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**TONY AWARD NOMINEE SHERYL LEE RALPH TO CO-STAR  
IN THE WORLD PREMIERE, BROADWAY-BOUND MUSICAL**

**THE FIRST WIVES CLUB**

**SHERYL LEE RALPH JOINS TONY AWARD NOMINEE BARBARA WALSH AND  
TONY AWARD WINNER KAREN ZIEMBA  
TO LEAD THE CAST**

San Diego – Broadway and television star Sheryl Lee Ralph has joined the cast of the Broadway-bound musical *The First Wives Club* in the role of “Elyse,” replacing Adriane Lenox, who left the production before the start of the rehearsal process due to health concerns. Sheryl Lee Ralph created the role “Deena” in the original Broadway production of *Dreamgirls* for which she received a Tony Award nomination for Best Actress in a Musical. She also originated the role of “Muzzy Van Hossmere” in the Tony Award-winning musical, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. Sheryl Lee was also a series regular on television’s “Moesha” and “Designing Women.” Her performance with Danny Glover in the film *To Sleep with Anger* won her the Independent Spirit Award for Best Supporting Actress.

*The First Wives Club* — *A New Musical*, will be performed at the Old Globe Theatre **July 17 – August 23, 2009**, as part of the Globe’s 2009 Summer Season. Based on the best-selling novel and Hollywood blockbuster of the same name, this Broadway-bound musical features a book by Tony winner **Rupert Holmes** (*Curtains!*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Say Goodnight Gracie*) and a score by **Brian Holland, Lamont Dozier and Eddie Holland**, the threesome who created hits for Martha and The Vandellas, The Miracles, Marvin Gaye, The Four Tops and The Supremes. The production will be directed by award winning opera and theatrical director **Francesca Zambello** (*The Little Mermaid* for Disney on Broadway, *Little House on the Prairie* for the Guthrie Theatre, *Rebecca* at the Vienna Raimund Theatre and recently, *Porgy and Bess* and the *Wagner Ring Cycle* at the San Francisco Opera where she is the Artistic Advisor. Ms Zambello has won three Olivier Awards and has credits at The Metropolitan Opera, Teatro alla Scala, Royal Albert Hall, Bolshoi, Paris Opera, The Kennedy Center and the Chicago Lyric).

*The First Wives Club* is a funny, moving and empowering new musical based on the smash-hit movie comedy and Olivia Goldsmith's bestselling novel. Former college friends reunite at middle-age and soon discover they share the same unhappy story - their ungrateful husbands careened into midlife by dumping them for younger women. Inspired by their renewed friendship, the three women band together and take back their lives in style! This captivating new musical is destined to be the theatrical event of 2009!

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“The Old Globe has sent over 20 productions on to Broadway and this new musical is one of the most exciting projects that we have ever had the privilege to produce,” said Spisto. “Countless millions of people grew up singing along to the hits of Holland-Dozier-Holland and their songs continue to have an enormous impact on each new generation. To have them composing original music for this world premiere at The Old Globe is beyond exciting. With the multi-talented Tony Award-winner Rupert Holmes writing the book and one of the most sought after directors in both the world of Opera and the theatre, Francesca Zambello, at the helm, this universally beloved story is sure to bring a thrilling new theatrical experience to San Diego audiences.”

The cast features Broadway veterans **Barbara Walsh** (*Company*, *Hairspray*) as “Brenda”, **Karen Ziemba** (*Contact*, *Curtains*) as “Annie,” **Sheryl Lee Ralph** as “Elyse,” (*Dreamgirls*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*) **John Dossett** (*Gypsy*) as “Aaron,” **Kevyn Morrow** (*Dreamgirls*) as “Bill,” **Brad Oscar** (*The Producers*) as “Morty,” **Sara Chase** as “Trophy Wife,” **Sam Harris** (*The Life*) as “Duane,” **Ari Lerner** and **Austyn Myers** alternating as “Jason,” with **Michelle Aravena**, **Mark Campbell**, **Thursday Farrar**, **Jenifer Foote**, **Bob Gaynor**, **Matthew LaBanca**, **Victoria Matlock**, **Kat Palardy**, **Martin Samuel** and **Richard Waits** as the Ensemble.

The design team includes Scenic Designer **Peter J. Davison** (revival of *Blithe Spirit* in 2009, *Is He Dead?*, *Deuce* and *Medea*, for which he was nominated for a 1994 Tony Award), Costume Designer **Paul Tazewell** (2009 revival of *Guys and Dolls*, Tony Award Nominee in 2008 for *In The Heights*, in 2006 for *The Color Purple* and in 1996 for *Bring in ‘Da Noise, Bring in Da Funk*), Lighting Designer **Mark McCullough** (*The American Plan*, 2000 revival of *Jesus Christ Superstar*), Sound Designer **Jon Weston** (*13*; 2006 revival of *Les Miserables*; *The Color Purple*; *Caroline, or Change*; *Thoroughly Modern Millie*), Choreographer **Lisa Stevens**, Music Supervisor **Ron Melrose**, Conductor **John Gentry Tennyson** and Orchestrator **Harold Wheeler**.

Original *Dreamgirl*, **Sheryl Lee Ralph**, (“Elyse”) is an acclaimed veteran of film, television and the Broadway stage. Her award winning body of work includes creating and originating the role of “Deena Jones” on Broadway in the landmark musical *Dreamgirls*, which earned her both a Tony and Drama Desk Award Nomination for Best Actress. After *Dreamgirls*, Ms. Ralph turned her attention to music, television and film. On television, Sheryl Lee has starred in “It’s a Living,” her own series “New Attitude,” the George Foreman series “George” and in the hit comedy “Designing Women.” She was also voted one of TV’s Favorite Moms for her portrayal of step mom Dee on the number-one rated television series “Moesha.” She broke new ground in the SHOWTIME series, “Barbershop,” as the popular, post-operative transsexual, Claire. Recently, Sheryl Lee brought a new face to the sufferings of war in the NBC hit series ER. Her extensive film credits include *Sister Act II* with Whoopi Goldberg, *The Flintstones* with Rosie O’Donell, *The Mighty Quinn* with Denzel Washington, *Mistress* with Robert De Niro, and Eddie Murphy’s *Distinguished Gentleman*. Sheryl Lee’s performance with Danny Glover in *To Sleep with Anger* won her the Independent Spirit Award for Best Supporting Actress.

**Barbara Walsh** (“Brenda”) has appeared in several prominent Broadway productions. Walsh is best known for her Drama Desk Award-winning and Tony-nominated role as “Trina” in the Broadway production of *Falsettos*. She appeared on Broadway in the short-lived musical *Big*, based on the Penny Marshall film starring Tom Hanks. Recently, Ms. Walsh was in the 2007 Broadway revival of Stephen Sondheim’s *Company*, playing the role of “Joanne.” She has also appeared on Broadway in *Rock ‘n Roll! The First 5,000 Years*, *Nine*, *Blood Brothers*, and *Hairspray*. She played the dual roles of “Edith Beale” and her daughter “Little Edie” in *Grey Gardens* at the Studio Theatre (Washington, DC) from November 12, 2008 through December 21, 2008. Walsh’s television credits include guest roles on “Law & Order,” “Law & Order: Criminal Intent,” and the recurring role of Judy Schulman-Brown on “One Life to Live.”

Tony-winning actor-singer-dancer **Karen Ziemba** (“Annie”) is one of Broadway’s most versatile and beloved performers. Karen received the Tony Award – along with the Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle awards – starring in Susan Stroman and John Weidman’s hit musical, *Contact*, at Lincoln Center Theater. On and Off-Broadway, Karen has played murderers and marathoners, a daughter of the West, to the daughter of an American president. She starred as “Roxie Hart” in Kander and Ebb’s *Chicago*, and “Rita Racine” in their *Steel Pier* (for which she received her first Tony award nomination as well as Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle nominations), and starred in the new Gershwin musical, *Crazy For You*. Karen Ziemba made her debut at the Globe earlier this year in John Guare’s *Six Degrees of Separation* as “Ouisa.”

**John Dossett** (“Aaron”) made his Broadway debut in 1979 in a short-lived musical entitled the *King of Schnorrers*. In 1982 he joined the cast of *Fifth of July*, after which the bulk of his work was in off-Broadway productions and on television. He was a member of the off-Broadway Circle Repertory Company, performing in many plays between 1980-1994. He later achieved success in two popular musicals, *Ragtime* (1998) and the 2003 revival of *Gypsy*, opposite Bernadette Peters. His performance in the latter garnered him both Tony Award and Drama Desk Award nominations as Outstanding Featured Actor in a Musical. His most significant screen credit is the 1990 AIDS drama, *Longtime Companion*. He most recently was reunited with his *Gypsy* co-star Peters in a one-night only benefit reading of *Love Letters*.

**Kevyn Morrow** (“Bill”) made his Broadway debut as a member of the original cast of *Leader of the Pack*, he soon after joined the cast of the legendary *A Chorus Line*. His next Broadway show would be as an original cast member of *Dreamgirls*. Kevyn has also appeared in *Smokey Joe's Cafe*, *Dream*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, and the 2002 revival of *Anything Goes*. He recently appeared in the premiere presentation of *Ripper*, the musical, at New World Stages.

**Brad Oscar** (“Morty”) was nominated for the 2001 Tony Award for his role as Nazi playwright “Franz Liebkind” in *The Producers*. He has appeared in several productions at the Arena Stage in Washington, DC. In 2005, he played “The Devil” (Mr. Applegate) in *Damn Yankees*, and in October 2006 he played “Master of Ceremonies” in *Cabaret*. He has completed playing multiple roles, including “Lady Enid” in *The Mystery of Irma Vep* in 2008. Other regional work includes the title role in the musical *Barnum*, at the Asolo Repertory Theatre (Florida).

**Sam Harris** (“Duane”) who’s recent role on the CBS comedy, “The Class,” is the latest incarnation of a career that has spanned more than two decades, spanning from singer/songwriter to stage, film, television actor to writer and producer. Sam has starred in productions of *Cabaret*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and the self-penned shows *Different Hats* and, most notably, *Hard Copy*, in which he portrayed six different characters frequenting an all-night news stand. The show was a huge success, garnering myriad awards, and Sam’s writing and acting skills were now coming to the forefront. He received a Drama Desk-nomination for his role in the Tommy Tune produced *Grease*. Immediately following, he toured for 15 months in the Broadway National tour of Andrew Lloyd Webber’s *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Soon after, Sam starred in Cy Coleman’s *The Life*, for which he received the Drama League Award as well as Tony, Outer Critic’s Circle and Drama Desk nominations.

One of America's most popular and prolific “pop” songwriting teams ever, the hits of **Brian Holland, Lamont Dozier, and Eddie Holland** (music & lyrics) have received over 100 million airplays on radio and television. Their songs have had an indelible influence on the international music scene and have been a part of the fabric of our lives for over four decades. Their body of work has been recorded by Rod Stewart, Michael Jackson, James Taylor, Marvin Gaye, The Dixie Chicks, The Supremes, Martha and the Vandellas, The Four Tops, The Isley Brothers, Freda Payne, The Carpenters, Barbra Streisand, Reba McEntire, The Temptations, Dionne Warwick, The Jackson Five and The Beatles to name just a few. Among the numerous hits penned by the team of Holland, Dozier and Holland, whose music has had more airplay than the Rolling Stones, Elvis and the Beatles combined, are “How Sweet It Is (To Be Loved by You),” “Baby I Need Your Loving,” “Stop! In the Name of Love,” “You Can't Hurry Love” and “I Can't Help Myself.” They were inducted in the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1988; into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1990; they received the National Association of Recording Artists and Science Trustee Award and were recently honored with the BMI (Broadcast Music, Inc) “ICON” award.

**Rupert Holmes** (Book) is the author of numerous songs, musicals, plays and novels, which have earned him three Tony Awards (Best Book, Best Score and Best Musical), several Drama Desk Awards, and the prestigious Edgar Award, which was given to him by the Mystery Writers of America. He has developed and arranged songs for many renowned artists, including Barbra Streisand, Dolly Parton, Barry Manilow, Paul Williams, the Manhattan Transfer and Barbara Cook. His *Solitary*, which starred Stacy Keach, set a new box office record at the Kennedy Center. Other notable theatrical projects include the Tony Award-Winning, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, the Tony-nominated *Say Goodnight Gracie*, *The Accomplice*, *Goosebumps* and *Marty*. His latest show, *Curtains!*, a Kander and Ebb musical, recently played to major acclaim on Broadway. He also received an Emmy for his made-for-television dramedy, “Remember WENN,” and more recently his novel, *Where The Truth Lies*, has been translated into a major motion picture starring Kevin Bacon.

**Francesca Zambello** (Director) is an internationally recognized and award-winning opera and theater director. Her recent theatrical credits include *The Little Mermaid* for Disney on Broadway, *Little House on the Prairie* for the Guthrie Theater, *Rebecca* for the Vienna Raimund Theater, *West Side Story* for the floating stage in Bergenz, Austria, and *Showboat* at The Royal Albert Hall. She is the Artistic Advisor of the San Francisco Opera where she is helming a new *Ring Cycle* and *Porgy and Bess* this season. She has many notable directing credits at the Metropolitan Opera, including *An American Tragedy*, *Cyrano* and *Les Troyens*, as well as at Teatro alla Scala, Royal Albert Hall, Bolshoi, Royal Opera House, Paris Opera, Washington Opera, and Chicago Lyric, among others. Her honors include three Olivier Awards, two Evening Standard Awards, two French Grand Prix des Critiques, Helpmann Award, Palme d'Or in Germany and the Golden Mask in Russia.

The musical will be produced on Broadway by Paul Lambert and Jonas Neilson, with a theatre and dates to be announced.

Tickets to *First Wives Club—The Musical* are currently available by contacting the Globe Box Office at **(619) 23-GLOBE** or online at [www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org).

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*The internationally-acclaimed, Tony Award® -winning Old Globe is one of the most renowned regional theatres in the country and has stood as San Diego's flagship arts institution for 74 years. The Old Globe produces a year-round season of 15 plays and musicals on its three stages, including its highly-regarded Shakespeare Festival. The Globe has become a gathering place for leading theatre artists from around the world, such as Tom Stoppard, Daniel Sullivan and Chita Rivera, among many others. Numerous Broadway-bound premieres and revivals, such as Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, The Full Monty and Damn Yankees, have been developed at The Old Globe and have gone on to enjoy highly successful runs in New York and at regional theatres across the country.*

*The Globe's 2009 Summer Season includes the renowned Summer Shakespeare Festival, featuring Coriolanus, Twelfth Night and Edmund Rostand's Cyrano de Bergerac playing in repertory; world premiere musical The First Wives Club, by R&B legends Holland-Dozier-Holland; and Charles Ludlam's The Mystery of Irma Vep. Under the leadership of Executive Producer Louis G. Spisto and Resident Artistic Director Darko Tresnjak, the Globe is at the forefront of the nation's leading performing arts organizations, setting a standard for excellence in American theatre.*

**THE OLD GLOBE FACT SHEET**  
*THE FIRST WIVES CLUB – A NEW MUSICAL*

**WHAT:**        *The First Wives Club*  
Book by Rupert Holmes  
Music and Lyrics by Brian Holland, Lamont Dozier and Eddie Holland  
Directed by Francesca Zambello

**WHEN:**       **July 17 – August 23; Press Opening: Friday, July 31 at 8pm**  
Sun/Tue/Wed at 7pm; Thu/Fri/Sat at 8pm; Matinees: Sat/Sun at 2pm

**WHERE:**       Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park

**WHO:**        Director: Francesca Zambello                    Scenic Designer: Peter J. Davison  
Costume Designer: Paul Tazewell                Lighting Designer: Mark McCullough  
Sound Designer: Jon Weston                     Music Supervisor: Ron Melrose  
Orchestrator: Harold Wheeler                  Conductor: John Gentry Tennyson

**Cast:**

Sheryl Lee Ralph	<i>Elyse</i>
Barbara Walsh	<i>Brenda</i>
Karen Ziemba	<i>Annie</i>
John Dossett	<i>Aaron</i>
Kevyn Morrow	<i>Bill</i>
Brad Oscar	<i>Morty</i>
Sara Chase	<i>Trophy Wife</i>
Sam Harris	<i>Duane</i>
Ari Lerner/Austyn Myers	<i>Jason</i>
Michelle Aravena	<i>Ensemble</i>
Mark Campbell	<i>Swing; u/s Morty</i>
Thursday Farrar	<i>Ensemble; Andante; u/s Elyse</i>
Jenifer Foote	<i>Swing</i>
Bob Gaynor	<i>Ensemble; u/s Aaron</i>
Matthew LaBanca	<i>Ensemble; u/s Duane</i>
Victoria Matlock	<i>Ensemble; Andante; Cynthia; u/s Annie</i>
Kat Palardy	<i>Ensemble; Chris</i>
Martin Samuel	<i>Ensemble</i>
Richard Waits	<i>Ensemble; u/s Bill</i>

**BACKGROUND:**

A world premiere, Broadway-Bound musical, *The First Wives Club* is a funny, moving and empowering new musical based on the smash-hit movie comedy and Olivia Goldsmith's bestselling novel. Former college friends reunite at middle-age and soon discover they share the same unhappy story - their ungrateful husbands careened into midlife by dumping them for younger women. Inspired by their renewed friendship, the three women band together and take back their lives in style! This captivating new musical is destined to be the theatrical event of 2009!

**TICKETS:**       \$55 to \$92

**BOX OFFICE:**   **(619) 23-GLOBE; [www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org)**  
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