



Media Contact: Brenda Hughes
415/244-9770 or brenda@theatricalpr.com

For Immediate Release

42ND STREET MOON ANNOUNCES CAST FOR GEORGE AND IRA GERSHWIN'S STRIKE UP THE BAND (April 6 - 24)

For tickets: 415/255-8207 or 42ndstreetmoon.org

SAN FRANCISCO, February 14, 2011—42nd Street Moon's Ira Gershwin celebration continues in April with *STRIKE UP THE BAND*, to be presented at the Eureka Theatre in low-priced previews on April 6, 7 and 8, opening on Saturday, April 9, and running through April 24. Heading the cast will be **Carson Church** as Horace Fletcher with **Michael Scott Wells** as Jim Townsend, **Samantha Bruce** as Joan Fletcher and Moon's Producing Artistic Director **Stephanie Rhoads** as Mrs. Draper.

A madcap treatise on the follies of love, war and business, *STRIKE UP THE BAND* has an unusual history. Originally written in 1927, by **George S. Kaufman** and **George and Ira Gershwin**, the show closed on the road (giving rise to Kaufman's comment that "satire is what closes on Saturday night"). The team resurrected it in a watered-down version in 1930, and this one was successful. 42nd Street Moon will be presenting the original 1927 version of the show.

STRIKE UP THE BAND received rave reviews when revived by New York's Encores! series in 1998 – the *NY Times* declared it "a show that remains remarkably vital, with a score as sweet and varied as a chocolate sampler. It reminds us that Broadway musicals once had sass, wit and sex appeal." The score includes Gershwin classics like the title song, "The Man I Love," "I've Got a Crush on You," "Soon" and "Meadow Serenade."

"*STRIKE UP THE BAND* is actually rather surprising," said Moon's Artistic Director Greg MacKellan. "It's quite sharp in its satire of war and especially war profiteers. Of course, the show is sublimely silly – Kaufman wrote for the Marx Brothers, and this is very much like a Marx Brothers musical without the Marx Brothers. But what it has to say feels very pointed, very timely to today. And of course, the score is outstanding – one of the Gershwins' best."

The unlikely tale revolves around Horace J. Fletcher, proud owner of the Fletcher American Cheese Company. Outraged when Switzerland protests a tariff on imported cheese, he convinces the U.S. government to declare a war, financed by himself and dubbed "The Horace J. Fletcher Memorial War." When his daughter announces her love for Jim Townsend, a newspaperman who has publicly criticized both the war and the quality of milk going into his cheese, Fletcher drafts Townsend and sends him off to war.

Carson Church, (Horace Fletcher) has appeared both on Broadway (*Inherit the Wind*, *Wonderful Town*) and Off-Broadway (*Pirates of Penzance*). His other credits include *South Pacific* with Reba McEntire at Carnegie Hall and *They're Playing Our Song* opposite Andrea McArdle. Former bass for the vocal harmony group "The Diamonds," Church has also written and appeared in a cappella spots for numerous TV shows.

Stephanie Rhoads, who plays the socialite Mrs. Draper, most recently appeared in 42nd Street Moon's *And All That Jazz: A John Kander Salon*. Her many leading roles with the company include Helen Vance in *Out of This World*, Adriana in *Boys from Syracuse*, and the Countess Diane de Vobrillac in *Ben Franklin in Paris*.

Michael Scott Wells, made his Moon debut in *Once in a Million Moons: A Jerome Kern Salon* with Rebecca Luker, and returns as the troublemaking reporter Townsend. He recently appeared in Moon's production of *Babes in Arms*. He has played leading roles with several local companies, and was part of the national touring company of *Strega Nona: The Musical*.

Timothy Harper, foreman of the Horace J. Fletcher American Cheese Company, is played by **Luke Chapman**, who appeared in Moon's production of *A Funny Thing Happened ... and Very Warm for May*. **Gabriel Grilli**, returning for his fourth show with 42nd Street Moon, portrays the manager of the factory, C. Edgar Sloane.

Samantha Bruce makes her company debut as Horace Fletcher's daughter Joan; **Eric Wenburg** appears as Colonel Holmes, the confidential adviser to the president; and **Sharon Rietkerk** plays Mrs. Draper's daughter Anne, and **Benjamin Knoll** is the mysterious Mr. Spelvin. Others in the cast are **Benjamin Pither**, **Jack Sale**, **Samantha Bartholomew**, **Megan Amanda Hopp**, and **Amie Shapiro**.

The creative team for STRIKE UP THE BAND is headed by Director, **Zack Thomas Wilde**, with music direction by **Dave Dobrusky**. **Sarah Phykitt** provides the set design, with costumes by **Scarlett Kellum** and lighting by **Robert Ted Anderson**.

42nd Street Moon's 2010-11 season concludes with **Cole Porter's** final Broadway musical *SILK STOCKINGS (1955)*, a sly and sophisticated version of the classic film *Ninotchka*. Porter's legendary wit is in top form in a dazzling collection of comic songs ("Stereophonic Sound," "Satin and Silk," "Josephine," "Siberia") and beautiful ballads (the classic "All of You," "Paris Loves Lovers," "As On Through the Seasons We Sail.") *SILK STOCKINGS* will run from May 4 - 22.

42nd Street Moon celebrates and preserves the art and spirit of the American Musical Theatre, presenting intimate productions of "Uncommon Musicals" -- classic and rarely performed shows by the great 20th century songwriters. Through productions, educational programs, and community outreach, the company is committed to increasing the awareness and appreciation of the rich heritage and cultural perspective of the musical theatre and its vast influence on the world stage. Since 1993 the company has staged more than 107 musicals, as well as several revues celebrating the dazzling legacy of the 20th Century's greatest musical theater composers and lyricists.

Tickets from \$24 - \$44 are available through the 42nd Street Moon Box Office at **415/255-8207** (Open Tues. - Fri. from noon to 5 p.m.), or through the website www.42ndstreetmoon.org. All performances are presented at San Francisco's intimate Eureka Theatre, 215 Jackson Street.

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Calendar Editors, please note:

42nd Street Moon presents

STRIKE UP THE BAND

Music by George Gershwin, Lyrics by Ira Gershwin

Book by George S. Kaufman

A merrily madcap treatise on the follies of love, war, and business.

Eureka Theatre, 215 Jackson Street, San Francisco

Low-priced previews: Wed. April 6 at 7 pm/Thurs. & Fri. April 7 & 8 at 8 pm

Opening: Sat. April 9 at 6 pm

Performances through April 24, 2011:

Weds. at 7 pm, Thurs. & Fri. at 8 pm, Sat. at 6 pm, Sun. at 3 pm

Plus Saturday Family Matinee April 16 at 1 pm

Tickets: \$24 - 44

Box Office: 415/255-8207 or online at www.42ndstmoon.org