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For Release: Friday, January 7th, 2022

Tweed & Company Theatre Assumes Operations of Two Hastings County Venues

On January 1, 2022, Tweed & Company Theatre assumed operations of two theatrical venues in Hastings County. The professional theatre company took ownership of the Marble Arts Centre (MAC) in Tweed, and signed a multi-year lease for the Bancroft Village Playhouse; both agreements were finalized in December.

Tweed & Co. was gifted ownership of the MAC - located in Actinolite, north of Tweed - from the Tweed & Area Arts Council. The theatre company had been renting the venue for its professional productions since 2010 and established a strong relationship with the Arts Council during that time. Operating the venue throughout the Covid-19 pandemic posed significant challenges, leading the Arts Council's Board of Directors to consider a change in ownership. Though they are stepping down from venue operations, the Arts Council will continue to be actively involved in the future of the MAC.

Vicki McCulloch, Chair of the T&AAC stated that the "MAC will still be 'our home' in many ways, and the Arts Council will continue to present programming there. Tweed & Co. have capacity, expertise, and a proven track record, continuing to grow as an arts and culture presence in the region. We look forward to continuing to work together with them now and into the future."

In Bancroft, Tweed & Co. was selected from a pool of applicants who submitted proposals to operate the Bancroft Village Playhouse. The Playhouse is owned by St. Paul's United Church of Bancroft and was previously managed by Hospice North Hastings. Hospice, similar to the T&AAC, faced new operational challenges brought on by the pandemic and ultimately decided to step down from their role. Tweed & Co. toured its nearly-sold-out production of *Hastings the Musical* to the Playhouse in 2018 and was eager to explore the possibilities for this venue.

"Tweed & Co.'s long-term goals have included the operation of multiple venues in Eastern Ontario for years," said General Manager, Emily Mewett. "We've seen exponential growth in these last few years, including the addition of two invaluable members to our administrative team and the ability to provide work to artists throughout the pandemic. To add assuming operations of two venues to this list is an absolute dream; one that would not have come true if it weren't for the tremendous support we have received along the way."

Tweed & Company Theatre is a charitable, not-for-profit organization operated by Tim Porter (Artistic Director), Emily Mewett (General Manager), Rebecca Ballarin (Artistic

Producer), Tricia Black (Creative Director), and Sarah Nairne (Development & Outreach Coordinator), and is overseen by a board of ten Directors local to Tweed and Bancroft.

“Our Board is extremely grateful to the T&AAC for the generous gifting of the Marble Arts Center and to St. Paul’s United Church for entrusting us with the operation of their Bancroft Village Playhouse,” said Don DeGenova, Tweed & Company Theatre President. “We look forward to staging theatrical productions including our original Canadian musicals in both of these beautiful theatres, each with amazing acoustics. We will continue to partner with the Arts Council and the Bancroft community to ensure that local talent and programming is a central pillar in our operation of both theatres.” DeGenova went on to note, “It has long been a dream of our Artistic Director Tim Porter, founder of Tweed & Company Theatre, to make Hastings County a theatre destination rivalling Drayton theatres in Southwestern Ontario. We are well on our way to making that a reality!”

Tweed & Co. will be presenting a full season of professional musical theatre in both venues, as well as operating youth training programs that will include March break and summer camp programs, and the opportunity for youth in Tweed and Bancroft to work with professional performers, directors and choreographers. The Company is continuing efforts to make both buildings fully accessible to patrons, staff and performers. Both venues will be available for rentals, one-night-only presentations, special events and more. Tweed & Co. is also encouraging local artists, creators, and performers to join its mailing list and to follow the company on social media to learn more about upcoming open houses and opportunities to connect with the artistic team on proposals (artistic performance and otherwise) for the venues.

“We are incredibly excited for the future of both of these venues, communities, and our entire region,” says Artistic Director Tim Porter. “We have long envisioned the possibilities that await here in Hastings County, and we can’t wait to present full seasons in these stunning venues, and continue on our path to make this region the next Stratford or Shaw. The future is bright here in Hastings...stay tuned.”

Tweed & Company Theatre will announce its 2022 season on February 1 and will offer season subscription packages and assigned seating for the first time. For more information on tickets, youth training programs, venue rentals or how you can get involved, please visit www.tweedandcompany.com or call the box office at 613-478-6060.

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