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Cygnet Theatre Announces 15th Season

Seven Shows Ranging from Classic Comedy to World Premiere



SAN DIEGO, CA - **Cygnet Theatre** is proud to announce its 15th season of presenting entertaining, thought-provoking and inspiring theatre. The 2017/2018 season reflects how it felt to be fifteen years old when everything was exciting, new, emotional and hilarious...and of course, seemed to mean life or death.

At fifteen you just want to have fun, and that's how we start the season - with the laugh-out-loud musical comedy **Animal Crackers**, based on the original Marx Brothers movie and Broadway hit. Hijinks meet high society when Captain Spaulding and his cronies mix up with social climbers and stolen paintings. A hilarious book written for the Marx Brothers by George S. Kaufman and Morrie Ryskind, this slapstick, madcap musical busts out with zany songs, quick changes and lavish dance numbers. Directed by Sean Murray, with costumes by Jennifer Brawn Giddings and featuring a cast including Josh Odsess-Rubin and Bryan and Katie Banville, you can expect Groucho, Chico, Harpo, and Zeppo to kick off the season with comedic anarchy and improv that just might change nightly.

In the fall we embrace the dreams, struggles and innocence of adolescence with the 1971 Pulitzer-Prize winning drama **The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds**. Directed by Rob Lutfy, this intimate look into the lives of a dysfunctional family illustrates universal truths about the human struggle for acceptance and reveals how each person adapts and responds differently to life's harsh uncertainties. Written by Paul Zindel, a playwright and science teacher, the play is often called "Tennessee Williams-esque" for its moving look at a mother and her two daughters struggling in a home that is more like a madhouse. Audience members may recall the film directed by Paul Newman featuring Joanne Woodward and the award-winning 1978 Broadway production featuring Carol Kane and Shelly Winters.

Next up is **The Legend of Georgia McBride**, a show that celebrates finding your own voice and signing your own song. Written by Matthew Lopez (*The Whipping Man*), this highly entertaining crowd-pleaser recently wowed New York audiences at the Lucille Lortel Theatre. Full of sass and good spirit, the musical follows Casey who is young, broke, just found out his wife is going to have a baby, and has lost his gig as an Elvis impersonator. When his club brings in a drag act led by Miss Tracy Mills, Casey is given the opportunity to trade one sequined outfit for another. Featuring Cygnet favorite David McBean.

A Cygnet tradition returns for the holidays with the family favorite **A Christmas Carol**. Cygnet Theatre invites you to start your own family tradition with one of ours. This season welcomes the return of the holiday classic adapted from Charles Dickens' timeless tale of hope and redemption. Featuring original music, creative stagecraft and puppetry, and live sound effects. Step into a Victorian Christmas card for a unique storytelling experience that is sure to delight the entire family!

The first play of 2018 is **The Last Wife** - a bold and contemporary return to Tudor England and the story of Henry the VIII's strong-minded wife, Katherine Parr, a feminist before her time. Brilliantly written by veteran Canadian actor and playwright Kate Henning, this is only the second US production. Henning's writing has been called, "mature and intellectual as well as witty and spicy," and in *The Last Wife*, she embraces a clever mix of fact and fiction. The modern staging and dress and the contemporary dialogue have the effect of clarifying and emphasizing the historical significance of Katherine's role in the Tudor realm.

The Last Wife premiered last year at the Stratford Festival in Ontario and addresses topics as relevant today as they were 500 years ago, such as relationships between women and power, female education, war and empire. Rob Lutfy directs this modern take on how the Royals might have really behaved in private.

In the spring, we revisit one of our favorite Stephen Sondheim musicals, **A Little Night Music**. Originally presented in 2008, Sean Murray will direct and act in this sophisticated, literate and stylish, romp through the country. Cygnet Theatre, with a record for embracing and producing Sondheim musicals, will present this audience favorite with a live orchestra. Featuring the hit song "Send in the Clowns" and starring Karole Foreman, Sandy Campbell, David Humphrey, and Sean Murray.

We close the season with the World Premiere of **The Wind and the Breeze**, which was first introduced to Cygnet audiences through the **Bill and Judy Garrett Finish Line Commission**. Written by New York playwright Nathan Alan Davis, the new work explores the politics of place, the unspoken expectations of friendship and what happens when we choose to stand our ground on shifting sands.

Current Cygnet subscribers will be notified by mail regarding subscription renewals. New subscription sales will be available beginning March 1st. For more information regarding subscriptions packages please contact the box office at 619-337-1525 or visit www.cygnettheatre.com.

Photos Top Row (L to R): Sandy Campbell, Karole Foreman, Katie Whalley-Barville

Photos Bottom Row (L to R): Sean Murray, Josh Odsess-Rubin, David McBean

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Cygnnet Theatre: Season XV

Animal Crackers

July 5 - Aug. 13, Opening July 8

Book by George S. Kaufman and Morrie Ryskind

Music and Lyrics by Bert Kalmar and Harry Ruby

Directed by Sean Murray

Music Direction by Terry O'Donnell

Hooray for Captain Spaulding! When a celebrated painting goes missing from Mrs. Rittenhouse's fancy house party in honor of African explorer Captain Spaulding, her guests set out to find the thief in a series of madcap antics and exploits. Based on the original Marx Brothers Broadway hit and film classic, this adaptation of *Animal Crackers* is an outrageous, rollicking, laugh-out-loud musical comedy, complete with audience participation!

"Delicious...A nonstop riot - a profusion of puns, gags, and hysteria with only an occasional pause (or maybe, gasp) for breath." - The Washington Tribune

The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds

Aug. 30 - Sept. 24, Opening September 2

By Paul Zindel

Directed by Rob Lutfy

This Pulitzer Prize-winning lyrical drama tells the story of a wounded family unraveling at the age of innocence and at the age of no return. Life in the 1960s with Beatrice, an embittered single mother, resembles a hell more than a home for her two daughters. But Tillie, the youngest, finds her own way to connect to the world with resilience and hope. Tillie - keeper of rabbits, dreamer of atoms, true believer in life, hope, and the effect of gamma rays on man-in-the-moon marigolds.

"The play itself is one of the lucky blooms; it survives, and is beautiful." - NY Times.

The Legend of Georgia McBride

Oct. 11 - Nov. 12, Opening October 14

By Matthew Lopez

Directed by Sean Murray

San Diego Premiere

He's young, he's broke, he's just found out his wife is going to have a baby, and now Casey has lost his gig as an Elvis impersonator. When his club brings in a drag act led by Miss Tracy Mills, Casey is given the opportunity to trade one sequined outfit for another. This music-filled comedy celebrates finding your voice and singing your own song.

"A stitch-in-your-side funny first-rate production full of sass and good spirits." - The New York Times

"A highly-entertaining, genuine crowd-pleaser." - Hollywood Reporter

A Christmas Carol

Nov. 29 - Dec. 24, Opening October 2

Adaptation & Lyrics by Sean Murray

Original Score by Billy Thompson

Directed by Sean Murray

Musical Direction by Patrick Marion

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"Critics Pick" in 2014 & 2015 - San Diego Union-Tribune

The Last Wife

Jan. 17 - Feb. 11, Opening January 20, 2018

By Kate Hennig

Directed by Rob Lutfy

West Coast Premiere

This contemporary re-imagining of the compelling relationship between Henry VIII and his last wife, Katherine Parr, is a witty and powerful examination of sexual politics and women's rights. It's a high stakes game of chess, with Henry's offspring, Mary, Elizabeth, and Edward as pawns.

"The show is stimulating... Surviving a tyrant was far from her only achievement. - The Chicago Tribune

A Little Night Music

Mar. 7 - Apr. 22, Opening March 10, 2018

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Book by Hugh Wheeler

Directed by Sean Murray

Cygnnet is thrilled to revisit one of its favorite musicals. Desirée Armfeldt has always captured the hearts of men. When both of her lovers-and their wives-show up for a weekend in the country, a tangled web of love and desire lead to humorous and heartbreaking revelations. Sophisticated, literate and stylish, but also disarmingly warm, funny, charming and very human. Featuring the hit song, Send in the Clowns.

"Sumptuous and triumphant production" - San Diego Union-Tribune (2008 review, original mounting)

Critics Circle Winner - Outstanding Direction of a Musical, Sean Murray

The Wind and the Breeze

World Premiere

May 16 - Jun. 10, Opening May 19, 2018

By Nathan Alan Davis

Directed by Rob Lutfy

Sam, the legendary, undisputed, greatest emcee in Rockford, IL, plans to rest on his laurels all winter and, if possible, stake out an early spot to watch the Independence Day fireworks - but his closest mentees and their outsized dreams challenge him to a battle he can't win. *The Wind and the Breeze* explores the politics of place, the unspoken expectations of friendship and what happens when we choose to stand our ground on shifting sands.

"Because ultimately what makes it soar is Davis' uniquely lyrical script, and its thematic veracity and original authorial voice floats us past fleeting new-play issues." - LA Times

"I wish that other playwrights...could be as skillful as Nathan Alan Davis." - DC Theatre Scene

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Photos and PDF versions of recent press releases can be downloaded from the Cygnet Online Media Center. Visit www.CygnetTheatre.com for more information.

ABOUT CYGNET THEATRE



Cygnet Theatre Company produces a year-round season of professional Off-Broadway-style theatre as well as thought-provoking and engaging educational programming. Cygnet is committed to maintaining high standards of artistic and fiscal integrity, and serves more than 40,000 patrons annually from San Diego and beyond. Cygnet performs its mainstage productions at the state-of-the-art theatre in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park. An active member of the San Diego community, Cygnet has outreach programs serving tens of thousands of students and community members annually. For more information, visit www.cygnettheatre.com.

CYGNET THEATRE MISSION STATEMENT

Believing in the power of theatre to startle the soul, ignite debate and embrace the diversity of the community it serves, Cygnet Theatre Company is fearlessly committed to the dissection, examination and celebration of the human story through the medium of live theatre.

For more information, visit www.cygnettheatre.com.

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