

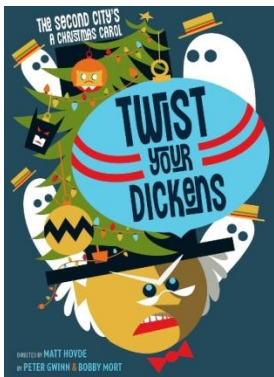


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## M E D I A R E L E A S E

Hysterical holiday romp direct from the comic geniuses at The Second City

**This ain't your father's #\$\$&!% *Christmas Carol***



**November 4, 2013 – PORTLAND, ORE.**, Portland Center Stage brings the comedic genius of The Second City to the stage this holiday season with **The Second City's *A Christmas Carol: Twist Your Dickens***. Emmy Award-winning writers for *The Colbert Report*, Peter Gwinn and Bobby Mort, wrote this sidesplitting take on Charles Dickens' Christmas novella. The script offers plenty of opportunities for improv, which is an exciting first for the Company with a multi-cast production. Several Second City alumni will make their PCS

debut, including Matt Hovde, directing the action, and Craig Cackowski, starring as Scrooge. They'll be joined by a troupe of local comedic talent performing a host of familiar characters whose Dickens will get twisted this holiday season.

Dickens' famous Victorian streets will spring to life as Scrooge, Tiny Tim, that fat, plucked goose and those know-it-all ghosts find themselves hopelessly mixed up with anachronistic characters, hilarious improv and an ever-changing stable of **starry, drop-in celebrity guests**.



**Previews begin Saturday, November 16, opening night is Friday, November 22, and it runs through December 22, 2013. Preview tickets start at \$29. Regular tickets start at \$33.** Discounts available for students and those under 25. Discounts are also available for groups of 10 or more. Rush tickets are \$20. Adult humor is used throughout this production and we suggest that parents bring children over age sixteen. Several exciting **improv-related events are planned to enhance the production.**



*Twist Your Dickens* had its world premiere in 2012 at Center Theatre Group's Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City, Los Angeles County. The production was a huge box office hit and marked a first for The Second City because it required theatrical production values that far exceeded the stripped down revue-style offerings of its previous shows. The *Los Angeles Times* praised the script for its “**bust-a-gut lines**” and said “this twist on Dickens is good medicine for a harried season.” *Backstage* also noted that “In its twisted way the show

spreads **just the right amount of holiday cheer.**”

**Matt Hovde**, who has been directing for The Second City since 2004 and also serves as the Artistic Director of the Second City Training Center, will direct the production. Second City veteran **Craig Cackowski** will make his Portland Center Stage debut as Scrooge – he’s been connected with Second City since 1995, as a performer, teacher and director. Portland audiences may recognize him from roles on TV, including "Officer Cackowski" on *Community*, as well as on Comedy Central's *Drunk History*, *Veep*, *Welcome to the Family*, *How I Met Your Mother*, *Arrested Development* and *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, among others.



Another Second City regular, **Beth Melewski**, will take the stage as The Ghost of Christmas Present and others. Melewski wrote and performed in the Jefferson Award-nominated Second City shows *The Second City Guide to the Opera* and *The Absolute Best Friggin’ Time of Your Life* in addition to the Jefferson Award-winning *Studs Terkel’s Not Working*.

**Several local artists will make their Main Stage debuts.** **Sam Dinkowitz**, playing the Ghost of Christmast Past and others, has been seen locally with Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Portland Shakespeare Project, Post5 Theatre, Stumptown Stages, Oregon Cabaret Theatre and others.





**Nicholas Kessler**, who regularly performs at the Gerding Theater as part of the Improv All-Stars and the Slingshot Comedy Series, will perform the Ghost of Christmas Future and other roles. Kessler has a long association with local improv group **The Liberators**.

Also making her debut is **Lauren Modica** as Mrs. Cratchit and others. Modica has performed locally with Public House Theatre, Jakers Productions, Willamette Shakespeare Theater and Portland Actors Ensemble.



**Chantal DeGroat**, playing Tiny Tim and others, performed with Portland Center Stage in this season's JAW Festival. DeGroat has also appeared recently with Badass Theatre Co and Profile Theatre.

Also returning is **John San Nicolas** as The Ghost of Jacob Marley and others. San Nicolas made his debut in the 2011/2012 Season as Queen/Iachimo/Arviragus in *Shakespeare's Amazing Cymbeline*. He's also performed recently with Artists Repertory Theatre, Third Rail Repertory Theatre, Northwest Classical Theatre Company, CoHo/Lucky Apple and others.



Scenic Designer **Tom Buderwitz** designed the world premiere of The Second City's *A Christmas Carol: Twist Your Dickens* for Center Theatre Group and will bring the twisted world to life once again for this production. Tackling all of the zany characters appearing in the past, present and future is resident Costume Designer **Jeff Cone**. Lighting Designer **Daniel Meeker** and Sound Designer **Casi Pacilio** return after their recent designs for *The Mountaintop*.

**The Second City** is known world-wide for its unique brand of humor and satire, as well as for being the launching pad for generations of comedy superstars, including Mike Myers, Bill Murray, Gilda Radner, John Candy, John Belushi, Catherine O'Hara, Tina Fey, Steve Carell, Stephen Colbert and many more. Recent productions include *The Second City Guide to the Opera* at Lyric Opera Chicago

featuring Renée Fleming and Sir Patrick Stewart; *Slapshot Live!* the first stage adaptation of the iconic 70's cult film in Toronto, Ontario; and *The Good, The Bad and The I-5*, a commissioned work for the La Jolla Playhouse.



**The Second City's *A Christmas Carol: Twist Your Dickens*** will be performed on the Main Stage. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday, with 2 p.m. matinees on Sundays and select Saturdays and matinees at noon on Thursdays. See the show calendar at <http://www.pcs.org/dickens/> for the complete performance schedule. Tickets can be purchased online at [www.pcs.org](http://www.pcs.org), by phone at 503.445.3700 or by visiting the box office located at 128 NW Eleventh Avenue. Group tickets can be purchased at 503.445.3794.

Additional support for this production is provided by production sponsors Argyle Winery and Ketel One. Portland Center Stage's 2013/2014 Season is funded in part by Season Superstars Tim & Mary Boyle and Lead Corporate Champion Umpqua Bank; Season Sponsors the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, Oregon Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts, the Regional Arts & Culture Council and Work for Art; and Season Supporting Sponsor KINK fm. The Mark Spencer Hotel is the official hotel partner for Portland Center Stage.

*Twist Your Dickens* photos by Craig Schwartz, from the 2012 production at Center Theatre Group.

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## RELATED EVENTS – Calendar Editors Kindly Note:

### **November 15 and 16: Slingshot Comedy presents BRINK OF EXTINCTION**

*Featuring **Second City Alum Bryan Coffee***

Slingshot Comedy is back for another season at Portland Center Stage! A new partnership with [Bad Reputation Productions](#) (*ROAD HOUSE: The Play!* and *The Lost Boys - Live!*), *Slingshot* is a projectile of smart and innovative comedic art installations designed to make you laugh your face right off your face.

**When:** November 15 and 16 at 8 p.m.

**Where:** Ellyn Bye Studio

**Cost:** \$15 advance, \$20 cash only at the door

**Tickets:** Purchase [online](#)

➤ **Next page: Related Events Continued**

### **November 23: Lauren Weedman's Awesome Workshop!**

Workshop fee includes a ticket to *Twist Your Dickens*

In this writing/performance lab, actors, writers, solo artists and storytellers will have the opportunity to engage with critically acclaimed writer, actor, and solo performer Lauren Weedman. The lab combines flash writing exercises with direct & frank feedback (and maybe some dancing), to help you mine your most humiliating stories, obsessions, journal ramblings, joys, traumas, dramas, and flat-out lies to help shape a short performance piece. *Participants should bring in a piece – an outline – a monologue – an idea – to workshop.*

**When:** Saturday, November 23, 6:30-7 p.m.

**Where:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Conference Room

**Cost:** \$80, includes a ticket to *Twist Your Dickens*

**Registration:** [education@pcs.org](mailto:education@pcs.org) or 503.445.3795

*Limited space available*

### **November 26: Shop Talk – The Art of Improv**

Our ongoing discussion series Shop Talk gives a behind-the-scenes look at PCS productions, from sets to costumes to casting. For this installment, we'll sit down with *Twist Your Dickens* cast member **Nicholas Kessler**, a Portland improv veteran known for his work with The Liberators. We'll chat with Nicholas about the nuts-and-bolts of Improv technique, how *Twist* changes from night to night, and how improv can change the world.

**When:** Tuesday, November 26, 6:30-7 p.m.

**Where:** On the Mezzanine

**Cost:** Free and open to the public

**Tickets:** No ticket or reservation required

### **December 2: PCS Improv All-stars**

Join a quartet of Portland's finest improv theater performers for an evening inspired by our production of *Twist Your Dickens* and featuring one of the stars of the show, **Nicholas Kessler**. The dream team of Brad Fortier, Nicholas Kessler, Shelley McClendon and Marilyn Divine promises to serve up some holiday-infused hilarity. So skip the ugly sweater party and join us for one night only!

**When:** Monday, December 2 at 8 p.m.

**Where:** Ellyn Bye Studio

**Cost:** \$5 in advance, \$10 at the door

**Tickets:** Purchase [online](#)

### **For Each Production of The Second City's *A Christmas Carol: Twist Your Dickens*:**

**Prologues** are free, pre-performance introductions to most Main Stage plays for all patrons attending that night's performance. Led by PCS staff members in the back of the Main Stage auditorium, prologues are offered on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings during the regular run of each Main Stage production from 6:55-7:10 p.m.

**Q&As** are informal conversations with the cast and PCS staff about the production, following every Thursday noon matinee performance during the regular run of each production.

➤ **Next Page: Ticket and Performance Information**

## Ticket and Performance Information | *The Second City's A Christmas Carol: Twist Your Dickens*

**When:** November 16 – December 22, 2013  
**Preview Performances:** November 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 7:30 p.m.  
**Opening Night:** Friday, November 22, 7:30 p.m.  
**Showtimes:** 7:30 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday; 2 p.m. matinees on Sundays and select Saturdays; matinees at noon on Thursdays.  
Complete schedule: <http://www.pcs.org/dickens/>

**Where:** Main Stage at [The Gerding Theater at the Armory](#)

**Preview tickets start at \$29. Regular tickets start at \$33.** Discounts for students and those under 25

**Online:** [www.pcs.org](http://www.pcs.org)  
**By Phone:** 503.445.3700, 12-6 p.m.  
**In Person:** PCS's box office is at 128 NW Eleventh Avenue  
12 p.m. - curtain on performance days  
12-6 p.m. on non-performance days  
**Rush Tickets:** \$20  
**Groups:** Discount for groups of 10 or more.  
Group tickets can purchased at 503.445.3794.

**Please Note:** Adult humor is used throughout this production and we suggest that parents bring children over age sixteen. *Mature content, language and sexuality.*

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[PORTLAND CENTER STAGE](#) inspires our community by bringing stories to life in unexpected ways. Established in 1988 as a branch of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, PCS became an independent theater in 1994 and has been under the leadership of Artistic Director Chris Coleman since May 2000. The company presents a blend of classic, contemporary and original productions in a conscious effort to appeal to the eclectic palate of theatergoers in Portland. PCS also offers a variety of education and outreach programs for curious minds from six to 106, including discussions, classes, workshops and partnerships with organizations throughout the Portland metro area.

[THE GERDING THEATER AT THE ARMORY](#) houses the 599-seat Main Stage and the 200-seat black box Ellyn Bye Studio. It was the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, and the first performing arts venue, to achieve a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certification. The Gerding Theater at the Armory opened to the public on Oct. 1, 2006. The capital campaign to fund the renovation of this hub for community artistic activity continues.

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