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MEDIA RELEASE

Skylight Announces One Night Only “CelebRAYtion” Fundraiser to Benefit Skylight Music Theatre and Honor Artistic Director Ray Jivoff

Thursday, June 13 at Broadway Theatre Center

Milwaukee, Wis. (May 1, 2019 rev. May 30) — Skylight Music Theatre will host “CelebRAYtion” honoring Artistic Director Ray Jivoff on Thursday, June 13, beginning at 5 p.m. in the Broadway Theatre Center, 158 N. Broadway in Milwaukee’s Historic Third Ward.

The event is a fundraiser for Skylight Music Theatre, Jivoff’s “artistic home.” He began at Skylight as an actor in 1990, joined the staff in 1999 as Skylight’s first education director, became associate artistic director in 2009, interim artistic director in 2016 and artistic director in 2017. Jivoff is directing the final show of Skylight’s current 2018-19 Season, *Kiss Me, Kate* running May 17 through June 16. He leaves Skylight in June 2019.

“It will be fun to celebrate with my Skylight family and friends at the event, and it is meaningful to me that it will benefit Skylight,” said Jivoff. “I am certain it will be a night to remember, highlighting some of the incredible talent I have had the privilege to work with all these years.

“Leaving Skylight is bittersweet,” he added. “It is hard to leave my artistic home and a place where I’ve been working for 30 years and on the staff for 20. But that is also a really long time, so I am gratified by all I’ve been able to do in that time.”

Taste of the Wards and Star-Studded Concert

CelebRAYtion will begin at 5 p.m. with “Taste of the Wards” food stations set up throughout the Broadway Theatre Center, hosted by nearby restaurants from the Third and Fifth Wards and surrounding areas, including Blue Bat Kitchen & Tequilaria, City Lights Brewing Co., Cubanitas, Fauntleroy, Hotel Madrid, Hudson Business Lounge, Indulge, Meraki, Onesto, Great Lakes Distillery and Twisted Path Distillery.

A concert performance in celebration of Jivoff begins at 7:30 p.m. in Skylight’s Cabot Theater. The concert features more than 35 performers who have worked with Jivoff throughout his career as a director, actor and in his work leading Skylight’s Education Department.

Among the special announced guests for the concert are Jack Forbes Wilson and Kay Stiefel who performed in numerous productions and cabarets with Jivoff, members of the cast of *Hair*, which Jivoff directed in 2014,

and performances from *KidsWrites*, a show that creates songs from uncorrected stories and poems written by MPS students. Jivoff recently produced his 20th *KidsWrites*.

Among the Skylight favorite performers scheduled to appear are (in alphabetical order) Ryan Cappleman, Cynthia Cobb, Karen Estrada, David Flores, Sean Jackson, Chris Klopatek, Diane Lane, Rick Pendzich, Jill Anna Ponasik, Rana Roman, and Andrew & Susan Varela. Jivoff will also perform, including a reprise of the song “Mr. Cellophane” from *Chicago*, and selections from other shows.

Special Surprises and Silent Auction

There will also be special surprises, a wine pull, and both a live and silent auction. Auction items include props, costumes, scenic elements and posters selected by Jivoff and Skylight Properties Director Lisa Schlenker. The night will conclude with an after party at 9 p.m. in the Skylight Bar & Bistro on the 2nd floor.

Career Highlights

Jivoff started as an actor at Skylight in 1990 in *Girl Crazy*. After performing with the company for nine years, he was hired as its first Education Director in 1999. He became Skylight’s Associate Artistic Director in 2009, Interim Artistic Director in 2016 and Artistic Director in 2017.

Among the many highlights of Jivoff’s career at Skylight are creating the Enlighten program, which includes an in-depth partner school program in eight MPS schools, two touring shows (*The Standard Songbook* and *KidsWrites*), in-school workshops and residencies and the annual *High School Musical Celebration*, which features hundreds of area high school students performing on the Cabot Theatre stage. He also initiated *Insights*, Skylight’s pre-show talk series, created in-depth audience guides, coordinated Skylight’s cabaret series and is proud that the summer music theatre workshop for high school students was restarted in 2018.

At Skylight Jivoff directed *Kiss Me, Kate*, *Pippin*, *Urinetown*, *Hair*, *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well* and *Living in Paris* and *Sing me a Story*. He has performed in over 25 productions at Skylight, in roles from Harpo Marx to Mr. Zero to the patter men in Gilbert and Sullivan productions. He recently starred as Albin in *La Cage Aux Folles* alongside longtime Skylight favorite, Norman Moses. He has also worked as an actor and director at numerous other area theatres including First Stage and Milwaukee Repertory Theater.



Jivoff has been active in the theatre community as an actor, teacher and director since moving to Milwaukee in 1988. He received both a BA in Theatre and his teacher’s credential in secondary education from San Francisco State University. Jivoff created the Next Actors Summer Theatre for Youth, a developmental music theatre project for high school students at Next Act Theatre and directed the program for eight years. He was the theatre director at Catholic Memorial High School in Waukesha for twelve years, directing over 20 productions. He has directed at many schools and colleges in the area including UW-Milwaukee, Carroll College, Marquette University, and Milwaukee High School of the Arts.

“I appreciate the opportunities I’ve had at Skylight and am proud of the work I’ve done. I leave with mixed emotions, but the time has come to make a life with less pressure and stress,” said Jivoff. “Although I don’t want to be behind a desk anymore, I plan to continue working as a freelance artist.”

Event Information & Tickets

CelebRAYtion is one night only, Thursday, June 13 at the Broadway Theatre Center, 158 N. Broadway in Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward. Orchestra tickets for *CelebRAYtion* are \$100 (\$70 tax-deductible contribution); Dress Circle (first balcony) tickets are \$75 (\$45 tax-deductible contribution) and Gallery (second balcony) tickets are \$50 (\$20 tax-deductible contribution). All tickets include Taste of the Wards food stations located throughout the Broadway Theatre Center from 5 to 7:15 p.m.

Deadline Extended! Tickets are limited and must be purchased by Friday, June 7, 2019. Tickets can only be purchased online at www.skylightmusictheatre.org/celebraytion or by sending a check payable to Skylight Music Theatre, 158 N. Broadway, Milwaukee, Wis. 53202. *Tickets are not available at the Box Office or by phone.* For more information or sponsorship inquiries call Deanna Gonzalez at (414) 299-4953 or email DeannaG@skylightmusictheatre.org

About Skylight Music Theatre

Skylight Music Theatre will celebrate its 60th Anniversary Season in 2019-2020. Its mission since 1959: To bring the full spectrum of music theatre works to a wide and diverse audience in celebration of the musical and theatrical arts and their reflection of the human condition. Skylight presents productions "Skylight Style" – bringing fresh approaches or interesting twists to music theatre works, creating meaningful connections, not only between the characters on stage but with the audience as well. The beautiful, intimate Cabot Theatre allows audiences to feel close to the powerful emotions on stage.