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NEWS RELEASE

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The Stage Mother of All Musicals Opens 2016-2017 Beck Center Season Unforgivingly hilarious *Ruthless!* leads eclectic line-up of productions starting September 16

Lakewood, OH—Beck Center for the Arts proudly opens its 2016-2017 theater season with the campy cult musical *Ruthless!* **September 16 through October 16, 2016** in the Mackey Theater. Show times are 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, and 3 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are now on sale. Buy early and save with promo code: **PIPI** to receive \$5 off each adult/senior ticket purchased by September 15. **This production contains strong language and content.**

Ruthless! is an Off-Broadway sensation featuring book and lyrics by **Joel Paley** and music by **Marvin Laird**. The winner of "Best Off-Broadway Musical" from the Outer Critics Circle, this story stars Tina Denmark—the greatest song-and-dance sensation to ever hit the third grade. When her school holds auditions for *Pippi in Tahiti*, Tina proves she will do anything to play the lead...anything! This outrageous production spoofs musicals such as *Gypsy* and *Mame*, as well as classic films including *The Bad Seed* and *All About Eve*. Even *The New York Times* agrees, "the fun comes from the sheer brazenness."

Beck Center's former artistic director, **William Roudebush**, returns to direct this hilarious musical for the new theater season. "*Ruthless!* is *Gypsy* on steroids. It is an unforgiving satirical romp through every show business cliché including backstage back stabbing and self-involved shameless self-promotion," remarked Roudebush. "How could I not want to direct this musical?"

With musical direction by **Larry Goodpaster** and choreography by **Martín Céspedes**, *Ruthless!* features Calista Zajac as Tina Denmark, and Lindsey Mitchell as ultimate stage mother Judy Denmark. They are joined by Matthew Wright as Sylvia St. Croix, Kate Michalski as Miss Thorn, Carla Petroski as Lita Encore, and Brittni Shambaugh Addison as Louise Lerman/Eve Allabout. Equity actors Mitchell and Wright appear courtesy of the Actors' Equity Association (AEA), the union of actors and stage managers.

Tickets are \$31 for adults, \$27 for seniors (65 and older), and \$12 for students with a valid I.D. A \$3 service fee per ticket will be applied at time of purchase. Preview Night on Thursday, September 15 is \$10 with general admission seating. Group discounts are available for parties of four or more. Purchase tickets online at beckcenter.org or call Customer Service at 216.521.2540 x10. Beck Center for the Arts is located at 17801 Detroit Avenue in Lakewood, just ten minutes west of downtown Cleveland. Free onsite parking is available.

This production of *Ruthless!* is presented through special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc. It is generously sponsored the residents of Cuyahoga County through Cuyahoga Arts and Culture and the Ohio Arts Council.

Ruthless! opens Beck Center's 2016-2017 theater season, which also includes the family favorite holiday production of Disney's *The Little Mermaid*. It also includes the regional premieres of *Body Awareness* by Pulitzer Prize winner Annie Baker, *Bring It On the Musical* by *Hamilton* mastermind Lin-Manuel Miranda, and *Really Really* by Helen Hayes New Playwright winner Paul Downs Colaizzo. This spectacular lineup is complimented by classics such as *The Dresser* and the Tony Award winning musical *City of Angels*. "I'm very excited by the balance in this season between regional premieres, as well as works that have been seen locally, though rarely," commented Artistic Director **Scott Spence**. "This is a terrific season to explore new titles and to have some very special guest artists return to our stages."

Beck Center for the Arts is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization that offers professional theater productions on two stages, arts education programming for all ages and abilities, including dance, music, theater, visual arts, and creative arts therapies for individuals with special needs, outreach education, and free gallery exhibitions.

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