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For release on Wednesday, October 15, 2014

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ROANOKE – Mill Mountain Theatre today announces the 50th Anniversary Season, offering Roanoke audiences four main-stage productions and two entirely new formats to enhance the Downtown Roanoke economy.

“It is especially appropriate that Mill Mountain Theatre marks its 50th season with both what our audience has come to expect – high-quality live entertainment - and a couple of new ventures intended to grow the core of downtown Roanoke as an entertainment venue,” said Ginger Poole, MMT’s Producing Artistic Director.

The 2015 Performance season includes:

* *Hairspray*, April 29-May 17, 2015 on the Trinkle Main Stage. The winner of eight Tony Awards, the show will be MMT’s first with a new sound system, ensuring audiences will leave the theatre singing and dancing.
* *Beauty and the Beast*, July 31-Aug 8, 2015 on the Trinkle Main Stage. Disney’s version of the classic fairy tale will showcase the region’s talented youth actors, including many who are students in the MMT Conservatory education classes.
* *On Golden Pond*, Sept. 30-Oct. 11, 2015 on the Trinkle Main Stage. Familiar Broadway and movie versions of this show tell a charming story of a loving elderly couple who unexpectedly find their restful summer vacation energized by a teenage “grandson.”
* *42nd Street*, Dec. 2-20, 2015 on the Trinkle Main Stage is a high-energy song-and-dance show about show business and the work it takes to be a star.

In addition, MMT continues its collaboration with the Hollins University Theatre Institute 2015 Winter Festival of New Work. The festival includes three productions:

* *Helvetica,* by Will Coleman of the Hollins MFA program in playwriting, Jan. 16-25, 2015 on the Waldron Stage. An unlikely guide leads a children’s storybook writer through adventures of life and death, past and present.
* *An Initial Condition*, by Taylor Gruenloh of the Hollins MFS program in playwriting, Feb. 17-22, 2015 on the Waldron Stage. A young mathematician helps map out cancer in a young woman’s body and solves the problem of her illness.
* *Iris and Walter*, based on a book by Elissa Haden Guest and adapted by Nicole B. Atkins, both of the Hollins MFA program in playwriting. A Legacy Series Production for children, Feb. 5-7, 2015 on the Trinkle Main Stage and the Hollins Theatre. A story about a rambunctious baby sitter with several surprises.

New programs being launched in 2015 by Mill Mountain Theatre are:

* Summer Performances in Market Square. A 10-week series of outdoor performances of Carl Sandburg’s *Rootabaga Stories* to be performed by a troupe of college-level student interns auditioned especially for this new project. Shows will be timed to animate the new gathering space in downtown Roanoke and spur economic activity for the neighborhood’s merchants and restaurants. The project is funded by a special grant from the Foundation for Roanoke Valley and by in-kind services of MMT’s project partners – The City of Roanoke Arts Commission; Downtown Roanoke, Inc.; Roanoke City Police Department, and the Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau. The performances will be May – July 2015.
* Mill Mountain Music, a two-concert series of informal concerts of different styles of music. The initiative is to test the marketability of low-cost, accessible events that encourage patronage of downtown restaurants and clubs. The concerts will be on March 28, 2015 with “Piano Man,” and on June 6, 2015 with “Opry Divas!”

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