**PRESS CONTACT: Nancy Richards – 917-873-6389 (cell)/nancy@northcoastrep.org**

**MEDIA PAGE:** [**www.northcoastrep.org/press**](http://www.northcoastrep.org/press)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, PLEASE:**

**NORTH COAST REP PRESENTS HILARIOUS,**

**SELDOM-SEEN NEIL SIMON COMEDY CLASSIC,**

***‘LAUGHTER ON THE 23RD FLOOR’***

**Performances Beginning Wednesday, October 19, 2016**

**Running Through Sunday, November 13, 2016**

**Directed by Tom Markus**

Solana Beach, Calif. North Coast Repertory Theatre, which mounted a monster hit last year with Neil Simon’s *Chapter Two,* is now staging ***LAUGHTER ON THE 23RD FLOOR,*** the playwright’s love letter to his early career as a writer for Sid Caesar’s “Your Show of Shows.” Described by Variety as “a battery of yuks that barely lets up,” the play recounts his writing, fighting and wacky antics during the days of live television when he cavorted with such comedy legends as Carl Reiner and Mel Brooks as they tried to please their terrifyingly demanding boss. Tickets are certain to be flying out the window for this wildly hysterically funny romp, so order early to avoid disappointment.

Tom Markus directs Brent Alters\*, Caroline Drage, David Ellenstein\*, Phil Johnson\*, Louis Lotorto\*, Nicholas Mongiardo-Cooper\*, Omri Schein\*, Amanda Sitton\*, and Christopher M. Williams\*. The design team includes Marty Burnett (Scenic Design), Matthew Novotny (Lighting), Melanie Chen (Sound), Elisa Benzoni (Costumes), Andrea Gutierrez (Props) and Peter Herman (Wig & Hair). Cindy Rumley\* is the Stage Manager.

\*The actor or stage manager appears through the courtesy of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States. For background information and photos, go to [www.northcoastrep.org/press](http://www.northcoastrep.org/press).

***Busy director Tom Markus, and his talented cast, are available for interviews by phone, in person, and in-studio. For more information and to arrange interviews or press tickets, please contact Nancy Richards at nancy@northcoastrep.org, or 917-873-6389 cell.***

***LAUGHTER ON THE 23RD FLOOR*** previews begin Wednesday, October 19. Opening Night is Saturday, October 22, at 8pm and includes a post-show reception. There will be a **special talkback on Friday, October 28,** with the cast and artistic director. It will play Wednesdays at 7pm, Thursdays through Saturdays at 8pm, Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2pm with Sundays at 7pm, through November 13, 2016. (See Schedule below.) North Coast Repertory Theatre is located at 987 Lomas Santa Fe Drive, in Solana Beach, CA 92075. Tickets: Previews- $39; Week Nights - $46; Sat. Eve. & Sun. Mat.- $50; Sat. Mat. & Sun. Night - $43. Seniors, Students, Military - $3 off admission. Call 858-481-1055 or visit [www.northcoastrep.org](http://www.northcoastrep.org) to purchase tickets.

**FACT SHEET**

**WHAT: NORTH COAST REPERTORY THEATRE presents**

 ***LAUGHTER ON THE 23RD FLOOR***

**By Neil Simon**

 **Directed by** Tom Markus

**CAST: Brent Alters\*, Caroline Drage, David Ellenstein\*, Phil Johnson\*, Louis Lotorto\*, Nicholas Mongiardo-Cooper\*, Omri Schein\*, Amanda Sitton\*, Christopher M. Williams\***

**WHERE:** North Coast Repertory Theatre

987 Lomas Santa Fe Drive, Ste. D

 Solana Beach, CA 92075

**SCHEDULE** **Previews:** **October 19, 2016**

 **Opens: October 22, 2016, at 8 pm**

 **Closes: November 13, 2016**

 **Wed. @ 7pm, Thurs-Sat @ 8PM; Sat & Sun @ 2PM, Sun @ 7pm**

 **Talkback with cast & director: Friday, October 28, 2016**

**PRICES:** Previews $39.00

 Week Nights $46.00

 Sat. Matinees & Sunday Nights $43.00

 Sat. Nights & Sunday Matinees $50.00

**DISCOUNTS:**  Seniors, Students, Military $3.00 off admission

**BOX OFFICE** (858) 481-1055 or [www.northcoastrep.org](http://www.northcoastrep.org)

| **OCTOBER** |
| --- |
| **SUN** | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|  |  |  | 19Preview8pm | 20Preview8pm | 21Preview8pm | 22OPENING8pm |
|  232pm & 7pm | 24 | 25 | 267pm | 278pm | 288pmTalkback | 292pm & 8pm |
| 302pm & 7pm | 31 | **NOV. 1** | 27pm | 38pm | 48pm | 52pm & ~~12~~8pm |
| 62pm & 7pm | 7 | 8 | 97pm | 108pm | 118pm | 122pm & 8pm |
| 132pm  |  |

**BIOS:**

**NEIL SIMON** (Playwright) began his writing career in television and established himself as our leading writer of comedy by creating a succession of Broadway hits, beginning with *Come Blown Your Horn.* During the 1966-67 season, *Barefoot in the Park, The Odd Couple, Sweet Charity,* and *The Star Spangled Girl* were all running simultaneously; in the 1970-71 season, Broadway theatergoers had their choice of *Plaza Suite, Last of the Red Hot Lovers,* and *Promises, Promises.* Next came *Little Me, The Gingerbread Lady, The Prisoner of Second Avenue, The Sunshine Boys, The Good Doctor, & God’s Favorite, They’re Playing Our Song, I Ought to be in Pictures, Fools,* a revival of *Little Me, Brighton Beach Memoirs, Biloxi Blues* (Tony Award), a new version of *The Odd Couple* staring Sally Struthers and Rita Moreno as the title duo, *Broadway Bound, Rumors. Lost in Yonkers* (Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize), *Jake’s Women,* and *London Suite.* Mr. Simon has also written for the screen: the adaptations of *Barefoot in the Park, The Odd Couple, Plaza Suite, The Last of the Red Hot Lovers, The Prisoner of Second Avenue, The Sunshine Boys, California Suite, I Ought to be in Pictures, Chapter Two, Brighton Beach Memoirs, Biloxi Blues* the TV motion pictures of *Broadway Bound* and *Lost in Yonkers.* Other screenplays he has written include *After the Fox, The Out-of-Towners, The Heartbreak Kid, Murder by Death, The Goodbye Girl, The Cheap Detective, Seems Like Old Times, Only When I Laugh, Max Dugan Returns,* and *The Marrying Man.*

**TOM MARKUS** (Director) thanks David Ellenstein and everyone on the Board and Staffat North Coast Rep for the opportunity to begin his seventh decade as a director in the laugh-filled world of Neil Simon. Tom has worked on Broadway and in Hollywood, and has directed plays on five continents, in seven nations, and in 18 of our United States. He laughed while rehearsing *Laughter*, and he knows he’ll hear you laughing during this performance -- all the way up to the 23rd floor. Tom views the world through farce-colored glasses, and his favorite play is whatever somebody hires him to direct next. [www.tommarkus.com](http://www.tommarkus.com)

**JACQUELYN RITZ\*** (Assistant Director) is delighted to be back at North Coast Repertory where she appeared in *Sherlock, Fox on the Fairway, Chapter Two, Fallen Angels, and Man… of Mischief.* Directing credits: The Fringe’s *That 24 Hour Thing* (2014-2016), *Crimes of the Heart* (A.D) at SRT as well as directing in undergraduate and graduate school, and she spent this spring directing 75 children in The Selfish Giant. She’s been an acting coach, a fight director, a teacher, and mostly an actor for many years. She will be directing Conor McPherson’s adaptation of Dance of Death by August Strindberg for the Theatre: Undone Reading Series in November. She is a member of AEA and SAG/AFTRA. [www.JacquelynRitz.com](http://www.jacquelynRitz.com)

**BRETT ALTERS\*** (Lucas) is making his North Coast Rep debut.  Born and raised in San Diego, Brett is an actor, improviser and clown, who studied at NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts.  Past credits include: *The Beatles’ LOVE* by Cirque Du Soleil*,* P!NK’s *The Truth About Love World Tour*, Franco Dragone’s *Le Reve, Slava’s Snowshow, MEAT LOAF in Concert* and *Piff the Magic Dragon.* Love to Mom, Dad, Walter, Jesse and Amber.  [www.brettalters.com](http://www.brettalters.com/)

**CAROLINE** **DRAGE** (Helen) is thrilled to be making her North Coast Rep debut with such a talented and versatile cast. Regional: *Heathers* (Generation Productions), *Spring Awakening* (FreeFall Theatre and Coterie Theatre), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Theatre Works), *How to Succeed...* and *The World Showcase Players’ Improv Show* (Walt Disney World). BFA Music Theatre, Elon University. Special thanks to her family and Jack for always encouraging her to be a goofball.

**DAVID ELLENSTEIN\*** (Max Prince) Born into a theatrical family, David has worked in theatres across the country. His favorite roles as an actor include: Matt in Talley’s *Folly* and George in *Chapter Two*, at North Coast Rep; title roles in *Hamlet* at Los Angeles Theatre Center and Los Angeles Repertory Company; Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof* at Moonlight Stage, Richard III at California Shakespeare Festival; Einstein in *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* at Laguna Playhouse, Calisto in *The Illusion* and Harker in *Dracula* at the Arizona Theatre Company, Jonathan in *Sight Unseen* at the North Coast Rep and Portland Repertory Theatre. Film and television credits include over three dozen roles *including Star Trek IV, The Practice, Foul Play, Christine Cromwell, Renegade, Eight is Enough, and General Hospital*. David lives with his beautiful wife Denise and their amazing sons Jamie and Will.

**PHIL JOHNSON\*** (Kenny) Broadway:*Les Miserables*, (also tour); the Canadian production of *Sunset Boulevard*; & the 1st National Company of *Miss Saigon*. Off Broadway: *She-Rantulas from Outer Space in 3D!,* Lynn Redgrave Theatre. (Actor/writer, NY Fringe). Latest: *A Jewish Joke* (actor, co-writer), Victory Gardens Theatre, Chicago (directed by David Ellenstein). SoCal Regional: *Man Who Came to Dinner* (SD Critics Circle Craig Noel Award), Coronado Playhouse; *Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Craig Noel Award), Intrepid Shakespeare Co.; *American Rhythm,* Lambs Theatre, *Mistakes Were Made,* Cygnet Theatre; *Putnam County Spelling Bee,* North Coast Repertory; *The Grinch…, Old Globe*. Founder: The Roustabouts Theatre Co. [www.philjohnson.net](http://www.philjohnson.net/)

**LOUIS LOTORTO\*** (Milt) returns to North Coast Rep having appeared in two other Neil Simon classics here: *Chapter Two* as Leoand *The Odd Couple* as Felix and more recently as Ace Dolan/Charles Valliere in the *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Great Nome Gold Rush* this past season. A native of Seattle, Louis has worked professionally in regional theatre for over 25 years. Credits include the Ahmanson’s *An Enemy of the People* (w/ Sir Ian McKellen), *A Noise Within* (Ovation Award Nomination), ACT, The Shakespeare Theatre Company (Helen Hayes Award Nomination), Oregon and California Shakespeare Festivals, Portland Center Stage, Berkeley Rep, San Jose Rep and at South Coast Repertory Theatre most recently in *Amadeus.* www.louislotorto.com

**NICHOLAS MONGIARDO-COOPER\*** (Val)Off-Broadway: *Rothschild and Sons*, *Lonesome Traveler*, *Julius Caesar.* NY: *SubUrbia*,*The Female Terrorists Project*, *Iolanthe*,*Slavs!*, *Three Days of Rain*. Regional: *Our Lady of 121st* *St.*, *Ferdinand the Bull*, *Behind the Gates*, *Slaughterhouse Five (*Action!) *Lucky Duck*,*The Borrowers, Edward Tulane* (SCR), *A* *Midsummer Night’s Dream (*SBCCLO), *Words By* (SDTCC Nom.)*, Side By Side By Sondheim*, *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Great Nome Gold Rush* (North Coast Rep), and *Side Show*(La Jolla Playhouse). TV: "Fuller House" (Netflix/WB), "Superstore" (NBCUniversal) Film: “Goodbye Canarsie,*” “*Viko,” “F.U.B.A.R.,” “0s & 1s,” “County Line,” “Diamond Bar,” “Signal,” “Potter’s Field,” “Hollywood Sex Wars.” LaGuardia High School, BFA: NYU. Proud AEA member since 2003. [www.nicholasmongiardocooper.com](http://www.nicholasmongiardocooper.com/)

**OMRI SCHEIN\*** (Ira Stone) New York: *The People Vs. Mona* (Off-Broadway/Cast Recording), *Hell’s Belles, Henry V*. International Tour: *Grease*. Regional: *When You’re In Love…Jewish* (directed by Jason Alexander), *A Funny Thing…Forum*, *Dear World, When Pigs Fly,* among others. At NCRT: *25th…Spelling Bee, Five Course Love, The Big Bang, The Underpants*. As a writer: *Gary Goldfarb: Master Escapist* (Winner best lyrics NYMF 2013), *Mambo Italiano* (based on the film of the same name), *The Toxic Avenger: Xmas Chaos*, *Bed Fellas,* and the upcoming *Withering Heights* (with Phil Johnson). MFA Musical Theatre SDSU. [www.omri-schein.com](http://www.omri-schein.com./)

**AMANDA SITTON\*** (Carol) Selected theater credits include: *Don’t Dress For Dinner*, *Voice of* *the Prairie, Collected Stories, Amy’s View* (North Coast Rep), *Maple and Vine, Glass* *Menagerie, It’s A Wonderful Life* (Cygnet Theater, Resident Artist) *The Oldest Boy, Road to Mecca, Doubt,* (SD Theatre Critics Circle Craig Noel Award Outstanding Featured Performance) (San Diego Rep), *Comedy of Errors, Golden Boy* (SD Theatre Critics Circle Craig Noel Award Outstanding Lead Performance), *Sailor’s Song* (New Village Arts), *Fair Use, Torch Song Trilogy* (Diversionary Theater). Ms. Sitton received her BA in Theatre from UCSD.

**CHRISTOPHER M. WILLIAMS\*** (Brian) is an actor, director, producer and stage manager, and the new Associate Artistic Director of North Coast Rep. Along with working on 15 shows for NCRT (*Visiting Mr. Green, Lend Me a Tenor, Don't Dress for Dinner, Unnecessary Farce,*) he played Nathan Rothschild in The York Theatre's, Off-Broadway musical, *Rothschild & Sons*, opposite Robert Cuccioli. Other theatres: AZ Theatre Company, AZ Jewish Theatre, Actor's Theatre, Phoenix Theatre, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Southwest Shakespeare Company, among others. Christopher was the founding Artistic Director of Oceanside Theatre Company. He produced, with Liberty Studios, the WWII feature film, "Walking with the Enemy," starring Jonas Armstrong and Ben Kingsley.

**CINDY RUMLEY\*** (Stage Manager): Credits include: *Ain’t Misbehavin’, Way Downriver; William Faulkner’s ‘Old Man’, Chapatti, Side By Side By Sondheim, Freud’s Last Session, Mandate Memories, Dames at Sea, Two By Pinter*, and *Visiting Mr. Green* with North Coast Rep. *Snapshots* with The Pico Playhouse, *Bye Bye Birdie* with San Diego Musical Theater, and *Conference of the Birds* with The Moscow Art Theater. Cindy has worked as a production assistant at North Coast Rep *for Heroes, My Name is Asher Lev,5 Course Love, King O’ the Moon,* and *The Drawer Boy*. Cindy holds an M.F.A in stage management from UC Irvine and is a member of Actor’s Equity Association. In her free time, Cindy enjoys being married to the amazing Mr. Aaron Rumley.

**DESIGN TEAM:**

**MARTY BURNETT** (Resident Scenic Designer) Marty is in his 23rd season as Resident Designer/Technical Director at North Coast Rep, where he has designed the last 170 shows. Other venues include Laguna Playhouse, Portland Stage Company, Drury Lane (Chicago), Claridge Hotel (Atlantic City), Union Plaza, Sahara Hotel, Hacienda in Las Vegas, Coronado Playhouse, Scripps Ranch Theater, Harrah’s Lake Tahoe. Marty is a proud alumni of Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska.

**MATTHEW NOVOTNY** (Light Design) is pleased to be designing another show for North Coast Rep, where he has designed close to 40 shows over the past seven years.  Matthew is currently the Lighting Designer in Residence for San Diego Musical Theatre as well as North Coast Rep, and his work can be seen at a wide variety of theatres across San Diego.  Matthew holds a BA in Technical Theatre from San Diego State, and a Masters Degree in Lighting Design from Boston University. Matthew is married to his beautiful wife Amanda, with three gorgeous children: Ragan, Harper and Heston.

**ELISA BENZONI** (Costume Design) is thrilled to be working with North Coast Rep again. Previous work with North Coast Repertory Theatre includes: *The Cocktail Hour, Hedda Gabler, Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Great Nome Gold Rush, Chapatti, The Fox on the Fairway* for which she was nominated for a Craig Noel Award; Other select credits: *Sex with Strangers*(Geffen Playhouse), *Constellations* (Old Globe) *Pericles, Prince of Tyre, Reckless, Much Ado About Nothing, Measure for Measure* (Old Globe/USD); *The Who and The What, Our Town, Tall Girls, Brahaman/I, Sam Bendrix* *at the Bon Soir* (La Jolla Playhouse); *Emilie*, *Sylvia, Much Ado About Nothing*(New Village Arts), *Snakeskin, Lifeblood Harmony, Chagall, A Man Found Wanting* (Malashock Dance); *The Storm, The Threepenny Opera, A Man, His Wife, and His Hat* (UCSD). Assistant costume credits: *Dialogues des Carmelites* (Teatro Petruzzelli, Bari), *Paradise Found* (Menier Chocolate Factory, London), *Milk Like Sugar*(La Jolla Playhouse), *As You Like It, A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (The Old Globe). Elisa holds a costume design MFA from UCSD. [www.elisabenzoni.com](http://www.elisabenzoni.com/)

**MELANIE CHEN**(Sound Design) is thrilled to be working with North Coast Rep again! She is a freelance sound designer who has designed over 50 productions in San Diego, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. Past North Coast Rep credits include *The Cocktail Hour, Ain’t Misbehavin’, Hedda Gabler, Way Downriver, Now You See It, Side by Side by Sondheim, Betrayal, Unnecessary Farce, Freud’s Last Session*, *Romance/Romance*, *Faded Glory*, *Mandate Memories*, and *Becoming Cuba.* Melanie holds an M.F.A. in Sound Design for Theatre & Dance from UC San Diego. For more info, visit her website at [www.melaniesound.com](http://www.melaniesound.com)

**ANDREA GUTIERREZ** (Prop Design) has been working at North Coast Rep since 2012, beginning as the Stage Manager and Prop Master for our theatre school. She worked as backstage crew for the 32nd and the beginning of the 33rd Season, before taking over as supervising House Manager and Volunteer Coordinator. Her previous prop credits include *The Cocktail Hour, Hedda Gabler*, *Way Downriver; William Faulkner’s ‘Old Man’, Now You See It*, *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Great Nome Gold Rush, Chapatti,* and *The Fox on the Fairway*, as well as two seasons as properties assistant at Starlight Theatre. She received her B.A. in Theatrical Design and Production from UCLA’s School of Theatre, Film & Television, and is currently pursuing her M.A. from Johns Hopkins University.

**PETER HERMAN** (Hair & Wig Design) has previously designed wigs for over 30 North Coast Rep productions including: *The Cocktail Hour, Way Downriver; William Faulkner’s ‘Old Man’, Now You See It*, *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Great Nome Gold Rush*, *Fallen Angels, Romance Romance, Faded Glory, Mandate Memories, The School For Lies, Honky Tonk Angels, Travesties, I Love You Because, Little Women,* *My Name is Asher Lev* and *Five Course Love*. He has also designed costumes for past North Coast Rep productions of *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, The Big Bang, Madagascar*, and *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*. Peter teaches wig and makeup design at San Diego State University. He is glad to be part of the creative team on this show.

**BACKGROUND:**

Season 35 continues with ***The Girl Singers of the Hit Parade Holiday Show,*** a tuneful tribute to the ‘50s’ favorite holiday songs as well as sing-a-longs to engage young and old alike (Dec. 6-23). The New Year rings in with the San Diego premiere of ***Marjorie Prime,*** a fascinating family drama set in the near future that dazzled critics and audiences in New York and Los Angeles (Jan. 11-Feb. 5, 2017). Following is a wildly inventive tour-de-force, ***The Illusion,*** by the legendary Tony Kushner (Feb. 22-March 19, 2017). Next, audiences are invited to take an entertaining, offbeat journey with ***Travels With My Aunt,*** a New York Times Critic’s Pick in 2015 (April 12-May 7, 2017). ***The Spitfire Grill,*** an emotional, all-American musical, is certain to win hearts with its compelling story and engaging melodies (May 31-June 25,2017). Season 35 then concludes with a second San Diego premiere, a gut-busting, uproarious backstage farce*,* ***At This Evening’s Performance*** (July 12-Aug. 6, 2017).

**About the North Coast Repertory Theatre**

North Coast Repertory Theatre is a professional Equity theatre founded in 1982, currently celebrating its 35th season. North Coast Rep has received critical acclaim from media and audiences alike, and has evolved into one of the area’s leading performing arts organizations. North Coast Rep prides itself on employing the majority of its actors from Actors’ Equity Association for its high quality, award-winning productions, and staging works by established and emerging playwrights. Throughout its history, North Coast Rep has created a platform where artist and audience thrive through the intimacy of live theatre, recognizing the power of theatre to challenge complacency, revitalize the imagination, nurture the unexpected and embrace the variety and diversity in our lives.

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