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THE BOY FROM OZ HEADLINES LANDMARK MUSICAL THEATRE'S 2016 SEASON!

Landmark Musical Theatre today announced that it will open its first full season in San Francisco at Chinatown's historic Great Star Theater in April with the Bay area and Western regional premiere of the award-winning hit, **The Boy From Oz**, based on the life of Australian songwriter and performer Peter Allen. The show, which won Hugh Jackman a Best Actor in a Musical Tony award in 2004 for his portrayal of the energetic Allen, showcases many of the remarkable people in Allen's life, including Judy Garland, who discovered Peter in a Hong Kong nightclub in the mid-1960s, and her daughter Liza Minnelli, to whom he was married for seven years.

The Boy From Oz was originally written for the Australian stage by Nick Enright with songs written or co-written by Peter Allen. Martin Sherman adapted the show for the American stage and the production is made available in the United States by special permission of David Spicer Productions.

Allen's storybook life, from his humble beginnings in the small town of Tenterfield, Australia, to his sold-out concerts at the Copacabana and Carnegie Hall in the 1970s and 1980s, is played out in **The Boy From Oz** through many of his remarkable songs which he wrote with people like Jeff Barry, Carole Bayer Sager and Burt Bacharach, including Olivia Newton-John's hit *I Honestly Love You*, Melissa Manchester's *Don't Cry Out Loud*, and the wonderful theme from the movie **Arthur**, *The Best That You Can Do*, which won Allen the Academy Award for Best Song in 1981.

The Great Star Theater, located in the heart of Chinatown at 636 Jackson Street, ½ block west of Kearny, is hosting its first full Broadway show with **The Boy From Oz**. Originally built in the 1920s as a home for Chinese opera companies, it later became a movie theater showing action films from Hong Kong. It closed in 1999 but reopened several years ago as a performing arts venue and has become a home for a variety of special events. The show opens April 23, 2016, and runs through May 15, 2016, with performances on Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 8 PM with Sunday matinees at 2 PM.

Landmark Musical Theatre's artistic director, Jon Rosen, is very excited to be directing this production. "I have been trying to obtain the rights to **The Boy From Oz** for several years for other companies in the Bay area but it simply hasn't been available in the United States since its run on Broadway," Rosen said. "I was quite surprised when David Spicer Productions contacted me in January to let me know that the Bay area premiere rights had become available for 2016. With the immediate availability of the Great Star Theater, we jumped at the chance to do this wonderful show in San Francisco for the first time ever." Rosen directed Landmark's first show in San Francisco, last summer's production of the musical revue **Tomfoolery** at the Eureka Theatre.

Actors' Equity member and former member of the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus Dan Seda will create the role of Allen for the San Francisco stage. Seda, who hails from North Carolina by way of New York City, is appearing in his first major production on the West Coast. Noted local actor and chanteuse Connie Champagne is featured as Allen's mentor Judy Garland. Champagne has been applauded by the New York Times, which said her performance as Garland in a previous production **Christmas At The Crawfords** was "a subtle masterpiece of parody and homage".

Another former North Carolinian, Kat Robichaud, who competed through the third live playoff round of 2013's **The Voice**, will portray the youthful Liza Minnelli as she falls in love with Allen while becoming an international star through her roles on Broadway, television and her Academy Award-winning performance as Sally Bowles in the 1972 film **Cabaret**. Amy Meyers is featured as Allen's charming and protective mother, Marion Woolnough.

Ivan Hardin plays Allen's long-time lover, Texas fashion model and businessman Greg Connell, who with the help of famous New York talent agent Dee Anthony, played by Keith Nielsen, shepherds Allen's career to stratospheric heights, including his flamboyant performances with the Rockettes at Radio City Music Hall. While celebrating the triumphs of Allen's life, the show doesn't flinch from the pain and sadness Allen dealt with in handling his own life crises as both he and Connell became relatively early victims of the AIDS epidemic which swept through the gay artistic community in the 1980s and 1990s.

Rounding out the show's cast are two delightful young 11-year old tap-dancers, Daniel Kaukonen and Dylan Palmer, who will portray Allen as a young boy at alternating performances, and the show's singing and dancing ensemble consisting of Davin Coffey, Lisa Darter, Janine Hartmann, Garrick Sather, Joella Wolnick and Bessie Zolno.

Rosen is assisted in this production by choreographer Kimberly Krol and music director Tammy Hall. Krol, who also staged the dance sequences for **Tomfoolery** as well as appearing in that show, has worked all over the Bay area as a director and choreographer. She will be directing **Big The Musical** for Coastal Repertory Theatre this summer. Acclaimed jazz pianist Hall has worked in the past with Connie Champagne on several of her cabaret shows, and recently music directed another West Coast premiere musical at the Cinnabar Theater in Petaluma, **Mahalia Jackson: Just As I Am**, starring Sharon Scott. Richard Gutierrez, who has worked with Rosen on several past shows, including the 16th Street Player's 2013 production of **The Fantasticks**, is serving as Production Manager.

The remainder of Landmark Musical Theatre's 2016 season includes the hilarious **Drowsy Chaperone** in July and the classic Anthony Newley/Leslie Bricusse musical **The Roar of the Greasepaint, The Smell of the Crowd** in October. Both shows will also be performed at the Great Star Theater. **The Drowsy Chaperone** is one of the funniest musicals to appear on Broadway in the past 15 years, winning several Tony awards, and while the Broadway tour passed through San Francisco and has been presented elsewhere in the Bay area over the past few years, Rosen said "to the best of my knowledge, this will be the first non-touring production presented in San Francisco by any local theater company."

As for **Roar of the Greasepaint**, Rosen noted "this classic show, which is rarely seen anymore, is one of the most fascinating commentaries on the subject of the struggle between the haves and the have-nots, or, as we might put it today, the 1% and the rest of us. With its magnificent score including such well-known standards as *Who Can I Turn To*, *The Joker*, *On A Wonderful Day Like Today* and *Feelin' Good*, the show holds a mirror up to life in a way that no other Broadway show has done, before or since. We think it is the perfect show to produce just before the upcoming Presidential election when so much is at stake for so many."

Single tickets are now on sale for **The Boy From Oz** and season tickets are also available for all three shows. Season tickets offer a significant discount over the cost of individual tickets. Individual tickets for **The Boy From Oz** range from \$20 for general admission seating on Thursday evenings and Sunday matinees in the rear orchestra to \$60 for reserved front row table seating at any performance. Students and seniors are offered a \$5 discount from the general admission and reserved seating prices (except for the front table section).

Adult season tickets for three shows range from \$50 for Thursday/Sunday general admission to \$150 for Friday and Saturday evening table seating. A \$15 discount from the regular price of a season ticket is offered for seniors and students. Season ticket holders also have performance exchange privileges that are not available to individual ticket patrons. Single performance tickets can be purchased at Landmark Musical Theatre's website <http://www.landmarkmusicals.com> or by calling its principal ticketing site, Brown Paper Tickets, toll-free at (800) 838-3006. Season tickets may only be ordered directly through the website via PayPal. Tickets may be paid for by check or online by credit card.

Until March 31, tickets may also be acquired through Landmark's Kickstarter campaign targeted at raising money to help with the marketing and promotion of their 2016 season and **The Boy From Oz** in particular. There are special ticket rewards available via the Kickstarter which, in addition to offering early access to discounts for **The Boy From Oz** and season tickets, provide other incentives such as concession vouchers for performances, backstage tours of the Great Star Theater and some super-special rewards like being able to dance onstage with the cast in the finale of **The Boy From Oz** and the opportunity to deliver the pre-show audience speech at selected performances. Rosen stated that "our Kickstarter campaign to raise \$7,500 or more to help with promotional expenses will help us reach more people who will hopefully attend our first big production and at the same time offer patrons the best discount tickets and incentives that will be available for the 2016 season."

Landmark Musical Theatre is a non-profit regional theater company focused on presenting quality musical theatre productions in the San Francisco Bay area, with an emphasis on shows that are either not well-known, or are not produced often (or ever) in the area. Landmark Musical Theatre's 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status is pending.

The Boy From Oz

April 23 – May 15, 2016 (Thursday/Friday/Saturday at 8 PM, Sunday at 2 PM)

The Great Star Theater

636 Jackson Street, San Francisco, CA 94110

Presented by Landmark Musical Theatre of San Francisco

Show and ticket information available online at <http://www.landmarkmusicals.com>

Information is also available by telephone at 855-LANDMRK (855-526-3675)

Tickets are sold by Brown Paper Tickets at <http://bit.ly/oztickets> or by calling 800-838-3006

Kickstarter information is available at <http://bit.ly/ozkickstarter>

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