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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Skylight Music Theatre Announces Creative Team, Cast and One Day Sale for Holiday 2019 Production of Disney's *Newsies* Broadway Musical**

*Performances November 15 – December 22, 2019 in the beautiful Cabot Theatre*

#### ***One Day Sale for 25% Off Tickets on Monday, July 15***

**Milwaukee, Wis.** (July 8, 2019) — Skylight Music Theatre today announced members of the creative team and cast for Skylight's holiday show, Disney's *Newsies*, running November 15 through December 22, 2019. This family-favorite Broadway musical will be presented in the beautiful Cabot Theatre at the Broadway Theatre Center, 158 N. Broadway, in Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward.

#### ***One Day Ticket Sale Monday, July 15***

On Monday, July 15 there will be a one-day sale offering 25% off single adult 'A' level tickets to *Newsies*. Call the Box Office (414) 291-7800 or visit at 158 N. Broadway from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., or online at [www.skylightmusictheatre.org](http://www.skylightmusictheatre.org) from 7 a.m. – 11:59 p.m. Use promo code NYC25.

Based on the 1992 Disney motion picture and inspired by a true story, *Newsies* was a 2012 Broadway hit with a Tony Award-winning score by Alan Menken (*Little Shop of Horrors*, *Sister Act*) and Jack Feldman and a book by Tony Award winner Harvey Fierstein (*Kinky Boots*). Featuring songs "Carrying the Banner," "Seize the Day," and "Santa Fe," *Newsies* has non-stop thrills and a timeless message, perfect for the whole family.

Set in turn-of-the-century New York City, *Newsies* is the rousing tale of Jack Kelly, a charismatic newsboy and leader of a band of teenaged newsies who dream of a better life far from the hardship of the streets. When titans of publishing raise distribution prices at the newsboys' expense, Jack rallies newsies from across the city to fight for what's right and seize the day.

#### ***Director Molly Rhode Returns to Skylight***

Molly Rhode will direct. Rhode directed Skylight's record-breaking productions of *Annie* (2017), *Les Misérables* (2013), and *The Sound of Music* (2012).

“This story is set at the turn-of-the-century, but it doesn’t feel far away,” said Rhode. “The way these young people stand up and say ‘listen to me!’ is happening right now, all across the globe. It is not a nostalgia piece. Its relevance and inspirational power are pertinent today. *Newsies* is not only exhilarating and triumphant Broadway musical entertainment, it shares a message of protest and persistence.”

### ***Based on the Newsboy Strike of 1899***

*Newsies* is inspired by the real-life “Newsboy Strike of 1899,” when newsboy Kid Blink led a band of orphan and runaway newsboys on a two-week-long action against Pulitzer, Hearst, and other powerful newspaper publishers. *Newsies* addresses age-old themes of social injustice, exploitative labor practices, and David-versus-Goliath struggles as the young learn to harness their power against corruption.

Following the film’s 1992 theatrical release with a screenplay by Bob Tzudiker & Noni White (*Tarzan, 102 Dalmatians*) and subsequent DVD releases, *Newsies* has grown into a cult phenomenon. Originally produced on Broadway by Disney Theatrical Productions in 2012, this production marks the first time for Skylight.

*Newsies* features a live orchestra and cast of 24. Marco Tzunux will make his Skylight Music Theatre debut in the role of Jack Kelly. Tzunux has appeared regularly on Chicago stages, including Porchlight Music Theater, Drury Lane and Paramount Theatre. Among the other principal roles will be Rachael Zientek as Katherine Plumber. Zientek last appeared at Skylight Music Theatre as Hope in *Urinetown, the Musical* (2018). Also returning to Skylight is Lee Palmer playing Pulitzer, who was previously seen at Skylight in *Once on This Island* (2015). Making their Skylight debuts are Jordan Arrasmith (Crutchie), Nicholas Parrott (Davey) and Natalie Harris (Medda Larkin). Also making their Skylight debuts are Abram Nelson and Edward Owczarski, who will rotate in the role of Les.

Music Director for the show is Christie Chiles Twillie, who returns to Skylight after music directing *Five Guys Named Moe* (2019), which garnered her the Footlights 2019 Award for Best Musical Direction. Rhode is also collaborating with choreographer David Roman, who teaches for the Milwaukee Ballet and was recently seen in *Pippin* (2018) and *In the Heights* (2014) at Skylight.

### ***Young Performers from Area Schools Join Cast***

Skylight showcased local young performers playing characters their own ages in *Hairspray* (2018) and *Annie* (2017). *Newsies* will continue that tradition with 10 young performers portraying the newsies. Among the schools represented by the young performers are Hamilton High School, Kettle Moraine School for Arts and Performance, Marquette University High School, Pius XI, St. Thomas Aquinas Academy, University Lake School, Whitefish Bay Middle School, Whitefish Bay High School, and Whitnall High School.

*The New York Times* said *Newsies* was “A stirring crowd pleaser. Terrific songs – buoyant melodies by Alan Menken and rousing lyrics by Jack Feldman – and a sweet, funny, emotionally satisfying book by Harvey Fierstein. A musical worth singing about! Even for the cynics among us, *Newsies* has a stirring, old-school sincerity that’s hard to resist.”

*The Daily News* called it “An exhilarating jolt of energy” and *Variety* described it as “Exuberant! It’s a vigorous David-and Goliath tale rendered with old-school skill.” *Entertainment Weekly* said “Stop the presses! *Newsies* is an irresistible, high energy winner!” The show is recommended for ages 8 and up.

*Disney’s Newsies*

*The Broadway Musical*

November 15 – December 22, 2019

Music by Alan Menken, Lyrics by Jack Feldman, Book by Harvey Fierstein

Based on the Disney film written by Bob Tzudiker and Noni White. Originally produced on Broadway by Disney Theatrical Productions

First time at Skylight

*Recommended for ages 8 and up*

Skylight Music Theatre announced the following members of the *Newsies* creative team:

Stage Director ..... Molly Rhode  
 Music Director..... Christie Chiles Twillie  
 Choreographer ..... Molly Rhode / David Roman  
 Costume Designer.....Jason Orlenko  
 Lighting Designer.....Herrick Goldman

Skylight Music Theatre announced the following *Newsies* principal cast members:

Jack Kelly ..... Marco Tzunux  
 Katherine Plumber ..... Rachael Zientek  
 Crutchie ..... Jordan Arrasmith  
 Davey ..... Nicholas Parrott  
 Medda Larkin ..... Natalie Harris  
 Pulitzer ..... Lee Palmer\*  
 Les ..... Abram Nelson/Edward Owczarski

\*Denotes member of Actors' Equity Association

**BIOGRAPHIES**

**Molly Rhode** (Stage Director) is Associate Artistic Director at Northern Sky Theater in Door County, Wis. where she’s in charge of new play development and has participated in 18 world premieres since 2007. She received her degree in Playwriting and Directing from Southern Methodist University but grew up in Wisconsin. She’s a product of Milwaukee High School of the Arts and First Stage Theater Academy. Rhode is proud to call Skylight Music Theatre one of her artistic homes where she’s directed *The Sound of Music*, *Les Misérables*, and *Annie*. She also performed in many productions in the Cabot Theatre, favorites including Ulla in *The Producers* and Sally Bowles in *Cabaret*. She directs and acts all across the state and is a huge cheerleader of the Wisconsin theater community.

**Christie Chiles Twillie** (Music Director) made her Skylight debut as music director for *Five Guys Named Moe* (2019), winning her the 2019 Footlights Award for Best Musical Direction. Since moving to Chicago, she has piano conducted over 30 productions. Recent projects: piano conductor for the Chicago Premiere of *Minnie’s Boys* (Porchlight), Music Director for the U.S. premiere of *Hopelessly Devoted*, (Piven), and Music Director for an all female workshop of *The Color Purple* (Definition Theatre) with the show’s original Broadway Director Gary Griffin. In 2017, she earned Best Music Direction nominations for her original score for *Yellowman* and *Big Fish: The Musical*.

**David Roman** (co-choreographer) At Skylight, David has been seen in *Pippin* (2018) and *In The Heights* (2014). He has spent the last 18 years sharing his time as a performer for Royal Caribbean International and training the

next generation at various locations including the Milwaukee High School of the Arts, Lake Shore Dance and the Milwaukee Ballet School and Academy.

**PRINCIPALS**



**Marco Tzunux** (Jack Kelly) is making his Skylight debut. Hailing from Fort Lauderdale, Fla., he is an alum of the Chicago College of Performing Arts. Regional credits include: Tulsa in *Gypsy* at Porchlight Music Theater, Wickersham Brother in *Seussical* at Drury Lane, and *TRU* at Greenhouse Theater, *Altar Boyz* at Theo Ubique Cabaret Theater, *HAIR* at Mercury Theater Chicago, *Head Over Heels* at Kokandy Productions, *The Producers* at Paramount Theatre, and on TV's *Chicago Fire*.



**Rachael Zientek** (Katherine Plumber) returns to Skylight after playing Hope in *Urinetown, The Musical* (2018) and being awarded Skylight's 2018 Lee Dougherty Ross Debut Artist Award. She was recently seen as Althea in *Annie Jump and the Library of Heaven* at Renaissance Theaterworks and as Medium Alison in *Fun Home* at Forward Theater. This fall, she will be seen in *Unnecessary Farce* at Milwaukee Chamber Theatre and *Elephant & Piggie's "We Are In A Play!"* at First Stage Children's Theater.



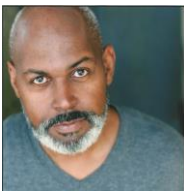
**Jordan Arrasmith** (Crutchie) makes his Skylight Music Theatre debut by living out a childhood dream of playing the role of Crutchie. Prior to *Newsies* at Skylight, he will perform the roles of Buttons/Spot Conlon in *Newsies* at Timber Lake Playhouse. In Wisconsin he was seen as Ralph Malph in *Happy Days: A New Musical* at The Palace Theater in The Dells. Other regional credits include *Mamma Mia* and *Ghost* at The Winnepesaukee Playhouse.



**Nicholas Parrott** (Davey) will make his Skylight Music Theatre debut. Originally from Gurnee, Ill., he holds a BA in Theatre Arts and Dance from Marquette University. Recent credits include: *West Side Story* (Hope Summer Repertory Theatre), *The Old Man and the Old Moon* (HSRT), *Shakespeare in Love* (HSRT), *Twelfth Night* (Summit Players Theatre), *Little Women* (MU) and *Anything Goes* (MU).



**Natalie Harris** (Medda Larkin) A performer, director and voice/acting teacher, Harris starred in the Lena Baker Story biopic and acted in the movie *The Honeydripper*, starring Danny Glover. She is a recording artist and songwriter who released her debut album entitled, "We Believe" in 2017. She has shared the stage with many Gospel greats from Tasha Cobbs to Donnie McClurkin.



**Lee Palmer\*** (Pulitzer) last seen at Skylight as Tonton in *Once on this Island* (2015). Other Wisconsin credits: *A Murder is Announced* and *Ghost, The Musical* at Peninsula Players; *Race*, and *The Exonerated* at Next Act Theatre; *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Benito Cereno* at Milwaukee Repertory Theater; *A Few Good Men* and *The Millionairess* at Milwaukee Chamber Theatre. Regional credits include *Jitney* at Congo Square Theatre (Jeff Award nom., Black Excellence Award winner); and *Two Trains Running* at the Goodman Theatre. TV: *Empire*, *Chicago Fire*, Spike Lee's *CHI-RAQ*.



**Abram Nelson** (Les) has appeared at First Stage as Stink in *Judy Moody and Stink* and as Charlie in *Best Christmas Pageant Ever*.




**Edward Owczarski** (Les) has previously been seen at Milwaukee Rep as Tiny Tim in *A Christmas Carol* and as Teddy in *Best Christmas Pageant Ever-The Musical* with First Stage.

**PERFORMANCE INFORMATION**

Performances of *Newsies* are Friday, November 15 through Sunday, December 22 in the Cabot Theatre, Broadway Theatre Center, 158 N. Broadway in the Historic Third Ward of Milwaukee.

TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<b>NOVEMBER</b>	13	14	15 7:30	16 7:30	17 ■ 2:00
19	■ 7:30	21 7:30	22 7:30	23 2:00/7:30	24 ■ 2:00
26 6:30	27	28	29 2:00/7:30	30 2:00/7:30	
TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<b>DECEMBER</b>					1 ■ 2:00
3	■ 2:00	5 7:30	6 6g 7:30	7 2:00/7:30	8 ■ 2:00
10	■ 2:00/7:30	12 7:30	13 7:30	14 2:00/7:30	15 ■ 2:00
17	■ 7:30	19 7:30	20 7:30	21 2:00/7:30	22 ■ 2:00

■ **Skylight Insights** Join us for free in-depth discussions with special guests.  **American Sign Language** (Fri. Dec 6)

**ONE DAY SALE**

Monday, July 15 is a one day sale for 25% off single adult 'A' level tickets to *Newsies*.

- SPECIAL HOURS! The Box Office will be open 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
- Call (414) 291-7800 or visit 158 N. Broadway.
- One Day Sale available online at [www.skylightmusictheatre.org](http://www.skylightmusictheatre.org) from 7 a.m. – 11:59 p.m.
- Promo code: NYC25. Offer only valid July 15. Limit 8 tickets. Not valid on previously purchased tickets. All sales FINAL. No exchanges. Other restrictions apply.

**BOX OFFICE**

Tickets available at the Broadway Theatre Center Box Office, 158 N. Broadway, by calling (414) 291-7800, or visiting [www.skylightmusictheatre.org](http://www.skylightmusictheatre.org)

- Box Office hours on Monday, July 15 are 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
- Summer box office hours are Monday – Saturday, noon - 5 p.m. Beginning Monday, August 5, 2019 Box Office hours will be noon - 6 p.m. The Box Office window is also open two hours prior to performances.
- Group discounts are available for parties of 10 or more by calling (414) 299-4964 or email [morganh@skylightmusictheatre.org](mailto:morganh@skylightmusictheatre.org)
- Please let the Box Office know if accessible seating is needed, or if patrons will have a wheelchair or walker.
- For more information visit [www.skylightmusictheatre.org](http://www.skylightmusictheatre.org), email [info@skylightmusictheatre.org](mailto:info@skylightmusictheatre.org)

### **SPECIAL EVENTS**

**Skylight Insights.** Free in-depth discussions with special guests one hour before Wednesday and Sunday performances.

**ASL Performance.** *Newsies* will be interpreted in American Sign Language on Friday, Dec. 6 at 7:30 p.m. Call Skylight Music Theatre's Box Office at (414) 291-7800 and mention ASL performance for seating in the appropriate section.

### **SKYLIGHT BAR & BISTRO**

Skylight Bar & Bistro is located on the second floor of The Broadway Theatre Center. Open two hours before each performance featuring gourmet dining and fine wine by Indulge Wine Room. Reservations are recommended at [www.skylightmusictheatre.org/bistro](http://www.skylightmusictheatre.org/bistro) or by calling (414) 291-3773. Counter service is available without reservations.

### **PARKING VOUCHERS**

Purchase \$5 discounted parking vouchers from the Broadway Theatre Center Box Office for use in the Historic Third Ward parking garage at 212 N. Milwaukee Street (one block east and one block north). Vouchers are valid between 5 p.m. and 11:59 p.m. for evening performances only. Voucher sales stop 30 minutes before showtime and are not available during intermission. *No refunds.*

**Newsies is sponsored** by Baird Private Asset Management. **Skylight Music Theatre's 2019-2020 Season is sponsored** by the United Performing Arts Fund, the Wisconsin Arts Board and CAMPAC, the Milwaukee County Arts Fund.

### **About Skylight Music Theatre**

Skylight Music Theatre celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary during the 2019-2020 season. Skylight's 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.