



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Rita McKenzie, star of *Ethel Merman's Broadway* at the Gem Theatre  
To appear on Jerry Lewis Telethon Monday, Sept 7**

DETROIT, MI – The Gem Theatre is excited to announce that Rita McKenzie, star of *Ethel Merman's Broadway* opening at the Gem Theatre on September 9, will appear on the Jerry Lewis MDA Telethon Monday, September 7! The 44<sup>th</sup> annual telethon begins at 9pm on Sunday, September 6<sup>th</sup> and will conclude at 6:30pm on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Ms. McKenzie will appear on the show between 12 Noon – and 12:50pm on Monday, September 7. The 2009 Jerry Lewis MDA Telethon can be seen in the Detroit area on WMYD TV20, in the Flint area on WNEC CBS 5, and in the Toledo area on WTVG ABC 13. More information on the telethon and the MDA can be found at <http://www.mda.org/telethon/history.html>.

*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.

Tickets for *Ethel Merman's Broadway* (\$25 - \$39.50) September 9 – November 22, are available 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](http://www.ticketmaster.com).

**333 MADISON AVENUE, DETROIT MI 48226**  
• [WWW.GEMTHEATRE.COM](http://WWW.GEMTHEATRE.COM) • (313) 963-9800 •

## **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](http://BlogTalkRadio.com) every Thursday at 2 PM Eastern time.

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](http://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  
Sunday, November 22 @ 2pm

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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](mailto:smyers@gemtheatre.com) for more information or to RSVP for Media Night.