Wednesday, December 17, 2014
For Immediate Release

UT Department of Theatre & Film invited to take two of its productions on the road

The University of Toledo Department of Theatre & Film and its students received some well-earned recognition when they were invited to re-present two of their productions as part of two major theatre events—“Strip Tease” in Chicago and “The Adding Machine” in Cleveland.

The 2013 fall UT production of Slawomir Mrozek’s “Strip Tease” was presented earlier this month at the Chopin Theatre in Chicago. Managers at the Chopin Theatre invited UT to bring the production as part of the Chicago Humanities Festival. The one-act play, directed by UT associate professor of theatre and head of acting, Cornel Gabara, was invited to be part of an important theatre festival celebrating the work of playwrights Slawomir Mrozek and Zbigniew Herbert. The festival, titled Tribute to S. Mrozek and Z. Hebert, was sponsored by the Chopin Theatre, and the University of Illinois, Chicago and its Hejna Family Chair in Polish Language and Literature.

Performances of UT’s production of “Strip Tease,” were held December 5-7, 2014. The one-act play is a comedic social commentary that explores the response of two characters faced with a voiceless and faceless authority figure that seems to be demanding that they shed not only their clothing but their dignity as well. But is it really asking or are they just all too willing to comply with what they do not understand? Through comic critique, the play invokes the social and political quirks of modern human beings.

Judges from the regional Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festivals attend members’ local productions and choose the best ones for invitation to the festival. This year’s UT production of “The Adding Machine,” written by American playwright Elmer Rice and directed by UT theatre lecturer Irene Alby, was invited to the upcoming Region II
KC ACTF. The regional festival will be held in Cleveland where UT’s production of “The Adding Machine” will be performed at the Ohio Theater in Playhouse Square on January 6. Should it be well received there, it will have the chance to perform at the national 47th Annual KC ACTF in Washington, D.C. in April.

“The Adding Machine” follows the story of an ordinary accountant, Mr. Zero, who murders his boss after learning he will be replaced at work by an adding machine. This action – his only unique and spontaneous act after a lifetime of obedience – and its consequences are explored in Rice’s expressionistic play. After he is sentenced and executed for murder, Mr. Zero finds his afterlife to be a most unexpected experience. Funny, sad, poignant and startling, this expressionist, metaphorical play is a visually rich contemplation on right and wrong, life and death.

UT’s production presents the action of the play as coordinated movement that is almost dance-like. All of the set pieces such as the cage-like office, which also transforms into Mr. Zero’s cell, as well as the actors, move in a kind of “dance” that makes the UT production a truly unique and creative rendering of the play.

Chopin Theatre web site
http://www.chopintheatre.com/event.php?id=2451&pageId=archives

KC ACTF Region II web site
http://kcactf2.org/

###