

NEWS RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Elisa Hale at (860) 873-8664, ext. 323
Elisa.Hale@goodspeed.org
Dan McMahon at (860) 873-8664, ext. 324
Dan.McMahon@goodspeed.org

COMPLETE CAST ANNOUNCED FOR FIVE-TIME TONY AWARD-WINNING *THE WILL ROGERS FOLLIES*

Performances begin April 13 at The Goodspeed

EAST HADDAM, CONN., MARCH 2, 2018: Goodspeed Musicals kicks off its 2018 season with the Broadway hit *The Will Rogers Follies, A Life In Revue*. The exuberant dance-filled musical will be running April 13 – June 21 at The Goodspeed in East Haddam, Conn. [Official Press Opening will be May 2, 2018]

Shake hands with the heartwarming humorist who spun a rope, poked fun at headlines and never met a man he didn't like. The rags-to-riches story of America's beloved stage, screen and radio star bursts to life as a Ziegfeld Follies-style extravaganza. Family, fame and fate are center stage in Will's rise from obscurity to stardom. Along the way he's arm-in-arm with vivacious showgirls and a slew of cowboys. Curtain up on the Tony Award-winning Best Musical that captures the American spirit at its up-tempo best.

The Will Rogers Follies features book by **Peter Stone**, music composed and arranged by **Cy Coleman** and lyrics by **Betty Comden** and **Adolph Green**. Inspired by the words of **Will** and **Betty Rogers**. The original New York Production was directed and choreographed by Tommy Tune. This spirited musical will be sponsored by Liberty Bank and Updike, Kelly & Spellacy, P.C.

Will Rogers will be played by **David Lutken**, who previously played the role on Broadway. His other Broadway credits include *Inherit the Wind*, *Ring of Fire* and *The Civil War*. Mr. Lutken has been seen in the Off-Broadway productions of *Woody Sez*, *Southern Comfort*, *Stars in Your Eyes* and *Winter Man*. In London, he performed in *Woody Sez*, *Dark of the Moon*, *Bonnie & Clyde* and *A Month In The Country*. *The Will Rogers Follies* is Lutken's fourth production at Goodspeed Musicals. Past favorites include *Honky Tonk Highway*, *Finian's Rainbow* and *Big River*. Additional regional credits include *Man of La Mancha*, *Elmer Gantry*, *Pump Boys & Dinettes* and *On Golden Pond* among others. Mr. Lutken won the Helen Hayes and Joseph Jefferson Best Actor Awards for his performance on his original show *Woody Sez: The Life & Music Of Woody Guthrie*, which David has performed in 65 cities around the world.

Catherine Walker will play Betty Blake. Ms. Walker most recently starred on Broadway in the Tony Award-winning *A Gentleman's Guide To Love and Murder* as Phoebe D'Ysquith. Ms. Walker performed in the original Broadway cast of Disney's *Mary Poppins* and became Broadway's second Mary after which she was cast in the Broadway revival of *Ragtime*. She travels nationally, representing Walt Disney Productions as their guest soloist with major national orchestras.

-more-

Ms. Walker performed in *The Marc Blitzstein Tribute* at Washington's Kennedy Center, *A Tribute To Stephen Sondheim* with The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, and *The Music Of Stephen Schwartz* for New York's Andrew Carnegie Society. Catherine won Carbonell Award for Best Actress in a Musical for her performance as Maria Von Trapp in Maltz Jupiter Theatre's *The Sound of Music*.

David Garrison will play Clem Rogers. Mr. Garrison received a Tony Award nomination and a Drama-Logue Award for his performance in the Broadway production of *A Day In Hollywood/ A Night in the Ukraine*. Additional Broadway credits include the Tony- winning *Titanic* and the Carbonell Award-winning *Wicked*, along with *Torch Song Trilogy*, *The Pirates of Penzance* and many others. He was in the Off-Broadway 30th Anniversary revival of *I Do! I Do!*, for which he received a Drama Desk Award nomination. Other Off-Broadway credits include *Geniuses*, *Middletown* and *New Jerusalem*. Mr. Garrison won a Helen Hayes Award for his role as Charlie in Stephen Sondheim's *Merrily We Roll Along* at Arena Stage. He has been featured in numerous hit television shows including *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, *The Good Wife*, *30 Rock*, *Madame Secretary*, *Everybody Loves Raymond* and *Law and Order*.

Brooke Lacy makes her Goodspeed debut in the role of Ziegfeld's Favorite. Ms. Lacy was just seen playing one of the Gemini Twins in Pittsburgh Public Theater's *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. She has also played Inga in *Young Frankenstein*. **Dewey Caddell** will play the role of Wiley Post. Dewey has performed in numerous regional productions including *Finian's Rainbow* (Irish Rep), *Dear World* (York), *Brigadoon* and *The Story of Pirates!*. The role of Will Rogers Jr. will be played by Connecticut native **Ben Stone-Zelman**. Ben returns to The Goodspeed where he previously performed as Randolph in *Bye Bye Birdie*, and Tommy Bailey in *A Wonderful Life*. Additional credits include the roles of Boy Scrooge and Fred's Son in Hartford Stage's *A Christmas Carol*; *Ragtime* at Connecticut Theatre Company; and *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Dill), *Mary Poppins* (Michael Banks), and *Little Mermaid* (Flounder) at Thomaston Opera House. Playing the role of Mary Rogers will be **Riley Briggs**, who played Beth Bailey in Goodspeed's *A Wonderful Life*. Miss Briggs understudied the role of Young Anastasia in the Hartford Stage production of *Anastasia*. **Brendan Reilly Harris** makes his Goodspeed debut in the role of Jimmy Rogers. Brendan has been in the regional productions of *A Christmas Carol* at Hartford Stage and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* at ACT of Connecticut. Other favorite performances for Connecticut theaters include in *Mary Poppins* and *The Who's Tommy*. **Nathan Horne** will play Freddy Rogers. Nathan has been seen playing Young Erik in *Phantom*, Jacob in *The Christmas Elf* and Tiny Tim in *A Christmas Carol* at Downtown Cabaret Theatre.

The ensemble includes **Michael Biren**, who previously appeared in Goodspeed's *Guys and Dolls* and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. Off-Broadway he performed in *Revolution in the Elbow* with **Cady Huffman** and the National Tours of *Billy Elliot* with **Faith Prince** and *Cinderella* with **Lea Salonga**. Joining Mr. Biren will be **Aaron Burr** (National Tour: *Doctor Doolittle*), **Sarah Fagan** (Goodspeed's *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn* and the National Tours of *Irving Berlin's White Christmas* and *42nd Street*), **Kaitlyn Frank**, **Brad Frenette** (National Tour: *Hello, Dolly!* and UK Tour: *Madagascar*), **Emily Jeanne Phillips** (Off-Broadway: *Attack of the Elvis Impersonators* and National Tour: *Elf, The Musical*), **Kelly Sheehan**, **Karilyn Ashley Surratt** (Goodspeed's *Anything Goes*), Hartt School graduate **Caitlin Wilayto** (Goodspeed Festival of New

Musicals ***Come From Away***) and **Borris York** (Broadway: *Holiday Inn*, National Tour: ***Pippin***. TV: *Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* and NBC's *Smash*). The Voice of Ziegfeld will be two-time Tony Award-winner **James Naughton**. In addition to a long list of film and TV roles his numerous theater credits include Broadway's ***Chicago*** as Billy Flynn, ***City of Angels*** as Stone, ***Whose Life is it Anyway?*** and ***I Love My Wife***.

The swings will be **Mallory Davis** (National Tour of *42nd Street*) and **Patrick Heffernan** (National Tours: ***Fiddler on the Roof***, *Anything Goes* and *42nd Street*). **Ella Briggs** who previously performed in Goodspeed Musicals *A Wonderful Life* in the role of ZuZu and as Baby Frances in ***Chasing Rainbows*** will understudy the roles of Mary, Jimmy, and Freddy Rogers.

The Will Rogers Follies will be directed by **Don Stephenson** who helmed the Goodspeed productions of *Guys and Dolls* and ***The Roar of the Greasepaint - The Smell of the Crowd***. Other recent credits include the production of *Titanic* at Lincoln Center; ***Of Mice and Manhattan*** for the Millennium Stage at Kennedy Center; ***The Other Place*** at the Alley Theatre; ***A Comedy of Tenors*** (BroadwayWorld Awards nom. Best Director of a Play), ***The Producers***, ***Vanya and Sonia and Marsha and Spike*** and ***Lend Me a Tenor*** at Paper Mill Playhouse; and ***Buyer and Cellar*** and ***Noises Off*** at Pittsburgh Public Theatre. Choreographer **Kelli Barclay** returns for her seventh production at Goodspeed Musicals where past productions include *Anything Goes*; ***Damn Yankees***; ***Hello, Dolly!***, and ***My One And Only***. Ms. Barclay has also choreographed the City Center Encores! production of ***Pipe Dream***, City Center's ***20 Years of Encores!***, ***Camelot in Concert*** starring **Jeremy Irons**, ***Himself and Nora*** at the Minetta Lane Theater and the feature film *Made for Each Other*.

Scenic Design will be by **Walt Spangler** whose designs for Goodspeed Musicals include The Terris Theatre productions of ***Camille Claudel***, ***The Flight of the Lawnchair Man***, ***Happy Days***, ***Lucky Guy***, ***The Unauthorized Autobiography of Samantha Brown*** and ***The Roar of the Greasepaint....*** In addition to nearly 30 Off-Broadway Productions, Mr. Spangler has designed the Broadway productions of the new musical ***Escape to Margaritaville***, ***Tuck Everlasting***, ***Scandalous***, ***A Christmas Story the musical*** and ***Desire Under the Elms***.

Costumes will be designed by **Ilona Somogyi** who designed ***Clybourne Park*** on Broadway and Goodspeed's *Anything Goes*. Somogyi's other credits include productions at MTC, Atlantic Theatre, Playwrights Horizons, Vinyard and Public Theatre. Lighting Design will be by **Rob Denton** who designed last season's hit ***Thoroughly Modern Millie*** at The Goodspeed. Mr. Denton served as Associate Designer for the Broadway productions of *Holiday Inn*, ***Blackbird*** and ***A Delicate Balance***. His regional credits include The Muny productions of ***A Chorus Line***, ***The Unsinkable Molly Brown***, ***42nd Street***, ***Fiddler on the Roof***, and ***Into the Woods*** among others and productions for TheaterWorks Hartford, Capitol Rep, Arena Stage, Signature Theatre to name a few.

Projection Design will be by **Michael Clark** who designed the projections for Goodspeed's *My One And Only*. Michael served as Projection Designer for Broadway's ***700 Sundays***, ***Ring of Fire***; ***Jersey Boys***; ***Dracula, the Musical***; and ***The Elephant Man***

Sound Design will be by **Jay Hilton** who has a long association with Goodspeed Musicals and has designed countless productions at both The Terris Theatre and The Goodspeed. His work has also been heard on Broadway, National Tours and Regional theatres from coast to coast. He also serves as Goodspeed's audio supervisor.

Wig and Hair design will be by **Mark Adam Rampmeyer** whose work has been seen at The Goodspeed in the productions of *Rags*, *Oklahoma*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Anything Goes*, *Bye Bye Birdie* and *Chasing Rainbows*, as well as *La Cage aux Folles*, *Good News!*, *42nd Street* and *Big River* to name a few. On Broadway, he designed *West Side Story*, *Lysistrata Jones* and *The Farnsworth Invention*.

The Music Director for *The Will Rogers Follies* will be **Michael O’Flaherty**, who is in his 27th season as Goodspeed’s Resident Music Director. **William J. Thomas** will be Assistant Music Director.

Orchestrations will be by **Dan DeLange**. This marks his 20th year and 50th show for The Goodspeed.

Casting for *The Will Rogers Follies* is by **Paul Hardt** of Stewart/Whitley Casting.

The Will Rogers Follies will run April 13 through June 21, 2018. Curtain times are Wednesday at 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., Thursday at 7:30 p.m. (with select performances at 2:00 p.m.), Friday at 8:00 p.m., Saturday at 3:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., and Sunday at 2:00 p.m. (with select performances at 6:30 p.m.).

Tickets are available through the Box Office (**860.873.8668**), open seven days a week, or online at goodspeed.org. For show highlights, exclusive photos, special events and more, visit us at goodspeed.org and follow us on [Facebook](#), Twitter [@goodspeedmusicl](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

Under the leadership of Executive Director Michael Gennaro, Goodspeed Musicals is dedicated to the preservation, development and advancement of musical theatre and is the first theatre in the nation to receive two Tony Awards (for outstanding achievement). Goodspeed produces three musicals each season at The Goodspeed in East Haddam, Conn., and additional productions at The Terris Theatre in Chester, Conn., which was opened in 1984 for the development of new musicals. Goodspeed also maintains The Scherer Library of Musical Theatre and The Max Showalter Center for Education in Musical Theatre. Goodspeed gratefully acknowledges the support of United Airlines, the official airline of Goodspeed Musicals; the official audio sponsor Sennheiser; and official auto sponsor Hoffman Audi. Goodspeed is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development with support from the Connecticut Office of the Arts.

-more-

GOODSPEED MUSICALS

THE WILL ROGERS FOLLIES FACT SHEET

Production: *THE WILL ROGERS FOLLIES*

Book by: Peter Stone

Music Composed and Arranged by: Cy Coleman

Lyrics by: Betty Comden & Adolph Green

Theatre: The Goodspeed
6 Main Street, East Haddam, Connecticut

Director: Don Stephenson

Choreographer: Kelli Barclay

Set Designer: Walt Spangler

Costume Designer: Ilona Somogyi

Lighting Designer: Rob Denton

Sound Designer: Jay Hilton

Music Director: Michael O’Flaherty

Assistant Music Director: William J. Thomas

Orchestrations: Dan DeLange

Principals: David Lutken (Will Rogers)
Catherine Walker (Betty Blake)
David Garrison (Clem Rogers)
Brooke Lacy (Ziegfeld’s Favorite)
Dewey Caddell (Wiley Post)
Ben Stone-Zelman (Will Rogers Jr.)
Riley Briggs (Mary Rogers)
Brendan Reilly Harris (Jimmy Rogers)
Nathan Horne (Freddy Rogers)
James Naughton (Voice of Ziegfeld)

Ensemble: Michael Biren
Aaron Burr
Sarah Fagan
Kaitlyn Frank
Brad Frenette
Emily Jeanne Phillips
Kelly Sheehan (Dance Capt.)
Karilyn Ashley Surratt
Caitlin Wilayto
Borris York

Swings: Mallory Davis
Patrick Heffernan

Understudy: Ella Briggs

Background: The Broadway production opened May 1, 1991, and ran through September 5, 1993 at the Palace Theatre earning five Tony Awards, an additional five Tony nominations and three Drama Desk Awards. The original production was directed and choreographed by Tommy Tune. Originally produced on Broadway by Pierre Cossette, Martin Richards, Sam Crothers, James M. Nederlander, Stewart F. Lane, and Max Weitzenhofer in association with Japan Satellite Broadcasting, Inc. The musical boasts a book by Peter Stone, lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green, and music by Cy Coleman.

The Will Rogers Follies was inspired by the words of Will and Betty Rogers. It focuses on the life and career of famed humorist and performer Will Rogers. The musical uses the Ziegfeld Follies as a backdrop to relate important moments in Rogers' life in the form of big production numbers. This "life in revue" utilizes snippets of Rogers' famous homespun style of wisdom and common sense to convey the personality of this quintessentially American figure whose most famous quote was "I never met a man I didn't like."

Description: Shake hands with the heartwarming humorist who spun a rope, poked fun at headlines and never met a man he didn't like. The rags-to-riches story of America's beloved stage, screen and radio star bursts to life as a Ziegfeld Follies-style extravaganza. Family, fame and fate are center stage in Will's rise from obscurity to stardom. Along the way he's arm-in-arm with vivacious showgirls and a slew of cowboys. Curtain up on the Tony Award-winning Best Musical that captures the American spirit at its up-tempo best.

Dates: April 13 – June 21, 2018

Performances: Wednesday at 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., Thursday at 7:30 p.m., (with select performances at 2:00 p.m.), Friday at 8:00 p.m., Saturday at 3:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., and Sunday at 2:00 p.m. (with select performances at 6:30 p.m.).

Tickets: Start at \$29.00. All prices subject to change based on availability.
Goodspeed Box Office (860.873.8668) or online at goodspeed.org

Special Events:

First Look Friday: Friday, April 13, 8pm

Celebrate the first performance with this ticket and drink special. Includes a specialty drink in a souvenir cup and a ticket to the show. Just \$51 per person.

Kids Nights: April 25 & 26, 7:30pm; April 27, 8pm

Each adult who buys a regular-priced ticket for the specified dates may purchase a \$15 ticket for a child ages 5 to 18. Meet the cast for autographs after the Friday, April 28 performance.

Mother's Day Mom-Tini: Sunday, May 13, 6:30pm

Includes a ticket to the show on Mother's Day plus Mom's favorite specialty martini in a souvenir cup. Just \$51 per person.

Meet the Cast: May 10 & 24, June 7

FREE! A lively discussion with the cast after the specified Thursday evening performances.

Student Rush:

\$15 tickets available for any evening performance, beginning at 10am on the day of the show. Must have valid student ID.

Friday Dinner Theatre Package: Includes dinner at the Gelston House (located next door to The Goodspeed) and a ticket to the 8:00 pm performance. Includes your choice of beef, chicken, fish, or pasta entrée. Only \$89!

ALL OFFERS ARE FOR SELECT SEATS AND ARE SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY

[Headshots and show art available upon request: elisa.hale@goodspeed.org]

For more information, to schedule an interview, or to receive stock art, please contact
Elisa Hale (ext. 323) or Dan McMahon (ext. 324) at 860.873.8664
Elisa.Hale@goodspeed.org / Dan.McMahon@goodspeed.org

