



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**Prime Stage Theatre  
Produces the Regional Premiere  
of “The Great American Novel” *The Great Gatsby***

**Pittsburgh, PA** – Prime Stage Theatre continues its 16<sup>th</sup> season with the regional premiere of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* at the New Hazlett Theater from March 1 through March 10, 2013.

The production, adapted by Simon Levy, is the only stage version authorized by the Fitzgerald estate since 1926. The Minneapolis Post-Bulletin called Levy’s script, “A powerful realization of Fitzgerald’s novel of obsession, love, money and the American dream. There’s no question that ‘Gatsby’ has all the elements of GREAT THEATER.” The London Free Press wrote – “A beautifully crafted interpretation of the 1925 novel which defined the Jazz Age.”

The story has everything for the makings of a great event: a love triangle, obsession, money, and mystery. The novel takes place on New York’s Long Island in the indulgent and intoxicating days of the 1920s. The story is narrated by Nick Caraway, a Midwesterner who moves into the town of West Egg, next door to a mansion owned by the wealthy and mysterious Jay Gatsby. Set in the intimate Hazlett Theater, audiences will get caught up in Nick and Gatsby’s unusual friendship, Gatsby’s pursuit of Daisy, his former love, within the dancing and partying world of “The Jazz Age.”

To enhance the Jazz Age in Prime Stage’s production, Tom Roberts, one of the leading pianists of early jazz piano in the world, will play at all performances. Roberts has performed on *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson*, *A Prairie Home Companion with Garrison Keillor*, was pianist for Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks (recent Grammy winners for the soundtrack to *Boardwalk Empire*), and pianist and musical director for Leon Redbone for six years. Tom has performed several times at The New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. He composed a choral work based on Langston Hughes’ poetry performed by The Bach Choir of Pittsburgh. As an arranger, Tom also arranged and performed music for the soundtrack of Martin Scorsese’s film *The Aviator*, starring Leonardo di Caprio.

“Gatsby” is directed Rich Keitel, who directed the critically acclaimed Prime Stage productions of *The Glass Menagerie*, *Twelve Angry Men*, and *The Elephant Man* in 2012. Returning to Prime Stage to play Jay Gatsby is Sean Sears who became

John Merrick in *The Elephant Man*.

*"I'm excited to be working on the "Great Gatsby" with a "Great" group of actors and designers. It is wonderful bringing one of the most beloved American novels of all time to life on the stage."* Rich Keitel, Director

The show previews on Friday, March 1. Opening night is Saturday, March 2 and it runs through March 10.

Party like it's 1925! A Gatsbyesque reception follows the opening night performance (for an additional \$10) with the director, cast and crew. Become part of the essence of Gatsby — bring your white linen out of the closet, tuck a bud in your lapel, and get the fringe on your dress shaking! Catered by Bistro to Go, there is a cash bar and prizes for best "Roaring Twenties" attire. This will be a "Grand Gatsby."

### **MORE ABOUT THE DIRECTOR – RICH KEITEL**

Keitel directed *American Buffalo* and *Collected Stories* for City Theatre, *Wild Duck* for Quantum Theatre, *Room Service* for Point Park Conservatory and *Of Mice and Men*, *Tuesdays With Morrie*, *The Glass Menagerie* and, most recently, *The Elephant Man* for Prime Stage Theatre. He was selected as the third recipient of The Harry Schwalb Award for Excellence in Theatre by *Pittsburgh Magazine* and was honored at Prime Stage Theatre's 2012 Gala for Excellence in Directing.

### **MORE ABOUT THE CAST AND CREW**

**Sean Patrick Sears** (Jay Gatsby) Since moving to Pittsburgh in 2008, Sean has played Joseph Merrick in *The Elephant Man* (Prime Stage Theatre); Abused Messenger in *Antony and Cleopatra*, and Ben Nicholson in *Pitman Painters* (Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theatre); and Sir Andrew Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night* (Quantum Theatre). He earned his B.A. in Theatre Arts from Catawba College in 2004.

**Andrew Swackhamer** (Nick Caraway) was last seen on The New Hazlett stage as the Wolf/Cinderella's Prince in *Into the Woods* with Carnivale Theatrics and as the Tom/Jim understudy in *The Glass Menagerie* for Prime Stage. He is thrilled to be back in Pittsburgh doing such an important American story.

**Julia Warner** (Daisy Buchanan) is a Senior BFA Acting Major at Point Park University and is making her debut with Prime Stage Theatre. She has performed in Unseam'd Shakespeare's productions of *Midsummer Nights Dream* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, on the Pittsburgh Playhouse stages in *Evita*, *Twelfth Night*, the *Raymond Laine One Act Festival* in Torrent and *Diary of a Breakup Breakdown*.

**Ryan Kearney** (Tom Buchanan) This is Ryan's third appearance with Prime Stage, most recently in *Fahrenheit 451*. He has also been seen on stage in Pittsburgh at

Stage 62, South Park Theater, and Center Theatre Players and has performed multiple times in the *Pittsburgh New Works Festival*.

**Katie Oxman** (Jordan Baker) will be graduating this May with a BA in Musical Theatre from Point Park University. She just finished a 4-month run of *A Grand Night for Singing* at the CLO Cabaret.

**Alexis Cash** (Myrtle Wilson) is a senior Acting Major at Point Park University. She grew up reading *The Great Gatsby* and loved the book immediately; this production could be considered a dream come true. She has been seen recently in *Seven Guitars* as Ruby with Point Park Conservatory and *Hair: The Rock Musical*.

**Jud Stewart** (George Wilson) graduated from Point Park University in 2010, with a BA in Theatre. Jud currently resides in Butler, PA.

**Everett Lowe** (Meyer Wolfsheim), a Pittsburgh stage actor/director and commercial actor, is delighted to be making his Prime Stage Theatre debut in *The Great Gatsby*. Privileged to work with many companies around the city, Everett most recently played Felix in *The Odd Couple*, and Phil in the Pittsburgh premiere production of *Hospitality Suite*.

**Catherine Kay** (Mrs. McKee/Mrs. Michaelis) has performed on many of Pittsburgh's stages, including those of Prime Stage, CLO, Pittsburgh Playhouse, Little Lake Theatre, McKeesport Little Theatre, and the *Pittsburgh New Works Festival*. She is a proud alumna of Point Park University's Conservatory of Performing Arts.

**Elizabeth Pegg** (Ensemble) is a recent graduate of Duquesne University's Theatre Arts program. She has performed with a number of local theater companies, and is excited to be making her Prime Stage Theatre debut.

**Margaret Anne Townes** (Ensemble) is a senior Acting Major, Dance Minor at Point Park University. She is delighted to delve into the world of one her favorite books with such a talented cast and crew!

**Michelle Sayah** (Ensemble) is thrilled to be making her Prime Stage Theatre debut. Michelle is a graduating theater arts major at Point Park University and was last seen in Gale McNeeley's directed performance of Point Park's first *Clown Workshop*.

#### **MORE ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT - SIMON LEVY**

Simon Levy spent four years adapting *Tender is the Night* and *The Last Tycoon* before he got permission for *The Great Gatsby* from the Fitzgerald estate. This completed his award-winning Fitzgerald trilogy of stage adaptations. He also adapted and directed *What I Heard About Iraq*, based on the essay by Eliot Weinberger, which was produced worldwide.

Levy has written and directed extensively and is the recipient of many awards, including the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle's Milton Katselas Career Achievement Award in Directing in 2011.

Since 1993, he has been the Producing Director for the Fountain Theatre in Los Angeles.

In an interview with Monica Stephenson, The Prime Stage Education Director, Levy said, "What everybody talks about when they talk about *Gatsby* the novel is the beauty of Fitzgerald's prose, his lyricism, the way he expresses, the poetic maturity of his descriptive prose, his astonishing use of metaphor and symbolism. Well, one of the great advantages of theatre is how we are able to give life to symbolism and metaphor on stage. I want the audience to care. I want *Gatsby* and Daisy and Nick and Tom and Jordan to be vibrant and alive and as complex and joyous and full of love and mistakes in their mythic American world. I want them to be remembered. I want them to live on, consciously and unconsciously, in the minds of the audience so that, years from now, when one of those characters is mentioned or the words "The Great Gatsby" come up in conversation, a scene or a moment or a line of dialogue from the play will explode to life inside of them."

#### **MORE ABOUT THE MUSICIAN - TOM ROBERTS**

According to Ricardo Sciavales, in his book *The Heart and Soul of Stride, Blues, and Swing Piano*, "Tom Roberts is one of the leading exponents of early jazz piano in the world today." Originally from Pittsburgh, Tom played in all the major jazz clubs in the French Quarter and on the riverboats of New Orleans when he lived there from 1989 to 1994. Tom has performed twice at New York's Carnegie Hall in 2003, once with Skitch Henderson and the New York Pops. He was featured in 2003 in solo with Dick Hyman at the prestigious Jazz In July series at New York's 92nd St. Y.

Tom has recorded over 40 compact discs and has performed throughout the United States and Europe.

He continues to tour worldwide and perform with bands from New Orleans and New York, including the Original Dixieland Jazzband and the Louisiana Repertory Jazz Ensemble. Besides his pianistic artistry Tom is a versatile music historian with special focus on the Early Jazz era . He has contributed articles for magazines such as *Piano Today* and is a frequent guest at National Public Radio.

#### **MORE ON THE 2012-2013 SEASON**

The third production of the season is an area premiere of *Walk Two Moons* (May 10 - May 19, 2013 ). The adaptation by Tom Arvetis, based on the book by Sharon Creech and will be directed by Lisa Ann Goldsmith. "Flawlessly adapted, 'Walk Two Moons' challenges audiences to look outward into a world where everyone has the immense power to help one another. 'Walk Two Moons' has a poignant, valuable message for audiences of every age." - *ChicagoBeat*. "Readers from over twenty-five countries have walked in the moccasins of these characters. I'm honored that

the book will now come to the stage, too, in Pittsburgh!" - Sharon Creech, author of *Walk Two Moons*.

### **MORE ABOUT PRIME STAGE THEATRE**

Prime Stage is Pittsburgh's non-profit theatre that is committed to producing high-quality, artistic experiences for adults, families, students, and educators so they discover the fusion of live theatre and literature. With education as the cornerstone of its mission and vision, Prime Stage offers unique programs designed to support educators and families in the sharing and appreciation of great literature, and that encourages both literacy and a love of theatre, as well as addressing topics such as teen dating violence with their *Everything is Fine* touring program.

### **PERFORMANCE DETAILS**

**WHO:** Prime Stage Theatre

**WHAT & WHEN:** *The Great Gatsby*  
March 1 – March 10, 2013  
Fridays & Saturdays @ 8:00 PM / Sundays @ 2:30 PM

Saturday, March 2 – Opening Night Reception  
Saturday, March 9 – Desserts with the Director

**WHERE:** New Hazlett Theater  
6 Allegheny Square E  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

**TICKETS:** \$10 - \$20 in advance / \$15 - \$25 at the door  
Opening night reception - \$10  
*Online at:* [primestage.showclix.com](http://primestage.showclix.com)  
*By phone:* 1.888.718.4253

**WEBSITE:** [www.primestage.com](http://www.primestage.com)

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