



**News Release**  
**Virginia Repertory Theatre**

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**July 7, 2021**

**Virginia Repertory Theatre Presents**  
***Ella and Her Fella Frank***  
**by Bo Wilson**  
**Based on an original concept by Randy Strawderman**

**Richmond, VA** -- Inspired by the late Randy Strawderman's 1999 hit musical of the same name, *Ella and Her Fella Frank* invites you to a heavenly concert with Ella Fitzgerald and Frank Sinatra, played by Virginia Rep favorites Desirée Roots and Scott Wichmann. This inspiring new musical by Bo Wilson celebrates the enduring magic of music and live theatre as we pay tribute to Ella, Frank, and Randy.

Featuring the music of Cole Porter, Duke Ellington, Irving Berlin, George Gershwin and other titans of the Great American Songbook, this show runs from July 9 – Sept 12, 2021 with weekend matinees and evening performances Thursdays through Saturdays.

"*Ella and Her Fella Frank* is a classy and sparkly, feel-good, life-affirming show that is exactly what we need as we come back to our theatre to experience live music and storytelling! With over 28 beloved songs, you are sure to hear one of your favorites," said Managing Director Phil Whiteway.

The creative team and cast list is below.

### **Direction & Design**

Direction	<b>Katrinah Carol Lewis</b>
Scenic Design	<b>Josafath Reynoso</b>
Costume Design	<b>Sue Griffin and Keith Walker</b>
Lighting Design	<b>BJ Wilkinson</b>
Music Direction	<b>Larri Branch</b>
Stage Management	<b>Jocelyn A. Thompson</b>

### **Cast**

Ella Fitzgerald	<b>Desirée Roots</b>
Frank Sinatra	<b>Scott Wichmann</b>

**Desirée Roots** is beyond excited to welcome back post pandemic live theatre on her most favorite stage!! 2020 was a year of artistic emptiness. What better way to make up for that void than by portraying this Jazz Diva!! You last saw her on the Virginia Rep stage as Auntie Em/Adaperle and Evilene in *The Wiz*. Desirée has appeared in over 30 productions regionally and continues to showcase her talent in an array of genres. In 2017, she wrote a tribute to Ella Fitzgerald in honor of the 100th anniversary of the legend's birth. The multi-media production, *Ella at 100*, featured Desirée as Ella along with a 3-member cast and a 14-piece orchestra and was held at Virginia Rep's November Theatre. The production has since sprouted wings and is being performed throughout Virginia and has been renamed *Forever Ella*. Some of her most memorable roles include Dorothy in *The Wiz*; Ti Moune in *Once On This Island*; Aldonza in *Man of La Mancha*; Nell in *Ain't Misbehavin'*; *Smokey Joe's Cafe*; Diana Ross/Aretha Franklin in *Beehive*; Vera in *Mame*; Sophia in *The Color Purple*; Caroline in *Caroline or Change* (RTCC Award for Best Actress in a Musical); Muzzy in *Thoroughly Modern Millie*; and Effie in *Dreamgirls*. Along with her acting credits, Desirée has been the opening act for such Jazz greats as the late B. B. King, Shirley Horn, Boney James, and Brian McKnight to name a few. She most recently shared the stage with Grammy Award-winning guitarist Buddy Guy, and has been a featured vocalist with the Glenn Miller Orchestra and our very own Richmond Symphony Orchestra. Desirée was awarded the Theresa Pollak Prize for Vocal Excellence in 2004.

**Scott Wichmann** first stepped into the Richmond spotlight as Frank Sinatra in the 1999 World Premiere Musical Revue *Ella and Her Fella, Frank* at Barksdale Theatre. Over 22 years, Scott

has appeared in productions at every major venue in the city. His Virginia Rep credits include *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, *1776*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *The Producers*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *Say Goodnight Gracie*, *Fully Committed*, *Last of the Red Hot Lovers*, *This Wonderful Life*, *The Odd Couple*, *Shipwrecked!*, *Scapino!*, *Fifth of July*, *Where's Charley?*, *Olympus on My Mind*, *The 1940s Radio Hour*, *Moonlight and Magnolias*, and the world premieres *The End of War* and *River Ditty*. Other notable efforts include *The Laramie Project*, *Murphy's Law*, and *I Am My Own Wife* at Richmond Triangle Players. Film and television credits include *Loving*, *Lincoln*, *Lake Effects*, *By the Grace of Bob*, *Legends & Lies: The Patriots*, *The Good Lord Bird*, *True Terror* with Robert Englund, and *Turn: Washington's Spies*. Scott holds a BA in Theatre and Speech from Wagner College, (Staten Island, N.Y.) and proudly serves as a chief petty officer in the U.S. Navy Reserve.

### **Ticket Information**

**Box Office:** 804-282-2620

[www.virginiarep.org](http://www.virginiarep.org)

Full Price Tickets \$58

Discounted Group Rates and Rush tickets available.

### **Press**

Press Kits will be available at <http://va-rep.org/press.html>

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### **About Virginia Repertory Theatre**

Virginia Repertory Theatre is a regional professional theater headquartered in downtown Richmond, and one of the largest performing arts organizations in Central Virginia. Virginia Rep stages four seasons annually: the Signature Season at the Sara Belle and Neil November Theatre, Virginia Rep's Children's Season at Willow Lawn, the Hanover Tavern Season, and the Theatre Gym Season produced in partnership with Cadence Theatre Company. Virginia Rep also tours, both virtually and live, and provides educational programming to schools throughout Virginia and to major performing arts centers throughout 32 states.

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