

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Alert for Theatre Editors, Reviewers and Calendar Listings

Chance Theater proudly presents

Violet

**With music by the Tony Award-winning composer of *Fun Home*
and the production team from last season's Ovation-nominated *Parade***

January 19, 2018 ... Anaheim, California ... Chance Theater, Anaheim's official resident theater company, is pleased to announce its production of ***Violet***, which will kick off its 20th Anniversary Season. The show has book and lyrics by Brian Crawley, music by Jeanine Tesori, direction and choreography by Kari Hayter, and musical direction by Robyn Manion. ***Violet* will preview from February 2 through February 9; regular performances will begin February 10 and continue through March 4 at Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken *theater arts* Center on the Cripe Stage.**

The best Tony-nominated musical nobody's ever heard of... ***Violet*** has wowed critics and audiences with its powerful story and energetic gospel, rock, country and R&B score by Jeanine Tesori (*Fun Home* and *Caroline, or Change*). Set in the Deep South during the early days of the civil rights movement, this powerful musical tells the touching story of a young woman accidentally scarred on the face as a child. Hoping that a TV evangelist can cure her, Violet embarks on a long bus ride from her sleepy North Carolina town through Memphis to Oklahoma. Along the way, she meets two young soldiers who teach her about love, courage and the true meaning of beauty.

"Glorious.. a deeply original, tough but romantic thrill of a show" – *Newsday*

"An enduringly rewarding musical" – *New York Times*

"Underappreciated musical gem" – *Broadway World*

Last season, Chance Theater presented a stripped-down and highly hailed production of *Parade*, which went on to receive three Ovation Award nominations -- Best Musical in an Intimate Theater, Best Actor in a Musical, and Best Direction of a Musical. That director, Kari Hayter, is returning for this production of *Violet*, and she is bringing many members of her production team with her, including music director Robyn Manion, scenic designer Fred Kinney, costume designer Elizabeth Cox, and dramaturg Sophie Cripe.

"The artistic vision that Kari brought to *Parade* stunned our audiences with the visceral quality that invigorated the story," said Founding Artist Casey Long. "We are so excited to have Kari return to tackle another lesser-known musical that explores deep truths about our society's views on beauty, and our own personal battles with the 'demons' that never leave us alone. For our 20th Anniversary Season... a season in search of truth... we are thrilled to have Kari and her team kick it with an exploration of the truth of who we are and what we are capable of becoming."

MEET THE TEAM

Brian Crawley (Books & Lyrics) is a playwright and screenwriter. He wrote the book and lyrics for *A Little Princess* (composer Andrew Lippa) which debuted at Theatreworks of Palo Alto in the summer of 2004. Other musicals he has written include *Evangeline* with Ted Dykstra, and *Down There* with composer Lewis Flinn. He appears in the documentary *One Night Stand*, in which he writes a short musical in 24 hours with composer Gabriel Kahane. For the libretto of *Violet*, Brian won the Kleban Award. Brian's plays have been developed or staged at Lincoln Center, New York Theater Workshop, the National Alliance of Musical Theatre, and the Eugene O'Neill summer theater conference. He majored in Theater Studies at Yale and has an MFA in Acting from the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco. Brian is a member of the Dramatists Guild.

Jeanine Tesori (Music) is an American musical theatre composer, arranger, pianist, and conductor and has been thrice nominated for Tony Awards for her Broadway scores: *Twelfth Night* at Lincoln Center, *Thoroughly Modern Millie* at the Marquis, and *Caroline, or Change* at the Eugene O'Neill. *Violet* was her first musical produced off-Broadway in 1997 and was nominated for seven Drama Desk Awards including Outstanding New Musical and won the Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best Musical, the Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Musical and a Special Obie Citation for Tesori's music. A member of the Dramatists Guild, she lives in Manhattan with Rafter and their daughter Siena. She has also composed many new songs in the field of film such as *The Emperor's New Groove 2: Kronk's New Groove* (2005), *Shrek the Third* (2007), and three animated Disney DVDs (*Mulan II*, *Ilo and Stitch II*, *The Little Mermaid: Ariel's Beginning*).

Kari Hayter (Director & Choreographer) is an award-winning professional director and educator based in Southern California. Kari is a proud member of the Theatre Communications Group, California Educational Theatre Association, and the American Alliance of Theatre and Education. She is a tenure track faculty member at California State University, Northridge, where she directs and teaches musical theatre history and performance. Kari is also an advocate for new musicals and has directed staged readings for *Mary Marie* and *Now and Then A Hero*, both of which have been recognized by the National Alliance for Musical Theatre and the New Musicals, Inc. She has worked at South Coast Repertory, Antaeus Theatre Company, Chance Theater and Summer Repertory Theatre. Most recently she directed *Rock of Ages* for Summer Repertory Theatre, the Ovation-nominated West Coast premiere of *Lysistrata Jones*, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, *Hairspray* and the critically acclaimed *Parade* (Ovation nomination for Best Direction) for Chance Theater.

In addition to Hayter, the production team for ***Violet*** includes music director Robyn Manion (*Parade*), scenic designer Fred Kinney (*Parade*), lighting designer Nick van Houten, sound designer Kenji Kang, costume designer Elizabeth Cox (*Parade*), dramaturg Sophie Cripe (*Parade*), and stage manager Wade Williamson (*Tribes*).

The cast for ***Violet*** includes Chance Theater Resident Artist Monika Peña (*Claudio Quest*), as well as returning artists Johnny Fletcher (*The Secret Garden*), Chris Kerrigan (*Parade*), Devin Collins (*Parade*), and Brian Weigel (*Boy at the Edge of Everything*). Making their Chance debuts with this production are Jordan Schneider, Taylor Fagins, Rebeka Hoblik, Wyn Moreno, Janet McGregor, Natasha Reese, and Jade Taylor.

Sophie & Larry Cripe are the Executive Producers for the Chance production, Susan Bowman & Eddie Greenfield and Rachelle Menaker & Eddie Schuller are the Associate Producers. Bette & Wylie Aitken are our 2018 Season Producers and Laurie Smits Staude is our 2018 Associate Season Producer.

To schedule press interviews, request photos, schedule press comps or for any additional information, please contact Casey Long at (714) 900-3284 or by e-mail at casey@chancetheater.com.

ABOUT CHANCE THEATER

Proud to be one of the leading ensemble-driven theatre companies in Southern California, CHANCE THEATER recently received a National Theatre Company grant from American Theatre Wing. The Chance has won six Ovation Awards, including two for Best Production of a Musical – Intimate Theater for its 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”, 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, Network of Ensemble Theaters, and the LA Stage Alliance, Chance Theater continues to bring national attention to the Southern California and Orange County theater scenes.

CALENDAR LISTING

WHAT: *Violet*

The best Tony-nominated musical nobody’s ever heard of... *Violet* has wowed critics and audiences with its powerful story and energetic gospel, rock, country and R&B score by Jeanine Tesori (*Fun Home* and *Caroline, or Change*). Set in the Deep South during the early days of the civil rights movement, this powerful musical tells the touching story of a young woman accidentally scarred on the face as a child. Hoping that a TV evangelist can cure her, Violet embarks on a long bus ride from her sleepy North Carolina town through Memphis to Oklahoma. Along the way, she meets two young soldiers who teach her about love, courage and the true meaning of beauty.

WHEN:

Preview Performances:

February 2 - 9, 2018

Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm

Sunday at 7pm

Regular Performances

February 10 - March 4, 2018

Thursdays at 7:30pm

Fridays at 8pm

Saturdays at 3pm & 8pm (no 3pm performance on February 10)

Sundays at 3pm

WHERE: Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken *theater arts* Center on the Cripe Stage
5522 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807

TICKETS: \$31.00 - \$45.00. Call (888) 455-4212 or visit www.ChanceTheater.com.

Discounts available for seniors, students and military.

REVIEWERS and OTHER PRESS are encouraged to attend:

Opening Night on Saturday, February 10 at 8pm

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