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ADVENTURE STAGE CHICAGO ANNOUNCES THE FORMATION OF NEW ARTISTIC ENSEMBLE

CHICAGO - As Adventure Stage Chicago (ASC) prepares to end their sixth season with the Midwest premiere of the pirate musical *The Ghosts of Treasure Island*, ASC announces the formation of a new artistic ensemble.

The eleven-member ensemble is comprised of actors, designers, directors, stage managers, teaching artists and writers committed to achieving artistic excellence through long-term collaboration and the creation of original work. The ensemble will be directly involved in the proposal of new projects, script development, season selection and the production process. A number of ensemble members also work in classrooms as teaching artists, implementing the company's Neighborhood Bridges program in Chicago Public Schools. Additionally, ensemble members will serve as ambassadors for the company within the community, playing their part during outreach events at libraries, park districts, neighborhood street festivals and celebrations.

As a Chicago-based company, ASC believes our work must reflect the complexity and diversity of the community in which we live and create. ASC has a history of nurturing new work by talented playwrights from around the country. The creation of the ensemble re-focuses the development of new and original work to come from within the company, creating dynamic and transformative theatre experiences by Chicagoans for youth and families of Chicago. We will call upon our diverse backgrounds in physical theatre, movement, puppetry, mask, music and storytelling to explore universal stories and Chicago-centric adventures while investigating our collective understanding of community, family and identity.

ASC Ensemble Members:

TOM ARVETIS is the founding Producing Artistic Director of Adventure Stage Chicago, where he has directed world premieres of *Katrina: The Girl Who Wanted Her Name Back* by Jason Tremblay, *The Blue House* by Jose Cruz Gonzalez, and *I Dream in Blues*, which he co-wrote with Chicago blues singer Katharine Davis. Additionally, he recently helmed a workshop reading of *Dragon/Sky* by Elizabeth Wong (Silk Road Theatre Project). Tom is an Emeritus Company Member with Barrel of Monkeys, has acted in award-winning productions with the Neo-Futurists, Bailiwick Repertory Company and Pyewacket Theatre, among others, and is a veteran sound designer. He is a graduate of Northwestern University.

BRIAN BELL recently directed *Gossamer* for ASC (where he also serves as a teaching artist) and will appear in their upcoming production *The Ghosts of Treasure Island*. Previously he completed a directing internship with the Carrousel Theater an der Parkaue in Germany and went on to direct *The Retreating World* by Naomi Wallace at Berlin's Acud Theater. Brian graduated with a B.A. in Theatre Performance from the University of North Texas, where he directed and adapted *Woyzeck* by Georg Buechner as a final thesis. Brian is the artistic director of Chicago's Cabaret Vagabond and has worked with Lincoln Square Theatre, Darknight Productions, Piccolo Theatre, Apple Tree Theatre and Collaboraction. He is an alumnus of the Chicago Directors Lab.

BRANDON CAMPBELL has worked for Adventure Stage Chicago as a teaching artist, stage manager and production manager since moving to Chicago in 2001. He is also an Associate of Collaboraction, serving as production manager for *Sketchbook 5, 6, 7, 8* and *Carnaval*. Other production credits include the world premiere of Jose Rivera's *Massacre* at Goodman Theater (with Teatro Vista), Chicago Sketchfest and several shows with the Neo-Futurists. In his creative time he has worked as a writer/performer (*Dark Eyed Strangers*), a puppeteer and designer (*Laika's Coffin*, *The Cay*, *Joe's Garage*, *Beowulf Vs. Grendel*), and a sax player (*Seeking Wonderland*, *2nd Story*, *Jenn Rhoads Project*).

SARAH ROSE GRABER graduated from Northwestern University's theatre program and received her Acting Certificate from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London. She was the Circumnavigator Foundation's Travel Around the World Study Grant Scholar, which enabled her to travel the globe while researching the way theatre is used as a tool for communication and education to encourage social change. She chronicled her journey in a play called *Time For Take-Off!* She adapted *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* into a bilingual play for English and Spanish viewers and Edmund Spenser's epic poem *The Faerie Queene* into a mask play she directed called *IMAGO*, for which she received the Center for Interdisciplinary Research in the Arts Grant (CIRA) and the Program in the Study of the Imagination Grant (PSI). Chicago credits include Northlight Theatre, Metropolis Performing Arts Center, Strawdog, Chemically Imbalanced, Village Players, and Factory Theatre, where she is also a company member. As a teaching artist, Sarah has taught and directed for Northlight Theatre, Arts Berwyn, Chicago Children's Humanities Festival, the National High School Institute at Northwestern, Neighborhood Bridges, and many residencies at Chicago area schools.

LAURA KOLLAR attended Loyola University Chicago, where she earned degrees in Theater and Psychology. Costume design credits at Adventure Stage Chicago include *Gossamer*, *Holes*, *The Blue House*, *The Cay* and *Shakespeare Stealer*. She co-designed *Still Life With Iris* with fellow ASC ensemble member Jessica Kuehnau and helped create costumes for *Katrina: The Girl Who Wanted Her Name Back* and *I Dream in Blues*. Laura's work has also been seen with Actor's Theatre Co., Theatre Mir, Lookingglass Theatre, Collaboration, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Serendipity Theatre, North Park University and Pegasus Players, among others.

JESSICA KUEHNAU's previous designs for ASC have included sets for *Eye of the Storm*, *The Shakespeare Stealer*, and *The Blue House*, and costumes for *Still Life with Iris*, *Search for Odysseus* and *Katrina: The Girl Who Wanted Her Name Back*. Since completing her MFA in Scenic and Costume Design at Northwestern University, Chicago design credits include Rivendell Theatre, Pegasus Players, Lifeline Theatre, Griffin Theatre, Backstage Theatre Co., MPAACT, The Building Stage, Metropolis Performing Arts Center, and Light Opera Works. She is also full time faculty and resident scenic designer at Northeastern Illinois University, as well as the resident set designer and design professor at North Park University.

ALLISON LATTA is a graduate of the theatre program at Virginia Tech. She has also studied Commedia dell 'Arte with Anotnio Fava in Reggio Emilia, Italy. Chicago performance credits include Buffalo Theatre Ensemble, Strawdog Theatre and Redmoon Theatre. She was a founding member of TriArts, Inc. and created four original Commedia shows with that company, including *Hfob-N-Ffos*, which was named a Best of Fringe show at the Winnipeg Fringe Festival. She has appeared in ASC's productions of *Sideways Stories from the Wayside School*, *And Then They Came for Me: Remembering the World of Anne Frank*, *Still Life With Iris*, *The Ash Girl*, *Holes* and *Gossamer*. She can also be seen in a number of national commercials and independent films. She has worked as a teaching artist with ASC, Gallery 37 and Metropolis Performing Arts Center.

SCOTT LETSCHER is currently the Managing Director of Adventure Stage Chicago. He was a company member of the late, lamented Terrapin Theatre for over ten years, where he served for two years as their Artistic Director. At Terrapin, he directed the After Dark Award-winning production of *Aunt Dan and Lemon*, the world premiere of *Requiem in a Light Aqua Room* by Sean Graney, *The Rimers of Eldritch*, *The Sneeze* and *Public/Privacy*. He appeared in the Terrapin productions *Nina Variations*, *Blue Remembered Hills*, *The Pooka* and *Daniel O'Rourke*, *The Kramer* and *Laurel and Hardy Sleep Together*. He also spent four years with the Children's Theatre Fantasy Orchard as an actor and adaptor. He received a Theatre Arts degree from Marquette University.

JANA LILES came to Chicago after receiving her B.F.A. in Theatre from Emporia State University in her home state of Kansas. She completed her M.F.A. in Theatre from The Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. She has performed with such theatre companies as Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Light Opera Works, Quest Theatre Ensemble, The GreyZelda Theatre Group, Chemically Imbalanced Comedy and Adventure Stage Chicago, while also appearing in numerous films, local television programs and commercials. An accomplished singer and dancer, she has also been fortunate enough to perform in front of thousands of people at the Lollapalooza music festival in Grant Park. In addition to serving as ASC's Marketing Coordinator, she is the Casting Director at BackStage Theatre Company.

MERISSA SHUNK has been with Adventure Stage Chicago since 2007 as the Director of Education. Before moving to Chicago she lived in Chiang Mai, Thailand as a Peace Corps Volunteer. She is originally from sunny California where she studied theatre, taught theatre, and studied how to teach theatre at UCLA and Santa Clara University. She has freelanced as a curriculum writer and teaching artist for the Silk Road Theater Project, is the Fine Arts Curriculum Advisor at Rowe Elementary School, and has been a mentor (Drama Mama) in Redmoon Theater's Mentoring program, Drama Girls. In fall of 2008 she co-founded the Chicago Arts Educator Forum and also serves on the board of the Illinois Theatre Association.

BRANDON WARDELL is a freelance Lighting and Scenic Designer in Chicago. He holds an MFA from Northwestern University and teaches at several universities, including Northwestern University, Columbia College Chicago, The University of Chicago, and Illinois Wesleyan. Recent lighting credits include *The Hollow Lands* (Steeep Theatre), *On An Average Day* (Backstage Theatre Company), *The Arab-Israeli Cookbook* (Theatre Mir), *John & Jen* (Apple tree), *The Robber Bridegroom* (Griffin Theatre) and *The Blue House* (ASC). Scenic Designs include *Maria's Field* (TUTA), *In Arabia We'd All Be Kings* (Steeep Theatre), *Holes* (ASC), *Dracula* (The Building Stage) and *Be More Chill* (Griffin Theatre).

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