

ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE

PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MICHAEL DONALD EDWARDS • MANAGING DIRECTOR LINDA DIGABRIELE

For Immediate Release

March 16, 2017

ASOLO REP PRESENTS ITS ANNUAL DOCUMENTARY THEATRE PROJECT: *FACES OF CHANGE*; THE 2017 PROJECT REFLECTS ON RACIALLY-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

(SARASOTA, March 16, 2017) — Asolo Rep proudly presents its annual documentary theatre project: ***FACES OF CHANGE***. ***FACES OF CHANGE*** collects stories, personal experiences, and interviews from community members of diverse backgrounds, which are assembled in an original script. The project culminates in free public readings followed by post-show discussions. The central question of this season's project is: Racially-motivated violence is more visible today than ever. How do we respond, and how can we take action where we live?

FACES OF CHANGE draws from the specific themes and plays of Asolo Rep's mainstage season each year in order to identify a topic to investigate from different points of view. Over the five years of the American Character project, residents of Sarasota, Manatee and beyond have used the documentary theatre process to reflect on issues as varied as immigration, poverty and homelessness and religious intolerance. The 2016-17 season provides inspiration from the civil rights struggle depicted in *The Great Society* and the ethnic stereotypes that are slyly critiqued in *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*. Race, identity and violence emerged as urgent and unavoidable issues that reoccur both in national dialogue and local neighborhoods.

"The focus of the ***FACES OF CHANGE*** project is to use theater to build community," said Ria Cooper, Asolo Rep's Education and Outreach Specialist. "By asking questions about social issues in our community, we learn what matters to us, and we learn about ourselves. Beginning a dialogue about these topics — no matter how challenging or difficult — offers us a way to connect with each other and build upon the shared theatrical experience, whether we are participants or audience members. When we connect and talk with each other, we learn about each other, and when we learn about each other, we all benefit."

There will be a public reading on April 9 at 7pm in the Cook Theatre on the set of *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*. Additional free readings will be held at partner locations including Fogartyville Peace Education and Action Center on Wednesday April 5 at 7pm, Visible Men Academy on Thursday, April 6 at 6pm, and at Manatee School for the Arts on Saturday, April 8 at 2pm. All readings are followed by a community conversation and dessert reception.

"I really like the goal of ***FACES OF CHANGE*** to start a conversation," said Sophie Buglisi, ***FACES OF CHANGE*** participant. "It's about issues that affect America, but they also affect our community here. I like being a part of that, and I really like the idea of documentary theatre, which I had never done before. You're speaking the actual words that somebody else said; it comes from their heart — an author didn't write it. It's exactly what

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they said in the moment, and you want to be truthful to them. Even if you don't even agree with what they're saying, you have to try and find why they feel that way."

Admission is free; however, tickets are required. Tickets for all four performances are available by visiting Asolo Rep's Box Office, located in Asolo Rep's lobby, 5555 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, by visiting www.asolorep.org/education/faces-of-change or calling 941.351.8000 or 800.361.8388.

FACES OF CHANGE is made possible, in part, with support from the Koski Family Foundation Fund for New Audiences.

FACES OF CHANGE 2017 PERFORMANCES

All **FACES OF CHANGE** performances are free and open to the public. Reservations strongly recommended.

- **Wednesday, April 5, 7pm**
doors open at 6pm
Fogartyville Peace Education and Action Center
525 Kumquat Court
Sarasota, FL 34236
 - **Thursday, April 6, 6pm**
Visible Men Academy
921 63rd Avenue East
Bradenton, FL 34203
 - **Saturday, April 8, 2pm**
Manatee School for the Arts
700 Haben Blvd.
Palmetto, FL 34221
 - **Sunday, April 9, 7pm**
Cook Theatre
FSU Center for the Performing Arts
5555 N Tamiami Trail
Sarasota, FL 34243
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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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