

AQUARIUS

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM ANNOUNCEMENT FOR THE WORLD PREMIERE OF POLLYANNA THE MUSICAL

Hamilton, ON. November 3, 2023 — Get ready to find your joy with the much-anticipated return of the holiday family event, *Pollyanna The Musical*.

With Book and Lyrics by Hamilton's own Steven Gallagher, Music by Linda Barnett, and directed by Robert McQueen, *Pollyanna The Musical* is based on the classic 1913 novel by Eleanor Porter. *Pollyanna The Musical* is an uplifting tale of hope triumphing over adversity, and how the power of one young girl's positivity can – and does – change the people around her. Showcased at the 2016 'From Page to Stage' Festival in London, England and shortlisted for the Playwrights Guild of Canada – Best Musical, *Pollyanna The Musical* is not to be missed!

"We can't wait to share the World Premiere of this exciting new musical on our Irving Zucker stage here at Aquarius. Linda and Steven have written a beautiful show which is sure to become a holiday favourite at theatres across the country." says Theatre Aquarius Artistic Director Mary Francis Moore

Proudly sponsored by LiUNA 837, you won't want to miss this renowned company of award-winning actors including Broadway and National Tour favourites. Plus, audiences will recognize familiar faces from Lanarkshire – Both Michelle Bardach and Adam Stevenson from the original *MAGGIE* production will return as Aunt Polly and Reverend Miller, respectively.

"Theatre Aquarius has a world class reputation, so we've been able to assemble an incredible team of artists for Pollyanna. The rehearsal hall was electric on our first day, and everyone is so excited to be here. It's a dream come true, and I can't imagine a better city or theatre to premiere Pollyanna!" says Steven Gallagher.

CAST

Emily Watt as *Pollyanna*.....*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Mirvish), *Christmas in Toyland* (Hallmark), *Holly Hobbie* (Hulu).

Michelle Bardach as *Polly*.....*Maggie* (Aquarius, Charlottetown Fest), *Elf: The Musical* (Grand Theatre), *Anne of Green Gables* (Charlottetown Fest), *Beauty and the Beast* (Arts Club).

Adam Brazier as *John Pendleton*.....*The Woman in White*, *Into the Woods* (Broadway), *The Likes of Us* (West End), *Pal Joey* (Shaw Fest), *Man of La Mancha* (Stratford Fest).

Joel Cumber as *Marvin/Ensemble*.....*Kelly v. Kelly* (Musical Stage – CanStage), *Sweeney Todd* (TIFT), *Into the Woods* (YES Theatre – STC), *Ride the Cyclone* (Tweed & Company).

Peter Fernandes as *Frank*.....*Fifteen Dogs* (Crow's), *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Brigadoon* (Shaw), *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night* (Canadian Stage).

Athan Giazitidis as *Jimmy Bean*..... *Mittens & Pants* (CBC), *The Accused* (FOX), *Elinor Wonders Why* (PBS Kids), *PJ Masks* (Hasbro/Disney+), *Mary Poppins*, *Seussical the Musical*, *Polar Express*, *Aladdin*.

Linda Kash as *Mrs. Snow/Mrs. Grey*.....*Casey and Diana* (Stratford Festival). *Seinfeld* (NBC), *Fargo* (FX), *Anne of Green Gables* (CBC), *Everybody Loves Raymond* (CBS).

Charlotte Moore as *Widow Benton*.....*Hairspray*, *The Wizard of Oz* (Mirvish), *Cabaret*, *Mary Poppins*, *I Love You You're Perfect Now Change* (Aquarius).

Keith Savage as *William*.....*Little Johnny Jones*, *Teddy and Alice* (Broadway), *Mary Poppins* (Citadel, Theatre Calgary), *The Wizard of Oz* (Grand Theatre).

Jessica Sherman as *Miss Pearl*.....*Rock 'n' Roll* (West End), *Batman Live* (World Tour), *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Japan), *Dear Evan Hansen* (Mirvish and North American Tour).

Adam Stevenson as *Reverend Miller*.....*Maggie* (Aquarius, Charlottetown Festival), *Young Frankenstein* (Stage West), *Plaid Tidings* (Neptune Theatre), *Aladdin* (Broadway).

Jenny Weisz as *Millie*.....*Grow* (Grand Theatre), *Mamma Mia* (Stage West), *Into the Woods* (Neptune Theatre), *Shrek* (Globe Theatre), *The Boys* (Prime), *Murdoch Mysteries* (CBC).

Kelsey Verzotti as *Nancy*.....*Bittergirl* (Thousand Islands Playhouse), *Anne of Green*

Gables (Charlottetown Festival), *A Christmas Carol* (Shaw Festival), *Gaslight* (Vertigo Theatre).

Ha'Keena Maneso as *Fannie/Ensemble.....Beautiful: A Carole King Musical* (Drayton), *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Tweed & Company).

Arinea Hermans as *Swing.....Cabaret* (Ovation Productions), *Elvis Has Left the Building* (Stage West), *Grow* (Grand Theatre), *Adventure of Pinocchio* (Young People's Theatre).

CHILDREN'S CHORUS

Finn Kirk (*Understudy Jimmy Bean*)

Alexa Meixner (*Understudy Pollyanna*)

Miles Avery

Sofie Greenspoon

Henry Tiller

Shaadee Vahdat

CREATIVE TEAM

Steven Gallagher, Book and Lyrics.....Acting: *The Gig* (Aquarius), Director/Playwright: *Murder at Ackerton Manor* (Tweed and Co), Actor/Playwright: *Stealing Sam* (Alberta Theatre Projects), Director: *Myth of the Ostrich* (Next Stage).

Linda Barnett, Music.... founder of *Stage Kids* that produced 17 original musicals including *The Player Principle* (Dora Nomination), *Time to Be Me* (Ontario Tour); *Come Save Today* (New Haven Summer Academy).

Robert McQueen, Director.....*Boy Falls From the Sky* (Royal Alexandra Theatre), *Man of La Mancha* (Stratford Festival), *Capriccio* (Pacific Opera), *La Boheme* (COC), *Fun Home* (Toronto Critics Award 2018).

Mark Camilleri, Supervising Music Director/Orchestrator.....Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame Gala, Kurt Browning Holiday Festival on Ice, The Canadian Tenors PBS Special.

Julie Tomaino, Choreographer.....*Elf*, *Kinky Boots*, *Beautiful* (Arts Club), *Jersey Boys*, *9 to 5*, *Once* (Citadel), *Rocky Horror* (Magnus), *Footloose*, *Grease* (Chemainus).

Michael Vieira, Associate Music Director.....*Wicked*, *Book of Mormon*, *Mamma Mia*, *Lion King*, *Beautiful*, *Bat Out of Hell* (Mirvish).

Brian Kenny, Sound Designer.....*Jersey Boys* (Citadel), *Billy Elliot*, *Little Shop of Horrors* (Stratford Festival), *Elf*, *Grow*, *Mary Poppins* (Grand Theatre).

Jareth Li, Lighting Designer.....*The Hours That Remain* (Aquarius), *Prince Caspian* (Shaw Festival), *Every Little Nookie* (Stratford Festival), *Controlled Damage* (Grand Theatre).

Cory Sincennes, Set and Costume Designer.....*Gypsy*, *Prince Caspian* (Shaw Festival), *Anne of Green Gables*, *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Charlottetown Festival), *Romeo and Juliet* (Citadel).

Kaylee Harwood, Directing Associate..... *Retold* (Musical Stage Company, Dora Nomination); *Boy Falls from the Sky* (Mirvish Productions); *Dixon Road* (Musical Stage Company).

Taran Kim, Assistant Choreographer..... *Rock of Ages* (Elgin Theatre); *White Christmas* (Shaw Festival); *Anne of Green Gables* (Charlottetown)

Kevin Bowers, Stage Manager.....*Kinky Boots*, *Once*, *Oliver!* (Mirvish), *A Little Night Music*, *Follies*, *All is Love* (Koener Hall), *Carmen*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *La Boheme*.

Jasmyne Leisemer, Assistant Stage Manager.....*Ring of Fire*, *Elf: The Musical* (Aquarius), *Retold* (Musical Stage Company), *Grease*, *West Side Story* (Drayton Entertainment).

Josephine Ho, Assistant Stage Manager.....*Ring of Fire*, *Full Monty* (Aquarius), *Bed & Breakfast*, *Rum Runners* (Lighthouse), *Leading Ladies* (Sudbury Theatre Centre).

Delaney Small, Apprentice Stage Manager.....*The Chorines*, *Turn the Page* (Theatre Sheridan), *Shirley Valentine* (Capitol Theatre), *Once* (Thousand Islands Playhouse).

Pamela Wood, Child Supervisor

Hannah Ottman, Child Supervisor

Pollyanna the Musical will premiere at Theatre Aquarius on December 6 and runs until December 23. Tickets are available through the Box Office at 905.522.7529 (toll free 1.800.465.7529), online at theatreaquarius.org, or in person at Theatre Aquarius, 190 King William Street, Hamilton.

About Theatre Aquarius:

Theatre Aquarius is recognized as a leader in Canadian theatre. A registered not-for-profit, Theatre Aquarius produces work of the highest quality, premieres new plays, develops the skills of professional artists, invests in youth and families, and contributes to the quality of life in this region. Now in its 50th season, Aquarius is a gathering place to create and share stories that provoke, delight, inspire, and transform.

-

For interviews, please contact:

Neal Miller

Director of Marketing

nmiller@theatreaquarius.org