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Safety Comes First in New Dallas Theater Center Season

DALLAS (October 28, 2020) - 2017 Regional Theatre Tony Award® Recipient Dallas Theater Center makes safety their number one priority as actors, artists, and some staff start preparations for their new season.

“In addition to modifying our work practices to maximize physical distancing, enhancing our scheduling to allow for deeper sanitation and providing new equipment to give staff the necessary personal protection, we’ve also focused on a mindset shift amongst our teams creating shows this season. Each person’s individual activities inside and outside of Dallas Theater Center spaces have a direct impact on everyone else,” said Bryan White, Director of Production, Dallas Theater Center. “The show must go on’ mentality doesn’t have a real place here while we’re grappling with COVID-19; if we can’t do it safely, we just don’t do it.”

The first step was training select employees to become COVID compliance officers. These officers took courses from the Red Cross, OSHA, World Health Organization, and Health Education Services. Course topics ranged from COVID awareness to contact tracing to mass gatherings risk assessment training.

Show rehearsals will be the first time since the pandemic began that a significant number of employees are returning and will be there at the same time. All employees returning will begin regular COVID testing. In addition, they will submit symptom and temperature assessments before they show up to any of the three Dallas Theater Center campuses. If employees are willing and able to work from home, they are being encouraged to do so and anyone who doesn’t feel comfortable coming back isn’t being forced. Rehearsals will also be closed to anyone outside the testing group.

“From the very beginning we knew we needed to equip ourselves with the most relevant information available in order to help guide our team through this pandemic successfully. As that information is ever-changing, we are constantly updating our portfolios with new training, webinars and research as it becomes available. That training combined with strong advice and collaboration with our medical advisory team, has put us in the position where we can start thinking about making art again in a way that protects the health and safety of the entire team,” said Andrea Somers, COVID19 Compliance Officer, Director of People Operations, Dallas Theater Center.

The COVID Compliance Officers are also consulting with two physicians. The doctors are helping them develop protocols and guidelines for returning. Different protocols have been developed for lighting, costumes, set production, and audio/visual depending on their needs. Dallas Theater Center has been stocking up on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Their PPE order included 72 gallons of hand sanitizer, touchless hand sanitizer stations, masks, gloves, and disinfectant wipes.

“The process to bring us back took a team and countless hours of research and discussion. As a team, we will move forward safely within our organization and industry,” said Theresa Zicoello, General Manager, Dallas Theater Center.

When audiences return in the late Spring they will be socially distanced with no more than 200 patrons sitting in a normally 570 seat house. They will also continue with their extensive cleaning practices and follow CDC, city, county and state guidelines. The COVID compliance officers are also coordinating their efforts with the AT&T Performing Arts Center.

To get information on Dallas Theater Centers' new season, visit <https://www.dallastheatercenter.org/2020-2021-season-shows/>.

ABOUT DALLAS THEATER CENTER:

One of the leading regional theaters in the country and the 2017 Regional Theatre Tony Award® Recipient, Dallas Theater Center (Dallas Theater Center) performs to an audience of more than 100,000 North Texas residents annually. Founded in 1959, Dallas Theater Center is now a resident company of the AT&T Performing Arts Center and presents its Mainstage season at the Dee and Charles Wylie Theatre, designed by REX/OMA, Joshua Prince-Ramus and Rem Koolhaas and at its original home, the Kalita Humphreys Theater, the only freestanding theater designed and built by Frank Lloyd Wright. Dallas Theater Center is one of only two theaters in Texas that is a member of the League of Resident Theatres, the largest and most prestigious non-profit professional theater association in the country. Under the leadership of Enloe/Rose Artistic Director Kevin Moriarty and Managing Director Jeffrey Woodward, Dallas Theater Center produces a six-play subscription series of classics, musicals, and new plays and an annual production of *A Christmas Carol*; extensive education programs, including the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award-winning Project Discovery, and partnerships with Southern Methodist University's Meadows School of the Arts and Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts; and many community collaborations. In 2017, in collaboration with SMU Meadows, Dallas Theater Center launched Public Works Dallas, a groundbreaking community engagement and participatory theater project designed to deliberately blur the line between professional artists and community members, culminating in an annual production featuring more than 200 Dallas citizens performing a Shakespeare play. Throughout its history, Dallas Theater Center has produced many new works, including *The Texas Trilogy* by Preston Jones in 1978; Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men*, adapted by Adrian Hall, in 1986; and recent premieres of *Miller, Mississippi* by Boo Killebrew; *Stagger Lee* by Will Power; *Hood: The Robin Hood Musical Adventure* by Douglas Carter Beane and Lewis Flinn; *Bella: An American Tall Tale* by Kirsten Childs; *penny candy* by Jonathan Noron; *Clarkston* by Samuel D. Hunter and *Moonshine: That Hee Haw Musical* by Robert Horn, Brandy Clark and Shane McAnally. Dallas Theater Center gratefully acknowledges the support of our season sponsors: Texas Instruments and Texas Instruments Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, City of Dallas Office of Arts and Culture, Lexus, TACA, Texas Commission on the Arts, and NBC5.

Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: At Dallas Theater Center, all are welcome. We want to be the best place to work and see theater, and to be a positive and transformational force in Dallas and beyond. We stand-up for equity, diversity, and inclusion across our company and community. As a leading national theater, we recognize that building an equitable, diverse, and inclusive environment is central to our relevance and sustainability in the community we serve and love.

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