



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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There's no business like show business at the Gem Theatre

Ethel Merman's Broadway starring Rita McKenzie opens September 9
Individual tickets go on sale at 11am, Friday, July 31.

DETROIT, MI – The queen of the Broadway musical will soon rule the Gem Theatre stage when ***Ethel Merman's Broadway*** starring Rita McKenzie comes to Detroit September 9 – November 21. Tickets (\$25 - \$39.50) will go on sale on Friday, July 31, 2009 at 11am through the Gem Theatre box office (313) 963-9800, Ticketmaster charge by phone (800) 982-2787, in person at the Gem and Fisher Theatre box offices and all Ticketmaster Ticket Centers and online at www.ticketmaster.com.

Ethel Merman's Broadway, conceived and directed by Christopher Powich and featuring Rita McKenzie's award-winning performance, revisits a theatrical era filled with charm, wit, personality, and most of all, some of Broadway's greatest music. This smash theatrical hit has garnered rave reviews around the world. With words and music by Cole Porter, George and Ira Gershwin, Jule Styne and Irving Berlin, the songs come alive in the incomparable style of Ethel Merman. "*There's No Business Like Show Business*," "*I Got Rhythm*" and "*Everything's Coming Up Roses*" are only a few of the numbers in this musical salute to the golden age of American Musical Theatre. Rita McKenzie weaves those amazing songs into a journey through Broadway's Golden Era - when one spectacular woman always brought down the house! A complete Gem Theatre performance schedule follows this release.

About Rita McKenzie

Rita McKenzie began her internationally acclaimed portrayal of Ethel Merman Off-Broadway at the John Houseman Theater in New York City and later performed at Carnegie Hall. The response was overwhelming and McKenzie took her act to the Pasadena Playhouse in California; Harrah's Casino Hotel in Atlantic City, New Jersey; and on an eight-city tour in Japan.

McKenzie recently completed the national tour of Neil Simon's female version of *The Odd Couple*, in which she co-starred with her good friend Barbara Eden. McKenzie received a National Broadway Theatre nomination for "Best Actress in a Touring Play" for her portrayal of Olive Madison. McKenzie and Eden previously completed a successful tour of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. She recently toured with Renee Taylor and Joe Bologna in *Bermuda Avenue Triangle*. McKenzie starred in the Los Angeles premiere of the Off-Broadway musical *Ruthless!* and can be heard on the original cast recording. She also toured as Annie Oakley in the 50th anniversary of *Annie Get Your Gun* with Glenn Yarbrough. McKenzie created the role of Phoebe Farber in Sam Harris's Broadway bound *Hurry! Hurry! Hollywood!* in Los Angeles and portrayed Maggie Jones in *42nd Street* with Mariette Hartley. Her other starring roles include Reno Sweeney in *Anything Goes*, Aldonza in *Man of La Mancha*, Ruth in *The Pirates of Penzance*, Belle Poitrine in *Little Me*, Domina in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, Cleo in *The Most Happy Fella*, Widow Corney in *Oliver!*, Nurse Custer in *Whoopie!*, and Rose in *Gypsy*.

McKenzie has had the privilege of opening for Steve Allen, Don Knotts, and Norm Crosby. She has been a Pops guest with every major symphony across the country. For television and film, McKenzie played Alice on *The Brady Bunch: The Final Days*; guest-starred on *Caroline in the City*, Mrs. Littlejohn on *Frasier*, Rita Marcus on *Big Brother Jake*, and her recurring role on *Daddy Dearest* starring Richard Lewis and Don Rickles. She co-starred in the feature film *I Might Even Love You* and was featured in Rodney Dangerfield's film *Meet Wally Sparks*. Ms. McKenzie's new venture Radio *Bupkis* is now playing on BlogTalkRadio.com every Thursday at 2 PM Eastern time.

About writer/director Christopher Powich

Christopher Powich conceived and directed both the Off-Broadway production of ***Ethel Merman's Broadway*** at the John Houseman Theater and the Pasadena Playhouse production. Powich also wrote and directed McKenzie's nationally acclaimed Symphony Pops tribute to Ethel Merman. He directed McKenzie and Carole Shelley in the reenactment of Ethel Merman and Mary Martin's famous 1955 television medley at Rainbow and Stars Nightclub in New York. Powich directed the world premiere of the comedy *Snap Shots* by Ralph Fredericks at the O'Neill Theater in Waterford, Connecticut, as well as the Boston company. He will direct *Snap Shots* for an Off-Broadway run in 2010. He recently was Tour Director for the American Idols show *American Stars In Concert*. He created, directed, and performed in *Class Act*, a nightclub revue that toured on the East Coast. In that show, Powich continued his association with McKenzie, which started with their featured roles in *The Most Happy Fella* and *Showboat*. He also directed McKenzie's nightclub act at Palsson's in New York. He has directed Barbara Eden and Larry Hagman, Hal Linden, George Chakiris, Dick Van Patten and Steve Allen in *Love Letters*. He performed regionally in lead roles in *The Music Man*; *Oklahoma!*; *The Most Happy Fella*; *My One and Only*; *Man of La Mancha*; *Oh, What a Lovely War*; *Hello Dolly!*; *Guys and Dolls*; *Forty Carats*; *Jazz Babies*; *A Face Worth Saving*; and *Oliver!*. And he is a co-conspirator in the new radio show Radio *Bupkis* on blogtalkradio.com.

Tickets for preview performances, September 9 & 10, are \$25, with tickets to all other performances \$39.50. Group discounts, \$5 off for groups of 15 or more, are available now by calling (313) 963-9800. Dinner & show packages are available with the Elwood Bar & Grill. Group lunch and dinner packages are available in the adjoining Century Grille Restaurant through the theatre's group sales office.

The Historic Gem & Century Theatres, Century Grille, Elwood Bar & Grill, and Colony Club are the gems in the heart of Detroit's entertainment district offering theatre packages, dinner, lunch, group dining, wedding packages, special events, boxed lunches, tours and more! For more information, call (313) 963-9800; visit online at www.gemtheatre.com, or in person at 333 Madison Ave, Detroit MI 48226.

Ethel Merman's Broadway starring Rita McKenzie

Gem Theatre Performance Schedule

Preview Performances All Tickets \$25.00

Wednesday, September 9 @ 8pm \$25.00
Thursday, September 10 @ 2pm \$25.00
Thursday, September 11 @ 8pm \$25.00

Regular Performances All Tickets \$39.50

Friday, September 11 @ 8pm
Saturday, September 12 @ 3pm
Saturday, September 12 @ 8pm
Sunday, September 13 @ 2pm
Sunday, September 13 @ 6pm

Tuesday, September 15 @ 8pm
Wednesday, September 16 @ 2pm
Wednesday, September 16 @ 8pm
Thursday, September 17 @ 2pm
Thursday, September 17 @ 8pm
Saturday, September 19 @ 8pm

Tuesday, September 22 @ 8pm
Wednesday, September 23 @ 8pm
Thursday, September 24 @ 2pm
Thursday, September 24 @ 8pm
Saturday, September 26 @ 3pm
Saturday, September 26 @ 8pm

Wednesday, October 7 @ 2pm
Wednesday, October 7 @ 8pm
Thursday, October 8 @ 2pm
Thursday, October 8 @ 8pm
Friday, October 9 @ 8pm
Saturday, October 10 @ 3pm
Saturday, October 10 @ 8pm

Wednesday, October 14 @ 8pm
Thursday, October 15 @ 2pm
Thursday, October 15 @ 8pm
Friday, October 16 @ 8pm
Saturday, October 17 @ 3pm
Saturday, October 17 @ 8pm

Sunday, October 18 @ 2pm

Wednesday, October 21 @ 2pm
Wednesday, October 21 @ 8pm
Thursday, October 22 @ 8pm
Friday, October 23 @ 8pm
Saturday, October 24 @ 8pm
Sunday, October 25 @ 2pm

Tuesday, October 27 @ 8pm
Wednesday, October 28 @ 8pm
Thursday, October 29 @ 2pm
Thursday, October 29 @ 8pm
Friday, October 30 @ 8pm
Saturday, October 31 @ 3pm

Wednesday, November 4 @ 8pm
Thursday, November 5 @ 2pm
Thursday, November 5 @ 8pm
Friday, November 6 @ 8pm
Saturday, November 7 @ 3pm
Saturday, November 7 @ 8pm
Sunday, November 8 @ 2pm
Sunday, November 8 @ 6pm

Wednesday, November 11 @ 8pm
Thursday, November 12 @ 8pm
Friday, November 13 @ 8pm
Saturday, November 14 @ 3pm
Saturday, November 14 @ 8pm
Sunday, November 15 @ 2pm
Sunday, November 15 @ 6pm

Wednesday, November 18 @ 8pm
Thursday, November 19 @ 2pm
Thursday, November 19 @ 8pm
Friday, November 20 @ 8pm
Saturday, November 21 @ 3pm
Saturday, November 21 @ 8pm

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Editor's Note: Interviews & appearances with Rita McKenzie are currently being scheduled. Media Night for Ethel Merman's Broadway will be Thursday, September 10. Please contact Scott Myers at (313) 463-4216 or smyers@gemtheatre.com for more information or to RSVP for Media Night.