

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



For more information, contact:
Jennifer Samuelson, Marketing Director
jsamuelson@skylightopera.com
(414) 299-4961

MEDIA RELEASE

December 2, 2011

Skylight Opera Theatre presents

Beyond the Ingénue

Julie Andrews, Shirley Jones, Barbara Cook and Me

Featuring NIFFER CLARKE and RICHARD CARSEY
Stage Directed by BILL THEISEN

December 30 – January 8, 2011

Studio Theatre at the Broadway Theatre Center

Milwaukee, WI – Skylight presents the premiere of *Beyond the Ingénue*, featuring Niffer Clarke and Richard Carsey. Coming off Skylight's critically acclaimed production, *The Music Man*, Clarke and Carsey reunite for a musical theatre piece that pays homage to the golden-voiced sopranos Niffer Clarke grew up idolizing.

Beyond the Ingénue captures the essence of Clarke's idols Julie Andrews, Shirley Jones, and Barbara Cook, who endowed the ingénue – the "girl-next-door" – with wit, spine and spirit. As their careers progressed, they also reinvented themselves, and their journeys have inspired Niffer on her own voyage of self-discovery and revelation.

Full of glorious music from these three women, as well as fun stories, personal anecdotes and impressions from both Clarke and Carsey, *Beyond the Ingénue* is not only a night full of musical variety, but is also a deeply touching insight into Clarke's personal journey from Ingénue to being a woman who is confident enough to get what she really wants.

It is a story "about giving ourselves permission to move beyond roles that are set for us, to break free of society's set expectations and live in the truth of who we are rather than who we think we should be," says Niffer Clarke.

Not unlike Clarke, Julie Andrews, Barbara Cook and Shirley Jones, are all considered ingénues in their own right, but it is their unconventional approach to their roles that Clarke identifies with. The show includes many classic songs such as "I Could Have Danced All Night", "I Have Confidence" and "The Sweetest Sounds" along with the debut of "Beyond the Ingénue" written for her by Tony-nominated Broadway composer, Jeff Blumenkrantz.

Beyond the Ingénue began in 2009 as a CD project while Clarke was touring with the Hollywood Concert Orchestra's *A Night at the Oscars* featuring Shirley Jones. Clarke then created a concert version of the CD for a performance in her hometown of Canton, Ohio. With encouragement from several of her colleagues Niffer, Richard Carsey and Bill Theisen are now mounting this new expanded version for premiere in the Studio Theatre. Carsey and Clarke have worked together in *Honk!* (First Stage), *Patience*, *The Music Man* (Skylight Opera Theatre) and are once again reunited for *Beyond the Ingénue*. Bill Theisen, who directed Skylight's *The Music Man* will join the duo as director.

"I am thrilled to be working with two such talented performers again. I could not picture any duo better suited to kick off the season's first Studio show!" says Bill Theisen.

SYNOPSIS SUMMARY:

Beyond the Ingénue pays homage to the golden-voiced sopranos Niffer Clarke grew up idolizing. These musical theatre icons endowed the ingénue - the "girl-next-door" - with wit, spine and spirit. As their careers progressed, they also re-invented themselves, and their journeys have inspired Niffer on her own voyage of self-discovery and revelation. *Beyond the Ingénue* is an evening of glorious music, fun stories, and Niffer's amusing personal tales of touring with Shirley Jones!

KEY BIOGRAPHIES:

Niffer Clarke – Niffer's Skylight credits include Marian in *The Music Man*, Daisy in *Adding Machine*, Mabel in *Pirates of Penzance*, Patience in *Patience* and Anna Held in *Tintypes*. Off-Bway: *Bells Are Ringing* (dir. Kathleen Marshall), *Adding Machine* (dir. David Cromer); NYC/Regional include: *Garbo & Me*, *Honk!* (First Stage), *A Little Night Music*, *She Loves Me*; Film/TV: *Meet the Robinsons* (Walt Disney Pictures), *Angel of Death* (Discovery Channel), *Only Criminals*; Concerts: *Night at the Oscars with Shirley Jones*, London Symphony Orchestra; Recordings: *Adding Machine*, *Meet the Robinsons*, *They Might Be Giants*, debut solo album *Beyond the Ingénue* available on iTunes, CDBaby and at www.NifferClarke.com.

Richard Carsey (Music Director) – Richard Carsey is a conductor, arranger, pianist and actor. He provided music coaching for the recent Broadway production of *House of Blue Leaves* starring Ben Stiller and Edie Falco, was music supervisor for Josh Schmidt's *A Minister's Wife* at Lincoln Center Theater and conducts the cast recording which is available on PS Classics. In 2010 he was music director for the first national tour of the new musical *Little House on the Prairie*, starring Melissa Gilbert and directed by Francesca Zambello. For eight seasons he was the Artistic Director of Skylight Opera Theatre, and has conducted over 60 productions here including the world premiere of Richard Wargo's opera *Ballymore*, Argento's *Waterbird Talk*, Britten's *Rape of Lucretia* and Mechem's *Tartuffe*. Other music direction: *Mikado*—Syracuse Opera; *Producers* (first regional), *Once Upon a Time in New Jersey* (world premiere), *Brigadoon*—Marriott; *The Happy Elf* (Harry Connick—world premiere), *The Wiz* (also orchestrator for premiere of Theater for Young Audiences version)—First Stage Milwaukee. As an actor, he has appeared in *2 Pianos, 4 Hands* at the Milwaukee Rep, Actors' Theater of Louisville; Dallas Theater Center; Laguna Beach Playhouse; Hartford Stage Company (Conn. Critics Circle Award), and the Gilmore International Keyboard Festival. Also *Souvenir* (Skylight), *Dirty Blonde* (Chamber Theater), *Old Wicked Songs* (In Tandem). Later this season he will conduct *Sunday in the Park with George*.

Bill Theisen (Stage Director) - Bill Theisen made his professional theatre debut as a performer at the Skylight Opera Theatre in 1981 and began his tenure as Artistic Director in 2004. He has directed over 100

productions for theatre and opera companies from coast to coast. Recent directing credits include *The Pirates of Penzance* for Santa Fe Opera, *Showboat* with Gateway Playhouse, *H.M.S. Pinafore* at Lyric Opera of Kansas City, *Sweeney Todd* with Cleveland Opera, *The Fourth Wall* at Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, *The Magic Flute* for Virginia Opera, *A Little Night Music* with Seaside Music Theater, *The Mikado* with Opera Carolina, *Seussical* at First Stage Children’s Theatre and *Into The Woods* at the Capitol Center for the Performing Arts. Skylight Directing credits include *The Figaro Story*, *La Boheme*, *Souvenir*, *South Pacific*, *The Tragedy of Carmen*, *Animal Crackers*, *The Spitfire Grill*, *La Cenerentola*, *The Mikado*, *Patience*, *The Pirates of Penzance* and the world premiere of *Over the Moon with Gilbert and Sullivan*. Mr. Theisen works frequently on the university level as a Guest Director and Lecturer. He served as Director of Opera at the University of Iowa and has continued that relationship for the past 12 years. Other university credits include Carnegie Mellon University, Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, Florida State University, Portland State University, Manhattan School of Music, Utah State University, Northwestern University, NYU and St. Ambrose University where he is also serves on the advisory committee to the theatre department. Bill was the Artistic Director of the Capitol Center for the Performing Arts in Upstate New York and is an adjudicator for arts programming on PBS.

FULL CAST

Niffer Clarke
Richard Carsey

PRODUCTION TEAM

Stage Director.....Bill Theisen
Lighting Designer.....Ryan Bertelson
Stage Manager.....Kelly Turner

MUSICAL NUMBERS

Act I

"In My Own Little Corner"
Oklahoma Medley
"Will He Like Me"
"I Wish It So"
Barbara Cook Medley
"My White Knight"
My Fair Lady Medley
"The Sweetest Sounds"/"I Can See It"

Act II

"I Have Confidence"
"What’s the Use of Wond’rin"
"In Buddy’s Eyes"
"Is It Really Me?"
"Past My Prime"
"The Sound of Music"
"Crazy World"
"Beyond the Ingénue"
(World Premiere composition by
Jeff Blumenkrantz)

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

December 30 – January 8, 2011

<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thurs</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>	<i>Sunday</i>
December				
28	29	30 <i>7:30 pm</i>	31c <i>4:00 pm</i> <i>8:00 pm</i>	
January				
				<i>1si</i> <i>2:00pm</i>
<i>4si</i> <i>2:00 pm</i> <i>7:30 pm</i>	5 <i>7:30 pm</i>	6 <i>7:30 pm</i>	7 <i>7:30</i>	<i>8si</i> <i>2:00 pm</i>

si = Skylight Insights are an engaging opportunity to learn more about the production. They are presented before every Wednesday and Sunday performance in the Salon.

Performances of *Beyond the Ingénue* will take place December 30 – January 8, 2011 in the Cabot Theatre at the Broadway Theatre Center, 158 N. Broadway in the Historic Third Ward of Milwaukee. **Tickets are \$22.50 - \$65.50 (plus tax)** and can be purchased in person at the **Broadway Theatre Center Box Office** or by calling **(414) 291-7800** Monday – Sunday from noon – 6:00 p.m. Tickets may be purchased online at **www.skylightopera.com**. Group, student, senior and other discounts are available.