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“A WALKING XMAS CAROL” AN OUTDOOR HOLIDAY WINDOW TOUR WITH MUSICAL AUDIO COMPANION IN THE CENTRAL WEST END FREE, NOV 28-DEC 23

St. Louis, MO (October 29, 2020) -- The **St. Louis Shakespeare Festival** (Tom Ridgely, Producing Artistic Director) and **PaintedBlack STL** (Javyn Solomon, Co-Founder) in partnership with the **Central West End Window Walk** will present “A Walking Xmas Carol”, a new immersive outdoor experience in the neighborhood featuring the musical soundtrack from the acclaimed “Q Brothers Christmas Carol”.

Building on the success of the socially-distant summer program “A Late Summer Night’s Stroll” - and inspired by the tradition of taking in the grand holiday windows at Stix and Famous-Barr - “A Walking Xmas Carol” is a 20-stop, audio-musical and window-display reimagining of the classic tale by Charles Dickens. Local artists selected by PaintedBlack STL (“Stroll”) will create large-scale window installations interpreting Scrooge’s journey from a never before seen perspective while the musical adaptation by the Q Brothers (*Dress the Part*) will guide guests throughout the walk along Euclid Avenue and Maryland Plaza.

“It’s going to be a long, hard winter, and so many of the things that make the holidays special just won’t be possible this year,” said producing artistic director Tom Ridgely in a statement. “Thank goodness there are still ways to celebrate and some experience the beauty, hope and transcendence that the season provides. The Central West End is one of the most beautiful neighborhoods in America, and our artists here in St. Louis are among the most transcendent. Mix in the Q Brothers’ impossibly smart and funny spin on one of the most enduring stories in world literature, and you’ve got the most holiday fun you can have with your mask on.”

WINDOW DISPLAYS

Inspired by the tradition of holiday window displays from luxury retailers on 5th Avenue in New York City - and building on 11 years of beloved Window Walks in the CWE - 16 local selected by PaintedBlack STL will create unique and elaborate installations in storefronts at the heart of the neighborhood. The 2D and 3D multimedia works of art will take over vacant and existing business windows beginning with The Drunken Fish and ending at The Chase Park Plaza.

As guests make their way along the two-block route they will be prompted to stop, marvel at the displays and listen to the audio companion to each window. The presenting artists include:

S3an Alexander, Kaila Austin, Bino, Tiélere Cheatem, Destini Clark, Taylor Deed, Kyla Hawkins, Mee Jey, Destiney Lomax, De Nichols, Edo Berger Rosenblith, Jayvn Solomon, Charlie Tatum and Cameron Williams.

“Increasing the visibility of local Black artists and business owners is at the center of the project, as well as PaintedBlack’s mission overall. We’re super excited to be working with the Shakespeare Festival again to push the creativity of local artists & designers.” says Jayvn Soloman, Co-founder of PaintedBlack STL.

THE MUSICAL GUIDE

Q Brothers Christmas Carol will make its St. Louis premiere as the audio companion and story guide for the walk. The musical was written by the Q Brothers Collective (members include GQ, JQ, JAX, and POS) with music by JQ developed with Rick Boynton at Chicago Shakespeare Theater. *The Chicago Sun Times* called it “...unlike anything you might imagine Dickens could be. And that’s a very good thing.”

The music combines hip-hop, rap and reggae beats with quick dialogue and witty rhymes that Dickens’ fans will love but will resonate for all audiences today. Take a journey with Scrooge and the ghosts of hip hop past, present and future, to find your holiday spirit this year.

A WALKING XMAS CAROL opens on Saturday, November 28 and runs through Wednesday, December 23. This is a free, outdoor, and self-guided walk—no reservations required. The walk can be enjoyed at any time of day, seven days a week. Guests will access the audio guide and virtual map using QR codes on each window or by downloading prior to their visit with a suggested donation of \$10 or more.

On Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings between 6:00 and 9:00 p.m., the route will feature festive food and beverage options, live sidewalk music and surprise performances in the windows.

To complete the immersive experience, the Central West End will be transformed into a winter wonderland surrounding the entire route with festive holiday decor and lights. The annual 11th Anniversary Central West End Window Walk will be visually incorporated using themes of family, friends and neighbors.

The event is outdoors with ample space to follow city and CDC guidelines. Face coverings are recommended for anyone visiting.

More information got to www.stlshakes.org/carol.

A Walking Xmas Carol is supported in part by PNC Arts Alive and St. Louis Public Radio. The St. Louis Shakespeare Festival is supported by the Missouri Arts Council and the Regional Arts Commission.

About the Collaborators:

The **St. Louis Shakespeare Festival** presents Shakespeare and works inspired by his legacy of storytelling. Since 2001, the festival has grown from producing a single production of Shakespeare in the Park to a year-round season of impactful theater in exciting and accessible venues throughout the St. Louis community. The festival's artistic and education programs reached over 50,000 patrons and students during the 2018 season and have reached over one million since 2001. In 2019, the Festival received a "What's Right with the Region" award from Focus St. Louis.

PaintedBack STL - Empowering local Black artists by connecting and collaborating with community organizations. Founded in Spring 2020.

Q Brothers - Award-winning and internationally acclaimed theater artists, the Q Brothers generate original work fusing hip hop and theater, adapting classic stories to a wholly original, entertaining and fast-paced style of comedic performance that has been energizing audiences for over two decades. The Q Brothers conceived the term add-RAP-tation in 1999 with their Off-Broadway hit *The Bomb-itty of Errors*. MTV has called the Q Brothers "Nothing short of brilliant."

Central West End - The CWE Business Community Improvement District (CID) was formed in 2010 in accordance with the Community Improvement District Act, a Missouri statute. The CWE Business Community Improvement District fosters a vibrant, welcoming neighborhood for residents and visitors by supporting the needs of businesses, and by leading efforts to enhance the charm and character of the Central West End. Activities of the CID are made financially possible through a 1 percent retail sales tax within the District, situated along the North Euclid Avenue commercial corridor from Lindell Boulevard to Washington Boulevard.