

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Hanover Theatre Celebrates National Autism Awareness Month with Giveaway



Worcester, Mass. (March 26, 2019) In honor of National Autism Awareness Month, The Hanover Theatre and Conservatory for the Performing Arts announces its third relaxed performance of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, to take place on Sunday, December 22 at 11 am. Visit TheHanoverTheatre.org/ACCSensory19 today for a chance to win a family four-pack of tickets and an exclusive backstage tour before tickets go on sale this summer.

Adapted by president and CEO Troy Siebels and featuring the Mighty Wurlitzer Organ, the 11th annual production is set with timeless music, colorful costumes and spectacular lighting and scenery. New and returning cast members tell the tale of curmudgeonly miser, Ebenezer Scrooge (Jeremy Lawrence from TV's "Blacklist"), who is visited by the Spirits of Christmases Past, Present and Yet To Come.

A relaxed performance is a specially adapted show, modified for adults and children who might benefit from a more relaxed environment. This performance is intended as a unique theatre experience where individuals and families impacted by autism or other sensitivities can attend together free of stress or self-consciousness. Additional accommodations will be provided, including a quiet area for individuals and families that need a break from the performance. Trained staff and volunteers will also be available to assist with patrons' needs.

"It's important to me that the theatre be accessible to everyone, and we have found that the sensory-friendly performance has been a great experience," said President and CEO Troy Siebels, director of *A Christmas Carol*. "I'm hopeful that the positive buzz

--more--

from that will help bring in more families with children impacted by autism, who might like to enjoy the show together for the holidays.”

Associate Director Annie Kerins said the largest changes to this performance are reflected in technical elements. For example, the theatre remains partially lit for the entirety of the performance.

“We also soften some theatrical elements that may be surprising to the audience,” Kerins said.

Audiences will get a brief introduction to the costumes and actors portraying some of Dickens’ scariest ghosts before the show begins. Additionally, during the performance ushers will be prepared to warn the audience prior to the more emotional and exciting parts in the story.

“As an actor, my lines, blocking, dancing and singing is going to be exactly the same, but we’ll let this audience in on a few of the secrets before they happen,” Kerins said.

“The make-up of the audience at these performances is a bit different, and I have noticed laughter and reactions to things that are often missed at a regular performance,” said Franklin Square Society member Barry Alman. “It is clear that the audience is totally engaged and reacting very well to what they are seeing.”

A Christmas Carol runs two hours and 15 minutes with one intermission and is generously sponsored by Assumption College and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. Set with timeless music and colorful costumes, lighting and scenery, the classic tale follows Ebenezer Scrooge through a series of strange and enchanting journeys on a quest to change his destiny.

For more information on the relaxed performance of *A Christmas Carol*, visit TheHanoverTheatre.org/ACCSensory19 to download an online resource guide or call the box office at 877.571.SHOW (7469).

About The Hanover Theatre and Conservatory for the Performing Arts

The Hanover Theatre has entertained more than 2 million patrons with world-class performances and headlining acts including Broadway hits (“Jersey Boys,” “Kinky Boots,” “Something Rotten!”), comedians (Dave Chappelle, Jay Leno, Jerry Seinfeld), musical acts (Neil Young, Aretha Franklin, John Legend, Tony Bennett) and everything in between (“A Christmas Carol,” Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, Alton Brown, Dr. Neil deGrasse Tyson). POLLSTAR consistently ranks The Hanover Theatre as one of the Top Theatres in the World. After 11 seasons, the award-winning, historic theatre continues to establish its place as a world-class performing arts venue, acting as a catalyst for the economic development of downtown Worcester. The Hanover Theatre’s facilities at 551 Main Street house function spaces, offices and The Hanover Theatre Conservatory.

Worcester Center for Performing Arts, a registered not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization, owns and operates The Hanover Theatre and Conservatory for the Performing Arts. All donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.