



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ERMA BOMBECK'S KIDS ADD THEIR THOUGHTS TO ARIZONA THEATRE COMPANY PRODUCTION OF *ERMA BOMBECK: AT WIT'S END*

TUCSON, Ariz. (Oct. 23, 2018): Erma Bombeck's three adult children, Betsy, Andy and Matt, will offer their personal thoughts about their mother and her influence at post-show discussions during the run of ***Erma Bombeck: At Wit's End*** at the Temple of Music & Art, 330 S. Scott Ave., from Oct. 20 through Nov. 10.

Betsy and her brother, Andy, will attend opening night and speak to those on hand during a 6 p.m. pre-show dinner.

Betsy also is confirmed for post-show discussions for shows on Nov. 4, 9 and 10. The performances begin at 7:30. The talkbacks will start between 8:30 and 8:45 each night.

"Erma Bombeck left a legacy of laughter and down-to-earth viewpoints on life that still resonate today," said Arizona Theatre Company Artistic Director David Ivers. "Having her family members as part of our production only deepens the connection between our patrons and a tremendously talented writer."

Single tickets are now on sale at the box office and through the website, www.arizonatheatre.org as are a range of flexible season-ticket packages. Single tickets prices start at \$25. Additional fees may apply. Group ticket prices are available for groups of 10 and more.

The 2018/2019 season is dedicated to Geri Silvi, ATC's long-time Box Office Manager in Phoenix. The season is sponsored by I. Michael and Beth Kasser.

Directed by Casey Stengl, who returns to ATC where she directed *Lombardi*, Jessica Pearson wrote in DC Theatre Scene.com that ***Erma Bombeck: At Wit's End*** "is full of the wit and wisdom of the woman herself ... leading the audience through her years as a mother and housewife who lampooned life in the suburbs in her weekly (then tri-weekly, then heavily syndicated) newspaper column called "At Wit's End."

Tony-nominated actress Jeanne Paulsen (*The Kentucky Cycle*) stars in this one-woman show that takes a comic look at one of our country's most beloved voices – a voice that reassures us that yes, the world is sometimes crazy, but if we look at it and laugh, we have most of it covered.

From her troubled childhood, where she found comfort in the words of Dorothy Parker and Robert Benchley, through her rise to fame as a journalist and public figure, it's the story behind America's beloved humorist who championed women's lives with wit that sprang from the most unexpected place of all – the truth.

A year after Erma launched her column for the local Ohio newspaper *Kettering-Oakwood Times* in 1964, she was writing twice-weekly columns for the *Dayton Journal Herald*. Three weeks later, the columns went into national syndication, appearing in 36 major U.S. newspapers three times a week. By 1969, 500 newspapers and a number of magazines, *Redbook*, *McCall's*, *Family Circle* and even *Teen* among them, featured her columns. That number reached 900 newspapers and 30 million readers by 1978. She moved to Phoenix in the late 1960s.

During the period from 1965 to 1996, Erma wrote more than 4,000 newspaper columns and published 15 books, most becoming bestsellers.

Erma Bombeck: At Wit's End will be followed by ***The Music Man***, Music and Lyrics by Meredith Willson, Book by Meredith Willson and Franklin Lacey, directed by David Ivers (Tucson: Dec. 1-30). ***Two Trains Running***, by August Wilson, directed by Lou Bellamy (Tucson: Jan. 19-Feb. 9); ***American Mariachi***, by José Cruz González (Tucson: March 9-30) and ***Things I Know to be True***, by Andrew Bovell, directed by Mark Clements (Tucson: April 20-May 11).

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BIOGRAPHIES

Margaret Engel and Allison Engel (playwrights)

Allison Engel has been a reporter for the *Des Moines Tribune*, *San Jose Mercury* and *Pacific News Service*, and was a Knight Journalism Fellow at Stanford University. She and her twin

Margaret wrote the play *Red Hot Patriot: The Kick-Ass Wit of Molly Ivins*. She also has been a speechwriter and aide for former Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack and Lieutenant Governor Sally Pederson. In Iowa, she was active in the Des Moines Playhouse, serving as president and head of play selection. She recently spent five years as director of communications at the University of Southern California before becoming the associate director of the Los Angeles Institute for the Humanities at the university. She received an MA in screenwriting from USC in 2009.

Margaret Engel directs the Alicia Patterson Journalism Foundation and was the managing editor of the Newseum. She was a reporter for the *Washington Post*, *Des Moines Register* and *Lorain Journal* and was a Nieman fellow at Harvard. She and Allison wrote *Food Finds: America's Best Local Foods and the People Who Produce Them*, and helped turn the book into a show for Food Network, where it ran for seven years. She serves on the board of Theatre Washington/Helen Hayes Awards, the Fund for Investigative Journalism and chairs the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism awards board.

Casey Stangl (Director) returns to ATC where she previously directed *Lombardi*. Recent projects include *Sense and Sensibility* and *The Sisters Rosensweig* for South Coast Repertory, *The Cake* at La Jolla Playhouse, *The Revolutionists* at Everyman Theatre in Baltimore, *The Nether* at the Jungle Theater in Minneapolis, and *Cloud 9* at Antaeus Theatre Company in Los Angeles (winner of eight LA Drama Critics' Association awards including Best Director and Best Production). Casey is a resident artist at Ojai Playwrights' Conference and she has developed new work with many playwrights. National credits include the Guthrie Theater, A.C.T. in San Francisco, Woolly Mammoth, Denver Center, Cleveland Playhouse and Portland Stage. Casey was the founding artistic director of Eye of the Storm Theatre in Minneapolis—a company devoted to new work—for which she was named Minnesota Artist of the Year. Casey proudly serves on the Executive Board of SDC, the national union for stage directors and choreographers.

Jeanne Paulsen (Erma Bombeck) is a Tony-nominated actress for her work in Robert Schenkkan's *The Kentucky Cycle*, directed by Warner Shook, starring Stacy Keach. Also on Broadway, she performed the role of Ann Putnam in *The Crucible*, directed by Richard Eyre, starring Liam Neeson and Laura Linney. She is happy to be back at ATC where she acted in *Moon for the Misbegotten* and *Copenhagen*. Jeanne has performed in theatres nationwide including, most recently, with Milwaukee Repertory Theatre and Geva Theatre's co-production of *One House Over*, a new play by Catherine Trieschmann; Seattle Repertory Theatre, American Theatre Company and Shakespeare Theatre Company in *King Charles III*, McCarter Theatre Center, Denver Center Theatre Company, A Contemporary Theatre, Intiman Theatre Company and South Coast Repertory as Rosie in *Holy Days* for which she received an LA Drama Critic's Circle Award for Lead Performance, and many, many more.

CREATIVE TEAM

Director: Casey Stangl

Scenic Designer: Jo Winiarski

Costume Designer: Kish Finnegan

Lighting Designer: Jaymi Lee Smith

Sound Designer: Paul James Pendergast

Dramaturg: Rachel Berney Needleman

Stage Manager: Glenn Bruner

Tickets for *Erma Bombeck: At Wit's End* start at \$25 and are subject to change depending on time, date and section, and are available at www.arizonatheatre.org or by calling the box office at (520) 622-2823 in Tucson. Discounts are available for seniors and active military. A \$10 student ticket pricing is now available for all performances. Half-price rush tickets are available for balcony seating for all performances one hour prior to curtain at the ATC box office (subject to availability). **\$10 Community Night** performance is Tuesday, Oct. 23 at 7:30 p.m. in Tucson. (Tickets must be purchased at the Temple of Music and Art starting one hour prior to curtain. Tickets are first-come, first served. *Cash preferred*. Two tickets maximum per person.) For discounts for groups of 10 or more, call (520) 622-2823 in Tucson.

Arizona Theatre Company offers accessibility services for patrons with disabilities for select performances. Audio Description provides patrons with vision loss a running audio description of the movement and activities onstage through an infrared broadcast system. An Audio-Described performance is offered in Tucson on Thursday, Nov. 8 at 2 p.m. Interested patrons with vision loss may request a tactile tour one hour prior to curtain. **American Sign Language Interpretation** is presented by professional, theatrically trained ASL-interpreters for people who have deafness or hearing impairment. An ASL-interpreted performance is offered in Tucson on Thursday Nov. 8 at 7:30 p.m. **Open captioning** allows patrons to read the play's dialogue on an LED screen as the play progresses. An open captioned performance is offered in Tucson on Thursday, Thursday, Nov. 8 at 2 p.m. For open-captioned or ASL-interpreted performances, patrons should request seats best suited to ASL interpretation or captioning when purchasing tickets. Large print and Braille playbills and infrared listening amplification devices are also available at every ATC performance with reservation. TTY access for the box office is available in Tucson at (520) 884-9723 or via Arizona Relay at (800) 367-8939 (TTY/ASCII).

Fact Sheet:

Erma Bombeck: At Wit's End

By Margaret Engel and Allison Engel

Directed by Casey Stangl

Tucson Venue:

Temple of Music and Art

330 S. Scott Ave.

Tucson, Arizona

Previews Begin: Saturday, Oct. 20 at 7:30 p.m.

Opening Night: Friday, Oct. 26 at 7:30 p.m.

Closing Performance: Saturday, Nov. 10 at 7:30 p.m.

Ticket prices are \$25-\$90 and are available in-person at the Temple of Music and Art box office or via phone at (520) 622-2823; or at the Herberger Theater Center box office or by calling (602) 256-6995 in Phoenix. Tickets also can be purchased online at www.arizonatheatre.org.

Contact:

Steve Carr, The Kur Carr Group, Inc., (602) 317-3040

About Arizona Theatre Company:

Arizona Theatre Company (ATC) is the preeminent fully professional theatre in the state of Arizona committed to inspiring, engaging, and entertaining - one moment, one production, and one audience at a time. Boasting the largest seasonal subscriber base in the performing arts in Arizona, ATC is the only resident company in the U.S. that is fully based in two cities providing its wide array of programming and community outreach across the region. Now in its 52nd

season, more than 130,000 people a year attend our performances at the historic Temple of Music and Art in Tucson, and the elegant Herberger Theater Center in downtown Phoenix. Each season of home-grown productions reflects the rich variety of world drama—from classics to contemporary plays, from musicals to new works—along with a wide array of community outreach programs, educational opportunities, access initiatives and new play programs. Designated The State Theatre of Arizona, ATC is led by Artistic Director David Ivers, Managing Director Billy Russo and a dedicated Board of Trustees.