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Fall in Love with the Cast of *FIRST DATE*!



Pittsburgh, PA • December 8, 2015 – Pittsburgh CLO is proud to announce the cast of the Pittsburgh premiere of [FIRST DATE](#), February 4 – April 24, 2016 at the CLO Cabaret. This inventive new version of the Broadway musical comedy was created just for Pittsburgh CLO by the original writers, Austin Winsberg, Alan Zachary and Michael Weiner. Our cast of five will shine a hopeful spotlight on the chances we all take to fall in love through a flirtatious, funny and unexpected tale of two strangers meeting for the first time. Audiences will [literally] surround these two would-be lovers and their band of quirky friends with brand-new and inventive staging set to transform the CLO Cabaret into the “First Date” of your dreams. Tickets start at \$36.75 and are now available at CLOCabaret.com or by calling **412-281-2822**.

Cast & Creative Team

Maggie Carr (*Lauren, Allison, Grandma Ida, Aaron’s Mother*) last appeared at the CLO Cabaret in *Judge Jackie Justice*. Other recent Pittsburgh credits include *The Country House* (The REP), *Evil Dead: The Musical* (No-Name Players), and Kopit and Yeston’s *Phantom* (CLO). Maggie is a co-writer and co-star of No-Name Players’ *The Sisters Sorella*, which just celebrated a year-long run at Arcade Comedy Club, and will transition into a web series this winter. Readings and workshops: *FIRST DATE* (CLO), *Walken On Sunshine* (NYC, Co-Creator/Producer).

Luke Halferty (*Aaron*) is a recent graduate of Point Park University’s Conservatory of Performing Arts, making his CLO Cabaret debut. Most recently, he was seen as Young Scrooge in *A Musical Christmas Carol* with Pittsburgh CLO. Mr. Halferty has also appeared regionally with Conservatory Theatre Co. (*Oklahoma!*, *Urinetown*, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, *The School for Scandal* and *The Crucible*), The REP (*Of Mice and Men*), Playhouse Jr. (*The Outsiders*), St. Vincent Summer Theatre (*Too Many Cooks*, *Jeeves in Bloom*), and the All University Choir with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

Connor McCanlus (*Waiter/British Artist/Aaron and Casey's Future Son*) returns to the CLO Cabaret after previous appearances in *Boeing Boeing* (Robert) and *Judge Jackie Justice* (Man #1). Local credits include *Bricolage* (*Yinz'r Scrooged* and *Scarrie: The Musical* as Carrie), barebones productions (*American Falls*), and monthly in No Name Players' live sitcom *The Sisters Sorella*. Mr. McCanlus is an improv comedian and hosts The Pittsburgh Improv Jam with comedy team *Well Known Strangers* every Thursday at the Cabaret at Theater Square. He is also a musical improviser and performs in a musical comedy duo *babyGRAND* with Missy Moreno and accompanied by James Rushin.

Caroline Nicolian (*Casey*) is returning to the CLO Cabaret for the fourth time after appearances in *Side by Side by Sondheim*, *Judge Jackie Justice* and *A Grand Night for Singing*. She is a native of Pittsburgh, and has worked for numerous theater companies in and around the city. Recently, Ms. Nicolian was seen in *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well* and *Living in Paris* with Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theater, and was the understudy for Eliza Doolittle in Pittsburgh Public Theater's *My Fair Lady*. She received her B.F.A. in Musical Theatre from Point Park University.

Casi Riegle (*Understudy*) is a Point Park University graduate making her CLO Cabaret debut. She previously appeared in Pittsburgh CLO's production of *Kopit & Yeston's PHANTOM* at the Benedum Center. Favorite credits include *Les Miserables* (North Shore Music Theatre), *Anything Goes*, *Les Miserables*, *Footloose* (Kansas City Starlight) and *Hairspray* (New Dinner Theatre).

Jason Shavers (*Understudy/Assistant Stage Manager*) has spent the past 10 years working for Pittsburgh CLO in many different capacities including performer, props master and teacher. He was last seen as Headmaster Marrow in *Choir Boy* with The REP at Pittsburgh Playhouse. His favorite regional credits include *A New Brain* (Roger), *every tongue confess* (Brother), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Peter) and *Putting It Together* (The Observer). Film credits include "Not Cool" (JayJay) and "Fathers and Daughters."

David Toole (*Gabe/Reggie/Casey's Father/Stoner Guy*) is an actor/singer/songwriter from Pittsburgh, PA. Recent professional theatrical credits include *The Last 5 Years* (Jamie Wellerstein) with Front Porch Theatricals, *Rent* (Roger), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Judas), *Disney's Tarzan the Musical* (Tarzan), *Les Miserables* (Marius), *Shrek the Musical* (Donkey), *West Side Story* (Tony), *Joseph & the Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Joseph) with Pittsburgh Musical Theater. Additionally Mr. Toole is the front-man for the original hard rock band "Identity X," for pop rock cover band "The Key of X," and is one of a handful of regular National Anthem singers for the Pittsburgh Penguins. Mr. Toole is a graduate of Robert Morris University and is a proud member of Actors Equity Association.

Austin Winsberg (*Book*) is the book writer of the Broadway musical *FIRST DATE*, which enjoyed a sold-out run at Seattle's 5th Ave/ACT Theatres in 2012, prior to opening at the Longacre Theatre on Broadway in August 2013. Mr. Winsberg is primarily a writer/producer for film and television. He recently adapted the live *THE SOUND OF MUSIC* television event, starring Carrie Underwood, for NBC. His other television credits include *GOSSIP GIRL*, *JAKE IN PROGRESS* (Creator/Executive Producer – youngest showrunner in ABC history), *WEDDING ALBUM*, *STILL STANDING* and *GLORY DAYS*. He has written numerous television pilots for ABC, NBC, CBS, Fox, Showtime and ABC Family and has also written movies for New Line, Dreamworks Animation and Warner Bros. Mr. Winsberg graduated with a Theater Arts degree from Brown University. He continues to work in theater, directing and mentoring plays for the Blank Theater Company's Annual Young Playwright's Festival in Los Angeles.

Alan Zachary (*Music & Lyrics*) co-wrote songs for Broadway's romantic comedy musical *FIRST DATE*, which opened at the Longacre Theatre on Broadway after selling out its run at Seattle's 5th Ave/ACT Theaters. Mr. Zachary (with co-writer Michael Weiner) recently also wrote songs based on material by J.K. Rowling for *CELESTINA WARBECK & THE BANSHEES*, a musical show at the Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal Studios in Orlando. Currently, he is co-writing the score for an upcoming Broadway musical adaptation of the film "SECONDHAND LIONS" (Book: Rupert Holmes / Warner Bros. Theatre Ventures),

which had its world premiere at Seattle's 5th Ave Theatre. As a frequent songwriter for Disney, Mr. Zachary co-authored book, music and lyrics for the hit original stage musical *TWICE CHARMED* (soundtrack on Walt Disney Records) and has written songs and developed projects for Disney Animation, Disney Channel and theme parks around the globe. Other credits include: music and lyrics for DreamWorks' *THE TIME MACHINE*, the Folgers Coffee hit viral commercial "HAPPY MORNING," and projects for ABC, Amazon Studios, Paramount, Universal, VH1, Hanna-Barbera and 20th Century Fox. Mr. Zachary is a graduate of Amherst College and is the recipient of the 2012 ASCAP Richard Rodgers New Horizons Award.

Michael Weiner (Music & Lyrics) is the co-composer/lyricist of the Broadway musical *FIRST DATE*, which enjoyed a sold-out run at Seattle's 5th Ave/ACT Theatres in 2012, prior to opening at the Longacre Theatre on Broadway in August 2013. Most recently, Mr. Weiner (with co-writer Alan Zachary) created songs based on material by J.K. Rowling for a Harry Potter themed show, *CELESTINA WARBECK & THE BANSHEES*, playing in Diagon Alley at Universal Studios in Orlando. He co-wrote music and lyrics for an upcoming Broadway musical adaptation of the film *SECONDHAND LIONS* (Book by Rupert Holmes/Produced by Warner Brothers Theatre Ventures) which premiered at Seattle's 5th Ave. Theatre in September 2013. Additionally, Mr. Weiner's original American history-themed musical *LIBERTY SMITH*, debuted at historic Ford's Theatre in Washington D.C. in 2011. For Disney, he has written songs/scripts for Disney Animation, Disney Channel and theme parks worldwide, including: the hit original stage musical *TWICE CHARMED* (soundtrack on Walt Disney Records). Mr. Weiner scored Fine Line Features' film "MAN OF THE CENTURY" and co-wrote the song for the Folgers Coffee hit commercial "HAPPY MORNING." He has created television, film and Internet projects at ABC, Disney, FOX, Paramount, Universal, VH1, Hanna-Barbera and Amazon Studios, and is the 2012 recipient of the ASCAP Richard Rodgers New Horizons Award.

Benjamin Endsley Klein (Director) was born in Charlotte, NC and studied at the University of Michigan. He is joining Pittsburgh CLO for the first time. His Broadway Directing credits include: *Ann* starring Tony Award®-nominated actress Holland Taylor as Governor Ann Richards. Broadway (as Associate Director): *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, *Macbeth*, *The Coast of Utopia*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*. West End (As Associate Director): *Hairspray*, *Love Never Dies*. Regional: *Hello Out There* (Adirondack Theatre Festival), *Sick* (NJ Rep), *Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (The Old Globe), *Notes to MariAnne* (O'Neill Musical Theatre Festival).

Douglas Levine (Music Director) is delighted to return to the CLO Cabaret for *First Date*. In addition to musical direction and teaching, Doug is a composer and arranger whose original scores for theater and dance include: *Mercy Train* (Microscopic Opera Company), *Eastburn Avenue*, *Mother Courage* and *Peer Gynt* (Playhouse REP), *Deadend* (Attack Theatre), *Mimoun* (Pennsylvania Dance Theatre), *Jane Eyre*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *The Shaughraun* (Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theatre), *Colorfast* (Pittsburgh International Children's Theater Festival) and *Shakespeare Street* (Playhouse Junior.) He has written music or arrangements for companies including the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, City Theatre, Dreams of Hope, Gateway to the Arts, Renaissance City Women's Choir, Pittsburgh Musical Theater and Opera Theatre of Pittsburgh.

Kiesha Lalama (Choreographer) has created more than 50 works for stage, film and television. Kiesha choreographed feature films, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, *Sorority Row*, the hit television documentary series *Broadway or Bust* (PBS) and upcoming television series *Outsiders* (WGN). Theatrical credits include *National High School Musical Theater Awards* (Broadway), *All Shook Up* (North Shore Music Theatre), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Kansas City Starlight Theatre), *Into the Woods* (Arsht Center), *Judge Jackie Justice*, *Ruthless! The Musical* and *A Grand Night for Singing* (Pittsburgh CLO). Concert dance highlights include *Shed* (DCDC), *Catapult* (Dance Kaleidoscope), *Alegria* (Giordano Dance Chicago) and *Torque* (August Wilson Center Dance Ensemble). Lalama has created two full-length contemporary dance theater productions. *The Bench* received rave reviews and was named by the Pittsburgh Post Gazette's "Best of Dance" Top Ten list in both 2009 and 2010. *The Bench* is currently under development with Titus Theatricals. *HeartShakes* for DCDC premiered in January 2015 receiving tremendous accolades.

Tony Ferrieri (Set Designer) has amassed many awards and milestones in his career, including 36 years with City Theatre, New Works Festival Lifetime Achievement Award, “Designer of the Year” by Pittsburgh City Paper and Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, “Frankel Award,” “Fred Kelly Award for Outstanding Achievement,” “Harry Schwalb Excellence in the Arts Award,” features in Live Design and Stage Directions, and over 525 designs. Recent designs include: *GIRLS ONLY*, *BOEING BOEING* (CLO Cabaret); *The Piano Lesson* (Pgh. Playwrights Theatre); *Sunset Baby*, *The Night Alive* (City Theatre); *The Winter’s Tale* (Quantum Theatre); *You Say Tomato, I Say Shut Up!* (Dana Phil Playhouse Productions); *A Streetcar Named Desire* (barebones).

Keith Truax (Lighting Designer) is a 3rd Graduate Student at Carnegie Mellon University, where he is pursuing an MFA in Lighting Design. Pittsburgh Design Credits include; Kinetic Theatre’s *Sherlock’s Last Case* & “Romance, PICT Classic Theatre’s *Oliver Twist*, *Sharon’s Grave*, *How The Other Half Loves* and *Women and Scarecrow*. CMU Design Credits include: *Beggars Opera* for School of Music, *Smokers* and *How To Be A Good Person* for School of Drama. Future Project: *The Plague In Venice* for CMU School of Drama.

The Story

BOY MEETS GIRL...ON A BLIND DATE... IN A MUSICAL.

Imagine you’re on a blind date and your mother shows up - followed by Grandma Ida, your opinionated best friend, your therapist and a bevy of broken-hearted exes. Throw in a soundtrack to rival the Top 40 and you’ve got one AMAZING evening, right? When blind date newbie Aaron is set up with serial-dater Casey, a casual drink turns into a hilarious high-stakes dinner. Though it’s “blah” at first sight, through the help of their wait staff, Aaron and Casey start to see a second date on the horizon. Can this couple turn what could be a dating disaster into something special before the check arrives? Featuring instant hits such as “Bailout Song,” “First Impressions” and “Awkward Pause.” *Adult Content*.

“A WINNING CROWD-PLEASER delivered with comic verve and charm.”
-*The Hollywood Reporter*

Performance Schedule

Wednesdays 7:30pm

Thursdays 1:00pm* & 7:30pm * Thursday matinees—2/25 and 4/21

Fridays 7:30pm

Saturdays 2:00pm & 7:30pm

Sundays 2:00pm

Tickets

Tickets start at **\$36.75** and are available online at CLOCabaret.com, by calling **412-456-6666** or at the Box Office at Theater Square. [Groups of 10 or more](#) can call the Group Sales Hotline at **412-325-1582** to learn more about special discounts, priority seating and corporate discounts. Visit pittsburghCLO.org for more information.

Pittsburgh CLO graciously acknowledges the generosity of The Charity Randall Foundation for its sponsorship of the 2015-2016 CLO Cabaret Series.

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Since 1946, the Pittsburgh CLO has been the driving force behind live musical theater in Pittsburgh and the entire Southwestern Pennsylvania region. Under the direction of Van Kaplan since 1997, this not-for-profit arts organization appreciates the support of nearly 200,000 patrons each year and produces a subscription series, educational programs, national tours and develops and invests in new works, including 20 Broadway shows

PITTSBURGH CLO

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(29 Tony Awards®) featuring the current productions of On Your Feet, Kinky Boots and Matilda. Its dedication to the musical theater art form extends to include such programs as the CLO Academy, the CLO Mini Stars, the Gene Kelly Awards, the Richard Rodgers Award the National High School Musical Theater Awards, the Construction Center for the Arts and the CLO Cabaret.