



Press Release

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For immediate release:

Clarence Brown Theatre 40th Anniversary Season Opener Brings Music Legend Hank Williams to Life

As a singer and songwriter, Hank Williams changed the face of not only country music, but music in general, forever. From September 4- 28, the Clarence Brown Theatre will stage the biographical retelling of his life in *Hank Williams: Lost Highway*. Rolling Stone called the show, “Exhilarating! A rare achievement in musical theater!” And, the NY Post called *Lost Highway*, “the best example of a musician’s bio put on stage I’ve ever seen!” UT Medical Center is the corporate sponsor for the production with additional support from the City of Knoxville. Media sponsors are WUOT, WUTK and the Knoxville News Sentinel.

With a live four-piece band, the production uses Williams’ lyrics and the stories behind them to highlight both the tragedy and humor of his life as the audience travels from the back woods of Alabama to the Grand Ole Opry to his untimely death at 29. During his short career, Williams released 35 songs; 11 of those hit number 1. The show features more than 20 songs including “Hey Good Lookin’,” “I’m So Lonesome I Could Cry,” and “Move It On Over.”

“Sixty years after his death we still hear his music and want to cry or dance or both. And that will be true 60 years from now and 60 years from that date and on and on,” said Director Karen Kessler.

Karen Kessler (Director) teaches directing and Shakespeare at Ball State University in Indiana. She is an ensemble member of A Red Orchid Theatre in Chicago and has directed there as well. She also has directed for the Northern Stage in Newcastle, England. This is her CBT directorial debut.

Kelly Kessler (Musical Director) lives in Nashville and is a member of the new acoustic trio Devil Bell. She has played the Bluebird, and NYC’s Café Nuyoriqueño. She can be heard on Bloodshot Records’ “Down From the Promised Land,” and on albums by the Texas Rubies and under her own name. She also helped launch the Chicago alt.country music scene.

The cast is comprised of several visiting guest professional actors and musicians as well as UT Theatre graduate actors.

Peter Oyloe (Hank Williams) is a visiting guest actor from Chicago and member of Redtwist Theatre and Filament Theatre Ensembles. He has performed the role of Hank Williams six times, winning the prestigious Joe Jefferson Award for that performance and others. He has acted in theaters across the country and also appeared in numerous short films. He recently made his national television debut on “Chicago PD.” Additionally, he is an acclaimed composer and folk musician.

Horace E. Smith (Tee-Tot) is a visiting guest artist whose past CBT credits include “Fences” and “Big River.” He also has performed for the Word Players, Cumberland County Playhouse as well as in New York and Bermuda.

David Kortemeier (Fred “Pap” Rose) is a visiting guest artist returning for his ninth season. Some CBT credits include: “Spamalot,” “A Christmas Carol,” “Noises Off,” “Sweeney Todd,” “Moonlight & Magnolias,” and “The Music Man.” Regional work includes principal roles at The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, the Great Lakes Theatre Festival in Cleveland, Drury Lane Theatre and Fox Valley Repertory in Chicago, Indiana Festival Theatre in Bloomington, IN and in 13 seasons with the Illinois Shakespeare Festival in Bloomington, IL.

Jayne Morgan (Mama Lily) is a visiting guest artist and UT alumna who has worked and lived all over - including NYC and LA. Some of her CBT acting credits include: “On the Razzle,” “Sweeney Todd,” and “Arsenic and Old Lace.” She has appeared in films and wrote and directed local revues called “Forbidden Knoxville” and once wrote and produced a full-length musical for the Bicentennial of Knoxville. She is a teacher, casting director and co-founder of Flying Anvil Theatre.

UT Theater graduate student actors Melissa David (Audrey Williams) and Cynthia Anne Roser (Waitress) complete the cast.

The professional musicians include: Brock Henderson as “Shag” (Slide & Steel Guitar); Seth Hopper as “Leon” (Fiddle/Mandolin); Ed Sublett as “Hoss” (Upright Bass); and, Jared Weiss as “Jimmy” (Electric Guitar).

Designers on the production include: Bill Black (costume designer); visiting guest designer Jack Magaw (scenic designer); Kristen Geisler (lighting designer); and visiting guest designer Joe Court (sound designer). Josafath Israel Reynoso Calvillo (Assistant Scenic Designer), William Andrew Young (Assistant Director), and Patrick Lanczki (Stage Manager) also are assisting with this production.

With a dual mission to train the next generation of theatre artists and to provide top quality professional theatre, the Clarence Brown Theatre at the University of Tennessee Knoxville is one of only 12 academic LORT (League of Resident Theatre) institutions in the nation. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Calvin MacLean and Managing Director David B. Byrd, the CBT season runs from August through May and features eight productions ranging from musicals to drama.

The 2014-2015 Season includes: “Hank Williams: Lost Highway,” “The Miracle Worker,” “4000 Miles,” “A Christmas Carol,” “Master Harold...and the boys,” “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” “A Shayna Maidel,” and “The Threepenny Opera.” For more information or tickets, call the CBT Box Office at 865-974-5161 or visit us online at <http://clarencebrowntheatre.com/>. Stay connected to the Clarence Brown Theatre on Facebook (Clarence Brown Theatre), follow us on Twitter (@ClarenceBrown) and view Clarence Brown videos on YouTube (Clarence Bro).

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