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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**City Theatre Opens 2016-2017 Season with the  
Heretical & Hilarious Broadway Hit Comedy**

***HAND TO GOD*  
By Robert Askins**

**September 24 – October 16, 2016**

**“Wickedly funny... *Sesame Street* meets *The Exorcist*.”  
– *The New Yorker***

**“A triumph”  
– *The Guardian***

**“Run, don’t walk to see *Hand to God*”  
– *The New York Times***

**Pittsburgh, PA** (August 29, 2016) – Kicking the 2016-17 season off with a bang, **City Theatre** presents ***Hand to God* by Robert Askins, September 24 – October 16, 2016** on the **Main Stage**. **Directed by Artistic Director Tracy Brigden**, the Pittsburgh premiere of the hit Broadway comedy will feature a cast of five local and national performers and several devious puppets.

In a church basement in a little town in Texas, something evil is afoot. Or, well — at hand. The youth group has a monster in its ranks: a rogue puppet named Tyrone. He’s hijacked the hand of timid teen Jason and there’s nothing his classmates, his mother, or the pastor can do to exorcise this foul-mouthed demon. *Hand to God* is a thrill ride of a comedy about good and evil, sex and sin, faith, and the filthy mind of one twisted sock puppet. It is the Pittsburgh premiere of the uproarious Tony Award® Nominated Broadway hit *The New York Times* called “Flat out hilarious.”

“Bringing the blasphemous new comedy *Hand to God* to City Theatre is a thrill for me! Where else in Pittsburgh can you see a cadre of puppets committing more than half of the seven deadly sins live on stage each night?” said **Director Tracy Brigden**. “It isn’t all heresy and dark

humor, though. Robert Askins is a fantastic new voice in the American theater. He draws on his own experiences growing up in a tight-knit Lutheran community in Texas in this cock-eyed coming-of-age story that swings from slapstick comedy to tragic reality. It's a raucous exploration of the human (and puppet) condition, where nothing is sacred."

**Robert Askins** was born in Cypress, Texas. His Tony Award®-nominated and Obie Award-winning play *Hand to God* ran on London's West End (Olivier Award-nominated for Best New Comedy) after it opened on Broadway in April 2015, following two critically-acclaimed runs at Ensemble Studio Theatre and MCC Theater, where it was named a New York Times Critics' Pick and called "the most entertaining show of 2014." His newest play *Permission* made its world premiere off-Broadway in spring 2015 at MCC Theater. His play *Fish Display* was part of the 2012 Ojai Playwrights Conference and *Permission* was part of the 2014 conference. Rob has received two EST/Sloan grants, the Helen Merrill Emerging Playwrights Award, and an Arch and Bruce Davis Award for Playwriting. He is an I-73 and Youngblood alum and a graduate of Baylor University and currently at work on two feature film projects and an original comedy series for HBO.

*Hand to God* is directed by Tracy Brigden. Performing the role of Jason/Tyrone is **Nick LaMedica** in his City Theatre debut. The cast includes Pittsburgh favorites **Maggie Carr** as Jessica/Jolene, **Michael Greer** as Timmy, **Tim McGeever** as Pastor Greg, and **Lisa Velten Smith** as Margery. The production team includes **Tony Ferrieri** (scenic designer), **Tracy Christiansen** (costume designer), **Andrew David Ostrowski** (lighting designer), **Elizabeth Atkinson** (sound designer), **Stephanie Shaw** (puppet designer), **Nancy McNulty McGeever** (dialect coach), and **Diego Villada** (fight choreography). Casting is by **Caparelliotis Casting/Lauren Port**.

New this season, beginning with *Hand to God*, City Theatre is introducing **Saturday matinee performances**. There will be both 1:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. performances on October 8 and 15.

### **PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE: September 24 – October 16, 2016**

Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m.

Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. and/or 7:00 p.m.

Thursdays and Fridays at 8:00 p.m.

Saturdays at 1:00 p.m., 5:30 p.m., and/or 9:00 p.m.

Sundays at 2:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m.

For a complete listing of show times, please visit [CityTheatreCompany.org](http://CityTheatreCompany.org) or call 412-431-2489.

**PRESS / OPENING NIGHT:**

Friday, September 30 at 8:00 p.m.

**SPECIAL EVENTS:**

***Hands Up!***

A Happy Hour kick-off for *Hand to God*

Wednesday, September 28 at 5:30 p.m.

Swing by City Theatre for a pre-show happy hour with wickedly good Wigle Whiskey cocktails and samples, Penn Brewery beer specials, and a preview performance of *Hand to God*. Join us in the lobby after the show for a live recording of **Drinking Partners Podcast** with comedians Ed Dailey and Day Bracey and the cast of *Hand to God*.

***Felt Up!***

A Puppet-making Workshop and Brunch

Saturday, October 15 at 11:30 a.m.

Join City Theatre and the **Pittsburgh Center for Creative Reuse** at City Theatre's home in the South Side to make your very own Tyrone!

Enjoy a complimentary Bloody Mary or Mimosa, grab some snacks, and make a one-of-a-kind hand puppet using recycled and repurposed materials from the PCCR. There are only 20 spaces available for the puppet-making workshop and it includes a ticket to the 1:00 p.m. performance of *Hand to God*.

Tickets are \$50.

***Sipping Sunday*** – Sept. 25 at 7:00 p.m.

Sample wines specially chosen to complement the production.

***Sunday Talkbacks*** – Oct. 2 and 9

Conversation with the artists immediately following the 2:00 p.m. performances, moderated by City Theatre Artistic Staff.

***Greenroom Young Professionals Night*** Friday, Oct. 7 at 8:00 p.m.

\$25 Greenroom ticket includes complimentary snacks, beer, and wine after the performance, and mingling with the cast. Use code GREENROOM when ordering.

***Pay-What-You-Want*** Saturday, Oct. 8 at 1:00 p.m.

A limited number of tickets are reserved for PWYW and go on sale two hours before curtain, walk up sales only. Call the box office in advance to check on availability.

**ACCESSIBLE PERFORMANCE DATES:**

***ASL Interpretation*** Tuesday, Oct. 11 at 7:00 p.m.

***Open Captioning and Audio Description*** Sunday, Oct. 16 at 2:00 p.m.

**WHERE:**

City Theatre, 1300 Bingham Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203 (South Side)

Patron parking is available in the lot across from the City Theatre entrance for \$8.

**BOX OFFICE:**

412.431.CITY (2489) or [citytheatrecompany.org](http://citytheatrecompany.org)

**TICKETS:**

Single tickets start at \$37.50.

Season subscriptions are still available and start at \$168.

**DISCOUNTS:**

**Audiences under 30** may reserve \$15 tickets in advance for all performances except Fridays at 8:00 p.m. and Saturdays at 5:30 p.m.; on Fridays and Saturdays, rush tickets are available two hours prior to show time and based on availability. **Seniors age 62 and older** may purchase \$22 rush tickets at the Box Office beginning two hours before show time, based on availability.

**Groups of 10 or more** are eligible for discounts – contact Joel Ambrose at 412.431.4400 x286.

**City Theatre** is now in its 42nd season. Located in the historic South Side, City Theatre is Pittsburgh's home for bold new plays, commissioning and producing work by playwrights including Daniel Beaty, Jessica Dickey, Christopher Durang, Michael Hollinger, Willy Holtzman, Tarell Alvin McCraney, and Madeleine George. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Tracy Brigden, Managing Director James McNeel, and the Board of Directors, City Theatre's mission is to provide an artistic home for the development and production of contemporary plays of substance and ideas that engage and challenge a diverse audience. [CityTheatreCompany.org](http://CityTheatreCompany.org)

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