

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

“Turning Thirty,” The Musical
Tom Willner’s Unique Play Turns Testicular Cancer into Song

Playwright and musician Tom Willner didn’t let a diagnosis of testicular cancer get him down. Instead, he let his illness inspire a series of songs that became the musical, “Turning Thirty,” which will be performed on Friday, October 9, 2009 at the American Cancer Society’s downtown location. All proceeds from the performance will be donated to the American Cancer Society.

Based on his personal experience with cancer, Willner penned a play that speaks to anyone whose life has ever been touched by the dreaded disease - and that would be most of us. “Turning Thirty” hits all the emotions cancer survivors experience, from fear and denial to determination and triumph.

Opening with the song “Life is Good,” the play demonstrates how quickly one’s life can change, especially for someone just leaving the twenties behind. Testicular cancer is particularly painful because it often robs its victims of the ability to have children, a subject addressed in the song “For A Child.”

While not a funny topic, Willner has managed to poke fun at his cancer, which he turns into the character “TC.” And yes, TC sings - “The Best Job in the World” is especially effective, delivered with a Grinch-like quality that makes you want to throw tomatoes at the character.

“Have a Ball” and “Masturbating in a Cup” have the audience giggling behind their hands, not quite sure how it is possible to actually laugh about the indignities inherent with this particular disease.

The play’s finale is a return to the opening tune, “Life is Good,” which is a reminder to us all that not only is life good, but it is precious and not to be taken for granted.

Willner is passionate about music. He began piano and organ lessons at age six and continued studying for a decade. As a teen, he began experimenting with music to determine where he wanted to go in the field. He wrote and recorded songs, and performed by himself and in various groups throughout high school and college. His diagnosis of testicular cancer came just after his thirtieth birthday. As a coping

mechanism, Tom wrote songs about the experience and eventually turned those songs into a musical play that touches and entertains audiences whenever it is performed.

“Turning Thirty” will be performed on October, 9, 2009 at the American Cancer Society, 250 Williams Street (formerly The Inforum) at noon. For more information on the play and how to obtain tickets, visit the Web site at www.turningthirty.org.

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