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**A Noise Within – 25th Anniversary
Announcement of new initiatives and season**

Beyond Our Wildest Dreams

***Arcadia* by Tom Stoppard, *The Maids* by Jean Genet,
Molière’s The Imaginary Invalid, Shakespeare’s *King Lear*,
Ah, Wilderness! by Eugene O’Neill,
and *Man of La Mancha* by Dale Wasserman,
Music by Mitch Leigh and Lyrics by Joe Darion**

***A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens,
adapted by Geoff Elliott, returns for its fifth season**

(Pasadena, CA –Tuesday, April 19) A Noise Within (ANW) is celebrating its 25th anniversary of success and growth of the company, and its sixth season in its permanent home for the classics in Pasadena by announcing new initiatives and the season offerings of 2016-2017.

The theme of the season, *Beyond Our Wildest Dreams*, resonates not just with the plays for the season – *Arcadia* by Tom Stoppard, *The Maids* by Jean Genet, Molière’s *The Imaginary Invalid*, adapted by Constance Congdon based on a new translation by Dan Smith, Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, *Ah, Wilderness!* by Eugene O’Neill, *Man of La Mancha* by Dale Wasserman, music by Mitch Leigh and lyrics by Joe Darion, and *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, adapted for the stage by Geoff Elliott – but also in the company’s growth plan, which calls for a cumulative supplementary investment of \$2 million by the 2019-2020 season.

To that end, ANW has already raised \$600,000 in the first year, including a single gift of \$250,000. The intention is to capitalize on the company’s success and momentum by continued investment in the artistic company: actors, designers and directors; to provide flexibility for ANW’s creative artists through the institution of “artistic freedom funds;” as well as to maximize its educational outreach by providing additional transportation and ticket scholarships to underserved schools, and deeper engagement opportunities for teachers and for students, including sequential learning options and curriculum development assistance.

“In 1991, we were struggling students, fresh from American Conservatory Theatre, and we used our last \$3,000 to produce *Hamlet*,” said Producing Artistic Director Julia Rodriguez-Elliott.

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“It was a big success – and we learned a lot very quickly: that Los Angeles was filled with well-trained talent, that there was an audience that was hungry to see plays of substance, that there were people and resources willing to support this effort, and that there was a press corps interested in writing about this work.

“All of this added up quickly to the beginnings of a community,” said Rodriguez-Elliott. “In the nurturing of this idea of community, we found ourselves on a path that quickly lead to our next productions, the use of the Masonic Temple in Glendale, a 501(c)(3) designation, an administrative staff, and on and on. We had suddenly built an organization, including a robust education program, which enabled us to share our love of the classics with local students.

“Somewhere in our tenth season, we began to plan and find the financing for the A Noise Within Theatre at 3352 Foothill Blvd. Since moving, our artistic payroll has doubled. As we begin our sixth season there, we are now announcing the plan for our future to broaden our scope and reach not just for artists and actors, but to broaden our educational outreach.”

“Four of the plays we are announcing for the 25th anniversary season are plays that speak loudly to us now from our history – *The Imaginary Invalid*, *King Lear*, *Ah, Wilderness!*, and *Man of La Mancha*,” said Producing Artistic Director Geoff Elliott. “*Arcadia* and *The Maids* are new for us. Together our actors, artists, and audience will take a journey through and beyond our wildest (and sometimes simply wild) dreams – the same journey and Julia and I have taken over this past quarter-century.”

For subscription tickets please call 626-356-3100, or visit online at www.aNoiseWithin.org.

A Noise Within is located on the corner of Foothill Boulevard and Sierra Madre Villa Avenue at 3352 East Foothill Blvd., Pasadena, CA 91107.

The Plays – 2016-2017

***Arcadia* by Tom Stoppard (September 4 – November 20, 2016)**

"I have never left a play more convinced that I had just witnessed a masterpiece" – *The Daily Telegraph*

Romantic, funny, and profoundly moving, Tom Stoppard’s meticulously crafted 1993 masterwork invites the audience to unravel the big and small mysteries of the universe at bucolic Sidley Park, an English country house in Derbyshire. There, the intricate interplay of past and present, order and disorder, and certainty and uncertainty, is equally driven by fierce intellectual curiosity and the fickle passions of the human heart.

Arcadia takes place in both 1809/1812 and the present day. The activities of two modern scholars and the house's current residents are juxtaposed with those of the people who lived there in the earlier period. In 1809, Thomasina Coverly, the daughter of the house, is a precocious teenager with ideas about mathematics, nature and physics well ahead of her time, who studies with her tutor Septimus Hodge, a friend of Lord Byron.

In the present, writer Hannah Jarvis and literature professor Bernard Nightingale converge on the house: she is investigating a hermit who once lived on the grounds; he is researching a mysterious chapter in the life of Byron. As their studies unfold – with the help of Valentine Coverly, Thomasina’s descendent and a post-graduate student in mathematical biology – the truth about what happened in Thomasina’s time is gradually revealed.

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The New York Times said of a recent revival that the play is about “the unquenchable human urge to acquire knowledge, whether carnal, mathematical, historical or metaphysical. It is the itch to discover what lurks beneath concealing clothes and clouds and dusty layers of accumulated years.”

***The Maids* by Jean Genet (September 18 – November 12, 2016)**

“A fantasy—about pain, about playacting, mixed in with a deep understanding of how power works on the powerless.” – *The New Yorker*

Jean Genet based *The Maids*, his groundbreaking play, loosely on the famous case of the Papin sisters, a pair of maids who murdered their employer and her daughter in 1933. His characters Solange and Claire are two housemaids who construct elaborate sadomasochistic rituals -- an elaborate and highly eroticized fantasy world in response to a lifetime of abuse -- when their mistress “Madame” is away. The focus of their role-playing is the murder of Madame and they take turns portraying both sides of the power divide.

Their deliberate pace and devotion to detail guarantee that they will always fail to actualize their fantasies by ceremoniously "killing" Madame at the ritual's dénouement. Their increasingly ruinous role-play, however, is a trenchant statement about the accident of birth, the searing brutality of class distinctions, and the liberation that stems from destruction.

***The Imaginary Invalid* by Molière (October 9 – November 19, 2016)
Adapted by Constance Congdon, Based on a new translation by Dan Smith**

“Lively fun!” – *Variety*

As his medical debts mount, Argan, a man whose mental neuroses grossly outweigh his physical maladies, concocts a scheme to marry his daughter off to a family of physicians. High comedy ensues—replete with thwarted love, false identities, dexterous wordplay, musical interludes, and a healthy dose of derision towards the medical profession.

When it premiered in 1673, Molière’s final play featured the playwright himself playing the role of Argan, the hilarious hypochondriac. The comedy of a man who thinks he is constantly ill and the ups and downs of trying to marry his daughter off to a doctor so that he can pay less for his care, despite her being in love with another, forms the basis of the hilarious plot. Ironically, at the fourth performance of the new work on February 17, Molière collapsed and died.

The Imaginary Invalid is a true French farce in all its glory – beginning with the servant who knows better than everyone else in the play. This is Molière at the top of his form: a sparkling, effervescent, incisive romp that will leave audiences in stitches. *The Oregonian* said, “Argan's problem here isn't that he's beset by medical quacks or by his own neurosis, it's that he's allowed such things to divert him from the joys around him.”

A Noise Within first performed the piece in 2001.

The Holiday Tradition Continues!

***A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens (December 2 – 23, 2016)**

Adapted for the stage by Geoff Elliott

“Fantastical stagecraft ... GO!” – *LA Weekly*

Producing Artistic Directors Geoff Elliott (who adapted the play from the novella) and Julia Rodriguez-Elliott co-direct Dickens’ masterpiece about the redemptive and transformative power of love. In this production, hailed for its “enchantment” by *LA Weekly*, Dickens’ poignant tale is matched by evocative original music by composer Ego Plum. Bursting with family-friendly holiday merriment, ANW’s beloved tradition returns for another round of boundless good cheer. Celebrate the season with Dickens’ timeless tale of forgiveness, change, and the life-changing power of kindness to our fellow man.

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"Remounting our acclaimed presentation of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* allows families to once again take a supremely theatrical journey, and celebrate the transformative power of forgiveness during the holidays," says Elliott. Rodriguez-Elliott adds, "Ebenezer Scrooge's rebirth from miserly curmudgeon to the epitome of love and generosity affirms our faith in the potent goodness of human kind during this beloved time of year."

***King Lear* by William Shakespeare (February 12 – May 6, 2017)**

"Who is it who can tell me who I am?" - *King Lear*

The gut-wrenching devastation of *Lear* encompasses more than one man's trajectory of power and hubris; it is an affecting, unflinching chronicle of a family as it disintegrates around the mental illness of its patriarch.

Written in 1606 with a second version appearing in 1623, *Lear* is one of Shakespeare's most well-known and frequently performed tragedies. Based upon the tale of Leir of Britain, a fictional Celtic king whose story provides probing observations on the nature of human suffering and kinship, Lear's misguided attempt to relinquish his throne in old age to his three daughters ends in tragic chaos, causing his madness and eventual death, as well as the death of his daughters.

To add a deeply personal dimension to Shakespeare's themes of madness, frailty, and love, this new ANW production is set in a memory-care facility, where in the midst of tragedy, the healing and transcendent nature of great art prevails.

The Guardian UK reviewing a 2015 production said, "An intricacy of interconnecting opposites (parent/child, frailty/strength, intransigence/compassion, good/bad) clash around the question: *Is man no more than this?* voiced by Lear when he catches sight of the disguised Edgar, Christ-like in his beggar's battered and bloody near-nakedness, during the storm on the heath."

A Noise Within last performed *King Lear* in 1994.

***Ah, Wilderness!* By Eugene O'Neill (March 5 – May 20, 2017)**

"A breath of fresh air... a miracle of sense and sensibility ... vividly alive."—*The New York Post*

A rare departure from the playwright's darker oeuvre, this comedy is unabashedly nestled in the halcyon days of turn-of-the-century Americana; a gentle, loving, and boldly optimistic study that takes place on the 4th of July, 1906, of a deeply bonded family as they navigate the youthful indiscretions of their wayward son.

Written in 1932-33 during the Great Depression, this coming of age comedy by the Nobel laureate playwright and master of American realism Eugene O'Neill looks fondly back at an earlier, easier era. It is his one well-known comedy, which paints a warm-hearted dream of O'Neill's own American family and a wistful re-imagining of his youth as he wished it might have been.

Terry Teachout in *The Wall Street Journal* said, "It's as sunny as the day that it describes. But bright sunshine casts dark shadows, and part of what makes *Ah, Wilderness!* so excellent is that it doesn't ignore the complexities of life."

A Noise Within last performed *Ah, Wilderness!* In 1996.

***Man of La Mancha* by Dale Wasserman, music by Mitch Leigh, lyrics by Joe Darion
(March 26 – May 21, 2017)**

"Too much sanity may be madness — and maddest of all: to see life as it is, and not as it should be!" - *Man of La Mancha*

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Playwright Dale Wasserman took a novel approach to the material, that of Miguel de Cervantes on mock trial in prison with his other inmates, acting the parts of his famous novel “Don Quixote,” as he waits to be brought before the Inquisition.

Set in a dungeon prison, the story-within-a-story of Don Quixote’s musical misadventures – rife with love, chivalry, and of course, four-armed giants – unfurls into something more transcendent: a beacon of hope in a dire world. One of the most important hits of Broadway’s golden age, audiences have been dreaming “The Impossible Dream” for the past half century, with the wandering hidalgo in this quintessential tale about the resilience of the human spirit, and the power of storytelling when faced with insurmountable odds.

First performed in 1965, it is based on an earlier teleplay “I, Don Quixote”, that Wasserman wrote for television. It won five Tony Awards; this original work, neither a retelling of Cervantes life and yet not a reiteration of his novel, has subsequently become one of the most enduring works of musical theater. It started its life in New York on a thrust stage, much like the Redmond Stage, at the ANTA Washington Square Theatre in Greenwich Village before moving uptown to Broadway in 1968.

The New York Times summing up its achievements said, “It was a harbinger of the concept musical — *Cabaret* would open the following year — and a pioneering effort in what could perhaps be called the musical-theater counterculture.”

A Noise Within first performed *Man of La Mancha* in 2007.

About A Noise Within

A Noise Within, celebrating its 25th anniversary, was founded in 1991 and named “one of the nation’s premier classical repertory companies” by *The Huffington Post*, is the leading presenter of these plays in Southern California. The company’s mission is to produce world-class performances of the great works of drama in rotating repertory with a resident company; to educate and inspire the public through programs that foster an understanding and appreciation of history’s great plays and playwrights; and to train the next generation of classical theatre artists.

In the past quarter-century, ANW has presented some 166 main stage productions, a challenging repertoire devoted to bringing classic plays to life in fully realized, full-bodied productions, garnering four LA Stage Ovation Awards (out of 31 nominations) and nearly 30 Los Angeles Drama Critics’ Circle Awards, including the Polly Warfield Award for Excellence and the Margaret Harford Award for Distinguished Achievement. In 2012, American Conservatory Theater honored ANW Producing Artistic Directors Geoff Elliott and Julia Rodriguez-Elliott with their inaugural alumni “Contributions to the Field” Award.

Originally based in a former Masonic Temple in Glendale, the company is also celebrating its fifth season in a state-of-the-art facility and a building of architectural distinction, with its historic façade designed by Edward Durrell Stone, noted for Radio City Music Hall, the Museum of Modern Art, and the John F. Kennedy Center. This venue has allowed ANW to expand its audience, surpassing its previous box office and attendance records each year there.

Helmed by Producing Artistic Directors Geoff Elliott and Julia Rodriguez-Elliott, who hold MFAs from San Francisco’s American Conservatory Theatre, A Noise Within delivers a seven-show repertory season and a wide range of educational programs to diverse audiences from Los Angeles County and well beyond. Voted “Best Theatre” by readers of *Time Out Los Angeles* and Reader Recommended by *Pasadena Weekly*, A Noise Within is indeed California’s Home for the Classics. www.anoisewithin.org

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