

PRESS RELEASE

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MARYLAND ENSEMBLE THEATRE

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CHARLES DICKENS' *A CHRISTMAS CAROL* CELEBRATES 20 YEARS AS A FREDERICK HOLIDAY TRADITION

FREDERICK, MD (October 30, 2013) - **Charles Dickens'** classic *A Christmas Carol* is returning to Frederick for the twentieth straight year with **Maryland Ensemble Theatre's** production December 20 through 22 at the **Weinberg Center for the Arts**. The cast of over two dozen actors portraying the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, Future and **Tiny Tim** will transport audiences to Victorian England as the penny-pinching **Ebenezer Scrooge** learns the error of his miserly ways and embraces the true spirit of Christmas. "We really do feel like it's a holiday gift we can give to our community," said the show's director **Julie Herber**. "The spirit of the show is infectious, the energy we feel greeting the audience after the show is always so cheerful and heartwarming."

A Christmas Carol is a stirring tale that has endured and delighted since being greeted with critical and popular acclaim upon its publication in 1843. Dickens himself was the first to add a performance element to the story personally performing 127 public readings of *A Christmas Carol*. Since then it has been adapted hundreds of times to nearly every medium possible including the first surviving film version in 1901, **Orson Wells** on **CBS Radio** in 1938, both opera and ballet adaptations, a **Muppets'** movie and a Broadway musical.

Maryland Ensemble Theatre's version was adapted by **Theatricks**, a theater company co-founded by **MET Associate Artistic Director** Julie Herber. Theatricks first produced the show at **Frederick Community College** and then **The Fun Company** (MET's Family Theatre, also founded by Julie Herber) began producing the show at the Weinberg Center in 1996. The Fun Company became part of Maryland Ensemble Theatre in 2003. "The entire *Christmas Carol* team looks forward to it every year," said Herber. "I've directed nineteen of the twenty years and each year it feels like coming home. We have so many cast members that return year after year, it's like having a holiday family reunion and that really comes across on stage." One of the longest tenured cast members is **Ashley Hall**, "I started when I was a sophomore in high school, when I was fifteen. I'm going to be thirty-one on Christmas Eve, so that makes 15 years! It's a Christmas classic that I personally feel should be revisited every year. I firmly believe in the line, 'I will honor Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year'. Ultimately, it's a wonderful show, performed by a wonderful cast and crew, and it's a great way to celebrate the holiday season." Over the past couple decades thousands of families have celebrated the holidays with this production of *A Christmas Carol*, making it a holiday tradition in downtown Frederick.

Tad Janes, **MET's Artistic Director**, will portray **Scrooge** for the eleventh straight year. In addition, **Gené Fouché** is returning for her tenth year as the ghost of **Christmas Past** and **Bill Stitely** who will play **Young Ebenezer** was in the very first cast twenty years ago. Other veteran cast members this year include **James McGarvey**, **Jack Evans** and **Lisa Burl**. Also familiar to returning audience goers will be the fantastic music by composer **John Walker** that underscores the show.

The show will run December 20 and 21 at 7:30pm and December 21 and 22 at 2pm at the Weinberg Center for Arts (20 West Patrick Street, Frederick). Tickets are \$12 through \$24 and can be purchased at the Weinberg Box Office, at 301-600-2828 or online at weinbergcenter.org. The show will also be presented prior to the Weinberg performances at the **Carroll County Arts Center** the weekend of December 14 (carrollcountyartscouncil.org).

For audiences looking for more holiday entertainment the Maryland Ensemble Theatre will also be presenting **David Sedaris'** outlandish and true chronicles as an elf in **Macy's** Santaland display, **THE SANTALAND DIARIES**. Santaland will reunite the artistic team of **Rona Mensah** as Sedaris' alter ego and **Suzanne Beal** as the show's

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director who previously collaborated on MET's 2003 production of the show. Performances will run December 6 through 29 on the MET stage located in the historic **FSK Hotel** at 31 W Patrick. Sharing the stage at MET will be the Fun Company's holiday sing-along **Junie B. in Jingle Bells, Batman Smells** which runs November 30 through December 29.

Now in its sixteenth season in downtown Frederick the Maryland Ensemble Theatre produces thought-provoking theatre, fun family entertainment, artist residency programs for public schools, theatre camps, challenging classes and side-splitting comedy.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL INFORMATION

Starring: **Tad Janes*** (Ebenezer Scrooge), **Gené Fouché*** (Ghost of Christmas Past, Belle), **Jack Evans*** (Bob Cratchit, Dick Wilkins), **Bill Stitely** (Nephew, Young Ebenezer), **James McGarvey*** (Ghost of Jacob Marley, Fezziwig), **Lisa Burl*** (Mrs. Cratchit), **Ashley Hall***. For additional cast information contact Dan Brick at MET.

Director and Designers: **Julie Herber*** (Director), **John Walker** (Original Music), **Ira Domser** (Set Design), Tabetha White & Greg Davis (Lighting Design), **Julie Herber*** (Costume Design) **Devin Gaither*** and **Kevin Cole*** (Stage Manager)

* Maryland Ensemble Company Members

Where: Weinberg Center for the Arts, 20 West Patrick Street, Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dates: December 20 - December 22, 2013

Performances: December 20 @ 7:30pm, December 21 at 2pm & 7:30pm, December 22 at 2pm

Ticket Prices: Adults \$24, Students (7-18) & Seniors (62+) \$20, *Children \$12
Additional service charges may apply.

Box Office: At the Weinberg Center Box Office or call the Weinberg at 301-600-2828 or at weinbergcenter.org

PRESS INFORMATION

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