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Contact: FHPR – 215-627-0801

Sharla Feldscher, #101, cell 215-285-4868, sharla@fhpublicrelations.com

Hope Horwitz, #102, cell 215-760-2884, hope@fhpublicrelations.com

GROUCHO MARKS RETURNS TO NEW HOPE!



Frank Ferrante Reprises His Acclaimed “An Evening with Groucho” at Bucks County Playhouse as part of Visiting Artists Program • February 14 – 25, 2018

New Hope, PA (February 2, 2018) – The quick-witted American actor and icon, Groucho Marx was a frequent visitor to New Hope and Bucks County. Now nearly 41 years after his death, Groucho makes a hilarious return to Bucks — this time in the form of award-winning actor Frank Ferrante in the global comedy hit, “An Evening with Groucho.” The show is presented February 14 – 25 at Bucks County Playhouse as part of the 2018 Visiting Artists Series.

Hailed by The New York Times as “the greatest living interpreter of Groucho Marx’s material,” Award-winning actor and director Frank Ferrante ignites his PBS, New York and London acclaimed portrayal of legendary comedian Groucho Marx in this fast paced 90 minutes of hilarity. The two-act comedy consists of the funniest Groucho one-liners, anecdotes and songs including “Hooray for Captain Spalding,” and “Lydia, the Tattooed Lady.” The audience literally becomes part of the show as Ferrante

ad-libs his way throughout the performance in grand Groucho style. Accompanied by his onstage pianist, the highly respected Gerald Sternbach, Ferrante portrays the young Groucho of stage and film and reacquaints us with the likes of brothers Harpo, Chico, Zeppo and Gummo, Charlie Chaplin, W.C. Fields and Marx foil Margaret Dumont. Sternbach has accompanied such luminaries as Jennifer Hudson, Josh Groban, Sarah Brightman, Carol Burnett, John Lithgow and Judith Light and recently for Mel Brooks for his *Live at the Geffenshow* (filmed for HBO). The show is directed by Dreya Weber, an acclaimed theater actress, producer, director and aerialist, who has worked with Doylestown native and rock star Pink on the aerial work for her international tours. Dreya was associate choreographer for Michael Jackson's *This is It*. Her creative direction and aerial choreography has been featured in over 15 international arena tours including those for Katy Perry, Taylor Swift, Rihanna, Madonna, Cher, Christina Aguilera, Britney Spears and Kylie Minogue.

"An Evening with Groucho" begins performances on Valentine's Day, February 14, and runs through February 25 at Bucks County Playhouse. Tickets are \$35 - \$45 plus fees. Special pricing is available for groups of 10 or more. Visit buckscountyplayhouse.org to purchase tickets or for more information, or call the box office at 215-862-2121.

Since its reopening in 2012, the Playhouse has continued to expand its schedule — presenting and producing more events year-round. The Visiting Artist Series represents one of the few times on the calendar when outside producers take the stage to showcase their work.

ABOUT FRANK FERRANTE (GROUCHO/WRITER)

Frank recently directed and played the lead role, Pseudolus, in "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" at Philadelphia's Walnut Street Theatre receiving rave reviews and acknowledgment in the *Wall Street Journal* as one of the top ten performances in the country for 2017. Discovered by Groucho's son Arthur when Frank was a drama student at the University of Southern California, Frank originated the off-Broadway title role in "Groucho: A Life in Revue" (written by Arthur) portraying the comedian from age 15 to 85. For this role, Frank earned New York's Theatre World Award and an Outer Critics Circle nomination. He reprised the role in London's West End and was nominated for the Laurence Olivier Award for "Comedy Performance of the Year." Frank played the Groucho role in the off-Broadway revival of "The Cocoanuts" and has played Captain Spalding in several productions of "Animal Crackers," winning a Connecticut Critics Circle Award for his portrayal at Goodspeed Opera House and a Helen Hayes nomination in Washington, DC at Arena Stage. In Boston, he played the Huntington Theatre in the record-breaking run of "Animal Crackers," that landed Frank on the cover of *American Theatre Magazine*. Frank has now performed the Groucho role over 2,500 times in more than 400 cities. Recently, Frank toured "An Evening with Groucho" in Australia playing 35 cities as well as extended runs at Milwaukee Repertory Theater and Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park. His other regional roles include Max Prince in Neil Simon's "Laughter on the 23rd Floor" at the Walnut Street Theatre (which Frank also directed); George S. Kaufman in *By George* (a one-man play written by Frank); Oscar in "The Odd Couple" and leads in "The Sunshine Boys," "Lady in the Dark" and "Anything Goes." Frank directed *M*A*S*H* star Jamie Farr in the Kaufman & Hart comedy "George Washington Slept Here" and at the Walnut revivals of Simon's "Brighton Beach Memoirs," "Biloxi Blues," "Broadway Bound" and "Lost in Yonkers." In 1995, he directed and developed the world premiere of the Pulitzer Prize finalist "Old Wicked Songs." In 2001, Frank directed, produced and starred in the national PBS television program "Groucho: A Life in Revue." Frank has played over 1,200 performances as the comic Latin lover Caesar in the cirque show "Teatro ZinZanni" in Seattle and San Francisco and in Palazzo in Amsterdam.

On television, Frank played a speaking mime on Rob Corddry's Emmy Award-winning comedy "Childrens Hospital" and can be heard on the animated series *Garfield* as the voice of Lyman, Odie's first owner, and on "SpongeBob SquarePants" as Patrick's boss. Frank stars in the web series *Caesar's World* now viewable on Funny or Die. He is a question on the TV program "Jeopardy." "He took his portrayal of Groucho Marx to New York in 1986." The answer: "Who is Frank Ferrante?"

GERALD STERNBACH (ACCOMPANIST)

Jerry is one of the busiest musical directors in LA with 12 Ovation nominations (2006 win), seven Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle nominations (winning in 2006, 2007 and 2011). He has accompanied and worked with a variety of artists including Marilyn Horne, Jennifer Hudson, Josh Groban, Sarah Brightman, Carol Burnett, Adam Lambert, Nancy Wilson, Lainie Kazan, John Lithgow and Judith Light (most recently for her Emmy nominated performance on *Transparent*). For Mel Brooks, he not only played for his *Live at the Geffenshow* (filmed for HBO), but Jerry made his West End debut at the Prince of Wales Theater playing a one night only concert with him. Southern California credits: the world premiere of *Wishful Drinking* (written and starring the late, great Carrie Fisher); Stephen Sondheim's 75th Birthday Concert at the Hollywood Bowl; *Grey Gardens* (associate conductor, Ahmanson Theater); *I Only Have Eyes for You* (arranger/musical director, Montalban Theater); Sondheim on Sondheim and *Closer than Ever* (International City Theater); and *Love, Noel and Enter Laughing* (by Carl Reiner, both at the Wallis Annenberg Center). Broadway credits include associate conductor for *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, *Merlin* and *The Tap Dance Kid*. National tour credits include *Les Misérables* (LA premiere company) and the national tour of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Song and Dance* (starring Melissa Manchester). He has been an adjunct professor at Cal State University, Los Angeles for over eight years and was musical director at the Jerry Herman High School Music Theater Awards held at the Pantages Theater for four years. As a songwriter/composer, Jerry has contributed songs to three Ringling Brothers' Circuses; *Heartbeats* (with Amanda McBroom); *A-5-6-7-8!* (with Faye Greenberg); *Club Mom* (with Elin Hampton); and *Biting Broadway! The First Successful Vampire Musical* (with Jordan Beck, Richard Hochberg). His song (written with Faye Greenberg) "Mary," a tribute to Mary Tyler Moore, was sung by Eric McCormack on the 2004 TV Land awards in the presence of the original cast of the landmark sitcom, one of the thrills of his life. Jerry recently accompanied a nine-week run of *An Evening With Groucho* at Milwaukee Repertory Theater and recently concluded a run of the west coast premiere (in LA) of the long running off-Broadway hit show, *Cagney*.

ABOUT DREYA WEBER, DIRECTOR

Dreya Weber has directed extended runs of *An Evening with Groucho* at Seattle's ACT, the Milwaukee Repertory Theater, the Pasadena Playhouse and Cincinnati's Playhouse in the Park. Dreya recently directed and choreographed *Sensatia* at the Faena theater in Miami. Dreya produced and starred in *The Gymnast* and *A Marine Story*, collectively honored with 48 U.S. and international film festival awards including seven "Best Actress" honors. Dreya co-directed and wrote the recently released independent feature *Raven's Touch* in which she plays the title role. She conceived and directed *Caesar's World*, now viewable on Funny or Die. Dreya writes extensively for many cirque/theater venues including Teatro ZinZanni, Palazzo and Le Studio. Her stage credits include *As You Like It* at Los Angeles Women's Shakespeare Company, *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings* at CTG and the award-winning West Coast premiere of Austin Pendleton's *Orson's Shadow* in which she played Vivien Leigh. On the East Coast, she appeared in the New York Shakespeare Festival's *Comedy of Errors*, *Childhood* (with Glenn Close), *Inadmissible Evidence* and *Macbeth*. Dreya conceived and choreographed Pink's performances at the 2010 and 2014 Grammy's and was associate choreographer for Michael Jackson's *This is It*. For more

than a decade, Dreya has created the aerials for all of Pink's record-breaking international tours. Her creative direction and aerial choreography has been featured in over 15 international arena tours including those for Katy Perry, Taylor Swift, Rihanna, Madonna, Cher, Christina Aguilera, Britney Spears and Kylie Minogue.

ABOUT BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE

Bucks County Playhouse, a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization, is the oldest and largest professional Equity performing arts center in Bucks County. Under the direction of Tony Award-winning producers Alexander Fraser and Robyn Goodman, the Playhouse provides first class professional theatrical entertainment as well as community events, partnerships and arts education programming for visitors and residents of New Hope, Doylestown, Lambertville and the Delaware Valley.

Located between Philadelphia and New York, Bucks County Playhouse opened in 1939 in a converted 1790 gristmill after a group of community activists, led by Broadway orchestrator Don Walker and playwright Moss Hart, rallied to save the building. The Playhouse quickly became one of the country's most famous regional theaters, featuring a roster of American theatrical royalty including Helen Hayes, Kitty Carlisle, George S. Kaufman, Grace Kelly, Robert Redford, Bert Lahr, Walter Matthau, Angela Lansbury, Bernadette Peters, Alan Alda, Tyne Daly, Liza Minnelli and Audra McDonald and remained in continuous operation until December 2010. In 2012, the Playhouse re-opened thanks to the efforts of the Bridge Street Foundation, the nonprofit family foundation of Kevin and Sherri Daugherty, and Broadway producer Jed Bernstein.

Since its renovation, significant productions include Terrence McNally's "Mothers and Sons" starring Tyne Daly, which moved to Broadway and was nominated for two Tony Awards, and "Misery" by William Goldman based on the Stephen King novel which also went on to a Broadway run in the 2015-16 season. Two of the Playhouse's recent productions -- "Company" starring Justin Guarini, and William Finn's "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" -- were named by Wall Street Journal to its "Best of Theatre" list for 2015. The Playhouse's productions of "Steel Magnolias" and "Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story" broke box office records in 2016. The record was broken again with its production of "Guys and Dolls" in Summer 2017. Thanks to the Bridge Street Foundation and its vision for the New Hope waterfront, the Playhouse is currently in construction as it adds a 4,000-square foot riverfront cafe and bar that will open in 2018.

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