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Cape May Stage Presents
The Understudy

Cape May Stage
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Bank & Lafayette Streets, Cape May, NJ 08204
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The Understudy
Written by Theresa Rebeck
Directed by Roy Steinberg

Cape May, NJ – Cape May Stage, South Jersey’s #1 professional Equity theatre, is pleased to announce a production of Theresa Rebeck’s hilarious *The Understudy*. Directed by Roy Steinberg and starring G.R. Johnson as Harry, Kristen Calgaro as Roxanne and Lucas Darnell as Jake, *The Understudy* will open Thursday, June 23rd at 8:00pm at the Robert Shackleton Playhouse on Bank and Lafayette Streets.

Originally produced by the Roundabout Theatre Company, critics hailed *The Understudy* as one of the funniest plays of the 2009 season. In this backstage farce, Rebeck achieves the astounding feat of melding Kafka with comedy: hilarity ensues when Harry, an overpaid and untalented movie action star, is cast in Kafka’s undiscovered (and fictitious) masterpiece, *The Castle*. With the arrival of Jake, his understudy, Harry lets him know exactly where he stands in the pecking order. Add a harried and charmingly ditzzy stage manager – who just happens to have been jilted two weeks before the wedding by the new understudy – and the Kafkaesque triangle is complete.

“You could say it’s about theater,” Rebeck says. “And it is – how a play gets put on and what’s behind it. But it’s also about more.” Perhaps better known for her work on TV’s *Law and Order*, Rebeck draws on her show business career for fodder for the play. “A lot of what happens in show business is just horrible,” says Rebeck, “and with next to no reason for it. Your life is out of your control.” Harry’s hilarious and frustrating battle with dramatic fulfillment always just beyond his grasp is pitted perfectly against the metaphor of the understudy. Placing backstage drama front and center, sharing the stage with biting dramatics and on-the-nose satire, *The Understudy* is high-spirited camp and laugh-out-loud funny.

About the Cast

G.R. Johnson (*Harry*) G.R. was told on an opening night once that he would understudy another role. He went on a week later after a lead actor broke his leg on stage. It was a Kafka nightmare. He has also played non-understudy roles at theater companies and festivals throughout New York City, including La MaMa E.T.C., Ensemble Studio Theater, Mint Theater Company, Vital Theatre Company, Circle Rep LAB, and the NY International Fringe Festival. Regionally, G.R. performed at the Huntington Theatre in Boston, Alabama Shakespeare, The Wilma in Philadelphia, Charlotte Repertory in North Carolina, Florida Studio Theater in

Sarasota, and the Meadow Brooke Theatre in Detroit. G.R. has also enjoyed other summers at the Dorset Theatre Festival in Vermont, Flat Rock Playhouse in North Carolina, Centennial Theater Festival in Connecticut, and the Williamstown Theater Festival in Massachusetts. He studied acting with Bill Esper.

Kristen Calgario (*Roxanne*) was last seen donning pointe shoes and a tutu in the world premiere of *And The Curtain Rises* (Signature Theatre, DC), and is delighted to be making her CMS debut wearing much more sensible attire! NEW YORK: New York Classical Theatre: *Much Ado About Nothing* (Hero); Broadway Workshop: *Brigadoon* with Rob Ashford. NATIONAL TOUR: *Dr. Dolittle* with Tommy Tune. EAST COAST: The Kennedy Center: *Broadway: 3 Generations*; The Bay Theatre: *The Glass Menagerie* (Laura Wingfield), Goodspeed Opera House: *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (Liza), North Shore Music Theatre: *Cinderella*, Deertrees Theatre Festival: *Out of Stereo* (Dotty). WEST COAST: 5th Avenue Theatre: *White Christmas*; Sierra Repertory Theatre; *White Christmas*, (Judy Haynes). TV: *Law and Order: Criminal Intent*. FEATURE FILM: *Kumare* (Audience Award Winner, 2011 South by Southwest Film Festival). EDUCATION: University of Virginia, Religious Studies & Spanish, Phi Beta Kappa. Kristen is a dedicated yoga and meditation practitioner and instructor.

Lucas Darnell (*Jake*) A fourth generation performer, and full-bred Jersey boy, Luke has shared stage or screen with his mother, father, brother, stepfather and two aunts. His family legacy includes Vaudeville, Broadway, film and television. Luke studied at Worth-Tyrrell Studios in Morristown, NJ and owes his parents, who happen to own said studios, an immeasurable debt of gratitude. Regional/tour credits include *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* (Joe B. Mauldin), *Oliver!* (Bill Sykes), *Smoke On The Mountain* (Stanley Sanders), *Julius Caesar* (Octavius), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Pilate, Simon Zealotes), *Deathtrap* (Clifford), *The Rocky Horror Show* (Rocky). TV: *Ghost Whisperer*, *General Hospital*, *Air America*. Film: *My Butterfly*, *Alien Agent* (SciFi), *Chupacabra Terror* (Sci-Fi), *Crash Dive* (HBO). Luke has toured and recorded with many rock bands (guitar/bass/vox) including Miracruz Recording Artist BIXBY.

Performance Information

The Understudy will run from Thursday, June 23rd to Saturday, July 30th at the Robert Shackleton Playhouse at the corner of Bank & Lafayette Streets in downtown Cape May. Performances are Tuesdays through Sundays at 8 pm. Tickets are \$35 adults, \$30 seniors, and \$15 students. Wednesday, June 22nd is a half-price preview, and the Sunday, July 10th performance will be half-price for senior citizens. Following the June 23rd opening, all ticket holders are invited to join the opening night after-party at the Pier House, with the chance to mingle with the cast and crew. Call (609) 884-1341 for reservations and information or visit the theatre's website, www.capemaystage.com.

The Understudy is presented through the gracious support of La Verandah at the Hotel Alcott and the Dog Friendly Billmae Cottage.

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