time and space, and illuminates the mysteries of the deep blue sea. The perfect family summer outing, **TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA** continues Asolo Rep's ongoing initiative to present engaging theatrical work for families, and is recommended for ages 8 and up.

**TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA** was developed in association with The 20K Collective and was commissioned for the TORONTO 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games arts and culture festival, PANAMANIA. The production will have its highly anticipated U.S. premiere in September at New York's renowned New Victory Theatre.

"**TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA** is an immersive theatrical production that connects the wonders of the Victorian era with today's technology and water environmental issues," said Rick Miller, who co-created the play and also directs. "As a father of two young people, I'm intensely driven to create entertainment that enlightens, educates, and empowers. We'll take you (and your kids) on an unforgettable ride to the depths of the sea... and the edge of your seat."

"The feeling is like falling into a favorite storybook," said Craig Francis, the play's co-creator, "and we've kept the themes of connection present not only in the multimedia in the theatre, but also the videos and interactivity around it: we invite the audience to connect before, during, and after the show. I hope you will enjoy our mysterious Captain Nemo, as he comes to life onstage and continues his animated adventures online."

Hailed as the "father of science fiction," author Jules Verne penned more than 60 novels throughout his career that continue to intrigue and enchant readers of all ages worldwide. **TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA** was transformed into a 1954 film, which starred Kirk Douglas and James Mason and garnered three Academy Awards®. In addition to **TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA**, the author is well known for his other works including *Around the World in Eighty Days*, *Journey to the Center of the Earth* and *The Mysterious Island*.

"We're thrilled to present this brand new, boldly re-imagined stage adaptation of an iconic novel. Not only is it a treat for the senses, but it's also an innovative and profoundly engaging new piece of theatre. It will enthrall audiences of all ages," said Michael Donald Edwards, Producing Artistic Director of Asolo Rep. "Infused with timely ecological conservation themes, **TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA** is particularly relevant for us right here in Sarasota, a beachfront community dedicated to preserving and protecting our oceans."

**TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA PERFORMANCE TIMES**

- Wednesdays at 1:30pm and 7pm (excluding June 7, which only has an evening performance)
- Thursdays at 7pm
- Fridays at 7pm
- Saturdays at 2pm and 7pm
- Sundays at 2pm (no performance on Sunday, June 4)

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**SELECTED ARTISTIC BIOS**

(In Alphabetical Order)

**Craig Francis** (Co-writer/Producer) is a writer, illustrator, improviser and actor whose works have been enjoyed by millions of children worldwide. Co-creative director of the Kidoons Network and an accomplished cartoonist, he is the creator of several animated series including Jerry Muskrat's *The Greatest Lakes*, Grandfather Frog's *Water Wonderful World* and *Animated Tall Tales*. He has acted in *The Refugee Hotel* (Teesri Duniya Theatre), and a co-producer and outreach director for the hit show *BOOM*. Craig co-created **TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA** and the parody *GAME of CLONES* with Rick Miller, and the upcoming *Jungle Book*. Craig co-founded two improvisation troupes in Montreal, touring nationally and performing in five Just For Laughs Festivals, including as its spokesman. He has illustrated books, including in *The Complete Idiot's Guide* series, and designed campaigns for hundreds of shows, and several theatres from Michigan to Florida. Craig has appeared as a guest on TV and radio, and his voice is heard in animated TV series, and video games.

**Rick Miller** (Co-Creator/Director/Producer) is a Dora and Gemini award-winning writer/director/actor/musician/educator who has performed in five languages on five continents and who *Entertainment Weekly* called "one of the 100 most creative people alive today". He has created and toured solo shows such as *MacHomer*, and (w. Daniel Brooks) *Bigger Than Jesus* and *HARDELL*. With Robert Lepage, he has collaborated on *Geometry of Miracles*, *Zulu Time*, *Lipsynch*, and on the film *Possible Worlds*. Rick recently taught an interdisciplinary class at the University of Toronto called *The Architecture of Creativity* and co-starred in the Canadian premiere of *Venus in Fur* (Canadian Stage). As the artistic director of WYRD Productions and co-creative director of the Kidoons Network, he has most recently developed the stage shows *BOOM*, **TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA**, and *GAME of CLONES*, as well as several web series that educate, enlighten, empower and entertain young people. Rick is from Montreal, and lives in Toronto with his wife Stephanie Baptist and their two daughters.

## **TICKETS**

Tickets range from \$15 to \$44 and youth discounts will be available. Single tickets for **TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA** and all of Asolo Rep's 2016-17 season shows go on sale to the general public online on Saturday, October 1 at 12:01am and by phone and at the box office on Monday, October 3 at 10am. Single tickets go on sale to Asolo Rep donors and subscribers on Thursday, September 8. Donors and subscribers receive a 15 percent discount for **TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA**. Tickets are available by calling or visiting the box office (941.351.8000 or 800.361.8388; 5555 N. Tamiami Trail) or online at [www.asolorep.org](http://www.asolorep.org). The box office is currently open Monday through Friday, 10am to 5pm. Season subscription packages are also available online and by visiting or calling the box office.

For tickets and more information about Asolo Rep visit [www.asolorep.org](http://www.asolorep.org).

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## **SPONSORS**

Asolo Rep is able to present **TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA** because of the generosity of its sponsors. Corporate sponsors for **TWENTY LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA** are Energy Today, 941 CEO and Hyatt Place. Asolo Rep 2016-17 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.

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