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**TOWN HALL THEATRE ANNOUNCES THE SECOND MAIN STAGE
PRODUCTION IN THE 2023-2024 SEASON**

SEPTEMBER 13th, 2023 – Join us for an unforgettable holiday experience as we bring to life the heartwarming tale of **“A Christmas Story”** on stage. Step into the magic of the season with Ralphie and his family, as we transport you to a world filled with laughter, nostalgia, and the true spirit of Christmas. Whether you’re reliving cherished memories or discovering this beloved story for the first time, our production promises to ignite your holiday spirit and create lasting memories for you and your loved ones. Don’t miss this timeless classic, live and in person – it’s a festive tradition that will warm your heart and leave you with a joyful glow all season long.

The classic story of Ralphie Parker’s mission to own a “Red Ryder 220-Shot Carbine Action Range Model Air Rifle, with a compass and a thing which tells the time built right into the stock!” Audiences will delight in both the familiar and unexpected in this stage adaptation of the beloved movie. A romping tale of the joys and woes of childhood (and adulthood!) around the holidays, *A Christmas Story* is a play for the whole family.

Humorist Jean Shepherd's memoir of growing up in 1938 Indiana follows 9-year-old Ralphie Parker in his quest to attain a genuine Red Ryder BB gun under the tree for Christmas but more importantly, his coming of age. Ralphie pleads his case but he is continuously disillusioned by his parents, his teacher, and even Santa Claus himself. As adult Ralph reflects on his childhood imagination and struggles, we understand what young Ralphie does not: that while some traditions are worth preserving, some must change over time and that coming of age, though challenging in the moment, can be looked back on with poignancy and humor.

"Town Hall Theater has a long-standing tradition of bringing a family-friendly Christmas story to the community. I believe that *A Christmas Story* is one of the best selections yet." commented Director **Heather Cousins**. "The event, like in other years, is Christmas. However, in this play, although Christmas is an essential part of the backdrop of the story, there is so much more at stake. In other stories, we see families behaving perfectly. However, this picture perfect family is not a fair, accurate, or attainable representation of family life. Audiences can relate and empathize more when they see themselves in some way in the characters. The Parker family is far from perfect. There is bickering, foul language (albeit veiled), frustration, resentment, a crooked star atop the tree, and a ruined turkey dinner. But it is the family's commitment to tradition and to each other that saves Christmas. As Ralph says, "it was a good Christmas because we had love; we had each other. And in the final accounting, that's what it's all about after all". This play invites families to recognize and take stock of their own family holiday memories, traditions, and relationships and what they hold dear."

"As far back as I can remember the Holiday Season wasn't complete without seeing the iconic leg lamp, Red Ryder BB gun, and hearing the all too familiar, "You'll shoot your eye out, kid!" remarked new Artistic Director **Richard Perez**. "Recreating the intimate and heartwarming story of the Parker family live on stage is a labor of love that we are excited to share during this special time of year."

Town Hall Theatre will hold talkbacks following the December 8th and December 15th performances. Enjoy a complimentary glass of wine while you learn more about the process and the creative team.

CONTENT ADVISORIES

This production contains miming of a BB gun.

COVID PRECAUTIONS

- MASKS ARE NO LONGER REQUIRED AND ARE NOW OPTIONAL
- PROOF OF VACCINATION IS NO LONGER REQUIRED

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT/AUTHOR

Philip Grecian (Playwright) makes his full-time living as a playwright. His authorized stage adaptation of the film *A Christmas Story* has approximately 100 professional and amateur productions annually. His staged radio adaptation of *It's a Wonderful Life* has been broadcast on both radio and television and continues to be produced on stages throughout the United States and Canada. Other works, most of which are published by Dramatic Publishing, include *The Great Gatsby*, *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, *The Dragon of Nitt* and *The Lion and the Lyre* (both translated and performed in Russia), *In His Steps*, *Little Pills*, *Toby Saves the Farm* and a translation of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. Grecian has also worked as a writer/director for film, video and audio production, earning more than 150 local, regional and national awards, and his televised live radio adaptation of *Dracula* won an Emmy in 2010. **Jean Shepherd** (Author) was an American storyteller, humorist, radio and TV personality, writer, and actor. With a career that spanned decades, Shepherd is known for the film *A Christmas Story* (1983), which he narrated and co-scripted, based on his own semi autobiographical stories. As a youth, he worked briefly as a mail carrier in a steel mill and earned his amateur radio license (W9QWN) at age 16, sometimes claiming he was even younger. He sporadically attended Indiana University, but never graduated. During World War II, he served stateside in the U.S. Army Signal Corps. Shepherd then had an extensive career in a variety of media.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Heather Cousins (she/her) is a native Bay Area Shellie Award winning actress, teacher, and director. She received a double major BA in Dramatic Art and English at UC Santa Barbara and a Master's Degree in Theatre Practice at Exeter University in England and is delighted to be making her Town Hall Theatre directing debut. Heather was a recipient of a Fulbright teaching fellowship through the US Department of State and was subsequently a guest theatre teacher in the UK. A published writer on theatre education in multiple theatre journals, Heather was a presenter at the international conference on Research in Theatre Education, also in the UK. This is Heather's 25th year teaching Drama and Stagecraft at Miramonte High School in Orinda where she has directed over 70 plays and musicals and has worked with over 2000 hardworking, multi-talented young theatre artists. She is the creator of an interactive, anti-bullying theatre-in-education project which has toured local middle schools since 2001, and she co-authored an Advanced

Drama Honors curriculum for the Acalanes Union High School District which is recognized by the University of California and was recently implemented in 2021. She is proud of the original work her students have developed in partnership with Town Hall's Young Playwrights Festival since its inception, and she is committed to fostering new works through young voices.

ABOUT TOWN HALL THEATRE

Established in 1944 as the Dramateurs, Town Hall Theatre Company is the oldest continuously active theatre in Contra Costa County. Town Hall Theatre (THT) was awarded Best Theatre Troupe 2016 by Diablo Magazine, Best of The East Bay, and is the past recipient of numerous Shellie Awards, and Theatre Bay Area Awards. THT is also home to an extensive children's educational program, twice voted the Best Children's Theatre Company by Bay Area Parent Magazine. THT's home is the historic Town Hall Theatre building located at 3535 School Street in Lafayette which is owned by the Lafayette Improvement Association (LIA).

CALENDAR Information for "A Christmas Story"

WHO: Town Hall Theatre Company

WHAT: "A Christmas Story" Adapted by Philip Grecian,
story by Jean Shepherd

ADULT CAST: David Boyll, Gretchen Lee Salter, David Ghilardi, Janelle Aguirre, Mark Foster (US), and Carla Birkhofer (US).

YOUTH GREEN CAST: Samuel Norder, Sofia Garcia, Brandon Stemmler, Hayden Hawthorn, Bella Verrico, Stella Ciarlantini, and Wyatt Strand.

YOUTH RED CAST: Jaxon Hunt, Jeffrey Chen-Lichman, Jamie Chen-Lichman, Nyx Dente, Maryn Moeller, Miranda Klein, and Brook McElhattan.

DATES: November 30th and December 1st (Previews), December 2nd-17th

WHERE: Town Hall Theatre (3535 School Street, Lafayette CA 94549)

TICKETS: \$20-45, Pay-What-You-Can tickets will be available at all performances at the door.

MORE INFO: <https://www.townhalltheatre.com/christmas-story>