



Main Phone: 404.523.1477 • Box Office: 404.584.7450 • Fax: 404.584.8815  
PO Box 5376 • Atlanta, GA 31107 • [horizontheatre.com](http://horizontheatre.com) • [marketing@horizontheatre.com](mailto:marketing@horizontheatre.com)

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For further information contact:  
Caroline Huftalen 404.523.1477 x111  
[Marketing@horizontheatre.com](mailto:Marketing@horizontheatre.com)  
Horizon Box Office: 404.584.7450

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **The Puppets are Bigger, Better and Back This Summer!**

### ***Avenue Q* Returns at two new locations**

**June 3 – 7 at Piedmont Park**

**June 12 – July 12 at Oglethorpe University's  
Conant Performing Arts Center**

ATLANTA – Horizon Theatre's award-winning production of *Avenue Q* returns **to two new locations this summer!** After two sold out runs at Horizon Theatre, the PG-13 edition of *Avenue Q* will be taking over Piedmont Park June 3 - 7, 2015 and the adult edition will be coming to Oglethorpe University's Conant Performing Arts Center June 12 - July 12, 2015 (with 3 performances of the PG-13 Edition, too).

**Smart, hilarious, 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* called "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 - but 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."

Thanks to a major grant from **The Charles Loidans Foundation**, a supporting grant from the Mark and Evelyn Trammell Fund and a partnership with the Piedmont Park Conservancy, **Horizon will bring professional theatre to Piedmont Park this summer and offer thousands of FREE general admission tickets, giving new audiences a chance to experience Horizon.** **The PG-13 Edition will be performed at Piedmont Park and for 3 performances at the Conant Center.** This version maintains the basic story line and the comedy of the original, but is edited for content to make it appropriate for teenagers. Neither production is intended for young children. The park version will be performed on an outdoor stage in The Promenade green space of North Piedmont Park with a simplified, durable set and lighting design, adjusted to fit the location. **For the original version of *Avenue Q*, join us at the beautiful Conant Performing Arts Center where you'll see the full, risqué version for grown-ups with its award-winning set and lighting design.**

**Come relax and picnic with us before the show at both locations** – under the trees at The Promenade green space on the North end of Piedmont Park and in our lovely outdoor lounge area and covered veranda on the beautiful grounds of the Conant Performing Arts Center off of Peachtree Road in Brookhaven.

**Park performances are Wednesday through Sunday, June 3 – 7 at 7:30 PM, and audiences will provide their own blanket or low beach chair.** Grounds open for picnicking at 6pm. **Free and \$15\* Reserved Seating Section Tickets are available ONLINE ONLY beginning May 1.** (\*plus tax and service charge). Tickets will be available at [www.horizontheatre.com](http://www.horizontheatre.com). Audiences will need to bring their own low beach chairs or blankets for seating. Bring your own picnic or purchase from food trucks. Wine, beer, water and soft drinks will be available for sale onsite. No alcohol or glass may be brought in to the performance area. The stage is in The **Promenade green space at the North end of Piedmont Park**, conveniently located near the Park/Botanical Gardens Sage parking garage and The Prado entrance to the Park.

**Conant Performing Arts Center performances are June 12 - July 12, 2015, Wed., Thurs and Fri at 8 PM, Sat at 3 PM and 8:30 PM and Sun. at 5 PM.** Grounds open for picnicking 2 hours before the show. At the Conant, Horizon will present both the original adult version of *Avenue Q* and a few performances of the PG-13 Edition in rotating repertory. The adult version contains strong language and adult content, and is not recommended for children. The PG13 Edition performances of *Avenue Q* (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 are available. **The Conant Performing Arts Center at Oglethorpe University** (4484 Peachtree Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30319, former home of Georgia Shakespeare) is located in **Brookhaven on Peachtree Road** (look for the “Hogwarts Castle”-like façade and flags). Plenty of free parking. **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, pornography, 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: PG-13 Edition opens in Piedmont Park June 3 and runs through June 7.** The grounds open daily at 6 PM for picnics and the show begins at 7:30 PM. The PG-13 Edition will be performed at this location and is not recommended for small children. Performance site is reached most conveniently from parking at the Botanical Gardens/Piedmont Park garage. There are a limited amount of FREE tickets available each night. Reserved seating section tickets are \$15 (plus tax and fees). Both free and reserved seats will go on sale May 1.

**Avenue Q opens at the Conant Performing Arts Center at Oglethorpe University on June 12 and runs through July 12.** Performances will be Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 8 PM, Saturday at 3 PM and 8:30 PM, and Sunday at 5 PM. Our outdoor veranda with new contemporary tables and lounge chairs as well as our food and beverage service open 2 hours before show time. Bring your own picnic or order from us in advance. The PG-13 Edition will be performed at this location on June 20 at 3 PM, June 28 at 5 PM, and July 8 at 8 PM. **Regular tickets start at as low as \$30** (plus 8% sales tax) – or join the Q-mmunity for VIP treatment including reserved preshow table, bottle of wine, and other special perks with packages starting at \$50. Prices change based on availability and demand, so buy early for the best prices! Tickets on sale now.

**.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 [horizontheatre.com](http://horizontheatre.com) or 404.584.7450.

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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 special performances of a new 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

**AT PIEDMONT PARK JUNE 3-7**

**Location:** Piedmont Park, The Promenade green space (North end of the Park, near the Park/Botanical Gardens parking garage and The Prado entrance to the Park)

**Dates, Days, Times:** June 3 – June 7, 2015, Wednesday through Sunday at 7:30 PM. Grounds open for picnics at 6 PM.

**Prices:** Limited Free General Admission Tickets and \$15\* Reserved Seating Section Tickets “on sale” starting May 1. (\*plus 12% sales tax and fees). Table seating available: see website for details. No refunds or exchanges. PURCHASE ONLINE ONLY.

**Seating:** Bring your own blanket or low beach chair. Regular seating height chairs will be placed in the back of the audience to ensure clear sightlines for all. Limited table seating available for a higher charge and for sponsors.

**Restrictions:** No glass, firearms or alcohol may be brought into the picnic/performance area. Any brought in will be sent back to your car or removed and held at the gate.

**Food and Beverage:** Bring your own picnic or purchase from onsite food trucks and concessions/bar. Audiences can bring their own food, water, and soft drinks – but no alcohol or glass. Wine, beer, water and soft drinks will be available for purchase.

**Tickets and info:** [www.horizontheatre.com](http://www.horizontheatre.com)

**AT CONANT PERFORMING ARTS CENTER AT OGLETHORPE – JUNE 12-JULY 12**

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

**Dates, Days, Times:** June 12 - July 12, 2015: 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. Prices change based on availability and demand, so buy early for the best prices! \*8% 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).

Major funding is provided by the City of Atlanta Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners, the Metropolitan Atlanta Arts Fund, The Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta, The Charles Loidans Foundation and The Mark and Evelyn Trammell Foundation. This program is supported in part by the Georgia Council for the Arts through the appropriations of the Georgia General Assembly. GCA also receives support from its partner agency - the National Endowment for the Arts. We are grateful for our play and program corporate sponsors: the Turner Voices initiative of Turner Broadcasting; The Waffle House; and Macy's.

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