

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Alert for Theatre Editors, Reviewers and Calendar Listings

Chance Theater Announces Season 23

**In 2021, the Chance will be producing 5 Main Series shows as part of their
“No Risk. All Chance.” season, including 4 area premieres**

ANAHEIM, CA: Chance Theater is making a commitment to the Southern California community in 2021 -- it will produce five shows with local artists during its **23rd Anniversary Season**. There will be no cancellations. The shows will be performed either in-person or on a virtual platform. Therefore... “No Risk. All Chance.”

In 2020, Chance Theater only produced three shows -- the critically-acclaimed *Fun Home* (which was just nominated for 5 Ovation Awards, including Best Musical), our in-person TYA adaptation of *A Wrinkle in Time*, and the virtual holiday offering, *A Very, Very Chance Holiday Cabaret*. The other seven scheduled shows had to be canceled due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in Chance subscribers, members, and patrons receiving refunds and no hope of seeing these shows brought to life in 2020.

“Chance Staff is steadfast in its commitment to presenting exciting productions this year,” said Executive Artistic Director Oanh Nguyen. “We will provide our audiences with an opportunity to engage again with thrilling, intimate theater created by award-winning local talent.”

Helping to ensure that Season 23 will be a success are Season Producers Bette and Wylie Aitken. True and hearty supporters, the Aitkens played a leadership role in 2020 for the “Make Them Hear You” fundraising campaign -- including offering a matching gift -- that is helping Chance Theater survive the COVID-19 shutdown while simultaneously increasing online offerings. Joining the Aitkens as Associate Season Producers are the Family of Mary Kay Fyda-Mar.

To kick off Season 23 in April, Chance Theater will present the Orange County premiere of ***The Story of My Life***, the Drama Desk Award-nominated musical that is a soaring tribute to the power of friendship and the people who change our lives forever. With music and lyrics by Neil Bertram and book by Brian Hill, the show

will be directed by Matthew McCray (*The Other Place*) and with music direction by resident artist Robyn Manion (*Ragtime, Lizzie*).

Following in May will be the Orange County premiere of the 2017 Pulitzer Prize winner, ***Sweat*** by Lynn Nottage. Filled with warm humor and tremendous heart, this acclaimed play tells the story of a group of friends who have spent their lives sharing drinks, secrets, and laughs while also struggling to survive economic and social forces that seek to divide and conquer. The highly acclaimed play will be directed by Elina de Santos (*Seminar*) and executive producers are Rachelle Menaker & Eddie Schuller.

Coming up in July is the Orange County premiere of ***Edges***, the first musical written by Benj Pasek and Justin Paul, the Oscar, Grammy, Tony, and Golden Globe Award-winning songwriting team behind some of the most popular musicals in the last decade -- *Dear Evan Hansen, La La Land, The Greatest Showman*, among many others. This Jonathan Larson Award-winning song cycle is about four burgeoning adults asking the classic coming-of-age questions about love, commitment, identity, and meaning. The show will be musically directed by resident artist Robyn Manion, and the executive producer is Elizabeth Jones.

Another Orange County premiere arrives in September with Dael Orlandersmith's Pulitzer Finalist, ***Yellowman***. This winner of the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize is a celebration of language and the human spirit, exquisitely and provocatively explores the challenges of overcoming racism, class, biases, and prejudices inherited both from community and family. Executive producers for this show are Susan Bowman & Freddie Greenfield.

Wrapping up Season 23 is the Lucille Lortel nominated musical, ***Striking 12***. This unique holiday show that is "as much rock concert as theater" (*Variety*) was nominated for the Lucille Lortel Award for Best Musical, but is still a hidden gem that is ready for a revival. Inspired by Hans Christian Anderson's "The Little Match Girl," *Striking 12* uses wit, emotion, and mesmerizing musicianship to create an uplifting musical celebration of rediscovering and reconnecting to the true spirit of the holidays. The holiday show will run November thru December and be directed by Kari Hayter (*Parade*), executive produced by Linda and Tod White, and associate produced by Sophie & Larry Cripe, Rachelle Menaker & Eddie Schuller, and Laurie Smits Staude.

Memberships and Subscriptions are now available for Season 23 at www.ChanceTheater.com/season23. Chance Theater is Anaheim's official resident theater company that is committed to contributing to a more connected, compassionate, and creative community through the production of powerful, socially-conscious, provocative theater experiences.

NOTE: The scheduled months represent an approximate timeline for this production. Actual dates will be announced as we determine whether the production will be at the Chance or virtual, based on health and safety guidelines.

SEASON 23

April - May, 2021

ORANGE COUNTY PREMIERE

The Story of My Life

Music & Lyrics by Neil Bartram

Book by Brian Hill

Directed by Matthew McCray

Music Direction by Robyn Manion

** NOMINATED for 4 Drama Desk Awards, including Outstanding Musical*

"A gem! Ninety minutes of true magic" -- Around the Town Chicago

"The power and depth of friendship and love defines this wonderful musical with special tribute to the dynamics of the human spirit." -- The Chicago Critic

To kick off Season 23, the Chance presents the Orange County premiere of the Drama Desk Award-nominated musical that is a soaring tribute to the power of friendship and the people who change our lives forever. *The Story of My Life* is a profoundly funny and deeply moving musical about lifelong best friends, Thomas and Alvin. As time tests the bonds of friendship, best-selling author Thomas calls on the only resource he has — his stories of Alvin — to better understand the best friend that got away.

May - June, 2021

ORANGE COUNTY PREMIERE

Sweat

by Lynn Nottage

Directed by Elina de Santos

** WINNER of 2017 Pulitzer Prize for Drama*

** WINNER of Obie Award for Playwriting*

"a superb, vital contribution to contemporary drama that could not be more timely" -- New York Times

Next up is the Orange County premiere of the Pulitzer Prize-winning drama, *Sweat*. Filled with warm humor and tremendous heart, this acclaimed play tells the story of a group of friends who have spent their lives sharing drinks, secrets, and laughs while working together on the factory floor. But when layoffs and picket

lines begin to chip away at their trust, the friends find themselves pitted against each other in a heart-wrenching fight to stay true to themselves and each other.

Executive Producers: Rachelle Menaker & Eddie Schuller

July - August, 2021

ORANGE COUNTY PREMIERE

Edges

Music & Lyrics by Benj Pasek & Justin Paul

Music Direction by Robyn Manion

** WINNER of Jonathan Larson Award*

"Consistently buoyant and clever songs" -- New York Times

"Benj and Justin are the freshest musical voices of their generation." -- Jeff Marx, Co-Creator of 'Avenue Q'

Before they wrote *Dear Evan Hansen*, *La La Land*, *The Greatest Showman*, *Dogfight*, and many other modern musical classics, Benj Pasek and Justin Paul wrote a thrilling song cycle about four burgeoning adults asking classic coming-of-age questions about love, commitment, identity, and meaning. For the first time in Orange County, see how the Oscar, Grammy, Tony, and Golden Globe Award-winning song team started their journey -- with a charming, witty and honest examination of adulthood that explores what happens when we're teetering on the edge of the rest of our lives.

Executive Producer: Elizabeth Jones

September - October, 2021

ORANGE COUNTY PREMIERE

Yellowman

by Dael Orlandersmith

** FINALIST for Pulitzer Prize for Drama*

** WINNER of Susan Smith Blackburn Prize*

"A landmark in theater history... enthralling... mind-altering" -- New York Times

The Pulitzer Prize Finalist *Yellowman* makes its Orange County premiere this Fall at Chance Theater. A celebration of language and the human spirit, *Yellowman* is an exquisite and provocative exploration of the challenges of overcoming racism, class, biases, and prejudices inherited both from community and family. Alma, a dark-skinned African-American woman, and her childhood friend Eugene, a light-skinned

African-American man, have been life-long friends — yet when their friendship turns to love, the different colors of their skin raise obstacles that could be insurmountable.

Executive Producers: Susan Bowman & Freddie Greenfield

November - December, 2021

Striking 12

Book & Lyrics by Brendan Milburn, Valerie Vigoda, and Rachel Sheinkin

Music by Brendan Milburn and Valerie Vigoda

Directed by Kari Hayter

** NOMINATED for the Lucille Lortel Award for Best Musical*

“Thoroughly winning! More artfully crafted and engaging than virtually all the standard-mold musicals these days. Alive with wit, humor, and emotion.” -- New York Times

Striking 12 is a unique hybrid of musical theater and a live concert. It tells the story of a grumpy, overworked New Yorker who resolves to spend New Year’s Eve alone when an incandescent figure arrives at the door with the promise to chase away the winter doldrums. *Striking 12* is filled with wit, emotion, and mesmerizing musicianship, creating an uplifting musical celebration of rediscovering and reconnecting to the true spirit of the holidays.

Executive Producers: Linda & Tod White

Associate Producers: Sophie & Larry Cripe, Rachelle Menaker & Eddie Schuller, and Laurie Smits Staude

ABOUT CHANCE THEATER

Proud to be one of the leading ensemble-driven theatre companies in Southern California, CHANCE THEATER has received the National Theatre Company grant from American Theatre Wing for “nurturing a community of artists in ways that strengthen and demonstrate the quality, diversity, and dynamism of American theatre.” The Chance was just nominated for five Ovation Awards for their intimate production of *Fun Home*, including Best Production of a Musical (Intimate Theatre). Previously, Chance Theater has won seven Ovation Awards, including three for Best Production of a Musical (Intimate Theatre) for its regional premiere of *Lizzie, The Musical*, the West Coast premiere of *Triassic Park – The Musical*, and Southern California premiere of *Jerry Springer – The Opera*, as well as four LADCC Awards, including the Polly Warfield Award for Outstanding Season. The Anaheim City Council named Chance Theater “the Official Resident Theater Company of Anaheim” in 2014, and Arts Orange County has twice named the Chance as “Outstanding Arts Organization.”

Known for using bold and personal storytelling to promote dialogue and connection within the Southern California theatrical landscape, the Chance is committed to contributing to a more compassionate, connected and creative community. As a constituent member of Theatre Communications Group, Orange County Theatre Guild, and LA Stage Alliance, Chance Theater continues to bring national attention to the Southern California and Orange County theater scenes.

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