

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Alert for Theatre Editors, Reviewers and Calendar Listings

Chance Theater proudly presents a stage version of the classic Peanuts story

A Charlie Brown Christmas

**Everyone's favorite holiday TV classic comes to life December 7-23
at Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken *theater arts* Center on the Fyda-Mar Stage**

November 1, 2018 ... Anaheim, California ... Chance Theater, Anaheim's official resident theater company, is excited to present ***A Charlie Brown Christmas*** as part of our 2018 Holiday Series! Created by Charles M. Schulz, based on the television special by Bill Melendez and Lee Mendelson, this stage adaptation by Eric Schaeffer is presented by special arrangement with Arthur Whitelaw and Ruby Persson, and will be directed by Resident Artist James McHale. ***A Charlie Brown Christmas* will preview from December 7th through 9th; regular performances will begin December 13th and continue through December 23rd on the Fyda-Mar Stage at Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken *theater arts* Center.**

Join Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Lucy, Linus, and the whole Peanuts gang as they produce their own Christmas play and ultimately learn the true meaning of the season. *A Charlie Brown Christmas* is a present the whole family can enjoy! Adapted from Charles M. Schulz's timeless story, this holiday treat features the unforgettable music of Vince Guaraldi, as well as beloved holiday carols performed by the Peanuts characters. There's no better way to discover the magic of the season!

"It's like watching the television special come to life!" – *Around The Town Chicago*

"A sweet and touching, live action version that is itself an instant holiday classic" – *Broadway World*

Peanuts is a syndicated daily and Sunday American comic strip written and illustrated by Charles M. Schulz that ran from October 2, 1950, to February 13, 2000, continuing in reruns afterward. The comic strip is among the most popular and influential in the history of comic strips, with 17,897 strips published in all, making it "arguably the longest story ever told by one human being".

A Charlie Brown Christmas premiered on CBS on December 9, 1965. The road to television was not an easy one, and the premiere was preceded by a sense of dread from the network. The program was contradictory to all the trends at the time -- no laugh track, a jazz score, a sad tone, slower pacing, and featuring a voice cast of children. Most people expected it to be a disaster. And those people were very wrong. *A Charlie Brown Christmas* was a ratings smash hit (over 15 million households tuned in -- nearly half of the television sets in the US), and went on to win both an Emmy and the Peabody Award. It is now broadcast every year.

MEET THE TEAM

Charles M. Schulz (Creator) born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on November 26, 1922, launched his comic strip Peanuts in 1950. Featuring hero Charlie Brown, over the years the strip would run in more than 2,000 newspapers and in many languages. Peanuts also expanded into TV specials like the Emmy-winning *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, as well as books and a huge merchandise collection. Schulz died on February 12, 2000.

James McHale (Director) is a Resident Artist and Artistic Council Member of Chance Theater where he recently performed as John Dodge in the SoCal Premiere of *Middletown*, and as the titular character in *The Little Prince*. He has appeared in many other Chance productions including *Dogfight* (LA/ OC Premiere), *Samsara* (West Coast Premiere), *Maple and Vine* (OC Weekly's Best Play of the Year), *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* (Ovation Recommended; LA Times Critic's Choice), and *The Laramie Project & Laramie Project: 10 Years Later* (LA Stage Times' Top 10 of 2013). Recently, he played Hamlet in *Hamlet* and *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* in repertory at American Coast Theater Company where his theater credits also include *All My Sons*, and the West Coast Premiere of *The Hiding Place*. James received his B.A. in Theater Arts Performance from CSU Long Beach, and has studied with the Michael Chekhov Association and The Actor's Center (NYC). James also works as a director and teaching artist. His recent directing credits include the World Premiere of *Comedy of ERRORS* (ACTC), and *The Eight: Reindeer Monologues* (Chance Theater). He has taught and directed for local middle-schools, Musical Theater Playground, and for Chance Theater's *Speak Up* youth program.

Joining James McHale on the production team for *A Charlie Brown Christmas* is production designer Masako Tobaru (*Big Fish*), production designer Megan Hill (*Fancy Nancy*), costume designer Christina Marie Perez (*In The Heights*), and stage manager Kelsey Somerville (*Big Fish*).

The cast for *A Charlie Brown Christmas* includes resident artist Laura M. Hathaway (*Big Fish*), returning artists Matt Takahashi (*Big Fish*), Dimithri Perera (*Stinky Cheese Man*), Angela Griswold (*Anne of Green Gables*), Hannah Schill (*The Eight: Reindeer Monologues*), and Seth Weiner (*The Who's Tommy*). Juston Gonzalez, Austin Brooks Rae, Nathan Shube, Jennifer Noce, and Adriana Rodriguez Burciaga are making their Chance debut with this production.

Bette & Wylie Aitken are the Season Producers and for the entire 2018 schedule.

Special "Relaxed Performances" on Sundays, December 16 & 23 at 1:00pm

Continuing the initiative that started with our inaugural season for the TYA Family Series, the Chance will be presenting two special "relaxed performances" on December 16th and 23rd at 1pm. These special performances are specifically designed to welcome people that will benefit from a more relaxed environment, including children under 4 years of age, people with an Autism Spectrum Condition, sensory and communication disorders, or a learning disability. There will be minor alterations made to some technical elements, and the house lights will be left on at a dim level to create a conducive environment for all audiences to enjoy the story. There is also a designated "relaxing and activities area" set up in the lobby for any audience members who may need to take a break during the performance.

To schedule press interviews, request photos, schedule press comps or for any additional information, please contact Casey Long at (714) 900-3284 or by e-mail at casey@chancetheater.com

ABOUT CHANCE THEATER

Proud to be one of the leading ensemble-driven theatre companies in Southern California, CHANCE THEATER recently received a National Theatre Company grant from American Theatre Wing. The Chance has won six Ovation Awards, including two for Best Production of a Musical – Intimate Theater for its West Coast premiere of *Triassic Park – The Musical* and Southern California premiere of *Jerry Springer – The Opera*, as well as four LADCC Awards, including the Polly Warfield Award for Outstanding Season. The Anaheim City Council named Chance Theater “the official resident theater company of Anaheim”, and Arts Orange County has twice named the Chance as “Outstanding Arts Organization”. Known for using bold and personal storytelling to promote dialogue and connection within the Southern California theatrical landscape, the Chance is committed to contributing to a more compassionate, connected and creative community. As a constituent member of Theatre Communications Group, Network of Ensemble Theaters, and the LA Stage Alliance, Chance Theater continues to bring national attention to the Southern California and Orange County theater scenes.

CALENDAR LISTING

WHAT: A **Charlie Brown Christmas**

Everyone’s favorite holiday classic comes to life in the all-new stage adaptation! Join Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Lucy, Linus, and the whole Peanuts gang as they produce their own Christmas play and ultimately learn the true meaning of the season. *A Charlie Brown Christmas* is a present the whole family can enjoy! Adapted from Charles M. Schulz’s timeless story, this holiday treat features the unforgettable music of Vince Guaraldi, as well as beloved holiday carols performed by the Peanuts characters. There’s no better way to discover the magic of the season!

WHEN:

Preview Performances:

December 7 - 9, 2018

Friday at 7pm, Saturday at 1pm and 4pm, Sunday at 4pm

Regular Performances

December 13 - 23, 2018

Thursdays at 7:00pm; Fridays at 7pm; Saturdays at 1pm, 4pm, and 7pm; Sundays at 1pm, 4pm, and 7pm

Special performances on Tuesday, December 18 at 7pm and Wednesday, December 19 at 7pm

REVIEWERS and OTHER PRESS are encouraged to attend:

Opening Performance on Sunday, December 9th at 7pm

WHERE: Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken *theater arts* Center on the Cripe Stage
5522 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807

TICKETS: \$21.00 - \$35.00. Call (888) 455-4212 or visit www.ChanceTheater.com.
Discounts available for children (ages 4-12), seniors, students and military.

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