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**UF School of Theatre + Dance Students Help Develop
Hit New York Musical, *Volleygirls*, This Summer**

Gainesville, Fla., May 18, 2015 — Students at the University of Florida (UF) School of Theatre + Dance will have the unique opportunity this summer to work on [Volleygirls](#), a new musical currently in development by a team of award-winning artists and producers, including UF School of Theatre + Dance alumnus and two-time Tony Award winning producer **John Arthur Pinckard**. Beginning today, the School of Theatre + Dance will be working closely with Pinckard and the entire production team for four weeks that will culminate with four workshop performances of the musical June 11-14, 2015. The workshop performances will be held in the Black Box Theatre in the Nadine M. McGuire Theatre and Dance Pavilion on UF's campus. Performance times are 7:30 p.m. June 11-13, 2015 and at 2 p.m. on Sunday, June 14, 2015.

"The School of Theatre + Dance is thrilled to host this special residency as part of our Summer Repertory Theatre program," said Jerry Dickey, director of the UF School of Theatre + Dance. "This musical gives our students a unique opportunity to work on an original composition that is in its latter stages of development for the theatre. In doing so, they also have the chance to work with stellar guest artists and three commercial theatre producing organizations, all with significant past productions on Broadway and in professional theatres, film and television. I envision this project as a significant step in the process of turning our summer season into a time for the development of significant new works for theatre and dance."

In *Volleygirls*, Kim Brindell, once a world-class volleyball athlete before she choked at the Olympics, is asked to revisit the very sport that shattered her. She must take charge of a team of wide-eyed, misfit, high school girls and turn them into a successful team. In the process Kim overcomes a neurotic P.T.A mom, the insecurities of the girls, and her own fears to become a winning coach.

Volleygirls began as a play commissioned by Craig Slight and Carey Perloff for the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco. After seeing it on its feet, playwright **Rob Ackerman** realized the play needed to be a musical. Years of development led to a smash hit production at the New York Musical Theatre Festival in 2013 where it won "Best of Fest" and "Best Ensemble Performance" honors.

In addition to Ackerman, the creative team consists of **Eli Bolin** (music) whose professional credits include writing music for *Sesame Street* since 2010; **Sam Forman** (lyrics), a writer for stage, screen and TV who is currently a staff writer for Netflix's hit show, *House of Cards*; **Neil Patrick Stewart** (director), who recently directed the world premiere of Christian Durso's *Shiner* for the IAMA Theatre Group in Los Angeles; **Ryan Kasprzak** (choreographer), featured on Fox's *So You Think You Can Dance* and assistant choreographer on NBC's *Smash*; **Monica Raymund** (producer), an accomplished actress, producer, philanthropist and teacher who is

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best known for her current starring role as Gabriella Dawson on NBC's long running drama, *Chicago Fire*; and **Jacob Harvey** (co-producer), an award-winning director/producer who recently completed the Bret C. Harte Director/Producer Fellowship for Berkeley Repertory Theatre's 2013/14 Season, under Artistic Director Tony Taccone.

Amy Danis and **Mark Johannes** of Mars Theatricals (Tony Award, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*) and **Suzanne Gilad**, **David Carpenter** and **John Arthur Pinckard** of Tilted Windmills Theatricals serve as co-producers of *Volleygirls*. While in residence at the UF School of Theatre + Dance, the producers will offer two panels open to the public. Danis, Johannes and Pinckard will speak on **"What Does a Broadway Producer Do?"** on **Thursday, May 21, 9:30-10:45 a.m.** in the McGuire Pavilion, G-10 Studio. On **Thursday, June 11, from 9:30-10:45 a.m.**, Pinckard will join Carpenter for a presentation of **"How Broadway Shows are Financially Structured and Who Makes Money in Commercial Theatre,"** also in the McGuire Pavilion, G-10 Studio.

"My partners and I are thrilled to inaugurate this new program in partnership with UF," said Pinckard. "For students of theatre and dance entering the performing arts industry, many of their first professional opportunities will be in the development of new shows, which involves distinct skill sets in which many universities are unable to offer training. We hope this residency continues to make UF an even more competitive presence in the world of collegiate theatrical education."

Tickets to the workshop performances of *Volleygirls* are \$17 for the general public, and are \$13 for students, UF faculty/staff and senior citizens. Tickets are available through the University Box Office located at Gate 1 of the Stephen C. O'Connell Center, by calling 352-392-1653 or at ticketmaster.com. The University Box Office is open Tuesdays through Fridays: 12-5:30 p.m. and Saturdays: 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Tickets can also be purchased at the Constans Theatre Box Office starting 45 minutes prior to the performance.

The Nadine McGuire Theatre and Dance Pavilion is located at 687 McCarty Drive, Gainesville, FL 32611. Parking is available across the street from the UF Bookstore & Welcome Center on the University of Florida located on Museum Road.

About the School of Theatre + Dance

The School of Theatre + Dance is one of the University of Florida College of the Arts' institutionally-accredited schools. Undergraduate students can pursue a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in acting, dance, musical theatre, theatre production—including costume design, lighting design and scenic design—or a Bachelor of Arts degree in dance studies or general theatre. Minors are also offered in dance and theatre as well as certificates in arts in medicine and dance in healthcare. Student organizations, showcase programs and other intensives provide students with invaluable professional experiences. UF is home to three School of Theatre + Dance performance venues, including the Constans Theatre, Black Box Theatre and G-6 Studio. To learn more about the School of Theatre + Dance, including upcoming performance dates and ticket information, visit www.arts.ufl.edu/theatreanddance.

About the College of the Arts

The College of the Arts, previously known as the College of Fine Arts, is one of the 16 colleges and more than 150 research centers and institutes at the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida. The College of the Arts offers baccalaureate, master's and Ph.D. degree programs in its three institutionally-accredited schools — the School of Art + Art History, School of Music and School of Theatre + Dance. The college is home to the Center for Arts in Medicine, Center for

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Arts and Public Policy, Center for World Arts, Digital Worlds Institute, University Galleries and the New World School of the Arts in Miami. More than 100 faculty members and approximately than 1,200 students work together daily to engage, inspire and create. The college hosts more than 300 performances, exhibitions and events each year. Faculty and students also exhibit and perform at other local, national and international venues. To learn more, visit www.arts.ufl.edu.

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