

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Village Theatre Announces Complete Casting For the 21st Annual FESTIVAL OF NEW MUSICALS

Featuring performances by Tony Award nominee **EDEN ESPINOSA**
Plus **ANTONIO CIPRIANO, JON-MICHAEL REESE, CLYDE VOCE,**
JADE McLEOD, GREGG HAMMER, LOUIS PARDO,
SHAUNYCE OMAR, BILLIE WILDRICK, and more

Francis J. Gaudette Theatre, Issaquah
August 2-4, 2024

SEATTLE (July 24, 2024) – Village Theatre (Adam Immerwahr, Artistic Director) is thrilled to share complete casting for the 21st annual **Festival of New Musicals**, which takes place August 2-4, 2024, at the Francis J. Gaudette Theatre in Issaquah, Wash. Casting for the 2024 Festival includes critically acclaimed Broadway artist **Eden Espinosa** – recently nominated for Tony and Drama League Awards for *Lempicka* – as well as notable Broadway artists **Antonio Cipriano** (*Jagged Little Pill*) and **Jon-Michael Reese** (*A Strange Loop*); nationally touring artists **Jade McLeod** (*Jagged Little Pill*) and **Clyde Voce** (*The Color Purple*); and many of Seattle’s finest musical theater artists, including **Shaunyce Omar** (Village: *Matilda*) and **Billie Wildrick** (Village: *Cabaret*).

This year, for the first time in the Festival’s 20-year history, Village Theatre made admission free to the general public—and all free seats were reserved within the first 24 hours. Waitlists are available for all four readings at VillageTheatre.org/Festival and seats will be released up to day-of-show based on availability. Limited seats are still available for donors of \$1,000 or more to support the Village Originals new works program.

“A huge congratulations to Brandon Ivie and Arika Matoba in our casting office, as well as to our creative teams,” said Artistic Director Adam Immerwahr. “This year’s Festival promises to celebrate the breadth, diversity, and artistic innovation of new musical theater, and the actors we have assembled are poised to bring these fantastic new shows to life.”

Village Originals has launched more than 180 new musicals into the universe, sending them across the country, to Broadway, and worldwide, and jumpstarting beloved hits like *Million Dollar Quartet* and the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Next to Normal*.

Village Theatre’s 2024 Festival is sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts with additional support from the Wilke Family Foundation.

The Oscar Micheaux Project

FRIDAY, AUGUST 2, 8:00 p.m.

Music by **Alphonso Horne**

Lyrics by **Jesse L. Kearney, Jr. & Peter Mills**

Book by **Jesse L. Kearney, Jr. & Cara Reichel**

Additional Music **Peter Mills**

Directed by **Kimille Howard**

Music Directed by **Michael Nutting**

Stage Managed by **Laurel Nichols**

CAST

Brandi Birdsong (Essie Robeson), **Kataka Corn** (Evelyn Preer), **Jesimiel R. Jenkins** (Paul Robeson), **Shaunyce Omar** (Blanche Jarvis), **Jon-Michael Reese** (Oscar Micheaux), **Be Russell** (Alice B. Russell), **Yusef D. SeEVERS** (Swan Micheaux), **Chandler T. Thomas** (George Johnson/Reverend), and **Clyde Voce** (Noble Johnson)

Cinematic pioneer Oscar Micheaux's legacy as Hollywood's first Black filmmaker comes to syncopated and soulful life in this tuneful and historic new jazz musical.

The Oscar Micheaux Project was originally commissioned and developed by NYC's Prospect Theater Company and received developmental support from the National Alliance for Musical Theatre and The Johnny Mercer Writers Grove at Goodspeed Musicals.

Wakeman

SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 2:00 p.m.

Music, Lyrics, and Book by **Jenn Grinels**

Directed by **Kelly Kitchens**

Music Directed by **Elisa Money**

Stage Managed by **Miranda C. Pratt**

CAST

Andi Alhadeff (Prisoner), **Tom Avery** (Perry Wilder), **Ethan Carpenter** (Canal Worker 1 (Lyons)/Stephen Wiley), **Ann Cornelius** (Sergeant Evans), **Rhys Daly** (Jimmy Webb), **Mark Emerson** (Father), **Jade McLeod** (Wakeman), **Alexander Kilian** (Gilbert Webb), **CJ Lorentz** (Henry Austin), **Hanson Mitchell** (Robert), **Casey Raiha** (Hiram Sweet), and **Billie Wildrick** (Mother)

This incredible true story of American Civil War soldier Rosetta Wakeman — who dressed as a man to fight for the Union army — chronicles her heroic journey with a thrilling modern-folk-rock-meets-Americana score.

We Ain't Ever Gonna Break Up: The Hymon & Parfunkel Musical

SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 8:00 p.m.

Book, Music, and Lyrics by **Gregg Hammer & Louis Pardo**

Developed with and Directed by **Scott Weinstein**

Stage Managed by **Laura Karavitis**

CAST

Gregg Hammer (Saul Hymon) and **Louis Pardo** (Bart Parfunkel)

A zany, laugh-out-loud jukebox musical about — and featuring the songs of — a band that never existed, with a hilarious score spoofing your favorite 60s-70s folk artists.

We Ain't Ever Gonna Break Up was previously developed at Phoenix Theatre and Chance Theatre.

And Sometimes... Love

SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, 2:00 p.m.

Music & Lyrics by **Michael Mott**

Book by **Gretchen Suárez-Peña**

Inspired by the true story *A Love Not Meant For Me* by **Aryana Rose**

Directed by **Peter Flynn**

Music Directed by **R.J. Tancioco**

Stage Managed by **Anna Vraney**

CAST

Antonio Cipriano (Gianluca Lejeune), **Eden Espinosa** (Aryana Rose Diaz), and **Julia Kuzmich** (Valerie Rousseau/Mother Mary)

An intimate and emotional story of a Latina empty-nester working in France who experiences romance for the first time with a man she's just met: her passionate Italian lover, many years her junior.

ABOUT VILLAGE THEATRE

Based in Issaquah, Wash., with operations in Everett, Wash., Village Theatre is a leading producer of musical theater in the Pacific Northwest. Producing entertaining, quality productions since 1979, Village has grown into one of the region's best-attended theatres. Village is nationally recognized for its contribution to the development of new musicals, having supported the creation of more than 180 new works to date; and also takes pride in nurturing tomorrow's audiences through its Youth Education programs, serving thousands of young people and their families annually.

ABOUT VILLAGE ORIGINALS

Village Theatre has proudly committed 40 years to developing new musicals through its Village Originals program, launching more than 180 musicals into the universe and sending them across the country, to

Broadway, and worldwide. Village Originals shows include the Pulitzer Prize-winning ***Next to Normal***, Tony Award-winning ***Million Dollar Quartet***, *It Shoulda Been You*, *Lizzie*, *The Noteworthy Life of Howard Barnes*, *String*, *Afterwords*, *Cupid & Psyche*, *Making Tracks*, *No Way to Treat a Lady*, *Once Upon a Time in New Jersey*, *Eleanor*, and many more. Village's Festival of New Musicals is now in its 21st year, providing a one-of-a-kind opportunity to test new musicals before they get any staging, costumes, or scenery. Throughout its history, Village has provided writers both established and up-and-coming with opportunities in both Seattle and New York City, including residencies, readings, workshops, dance labs, developmental productions, and world premieres, making it one of the largest and most impactful new musical development programs in the country.

CONNECT WITH VILLAGE THEATRE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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