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March 23, 2017

1812 Productions presents the Philadelphia Premiere of

Happy Birthday

Written by Marc Camoletti

Adapted by Beverly Cross

Directed by Trey Lyford

April 27—May 21, 2017

(OPENING NIGHT—Wednesday, May 3rd at 7pm)

Starring Greg Wood, Susan Riley Stevens, Scott Greer, Jennifer Childs, and Suli Holum

A sensational farce about love, marriage, class, and what it means to work hard for the money

(Philadelphia, PA) 1812 Productions, Philadelphia's all comedy theatre company, is pleased to present the Philadelphia premiere of Marc Camoletti's raucous farce ***Happy Birthday***. A rich comedy of infidelities and mistaken identities, ***Happy Birthday*** played the Apollo Theatre in London for five years and is enjoying new life on American stages. This production stars **Philadelphia favorites Greg Wood, Susan Riley Stevens, Scott Greer, Jennifer Childs, and Suli Holum** and is directed by Princess Grace Award-winner **Trey Lyford**.

It's 1983 in the UK. Margaret Thatcher is in power and all of the excesses of the 80's are on full display. First we meet Bernard, who has a perfect plan to have a birthday party for his mistress, Brigit, at his home with his wife, Jacqueline, none the wiser. He ropes his best friend Robert into his scheme, unaware that Robert and Jacqueline have been having an affair of their own. Enter the savvy new maid-for-hire, also named Brigit, and it's off to the races as everyone in the household tries to keep everyone else from discovering their own bit of scandal. **Lightning fast and full of twists and surprises, only the working class maid can keep her finger on this bourgeois pulse, and she is more than happy to cash in on the excitement.**

"The tension between the rich and working class is definitely an important element to the comedy of this work," says Trey Lyford. "That life of freedom and excess while the workers make it all possible—in ***Happy Birthday*** that lunacy is on full display and it's the audience that gets to enjoy having the last laugh." He continues, **"The flip side of that is the thrill of watching people live dangerously. So often we take such care in our lives, but *Happy Birthday* has all kinds of turns and surprises that when that tension is released, the laughter we get is truly liberating."**

In a first for this comedy of infidelity, the director and cast are, in reality, three married couples. Jennifer Childs and Scott Greer, Greg Wood and Susan Riley Stevens, and Suli Holum and Trey Lyford are all happily married and have enjoyed personal and professional friendships for many years. **Ms. Stevens says, "It is a joy to work with Greg and to have opportunities to tackle something creative together. As we get into *Happy Birthday* and all the twists, turns, and intrigue of this bedroom farce, I can confirm**

~more~

that it's far less complicated than real life! It also makes me feel incredibly lucky, though, to see Greg take on material that tasks both of us with responses we don't often display in married life—to see your partner in this changing light is really a kick.” Mr. Lyford adds, “The wonderful thing about working with Suli, that we share with Jen and Scott and Greg and Susie, is that we know the shorthand for our relationship. I think one of the key things that makes a comic play about marriage and infidelity work is a real understanding of what the stakes are. **When you're honest about the danger, then you can laugh at it. With the ferocity of this ensemble, we're all looking forward to this trip.”**

Happy Birthday features a set design and sound design by long-time 1812 collaborators Lance Kniskern and Christopher Colucci, respectively. The lighting design is by Lily Fossner, with costumes by Alisa Sickora Kleckner.

***Happy Birthday* will be performed from April 27 thru May 21 at Plays & Players Theatre, 1714 Delancey Place, in Center City. Opening Night will be Wednesday, May 3rd at 7:00pm. Tickets range from \$28 to \$42 and are available at www.1812productions.org or at 215-592-9560. An open-captioned performance in English will be held on Sunday, May 7th at 2:00pm. An open-captioned performance in Spanish will be held on Wednesday, May 10th at 6:30pm. *Happy Birthday* is supported in part by Charlotte Cushman Foundation.**

Production photos are available for download [HERE](#).

Company History

1812 Productions was founded in 1997 and is the only professional theater company in the country dedicated to comedy. With a focus on devised and original works, 1812 Productions' mission is to produce theatrical works of comedy and comedic works of theatre that explore and celebrate our sense of community, our history, and our humanity.

***Happy Birthday* creative team**

Scott Greer (Robert): A 24 year veteran of Philadelphia theatre, Scott has worked for Arden Theatre, Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Wilma Theater, People's Light, InterAct Theatre Company, Theatre Exile, Lantern Theatre Company and many more. Regionally, he has worked for Actors Theatre of Louisville, Round House, Cape May Stage, Gulfshore Playhouse, and the Pearl Theatre in New York. He has won five Barrymore Awards for Excellence in Theatre, including the prestigious F. Otto Haas Award for an Emerging Theatre Artist. He was named 2014's "Best Theatre Talent" by Philadelphia Magazine.

Suli Holum (Brigit- the mistress): Suli was most recently seen onstage in Philadelphia as Nora in Jo Strogren's *Doll's House* at FringeArts, a role she will be reprising at the Oslo Opera House this spring. She is co-artistic director of Stein | Holum Projects (www.steinholum.org). SHP projects include Drama Desk nominated *Chimera*, which premiered at the Under the Radar Festival in NYC and toured to London's Gate Theatre, and *The Wholehearted*, commissioned by ArtsEmerson, premiered at LA's Center Theatre Group and presented by La Jolla Playhouse. Holum was a co-founder of Pig Iron Theatre Company, where she co-created and performed Barrymore Award winning *Cafeteria* and *Shut Eye* among others, and wrote Barrymore Award-winning *Gentlemen Volunteers*. Other awards include a Drama Desk for her role in *Lebensraum* off-Broadway, a TCG/Fox Resident Actor Fellowship for *Chimera*, and an Independence Foundation Fellowship for *The Lollipop Project*.

Susan Riley Stevens (Jacqueline): Recent credits: *The Gift*; Walnut Street Theatre, *Marcus/Emma*; InterAct, *A New Brain* at Theatre Horizon. At 1812 Productions: *It's My Party: The Women and Comedy Project*, *This Is The Week That Is*, *The Uneasy Chair*. Regional: *God of Carnage*; Peterborough Players, *White Guy On The Bus*; Passage Theatre, *According To Goldman*, *Bad Dates* (Barrymore Award); Act II Playhouse; *Nora* (Barrymore Award-nominated); *The Exonerated*, Delaware Theatre Company; *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Fallen Angels*, *God of Carnage*, *Harvey*; Walnut Street Theatre, *Tom Jones*; Actors Theatre of Louisville, PA Shakespeare Festival, Arden Theatre Company, People's Light, Bristol Riverside, Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Dallas Theatre Center, Portland Stage Company, and Asolo Repertory Theatre. M.F.A.; Yale School of Drama.

Greg Wood (Bernard): Greg Wood is making his 1812 Productions debut in *Happy Birthday*. Recent credits include directing *The Gift* at the Walnut Street Theatre, Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* with the McCarter Theatre, and Sorn in the Arden Theatre's production of *Stupid Fucking Bird*. 25 seasons with the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival and a company member of The People's Light & Theatre Co. Film and television credits include *The Sixth Sense*, *Signs*, *The Happening*, *How to Get Away With Murder*, *Law & Order*, *Ed*, *Hack*, and *Homicide*.

Jennifer Childs (Brigit- the maid): Jennifer Childs is the Producing Artistic Director and Co-Founder of 1812 Productions. For 1812 she has created over a dozen original works of theater including *This Is The Week That Is*, *Always a Lady*, *Our Show of Shows*, *Cherry Bomb*, *It's My Party: The Women and Comedy Project*, *To The Moon*, *The Carols* and *I Will Not Go Gently*, which was recently honored with three Barrymore Award nominations for Outstanding Overall Production of a Musical, Outstanding Leading Actress in a Musical (**winner**), and Outstanding Original Music. Her one-woman show *Why I'm Scared of Dance by Jen Childs* premiered at 1812 and has since been performed at Delaware Theatre Company, the Kohler Arts Center in Wisconsin, Act II Playhouse, and City Theatre in Pittsburgh. Favorite performances outside of 1812 include *The Happiness Lecture* with Bill Irwin at Philadelphia Theater Company, *Spin* at Wilma Theater, *Red Herring* and *Dex and Julie Sittin' in a Tree* at Arden Theatre Company.

Marc Camoletti (Playwright): Marc Camoletti authored more than 40 plays and became a Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur in France. *Boeing-Boeing*, his first major international success, ran for seven years and 2000 performances in its debut London production. It became the Guinness Book of Records' most performed French play worldwide. The Paramount film starred Jerry Lewis, Tony Curtis and Thelma Ritter. A later play, *Don't Dress for Dinner*, also ran for seven years in London's West End. A French citizen born in Geneva, and an acclaimed artist and associate of the Société National des Beaux Arts, Marc Camoletti's theatre career launched with three plays running simultaneously in Paris. Ten of his plays have also been produced for television. His work continues to flourish in numerous languages and some 55 countries. He died in 2003.

Beverly Cross (Adaptation): Beverly Cross achieved instant success in 1959 with *One More River* starring Sir Michael Caine and directed by Laurence Olivier. His second play, *Strip the Willow*, made his future wife, Dame Maggie Smith, a star. Among his other successes were the musical comedy *Half a Sixpence* (1963) based on HG Wells' book *Kipps*, and his screenplay of *Jason and the Argonauts*.

Trey Lyford (Director): Trey Lyford is a Philadelphia-based theatre artist and Co-Artistic Director of rainpan 43 performance group. He has co-created and performed in all of their works to date. Following

a world tour of r43's inaugural work *all wear bowlers* (2005 Drama Desk Nomination, Innovative Theatre Award), r43 has continued to concoct absurd theatrical ruminations including: *Amnesia Curiosa* (2006), the OBIE award-winning kinetic junk sculpture play *machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines* and most recently *Elephant Room*. In addition to his pieces with rainpan 43, Mr. Lyford develops and produces works as an individual artist and is an Associate Artist with the celebrated company The Civilians (*Gone Missing, Paris Commune, Nobody's Lunch, The Great Immensity*). Mr. Lyford has performed his original works on four continents as well as at Philadelphia Live Arts / FringeArts, LA's Center Theatre Group, La Jolla Playhouse, Berkeley Rep, Arena Stage, Studio Theater, and theaters throughout NYC. He currently has two works in development: *The Accountant* and a new hip hop musical for kids. Trey is a Princess Grace Award and Fabergé Theatre Excellence Award recipient and his work has received support from NYSCA, Princeton Atelier, Creative Capital and NEFA. He has taught numerous workshops both domestically and abroad and was a professor at the SUNY Purchase Acting Conservatory. He is currently on faculty at the Pig Iron School and teaches at NY's Movement Theatre Studio. BA: Vassar, MFA: UCSD

***Happy Birthday* performance details**

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Scott Greer, Jennifer Childs, Suli Holum

Performance Location:

Plays & Players Theatre
1714 Delancey Place
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Dates: April 27 thru May 21, 2017

Ticket Prices: \$28-\$42

Tickets and Information Contact:

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