



Chicago Shakespeare Announces Casting for
Disney's *The Little Mermaid*
Summer Family Musical on Navy Pier, July 3 – August 16

Chicago—June 11, 2015—**Chicago Shakespeare Theater** (CST) continues its summer tradition of bringing exceptional family entertainment to Navy Pier with **Disney's *The Little Mermaid***, a Broadway musical adaptation of the beloved film, staged by Jeff Award-winning director and choreographer **Rachel Rockwell**. Children and adults alike will delight in the dazzling production and unforgettable music as the spunky mermaid Ariel goes on an adventure, finding true love—and her voice. Rockwell and CST Creative Producer **Rick Boynton** have collaborated to bring this new 75-minute production for family audiences to the Courtyard Theater, **July 3–August 16, 2015**. Every performance features opportunities for audiences to interact with the actors for one-on-one conversations and photos in the Lobby.

Based on the Hans Christian Andersen tale, the musical follows Ariel, a young mermaid that longs for a life beyond the sea. Over the course of her adventure, she defies her father King Triton, makes a deal with the sea witch Ursula and ultimately finds her home on land and happiness with the handsome Prince Eric. With music by **Alan Menken**, lyrics by **Howard Ashman** and **Glenn Slater** and book by **Doug Wright**, Disney's *The Little Mermaid* features

favorite songs including “Part of Your World,” “Kiss The Girl” and the Academy Award-winning “Under The Sea.”

Celebrated Chicago musical theater director **Rachel Rockwell** returns to Chicago Shakespeare to stage her fourth summer family musical. In addition to directing *Shrek* (2013) and Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* (2012), Rockwell has directed CST-commissioned world premiere musicals *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (2011) and *The Emperor's New Clothes* (2010). Rockwell's Chicago-area directing and choreography credits include Jeff Award-winning productions at The Marriott Theatre, the Goodman Theatre and Drury Lane Oakbrook, where Rockwell garnered a Jeff Award for Best Director for *Ragtime*. Rockwell returns to CST in the fall to direct and choreograph the offbeat new musical, *Ride The Cyclone*.

In her Chicago Shakespeare debut, **Rachel Eskenazi-Gold** performs the role of Ariel, the independent and determined mermaid who yearns to be a part of the world beyond the sea. Three-time Jeff Award winner **Rebecca Finnegan** portrays Ursula, the sea witch who plots to steal Ariel's voice. **Matthew Jones** plays Ariel's father and ruler of the Sea—King Triton. **Brandon Springman** takes on the role of Prince Eric, Ariel's handsome and brave love interest. Ariel's loyal companions are Sebastian, played by **Joseph Anthony Byrd** and Flounder, played by **Matthew Uzarraga** whose previous CST credits include Young Shrek and Baby Bear in *Shrek The Musical*. Returning for his fifth CST production, Jeff Award-winner **Mark David Kaplan** takes the stage as Prince Eric's servant and confidant Grimbsy, while **Matthew Crowle** plays Ariel's loveably eccentric seagull friend, Scuttle. Ursula's eel minions are portrayed by **Adam Fane** (Jetsam), who appeared in CST's productions of *Gypsy* and *Shrek The Musical*, and **Sean Blake** (Flotsam), who has also been seen in *Aladdin* and *Timon of Athens*. King Triton's other daughters, the Mersisters, are played by **Missy Aguilar**, **Allyson Graves**, **Hanah Rose Nardone** and **Erica Stephan**. The cast also includes ensemble members **Este'Fan Kizer**, **Peter Scharbrough** and **Stephen Spanopoulos**.

The production's team features Music Director **Roberta Duchak**, Associate Music Director **Valerie Maze** and **Doug Peck**, who is coordinating orchestration for the live 4-piece music ensemble. Scenic Designer **Scott Davis** returns to Chicago Shakespeare after designing recent productions of *Road Show*, *Othello: The Remix* and *Pericles*. Also returning to CST is Costume Designer **Theresa Ham** who has created the imaginative costumes for *Seussical*, *Shrek the Musical* and *Beauty and the Beast*. Lighting Designer **Yael Lubetzky**, Projection Designer **Shawn Sagady** and Puppet Designer **Chelsea Warren** will transform the Courtyard Theater stage into an underwater wonderland. Four-time Jeff Award-winning Sound Designer **Josh Horvath** returns after designing *As You Like It* (2011) and *Follies*. CST's resident Jeff Award-winning Wig and Make-up Designer **Melissa Veal**, who has designed over seventy-five productions at Chicago Shakespeare, completes the creative team.

Chicago Shakespeare Theater continues its successful collaboration with the **Chicago Children's Museum**, presenting the following series of programs around Disney's *The Little Mermaid*:

- **CCM staff and volunteers offer free hands-on art activities** in the Theater's lobby

from 12:15 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. between the Thursday and Friday performances.

- **The cast of *The Little Mermaid*** performs at the museum's Free Family Night on Thursday, July 23 at 5:30 p.m. as a part of the Made in Chicago season.

Access Shakespeare performances for Disney's *The Little Mermaid* include:

- **ASL Duo-interpreted Performance:** Wednesday, July 29 at 11:00 a.m.
- **Audio-described Performance:** Wednesday, July 29 at 11:00 a.m.
(optional Touch Tour at 9:15 a.m.)

Chicago Shakespeare Theater's CST **Family Series** presents a wide range of affordable programming especially for families. Offerings year-round include **Short Shakespeare!** abridgments of Shakespeare plays and **Chicago Shakespeare in the Parks**, which produces free Shakespeare performances in neighborhood parks throughout the city. These programs reach more than 45,000 patrons each season—making Chicago Shakespeare one of the largest providers of family programming in Chicago.

Visit www.chicagoshakes.com/mermaid for a complete performance listing and additional production information.

This 75-minute production of **Disney's *The Little Mermaid*** is best enjoyed by ages 5 and up and will be performed **July 3–August 16** in CST's Courtyard Theater. **Tickets are \$22-\$34 with special discounts available for groups of 10 or more.** All patrons receive a 40% parking discount at Navy Pier garages. For more information or to purchase tickets, contact Chicago Shakespeare Theater's Box Office at 312.595.5600 or visit the Theater's website at www.chicagoshakes.com.

ABOUT CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER

Chicago Shakespeare Theater (CST) is a leading international theater company and the recipient of the Regional Theatre Tony Award®. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Barbara Gaines and Executive Director Criss Henderson, CST is dedicated to creating extraordinary production of classics, new works and family programming; to unlocking Shakespeare's work for educators and students; and to serving as Chicago's cultural ambassador through its World's Stage Series. Through a year-round season encompassing more than 650 performances, CST attracts 225,000 audience members annually. One in four of its audience members is under eighteen years old, and today its education programs have impacted the learning of over one million students. CST is proud to take an active role in empowering the next generation of literate, engaged cultural champions and creative minds.

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