



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Media Contact: Steven Box, Director of Marketing and Communications
The Human Race Theatre Company
126 North Main Street, Suite 300
Dayton, OH 45402
(937) 461-3823 ext. 3112
steven@humanracetheatre.org

AMERICAN CLASSIC *THE GLASS MENAGERIE* SHATTERS FAMILY MEMORIES AT THE HUMAN RACE THEATRE COMPANY

Tennessee Williams' masterpiece takes to The Loft Theatre stage February 4 – 21, 2016.

(Dayton, OH) — The Human Race begins the second half of its 29th season with Tennessee Williams' first great masterpiece, *The Glass Menagerie*. Memories come alive and love becomes desperate in this shimmering drama of a family on the edge. Tom struggles to make it in a modern day world while his reclusive sister hides amongst the small glistening crystalline creatures she collects. Their mother holds tight to a fantasy of Southern gentility and the belief that a certain gentleman caller will be the answer to their problems. With an edge as sharp as broken glass, it's a story that cuts deep into the longing of human hearts. The production at The Human Race's downtown Dayton home at The Loft Theatre is directed by **Greg Hellems** and features actors **Scott Hunt, Jennifer Joplin, Claire Kennedy** and **Drew Vidal**. The preview performance of *The Glass Menagerie* is Thursday, February 4. Opening night is Friday, February 5. The production runs through February 21.

Even before it opened on Broadway in 1945, *The Glass Menagerie* had proved itself to be a powerhouse hit with audiences and critics, quickly earning the then unknown Tennessee (real name "Thomas") Williams national recognition as a voice of his generation. Considered to be semi-autobiographical in nature, the play takes elements of Williams' own early life—growing up in St. Louis with an overprotective Southern mother and an emotionally troubled sister, toiling in a shoe factory, a difficult relationship with his father—and pours them into the tortured soul of its protagonist and narrator, "Tom Wingfield." Described by the playwright as a "memory play," *The Glass Menagerie* was unusual for its time, the script was filled with considerable and detailed stage directions from Williams to ensure its presentation in the manner he envisioned, the story is filled with intentional symbolism and its dialogue highly poetic and lyrical in nature. Even after Williams went on to win two Pulitzer Prizes for *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, his *The Glass Menagerie* was heralded as a defining work that changed the American Theatre and opened up new ways of writing dramatic literature.

In defining his vision of *The Glass Menagerie* for The Human Race, director **Greg Hellems** focused on Williams' early life and how he sought to purge himself of guilt and regret, just as his doppelganger on stage, "Tom," must do. "I see the theatre as Tom's purgatory," explains **Hellems**, "in which he must make his nightly confession to explain his actions and to justify his decision to abandon his mother and his disabled sister." The story in the play is Tom's memory, but it's telling has an unintended consequence. "The ghosts of Tom's illusion—his mother, his sister, his co-worker, Jim—respond with vitality and life, and won't succumb to Tom's

conscious desire to win us over,” **Hellems** says. “Once Tom steps into his memory, it is no longer under his control, and he must face the reality of his past decision.”

CAST AND DESIGN TEAM

The four-member cast of *The Human Race*’s production features two of the company’s Resident Artists, native Daytonian **Scott Hunt** (*Rent* and *Les Misérables* on Broadway, *Big River* and *Shenandoah* with HRTC) as the troubled son, “Tom,” and Cincinnati’s **Jennifer Joplin** (HRTC’s *Miracle on South Division Street*, *Other Desert Cities* and *God of Carnage*) as his mother, “Amanda,” as well as Wright State University graduate **Claire Kennedy** (HRTC’s *Lend Me a Tenor*, *Twelfth Night*, *Romeo and Juliet*) as sister “Laura” and Ball State University assistant professor **Drew Vidal** (*The Three Musketeers* at Illinois Shakespeare Festival, *Red Light Winter* at Shafer Street Playhouse) as the gentleman caller, “Jim.”

Earlham College professor **Eric Barker**’s (The Repertory of St. Louis, CATCO, Richmond Shakespeare Festival) set combines a stylistic setting with real world furnishings in his first turn as scenic designer for *The Human Race*. Local artist/designer **Ayn Kaethchen Wood** (The Zoot Theatre Company, Yellow Springs Kids Playhouse, HRTC’s *Under a Red Moon*) serves as costume designer. Resident Artist **John Rensel** returns to set the mood as lighting designer. Sound designer **Jay Brunner** (HRTC’s *The Santaland Diaries*, *The Full Monty*, *Family Shots*) has created an original musical score to accompany the action onstage. **Kay Carver** is the production stage manager. The show’s producer is Human Race Associate Artistic Director **Tara Lail**.

Biographies on the cast and creative team can be found on The Human Race Theatre Company’s website.

The Human Race Theatre Company’s production of *The Glass Menagerie* is sponsored by the Roberts Foundation, an Anonymous Sponsor in Joyful Memory of Marsha Hanna, and David and Dulie Greer.

PERFORMANCE AND SPECIAL EVENT INFORMATION

Tickets for the preview performance of *The Glass Menagerie* on February 4 start at \$35 for adults, \$32 for seniors and \$17.50 for students. For all performances February 5 – 21, single ticket prices start at \$40 for adults, \$37 for seniors and \$20 for students. Prices vary depending on the day of the week and seating location. Group discounts are available for parties of 10 or more. The Human Race is offering a pair of discount ticket opportunities. Side-area seats are available at all performances for \$25 each, on sale two weeks prior to performance. The Sunday, February 7 7:00 p.m. performance is “Sawbuck Sunday”, when any available seat can be purchased in person for just \$10 at The Loft Theatre box office two hours prior to the show. Discounts are subject to availability and some restrictions apply.

All performances are at the Metropolitan Art Center’s Loft Theatre, located at 126 North Main Street in downtown Dayton, Ohio. Show times for *The Glass Menagerie* are 8:00 p.m. on

Wednesday through Saturday evenings. Performances on Sunday and Tuesday evenings begin at 7:00 p.m. and at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday matinees.

Tickets and performance information on *The Glass Menagerie* are available at www.humanracetheatre.org or by calling Ticket Center Stage at (937) 228-3630, and at the Schuster Center box office.

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The Human Race Theatre Company was founded in 1986 and moved into the Metropolitan Arts Center in 1991, taking up residence at the 212-seat Loft Theatre. In addition to the Eichelberger Loft Season, The Human Race produces a summer Festival of New Works and special event programming. Under the direction of President and Artistic Director Kevin Moore, the company also maintains education and outreach programs for children, teens and adults, as well as artist residencies in area schools, the Muse Machine In-School Tour, and a summer youth program. Human Race organizational support is provided by Culture Works, the Montgomery County Arts and Cultural District, the Shubert Foundation, the Erma R. Catterton Trust Fund, the Jesse & Caryl Philips Foundation, the Virginia W. Kettering Foundation and the Ohio Arts Council, which helped fund this organization with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. The 2015-2016 Sustainability Sponsors are the ELM Foundation, Anne F. Johnson and Steve and Lou Mason. The 2015-2016 Loft season sponsor is the Jack W. and Sally D. Eichelberger Foundation of the Dayton Foundation, with additional support from Premier Health and Morris Home Furnishings.

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

The Human Race Theatre Company presents

The Glass Menagerie

by Tennessee Williams

directed by Greg Hellems

February 4 – 21, 2016

Performed at The Loft Theatre

Metropolitan Arts Center

126 North Main Street (between First and Second streets)

Dayton, Ohio 45402

Memories as fragile as glass are tossed into the air in Tennessee Williams' first great masterpiece. Dreams meet reality and love becomes desperate in a shimmering drama of a family on the edge. Tom struggles in a modern day world while his mother holds tight to a fantasy of Southern gentility and his sister hides amongst the glistening crystalline creatures she collects. With an edge as sharp as broken glass, it's a story that cuts deep into the longing of human hearts.

For tickets:

Ticket Center Stage box office phone: (937) 228-3630

Box office hours: Monday – Friday, 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.; and two hours prior to each performance

Online: www.humanracetheatre.org or www.ticketcenterstage.com

Ticket prices start at: \$35 – \$50 for adults, \$32 – \$46 for seniors and \$17.50 – \$25.00 for students. Prices vary depending on performance date.

Discounts: Select side-area seats available for \$25 at all performances; “Sawbuck Sunday” February 7 at 7:00 p.m. – \$10 seats available for walk up sales only

Group sales: Contact Betty Gould at (937) 461-8295 or Betty.Gould@victoriatheatre.com

***The Glass Menagerie* performance dates:**

Wednesday, February 3 8:00 p.m. Pay-What-You-CAN open rehearsal

Thursday, February 4 8:00 p.m. “Inside Track” pre-show discussion/Preview performance

Friday, February 5 8:00 p.m. Opening night with post-show party at Uno Pizzeria & Grill

Saturday, February 6 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 7 2:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 7 7:00 p.m. “Sawbuck Sunday” – \$10 tickets at the door

Tuesday, February 9 7:00 p.m. Lite Fare at The Loft pre-show lobby dining

Wednesday, February 10 8:00 p.m.

Thursday, February 11 8:00 p.m.

Friday, February 12 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, February 13 8:00 p.m. Audio Described/Sign Interpreted performance (reserve by January 29)

Sunday, February 14 2:00 p.m. “While We’re on the Subject” post-show talk-back

Tuesday, February 16 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, February 17 8:00 p.m.
Thursday, February 18 8:00 p.m.
Friday, February 19 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, February 20 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, February 21 2:00 p.m. Closing performance