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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***The Toxic Avenger*
A Monster of a Musical Comedy Off-Broadway Hit opens Horizon's 2016 season!
January 29-March 13, 2016**

ATLANTA –Kicking off Horizon's 2016 season, *The Toxic Avenger*, winner of the Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Off-Broadway Musical, is a hot toxic love story and laugh-out-loud musical that has it all -- an unlikely hero, his beautiful girlfriend, a corrupt New Jersey mayor and two guys who play... well, everyone else ... bullies, mobsters, old ladies, and stiletto-wearing back-up singers. Melvin Ferd the Third turned Toxic Avenger is here to save New Jersey from toxic waste, clean up his neighborhood, and win the love of the blind librarian. It's a toxic love story with an environmental twist! *The Toxic Avenger* will leave audiences laughing in the aisles as it rocks the house.

Featuring a wailing rock score and based on the campy cult classic movie, *The Toxic Avenger* is by the award-winning writing duo behind the hit musical *Memphis*, with book and lyrics by Broadway veteran Joe DiPietro (*I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*) and music and lyrics by David Bryan (keyboardist and founding member of Bon Jovi). Horizon's Co-Artistic Director, Lisa Adler notes, "*The Toxic Avenger* is a perfect fit to open our 2016 season of contemporary plays—an ensemble musical comedy that's a ton of off-beat fun and a tour de force for five powerhouse actor/singers."

Performances are Wed., Thurs. and Fri. at 8 PM, Sat. at 3 PM and 8:30 PM, and Sun. at 5 PM at Horizon Theatre in Little Five Points/Inman Park (1083 Austin Avenue NE Atlanta, GA 30307). The play contains strong language and adult content, and is not recommended for children. Tickets start at \$25 Tickets and information are available at horizontheatre.com or 404.584.7450.

More About *The Toxic Avenger*: The Musical and this Production

Everyone needs a hero and New Jersey is in trouble! The mayor and her thugs are selling space for toxic waste and poor Tromaville has turned into one smelly stop. Who or what will rescue New Jersey? Enter Melvin Ferd the Third, a wannabe earth scientist with a crush on the lovely blind librarian, Sarah. His attempts to save the city without resulting to violence are foiled when the mayor's thugs dump him into a vat of toxic goo. Don't lose hope though- The Toxic Avenger, Toxie for short, emerges. Melty green skin, a traveling left eye, and pecs to die for, Toxie is a wall of masculine waste wrapped around a heart of gold. With his new found strength

and his love for Sarah fueling him, Toxie muscles his way through one obstacle after another. With snappy songs, a casting that requires a duet with only one person on stage, and two guys playing 27 characters combined, this musical is sure to become a fast favorite of Atlanta as they root for the 'goo guy.'

When asking about what makes this production special for Atlanta audiences, Adler points out, **"We're bringing back our award-winning creative team from our mega-hit *Avenue Q* led by Horizon artistic associate Heidi Cline Mckerley and her long-time musical director collaborator S. Renee Clark. And for our ensemble, we are mashing up the casts from two recent powerhouse Atlanta productions, Horizon's *Avenue Q* and Actor's Express' *Rent*."**

Writers, Cast and Creative Team

Book and Lyricist writer **Joe DiPietro**, along with Bon Jovi's own **David Bryan** writing music and lyrics, had such success with *Memphis* that they decided to step up their game, give homage to their home - The Garden State of New Jersey - and created a rocking success with *The Toxic Avenger*. When watching the musical preview for their first audiences, DiPietro joyously noted that **"Somehow each night, the *Toxic Avenger* reduces three-hundred adults to giddy children."** DiPietro's *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* was one of Horizon's most loved musical productions, having enjoyed three long runs at Horizon after its multi-year Off-Broadway run, and his *The Thing About Men* was another popular hit for Horizon.

The Toxic Avenger musical is based on the **Lloyd Kaufman** 1984 film of the same name. Originally released as a low-budget superhero movie, the film developed a huge cult following, generating three movie sequels (with a fourth planned for future production), along with a comic book series, a cartoon series, novel, graphic novel, and ultimately the hit musical.

Horizon's production will be in the steady hands of Heidi Cline Mckerley who will direct this fast-paced romp with S. Renee Clark guiding the rocking score as musical director. After winning the Suzi Award for Outstanding Direction, Musical Direction and Musical Production for Horizon's *Avenue Q*, they have now mounted *Avenue Q* three times for Horizon in three different Atlanta venues, including Theatre in the Park at Piedmont Park last summer. They also teamed up on two of Joe DiPietro other musicals (*I Love You, You're Perfect...*, *The Thing About Men*) as well as three productions of *Cowgirls* at Horizon. Around town, their work has been seen at every professional theatre, including Aurora, Theatrical Outfit, the Atlanta Lyric Theatre, Georgia Ensemble Theatre and Actor's Express.

A cast as strong as our hero helps bring Tromaville alive as a combination of Horizon's *Avenue Q* and Actor's Express *Rent* actors come together. **Nick Arapoglou** (Princeton-*Avenue Q*, *My Name is Asher Lev* and *The Gifts of the Magi* at Theatrical Outfit) transforms Toxie from a green mess into the lovable good guy while he chases Sarah, played by **Julissa Sabino** (Actor's Express' *Rent* and *Rocky Horror Picture Show*; Alliance Theatre's *Lizard and El Sol*), the lovely blind librarian. **Leslie Bellair** (Christmas Eve in Horizon's *Avenue Q*, Aurora Theatre's *Les Miserables*) brings in the evil as our villainous (but sexy) mayor and also plays her own rival, Toxie's mom, getting to relish a duet with – herself! The 27 other characters are an actor's feast and a riot of quick changes covered by *Rent* alums **Michael Stiggers** (Aurora's *Les Miserables*, Alliance Theatre's *A Christmas Carol*) and **Austin Tijerina** (winner of a 2015 Suzi Bass award for Outstanding Feature Actor for *Rent*, as well as the 2014 for *Oklahoma* at Serenbe Playhouse). Between the costume

changes, character voices, and stunning songs, this cast is sure to prove it can withhold the toxic fumes.

Back for another season, Horizon's resident designers, the multiple Suzi Award winning **Moriah and Isabel Curley-Clay**, are tackling the set and costumes for the comic book world with resident lighting designer **Mary Parker** lighting their way. **Rob Brooksher** (*Avenue Q*) will help create the audio atmosphere with his wicked sound design, while the Alliance's own **Kimberly Townsend** props up the prop department with everything from toxic sludge to a mutant fish to fake limbs.

Tickets and More

The Toxic Avenger runs at January 29 through March 13, Wed, Thurs and Fri at 8 PM, Sat at 3 PM and 8:30 PM and Sunday at 5 PM at the Horizon Theatre in Little Five Points/Inman Park. (1083 Austin Avenue NE, Atlanta, GA 30307, corner of Euclid and Austin Avenues). There is a special early bird show time of 2pm on Super Bowl Sunday February 7.

Tickets start as low as \$25 (plus 8% sales tax) and are on sale now. Prices change based on availability and demand, so buy early for the best prices! Four and five play subscriptions also available to get your tickets for as little as \$15 each. And don't forget to stay after the show for your photo op with *The Toxic Avenger*. Tickets and information are available at or 404-584-7450 or www.horizontheatre.com.

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The Summary

The Toxic Avenger Musical*

A Monster of a Musical Comedy! *The Toxic Avenger*, winner of the Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Off-Broadway Musical, is a toxic love story and laugh-out-loud musical that has it all—an unlikely hero, his beautiful girlfriend, a corrupt New Jersey mayor and two guys who play...well, everyone else...bullies, mobsters, old ladies, and stiletto-wearing back-up singers. Melvin Ferd the Third wants to clean up Tromaville, the most polluted town in New Jersey. Foiled by the mayor's bullies, Melvin is dumped into a vat of radioactive toxic waste, only to reemerge as The Toxic Avenger, New Jersey's first superhero. Affectionately known as Toxie, our new hero is a seven-foot mutant freak with superhuman strength and a heart as big as Newark. He's out to save New Jersey, end global warming, and woo the blind librarian in town. *The Toxic Avenger* will leave audiences laughing in the aisles as it rocks the house.

Length & Content

The Toxic Avenger runs **about 2 hours**

***Contains mature language and situations; not intended for children.**

Playwright

Book and Lyrics by Joe DiPietro

Music and Lyrics by David Byran

Based on *The Toxic Avenger* by Lloyd Kaufman

CREATIVE TEAM

Director- Heidi McKerley
Music Director –S. Renee Clark
Scenic and Costume Designers-Isabel and Moriah Curley-Clay
Lighting Designer –Mary Parker
Sound Designer - Rob Brooksher
Prop Designers-Kimberly Townsend
Stage Manager-Julianna Lee*

CAST

Melvin Ferd the Third/The Toxic Avenger- Nick Arapoglou*
Sarah-Julissa Sabino*
Mayor Babs Belgoody/Ma Ferd/Nun-Leslie Bellair
White Dude (various ensemble roles)-Austin Tijerina
Black Dude (various ensemble roles)- Michael Stiggers*

Understudies

Toxie - Chase Peacock*
Sarah - Rose Alexander
Mayor - Kayce Grogan Wallace
Black Dude - Lawrence Flowers
White Dude - Patrick Schweigert

*Member of Actors Equity Association

Dates: January 29 - March 13, 2016

Days and Times: Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 8 PM, Saturday at 3 PM and 8:30 PM, and Sunday at 5 PM. Special Super Bowl Early Bird Showtime 2pm on Sunday, Feb. 7.

Prices: Tickets start at \$25 (plus tax). Discounts for groups of 10 or more. Prices change based on availability and demand, so buy early for the best prices! Eight percent sales tax will be added to all ticket orders. Internet convenience fee added to all online orders. No refunds or, exchanges.

Tickets and info: www.horizontheatre.com or 404-584-7450.

Press Photos

Press photos are available at
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/horizontheatre/albums/72157662662745910>

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About Horizon Theatre Company

Horizon Theatre Company connects people, inspires hope and promotes positive change through the stories of our times. We produce professional area and world premieres of smart,

funny and provocative contemporary plays. We also develop the next generation of diverse artists and audiences. For more information about tickets, group sales, or to receive a season brochure, call 404.584.7450 or visit horizontheatre.com.

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