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For Immediate Release:

A VERY MERRY HOLIDAY CONCERT AND WINTER FUN

The Stonington Opera House will be featuring some of the area's best talent when well-known local performers come together for a Very Merry Holiday Concert on Saturday, December 16 at 7 pm. The lobby will open at 6 for free cocoa and cookies.

"We are excited to announce that "Waterbound", comprised of Frank Gotwals, Cindy Coombs, and David Quinby, will be performing along Sam Robbins & Friends, Tenor John McVeigh and Broadway star Fred Rose, Kathy O'Rourke, Tim Peper, and Jessica Moore," said Interim Executive Director, Pam Dewell. "Many people might remember Blue Hill resident Tim Peper from the snowball scenes in *Almost, Maine* last summer. And Artistic Director, Kathryn Markey, who plays concerts throughout New York and New England will not only be directing the concert but will be performing, too."

Thanks to the WF Whitman Foundation, the concert will be part of Opera House Arts' Live For \$5 series with adult tickets just \$5 and free admission for Hancock County students. "Local students are invited to attend all live performances at the Stonington Opera House for free thanks to proceeds from our Annual Gala and successful earnings over the summer months," said Dewell.

There will be many other offerings over the winter months with something to do each week at the Opera House. Last Thursday, guest host Frank Gotwals drew a large audience to listen to seven different performances by local musicians. Open Mic takes place each first Thursday of the month. Kathy O'Rourke will guest host in January and Renee Sewell is on the schedule for February. Dewell noted that "Live in the Lobby" events are funded in part by the Maine Community Foundation.

The third Thursday of each month, the Opera House hosts a Trivia Contest and this December, that falls on the Winter Solstice. Fin and Fern will be offering late night dinner reservations for Trivia contestants as well as firepits, s'mores and hot toddies. The December 21st contest will feature Jimmy Cook as guest host and the winning team will receive a Fin and Fern gift card.

Holiday blockbuster movies include *Napoleon* on December 22 – 24. Following that, *Wish* will be shown on December 29 – 31 at special early times. *In the Whale* comes to the Opera House

in late January, bringing the true story of the Provincetown fisherman who survived being engulfed by a humpback whale.

Dewell urges moviegoers to check local newspapers and OHA's website often as movies are always being added and the Opera House does its best to get new movies to Stonington whenever possible. "It's hard to compete with the cineplexes which get first dibs on new releases, but we will always get what we can before it goes to streaming. The Opera House really appreciates the support of everyone who chooses to watch movies at our little local theater. It's been fun to see things on a big screen again!"

The sixth performance of *Island Women Speak*, directed by Debbie Weil, returns to the Opera House stage on January 25th. This one-time performance will feature seven remarkable women spanning seven decades, from their 20s to their 70s. This year's theme is "A Hot Mess" and features Donna Brewer, Hallie Lartius, Liz Lincoln, Leslie McDonald, Julie Morringello, Su Oliver, and Donna Stinson.

The Town of Stonington will also be continuing its *Talk of the Town* series with future topics focusing on managing solid waste and ensuring adequate housing for our island workforce. The series is sponsored by the Island Institute. Watch our local papers and social media for dates and speakers.

"We are so very grateful for the support of our community and the many people who make it possible to provide an amazing range of performing art, entertainment, and contemporary topics here in Stonington," Dewell further added. "Please head over to an island restaurant before or after a show at the Opera House and help keep these hardworking businesses open during the long dark days of winter. And people coming from off-island can stay at one of the local motels and make it a whole weekend. Let's keep island dollars circulating on the island as long as we can by buying local."

Opera House Arts, a 501 [c] [3] nonprofit organization, was founded in 1999 to restore the 1912 Stonington Opera House, on the National Register of Historic Places, and its original purpose as a performance space and community cornerstone. Professional theater, movies, variety acts, music and dance, educational programs, and special events are offered year-round. For more information visit operahousearts.org.

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