

**THEATREWORKS SILICON VALLEY PRESENTS
TONY AWARD-NOMINATED MUSICAL**

RAGS

Book by Joseph Stein
Music by Charles Strouse
Lyrics by Stephen Schwartz

April 5-30, 2017

Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts

MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA (1 March 2017) — **TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** continues its 2016/2017 season with a musical saga of immigrant America, *Rags*. From the creators of *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Wicked*, this exhilarating musical follows the journey of Jewish immigrants Rebecca and her son David, who find themselves navigating the teeming, turn-of-the-century tenements of New York. A soaring, tuneful score (music by Charles Strouse, lyrics by Stephen Schwartz) illuminates this sweeping saga (book by Joseph Stein) of dreams and disillusion, love lost and inspiration found, and the heart and soul of the American character. It was declared “A winner, warm and witty. You are tempted to rise cheering,” by *The Mercury News*. *Rags* will be directed by TheatreWorks Founding Artistic Director Robert Kelley, who notes “this production could not be timelier. As America debates immigration policies, what better time to present this deeper look at the newcomer’s experience.” Performances are April 5-30 (*press opening: April 8*) at Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro Street, Mountain View. For tickets (\$35-\$86) and more information the public may visit **TheatreWorks.org** or call **(650) 463-1960**.

In 1910 at the height of the immigration flooding into America from Eastern Europe, five Jewish refugees travel in the same boat, in search of a new life. Rebecca and her son David have left their destroyed village and hope to reunite with father and husband Nathan, who traveled to America years earlier. Also on the same boat are the Cohens, father Avram and daughter Bella, desperately seeking a better life. Last is young Ben Levitowitz, a young man in search of a start in the land of opportunity. *Rags* chronicles each of their journeys, from their travels to America, processing at Ellis Island, and as

they navigate life in a new world. While in New York Rebecca takes a job sewing in a sweatshop. She meets union supporter Saul who broadens Rebecca's view of the American Dream.

Rags made its Broadway premiere in August 1986, and the *New York Post* hailed operatic star Teresa Stratas in her Broadway debut as “the heroine of the hour.” It was nominated for five Drama Desk Awards in 1987, and Teresa Stratas won for Outstanding Actress in a Musical. **Rags** also received six Tony Award nominations in 1987, including Best Musical, and earned playwright Joseph Stein a nomination for Best Book of a Musical, and Charles Strouse and Stephen Schwartz a nomination for Best Original Score. It was presented by TheatreWorks shortly after its Broadway run in 1989 in a hit production that set box office records at the time and was hailed by critics and audiences.

TheatreWorks Silicon Valley has assembled an exceptional cast for this production. Jewish immigrant Rebecca will be played by **Kyra Miller** who will be making her TheatreWorks debut. Ms. Miller has performed in regional theatres such as the Portland Stage Company, Seattle Rep, Seattle's Fifth Avenue Theater, New Orleans' Southern Rep, and New York theatres including Pearl Theatre Co., Jean Cocteau Repertory, Moonwork, and the Manhattan Theater Source. **Jonah Broscow** will play the role of David, Rebecca's son. Mr. Broscow will be making his TheatreWorks Mainstage debut. He appeared in the 2015 New Works Festival where he read the role of Jimmy in *The Man in the Ceiling*. He was last seen in the International Tour of *Pippin* as Theo, and has performed in Bay Area theatres such as the Cowell Theatre, The Eureka Theater, and the Berkeley Playhouse.

Noel Anthony will be returning to the TheatreWorks stage as Nathan, Rebecca's husband and David's father who ventured to America before them. Mr. Anthony was seen in TheatreWorks' World Premiere of *A Little Princess*, as well as *The Secret Garden*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Jane Eyre The Musical*, and *Merrily We Roll Along*, and has performed in several New Works Festivals. He has been seen in leading roles at many local theatres including American Conservatory Theater, Broadway By the Bay, Marin Theatre Company, Center REpertory Company, Diablo Theatre Company, American Musical Theatre of San Jose, and has performed with Alameda Civic Light Opera and Symphony Silicon Valley.

Julie Benko will be making her TheatreWorks debut as Bella. Ms. Benko has performed in Broadway productions of *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Les Miserables*, as well as the first National Tour of *Spring Awakening*. She has performed regionally with Barrington Stage, Amarillo Opera, NC Theater, and Downtown Cabaret, and has also been seen on television in the 70th Tony Awards on CBS, the 80th

Academy Awards on ABC, and NBC's *America's Got Talent*. Also making his debut is **Donald Corren** as Avram, Bella's father. His Broadway credits include *Souvenir* and *Torch Song Trilogy*. He has also appeared with many regional theatres, and in television shows such as *Law and Order*, *Rescue Me*, and *Martha Stewart Living*.

Playing the role of Ben is **Travis Leland**. He will be returning to the TheatreWorks stage, where he was last seen in *Jane Austen's EMMA* as Frank Churchill. Mr. Leland has performed at a variety of theatres including Celebration Theatre, Geffen Playhouse, and Cabrillo Music Theatre. He was also seen in the original cast of Disney's *Frozen* at the Hyperion Theatre as the iceman Kristoff. **Danny Rothman** will be making his TheatreWorks debut as union supporter Saul. Mr. Rothman starred in *Les Miserables* at several regional theatres. He has been seen in New York in *Ragtime*, *I am Harvey Milk*, and *Meet Me in St. Louis* and at regional theatres in *Sweeney Todd*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *My Fair Lady*, *State Fair*, and *Brigadoon*.

The talented cast for this musical will also include: **David Bryant, Michelle Drexler, Teresa Foss, Nic Roy Garcia, Brian Herndon, Jake A. Miller, Caitlyn O'Leary, Benjamin Pither, Darlene Popovic, and Christopher Reber.**

Joseph Stein (Book) won the Tony Award and Drama Critics Circle Award for *Fiddler on the Roof*. His other musicals include *Zorba*, *Rags*, *The Baker's Wife*, *June*, *Take Me Along*, *Irene*, *The King of Hearts*, and *So Long, 174th Street*. He also co-authored the musical *Carmelina* (with Alan Jay Lerner), *Mr. Wonderful* and *Plain and Fancy* (with Will Glickman), *All About Us* (with Kander and Ebb) based on Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth*, and the musical adaptation of Stein's play *Enter Laughing* (with Stan Daniels). Stein began his career in television and radio, writing for Sid Caesar's "Your Show of Shows," and many others, and for personalities including Tallulah Bankhead, Phil Silvers, Jackie Gleason, and Zero Mostel. He wrote the screenplays of *Enter Laughing* and *Fiddler on the Roof*, for which he won the Screen Writers Guild Award. He also received Tony Award nominations for *Take Me Along*, *Zorba*, and *Rags*.

Charles Strouse (Music) has written scores for more than 30 stage musicals, including 14 for Broadway. He has also composed scores for five Hollywood films, two orchestral works and an opera. He has been inducted to the Songwriters Hall of Fame and the Theatre Hall of Fame. He is a three-time Tony Award winner (*Annie*, *Applause*, *Bye Bye Birdie*), a two-time Emmy Award winner (*Annie*, *Bye*

Bye Birdie), and his cast recordings have earned him two Grammy Awards (*Annie*). His song "Those Were the Days" launched more than 200 episodes of "All in the Family" and continues to reach new generations of television audiences in syndication.

Stephen Schwartz (Lyrics) wrote the music and lyrics for the current Broadway hit *Wicked*, and has also contributed music and/or lyrics to *Godspell*, *Pippin*, *The Magic Show*, *The Baker's Wife*, *Working* (which he also adapted and directed), *Rags*, and *Children of Eden*. His most recent musical, *Schikaneder*, premiered in 2016 in Vienna. He wrote the title song for the play and movie *Butterflies are Free*, and for young audiences, he has written songs for two musicals, *Captain Louie* and *My Son Pinocchio*. He has also worked in film, collaborating with Alan Menken on the songs for Disney's *Enchanted*, as well as the animated features *Pocahontas* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and wrote the songs for the DreamWorks animated feature *The Prince of Egypt*. In the classical music field, he collaborated with Leonard Bernstein on the English texts for Bernstein's *Mass*, and his first opera, *Seance on a Wet Afternoon*, was produced at Opera Santa Barbara and New York City Opera. A book about his career, "Defying Gravity," has been released by Applause Books. Mr. Schwartz has been inducted into the Theatre Hall of Fame and the Songwriters Hall of Fame, and has been given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Awards include three Academy Awards, and four Grammy Awards.

Director **Robert Kelley** is TheatreWorks' Founder and Artistic Director and has served as artistic head of the company since its inception in 1970. He has directed more than 170 TheatreWorks productions, including many world and regional premieres. In 2003 he was honored with the Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle (BATCC) Paine Knickerbocker Award for Lifetime Achievement, and in 2016 was awarded the Jerry Friedman Lifetime Achievement Award from the BATCC. He received BATCC Awards for Outstanding Direction for his productions of *Into the Woods*, *Pacific Overtures*, *Rags*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Another Midsummer Night*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Caroline, or Change*. He more recently directed the record-setting production of *Jane Austen's EMMA*, as well as *The Country House*, *Fallen Angels*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Marry Me a Little*, *Cyrano*, *Outside Mullingar*, and *Daddy Long Legs*.

With some 100,000 patrons per year, **TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** has captured a national reputation for artistic innovation and integrity, often presenting Bay Area theatregoers with their first look at acclaimed musicals, comedies, and dramas, directed by award-winning local and guest directors, and performed by professional actors cast locally and from across the country. A home for artists

developing new works, it was at TheatreWorks that *Memphis* was first workshopped and received its world premiere. *Memphis* went on to win the 2010 Tony Award for Best Musical, and played on Broadway for three years before embarking on a 19-month national tour, followed by an extended run on London's West End, where it captured two Olivier Awards.

For Calendar Editors:

WHAT: **TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** continues its 2016/2017 season with a musical saga of immigrant America, *Rags*. From the creators of *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Wicked*, this exhilarating musical follows the journey of Jewish immigrants Rebecca and her son David, who find themselves navigating the teeming, turn-of-the-century tenements of New York. A soaring, tuneful score (music by Charles Strouse, lyrics by Stephen Schwartz) illuminates this sweeping saga (book by Joseph Stein) of dreams and disillusion, love lost and inspiration found, and the heart and soul of the American character. It was declared "A winner, warm and witty. You are tempted to rise cheering," by *The Mercury News*. *Rags* will be directed by TheatreWorks Founding Artistic Director Robert Kelley.

WHEN: Previews: Wednesday, April 5, 2017 – Friday, April 7, 2017
Press Opening: Saturday, April 8, 2017
Closes: Sunday, April 30, 2017

SHOWS: Previews: 8:00 PM
Tuesdays: 7:30 PM
Wednesdays: 2:00 PM, 7:30 PM
Thursdays and Fridays: 8:00 PM
Saturdays: 2:00 PM, 8:00 PM
Sundays: 2:00 PM, 7:00 PM

WHERE: **Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts**
500 Castro Street, Mountain View

TICKETS: \$35-\$86; savings available for educators, seniors, and patrons 35 and under. A \$6 convenience fee will be assessed for online and telephone orders. Pricing subject to change.

INFO: For information or to order tickets visit **theatreworks.org** or call
(650) 463-1960

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PRESS: Contact Carla Befera & Co.
650.327.1200 | courtney@cb-pr.com

PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos will be available here:
<http://www.cb-pr.com/press/rags.html>