

Portland Center Stage at

**THE ARMORY**  
PRESENTS

*Hershey Felder as*

*IRVING BERLIN*

*A New Musical Play*

**Lyrics & Music by Irving Berlin**

**Book by Hershey Felder**

**Directed by Trevor Hay**

**November 30 – December 30, 2016**

Artistic Director | Chris Coleman

*Hershey Felder as*  
***IRVING BERLIN***  
*A New Musical Play*

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**Book by Hershey Felder | Directed by Trevor Hay**

**Scenic Designers**  
**Hershey Felder &**  
**Trevor Hay**

**Lighting Designer**  
**Richard Norwood**

**Projection Designers**  
**Christopher Ash &**  
**Lawrence Siefert**

**Line Producer/  
Sound Designer**  
**Erik Carstensen**

**Production Dramaturg**  
**Meghan Maiya**

**Scenic Decoration**  
**Meghan Maiya,**  
**Jordan Hay &**  
**Emma Hay**

**Stage Manager**  
**Kelsey Daye Lutz\***

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**FEATURE** | By Benjamin Fainstein, Literary Manager

## **“Not for Just a Year, but Always” The Immortal Irving Berlin**

Composer Jerome Kern once famously remarked that “Irving Berlin has no place in American music — he *is* American music.” Such an enviable distinction could only be bestowed upon a musician with far-reaching success and a diverse body of work, and Berlin certainly fits the bill. He was born Israel Beilin in 1888 and immigrated to New York from Belarus at the age of five. After years of literally singing for his supper as a busker, he leapt to international success with his 1911 hit “Alexander’s Ragtime Band.” Throughout his lengthy career, he explored a variety of styles, from the ragtime, jazz and balladeering of Tin Pan Alley to Broadway showstoppers like “There’s No Business Like Show Business” from his musical *Annie Get Your Gun* to Hollywood hits including *Easter Parade*, *Holiday Inn* and *Blue Skies*.

Berlin’s song catalog contains nearly 1,500 tunes, more than two dozen of which topped the charts before his death in 1989. Hundreds of artists have recorded his work, including Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Ethel Merman, Dean Martin, Judy Garland, Diana Ross, Patsy Cline, Celine Dion, Bob Dylan, Jerry Garcia, Leonard Cohen, Willie Nelson, Cher, and the Muppets. His influence on American music is undeniable; his presence, ubiquitous. Here is a glimpse at the stories behind two of his most legendary songs.

## **“White Christmas”**

Berlin’s song was first broadcast on December 25, 1941, less than three weeks after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The wistful tone of “White Christmas” took on a particularly poignant significance as American soldiers found themselves fighting overseas in the years that followed. Crooner Bing Crosby’s iconic rendition of the tune became the best-selling song of all time by the end of World War II, and “White Christmas” has maintained that distinction in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. The song is also notable for being relatively secular, a fact which music scholars have pointed to as an engine for its universality. Berlin, a Jewish man, had a personal tradition that may have contributed to the yearning melancholy of the song: his infant son had died on Christmas Day 1928, and every year, Berlin spent the holiday visiting Irving Berlin, Jr.’s grave. Hundreds of musicians, from Elvis Presley to Destiny’s Child, have recorded the song since, but Crosby’s version is still the gold standard. The postwar era saw a shift away from the melodic keyboards of Tin Pan Alley toward the rebellious guitars of rock-and-roll. “White Christmas” stood at the apex of this transition, the pinnacle of an American moment that was, like a glowing yule log, slowly burning away.

## **“God Bless America”**

On November 10, 1938 — the holiday then known as Armistice Day — popular singer Kate Smith debuted a new song by Irving Berlin that has endured as a kind of unofficial national anthem. Berlin began work on “God Bless America” twenty years before Smith sang it on the radio; he had intended it as a finale for a musical revue he wrote as a recruit in the U.S. Army. The song has been the subject of controversy over the years. Some have accused it of promoting war-mongering and xenophobia, while other groups, such

as the Ku Klux Klan, have condemned its patriotism because of Berlin's status as a Jewish immigrant. But Berlin himself intended it as a peace song, and Kate Smith remarked on-air that she prayed "we shall never have another war" before she sang it. Despite mixed reactions from the public, "God Bless America" continues to be taught in schools, sung at sporting events, and performed in the wake of national tragedies. Berlin never made any money off of the song's success, a fact which perhaps adds to the evidence that he felt the song belonged to his fellow Americans rather than to himself. Since 1940, all royalty payments have been directed to the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America.

## CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

### **Irving Berlin**

#### **Lyrics and Music**

Irving Berlin wrote scores to 17 Broadway musicals, seven revues, and wrote songs for 12 classic Hollywood movie musicals. Born in Russia, he immigrated to the Lower East Side, where he started his music career as a singing waiter and soon became a lyricist, composer and music publisher. He built Broadway's The Music Box Theater in 1921, with producer Sam Harris, to present his popular Music Box Revues. A sampling of just some of the Irving Berlin standards includes "How Deep is the Ocean," "Blue Skies," "White Christmas," "Always," "Anything You Can Do (I Can Do Better)," "There's No Business Like Show Business," "Cheek to Cheek," "Puttin' On The Ritz," "A Pretty Girl is Like a Melody," "Heat Wave," "Easter Parade" and "Let's Face the Music and Dance." The Hollywood movie classics with scores by Berlin include *Top Hat*, *Follow the Fleet*, *Alexander's Ragtime Band*, *Holiday Inn* and *White Christmas*. Among his many awards were the Academy Award for

Best Song of the Year for "White Christmas" (1942) and a Special Tony Award (1963).

## **Hershey Felder**

### **Performer/Playwright/Scenic Co-Designer**

Writing in *American Theatre*, Hedy Weiss said, "Hershey Felder is in a category all his own." Over the past twenty years, he has played over 4,500 performances of his self-created solo productions at some of the world's most prestigious theaters and has broken box office records consistently. In addition to *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin*, his shows include *George Gershwin Alone* (Broadway's Helen Hayes Theatre, West End's Duchess Theatre), *Monsieur Chopin*, *Beethoven*, *Maestro Bernstein*, *Franz Liszt in Musik* and *Lincoln: An American Story*. In addition, he performs concerts of *The Great American Songbook Sing-Along* at every theater where his shows are presented. Future productions include *Our Great Tchaikovsky* (January 2017 premiere at San Diego Repertory Theatre) and the new musical, *Chosen By G-d* for which he is writing music, book and lyrics. His compositions and recordings include *Aliyah, Concerto for Piano and Orchestra; Fairytale, a musical; Les Anges de Paris, Suite for Violin and Piano; Song Settings; Saltimbanques for Piano and Orchestra; Etudes* *Thematiques for Piano*; and *An American Story for Actor and Orchestra*. Hershey is the adaptor, director and designer for the very successful play with music, *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* (presented at The Armory earlier this year), and recently produced and designed for the new musical *Louis and Keely: 'Live' at the Sahara*, directed by Taylor Hackford. Hershey has operated a full-service production company since 2001. He has been a scholar-in-residence at Harvard University's Department of Music and is

married to Kim Campbell, the first female Prime Minister of Canada.

## **Trevor Hay**

### **Director/Scenic Co-Designer**

Trevor Hay directed the world premieres of *An American Story for Actor and Orchestra*, *Abe Lincoln's Piano* and *Franz Liszt in Musik*, and associate directed Mona Golabek's *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*. He is a former member of the historic Old Globe in San Diego where, at the age of nine, his first position was selling memorabilia. Over the next 32 years, he went on to various aspects of production on more than 80 presentations, including the Broadway productions of Jack O'Brien's *Damn Yankees*, *How The Grinch Stole Christmas!*, and Twyla Tharp's *The Times They Are A-Changin'*. Included in his 23 seasons at The Old Globe were 11 seasons of the Summer Shakespeare Festival Repertory, as well as work on Tracy Letts' *August: Osage County* (directed by Sam Gold), and Hershey Felder's *George Gershwin Alone*, *Monsieur Chopin* and *Maestro Bernstein*.

## **Richard Norwood**

### **Lighting Designer**

Designs for Hershey Felder Presents: *Louis and Keely: 'Live' at the Sahara*, *Monsieur Chopin* and *Beethoven, As I Knew Him*. Richard's most recent designs include *Le Bête* and *Cookie Play* for Trap Door Theatre, and *King Hedley II* for Congo Square. Richard is the production manager for the theater at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago.

## **Lawrence Siefert**

### **Projection Co-Designer**

For over 20 years, Lawrence has been involved in theater, corporate events and film. Some of his credits include projection design for San Diego Opera's *Wozzeck* and *Moby Dick*. He is a recipient of two Telly Awards and one Davey Award for *How Do You Build Hope* (Habitat for Humanity). Lawrence has been a member of IATSE Local 1022 since 1996.

## **Christopher Ash**

### **Projection Co-Designer**

Christopher Ash is an international designer of scenery, lighting and projections for theater, dance, opera and film. Recent projects include projection design for *Carmina Burana* (Chautauqua Institution) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Guthrie Theater); scenic design for *The Fairy Tale Lives of Russian Girls* (Yale Repertory Theatre); projections for *La Traviata* (Lyric Opera of Chicago) and *Marie Antoinette* (SOHO Rep); lighting for Heidi Latsky Dance's *One Hour: Two Works* and *GiMP*; and production and lighting for Amanda Palmer's music video "Bedsong." He received his M.F.A. in set design from the Yale School of Drama.

## **Erik Carstensen**

### **Sound Designer/Line Producer**

Erik Carstensen's sound design credits include *An American Story*, *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* (2012 Ovation Award Nomination), *Franz Liszt in Musik*, *Abe Lincoln's Piano* and *Louis and Keely: 'Live' at the Sahara*. He was the master sound technician at The Old Globe in San Diego from 1997 to 2012, and has been the production engineer on over 60 productions, including *Allegiance*, *Robin and the 7 Hoods*, *A Catered Affair*, Hershey Felder's *George Gershwin*



*Alone, Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, Chita Rivera: The Dancer's Life, Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!, The Full Monty, Dirty Blonde and Floyd Collins.* Erik is a member of IATSE Local 122.

## **Meghan Maiya**

### **Production Dramaturg**

Meghan has collaborated with Hershey Felder doing biographical and historical research for new theatrical productions since 2013.

Productions include: *Hershey Felder as Franz Liszt in Musik, Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin* and *Our Great Tchaikovsky*.

Additional collaborations with Hershey Felder include production research and imagery for *Louis and Keely: 'Live' at the Sahara*; and scenic decoration for *The Pianist of Willesden Lane, Abe Lincoln's Piano* and *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin*.

## **Kelsey Daye Lutz**

### **Stage Manager**

The Armory credits include: stage manager for *Hold These Truths, The Pianist of Willesden Lane, Each and Every Thing, Forever, The Santaland Diaries, The Lion, The People's Republic of Portland* (second engagement), *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, The Typographer's Dream, The Last Five Years* and *A Small Fire*; and production assistant for *Clybourne Park, Venus in Fur, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The North Plan* and *Anna Karenina*.

Kelsey Daye is a graduate of University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She would like to thank her pups for all their unconditional love, and Shamus for being wonderful.

## **Eva Price**

### **Producer**

Eva Price's upcoming credits include *Dear Evan Hansen* (Broadway), *FOUND: A New Musical* (Philadelphia Theatre Company); and *Small Mouth Sounds* (Signature Center). Select Broadway credits include: *On Your Feet! — The Story of Gloria and Emilio Estefan*; *Peter and the Starcatcher* (five Tony Awards); *Annie* (2012 Tony Award-nominated revival); *The Merchant of Venice*, starring Al Pacino (Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle nominations); and *The Addams Family*. Noted solo shows and concerts include Benjamin Scheuer's *The Lion* and Broadway engagements of *Lewis Black*, *Carrie Fisher*, *Kathy Griffin*, *Colin Quinn* (dir. Jerry Seinfeld), *Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons*, and *The Temptations & The Four Tops*. Eva was named one of *Crain's* New York 40 Under Forty Rising Business Stars. She is the executive producer/EVP for Maximum Entertainment, a producing and general management company focusing on Broadway, Off-Broadway and touring properties.

## **Karen Racanelli**

### **Executive Producer**

Karen comes to Eighty-Eight Entertainment from Berkeley Repertory Theatre, where she worked as general manager since 1993, overseeing daily operations; and where she had the pleasure of producing several shows performed and/or directed by Hershey Felder. She has represented the League of Resident Theatres during negotiations with both Actors' Equity Association and the Union of Stage Directors and Choreographers, served on LORT's Executive Committee, and served as a panelist at several LORT meetings. Prior to her tenure at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Karen worked as an independent producer at several Bay Area theater companies, and

has served on the boards of Climate Theater, Overtone Theatre Company, Park Day School, and the Julia Morgan Center. Karen is married to Bay Area arts attorney MJ Bogatin.

### **Samantha F. Voxakis**

#### **Producer/Company Manager**

Samantha is a native of Maryland where she spent 12 memorable years working in the front office of the Baltimore Orioles. Since 2004, Sam has been responsible for the day-to-day operations of Eighty-Eight Entertainment, LLC/Hershey Felder Presents. With special thanks to her family and Mr. Felder.

### **Hershey Felder Presents**

#### **Producer**

Hershey Felder Presents is the newest division of Eighty-Eight Entertainment which was created in 2001 by Hershey Felder and is devoted to the creation of new works of musical theater. Current projects include the musical plays *Our Great Tchaikovsky*, *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin* and *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*. Recordings include *Love Songs of the Yiddish Theatre*, *Back from Broadway*, *George Gershwin Alone*, *Monsieur Chopin*, *Beethoven*, *As I Knew Him*, and *An American Story for Actor and Orchestra*.

### **Chris Coleman**

#### **Artistic Director**

Chris joined Portland Center Stage at The Armory as artistic director in May, 2000. Before coming to Portland, Chris was the artistic director at Actor's Express in Atlanta, a company he co-founded in the basement of an old church in 1988. Chris returned to Atlanta in 2015 to direct the world premiere of *Edward Foote* at Alliance

Theatre (Suzi Bass Award for Best Direction, Best Production and Best World Premiere). Other recent directing credits include the Off-Broadway debut of *Threesome* at 59E59 Theaters; a production that had its world premiere at The Armory and was also presented at ACT Theatre in Seattle. Favorite directing assignments for Portland Center Stage at The Armory include *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Three Days of Rain*, *Threesome*, *Dreamgirls*, *Othello*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Clybourne Park*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Shakespeare's Amazing Cymbeline* (which he also adapted), *Anna Karenina*, *Oklahoma!*, *Snow Falling on Cedars*, *Ragtime*, *Crazy Enough*, *Beard of Avon*, *Cabaret*, *King Lear*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Man and Superman*, *Outrage*, *Flesh and Blood* and *The Devils*. Chris has directed at theaters across the country, including Actor's Theater of Louisville, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, ACT Theatre (Seattle), The Alliance, Dallas Theatre Center, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop and Center Stage (Baltimore). A native Atlantan, Chris holds a B.F.A. from Baylor University and an M.F.A. from Carnegie Mellon. He is currently the board president for the Cultural Advocacy Coalition. Chris and his husband, Rodney Hicks – who is appearing in the new musical *Come From Away*, which opens on Broadway in March – are the proud parents of an 18-lb Jack Russell/Lab mix, and a 110-lb English Blockhead Yellow Lab.

### **Portland Center Stage at The Armory**

Portland Center Stage at The Armory is the largest theater company in Portland and among the top 20 regional theaters in the country. Established in 1988 as a branch of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the company became independent in 1994 and has been under the leadership of Artistic Director Chris Coleman since May, 2000. Around 160,000 visitors attend The Armory annually to enjoy a mix

of classical, contemporary and world premiere productions, along with a variety of high quality education and community programs. 11 productions are offered each season, in addition to roughly 400 community events created — in partnership with 170+ local organizations and individuals — to serve the diverse populations in the city. As part of its dedication to new play development, the company has produced 21 world premieres and presents an annual new works festival, JAW: A Playwrights Festival. The Northwest Stories series was recently launched to develop and produce works about, or by artists from, the Northwest region. Home to two theaters, The Armory was the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, and the first performing arts venue, to achieve a LEED Platinum rating.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Grosses bises à notre famille à Seine-Port— Pierre, Isa, Amandine et Reglisse.

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Thank you to **Michelle’s Piano Company** of Portland for their courtesy in providing the concert grand piano.

## SPONSOR STATEMENTS

### **Delta Air Lines**

Delta Air Lines is proud to sponsor Portland Center Stage at The Armory’s production of *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin*. With 29 daily flights to nine destinations, including Amsterdam, Tokyo and new service to London launching in 2017, Delta connects Portlanders not only to the arts in our home town but to destinations across America and the globe. Plan your next trip at [delta.com](http://delta.com).

## **The Holzman Foundation/Renée and Irwin Holzman**

Join us in recognizing the stellar contribution that Portland Center Stage at The Armory provides the Portland cultural arts scene. We're proud to sponsor this production that showcases the genius and talent of both Irving Berlin and Hershey Felder. Enjoy! Enjoy!

## **Doug and Teresa Smith**

We are happy to sponsor *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin* at The Armory this year. It is our eighth year as play sponsors of Portland Center Stage at The Armory and we couldn't imagine an organization more deserving of our financial support. Please enjoy the show!

## **Helen Stern**

I take pride in sponsoring a show each season. Jerry and I usually chose one centered on music. To have this opportunity to be associated with the story of "America's Composer" — Irving Berlin — fills my heart with joy, and my soul with pride. For 21 years, my late husband, Jerry Stern, and I have given our support to Portland Center Stage at The Armory. Hershey Felder's musical performance, presented with great feeling and talent, is a perfect showcase for our favorite songs.

## **LEAD CORPORATE CHAMPION**

### **Umpqua Bank**

Actors take chances. Sometimes they work. Sometimes they don't. But none of these actors would be on stage tonight without taking chances. It's part of growth, and we're all made to grow. That's why we're such a proud supporter of Portland Center Stage. Let this performance inspire you to take the chances that power your own growth.