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EINSTEIN, A STAGE PORTRAIT
PRIME STAGE'S AWARD WINNING ONE-MAN PRODUCTION

UPDATED PRESS RELEASE

(Pittsburgh, PA – November 2, 2020) This award winning dramalogue, *Einstein, A Stage Portrait* written by **Willard Simms** and directed by **Wayne Brinda**, Prime Stage's Producing Artistic Director, will take the audience past the genius who developed the theory of relativity down to the deeply human side of the man. **Simms** touches on the private, personal side of this genius who forever changed the way we look at the universe.

"The play began at a small but prestigious theater in Los Angeles, where I wanted to show the personal and deeply moral side of this great genius – humanizing him and bringing to life how his personal beliefs could sometimes get in the way of his scientific achievements," said **Simms**. "The play soon developed a following and was transferred to a 500 seat Los Angeles theater where it received excellent reviews. The Los Angeles Times called it 'the official commemorative Einstein.' From there it went on a national tour, and on that tour I met several of Einstein's former colleagues, including Banesh Hoffmann, who wrote the book *Albert Einstein: Creator and Rebel*, and Einstein's daughter-in-law who was so impressed that she invited me to her home. From these two sources I got several of the personal anecdotes (like his wife Elsa eating an orchid at a fancy dinner) that appear in the script."

Simms, an expert in biographical drama, is the author of 11 published plays, 14 produced teleplays, and two television mini-series. Included in his theatre and television work are scripts on Albert Einstein, Leonardo da Vinci, George Washington, and Benedict Arnold. Recently his play *Wright From America*, was one of the winners of the Juneteenth National Playwriting Competition in Louisville, Kentucky. He is the co-author, with Glenn Benest, of *POE*, an eleven character drama which won the Maltese Falcon Award from the Mystery Writers of America.

"Prime Stage has become known for bringing literature to life, but what is literature? In 2016, Bob Dylan won the Nobel Prize in Literature for his poetism in his songs. Literature is so much more than a dusty old classic. It is a short story, a song lyric, a graphic novel, a fictional character, or a beloved historical figure," said **Tina Marie Cerny**, Operations Director. "These historical figures have so many wonderful books written about them and if we can get you interested in the person, we can get you interested in reading the books about them. We want to show you that Prime Stage Theatre and literature both are more than just the classics."

"With the goal of continuing to meet our mission as we pivot to this new approach of doing theater, we searched for one actor or small cast scripts that can be produced in a way to sustain the experience of live theater that goes beyond doing Zoom presentations," said **Brinda**. "I found this script of Einstein which has been successfully produced as a theater presentation. The one-act script fits the criteria as well as being timely as people are beginning to look at science in new ways."

Matt Henderson who plays Einstein draws in the audience through a series of anecdotes that takes them on the life journey of this great genius from a bored high school dropout whose teachers considered him a slow learner to the winner of the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1921. He is best known to the general public for his mass-energy equivalence formula $E = mc^2$, which has been dubbed "the world's most famous equation".

"Considering our acting pool, **Henderson** was the perfect actor for this project that initiates our Prime Online series where audiences will see a quality theater production by an incredible actor," **Brinda** said. "We contracted **Lisa Bansavage** as our Dialect Coach and Dramaturg. In addition to her television and stage work, **Bansavage** has extensive experience as an actress who has performed in several one-person shows. She is an expert with dialects and has done a lot of research on Einstein, who she loves."

In addition to his social media work with Prime Stage, **Henderson** has appeared in several of their productions as well as 2nd Stage readings, appearances at Bricolage, City Theatre (the Young Playwrights Festival), No Name Players, Off the Wall, TACT and PICT Classical Theatre. As a playwright, his work has been seen throughout the U.S., Canada, England, Scotland and Finland. He is also the Literary Manager and Marketing Director of 12 Peers Theater and has performed in several of their productions.

Henderson pulls off the one-man show with wit and humor enticing the audience to alternately laugh and cry with this endearing portrayal of Einstein. His idiosyncrasies and reluctance to accept celebrity offer insight into his family life, politics and being Jewish. All played a role in his philosophy and passionate opposition to Hitler and the atomic bomb. His scientific theories, accepted all over the world, were attacked in Germany as subversive Jewish propaganda. Known as the father of the atomic bomb, Einstein reveals the terrible anguish of science he felt as it clashed with morality.

"Playing Albert Einstein is a unique challenge for me because I've never played a well-known historical figure before. As I've worked on this role, I've done a lot of research on how Einstein looked and sounded, and I've incorporated his physical presence into my approach while also

finding ways to bring myself to the character in order to make him human and real," said **Henderson**. "What I love most about Einstein is his deep passion for science; he was relentless in his pursuit of the truths behind the mysteries of the universe, and he found so much joy in learning. I'm really excited to bring that passion to life in a theatrical context and share that joy with the audience."

As with all Prime Stage performances we strive to make our online performances accessible to all. This production will be available with options for Audio Description, American Sign Language and captions. Prime Stage Theatre is the only theater company in the Pittsburgh area to attain Certified Sensory Inclusive status through KultureCity, a leading nonprofit recognized nationwide for using their resources to affect change for those with sensory needs.

WHAT: Einstein, A Stage Portrait

WHERE & WHEN: Live streamed on November 13, 2020 at 8:00 PM ET

A recorded link will also be available for purchase through November 20, 2020.

TICKETS & INFO: Prime Online www.primestage/events

Einstein (online sales begins Thurs. 10/29)

Price is \$20 per household.

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