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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The Puppets are Bigger, Better and Back This Summer!**  
**Avenue Q Returns at Oglethorpe University's Conant Performing Arts Center**  
**June 12 – July 12**

**ATLANTA –** Horizon Theatre's award-winning production of *Avenue Q*, returns for a special debut at Oglethorpe University's Conant Performing Arts Center! After two sold out runs at Horizon Theatre, *Avenue Q* will be coming for a limited engagement at the Conant Performing Arts Center **June 12 - July 12, 2015**. **Smart, hilarious, risqué and full of heart, Avenue Q is Broadway's smash-hit Tony award winner for Best Musical, Best Score and Best Book.** Now it's back and better than ever in a production the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* calls "**risqué and downright irresistible**". **Horizon's Avenue Q is the winner of the Suzi Bass Award for Outstanding Production of a Musical, plus a sweep of 6 other Suzis in its 2011 debut.** "It's an explosion of upbeat energy, music, and puppets – and definitely for grown-ups!" says Co-Artistic/Producing Director Lisa Adler. "But it's so much fun, we want to make sure teens can come with their families, so there will be limited PG-13 Edition performances as well."

**Come relax, drink or picnic with us before the show in our lovely outdoor lounge area and covered veranda on the beautiful grounds of the Conant Performing Arts Center** (former home of Georgia Shakespeare, 4484 Peachtree Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30319). Performances are Wed., Thurs. and Fri. at 8 PM, Sat. at 3 PM and 8:30 PM, and Sun. at 5 PM. The play contains strong language and adult content, and is not recommended for children. The special PG-13 Edition performances of *Avenue Q* appropriate for teens (no strong language or sexual situations) are June 20 at 3 PM, June 28 at 5 PM, and July 8 at 8 PM. Tickets start at \$30 and VIP tickets that include a pre-show reserved table and drink start at \$50. Student prices will be available. **Tickets and information are available at [horizontheatre.com](http://horizontheatre.com) or 404.584.7450.**

**More About Avenue Q: The Musical and this Production**

**The neighbors are nice on Avenue Q, the only address you can afford when you're fresh out of college, out of a job, or just trying to find your way in life.** Princeton, Gary Coleman (yes, that one!), Christmas Eve and their newfound friends (played by talented actors and puppets) valiantly seek jobs, dates, and their ever-elusive purpose in life. This upbeat musical for grown-ups tackles tough subjects like racism, unemployment, homosexuality, homelessness, love, and lust with Sesame Street-like puppets, monsters, video and catchy tunes.

**“Avenue Q is about finding your purpose in life — whether you are young or old, gay or straight, yellow, red or blue.** It fits perfectly with Horizon’s mission of connecting Atlantans through smart, positive, provocative contemporary theater that speaks to our diverse community,” continues Ms. Adler. **“It is a tour de force for an ensemble of 8 artists who act, sing, dance, puppeteer, and play musical instruments. It gives you hope and lifts your spirits. Don’t we all need that today?”**

**Horizon was one of the first theatres in the country to produce the play regionally, and the production won 7 Suzi Bass Awards in 2011: Outstanding Production of a Musical,** Director of a Musical (Heidi Cline McKerley), Musical Direction (S. Renee Clark), Lead Actor in a Musical (Nick Arapoglou as Princeton), Featured Actress in a Musical (Leslie W. Bellair as Christmas Eve), Lighting Design of a Musical (Mary Parker), Scenic Design of a Musical (Moriah and Isabel Curley-Clay).

### **Writers, Cast and Creative Team**

**The co-creators of Avenue Q, Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx,** conceived the idea and co-wrote all of the songs, both music and lyrics, writing together, in the same room, at the same time. They met in 1998 in a BMI Workshop which changed their lives. **Robert Lopez is now one of only a dozen people (and the youngest) to have won an Emmy, a Grammy, an Oscar and a Tony Award, and the only person who has won all four within a decade.** He won the Tony Award for Best Score for *Avenue Q*, which has been produced in New York, Las Vegas, London, and around the world. He is also the co-creator of the Broadway hit *The Book of Mormon* with Matt Stone and Trey Parker from *South Park* which won the Tony for Best Musical, and won Tonys for him for Best Original Score and Best Book of a Musical as well as a Grammy for Best Musical Theatre Album. **Lopez and his wife Kristen wrote the songs for the animated Disney feature Frozen, including the much loved “Let It Go”** which won the Academy Award for Best Original Song. And just like his character Princeton, he also has a B.A. in English from Yale (“What do you do with a B.A. in English?”). Jeff Whitty is a playwright who won the 2004 Tony Award for Best Book of a musical for *Avenue Q*. He also wrote the libretto for *Bring It On: The Musical* which premiered at Atlanta’s Alliance Theatre and continued to Broadway where it was nominated for the 2013 Tony Award for Best Musical.

**Horizon Theatre brings Avenue Q back with most of its original cast plus two top notch actors new to this production.** Reprising his Suzi Award-winning lead performance as fresh college grad, Princeton, is **Nick Arapoglou.** Nick’s been staying busy in feature films and was recently seen in *Romeo and Juliet* at The Shakespeare Tavern and in *The Gift of the Magi* at Theatrical Outfit. **Jeff McKerley** (recent: *Catch Me If You Can* and *Damn Yankees* at the Atlanta Lyric) is back again as sloppy slacker Nicky. Lucy the Slut, the sexy singer who seduces Princeton, is again played by **Jill Hames** (recent: *Hands on a Hard Body* Aurora Theatre, *The Rocky Horror Show* Actor’s Express). **J.C. Long** returns from three international tours with the American Shakespeare Center to rejoin the cast as Rod, the closeted investment banker who loves Nicky. Locally he was also seen in *Gut Bucket Blues* at True Colors and *Fly* at Theatrical Outfit. **Matt Nitchie** switches it up by returning as aspiring stand-up comic Brian after playing the leads in *Anthony and Cleopatra* and *Taming of the Shrew* at the Shakespeare Tavern. Our final returning cast member is **Spencer Stephens** as Gary Coleman, Avenue Q’s maintenance man. Spencer is a regular performer and director at the Center for Puppetry Arts and is also serving

as Q's puppeteer consultant. Fresh from her starring role as Eliza Doolittle at Georgia Ensemble Theatre, newcomer **Molly Coyne** joins us as our new Kate Monster, the kindergarten teaching assistant monster who falls in love with Princeton. Rounding out the cast in human form is **Natalie Gray** as Christmas Eve, the Asian-American therapist without any clients. Formerly from Atlanta and now in NYC, Natalie is new to the Horizon cast, but not to *Avenue Q*; she played Christmas Eve for over a year in the commercial Las Vegas production.

**Creating the world of *Avenue Q* is the Atlanta creative team that swept the Suzi Bass Awards with *Avenue Q*.** Leading the ensemble is **Director Heidi Cline Mckerley**, who has worked on over 20 projects at Horizon Theatre and is one of the hottest directors of musicals in town, including her recent work on *Cowgirls* at Horizon and *Catch Me if You Can* and *Damn Yankees* at the Atlanta Lyric. The musical side is helmed by **musical director S. Renée Clark**, a two-time Suzi Award winner whose collaborations with Ms. Cline Mckerley go back more than fifteen years. She has music directed many Horizon productions, including last year's *Cowgirls* and *Right On*. Horizon's favorite scenic design duo, resident designers **Moriah and Isabel Curley-Clay**, return with their Suzi Award-winning streetscape for people and puppets along with Horizon resident lighting designer **Mary Parker** and her Suzi Award-winning design. The rest of the team includes: props designer, **MC Park**, resident prop master at Georgia Ensemble Theatre; costume designer **Anna Jenny**, now designing for the shows at the Georgia Aquarium; and video designer, **Bradley Bergeron**. The colorful and furry cast of puppets are original designs, hand built by **Russ Walko**, who designs puppets for film, television and the stage in his West Coast workshop.

So if you have ever been looking for an apartment, a job, love, your personal identity, or your purpose in the world (or plan on it soon) join in the fun at Horizon Theatre. **This adult-only, politically incorrect cross between *Sesame Street* and *The Simpsons* uses clever writing and catchy songs to take a look at the issues we face every day.**

### Tickets and More

***Avenue Q* runs at June 12 through July 12, Wed, Thurs and Fri at 8 PM, Sat at 3 PM and 8:30 PM and Sunday at 5 PM at the Conant Performing Arts Center at Oglethorpe University.** Conveniently located on Peachtree Road in Brookhaven just a mile from Buckhead, **the Conant Performing Arts Center features an intimate, comfortable 500-seat theatre and a new contemporary picnic and lounge area with tables on a covered veranda and Adirondack style chairs on the lawn.** Make sure to drink or dine with us before the show. Bring your own picnic or order from us in advance. Wine, beer and soft drinks are available for purchase – or bring your own. Tables for 2, 4 and 8 are available first come first serve or reserved as part of the VIP ticket.

**Tickets start as low as \$30** (plus 8% sales tax) and are on sale now. Or you can be part of our Q-community of VIPs (Very Important Puppets!) with a reserved preshow table, bottle of wine, and other special perks, starting at \$50\*. Prices change based on availability and demand, so buy early for the best prices! **And don't forget to stay after the show for your photo op with your favorite *Avenue Q* puppets.** Tickets and information are available at or 404-584-7450 or [www.horizontheatre.com](http://www.horizontheatre.com).

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## The Summary

### **AVENUE Q\***

Smart, hilarious, risqué and full of heart, *Avenue Q* is Broadway's smash-hit Tony award winner for Best Musical, Best Score and Best Book and a worldwide sensation. Horizon Theatre is back for an encore of *Avenue Q*, winner of 2011 Suzi Bass Awards for Outstanding Production of a Musical and 6 other Suzis Awards. The neighbors are nice on Avenue Q, the only address you can afford when you're fresh out of college, out of a job, or just trying to find your way in life. Princeton, Gary Coleman (yes, that one!), Christmas Eve and their newfound friends (played by talented actors and puppets) valiantly seek jobs, dates, and their ever-elusive purpose in life. ***Sesame Street* meets *The Simpsons* in this upbeat musical for grown-ups – and limited performances of the PG13 Edition.**

\*Contains mature language and situations; not intended for children.

### **Playwright**

Music & Lyrics by Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx

Book by Jeff Whitty

### **Creative Team**

|                     |                             |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Director            | Heidi Cline McKerley        |
| Music Director      | S. Renée Clark              |
| Scenic Designer     | Moriah & Isabel Curley-Clay |
| Puppet Designer     | Russ Walko                  |
| Light Designer      | Mary Parker                 |
| Prop Designer       | MC Park                     |
| Video Designer      | Bradley Bergeron            |
| Stage Manager       | Jude Futral*                |
| Asst. Stage Manager | Kayla Zinke                 |

### **The Cast**

|                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Princeton          | Nick Arapoglou*  |
| Kate Monster       | Molly Coyne*     |
| Lucy the Slut/Bear | Jill Hames       |
| Nicky/Trekkie      | Jeff McKerley*   |
| Rod/Trekkie        | J.C. Long*       |
| Gary Coleman       | Spencer Stephens |
| Christmas Eve      | Natalie Gray*    |
| Brian              | Matt Nitchie     |

\*Member of Actors Equity Association

**Location:** Oglethorpe University's Conant Performing Arts Center  
4484 Peachtree Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30319 (former home of Georgia Shakespeare)

**Dates:** June 12 through July 12, 2015

**Days and Times:** Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 8 PM, Saturday at 3 PM and 8:30 PM, and Sunday at 5 PM. PG-13 Edition: June 20 at 3 PM, June 28 at 5 PM, and July 8 at 8 PM. Grounds open 2 hours prior to performance for picnics.

**Prices:** Tickets start at \$30\*. Discounts for groups of 10 or more. VIP Tickets (Very Important Puppets!) start at \$50\* and include a reserved preshow table, bottle of wine, and other special perks. Student prices are available. Prices change based on availability and demand, so buy early for the best prices! Eight percent sales tax will be added to all ticket orders. Internet convenience fee added to all online orders. No refunds or, exchanges.

**Tables:** Pre-show tables available first come, first serve or Reserved with a VIP ticket.

**Food and Beverage:** Bring your own food and drink or order from us. Meals must be ordered in advance. Wine, beer, soft drinks and snacks are available onsite.

**Tickets and info:** [www.horizontheatre.com](http://www.horizontheatre.com) or 404-584-7450.

### **About Horizon Theatre Company**

Horizon Theatre Company connects people, inspires hope and promotes positive change through the stories of our times. We produce professional area and world premieres of smart, funny and provocative contemporary plays. We also develop the next generation of diverse artists and audiences. For more information about tickets, group sales, or to receive a season brochure, call 404.584.7450 or visit [horizontheatre.com](http://horizontheatre.com).

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