



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (5-11-15)

NEWS RELEASE

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STAGES ST. LOUIS CELEBRATES ITS 100TH PRODUCTION WITH SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ

STAGES Also Launches New and Renewed Initiatives

(ST. LOUIS) – STAGES St. Louis celebrates its 100th production with *Smokey Joe's Café*, from the legendary rock and roll songwriting team, Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. The season begins May 29 – June 28 at the Robert G. Reim Theatre in Kirkwood. Featuring nearly 40 chart-topping hits that span over three decades of popular American music, *Smokey Joe's Café* offers a nostalgic exploration of the lives, loves, and aspirations of a group of friends who know how to rock 60s style. With enduring pop classics such as "Stand By Me," "Jailhouse Rock," "I'm A Woman," "Hound Dog," and "On Broadway," this thrilling Grammy Award-winning song sensation delivers an evening of electrifying entertainment!

Smokey Joe's Café made its theatrical debut in November 1994 at the Doolittle Theatre in Los Angeles and quickly moved to Broadway, opening in March 1995 at the Virginia Theatre. The show closed after an unprecedented 2,036 performances, distinguishing *Smokey Joe's Café* as the longest-running musical revue in Broadway history. Throughout its nearly five-year run, many celebrated pop sensations made special appearances, including Gladys Knight, Gloria Gaynor, Rick Springfield, Tony Orlando, and Ben E. King. The show was nominated for seven Tony Awards in 1995, including Best Musical. In 1996, the original Broadway cast won the Grammy Award for Best Musical Show Album. The show since has played extensively in London at the Prince of Wales Theatre, where it enjoyed another two-year run, as well as in numerous regional productions throughout the United States.

East Coast natives Jerry Leiber (1933-2011) and Mike Stoller (b.1933) began their songwriting partnership in 1950 Los Angeles at the age of 17 upon discovering their shared passion for Boogie Woogie and the Blues. Combining the intricacies of rhythm and blues with a more mainstream melodic and lyric accessibility, Leiber and Stoller infused popular American music with scores of spirited and enduring songs that transcended the team from pop amateurs to rock and roll icons. Literally hundreds of artists sang and recorded their songs, including The Coasters, Buddy Holly, Jimmy Witherspoon, The Drifters, Little Willie Littlefield, as well as Count Basie. Their infectious songwriting produced 77 hits on the US and UK Billboard Top 100 charts, including Elvis Presley's "Hound Dog," originally written for Big Mama Thornton. Leiber and Stoller share countless honors and awards, including induction into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1985 and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1987 for their substantial contributions to rock and roll and the American music scene.

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Broadway Actress Emily Afton stars as Pattie. Afton previously appeared in St. Louis at the Fox Theatre in 2013 with the National Tour of *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*. Other Broadway and National Tour credits include *Hair* and *I Love A Piano*.

New York Actor Richard Crandle stars as Victor. Crandle has performed in the National Tour of *Hairspray* and more recently has been seen on NBC's "The Sing Off" as well as the 2013 feature film, *Black Nativity* starring Jennifer Hudson. Other New York and regional credits include *In Transit*, *Hairspray*, *Native Son*, and *Cat in the Hat*.

New York Actor Josh A. Dawson stars as Ken. Dawson has appeared as Ken previously in a regional production of *Smokey Joe's Café*. Recent tour credits include Broadway Boys (Winter 2015) and Wynton Marsalis Jazz at Lincoln Center in 2013. Other regional credits include *Hair*, *Oklahoma!*, and *Cats*.

New York Actor Brent Michael Diroma stars as Michael. Diroma has performed in the North American Tour of *Avenue Q* and in Off-Broadway productions of *Cabaret*, *Quibb*, and *Musicals Tonight*. Other credits include *Memphis*, *Jersey Boys*, and *West Side Story*.

New York Actress Keisha Gilles stars as B.J. Gilles previously appeared in the National Tour of *Dreamgirls*. Other regional credits include *Sistas: The Musical*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, and *Chicago*.

New York Actor Kent Overshown stars as Adrian. Overshown has performed in the National Tours of *Memphis* and The Gershwins' *Porgy and Bess* as well as with the Philadelphia Orchestra. A familiar face in St. Louis, Overshown also has appeared in multiple productions at The Muny.

New York Actress J. Nycole Ralph stars as Brenda. Best known for her performance in the Broadway Tour of *West Side Story*, Ralph also has appeared in regional productions of *Memphis* and *Hairspray*. Other credits include the Chris Rock film, *Top Five* and the award-winning film, *Homework*.

New York Actor Jason Samuel stars as Fred. Samuel has appeared in the First National Tour of *The Wedding Singer* and in regional productions of *Elf*, *The Full Monty*, *Smokey Joe's Café*, and *Aida*.

New York Actress Bronwyn Tarboton returns to STAGES, starring as DeLee. Tarboton recently appeared last season in STAGES' 2014 productions of *They're Playing Our Song* and *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. Other regional credits include *Oliver!*, *A Chorus Line*, and *Kiss Me Kate*.

Rounding out the cast are **Christian Bufford** (Swing) and **Morgan Amiel Faulkner** (Swing).

The creative team for the production includes: **Stephen Bourneuf** (Direction and Choreography), **Peggy Taphorn** (Co-Choreography), **Lisa Campbell Albert** (Musical Direction), **James Wolk** (Scenic Design), **Brad Musgrove** (Costume Design), **Matthew F. McCarthy** (Lighting Design), **Stuart M. Elmore** (Orchestral Design).

-Complete biographical information is listed on STAGES' website at www.stagesstlouis.org
New York Casting is done by Scott Wojcik and Gayle Seay of Wojcik/Seay Casting.

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STAGES would like to thank Corporate Sponsor Edward Jones as well as Production Sponsors Merry and Jim Mosbacher and the Piening Family Fund.

Single tickets are on sale now and prices range from \$20 - \$57. STAGES performs in the intimate, 377-seat Robert G. Reim Theatre at the Kirkwood Civic Center, 111 South Geyer Road in St. Louis, MO. For more information or to purchase tickets call 314-821-2407 or visit www.StagesStLouis.org.

STAGES ALSO LAUNCHES NEW AND RENEWED INITIATIVES

For its 2015 Season, STAGES St. Louis is excited to announce new and renewed initiatives to encourage audience attendance.

For New Patrons – New!

FREE TIX @ SIX

- Sample what STAGES has to offer. From 6:00PM – 6:30PM, new patrons can receive 1 FREE ticket for that evening's performance. Based on availability. Call ahead recommended. Patron must be new to the STAGES' reservation system.

For Students

STUDENT RUSH

- High school and college students (25 and under with valid student ID) may attend at STAGES production for \$20. Tickets must be purchased in person the day of the performance only and are limited to two per individual. Subject to availability.

For Seniors

SENIOR RUSH

- Seniors (65 and older) may attend a STAGES performance for \$20. Tickets must be purchased in person the day of the performance only and are limited to two per individual. Subject to availability.

For Academy Parents – New!

ACADEMY FAMILY PRICE

- Parents of currently enrolled students of the STAGES Performing Arts Academy can purchase reduced price tickets to any performance.

Single tickets are on sale now and prices range from \$20 - \$57. STAGES performs in the intimate, 377-seat Robert G. Reim Theatre at the Kirkwood Civic Center, 111 South Geyer Road in St. Louis, MO. For more information or to purchase tickets call 314-821-2407 or visit www.StagesStLouis.org.

STAGES St. Louis is the region's foremost not-for-profit company committed to preserving and advancing the art form of Musical Theatre through excellence in performance and education. In 2015, STAGES celebrates its 29th year of producing Broadway-quality theatre, presenting 144 performances from May through October to nearly 50,000 patrons, during its mainstage season.

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STAGES ST. LOUIS is grateful for the support of the Regional Arts Commission, and has been funded in part by the Arts & Education Council. In addition, financial assistance has been provided by the Missouri Arts Council.

Media Partners: 103.3 KLOU, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and KSDK News Channel 5.

Interviews are available with the cast and/or director based on availability.

Production photos are available upon request.

Performance Schedule follows below.

SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ
The Songs of Leiber and Stoller
Robert G. Reim Theatre
Performance Schedule
May 29 – June 28, 2015

Friday	May 29	8:00 PM
Saturday	May 30	4:00 PM & 8:00 PM
Sunday	May 31	2:00 PM & 7:30 PM
Tuesday	June 2	8:00 PM
Wednesday	June 3	8:00 PM
Thursday	June 4	8:00 PM
Friday	June 5	8:00 PM
Saturday	June 6	4:00 PM & 8:00 PM
Sunday	June 7	2:00 PM & 7:30 PM
Tuesday	June 9	8:00 PM
Wednesday	June 10	2:00 PM & 8:00 PM
Thursday	June 11	8:00 PM
Friday	June 12	8:00 PM
Saturday	June 13	4:00 PM & 8:00 PM
Sunday	June 14	2:00 PM
Tuesday	June 16	8:00 PM
Wednesday	June 17	2:00 PM & 8:00 PM
Thursday	June 18	8:00 PM
Friday	June 19	8:00 PM
Saturday	June 20	4:00 PM & 8:00 PM
Sunday	June 21	2:00 PM
Tuesday	June 23	8:00 PM
Wednesday	June 24	2:00 PM & 8:00 PM
Thursday	June 25	8:00 PM
Friday	June 26	8:00 PM
Saturday	June 27	4:00 PM & 8:00 PM
Sunday	June 28	2:00 PM & 7:30 PM

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