

# ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE

PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MICHAEL DONALD EDWARDS • MANAGING DIRECTOR LINDA DIGABRIELE



\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\*

March 29, 2017

**ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE PROUDLY PRESENTS**  
**A CO-PRODUCTION WITH 5TH AVENUE THEATRE**  
**THE WORLD PREMIERE OF *BEATSVILLE: The Beatnik Musical***

**BOOK BY GRAMMY® WINNER AND TONY®, ACADEMY AWARD®,**  
**GOLDEN GLOBE® AND EMMY® NOMINEE GLENN SLATER**  
**MUSIC AND LYRICS BY WENDY WILF;**  
**DIRECTED BY BILL BERRY**

(SARASOTA, March 29, 2017) — Dig this: Asolo Rep will proudly present the world premiere of ***BEATSVILLE: The Beatnik Musical***, a co-production with Seattle's 5th Avenue Theatre. ***BEATSVILLE*** has a book by **Glenn Slater**, a Grammy winner (*Disney's Tangled*), and Academy Award (*Tangled*), Emmy (ABC's *Galavant*), Golden Globe (*Tangled*) and three-time Tony Award nominee (*School of Rock*, *Sister Act*, *The Little Mermaid*), and the co-creator of Disney's worldwide smash hit *Tangled*. Set in Greenwich Village in 1959, ***BEATSVILLE*** features music and lyrics by **Wendy Wilf**. It will be helmed by **Bill Berry**, Producing Artistic Director of Seattle's 5th Avenue Theatre, who has directed several developmental labs of ***BEATSVILLE*** at The 5th Avenue Theatre and recently directed *First Date* on Broadway. Previews begin **April 28**, opening night is **May 6**, and the production will run through **May 28** in the Mertz Theatre, located in the FSU Center for the Performing Arts.

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"**BEATSVILLE** was born when Wendy Wilf, our composer/lyricist, smashed together her two great passions — bebop jazz and musical theatre — and found that they created a brand new musical language: fast, freewheeling, and perfect for conveying the twists and turns of a great story," said Glenn Slater, who penned the book for **BEATSVILLE**. "It's also a sound that instantly made us think of a specific time and place — the bohemian world of Greenwich Village in the late 1950s, when bongos and berets were all the rage and beatniks ruled the scene. We knew that we had stumbled upon something fresh and vibrant, something that has never really been seen onstage before, and that we had the seeds for an offbeat, quirky black comedy that could transport an audience to another world while also satirizing the self-involved hipsters of our own time."

Hang onto your berets – we're headed to **BEATSVILLE** – the world of subterranean coffee shops, goateed artists, turtle-necked poets, and bongo-playing jazzbos. Tragically square busboy Walter Paisley wants nothing more than to be one of the beatniks, but he has no artistic talent whatsoever. When he accidentally kills a cat and hides it in a lump of clay, "Dead Cat" is declared a masterpiece, and Walter a genius. More "sculptures" bring more acclaim – but will the world discover Walter's secret?

"There were two exciting things that drew me to **BEATSVILLE**," said Director Bill Berry. "The first is the amazing score that fuses jazz with musical theatre to create a sound that is truly one of a kind. The second is Glenn's sharp, satirical book that when combined with the score creates a thrilling, fun evening of musical theatre. I always enjoy bringing new work to life, and I am looking forward to bringing this show to life in Sarasota."

**Max Crumm** leads the cast as Walter. Mr. Crumm played Scott in *Disaster!* on Broadway and also starred as Danny in the most recent Broadway revival of *Grease*. He won America's heart on the reality TV show *Grease: You're the One That I Want!*, where he beat out thousands to earn the role of Danny on the Great White Way.

**Ann Morrison** will play Mrs. Zwicker, Walter's landlord, and Mrs. Greenberg, the mother of Walter's love interest. Ms. Morrison originated the role of Mary Flynn in Stephen Sondheim's *Merrily We Roll Along*. She is the co-founder of Asolo Rep's Kaleidoscope program, which empowers individuals with special needs to explore creative expression through theatre. **Lauren Marcus** plays Walter's equally square love interest, Carla. Regionally, Ms. Marcus has appeared in the world premiere of *Be More Chill* at Two River Theater, in *Merrily We Roll Along* and *Little Shop of Horrors* at Sharon Playhouse and in *Hello, Dolly!* at Paper Mill Playhouse.

The creative team also includes orchestrator and vocal and dance music arranger **Steve Orich** (Tony nomination: *Jersey Boys*), who orchestrated Asolo Rep's 2016 hit production of *Josephine*, choreographer **JoAnn M. Hunter** (Broadway's *School of Rock*, *Disaster!*) and two-time Tony Award nominee and Drama Desk Award winner **David C. Woolard** (*Dames at Sea*, *First Date*, *West Side Story*, *All Shook Up* and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*). Tony Award-winner **David Gallo**, who has designed more than 30 Broadway productions, is **BEATSVILLE**'s scenic designer

"Tony nominee Glenn Slater and Wendy Wilf's **BEATSVILLE** is unlike any other musical we've ever produced at Asolo Rep," said Michael Donald Edwards, Producing Artistic Director of Asolo Rep. "It's fresh, hip and hilarious and, to me, a captivating fusion of *Little Shop of Horrors* and *La La Land*. With Broadway's brightest talent on stage and behind-the-scenes, the world premiere of **BEATSVILLE** at Asolo Rep is sure to be a dynamic, electric and unmissable production."

**CAST**

(In Order of Appearance)

CAYMAN ILIKA\* .....Natasha  
CHARLIE JOHNSON\* .....Claude 1  
CONNOR RUSSELL\* .....Claude 2  
SARAH ROSE DAVIS\* .....Betty/Art Heiress  
BILLIE WILDRICK\* .....Alice  
CLIFTON OLIVER\* .....Thelonious/Policeman 2/Gallerista  
TARYN DARR\* .....Naolia/Euro Woman  
ANDREW CHAPPELLE\* .....Lou/Beat Cop/Policeman/Diego/Museum Curator  
MAX CRUMM\* .....Walter  
BRANDON O'NEILL\* .....Brock  
MICHAEL THOMAS HOLMES\* .....Leonard  
LAUREN MARCUS\* .....Carla  
KEVIN PARISEAU\* .....Mr. Greenberg/Serious Man/Detective Burkle  
ANN MORRISON\* .....Mrs. Greenberg/Mrs. Zwicker  
SCOTT KUIPER, KELLY ELIZABETH SMITH: Swings

\*Members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

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**SELECTED CREATIVE TEAM MEMBERS**

Director.....Bill Berry  
Bookwriter.....Glenn Slater  
Composer and Lyricist.....Wendy Wilf  
Choreographer.....JoAnn M. Hunter  
Orchestrator.....Steve Orich  
Vocal & Dance Music Arranger.....Steve Orich

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Musical Director .....Kat Sherrell  
Scenic Designer.....David Gallo  
Costume Designer.....David C. Woolard  
Lighting Designer.....Mike Baldassari  
Sound Designer.....Justin Stasiw  
Hair/Wig & Make-up Designer.....Michelle Hart

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**SELECTED ARTISTIC BIOS**

(In Alphabetical Order)

**BILL BERRY** (Director) is the Producing Artistic Director of The 5th Avenue Theatre. Directing credits: *First Date* (Broadway and ACT Theatre); *Little Shop of Horrors* (Seattle Footlight Award and Gypsy Rose Lee Award); *The Pajama Game*; *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (Seattle Footlight Award and Gypsy Rose Lee Award); *On the Town*; *The Music Man*; *Rent*; *West Side Story* (Seattle Footlight Award); *Wonderful Town* (Seattle Footlight Award); *Smokey Joe's Café*; *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Carousel*; *The Wizard of Oz*. His reimagined production of *Cabaret* has been performed at the 5th Avenue Theatre, Theatre Under The Stars in Houston, and the Ordway Center in St. Paul, where it won the Ivey Award for best production.

**MAX CRUMM\*** (Walter) is beyond excited to be making his Asolo Rep debut originating this role. He is known for playing Scott in *Disaster!* and starring as Danny in the most recent revival of *Grease*, both on Broadway. His Off-Broadway credits include: Matt in *The Fantasticks*; Scott in *Disaster!*; Christian Mohammed Schwartzelberg in *F#%king Up Everything* (NYTimes Critics' Pick). Other credits include *Jersey Shoresical* at the Fringe Festival, the hit film *Easy A*, and upcoming horror flick *Killing Diaz*. Thanks to Tara Rubin casting, Vanguard & Headline!  
@MaxCrumm

**JoANN M. HUNTER** (Choreographer) has 20 Broadway credits as a choreographer, associate choreographer and performer. Choreography- Broadway: *School Of Rock (Broadway/West End)*, *Disaster!*, *On A Clear Day...*, *Broadway Bound*. Off Broadway: *Rock and Roll Refugee*, *Dedalus Lounge*. Workshops: *Chix 6*, *The Twelve*. National Tour/Regional: *A Sign Of The Times* (Goodspeed) by Bruce Vilanch, *Harmony* (Ahmanson Theatre) by Barry Manilow and Bruce Sussman, world premiere of Marvin Hamlisch and Rupert Holmes' *The Nutty Professor* directed by Jerry Lewis, Nat'l tour of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. *Pump Boys and Dinettes*, *Grease*, *Oliver*, *Curtains* (PMP). She has directed Debra Monk in her one woman show. In development, *Perfect Spiral*, conceived by JoAnn is a ballet with words about two football players and the will to do what you were born to do regardless of a possible outcome: the loss of your own identity.

**LAUREN MARCUS\*** (Carla) is so excited to be making her Asolo Rep debut. Credits include: *Be More Chill* (World Premiere, Two River Theater), *Merrily We Roll Along* and *Little Shop of Horrors* (Sharon Playhouse), *Pregnancy Pact* (World Premiere) and *The Marvelous Wonderettes* (Weston Playhouse), *Hello, Dolly!* (Paper Mill Playhouse), *Improvised Musical* (Edinburgh Fringe), *Rewrite* (Urban Stages), *The Plant That Ate Dirty Socks* (Lucille

Lortel), and a bunch more. Lauren is also a songwriter and released her debut EP this past July. She holds a BM from NYU and an MA from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Check the girl out at [www.laurenmarcus.com](http://www.laurenmarcus.com)

**ANN MORRISON** \* (Mrs. Greenberg/Mrs. Zwicker) has starred on Broadway, Off Broadway, the West End in London, regional, cabaret, solo plays, and furniture stores. She won the 1981 Theatre World Award for her role of Mary Flynn in Sondheim's *Merrily We Roll Along*. She is featured in the documentary "Best Worst Thing That Ever Could Have Happened" about what happened to the original Broadway cast of *Merrily*. Ann is Co-Founder of Kaleidoscope, through which she serves Easter Seals and The Haven as Artistic Director of a musical theatre troupe for persons with developmental differences, and is Co-Founder/Artistic Director of the SaraSolo Festival, celebrating solo performances that illuminate the human condition especially that of those who are perceived as "other than."

**STEVE ORICH** (Orchestrations, Vocal & Dance Arrangements) is happy to return to Asolo Rep. On Broadway, he received a Tony nomination for his orchestrations for *Jersey Boys*. Off-Broadway: *Snoopy, Personals, A Good Swift Kick, Potholes, NYC Street Show*. National Tours: *Annie, Godspell, A Class Act*. Regional Theatre: Paper Mill Playhouse, Hollywood Bowl, Pasadena Playhouse, Geffen Playhouse, Mark Taper Forum, La Jolla Playhouse, Theatreworks, Goodman Theatre, Goodspeed Opera House. As a composer, he has written music for numerous television series, specials, and documentaries including the ACE award-winning *Mo' Funny* for HBO, *All About Bette Davis* for TNT, and the award-winning PBS/Lifetime documentary *Jackie Onassis: An Intimate Portrait*. He has also orchestrated and/or conducted dozens of albums including the Grammy-winning cast album for *Jersey Boys*. His orchestrations have been performed by the National Symphony, the Boston Pops, and the BBC Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, the White House and around the world.

**GLENN SLATER** (Book) is a three-time Tony nominee for the international hit musicals *The Little Mermaid, Sister Act, and School of Rock*, and a co-creator of Disney's worldwide smash *Tangled* (Grammy Winner, Oscar and Golden Globe nominees). With frequent collaborator Alan Menken, he wrote the songs for ABC's cult series *Galavant* (Emmy nominee) and the Disney Channel's *Tangled: The Series*; as well as the animated comedy *Sausage Party*, Disney's *Home On The Range*, Broadway's *Leap of Faith*, and current hit *A Bronx Tale*. In the West End, Glenn provided the libretto for Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Love Never Dies*. Other work includes an Emmy-nominated song for ABC's *The Neighbors*, and the critically-acclaimed revue *New Yorkers* at MTC. Glenn lives in NYC with composer/lyricist/wife Wendy Wilf, and sons Benjamin and Daniel.

**WENDY WILF** (Music and Lyrics) is a graduate of Northwestern University, an alumnus of the BMI Musical Theater Workshop, and holds a Masters in Jazz Piano from the Manhattan School of Music. **BEATSVILLE** is her first full-length musical and she is thrilled it is having its world premiere here at the Asolo Repertory Theatre. She lives in New York City with her husband Glenn Slater, and their two sons. They also have a cat.

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## **PUBLIC PROGRAMMING**

### **The Scoop**

One hour prior to every performance of **BEATSVILLE**  
Mertz Theatre

## **BEATSVILLE**

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Arrive one hour before curtain to hear the ideas and inspirations that contributed to the making of **BEATSVILLE**. (Opening Night, May 6, is excluded.)

### **Tuesday Talkbacks**

Tuesdays throughout the run: May 2, 9, 16, 23  
Mertz Theatre

Join us for an intimate post-show discussion with featured actors or guests following every Tuesday performance of **BEATSVILLE**.

### **OUT@AsoloRep: BEATSVILLE**

Thursday, May 11 at 6:30pm; show starts at 7:30pm  
Asolo Rep's Mezzanine  
Contact Asolo Rep's Box Office for subscription and ticket information

Now in its seventh season, OUT@AsoloRep is Sarasota's premier cultural event connecting local Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities with fantastic theatre. Enjoy a pre-show reception and learn about participating LGBT organizations, gain personal insight into **BEATSVILLE** from the creative team and cast members, and mingle with the actors and other OUT attendees after the performance.

**OUT@AsoloRep is sponsored by U.S. Trust, Visit Sarasota County, Morton's Gourmet Market & Catering, and Community Foundation of Sarasota County - Our Sarasota Fund and McCauley Brown Fund.**

### **Meet the Actors**

Sunday, May 14 at 2pm  
Mertz Theatre

Immediately following the 2pm matinee, ask questions and learn more from members of the cast in a facilitated discussion.

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## **TICKETS**

Tickets for **BEATSVILLE** are on sale now and start at \$26.

To purchase tickets, call 941.351.8000 or 800.361.8388, visit [www.asolorep.org](http://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 open Monday 10am – 5pm, Tuesday – Thursday 10am - 7:30pm, Friday – Saturday 10am – 8pm, and Sunday 10am – 2pm. The box office closes at 5pm when there 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.

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## **SPONSORS**

Asolo Rep is able to present **BEATSVILLE** because of the generosity of its sponsors. Corporate sponsors for **BEATSVILLE** are the Herald Tribune Media Group, Scene Magazine,

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Residence Inn Marriott, SNN and Mattison's. 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 Huisking 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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## **ABOUT ASOLO REP**

Now in its 58th season, Asolo Repertory Theatre is recognized as one of the premier professional theatres in America and one of the largest in the Southeastern United States. One of the few select theatres in the nation that performs in true rotating repertory, Asolo Rep's highly skilled acting company and extensive craftsmanship bring to life this unique performance method that gives audiences the opportunity to see multiple productions in the span of a few days. Asolo Rep presents up to 15 productions each season including contemporary and classic works and provocative musical theatre experiences. A theatre district in and of itself, Asolo Rep is committed to expanding its reach into the community, furthering its collaboration with the best theatre artists working in the industry today and cultivating new artists through its affiliation with the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Michael Donald Edwards and Managing Director Linda DiGabriele, Asolo Rep's ambitious theatrical offerings and ground-breaking education and outreach programming engage audiences and ensure its lasting legacy for future generations.'

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## **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 2001, the Seattle-based company has produced 18 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. 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 20,000 subscribers.

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