Harlequin honors Stardust legacy, restages first Holiday show ‘The 1940s Radio Hour’

Olympia, WA – November 7, 2018 – Harlequin Productions has changed the first show of its 2019 season to remount the first Holiday show ever produced by the theater, Walter Jones’ The 1940s Radio Hour, November 29th through December 31st at the State Theater in downtown Olympia. Acting Artistic Director Aaron Lamb will direct and music direct, with Maggie Doyle as assistant director.

Join us as we return to the 1940s, to the show that inspired and launched the Stardust series. Performed at Harlequin in 1993, The 1940s Radio Hour was the first Holiday show produced on our stage. Grab the family and join us for a holiday tradition that is sure to invoke many memories from our 22 years of Stardust!

The time: Monday, December 21, 1941
The place: The studios of WOV, a 5,000-watt local New York City radio station in the Hotel Astor
The people: A rag-tag band of working-class entertainers - these are real people with second jobs and real stories to tell
The story: A live broadcast of “The Mutual Manhattan Variety Cavalcade,” a weekly variety show

Immerse yourself in the spirit of that bygone era when the world was at war and pop music meant “Strike Up the Band” and “Boogie-Woogie Bugle Boy.” A harassed producer copes with his drunk lead singer, the delivery boy wants a chance in front of the mike, the second banana dreams of singing a ballad, and the percussion player must choose between a fighter plane and Glenn Miller.

In a twist on the standard format, the show begins before the curtain rises. The audience will see the pre-show process, giving them a chance to meet the actors as well as the characters they play on the radio.

Says Lamb, “What’s so fun about watching radio theater is that you get to hear the story being told, but you also get to see what’s actually happening. If you close your eyes in the audience, you’ll get a completely different experience. Imagine hearing a Pepsi commercial, then opening your eyes to see that the actress is drinking a Coke. Radio is about what you hear, but what you hear isn’t necessarily what’s really happening. So try closing your eyes for 5 minutes when you come to see the show.”

Assistant Director Maggie Doyle is a Stardust veteran who has played Joy Higgsby in Stardust shows for the past 6 seasons. Of the opportunity to assistant direct this show, she
says, "Stardust is a Christmas tradition cherished by the Olympian community and one I hold closely to my heart. I can think of no better way to honor the legacy of Stardust than to go back to the story that inspired it all. Having performed in Stardust for the past 6 seasons at Harlequin Productions, I am excited to bring the "Stardust magic" we have all fallen in love with to The 1940s Radio Hour."

Aaron Lamb, Acting Artistic Director for Harlequin Productions, will direct and music direct. This season, Lamb has directed Three Days of Rain, I Am My Own Wife and Ruthless! In ten seasons as an actor and director with Harlequin he has also directed August: Osage County, Hedda Gabler, Time Stands Still, Middletown, and Five Women Wearing the Same Dress. As an actor, he most recently appeared last season, as Gary Essendine in Noel Coward’s Present Laughter. Lamb has worked in Seattle for Village Theatre, Taproot Theatre, Book-It Repertory Theatre, and Seattle Shakespeare Company, and has worked regionally throughout the country. He holds an MFA in acting from California State University, Fullerton and a BA from Washington State University.

The cast includes Bruce Haasl (4 Stardust productions including The Stardust Christmas Fandango), Xander Layden (The Art of Racing in the Rain; 2 Stardust productions), Miguel Pineda (The Stardust Christmas Fandango; Rock N’ Roll Twelfth Night), Edsonya Charles (The Stardust Christmas Commotion), James Dean (The Stardust Christmas Enchantment), Christie Murphy-Oldright (The Stardust Christmas Fandango; First Date), Nathan Rice (Laughter on the 23rd Floor), Carolyn Willems Van Dijk* (First Date), Gerald Browning (The Love List), and Andy Garness (5 Stardust productions including The Stardust Christmas Fandango)

WHAT: Harlequin presents The 1940s Radio Hour, Harlequin’s first Holiday show and the inspiration for the Stardust series, written by Walter Jones and directed by Aaron Lamb.

WHEN: November 29 – December 31, 2018

WHERE: State Theater, 202 4th Ave East, Olympia, WA 98501

TICKETS: Tickets are available online at harlequinproductions.org, by phone at 360-786-0151, or in person 12-6pm, Tues-Friday and 2 hours before performances at the Harlequin Box Office in the State Theater.

General admission tickets are $49
Senior 60+/Military $45
Student/Youths Under 25 $25
Rush Tickets (half-hour prior to showtime) General $30; Senior/Military/Student/Under 25 $20

SPECIAL DATES FOR THE AUDIENCE:
Opening Night: Thursday, November 29, 2018 at 8:00pm
Pay-What-You-Can: Wednesday, December 5, 2018 at 8:00pm
Ladies’ Night Out: Friday, December 7, 2018 at 8:00pm
Post-show Talkback: Sunday, December 9, 2018 at 2:00pm
Pride Night: Friday, December 14, 2018 at 8:00pm

AGE RECOMMENDATION: All Ages
CAST:

Gerald Browning          “Pops” Bailey
Nathan Rice              Lou Cohn
Bruce Haasl              Clifton Feddington
Edsonya Charles          Ann Collier
Andy Garness             Bif Baker
Carolyn Willems Van Dijk* Connie Miller
James Dean               Johnny Cantone
Christie Murphy-Oldright Ginger Brooks
Miguel Pineda            B.J. Gibson
Xander Layden            Wally Fergusson

PR: Ashley Chandler, Box Office Manager, 306-786-0151 x103
or ashley@harlequinproductions.org

* Indicates membership in the Actor’s Equity Association.

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