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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Toxie is Back! For FREE in the Park this Summer!  
Off-Broadway Hit Musical *The Toxic Avenger* Comes to Piedmont Park  
June 9-12, 2016 at Piedmont Park**

ATLANTA -- Critics and audiences couldn't get enough of *The Toxic Avenger*, and so we're bringing it back! Horizon's musical comedy sensation *The Toxic Avenger* will be outside in the ATL this summer when it hits **Piedmont Park, June 9<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup>– and thousands of FREE tickets will be available to the public beginning May 12.** Get ready to experience an Atlanta hit in the center of our city!

Last summer, Horizon's sold-out musical *Avenue Q* was a rollicking fun party in the Park, playing to thousands who came to picnic, play and watch fantastic professional musical theatre in Piedmont Park. "*Avenue Q* was so amazing and special last summer – audiences of all ages and types came together for a truly unique Atlanta experience. There is just nothing else like it - live performance under the stars. And it's free!" says Lisa Adler, Horizon's Co-Artistic/Producing Director. "*The Toxic Avenger* was another runaway hit for Horizon in our Little Five Points home this past winter. It's just so much fun – upbeat, smart and silly at the same time with a hugely energetic and talented cast, fantastic rock music and a live band. Everyone leaves smiling every night, so it is the perfect show to bring together Atlantans in the heart of our city under the sky and treetops this summer."

Full of off-beat humor and an amazing score, *The Toxic Avenger* is the Winner of the Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Off-Broadway Musical and is guaranteed to have the audience laughing on the green. "Infectious fun to watch....Just enjoy," raved the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. ArtsATL noted it was, "most fun to be had in local theatre," and Atlanta InTown promised, "you'll have tons of fun." It's a laugh-out-loud rock musical with an unlikely hero, the mild-mannered scientist, Melvin Ferd the Third, whose crusade to stop the corrupt mayor gets him dumped in toxic waste. From the smoke emerges our green, gooey superhero with mega-strength - The Toxic Avenger, or Toxie for short. He's here to save his home town from toxic waste, win the love of the beautiful blind librarian, stop global warming and bring a brand new day of clean air and harmony to New Jersey and the world. **This tour de force for five powerhouse actor/singers playing over 30 roles keeps the action spinning as the music rocks the park.**

Thanks to a major grant from **The Charles Loidans Foundation**, a supporting grant from the Mark and Evelyn Trammell Foundation and a partnership with the Piedmont Park Conservancy, **Horizon continues for the second year the tradition begun by Georgia Shakespeare of bringing free professional theatre to Piedmont Park this summer, giving new audiences a chance to experience Horizon.** “Our mission is to connect people, inspire hope and promote positive change through the stories of our times – and this gives us the chance to do that on a larger scale and with great joy.” said Adler. “There has been a huge influx of new residents intown, and this is the perfect show to introduce them to the amazing work they will find at Horizon and our other professional Atlanta theatres and the talented theatre artists who are thriving here.”

**Park performances will be Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, June 9-12 at 7:30 PM, and audiences will provide their own blanket or low beach chair.** Grounds open for picnicking at 6 PM. **Free and \$15 Reserved Seating Section Tickets are available ONLINE ONLY beginning May 12.** General admission tickets will be available for free for each performance, but must be reserved online in advance. Reserved Seating section tickets are \$15 (plus tax and small service charge) and get you in the reserved seating area up close to the stage. Arrive at your leisure and walk past the crowds to come right down front. Limited Table Seating Tickets close to the stage are \$35. Tickets are available online only at [www.horizontheatre.com](http://www.horizontheatre.com). Audiences will bring their print-at-home or mobile tickets and will need to bring their own low chairs (30” back height maximum, 6” seat height maximum) or blankets for seating. Anyone bringing a taller chair will be directed to the rear to allow good sightlines for all. Food and non-alcoholic beverages may be brought in for picnics – although no glass is allowed. No firearms allowed. Food trucks will provide dinner options for purchase and wine, beer, water and soft drinks will be available for sale onsite. The stage is in the Promenade green space at the North end of the Park, conveniently located near the Park/Botanical Gardens Sage parking garage and The Prado entrance to the Park.

### **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, an actor who has a duet with herself (!), and two guys playing 27 characters combined, this offbeat musical has thousands of happy audiences rooting for the ‘goo guy.’

When asking about what makes this production special for Atlanta audiences, Adler points out, **“We brought 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 mashed up the casts from two recent powerhouse Atlanta productions, Horizon’s *Avenue Q* and Actor’s Express’ *Rent*.”**

### **Writers, Cast and Creative Team**

Featuring a wailing rock score, *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 Bon Jovi's own **David Bryan**. They teamed up again to give comic homage to their home - The Garden State of New Jersey - and created *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.

**Heidi Cline McKerley directs this fast-paced romp with S. Renee Clark guiding the score as musical director and keyboardist.** 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 brings 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* alum **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), and new-to Horizon **Lawrence Flowers**, who is known for his work as a chart-topping gospel singer. the costume changes, character voices, and stunning songs, this cast is sure to .

Back for another season and another Piedmont Park show, Horizon's resident designers, the multiple Suzi Award winning **Moriah and Isabel Curley-Clay**, created the comic-inspired set and the dozens of colorful costumes with resident lighting designer **Mary Parker** lighting the way. **Rob Brooksher** (*Avenue Q*) will help create the audio atmosphere with his wicked sound design, while the Alliance's own **Kimberly Townsend and master craftsman Ryan Bradburn** prop up the prop department with everything from toxic sludge to a mutant fish to fake limbs and a mini armored tank.

## Tickets and More

**The Toxic Avenger opens in Piedmont Park June 9 and runs through June 12.** The grounds open at 6 PM for picnics and the show begins at 7:30 PM. It is rated PG-13: there is sexual innuendo (Toxie and Sarah have “Hot Toxic Love”; the Mayor and the Scientist have a sexy tango to “Evil is Hot”) and minor strong language (“Bitch, Slut, Whore” are lyrics in the song that ends the first act). Performance site is reached most conveniently from parking at the Botanical Gardens/Piedmont Park garage. Free general admission and \$15 reserved seating section. Both free and reserved seats will go on sale May 12.

**And don't forget to stay after the show for your photo op and meet and greet with your favorite superhero, Toxie, and the rest of the cast.** Tickets and information are available at [horizontheatre.com](http://horizontheatre.com) or 404.584.7450.

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## The Summary

### The Toxic Avenger\*

*The Toxic Avenger*, winner of the Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Off-Broadway Musical, is an off-beat, laugh-out-loud musical comedy and quirky love story. A mild-mannered earth scientist turned gooey super hero and the beautiful blind librarian he loves save their hometown from the evil mayor's toxic waste get-rich-quick scheme.

*The Toxic Avenger* 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 with one intermission**

**PG-13:** Contains sexual innuendo and some limited strong language.

### Playwright

Book and Lyrics by Joe DiPietro

Music and Lyrics by David Byran

### Creative Team

Director	Heidi Cline McKerley
Music Director	S. Renée Clark
Scenic & Costume Designer	Moriah & Isabel Curley-Clay
Light Designer	Mary Parker

Prop Designer	Kimberly Townsend
Sound Designer	Rob Brooksher
Stage Manager	Julianna M. Lee*
Asst. Stage Manager	Kayla Zinke

### **The 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)- Lawrence Flowers

### **Musicians**

Keyboard – S. Renee Clark  
Guitar – Joel Saidi  
Drums – Lorenzo Sanford  
Bass – Andrew Cleveland

\*Member of Actors Equity Association

**Location:** Piedmont Park, The Promenade green space (North end of the Park, near the Park/Botanical Gardens parking garage and The Prado entrance to the Park)

**Dates:** June 9 – June 12, 2016

**Days and Times:** Thursday through Sunday at 7:30 PM.

**Prices:** FREE General Admission Tickets, \$15\* Reserved Seating Section Tickets (close to the stage), \$35\* Reserved Table Seating (close to the stage). \*Plus sales tax/small service charge. All tickets available/on sale starting May 12. No refunds or exchanges. PURCHASE ONLINE ONLY.

**Seating:** Bring your own blanket or low beach chair. 30" maximum back height, 6" maximum seat height. Regular seating height chairs or any taller than allowed will be placed in the back of the audience to ensure clear sightlines for all. Limited table seating available close to the stage for a higher charge and for sponsors.

**Restrictions:** No glass, firearms or alcohol may be brought into the picnic/performance area. Any brought in will be sent back to your car or removed and held at the gate.

**Food and Beverage:** Bring your own picnic or purchase from onsite food truck and concessions/bar. Audiences can bring their own food, water, and soft drinks – but no alcohol or glass. Wine, beer, water and soft drinks will be available for purchase.

**Tickets and info:** [www.horizontheatre.com](http://www.horizontheatre.com)

**Info only:** 404-584-7450

**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](http://horizontheatre.com).

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