

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: OCTOBER 6, 2015

Details: <http://www.showtunestheatre.org/>

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Showtunes Theatre Company Launches 2015-2016 Season with New Artistic Director, Matt Wolfe

*Expanded Three-Show Season: The Washingtonians; Dec. 5 – 6, 2015
Finian's Rainbow; Mar. 19 – 20, 2016 / Working; May 7 – 8, 2016*

SEATTLE, WA— Seattle-based actor and director **Matt Wolfe** recently took the reins as artistic director for **SHOWTUNES Theatre Company**. His first full day of work was Monday October 5, 2015 and he is knee-deep in preparations for the start of the expanded three-show 2015-2016 Season. On December 5th *The Washingtonians* will kick things off by performing *Songs We Know*; it will be their first concert after a 12-year hiatus and more than 65 chorus members are expected to participate.

At a late September fundraising event Martin Charnin, who joined SHOWTUNES Theatre Company as artistic director in 2010 after a restructure, explained his decision to step down, "I've been honored to be a part of SHOWTUNES' grand and noble purpose for the past six years. However, I am now living and working in New York; what seems prudent is to have a hands-on Seattle-based artistic director continuing in my position. Maggie Stenson Pehrson and I realized soon after Matt Wolfe joined the board that he would be an ideal successor. He imbues the right amount of talent, dedication, and knowledge. His passion and energy are devout. I will happily remain on the board, and am only a call, text, email, or Skype away. The excitement around this season is palpable. I am confident that this organization has a bright future in Matt's extremely capable hands."

Company co-founder and Executive Producer Maggie Stenson Pehrson continued, "I'm so grateful to Martin and deeply appreciate his abiding belief in our mission and goals. I count on his continued friendship and guidance as we head into our 16th year. This past season, as board member, Matt spearheaded some great new programs and initiatives. I am excited to see the places SHOWTUNES will go with him as artistic director."

Phone interviews and in-person appearances are available by contacting Jennifer Rice at 206-285-5175.

About Matt Wolfe

Matt Wolfe is a member of Actor's Equity with more than twenty years of theatre experience. He is a veteran of an original Broadway cast, a national tour, two original cast recordings, five Broadway development productions and countless new works for music theatre. He leads a thriving career as a

regional actor, director and theatre arts educator, while maintaining a successful on-camera and voice-over business.

During the 2014-2015 theatre season Matt dedicated his focus to directing. He interned under Artistic Director Linda Hartzell at the Seattle Children's Theatre; worked as a Board Member for SHOWTUNES Theatre Company; directed professional theatre productions of *West Side Story*, *Man of La Mancha*, and *Legally Blonde* as well as a fully produced youth theatre production of *Young Frankenstein*. He served as an assistant director under Steve Tomkins (Village Theatre) and assisted Linda Hartzell (Seattle Children's Theatre) on the world premiere of *Mwindo*.

Prior to 2014, Matt starred as "Cornelius" in the national tour of *Hello Dolly* starring Sally Struthers. He spent many months on new musical workshops in New York and Washington and returned to the 5th Avenue Theatre in Seattle to perform in *The Pirates of Penzance*. Matt made his Broadway debut in *Scandalous: The Life and Trials of Aimee Semple McPherson*, playing several roles in the ensemble and understudying George Hearn in his roles of "Brother Bob" and "James Kennedy".

Matt is committed to helping develop new musicals for the theatre. He has worked with the finest talent in Seattle as well as a long list of Tony Award-winning artists and legendary Broadway veterans including: Martin Charnin, Jack O'Brien, Jerry Mitchell, Casey Nicholaw, Marc Shaiman, Scott Wittman, Alan Menken, and Terrance McNally. His 5th Avenue Theatre credits include: *Catch Me If You Can*, *A Christmas Story*, *Disney's Aladdin* and *Saving Aimee*. He is featured as "Santa" in the song "Up on Santa's Lap" on the original cast recording of *A Christmas Story*. Matt's Village Theatre credits include: *Hello Dolly!*, *The Music Man*, *42nd Street*, *The Producers*, and *Tommy*. As an actor in Village Theatre's Festival of New Works he participated in readings and workshops for *Iron Curtain*, *Chasing Nicolette*, and *Million Dollar Quartet*. At Seattle Children's Theatre, Matt helped develop *Goodnight Moon* and *Richard Scarry's Busytown* and they are now performed for children all around the country. Matt holds a B.F.A. Magna Cum Laude in Music Theatre from Illinois Wesleyan University.

SHOWTUNES enters their 16th year and fourth full season at Benaroya Hall's intimate yet acoustically rich 500-seat Illsley Ball Nordstrom Recital Hall. They continue on in their mission to bring lesser-produced American musical theatre gems to life. On December 5 and 6 (8pm and 2pm, respectively) 2015 **The Washingtonians** perform *Songs We Know*. This beloved "choir with a sense of humor" is comprised largely of musical theater performers; it was founded in 1993 by Seattle-based composer **Scott Warrender** (*Das Barbecu! Texas Chainsaw Manicurist*). **Warrender** directs the *Songs We Know* concert and will feature the very best from his hilarious repertoire of tunes and wonderful choral arrangements. Their band, The King Counties, and a colorful cast of funny characters including Don and Fluff LeQwape and Mrs. Wilke, add to the fun.

Finian's Rainbow runs March 19 and 20, 2016. This old-fashioned musical (featuring the clever lyrics of E.Y. Harburg set to the beautiful music of Burton Lane) premiered 69 years ago on Broadway, and its scathing indictment of racism, and message of justice and social equality remains just as relevant today. "Look To The Rainbow," "Devil Moon," and "How Are Things In Glocca Morra" are but a few of the

lyrical tunes in this magical tale of Finian McLonergan, his daughter Sharon, the golden crock stolen from Og, a leprechaun, and a racist Senator.

The season closes on May 7 and 8, 2016 with *Working*, a show that is known for its dramatic book and powerful contemporary score. Based on Studs Terkel's oral history of the working class set to music by Stephen Schwartz, James Taylor, Mary Rodgers and others, *Working* presents a different look at the seemingly humdrum lives of everyday people and reveals a myriad variety of hopes, aspirations and dreams. From "Millworker" to "The Mason" to "Just A Housewife," the stories from everyday Americans working to get by in 1978 still resonate in 2015.

SHOWTUNES Season Subscription packages and single tickets are available now over the phone (206.215.4747) online (www.showtunestheatre.org), via mail (download a subscription form at www.showtunestheatre.org and mail it in) or in person at the Benaroya Hall Ticket Office on the corner of Third Avenue and Union Street. Ticket Office hours are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m.–6 p.m.; and Saturday, 1 p.m.–6 p.m.

About SHOWTUNES Theatre Company

Based in Seattle and founded in 1999, SHOWTUNES creates concert versions of the many unsung American musical theater gems. Led by Matt Wolfe (Artistic Director) and company founder Maggie Stenson Pehrson (Executive Producer), the company currently presents a three-concert season at Seattle's stunning Benaroya Hall. Pulling from the vast array of musical theatre talent in the area, SHOWTUNES has staged 28 productions to date.

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