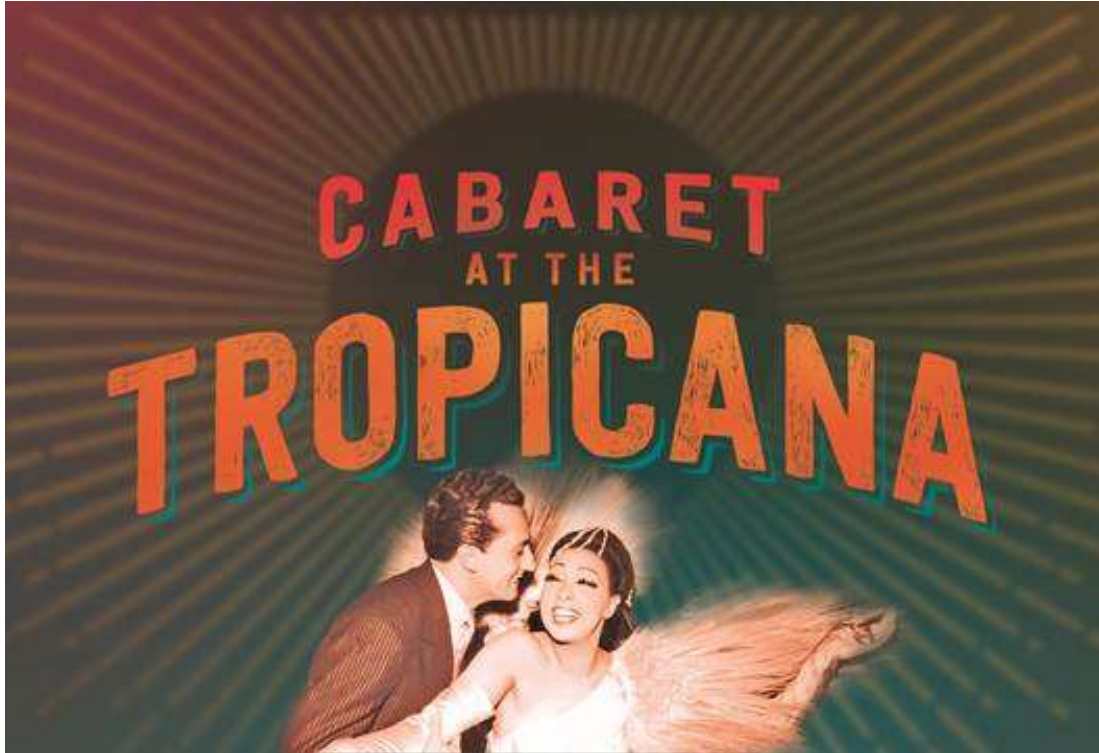


ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE

PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MICHAEL DONALD EDWARDS • MANAGING DIRECTOR LINDA DIGABRIELE



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ASOLO REP TO HOST ANNUAL GALA:
CABARET AT THE TROPICANA
ON SATURDAY, MARCH 5 AT THE RITZ-CARLTON SARASOTA

(SARASOTA, February 12, 2016) — Asolo Rep's Annual Gala 2016: *Cabaret at The Tropicana*, will be held on Saturday, March 5, 2016 at The Ritz-Carlton Sarasota.

The event, chaired by Ann Charters, Caroline Ellerson, Susan Malloy Jones and Jennifer Rust, will begin at 6pm with a cocktail reception and silent auction, followed by a seated dinner, paddle raise, live music and dancing. It will celebrate the world-renowned, Cuban cabaret and nightclub, The Tropicana Club, where Nat King Cole, Josephine Baker and other noteworthy mambo and jazz musicians performed.

Marc Koeck, who dazzled audiences earlier this season as the lovestruck Tony in the theatre's record-breaking production of *West Side Story*, will kick off the entertainment portion of the evening with two surprise musical performances. Beloved Asolo Rep actor Tyla Abercrombie, who plays Coretta Scott King and Fannie Lou Hamer in *All the Way* and Mary Prentice in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, will emcee the evening. The musical entertainment will also feature the authentic and interactive RUMBACOPA Cuban Cabaret Show with bandleader Maestro Bobby Ramirez and his 5-piece orchestra, *RITMO! Caliente Del Caribe*. Ramirez delivers original sounds from the 1950s; and his "Hot Havana" cabaret show celebrates the rhythm and music of Cuba with dazzling, costumed showgirls, drummers and dancers.

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"The Tropicana Club was unique in that it was an open-air theater amidst lush, tropical gardens. So our challenge is to recreate that outdoor space inside of the Ritz ballroom," said Laura Stuart Wood, Asolo Rep's Special Events Manager. "We are working with Bay Stage Live again this year to bring in lighting and projections, and Plant Parents and Flowers by Fudgie to bring in palm trees and greenery that will transform the environment into 1950s Cuba."

This year's Gala proceeds will support the artists in Asolo Rep's 2015/16 season and our award-winning Education & Outreach programs, which help students develop an appreciation for the arts while gaining empathy and insight into the lives of others through experiencing, discussing and creating live theatre.

"We hope you will join us to experience 'The Tropicana Club' and the Latin beat as we recreate a nightclub replete with dancers and music that will rouse you from your seats. Remember the rumba and the conga line? In addition to supporting the artistic excellence of our work on the stage, the evening raises funds for Asolo Rep's Education and Outreach programs," said gala co-chair Ann Charters. "Just this past year, approximately 14,000 students experienced Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* in classrooms, on Asolo Rep's stage and in public spaces throughout Sarasota and Bradenton, and beyond. As Co-Chair, let me thank everyone who is working so hard to expand Asolo Rep's reach to new and young audiences. And once again, the Gala will entertain, so that people of all ages and backgrounds can experience live theatre. It is an honor to be involved."

Immediately following the gala, the theatre will once again host a late night after party at Louies Modern from 10:30pm - 1:30am. Tickets are \$40 and include a complimentary specialty drink, discounted cash bar, light bites, DJ and entertainment. Tickets for the gala range from \$300 - \$1,000 and tables range from \$3,000 - \$10,000. For tickets and information, please contact Asolo Rep Special Events Manager Laura Stuart Wood at 941.351.9010 ext. 4712 or Laura.Wood@asolo.org. More information and online tickets are also available by visiting <http://www.asolorep.org/ANNUALGALA>.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

TYLA ABERCRUMBIE* GUEST ARTIST, FOURTH SEASON (Coretta Scott King/Fannie Lou Hamer, Ensemble, *All The Way*; Mary Prentice, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*) is excited to return to Asolo Rep. She appeared in last season's *The Matchmaker* and *Good People*. Regional credits; Court Theatre, Next Theatre, Northlight, Timeline, The Goodman, Portland Stage Company, Pittsburgh Public, Milwaukee Repertory, ATL, St. Louis Black Repertory, Victory Gardens, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Studio Arena, Onyx Theatre Company, Coronet Theatre. Film & Television credits: *Poker House*, *Crisis*, *Low Winter Sun*, *The Mob Doctor*, *The Chicago Code*, *Detroit 187*, *The Beast*, the 2015 film *Unexpected* and Starz new series *The Girlfriend Experience*.

MARC KOECK* FIRST SEASON (Tony, *West Side Story*) recently starred as John Jasper in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* at the New London Barn Playhouse. Other recent credits include: Lancelot in *Camelot* (New Repertory Theatre), *Legally Blonde* (Ocean State Theatre), Jesus in *Jesus Christ Superstar* (The Boston Conservatory), and the workshop of the upcoming Baseball Hall of Fame musical *Stars and Strikes*. Mr. Koeck is a proud 2014 graduate of The Boston Conservatory. www.marckoeck.com

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