

# BLAKE ZIDELL & ASSOCIATES

For Immediate Release

January 28, 2014

## **GREG EDWARDS & ANDY SANDBERG'S *CRAVING FOR TRAVEL* MAKES WORLD PREMIERE OFF-BROADWAY, DIRECTED BY SANDBERG**

**Two-Actor, 30-Character Comedy about Travel Agents and the People They Serve  
Is Commissioned and Produced by Travel Agent Jim Strong,  
Stars Michele Ragusa and Thom Sesma**

The best luxury travel agents are thriving as never before, at a time when the internet would seem to have made them obsolete. According to a recent study, one in three travel agencies is actively hiring, due to demand for professionals who can give advice about the infinite choices available and can listen to, and meet, particular clients' needs and desires. Of course, not all of those clients' needs and desires are what you would call reasonable. All of which makes for a highly competitive industry, and one full of comedic raw material.

**Greg Edwards & Andy Sandberg** capture the humor in their new play, *Craving for Travel*. Commissioned and produced by **Jim Strong**, one of America's leading luxury travel agents, and directed by Sandberg, the play is making its world premiere through February 9, 2014 at the Peter J. Sharp Theater (416 W. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, NYC).

Performances take place Tuesday - Saturday at 7:30pm, Sunday at 7pm, and Saturday and Sunday at 3pm. The Sunday, Feb 9 matinee performance will take place at 2pm (instead of 3pm). There are added performances Jan 29 and Feb 5 at 3pm, and no 7pm performance on Feb 2 or 9. Previews began Jan 9, and the world premiere opened on Jan 22.

Running time is 75 minutes, with no intermission. Tickets are \$32.50 and \$49.00 and can be purchased at [www.CravingForTravel.com](http://www.CravingForTravel.com) or 212.279.4200, or in person at the Ticket Central Box Office at 416 W. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street (12 – 8pm daily).

In 2011, Jim Strong set out to find New York theater artists who could write about the travel industry in their own voice and shed light on the role of the modern travel agent. He found Edwards and Sandberg, arranged for them to interview travel professionals and experience them at work, and encouraged the writers to theatricalize their impressions, whatever they may be.

**Michele Ragusa** (*Young Frankenstein, Disaster!*) and **Thom Sesma** (*The Lion King, The Times They Are A-Changin'*) collectively play thirty characters—chiefly, Joanne and Gary, rival travel agents (and former spouses) vying for their industry's most prestigious honor: the Globel Prize. With their reputations on the line, Joanne and Gary will tackle any request, no matter how impossible, and any client, no matter how unreasonable. Full of overzealous travelers, overbooked flights, and hoteliers who are just over it, *Craving for Travel* reminds us why we travel—and *everything* that can happen when we do.

The world premiere features scenic design by **Charlie Corcoran** (*The Weir*), costume design by Tony Award nominee **Michael McDonald** (*Hair*), lighting design by Tony Award-winner **Jeff Croiter** (*Peter and the Starcatcher*), and sound design by **Bart Fasbender & Dave Sanderson** (*Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*). **Pamela Edington** is the Production Stage Manager, and **Andrew Jones** is the General Manager. Casting is by **Geoff Josselson**.

# BLAKE ZIDELL & ASSOCIATES

## About the Creators and Cast

**Andy Sandberg** (Director; Co-Author) recently directed the world premiere of *Shida* (Ars Nova; nominated for four AUDELCO Awards), the world premiere of *Operation Epsilon* (nominated for three 2013 Elliot Norton Awards) at Central Square Theater in Cambridge, MA, and the New York premiere of *The Last Smoker in America* (Westside Theatre), having previously directed the world premiere at CATCO (Columbus, Ohio). Sandberg is the co-author of *Application Pending*, also with Greg Edwards. He has been represented on Broadway and London's West End as a producer of *HAIR* (2009 Tony, Drama Desk, Drama League, Outer Critics Circle Awards) and the Broadway revival of Gore Vidal's *The Best Man* (2012 Tony, Drama Desk, Drama League, Outer Critics Circle Nominations). Other New York directing credits include *Zelda at the Oasis* (St. Luke's Theatre), *R.R.R.E.D.* and *Bernice Bobs Her Mullet* (NYMF), *Into the Woods* and *A Funny Thing...Forum* (Blue Hill Troupe), "Eli's Comin' to Broadway," a BC/EFA benefit hosted by Nathan Lane (Lincoln Center), and multiple workshops, benefits, and readings. As producer: *A Perfect Future* (Cherry Lane Theatre); *Paradise Found* (Menier Chocolate Factory, London; dir. Hal Prince and Susan Stroman); and *Vigil* (DR2 Theatre). In 2007, Sandberg worked with Hal Prince on the Broadway production of *LoveMusik*. For more information: [AndySandberg.com](http://AndySandberg.com). Twitter: @Andy\_Sandberg.

**Greg Edwards** (Co-Author) has written lyrics for *Neurosis: A New Musical* (Merry-Go-Round Playhouse); book and lyrics for *Taking the Plunge* (NYMF, Samuel French OOB Festival), *The Temptation of Lady Amsterdam* (Prospect Musical Theatre Lab), and *Office Space: The Musical* (Yale); the script for *Application Pending* (with Andy Sandberg); and assorted songs with Marvin Hamlisch (White House Governors' Dinner, Mr. Hamlisch's holiday tour). Honors and approximations thereof include the BMI Harrington Award and the Fred Ebb Award (two-time finalist). He's backpacked through India, Guatemala, Peru, and Iceland, but really he should have used a travel agent. For more information: [www.greged.com](http://www.greged.com).

**Michele Ragusa** (Joanne et. al.) just finished a successful run as Jackie in the Off-Broadway production of *Disaster, the Musical*. She last starred on Broadway as Elizabeth in *Young Frankenstein*, succeeding Megan Mullally. Her other Broadway credits include *Urinetown*, *Ragtime*, *A Class Act*, *Titanic* and *Cyrano*. Her Off-Broadway credits include *Adrift in Macao* (Primary Stages, Lortel and Drama League nominations as well as the Barrymore Award. Regional credits: *Spamalot* (Lady of the Lake, The Muny); *Gypsy* (Rose, The Hangar Theatre); *Singing in the Rain* (Lina Lamont, The Muny); *Into the Woods* (The Witch, Kansas City Rep., dir. Moises Kaufman); *Annie* (Miss Hannigan, TUTS); *Kiss Me Kate* (Kate, Paper Mill, dir. James Brennan); *The Drowsy Chaperone* (The Chaperone, Flat Rock Playhouse); *Company* (Sarah, GeVa Theatre); *Bad Dates* (Haley, Studio Arena, dir. Scott Schwartz); *She Loves Me* (Amalia, Paper Mill, dir. James Brennan); *Boeing Boeing* (Gabriella, Engeman Theatre, dir. BT McNicholl); *Guys and Dolls* (Adelaide, Rabin Award, Dallas Theatre Center); *Noises Off* (Belinda, Studio Arena); *Sweeney Todd* (Beggars Wmn, Portland Center Stage); *Side Sondheim* (Berkshire Theatre Festival); *Lend Me a Tenor* (Maria, Portland Stage/Engeman Theatre); *Me and My Girl* (Jacquie, Goodspeed, dir. Scott Schwartz); *Nonsense* (Sr. Amnesia, Sacramento Music Circus). Ms. Ragusa is also seen as star vocalist with symphonies across the country.

**Thom Sesma** (Gary et. al.) recently returned to New York from DC's Signature Theatre, where he appeared as the Engineer in Eric Schaeffer's newly re-imagined *Miss Saigon*. Mr. Sesma's other theater credits include leading roles on Broadway and on tour, including *The Times They Are A-Changin'*, *The Lion King*, *Search & Destroy*, *Titanic* and *Chu Chem*. He has performed Off-Broadway with NSYF/Public Theatre, the Roundabout, Second Stage, The Drama Department, The Mint, NAATCO, Epic Theatre and others. Regionally, he has performed new plays, musicals and classical theater with The Old Globe, Yale Rep, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Cincinnati Playhouse, The McCarter, Two River Theatre Co., Arena Stage, Baltimore Center Stage and many more. Among his TV and film credits: are *The Good Wife*, *Single Ladies*, *Third Watch*, *Law & Order*, *Canterbury's Law*, *Over/Under*, *Lay The Favorite*, *Building Girl*, and *Person of Interest*.

**Jim Strong** (Producer) is one of America's leading luxury travel agents and the President of Strong Travel Services in Dallas, Texas, a Virtuoso member agency. His experience and travel insights are sought by an exclusive clientele that includes prominent names in the arts, entertainment and business. Jim travels extensively throughout the world

# BLAKE ZIDELL & ASSOCIATES

selecting and vetting unique hotels, villas, and destinations for his clients. He is the author of two luxury travel books and recently developed an iPhone and iPad app, all under the name *Craving for Travel*. A Certified Travel Counselor and an Accredited Cruise Counselor, Jim serves on the advisory boards of Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, Ritz Carlton Hotels, Rosewood Hotels, *Travel + Leisure Magazine*, as well as many other luxury travel organizations.

## Sponsors

Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts, Virtuoso, LTD, Strong Travel Services, Inc., Holland America Line, Seabourn, Viking River Cruises, Sabre Travel Network, Cox & Kings and Travelex Insurance Services.

**Press contact: Blake Zidell at Blake Zidell & Associates:  
718.643.9052 or [blake@blakezidell.com](mailto:blake@blakezidell.com).**

**[www.CravingforTravel.com](http://www.CravingforTravel.com)**

**[www.Facebook.com/Craving4Travel](https://www.facebook.com/Craving4Travel)**

**[www.Twitter.com/Craving4Travel](https://www.twitter.com/Craving4Travel)**