



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 20, 2015

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THE HUMAN RACE THEATRE COMPANY MAKES AN APPOINTMENT FOR LAUGHTER AND TEARS WITH *STEEL MAGNOLIAS*

**Robert Harling's Southern treasure makes its long-awaited return,
November 5 – 29, 2015 at The Loft Theatre.**

(Dayton, OH) — One of the most beloved plays in modern theatre returns to The Human Race as Dayton's premier professional theatre company revisits the popular tale of friendship among triumph and loss, *Steel Magnolias*. Many things beside hair get done at Truvy's hair salon, and that's why it is the place to go in Chinquapin Parish, Louisiana. Gossip, revelations and witty Southern banter flow like refreshing sweet tea on a hot summer day. The opinionated Truvy and her new assistant, Annelle, play host to unlikely friends Ouiser and Clairee, the respectable and sociable M'Lynn and her beautiful daughter, Shelby. As the women come face to face with difficult times, they are brought together through strength and love. **Robert Harling's** 1987 play is consistently one of the most widely produced shows in the country and has been twice adapted for the screen. The Human Race first produced *Steel Magnolias* in 1989 at the Biltmore Hotel's Muse Space, then again on the Victoria Theatre's Broadway on Main series in 2001. This production on The Loft Theatre stage is being directed by **Heather N. Powell**. The preview performance of *Steel Magnolias* is Thursday, November 5. Opening night is Friday, November 6. The production runs through November 29.

"We're thrilled to be making another visit to Truvy's," says Human Race President & Artistic Director **Kevin Moore**. "*Steel Magnolias* was a very popular show for us and has always been an audience favorite. We've been looking forward to the chance to bring it to The Loft stage for some time."

While many of The Human Race's patrons may know **Heather N. Powell** from her behind-the-scenes work as the company's long-time prop master, most don't know she is a trained director who has helmed a number of local productions and The Race's in-school touring productions of *Change* and *A Dickens of a Time*. For this well-known story, **Powell** and scenic designer **Eric Moore** have a vision that is truly their own, and that is intentional. "It may surprise a lot of people neither I nor Eric have ever seen the 1989 movie or a staged version of the play," she says. "When we realized this, we made a pact to not see the movie and to avoid exposure to it on the internet." As for establishing the characters' personalities and the world in which they live, "I am approaching the play by staying true to Harling's words and the characters he gave me to play with," states **Powell**. "His words are my only guide; so what you will see on stage is what Eric and I saw in our minds and through development working together with solely the script for reference."

CAST AND DESIGN TEAM

For The Human Race's 2015 production, director **Powell** has gathered a six-actress ensemble of faces both familiar and new to The Loft Stage. **Christine Brunner** (*Play It by Heart, Permanent Collection, A Christmas Carol*) is "Truvy," owner of the beauty salon that is the play's setting. Resident Artist **Patricia Linhart** (*Torch Song Trilogy, Becky's New Car, Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*) is the town's *grande dame*, "Clairee." **Caitlin Larsen** (*Lend Me a Tenor, Moonlight and Magnolias, Fiddler on the Roof*) is the acerbic, but lovable, curmudgeon "Ouiser." New to The Human Race are **Julia Geisler** (*A Musical Christmas Carol* and *Boeing, Boeing* at Pittsburgh CLO) as "Shelby," the prettiest girl in town, **Carolyn Popp** (*The Drilling Company's Romeo and Juliet*, and Bay Street Theatre's *To Kill a Mockingbird*) as Shelby's social prominent mother, "M'Lynn," and **Maretta Zilic** (Richmond Shakespeare Festival's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) as Truvy's new assistant, "Annelle."

"These women are perfect for their roles," praises **Powell** as she recalls the show's audition process. "We had so many talented actresses who auditioned, but there was just something special about each of these ladies. It became especially clear when they each read snippets of the show for their callbacks. I immediately saw them in full 80s hair and outfits bringing their character to life."

Scenic designer **Eric Moore** (*Miracle on South Division Street*, and *Footloose* and *The Music Man* for Springfield's Summer Arts Festival) has created the carport-turned-makeshift-beauty salon set. Costume designer **Janet G. Powell** (*The Full Monty: The Broadway Musical, Family Shots, Avenue Q*) has styled the cast in nostalgic 80s. This production marks Resident Lighting Designer **John Rensel**'s third time lighting *Steel Magnolias* for The Human Race. **Brian Retterer** (*Play It by Heart, Oliver!*) returns to The Loft to oversee the sound design. **Kay Carver** serves as 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 *Steel Magnolias* is sponsored by Marion's Piazza, Square One Salon and Day Spa, Larry S. Glicker—Glickler Funeral Home, Patricia Giering and One Call Now.

PERFORMANCE AND SPECIAL EVENT INFORMATION

Tickets for the preview performance of *Steel Magnolias* on November 5 start at \$35 for adults, \$32 for seniors and \$17.50 for students. For all performances November 6 – 29, 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, November 8 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 *Steel Magnolias* 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 *Steel Magnolias* 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

Steel Magnolias

by Robert Harling

directed by Heather N. Powell

November 5 – 29, 2015

Performed at The Loft Theatre

Metropolitan Arts Center

126 North Main Street (between First and Second streets)

Dayton, Ohio 45402

Many things beside hair get done at Truvy's hair salon, and that's why it is the place to go in Chinquapin Parish, Louisiana. Gossip, revelations and witty Southern banter flow like refreshing sweet tea on a hot summer day. The opinionated Truvy and her new assistant, Annelle, play host to unlikely friends Ouiser and Clairee, the respectable and sociable M'Lynn and her beautiful daughter, Shelby. As the women come face to face with difficult times, they are brought together through strength and love.

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” November 8 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

***Steel Magnolias* performance dates:**

Wednesday, November 4 8:00 p.m. Pay-What-You-CAN open rehearsal

Thursday, November 5 8:00 p.m. “Inside Track” pre-show discussion/Preview performance

Friday, November 6 8:00 p.m. Opening night with post-show party at Uno Pizzeria & Grill

Saturday, November 7 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, November 8 2:00 p.m.

Sunday, November 8 7:00 p.m. “Sawbuck Sunday” – \$10 tickets at the door

Tuesday, November 10 7:00 p.m. Lite Fare at The Loft pre-show lobby dining

Wednesday, November 11 8:00 p.m.

Thursday, November 12 8:00 p.m.

Friday, November 13 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, November 14 8:00 p.m. Audio Described/Sign Interpreted performance (reserve by October 30)

Sunday, November 15 2:00 p.m. “While We're on the Subject” post-show talk-back

Tuesday, November 17 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, November 18 8:00 p.m.
Thursday, November 19 8:00 p.m.
Friday, November 20 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, November 21 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, November 22 2:00 p.m.
Tuesday, November 24 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, November 25 7:00 p.m.
Friday, November 27 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, November 28 2:00 p.m.
Saturday, November 28 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, November 29 2:00 p.m. Closing performance