

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**PlayMakers Repertory Company Presents Tony Award<sup>®</sup> Winning Musical Ragtime**

Paul Green Theatre Reimagined for a 360° Immersive Experience

**Who:** PlayMakers Repertory Company

**What:** “Ragtime” Book by Terrence McNally, lyrics by Lynn Ahrens, music by Stephen Flaherty. Directed by Zi Alikhan.

**When:** November 20 to December 15, 2019; Opening Night & Press Opening Saturday, November 23, 8:00 p.m.

**Where:** PlayMakers Repertory Company, 120 Country Club Road, Chapel Hill, NC

**Tickets:** Start at \$15; Students tickets start at \$10

(Chapel Hill, NC, November 13, 2019) **PlayMakers Repertory Company** proudly presents “Ragtime,” the Tony Award-winning epic musical that captures the electric, chaotic, at once hopeful and desolate world that was America at the turn of the last century. Directed with a prescient 21<sup>st</sup> century lens by Zi Alikhan in his PlayMakers debut, the production runs from November 20 to December 15.

America at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is a symphony of diverse and often clashing rhythms. Cultures collide with the influx of immigrants. The divide between rich and poor grows as industrial and financial giants loom large. Passions and tempers flare over the legacy of reconstruction that promised justice but never delivered it. Prepare to be swept away by a dynamic, immersive staging of “Ragtime” that brings the audience cheek-to-jowl with the intersecting lives of a wealthy white family, a Jewish immigrant and his daughter, and an African American ragtime musician. The Paul Green Theatre has been reimagined to create a 360° experience that envelopes the audience, puts them literally in the middle of the action, and provides a heightened ability to get inside the rollercoaster of living, breathing passions and pains of the great American experiment—one hundred years ago and today.

“I am delighted to bring to our stage the talents and genius of Zi Alikhan, our director, and Mark Wendland, our scenic designer, who are two of the most visually innovative and thoughtful artists working in American theatre today,” said Vivienne Benesch, PlayMakers’ Producing Artistic Director. “Their desire is to give the audience a true ‘walk-with-me’ experience that makes ‘Ragtime’ relevant and alive in new and unexpected ways. Add in the marvelous, über-talented Lauren Kennedy, Fergie L. Philippe, and the rest of our cast soaring on the wheels of an exquisite score, and this is truly the musical event of the season. This production will remind us all why we love the great American musical—and make us recognize its power to help us understand who we are as Americans today and how we got this way.”

“The American musical is an inherently political art form, and our theatre spaces arenas to untie our country’s tightest knots, both past and present,” said director Alikhan. “It feels like such a privilege to be making a musical that unpacks the origins of our contemporary intersections of race, ethnicity, and gender, and asks at its center ‘Who owns The American Dream?’”

Before each performance, audiences are invited to experience **North Carolina 360: VR Stories**, an immersive virtual reality experience that captures the stories of North Carolina families some here for generations some recently arrived. **North Carolina 360** is funded by UNC Humanities for the Public Good, UNC Center for Faculty Excellence, UNC Libraries Health Sciences Library, Jacob Stiglitz and Brian Batista of UNC ARVR, Department of Dramatic Art, Arts Everywhere, and PlayMakers Repertory Company.

"Ragtime" features **Lauren Kennedy** as Mother (PlayMakers debut, Broadway's "Sunset Boulevard" and "Les Miserables"), **Fergie L. Philippe** as Coalhouse Walker (PlayMakers debut, "Hamilton" National Tour), **AnnEliza Canning** as Sarah (PlayMakers debut), **Adam Poole** as Tateh ("Jump," "She Loves Me"), and **Jeffrey Blair Cornell** as Father/J.P. Morgan ("My Fair Lady," "The Tempest"). Also featuring **David Adamson** as Grandfather ("Into the Woods," "Big River"), **Sergio Mauritz Ang**, Ensemble (PlayMakers debut; "Much Ado About Nothing" at Classics in Color), **Anthony August** as Booker T. Washington (PlayMakers debut; "Fade to Black Festival" at The Landing Theatre Company), **Emily Bosco**, Ensemble ("Dairyland," "She Loves Me"), **Toshia Cunningham-Swinson** as Sarah's Friend (PlayMakers debut), **Ray Dooley** as Henry Ford ("Life of Galileo," "The Nutcracker"), **David Fine** as Younger Brother (PlayMakers debut; "The Tempest" at NC Stage Company), **Julia Gibson** as Emma Goldman ("The Cake," "Bewilderness"), **Liz Howard**, Harlem Ensemble (PlayMakers debut), **Faith Jones**, Harlem Ensemble (PlayMakers debut, "Caroline, or Change" at Raleigh Little Theatre), Sarah Keyes as Evelyn Nesbitt ("Native Son," "Life of Galileo"), **Tyrone Kaiku**, Ensemble (PlayMakers debut, "The Scottsboro Boys" at Theatre Raleigh), **Lydia Kinton** as Willie Conklin (PlayMakers debut), **Tristan Parks**, Harlem Ensemble ("Leaving Eden," "Life of Galileo"), and **Sebastiani Romagnolo** as Harry Houdini (PlayMakers debut).

The Creative Team of "Ragtime" includes: **Zi Alikhan** (Director; Associate Director, Broadway's "The Rose Tattoo"), **Mark Hartman** (Music Director; "My Fair Lady,"), **Tracy Bersley** (Choreographer; "Sense and Sensibility,"), **Mark Wendland** (Scenic Designer; Broadway's "Death of a Salesman"), **Lux Haac** (Costume Designer; "Between Two Knees" at Oregon Shakespeare Festival); **Masha Tsimring** (Lighting Designer; "My Fair Lady"), **Eric Alexander Collins** (Sound Designer; "Peter and The Starcatcher"), **NJ Agwuna** (Assistant Director), **Tristan Parks** (Assistant Choreographer); **Tia James** (Vocal Coach; "Skeleton Crew"), **Greg Kable** (Dramaturg; "Sweeney Todd"), **Jacqueline E. Lawton** (Dramaturg; "Dairyland"), and **Charles K. Bayang** (Stage Manager; "Into the Woods").

*Rated PG-13 for some adult situations and language. Please contact our Box Office for more details.*

For information and to purchase tickets, call 919.962.7529 or visit [www.playmakersrep.org](http://www.playmakersrep.org). Individual ticket prices start at \$15.

#### **Performance and Special Event Schedule:**

- **November 20–December 15, 6:00 - 7:15 p.m.** — North Carolina 360: VR Stories, a virtual reality experience, in the Paul Green Gallery.
- **November 21, 6:00 p.m.** — "The Vision Series—Directors in Conversation," a behind-the-scenes preview with members of the creative team before the evening's performance, at the Joan H. Gillings Center for Dramatic Art. Free and open to the public.
- **November 20–22, 7:30 p.m.** — Preview performances
- **November 23, 7:30 p.m.** — Opening Performance & Press Opening, with post-show Opening Night Celebration
- **November 26, 2:00 p.m.** — All-access performance for attendees with special needs, with sign language interpretation and audio description
- **November 26, 7:30 p.m.** — Community Night. General admission seating, with all tickets \$15
- **November 30, 2:00 p.m.** — Open captioned performance, with dialog, stage direction, and sound effects communicated on a "universal access" live caption unit
- **November 27–December 10**— As part of our 2019/20 Legacy | NOW season, PlayMakers is hosting a series of pre- and post-show conversations with members of the creative team, dramaturgs, local artists, scholars and cultural workers. Visit [www.playmakersrep.org/ragtime/#NOW](http://www.playmakersrep.org/ragtime/#NOW) for a complete schedule.

# PLAYMAKERS REPERTORY COMPANY

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WEB PLAYMAKERSREP.ORG

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VIVIENNE BENESCH PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

## **About PlayMakers Repertory Company:**

PlayMakers Repertory Company is North Carolina's premier professional theatre company. For more than 40 years, we have produced relevant and courageous work that tells stories from and for a multiplicity of perspectives, and creates transformational impact in our immediate and extended communities. We are proud to be part of a 100-year tradition of playmaking at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. PlayMakers has been named one of the "best regional theatres in America."

## **PlayMakers Contacts:**

- For press information and interviews, contact Diana Pineda, Director of Sales and Marketing, [dmpineda@email.unc.edu](mailto:dmpineda@email.unc.edu) or 919.962.7114
- For photos or poster art and other PlayMakers questions, please contact Rosalie Preston, Associate Director of Marketing, [rosalie@unc.edu](mailto:rosalie@unc.edu) or 919.962.6997

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