



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GAMERS AND THEIR AVATARS COMPETE TO BE THE LORD OF *LEGENDALE* AT THE HUMAN RACE THEATRE COMPANY.

**American Premiere of fantasy musical comedy comes alive to open The Race's 31st Season,
September 7 – October 1, 2017 at the Loft Theatre.**

(Dayton, OH) —The Human Race Theatre Company (HRTC) proudly launches its 2017-2018 Eichelberger Loft Season with the American Premiere production of *Legendale*. Created by **Andrea Daly** (music and story) and **Jeff Bienstock** (words and story), this new musical follows a 30-year-old IT manager named Andy, whose favorite way to escape his miserable job and humdrum life is the online game *Legendale*. He dreams of victory in its new tournament and winning the grand prize to become “the Lord of Legendale,” but is stuck competing as a lowly milkmaid. When things in the online world suddenly take a strange turn, Andy and his avatar must both discover their inner warrior. A blend of romance, adventure and virtual reality with a pop-infused score, it's an inspiring tale like no other that's sure to delight.

John Simpkins (Off-Broadway's *Bloodsong of Love: The Rock and Roll Spaghetti Western*, *The Bus*, *ReWrite*, *The Plant That Ate Dirty Socks*), Head of Musical Theatre at Penn State University, returns to direct and choreograph The Human Race's production of *Legendale* after helming the world premiere at the Fredericia Teater in Denmark. Resident Artist and Music Director for Wright State University's Department of Theatre, Dance and Motion Pictures **Scot Woolley** (*Crowns*, *Next to Normal*, *Tenderly*, *Harold and Maude* among many others for HRTC) is the production's music director and conducts its seven-member band.

The preview performance of *Legendale* is Thursday, September 7. Opening night is Friday, September 8.

Daly and **Bienstock** began writing *Legendale* in 2013. That same year, the pair attended a two-week residency at Goodspeed Musicals' Writers Colony in East Haddam, Connecticut, where the play had a first, informal reading of its first act in February 2014. Its first full-length reading was presented in New York City in November of that same year. In October 2015, HRTC President & Artist Director **Kevin Moore** attended the National Alliance of Musical Theatre's (NAMT) Festival of New Works – the highest attended showcase of new musicals in the country. One of the eight new musicals in the festival was *Legendale*. After seeing a 45-minute presentation from the work in progress, **Moore** began a dialogue with **Daly** and **Bienstock**, asking questions like, “What is your next step for the show?” and “What do you need?” Their answer was clear – time to work on the show and the ability to see and hear it. After *Legendale* progressed through a

series of 29-hour workshops in New York and Los Angeles (**Moore** attended two New York readings), The Human Race, Denmark's Fredericia Teater and the writers presented at the 2016 NAMT Fall Conference about their collaboration and the trajectory of the show. HRTC hosted an extended two-week workshop in Dayton in December 2016, where *Legendale* received a staged reading, to help the writers prepare for their March 2017 world premiere at the Fredericia. After receiving great critical and audience acclaim in Denmark, the musical now returns with its writers in tow to The Human Race, where it will use some technical and artistic elements from its Danish production.

"I'm beyond excited to be producing this show," says **Moore**. "There is nothing else like it on the American musical scene today." While the plot centers around online gamers and their avatars, he is confident about *Legendale*'s appeal to a much larger audience. "Jeff and Andrea have created this unique virtual world, for sure. But you don't have to know anything about video games or supernatural warriors to relate. The story's true theme is about the power of fantasy, and it speaks clearly to anyone who has ever dared to dream."

CAST AND DESIGN TEAM

Legendale's cast consists of only eight performers, most of whom will be new to Human Race audiences. Featured in the lead role of "Andy" is **Max Crumm**, who television viewers will remember as a contestant on the NBC competition series *Grease: You're the One That I Want!*, eventually winning the role of "Danny Zuko" for the 2007 Broadway revival of *Grease*. **Crumm**'s other New York credits include *Disaster!* on Broadway and *The Fantasticks* and *Brooklyn Crush* Off-Broadway. **Abby Church** (Broadway's *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* and *White Christmas*) is "Andy's" *Legendale* avatar, "Zelayna/Cow Maiden." **Rachel Flynn** (Off-Broadway's *Heathers, the Musical*) plays "Beth" and "Dr. Gamer." **Jesse Sharp** (*Chasing Rainbows* at Goodspeed Musicals, tours of *The Addams Family*, *Elf* and *Grease*) is making his first appearance at The Human Race in the role of *Legendale* creator "Jansen." Green Bay, Wisconsin native **Travis Mitchell** (tours of *Rock of Ages*, *Elf*, *Catch Me If You Can*) is "Andy's" overbearing boss, "Steve." Recent Wright State University graduate **Nathan Robert Pecchia** (HRTC's *Sweeney Todd* and *Spamalot!* at Short North Stage) returns to the Loft as gamer "Sir Sarcasm." Wright State University students **Cody Westbrook** and **Colin Hodgkin** round out the cast as gamers "Fanboy" and "Newbie."

Scenic designer **Michael Schweikardt** (Off-Broadway's *The Bus*, *Gates of Gold* and *The Black Suits*) makes his HRTC debut, tasked with merging *Legendale*'s virtual realm and the real world on the Loft Theatre's thrust stage. Costume designer **Ayn Kaethchen Wood** (HRTC's *The Glass Menagerie* and *Under a Red Moon*) combines existing costume pieces from the Fredericia production with new elements to outfit both humans and avatars. New York designer **David Bengali** (*The Last Ship*, *Dear Evan Hansen* and *Amélie* on Broadway) serves as the projections designer. Human Race Resident Artists **John Rensel** (lighting designer) and **Jay Brunner** (sound designer) round out the design team.

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 *Legendale* is sponsored by the New Works Fund, the Mary H. Kittredge Fund and Beth and Alan Schaeffer.

PERFORMANCE AND SPECIAL EVENT INFORMATION

Tickets for the preview performance of *Legendale* on September 7 start at \$35 for adults, \$32 for seniors and \$17.50 for students. For all performances September 8 – October 1, 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. A limited number of \$12 and \$25 side-area seats are available in advance for all performances. The Sunday, September 10 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.

In connection with *Legendale*, The Human Race is hosting a **Cosplay Costume Contest**, hosted by Through the Ages Fabric, on Monday, September 11 at the Loft Theatre. Cosplay enthusiasts of all ages are invited to dress up and enter to win a variety of prizes provided by Through the Ages Fabric, Victoria Theatre Association and other area businesses. Registration begins at 6:15 p.m. at the Loft. Pre-judging starts at 7:00 p.m., prior to the 8:00 p.m. costume parade. Admission is \$10 for participants and \$5 for audience members at the door. All participants will receive a ticket voucher good for any production on HRTC's 2017-2018 Eichelberger Loft Season.

On Saturday, September 16, The Human Race invites area young professionals to attend its **Young Professionals Board Game Night**. The event starts at 5:00 p.m. in HRTC's rehearsal studio on the second floor of the Metropolitan Art Center. Individuals are welcome to play a wide variety of board games on hand as they enjoy margaritas, beer and a taco bar. There will be prizes provided by 2nd & Charles. Admission is \$35 and includes food, drinks and a ticket to the 8:00 p.m. performance of *Legendale*. Tickets are limited to 50 persons and must be purchased by calling Ticket Center Stage and using the promotion code "YPGAME" before September 9.

More information on the **Cosplay Costume Contest** and **Young Professionals Board Game Night** can be found on The Human Race's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/humanracetheatre/

All performances of *Legendale* are at the Metropolitan Art Center's Loft Theatre, located at 126 North Main Street in downtown Dayton, Ohio. Show times are 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings. Performances on Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings begin at 7:00 p.m., and at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday matinees.

Tickets and performance information on *Legendale* are available online 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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2017-2018 marks the 31st season for The Human Race Theatre Company, “Dayton’s Official Professional Theatre Company.” Founded in 1986, The Human Race moved into the Metropolitan Arts Center in 1991, taking up residence in its current home, the 212-seat Loft Theatre. In addition to the Eichelberger Loft Season, The Human Race produces new works development 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 and a summer youth program. Human Race organizational support is provided by the Montgomery County Arts and Cultural District, Culture Works, 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 2017-2018 Sustainability Sponsors are the ELM Foundation, Anne F. Johnson, Steve and Lou Mason, and Morris Home. The 2017-2018 Loft season sponsor is the Jack W. and Sally D. Eichelberger Foundation of the Dayton Foundation, with additional support from Premier Health.

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

The Human Race Theatre Company presents

Legendale

music by Andrea Daly

words by Jeff Bienstock

story by Jeff Bienstock and Andrea Daly

directed and choreographed by John Simpkins

music direction by Scot Woolley

September 7 – October 1, 2017

Performed at the Loft Theatre

Metropolitan Arts Center

126 North Main Street (between First and Second streets)

Dayton, Ohio 45402

Andy's favorite way to escape his miserable job and humdrum life is the online game *Legendale*. He dreams of victory in its new tournament and winning the grand prize to become "the Lord of Legendale," but is stuck competing as a lowly milkmaid. When things in the online world suddenly take a strange turn, Andy and his avatar must both discover their inner warrior. A blend of romance, adventure and virtual reality with a pop-infused score, it's an inspiring tale like no other that's sure to delight.

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: Side-area seats available in advance for \$12 and \$25 at all performances; "Sawbuck Sunday" September 10 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

***Legendale* performance dates:**

Wednesday, September 6 8:00 p.m. Pay-What-You-CAN open rehearsal

Thursday, September 7 8:00 p.m. "Inside Track" pre-show discussion/Preview performance

Friday, September 8 8:00 p.m. Opening night with post-show lobby party

Saturday, September 9 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 10 2:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 10 7:00 p.m. "Sawbuck Sunday" – \$10 tickets at the door

Tuesday, September 12 7:00 p.m. Lite Fare at the Loft pre-show lobby dining

Wednesday, September 13 7:00 p.m.
Thursday, September 14 8:00 p.m.
Friday, September 15 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, September 16 8:00 p.m. Young Professionals Board Game Night (must reserve by September 9) and Audio Described/Sign Interpreted performance (must reserve by September 1)
Sunday, September 17 2:00 p.m. "While We're on the Subject" post-show talk-back
Tuesday, September 19 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, September 20 7:00 p.m.
Thursday, September 21 8:00 p.m.
Friday, September 22 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, September 23 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, September 24 2:00 p.m.
Tuesday, September 26 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, September 27 7:00 p.m.
Thursday, September 28 8:00 p.m.
Friday, September 29 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, September 30 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, October 1 2:00 p.m. Closing performance