



PHILADELPHIA'S
ALL COMEDY
THEATRE COMPANY

For Further Information Contact:
Tyler Melchior
tyler@1812productions.org
215-592-9560

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, PLEASE
UPDATED
December 7, 2016

1812 Productions presents the world premiere musical

The Carols

written & directed by Jennifer Childs

December 1—31, 2016

(Opening Night—Wednesday, December 7th at 7pm)

Music by Monica Stephenson

Lyrics by Jennifer Childs

Starring Mary Martello, Rachel Camp, Emily Kleimo, Caroline Dooner, Anthony Lawton, and TJ Harris

***A holiday musical about the everyday magic
of generosity and love in an uncertain world***

(Philadelphia, PA) 1812 Productions continues its 20th anniversary season with ***The Carols***, an original musical set in the small town of Picatinny, NJ during World War II. It's Christmastime in 1944 and the local VFW is empty. Allied forces have stormed the beaches at Normandy, the community waits to see if their loved ones will return from foreign battlefields, and no one is particularly interested in the Hall's annual performance of *A Christmas Carol*. Enter a trio of sisters and their post-war dreams, their curmudgeonly landlady with a pre-war past, and a silent pianist, and the show, such as it is, must go on. This quintet is joined by an itinerant Jewish comedian, out on his own and looking for work after a Catskills bust. With a small audience of invited servicemen in attendance, this group of holiday orphans perform *A Christmas Carol* all their own, rewriting and unraveling Dickens' classic tale, as they bring their own stories of hope lost and found to the stage.

"It's about the everyday magic of love and generosity," says the show's author and director, Jennifer Childs. "*The Carols* is set in the past but it's not a history lesson—it's very much about what's happening in our world right now, where groups of people, small and large, are finding common ground in their dreams of what their lives, and the world, can be—while war and strife seem to lurk at every corner. The show takes the theme of Dickens' work in several different directions. It's not just about one man and his money, it's about how we collectively help others get 'unstuck' from their troubles, and how we find ourselves helped in return. The Christmas miracle and the nostalgia of it all are still there, but it's a living nostalgia for the interactions we have with people every day. *The Carols* offers a glimpse of the good that is possible right outside our doors. Dickens summarized this connection perfectly when he wrote, '...there is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good-humor.'"

Mary Martello, the grande dame of Philadelphia theatre, stars as Miss Betty the landlady, shut in by memories she can't leave behind. Emily Kleimo and Rachel Camp are each making their mainstage debuts with 1812 Productions, joining Caroline Dooner as ***The Carols***' singing sisters. Anthony Lawton returns to 1812 after his acclaimed performance in Alan Ayckbourn's *Intimate Exchanges* as the wandering comedian. And TJ Harris, also making his 1812 debut, takes a seat at the piano—a silent character who brings a world of music to our scene.

~more~

Singer and composer, Monica Stephenson, joined Jennifer Childs in the early stages of the show's development. "We didn't set out to create a musical," Ms. Stephenson says. "Jennifer originally asked me to join the creative process with short pieces of music—elements to capture the color of the time period—but as the show continued to grow and change, and as each of the characters' stories became clearer, we knew that a musical was exactly what we had on our hands. **I've never worked on show quite like this, where the story grew into songs, instead of going at it the more traditional way where script and music evolve together. It was a really remarkable process to see these moments suddenly blossom in the middle of a script re-write or a change in the story's direction.** It was beautiful and spontaneous and I'm incredibly proud to be a part of it."

Lance Kniskern, Christopher Colucci, and Drew Billiau return to 1812 as scenic, sound, and lighting designers, respectively, creating the classic look and atmosphere of a 1940's-era VFW hall. Three-time Barrymore Award winner Janus Stefanowicz joins the production team as costume designer. 1812 veteran choreographer Karen Getz completes the production team.

Having created more than a dozen original works for 1812 Productions, *The Carols* is Jennifer Childs' third musical, after 2008's acclaimed vaudeville *Cherry Bomb*, also starring Mary Martello with Music by James Sugg, and 2016's one-woman comedy *I Will Not Go Gently*, with music by Christopher Colucci. Ms. Childs recently received the Barrymore Award for Outstanding Leading Actress in a Musical for her performance in *I Will Not Go Gently*. Additionally Ms. Childs and Mr. Colucci received the Barrymore Award nomination for Outstanding Original Music for the same production.

***The Carols* will be performed from December 1st through December 31st at Plays & Players Theatre, 1714 Delancey Place, in Center City. Opening Night will be Wednesday, December 7th at 7:00pm. Tickets range from \$28 to \$45 and are available at www.1812productions.org or at 215-592-9560. An open-captioned performance in English will be held on Sunday, December 11th at 2:00pm. An open-captioned performance in Spanish will be held on Wednesday, December 14th at 6:30pm.**

The Carols is presented as part of The Phoebe and Otto Premiere Series sponsored by Wyncote Foundation. Production support has been kindly received from Independence Foundation. *The Carols* is pleased to welcome honorary producers Sharon and Jeff Weiss.

Company History

1812 Productions was founded in 1997 and is the only professional theater company in the country dedicated to comedy. With a focus on devised and original works, 1812 Productions' mission is to produce theatrical works of comedy and comedic works of theatre that explore and celebrate our sense of community, our history, and our humanity.

The Carols Creative Team

Jennifer Childs (Writer/ Director/ Lyricist): Jennifer Childs is the Producing Artistic Director and Co-Founder of 1812 Productions. For 1812 she has created over a dozen original works of theater including *This Is The Week That Is*, *Always a Lady*, *Our Show of Shows*, *Cherry Bomb*, *It's My Party: The Women and Comedy Project*, *To The Moon*, and *I Will Not Go Gently*, which was recently honored with three Barrymore Award nominations for Outstanding Overall Production of a Musical, Outstanding Leading Actress in a Musical (**winner**), and Outstanding Original Music. Her one-woman show *Why I'm Scared of Dance by Jen Childs* premiered at 1812 and has since been performed at Delaware Theatre Company, the Kohler Arts Center in Wisconsin, Act II Playhouse, and City Theatre in Pittsburgh. Favorite performances outside of 1812 include *The Happiness Lecture* with Bill Irwin at Philadelphia Theater Company, *Spin* at the Wilma Theater, *Red Herring* and *Dex and Julie Sittin' in a Tree* at Arden Theatre Company.

~more~

Monica Stephenson (Composer): Monica Stephenson is a vocalist, theatre artist and a songwriter. A graduate of Duquesne University School of Music in Pittsburgh, Monica has had the pleasure of working with companies such as The Pittsburgh Opera Company, Opera Theatre of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh Irish & Classical Theatre, Unseam'd Shakespeare Co., Prime Stage Theater, Philadelphia Young Playwrights, and of course 1812 Productions. Monica was a composer and music director for 1812 Productions' 2013 production of *It's My Party: The Women and Comedy Project* and served as their Education Director from 2009-2012. Most recently, she has music directed and composed work for *Wild Women Don't Get the Blues* (a multi-disciplinary work that encourages young women to stand up, speak their mind, refuse to back down, and ultimately, change the world) in collaboration Hope Academy of Music and the Arts; as well as *This Girl Laughs, This Girl Cries, This Girl Does Nothing* by Finegan Kruckemeyer, and for *Dreams of Hope*, theatriQ, and other LGBTQ organizations in Pittsburgh. She is currently in residence as part of the Harvey Wallbangers Sketch Comedy Group at Off The Wall Theatre in Pittsburgh and often performs in local live music venues in the Pittsburgh area.

The Carols Performance Details

Written & Directed by: Jennifer Childs

Music by: Monica Stephenson

Lyrics by: Jennifer Childs

Music Director: TJ Harris

Choreography by: Karen Getz

Starring: Mary Martello, Rachel Camp, Emily Kleimo,
Caroline Dooner, Anthony Lawton, and TJ Harris

Performance Location:

Plays & Players Theatre
1714 Delancey Place
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Dates: December 1—31, 2016

Ticket Prices: \$28-\$45

Tickets and Information Contact:

215-592-9560

www.1812productions.org

1812 Productions

Administrative Office

2329 S. 3rd Street

Philadelphia, PA 19148

[*Click to download promotional photos
with full credit information*](#)

The Carols Performance Schedule

Thursday, Dec. 1 at 8pm (Preview)

Friday, Dec. 2 at 8pm (Preview)

Saturday, Dec. 3 at 8pm (Preview)

Sunday, Dec. 4 at 2pm (Preview)

Tuesday, Dec. 6 at 8pm (Preview)

Wednesday, Dec. 7 at 7pm (OPENING NIGHT)

Thursday, Dec. 8 at 8pm

Friday, Dec. 9 at 8pm

Saturday, Dec. 10 at 8pm

Sunday, Dec. 11 at 2pm (Open-captioning in English)

Wednesday, Dec. 14 at 6:30pm (Open-captioning in Spanish)

Thursday, Dec. 15 at 8pm

Friday, Dec. 16 at 8pm

Saturday, Dec. 17 at 8pm

Sunday, Dec. 18 at 2pm

Wednesday, Dec. 21 at 6:30pm

Thursday, Dec. 22 at 8pm

Friday, Dec. 23 at 8pm

Tuesday, Dec. 27 at 8pm

Wednesday, Dec. 28 at 6:30pm

Thursday, Dec. 29 at 8pm

Friday, Dec. 30 at 8pm

Saturday, Dec. 31 at 8pm