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Image: Richard Tetrault, Alley Variation #3, woodcut and metal print 2012, with photo of Jim Byrnes by David Cooper.

MEDIA RELEASE

Bah Humbug! An Eastside Christmas Carol returns to SFU Woodward's

November 21, 2017

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Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* comes to life in modern-day East Vancouver with *Bah Humbug!* This annual seasonal tradition returns to SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts for its eighth year, with evening and matinee performances from December 7-16.

This year *Bah Humbug!* is directed by Jessie-award winning playwright, actor and director James Fagan Tait; while celebrated actor and Juno award-winner blues musician Jim Byrnes returns in the starring role of Ebenezer Scrooge.

Joining Byrnes on stage is a diverse and exceptional cast of local native and non-native professional and community musicians and actors. Through social satire, heartbreak and compassion, they address modern-day realities, including the housing crisis, poverty, addiction and the need for reconciliation, based on the light of truth and shared mutual respect.

At the darkest hour of a winter's night, Scrooge, a selfish pawnbroker, awakes to confront spirits of the past present and future. Emerging from Coast Salish land buried under the urban sidewalks of today, they bring Scrooge face to face with memories he tried to forget, relations that may never heal.

Meanwhile the streets of East Vancouver will come to life with colourful animations of the art of award-winning Richard Tetrault, known for capturing the area's urban landscape through large-scale mono-print, linocut projections and murals.

"*Bah Humbug!* deals with large themes and touches on serious issues, but it is, above all, a family celebration, sometimes bittersweet, but also filled with humour, compassion and a celebration of resilience," says Michael Boucher, director, SFU Woodward's Cultural Programs.

The cast includes award-winning Kevin McNulty, a prolific film and television performer, and Tom Pickett, gospel and blues singer/actor. First Nations artists include award-winning Renae Morriveau, known for her determination to ensure that First Nations voices are heard, and stories told; Sam Bob, Jessie Richardson Award nominee for Best Actor in a theatre production *Out of the Silence*; and Stephen Lytton, recipient of the Governor General Award for Caring (2016).

Joining the production this year, is the youngest cast member to date, 16-year-old Jason Sakaki, a promising rising talent and graduate of the Gotta Sing! Gotta Dance! Program.

With musical direction by Bill Costin, *Bah Humbug!* includes more than 30 musical numbers ranging from traditional Christmas carols to blues, First Nations songs, soul, and rock, including such artists as Buffy-Sainte Marie and Nine Inch Nails. *Bah! Humbug!* also features the acclaimed Downtown Eastside-based Saint James Music Academy Youth Choir.

Commissioned and co-produced by SFU Woodward's Cultural Programs and Vancouver Moving Theatre, in partnership with Full Circle: First Nations Performance, *Bah Humbug!* supports the Downtown Eastside Heart of the City Festival, which partners each year with 50-plus Downtown Eastside arts and non-arts organizations. Proceeds from the show support the festival.

Bah Humbug! runs from Dec. 7-9 and Dec. 13-16, at 7:30 p.m., with 2 p.m. matinees on Dec. 9, 10 and 16, at SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts, 149 West Hastings Street. Tickets are \$35 (general) and \$20 (youth/students/seniors), and can be purchased online at www.sfuwoodwards.ca. Family and group discounts are available.

ABOUT SFU WOODWARD'S CULTURAL PROGRAMS

SFU Woodward's Cultural Programs (SFUW) aim to enable and promote creativity and leading-edge practices in the contemporary arts as well as public community discourse. By supporting professional activities through partnerships, SFUW engages the immediate inner-city community through unique cultural, employment, and public initiatives with the ultimate goal to create, provoke and transform.

ABOUT VANCOUVER MOVING THEATRE

Vancouver Moving Theatre (VMT) is a multiple award-winning Downtown Eastside-based professional arts organization founded (1983) by Terry Hunter (Executive Director) and Savannah Walling (Artistic Director). VMT is dedicated to art creation that celebrates the power of the human imagination and spirit; builds shared experiences that bridge cultural traditions, social groups and artistic disciplines; and gives voice to the residents of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and beyond. The mandate of VMT's flagship *Downtown Eastside Heart of the City Festival* (established in 2004), produced in partnership with over fifty community partners, is to promote the artists, art forms, cultural traditions, heritage, activism, people and great stories about Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

ABOUT FULL CIRCLE: FIRST NATIONS PERFORMANCE

Full Circle: First Nations Performance was founded in 1992 by Margo Kane (Cree/Saulteaux), an interdisciplinary artist and Indigenous arts leader. Her vision has made a profound contribution to the development of Indigenous performance in Canada. The company creates opportunities for Indigenous artists to express themselves across many artistic disciplines with their annual Talking Stick Festival and programs such as the Ensemble training program and the Indian Acts. Full Circle shares Indigenous values with many audiences so that people of all races and ages have a better understanding of First Nations, Metis and Inuit culture and the artistic expressions that celebrate all Indigenous peoples.

ABOUT SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY:

As Canada's engaged university, SFU is defined by its dynamic integration of innovative education, cutting-edge research and far-reaching community engagement. SFU was founded more than 50 years ago with a mission to be a different kind of university—to bring an interdisciplinary approach to learning, embrace bold initiatives, and engage with communities near and far. Today, SFU is Canada's leading comprehensive research university and is ranked one of the top universities in the world. With campuses in British Columbia's three largest cities – Vancouver, Burnaby and Surrey – SFU has eight faculties, delivers almost 150 programs to over 35,000 students, and boasts more than 145,000 alumni in 130 countries around the world.

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