



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

CASTING COMPLETE FOR GOODSPEED'S MOVING NEW MUSICAL ***HI, MY NAME IS BEN***

A Modern-Day Fairytale About Communication And Connection

Hi, My Name is Ben begins May 17 at The Terris Theatre

EAST HADDAM, CONN., APRIL 11, 2019: Goodspeed Musicals continues its commitment to innovative, thought-provoking new works with ***Hi, My Name is Ben***, the inspirational true story of one man who impacted the lives of all those around him without speaking a word. Written by **Scott Gilmour** and **Claire McKenzie** while in residence at the Johnny Mercer Writers Colony at Goodspeed, this hope-filled musical will run May 17 – June 9, 2019 at The Terris Theatre in Chester, CT. This production is supported in part by the Richard P. Garmany Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

The true story of one ordinary man and his extraordinary life. From his tiny room in New York City, Bernhardt Wichmann III changed the lives of those around him without ever speaking a word. Using just his notepad, pen and open heart, Ben turned a neighborhood of strangers into a community of friends, before finally encountering a miracle of his own. Featuring an uplifting, folk-inflected score by award-winning Scottish writing team Noisemaker in association with Dundee Rep, one of Scotland's leading theatres, this is the story of how one man with nothing somehow changed everything.

Ben will be played by **Joel Rooks**, who has performed in several Broadway shows including ***Fish in the Dark***, ***The Royal Family***, ***Say Goodnight Gracie***, ***Taller Than a Dwarf***, ***The Tenth Man***, ***The Sisters Rosensweig***, and ***Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune***. Some of Rooks's Off-Broadway credits include ***Law of Return***, ***Iron***, ***Comic Potential***, ***Jewtopia***, ***Rocket to the Moon*** and ***Under the Bed***. He has appeared in several films including: ***My Bakery in Brooklyn***, ***Outliving Emily***, ***It Runs in the Family*** and ***Snatched***, and on television in ***New Amsterdam***, ***The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel***, ***Ramy***, ***Deadbeat***, ***Copshop*** and ***Law & Order***.

Young Ben will be played by **Adam Kaplan**, whose Broadway credits include ***A Bronx Tale The Musical*** and ***Newsies The Musical***. He performed in the First National Tour of ***Kinky Boots***. Mr. Kaplan's regional credits include ***Hairspray***, ***Legally Blonde***, ***Fiddler on the Roof*** and ***Singin' in the Rain*** at Music Theatre Wichita, and ***How to Succeed...*** and ***The Rocky Horror Show*** at Flat Rock Playhouse. His film and television credits include ***Deception***, ***Maja + Theo*** and ***The Point of Divergence***.

James will be played by **Ken Land**, whose Broadway credits include ***Promises, Promises***; ***How the Grinch Stole Christmas!***; ***The Scarlet Pimpernel*** and ***Victor/Victoria***. Land returns to Goodspeed, where he previously

performed at The Terris Theatre in **Romeo and Juliet**. Mr. Land's Off-Broadway credits include **Curvy Widow**, **The Gig**, **Little Shop of Horrors** and **Death of Von Richthofen**.

The role of Young James will be played by **CJ Pawlikowski**, who is currently playing Mike in the TheaterWorks Hartford production of **Girlfriend**. His Off-Broadway credits include **A Letter to Harvey Milk** and **The Underclassmen**. CJ's favorite credits include performing the National Tour of **The Book of Mormon** and the role of Huey Calhoun in Phoenix Theatre's **Memphis**, for which he won the BroadwayWorld Award for Best Actor.

Lucy will be played by **Abigail E. Stephenson**, a recent graduate of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland M.A. Musical Theatre program.

Helen will be played by **Lee Harrington**, who recently appeared as Martha Cratchit in Goodspeed's **A Connecticut Christmas Carol**. Her Off-Broadway credits include **Into the Woods** at Roundabout and **Jellybean** with Irondale Ensemble Project. Harrington's regional credits include **Show Boat**, **Company**, **Merrily We Roll Along**, **Man of La Mancha**, **Marvelous Wonderettes**, **Fiddler on the Roof**, **Dead Man's Cell Phone** and **Carousel**.

The role of Juan will be played by **Carlos Lopez**, who returns to Goodspeed where he previously appeared as Harry the Horse in **Guys and Dolls**. His numerous Broadway credits include **Man of La Mancha**, **Annie Get Your Gun**, **Grease**, **Guys and Dolls**, **Grand Hotel** and **A Chorus Line**. Carlos can also be heard on the Broadway cast recording of **SpongeBob The Musical**.

Jorge will be played by **David Baida**. Baida's credits include the Broadway production and the First National Tour of **On Your Feet!** and the First National Tour of **In the Heights**. Other credits include **Forever Plaid**, **Joseph...Dreamcoat**, **King Tut** and **Jesus Christ Superstar**.

Heather Ayers will play the roles of Joan and Meta. Ms. Ayers's Broadway credits include **Groundhog Day**, **Mel Brook's Young Frankenstein**, **On a Clear Day You Can See Forever** and **Trevor Nunn's A Little Night Music**. Some of her Off-Broadway credits include **Five Course Love** at Minetta Lane; **Sarah, Plain & Tall** at Lucille Lortell and **Forbidden Broadway** at Stardust. Her TV credits include **Scandal**, **Sarah Silverman's I Love You America** and **Brockmire**.

Tony, Drama Desk, LA Ovation and Drama League Award nominee **Barbara Walsh** will play Pat. Walsh's Broadway credits include **Falsettos**, **Company**, **Rock 'N' Roll! The First 5000 Years**, **Nine**, **Blood Brothers**, **Big** and **Hairspray**. Her many Off-Broadway and National Tour credits include **Summer and Smoke** at Classic Stage Company and Transport Group, **First Daughter Suite** at The Public Theatre and the National Tours of **Oklahoma!**, **Nine** and **Les Misérables**. In addition to her numerous regional theater, television and film credits, Barbara has appeared in the Goodspeed Musicals productions of **Houdini** and **Exactly Like You**.

-more-

PAGE 2 – CAST ANNOUNCED FOR **HI, MY NAME IS BEN**

Hi, My Name is Ben features book and lyrics by Scott Gilmour and music by Claire McKenzie. Together they created the award-winning writing partnership called Noisemaker. Graduates of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, the pair work across the globe creating innovative, original work that challenges the expectation of musical theatre. Recent credits include **The Snow Queen** for Dundee Rep and Citizens Theatre, **My Left/Right Foot** at National Theatre of Scotland/Birds of Paradise (Herald Angel Winner/Fringe First Winner 2018) and **The Girl Who** at American Musical Theatre Project at Northwestern University/Assembly. Their

upcoming projects include a collaboration with Unigram and the Faena Hotel Miami Beach, to adapt Peter Greenway's iconic *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* into an immersive, theatrical dining experience.

This inspiring new musical will be directed by **Andrew Panton**. Panton has worked internationally across theater, film, television and music. He is the Artistic Director and Joint Chief-Executive at Dundee Rep Theatre. He has directed *The Snow Queen*, *The Yellow on the Broom*, *Passing Places*, *Spring Awakening*, *A Christmas Carol*, the Scottish Premiere of *August: Osage County*, *Love Song* and *The Mill Lawvies* at Dundee Rep. Panton has directed productions for the National Theatre of Scotland, Edinburgh Royal Lyceum, Glasgow Citizen's Theatre, Royal & Derngate, Perth Theatre and The Stephen Joseph Theatre. He was also the movement director for the TMA and CATS award-winning production of *Sweeney Todd*. Work for TV includes *Children in Need*, Gareth Malone's *The Naked Choir* and *The Voice* for the BBC.

-more-

PAGE 3- CAST ANNOUNCED FOR *HI, MY NAME IS BEN*

Choreography will be by **Emily-Jane Boyle**, a Glasgow-based choreographer and movement director who currently serves as Artistic Associate of Dundee Rep. Her credits include the Dundee Rep productions of *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black Black Oil*; *The Snow Queen*; *Passing Places*; *Great Expectations*; *Exit the King* at the National Theatre; *Oresteia: This Restless House* at Edinburgh International Festival; *Forest Boy* at NYMF; and the UK Tours of *Sunshine on Leith*. Other credits include *How to Act* at National Theatre of Scotland, *Trainspotting* and *Nora: A Doll's House* at Citizens Theatre, and *The Red Balloon* for NYB/Sadlers Wells. Film and TV credits include *The Crown* (Netflix), *In Plain Sight* (ITV), *Two Doors Down* (BBC), *God Help the Girl* (Sundance) and *Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games* (BBC).

Scenic Design will be by **Edward Pierce**. Some of his favorite Broadway and National Tours credits include the Tony-nominated revival of *Angels in America*, *Bright Star*, *Amazing Grace*, *Holler If Ya Hear Me*, *The Other Place*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Shatner's World*, *Billy Elliot*, *Pippin*, *9 to 5*, *The Pirate Queen*, *Aida* and *Ragtime*. In addition, Pierce has designed productions of *Wicked* worldwide productions, the International Tour of *Love Never Dies* and the new World Tour of *Phantom of the Opera*.

Costume Design will be by **Lara de Bruijn**. Lara has designed costumes for theatre, film, dance and opera. Her theatre credits include *Party Face* at City Center, *Devil of Choice* at LABrynth Theatre, *Olityelwe (The Forgotten)* at 59E59, *The Two-Character Play* at New World Stages, *Under my Skin* at Little Shubert Theatre, *Blasted* at The Calderwood Pavillion and *The Ladies Man* at Peterborough Players,

Lighting Design will be by **Masha Tsimring**, a NYC-based performance lighting designer. Recent credits include *Pride and Prejudice* at Kansas City Rep, *The Appointment* for Lightning Rod Special, *Kleptocracy* at Arena Stage, *Minor Character* for Under the Radar/New Saloon, *Noura* at Playwrights Horizons, *Intractable Woman* at PlayCo, *Romeo & Juliet/Our Town* at Alabama Shakespeare, *Electric Lucifer* for The Kitchen, LA Dance Project's *Sarabande* and *The Garden of Forking Paths* for Nichole Canuso Dance Co.

-more-

PAGE 4- CAST ANNOUNCED FOR *HI, MY NAME IS BEN*

Music Direction will be by **Gavin Whitworth**. As Music Director, Whitworth's credits include *The Snow Queen* at Dundee Rep, *But First This* and *The Witches of Eastwick* at Watermill Theatre, Newbury, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Hansel and Gretel* at Citizens Theatre, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *Brigadoon*, and *London Road* at RCS, *Wasted Love* and *The Improvised Musical* at Edinburgh Fringe, *Room* at Stratford East/NTS and *Glasgow Girls* for RAW Materials. As Composer, Gavin's credits include *Some Small Love Story* at Arts Theatre London, *Neverland* at Theatre Deli, Sheffield, *White Fang* at Florida's freeFall Theatre and *Hunchback of Notre Dame* at Selby Abbey.

Projection Design will be by **Andrew Bauer**. Bauer is returning to Goodspeed where he previously designed *Indian Joe* at The Terris Theatre. Bauer's New York credits include *Magnolia* at Fordham University, *CQ/CX* (co-design with Peter Nigrini) at Atlantic Theater, *An Error of the Moon* at Theater Row, *Diary of a Teenage Girl* and *Milk-n-Honey* for 3LD. Bauer's regional credits include *Dancing Lessons* and *Veils* at Barrington Stage Company, *Adding Machine* and *Joël Pommerat's Cinderella* at University of Rochester and *Hydrogen Jukebox* at Fort Worth Opera.

Sound Design will be by **Jay Hilton**, who is pleased to continue his long association with Goodspeed Musicals. Jay has designed countless productions at both The Goodspeed and The Terris Theatre in Chester. His work has also been heard on Broadway and National Tours and at Regional Theatres from coast to coast. In addition to being Goodspeed's Resident Sound Designer, Jay serves as Goodspeed Musicals Audio Supervisor.

Casting for *Hi, My Name is Ben* is by **Paul Hardt** of StewartWhitley Casting.

Hi, My Name is Ben will run May 17 – June 9, 2019. Curtain times are Wednesdays at 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8:00 p.m., Saturdays at 3:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., and Sundays at 2:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

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

For over 30 years, The Terris Theatre has been Goodspeed's home for developing *fresh, innovative* and *original* new musicals. Many new and reimagined musicals have been developed in Chester, Conn., before moving on to Broadway, Off-Broadway, National Tours and other Regional Theatres. Because this is a developmental theatre, the show can change on a day-to-day basis. New scenes are added, songs are moved, costumes are changed, dialogue is tweaked—all based on audience response and feedback.

Under the leadership of Executive Director Michael Gennaro, Goodspeed Musicals is dedicated to the preservation, development and advancement of musical theatre. Goodspeed produces three musicals each season at The Goodspeed in East Haddam, Conn. and additional productions at The Terris Theatre in Chester, Conn. The first regional theatre to receive two Tony Awards (for outstanding achievement), 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 and official audio sponsor Sennheiser. This production is also made possible with the support of the Richard P. Garmany Fund at Hartford Foundation for Public Giving and Department of Economic and Community Development, Office of the Arts.

GOODSPEED MUSICALS

Hi, My Name is Ben FACT SHEET

Production: *Hi, My Name is Ben*

Book and Lyrics by: Scott Gilmour

Music by: Claire McKenzie

Theatre: The Terris Theatre
33 North Main Street, Chester, Connecticut

Director: Andrew Panton
Choreographer: Emily-Jane Boyle
Scenic Design: Edward Pierce
Costume Design: Lara de Bruijn
Lighting Design: Masha Tsimring
Projections Design: Andrew Bauer
Sound Design: Jay Hilton
Music Director: Gavin Whitworth
Production Stage Manager: Chris Zaccardi

Cast: Joel Rooks (Ben), Adam Kaplan (Young Ben), Ken Land (James), CJ Pawlikowski (Young James), Abigail E. Stephenson (Lucy), Lee Harrington (Helen), Carlos Lopez (Juan), David Baida (Jorge), Heather Ayers (Joan/Meta), Barbara Walsh (Pat)

Dates: May 17 - June 9, 2019
Performances: Wednesday at 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., Thursday at 7:30 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. and 6:30 p.m.

Tickets: Single tickets start at \$49
Prices are subject to change based on availability.
Goodspeed Box Office (860.873.8668) or online at goodspeed.org

Special Events & Offers:

Heroes Weekend: May 17 – 19 To honor those who serve our country, we offer \$10 off tickets for veterans or active military and their families for the evening performances on May 17 - 19. Limit 6 tickets. USE CODE: HERO10

Talkbacks: May 18, 23 & 30. FREE! Participate in the process of creating a new musical. Join us for a free post-show discussion with the creative team after the specified Saturday matinee and Thursday evening performances.

Wine Tasting: Sunday, May 19, 5pm. Enjoy a sampling of fine wines hosted by Shore Discount Liquors of Deep River, hors d'oeuvres, and a pre-show chat with a member of the creative team- \$10 with your ticket to the 6:30pm show.

Teacher Night Out: Friday, May 24, 8pm. We love teachers! Celebrate the first performance with a discounted ticket and free specialty drink in a souvenir cup. Just \$30 per person. Must present valid teacher ID.

Open Caption Performance: Friday, June 7, 8pm. Text display screen available at this performance. Call the Box Office or check online for seats with the best view.

Student Tickets: \$15 tickets for any evening performance are available in advance by calling the Box Office. Must have valid student ID. One ticket per ID.

Thursday Dinner Package: Enjoy a night filled with homemade pasta and first-class theatre! Package includes a four-course dinner at Rustica Ristorante in Chester and a ticket to select Thursday 7:30pm performances at The Terris Theatre. Only \$79.

Dinner Discounts: Reserve tickets for a Wednesday, Thursday or Sunday evening performance and enjoy special dinner offers at local restaurants.

Bring A Group: Call Kate Micari-Miller at 860.615.0316 for special group discounts.

ALL OFFERS VALID ON SELECT SEATS FOR NEW PURCHASES ONLY AND SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. RESTRICTIONS MAY APPLY. NOT VALID IN COMBINATION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER. HANDLING FEES MAY APPLY. CALL OR VISIT THE BOX OFFICE FOR DETAILS.

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

Find us on Twitter [@goodspeedmusic](https://twitter.com/goodspeedmusic)

Facebook: [Goodspeed Musicals](https://www.facebook.com/goodspeedmusicals)

And Instagram: [goodspeedmusicals](https://www.instagram.com/goodspeedmusicals)

###

About Dundee Rep and Scottish Dance Theatre:

Dundee Rep and Scottish Dance Theatre Limited is the charity behind Dundee Rep Theatre and Scottish Dance Theatre. The organisations mission is to create unmissable experiences which engage, support and take risks. Dundee Rep and Scottish Dance Theatre sit at the cultural heart of Scotland and the City of Dundee. Founded in 1939, the Rep is a centre of creative energy, a space for engagement with a wide range of art forms, whilst also playing a lead role in arts education and engagement across the city and beyond. Proud of its Scottish roots, the Company looks outwards, creating and delivering work for a local audience, as well as on a national and international scale, for and with a diverse audience. Dundee Rep Ensemble was established in 1999 with the mission of bringing together a permanent full-time company of actors, the only company of its kind in Scotland. Dundee Rep Ensemble has created a number of award-winning productions, including *Death of a Salesman*, *Further than the Furthest Thing*, *Elephant Man*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf* and many more; establishing a reputation as one of the UK's foremost theatre companies. Scottish Dance Theatre, Scotland's principal contemporary dance company and research engine for dance was created in 1986 as the Dundee Rep Dance Company. Pioneering new ways to create and distribute dance across all scales, the company commissions work by pre-eminent artists in many fields whose practice is outstanding and assured in its relationship with audiences.