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FACT SHEET FOR Avenue X

WHAT: *Avenue X*
Book and Lyrics by John Jiler
Music by Ray Leslee
Directed by Susan V. Booth

WHEN: Jan. 13 – Feb. 7, 2010

Tuesday through Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 2:30 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., Jan. 13 – Feb. 7 on the Alliance Stage. There will not be a 2:30 p.m. matinee performance on Saturday, Jan. 16.

Opening Night is Wednesday, Jan. 20 at 8 p.m. The Sunday, Jan. 24 show at 2:30 p.m. will be Audio Described. The matinee performance on Sunday, Jan. 31 at 2:30 p.m. will be Sign Interpreted

STORY: The scintillating sounds of Doo Wop and R&B collide on a Brooklyn street corner in 1963. In this revolutionary a cappella musical the Italian Americans stay on one side of Avenue X, and the African Americans on the other. Two young men from opposite sides of the street dare to bridge the divide and put together an act for a talent show at the legendary Fox Theater. In doing so, they search their segregated community for harmony in more than just their music.

TICKETS: \$25-\$60, Woodruff Arts Center Box Office, 1280 Peachtree St. NE, Atlanta, GA, 30309. 404.733.5000. Online at www.alliancetheatre.org. The Alliance Theatre is located at the Woodruff Arts Center, corner of Peachtree and 15th Street, in Midtown Atlanta. Box-office hours are 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. weekdays and noon to 8 p.m. on weekends. Tickets may be charged on Visa, Discover, American Express or MasterCard. Groups of 10 or more call 404.733.4690.

THE CAST

*Rebecca Blouin Barbara
*Lawrence Clayton Roscoe

*Jeremy Cohen
*Steve French
*J.D. Goldblatt
*Nick Spangler
*Neda Spears
J.D. Webster

Chuck
Ubazz
Milton
Pasquale
Julia
Winston

THE CREATIVE TEAM:

Susan V. Booth	Director
Danny Pelzig	Choreographer
Todd Rosenthal	Set Designer
Mariann Verheyen	Costume Designer
Ken Yunker	Lighting Designer
Clay Benning	Sound Designer
Darryl Jovan Williams	Music Director
*Pat A. Flora & *Iark Hackshaw	Production Stage Manager
Celise Kalke & Patrick McColery	Dramaturg

*Denotes a member of the Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

FREE AUDIENCE ENRICHMENT EVENTS:

Before Play

At 7 p.m. prior to performances on Jan. 19, 26 and Feb. 2.

Learn the inside story of the play, sets, costumes and playwright – whatever makes the play special and even more interesting. The talk begins one hour before the show and lasts approximately thirty minutes.

After Words

Following the 2:30 p.m. performances on Saturday, Jan. 23, 30 and Feb. 6.

The play is over and you really want to talk about it. After Words is an open dialogue that offers the audience the opportunity to explore and discuss various aspects of the play. The discussion begins when the play ends.

BIOGRAPHIES:

Susan V. Booth

(*Director, Artistic Director*) joined the Alliance Theatre in 2001. In the past eight seasons, she has initiated the Collision Project for teens, the Keneda Graduate Playwriting Competition and has produced projects including *The Color Purple*; *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*; *SISTER ACT the Musical*; *Bring in Da' Noise*, *Bring in Da' Funk*; and last season's *Jesus Christ Superstar GOSPEL*. As a director, she has directed nationally for Goodman, La Jolla Playhouse, New York Stage and Film, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Northlight Theatre, Victory Gardens, Court Theatre and many others. She holds degrees from Denison and Northwestern universities and was a fellow of the National Critics Institute and the Kemper Foundation. She has held teaching positions at Northwestern and DePaul University and serves as adjunct faculty with Emory University. She is the immediate past President of the Board of Directors for Theatre Communications Group (the national service organization for the field) and serves on

the board of the Metro Atlanta Arts and Culture Coalition. Susan is married to Max Leventhal and is the proud mother of Moira Rose Leventhal. susan.booth@woodruffcenter.org.

Rebecca Blouin

(*Barbara*) grew up as the daughter of a southern Baptist minister of music singing classically in church for as long as she can remember. By the time she was 16, she had conducted her first choir and had been an accomplished ballet dancer. Shortly thereafter she owned and operated her own ballet studio. Blouin studied vocal performance at Ole Miss and the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. She was also crowned Queen of Mississippi and went on to the Miss America Pageant where she placed in the top ten. Currently, Rebecca resides in Atlanta where she is a private vocal instructor for teenagers mostly from Paideia School and teaches yoga at Bikram Yoga Atlanta. Representative roles Include: *Jeckyl and Hyde* (Lucy); *Christmas Carol* (Belle); *Company* (April/Marta); *Hansel & Gretel* (Company/Hansel); *Odd Couple* (Gwendolyn); *Gypsy* (Louise/Gypsy); *The Fantastiks* (Louisa).

Lawrence Clayton

(*Roscoe*) Lawrence's most recent appearances include the role of the Tenor in *Too Hot to Handel* with the Baltimore Symphony under the direction of Marin Alsop. He starred as Montel/Jesus in the NYC premiere of *Jerry Springer the Opera* with Harvey Kietel at Carnegie Hall. He reprised the role this spring at the Sydney Opera House. His Broadway appearances include *Bells Are Ringing*, *It Ain't Nothin but the Blues*, *The Civil War*, *Once upon a Mattress*, *High Rollers Social Pleasure Club* and *Dreamgirls*. Off-Broadway he originated the role of the *Man in Crowns* at Second Stage. Other credits include: *Saturn Returns* and *Romance in Hard Times* at The Public Theater and Judas in *Jesus Christ Superstar* at the Paramount Theater at Madison Square Garden. Regional audiences have seen him in productions of *Big River*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Boys from Syracuse*, *Betsy Brown* and *Sophisticated Ladies*.

Jeremy Cohen

(*Chuck*) A native of New York, Jeremy is thrilled to make his Alliance Theatre debut in *Avenue X*. Other credits include *West Bank*, *UK* (La Mama, E.T.C. & Malibu Stage Company); *Maccabeat* (NY Music Theatre Festival); *The Good War* (Northlight Theatre); *Fire on the Bayou* (Milwaukee Repertory Theatre & Delaware Theatre Company); *Grafton City Blues* (Milwaukee Repertory Theatre); *Grease* (Marriott Theatre); *Sisters of Swing* (Pennsylvania Centre Stage); and *The Last Five Years* (Syndicate Productions). Film: *3 Words About New York* and *Hell's Gate*. Composer of *The Bowery Boys* (Marriott Theatre), a 2009 Chicago Jeff Award nominee for "Best New Work." Proud Northwestern graduate. This coming spring, Jeremy will be seen in the Kennedy Center's production of *Master Class*. jeremy-cohen.com

Steve French

(*Ubazz*) is honored to make his Alliance debut with *Avenue X*. New York: *Still the River Runs* (NYIT Award nomination, Outstanding Actor in a Lead Role), *Professional Skepticism*, Zootopia Theatre Co.; *A First Class Man*, Alter Ego Productions; *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*, The Alternate Theatre; Second Stage; TACT. Regional: *Camelot* and *Big River*, Goodspeed Musicals; *Othello*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Mystery of Irma Vep*, Hartford Stage Company; *A Moon For the Misbegotten*, Long Wharf Theatre; *Amadeus*, *Henry V*, *Tartuffe*, *No Man's Land*, Monomoy Theatre. Television: "All My Children." For Allison.

J.D. Goldblatt

(*Milton*) I am so stoked to be back at the Alliance. I love this theater and this city! Pat productions include: *Monstrosity* (world premiere by Lucy Thurber) at The Connelly Theater in NYC, Lear DeBessonnet director; *Venice* (workshop co-written by Matt Sax and Eric Rosen) at

The Kirk Douglas Theater in L.A., Eric Rosen director; *A Civil War Christmas* (world premiere by Paula Vogel) at The Long Wharf Theater in Conn., Tina Landau director; *Iphigenia 2.0* (NYC premiere by Charles Mee) at the Signature Theater in NYC, Tina Landau director; *Les Miserables* (Broadway Revival Original Cast), John Caird director; *Jelly's Last Jam* (Suzi Bass Award Best Lead Actor) at the Alliance Theater in Atlanta, Kent Gash director; *The Turnover* by Adam Kraar and *Bleach* by Michael Bassett at the Alliance Repertory Company in L.A. TV/Film: "Hawthorne," "NUMB3RS," *The Last Spin*, *The Wood*, BAQ-132. B.F.A. in drama from Carnegie Mellon.

Nick Spangler

(*Pasquale*) comes directly to Atlanta from the Off-Broadway cast of *The Fantasticks!* where his performance as Matt was recognized by the Theater Hall of Fame with the Eileen and Jerry Orbach Musical Theater Fellowship Award. Recent Regional: Michael John LaChiusa's *GIANT* (Signature Theater, world premiere); *Fantasy Football: the musical?* (NYMF); *La Cage* (Arvada Center); *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Gateway Playhouse). Reality TV buffs might recognize Nick from the 13th season of the CBS reality series "The Amazing Race," on which he and his sister won the million dollar prize. B.F.A. from NYU. nickspangler.com

Neda Spears

(*Julia*) is so proud to be making her debut at the Alliance Theatre with *Avenue X*. For the past 15 years, she has been in Chicago performing in productions of *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story*, *Tintypes*, *Nunsensations!* and *Schoolhouse Rock Live!* (Drury Lane Oakbrook); *Big River* and *Honk!* (Mariott-Lincolnshire); *Raisin* (Court Theatre); *Side Show* (Northlight Theatre); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre); *The Who's Tommy* (Village Players Theatre); the Chicago premiere of *Bingo! The Winning New Musical* (Apollo Theater); and *Could It Be Magic?*, conceived and directed by Barry Manilow (Mercury Theater). Neda also originated the role of Momma in *The American Girl's Revue*. She was also a featured performer in the Navy Pier Players, an a capella singing group at Chicago's most well-known tourist attraction, for over 3 years.

J.D. Webster

(*Winston*) returns to the Alliance, having been last seen as Annas in the premiere of *Jesus Christ Superstar GOSPEL*. Broadway: *Wonderful Town*, *Ragtime* and *Showboat*. Regional: Sid in *The Desert Song* (Sacramento Music Circus), Nicely-Nicely in *Guys and Dolls* (Alabama Shakespeare Festival), Howard in *Finian's Rainbow* (Coconut Grove), Flick in *Violet* (Connecticut Rep), J.D. in *Jam and Spice* (Westport Playhouse), and Raymond in the world-premiere of *An American in Paris* (Houston Alley Theatre). Last season, he was a featured soloist with the Baltimore Symphony in Bernstein's *Mass* at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center (Naxos recording). His other concert work includes appearances with the New York Philharmonic, the Virginia Symphony Pops, the New York Ragtime Orchestra (Japan tour), *Spring is Here* (Rodgers Centennial @ Carnegie Hall), and the PBS broadcasts of *South Pacific* and *Ira Gershwin at 100*.

John Jiler

(*Author/Lyricist*) received both the Richard Rodgers Award and the Kleban Librettists' Award for *Avenue X*, his first musical. His first full-length play, *Sour Springs*, won the Weissberger Prize from New Dramatists. His plays have been seen coast to coast, from the O'Neill Playwright's Conference to the Kennedy Center to Seattle Rep. His latest book, *Sleeping With The Mayor* was named a New York Times' "Most Notable Book," and his first, *Dark Wind*,

was called by the Village Voice a classic. As a journalist he has written for the NY Times, The Nation and the Village Voice. His current theatrical projects are *Big Red Sun* (winner of the Harold Arlen Award from ASCAP) and *Explicit Vows*, a one-man show at Playwright's Horizons and the Flea Theatre. He has acted at the Public Theatre, the Hartford Stage Company, and Chicago's Body Politic, where he won the Chicago Drama Critic's Best Actor Award.

Ray Leslee

(Composer) *Standup Shakespeare* (directed by Mike Nichols, with F. Murray Abraham, Alfred Molina and Alice Ripley); *Avenue X*, (Playwrights Horizons); *A Good Man* (The Vienna Chamber Opera); *Educating Rita* (Steppenwolf); *Twelfth Night* (Theatre For A New Audience); *The Three Musketeers* (national tour with The Acting Company); *The Author's Voice* (with Philip Seymour Hoffman); *The Common Pursuit* (Simon Gray's Pulitzer Prize); *The Living Newspaper* (Ensemble Studio Theatre); *The Notebook of Trigorin* (ACT); *Romeo & Juliet For Orchestra & Actors* (The Buffalo Philharmonic); to name a few. He was a 2009 artist in residence at the Folger Shakespeare Library; received a 2008 Fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts; and was honored at Lincoln Center with the Gilman & Gonzalez Award for lifetime achievement in musical theatre. As a young pianist in New York in the 70s through the 80s, he appeared with The Platters, The Drifters, The Shirelles, The Capris, Jay & The Americans, Lesley Gore, Alvin Ailey and Martha Graham. rayleslee.com

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