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PRESS CONTACT: David Elzer
818/508-1754

MEDIA ALERT FOR THEATRE EDITORS AND REVIEWERS
AND CALENDAR LISTINGS

**LA MIRADA THEATRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS &
MC COY RIGBY ENTERTAINMENT**
present the Fourth Production of their 2006/2007 Season!

THE RETURN OF THE ORIGINAL CAST of

GREATER TUNA

Written by Jaston Williams, Joe Sears, & Ed Howard

*Limited Engagement Opens April 13 at
La Mirada Theatre for the Performing Arts!*
(Press Opening Saturday, April 14)

"The Audience all but Exploded the Theatre With Laughter" -- New York Post

March 12, 2007...La Mirada, Calif...LA MIRADA THEATRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS & MC COY RIGBY ENTERTAINMENT present the fourth production of their 2006-2007 season, the original cast of the hilarious comedy, **GREATER TUNA**, written by Jaston Williams, Joe Sears and Ed Howard. **GREATER TUNA** will begin performances on Friday, April 13 (with a press opening on Saturday, April 14) and will run through Sunday, April 29 at La Mirada Theatre for the Performing Arts, 14900 La Mirada Boulevard in La Mirada, near the intersection of Rosecrans Avenue.

GREATER TUNA's master comedians Joe Sears and Jaston Williams are back by overwhelming demand with their deft comedic timing, trademark characterizations and split-second costume changes, portraying all 20 polyester-clad citizens of Tuna, Texas' third smallest town where the Lion's Club is too liberal and Patsy Cline never dies!

Although written and first performed over twenty years ago, the residents of Tuna could not be more up-to-date. Contemporary politicians and the Religious Right have put the basis for the comedy in **GREATER TUNA** right back on the front pages of today's newspapers. Vera Carp is still leading the Smut Snatchers of the New Order in their campaign to clear the library shelves of dirty books like "Huckleberry Finn" and "Romeo and Juliet," Elmer Walkins speaks up for the KKK, Petey Fisk argues for animal rights, and a Celebrity Murder is on the front page of the papers. UFO Sightings? A Fat, Overbearing Talk Show Host? Celebrity Murder? It's not this week's cover of Time Magazine, it's **GREATER TUNA** and it's back and funnier than ever!

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ABOUT THE "TUNA, TEXAS" HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The mythical third smallest town in the Lone Star State has become home to the most successful stage trilogy of all time. Few productions have sustained the longevity and popularity that the original show in the series, **GREATER TUNA**, has enjoyed over the years. The Tuna legend is now a matter of history - a history we are happy to share with you today.

The show began in Austin, Texas in 1981 as a simple party skit based on a political cartoon. Talented creators Joe Sears, Jaston Williams and Ed Howard were the imaginative authors that parlayed the sketch into a critically acclaimed production which has entertained audiences across the country ever since.

GREATER TUNA is the hilarious comedy that parodies small-town Texas with the city slogan "The Lion's Club is too liberal and Patsy Cline never dies." The eclectic band of citizens that make up this town are portrayed by only two performers, making this satire on life in rural America even more delightful as they depict all of the inhabitants of Tuna -- men, women, children and animals.

The early tour dates found an instant audience coast to coast as the show played to packed houses in San Francisco, Atlanta, Houston and Hartford before original stars Joe Sears and Jaston Williams found themselves performing **GREATER TUNA** for over a year Off-Broadway at Circle in the Square Theatre. This successful New York run led to an HBO special produced by Norman Lear which took the "Tuna" phenomenon to every household in America.

By 1985, **GREATER TUNA** was the most produced play in the United States with schools, colleges, community and professional theatres all anxious to add the bit comedy to their repertoire. Meanwhile, Joe Sears and Jaston Williams were continuing their whirlwind tours in such prestigious venues as the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, the Marines Memorial Theatre in San Francisco and the American Spoleto Festival.

GREATER TUNA's popularity crossed the Atlantic in 1988 as the highlight of Scotland's famed Edinburgh Festival. Back at home, the Marines Memorial Theatre in San Francisco began a local production of **GREATER TUNA**, which ran continuously for a record-breaking seven years.

The popularity of **GREATER TUNA** has even extended to the most distinguished home in the country, with Command Performances at the White House upon the invitation of President and Mrs. Bush in 1990 and again in 1991.

The demand for a sequel became so great that writers Jaston Williams, Joe Sears and Ed Howard created **A TUNA CHRISTMAS**, in which the much beloved citizens of Tuna cope with a blizzard of seasonal traumas and delivering Yuletide chuckles to Tuna fans.

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In December of 1994, **A TUNA CHRISTMAS** took Broadway by storm, playing to rave reviews and turning the toughest New York critics into Tuna fans. That year, Joe Sears was presented with the esteemed honor of a Tony Award nomination for Best Actor in a Play. In 1995 a second team of actors began a run of **GREATER TUNA** in Dallas that entertained audiences at the Tuna Little Theatre, which became Dallas' longest running play. November 1997 marked the 1000th performance of **A TUNA CHRISTMAS** as it continues to delight audiences around the country each holiday season.

To complete the Tuna trilogy, creators Jaston Williams and Joe Sears unveiled **RED, WHITE AND TUNA** to record breaking box office grosses throughout Texas in the summer of 1998. This final chapter tells the deliciously insane tale of the denizens of Tuna as they celebrate the Fourth of July and the Tuna High School Reunion. You just can't breathe tomorrow's air until you see who wins Tuna's Reunion Queen Contest.

Joe Sears and Jaston Williams' 29-year stage partnership has outlasted the comic duos of Laurel and Hardy, Abbott and Costello and Martin and Lewis.

ABOUT THE "TUNA" CREATIVE TEAM

JOE SEARS (Co-Author/Actor) As co-author and costar of the wildly successful Tuna trilogy, Mr. Sears has been touring extensively with these productions since 1982. His sixth tour of *A Tuna Christmas* included his Broadway debut for which he received a 1995 Tony Award-nomination for Best Actor in a Play. The first record-breaking year included a command performance for President and Mrs. George Bush at the White House. Mr. Sears' Washington, D.C. engagement of *A Tuna Christmas* earned him his third nomination for the Helen Hayes Award for Best Actor. *A Tuna Christmas* was also nominated for Best Play. Mr. Sears also received nominations in 1984 and 1988 for the Helen Hayes Award for his performance in *Greater Tuna*. He originated these roles Off-Broadway when *Greater Tuna* premiered in 1982 and has performed in the highly successful national tours and co-wrote and starred in the Embassy Television/Norman Lear Special of "Greater Tuna" which aired on HBO. Mr. Sears has been acting professionally for over 30 years. His credits include a season with Theatre Works USA in New York, summer stock, outdoor drama, television and eight Shakespeare plays. Among his many roles are Bottom and Thisby in two separate productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and the Doctor in *Three Sisters*. He appeared with Fannie Flagg ("Fried Green Tomatoes") in *The Foreigner* and later he would play Fannie's role and attributes his success to her. Mr. Sears has appeared on the David Letterman and Merv Griffin shows and received a Los Angeles Drama-Logue Award for his writing and performance of *Greater Tuna*. Mr. Sears received the 1993 Los Angeles Drama-Logue Award for Best Actor in *A Tuna Christmas*. He performed in the musical comedy *The Fantasticks* at the Ford's Theatre in Washington, DC and at Casa Mañana Theatre in Fort Worth. He made his movie debut with Tommy Lee Jones and Matt Damon in "The Good Old Boys." Mr. Sears is the playwright for the Cherokee Nation's outdoor drama *Trail of Tears*, which runs during the summer months in Tahlequah, OK. Mr. Sears was awarded the Theatre LA Ovation Award for Best Actor 1999. He recently completed the Libretto (along with Mr. Williams) for the new Comic Opera *Ochelata's Wedding*, commissioned by the OK Mozart International Music Festival. He and Austin-Nashville songwriter Kimmie Rhodes are now working on a new musical entitled *Doin' God's Chores*, an Austin workshop production. Mr. Sears also owns and operates Cody Stage, a summer stock theatre company in Cody, WY.

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JASTON WILLAMS (Co-Author/Actor) Mr. Williams is co-author and co-star of the Tuna Trilogy and has been creating the citizens of Tuna since 1982. The show has played on and off Broadway, at the Kennedy Center, the Edinburgh International Arts Festival, the Spoleto Festival U.S.A. and all over America. He has received Washington D.C. 's Helen Hayes Award nominations for *A Tuna Christmas* and *Red, White And Tuna* as well as the San Francisco Bay Area, Critics Award for *Greater Tuna*. Mr. Williams received the L.A. Drama-Logue Award for both *Greater Tuna* and *A Tuna Christmas*. *A Tuna Christmas* was published in "Best Plays of 1995." For several years, Mr. Williams toured in Larry Shue's *The Foreigner*, for which he received a Helen Hayes Award nomination for Best Actor. He performed in *The Fantasticks* at Washington's Ford's Theatre and directed the musical *Bad Girl's Upset By The Truth* at Atlanta's Alliance Theatre. Mr. Williams received the Texas Governor's Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Arts by a Native Texan and has performed at the White House on three occasions. In his hometown of Austin, Texas, Mr. Williams has appeared at the State Theatre in Eugene Ionesco's *The Chairs* and at Zachary Scott Theatre in Jay Presson Allen's *Tru*, for which he received the Austin Critics Table Award for Best Actor in a drama. He most recently appeared at Zachary Scott Theatre in *The Laramie Project*. His newest play, *Romeo And Thorazine*, work-shopped at Zachary Scott Theatre in November 2001. He work-shopped his autobiographical one-man show *I'm Not Lying* to critical acclaim at Austin's State Theatre of Texas and returned it there for a full production in February of 2004. He has two new plays in progress, *Morning Star* and *A Little Iffy*.

CHARLES H. DUGGAN (Producer) Charles has owned and operated the Marines Memorial Theatre in San Francisco since 1983. He has produced on and off Broadway (*A Tuna Christmas*, *If Memory Serves* starring Elizabeth Ashley, *K-2*, *Private Lives* starring Joan Collins, *The Twilight of the Golds*, *Feast of Fools*), in London (*Jeeves Takes Charge* starring Edward Duke) and in most major U. S. cities working with, among others, Julie Harris, Sir Ian McKellen, Lynn Redgrave, Stacy Keach, Carol Channing, Luis Valdez, Cloris Leachman, Rene Auberjonois, Imogene Coca, Phyllis Diller, Sid Caesar, Peggy Lee, Jose Greco, Barbara Rush, Barbara Cook and Sammy Cahn. He served as the co-producer on the feature film version of "The Twilight of the Golds" starring Faye Dunaway and Brendan Fraser. He has produced Joe Sears and Jaston Williams in the continuing national tours of *Greater Tuna*, *A Tuna Christmas*, and *Red, White and Tuna* since 1984.

ED HOWARD (Co-Author, Director) is co-author of *Greater Tuna*, *A Tuna Christmas*, *Red, White and Tuna*, *Splendor*, *The Tempest Tossed*, a musical with music by Dennis West, and *Coming Attractions*, based on the novel "Daisy Fay and the Miracle Man" by Fannie Flagg. Off-Broadway, he has directed *Greater Tuna* and *Laughing Stock* written by Romulus Linney and starring Frances Sternhagen. On Broadway he directed *A Tuna Christmas*.

GREATER TUNA has assembled an award-winning design team. The set design is by Kevin Rutpnik. The lighting design is by Root Choyce. The sound design is by Ken Huncovsky. The costume design is by Linda Fisher.

GREATER TUNA will open Friday, April 13 and run for three weeks through Sunday, April 29. Performances will be Tuesday through Thursdays at 7:30 p.m; Fridays at 8 p.m.; Saturdays at 2:00 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2:00 and 7 p.m. (no matinee performance on April 14 or evening performance on April 15). Tickets are \$45 and \$37.50 and can be purchased at La Mirada Theatre's Web site, lamiradatheatre.com. Student, Senior, Children and group discounts are available. For more information, call the La Mirada Theatre Box Office at (562) 944-9801 or (714) 994-6310.

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LA MIRADA THEATRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS is located at 14900 La Mirada Boulevard in La Mirada, near the intersection of Rosecrans Avenue where the 91 and 5 freeways meet. Parking is free.

To schedule press interviews, photos, press comps or for additional information, please contact David Elzer/DEMAND PR at 818/508-1754 or by e-mail at ELZERD@aol.com or visit www.demandpr.com. Photos and press information also available at lamiradatheatre.com.

LA MIRADA THEATRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, now in its 29th year, has been hailed by the Los Angeles Times as "one of the best Broadway-style houses in Southern California." This beautiful state-of-the-art theatre has been producing quality productions for its Southern California audiences since 1977. The theatre has produced several National Tours and is the recipient of many accolades including Ovation and Emmy Awards and Tony Award nominations. The theatre is located at 14900 La Mirada Boulevard in La Mirada, near the intersection of Rosecrans Avenue where the 91 and 5 freeways meet. Parking is theatre-adjacent and free. For further information 562-944-9801 or visit www.lamiradatheatre.com.

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McCOY RIGBY ENTERTAINMENT combines the talents of musical theatre star Cathy Rigby with Tom McCoy's extensive production and theatrical experience and has become one of the nation's premier theatrical production companies. Credits include Tony-nominated Broadway shows, long-running national tours, multiple-award-winning Los Angeles stage productions, and hit TV specials.

The number of major theatrical awards garnered by McCoy Rigby Entertainment includes 3 Ovation Awards, 25 Drama-Logues, 3 Backstage Garland Awards and 3 Tony nominations, 20 Ovation nominations and 8 NAACP award nominations for the touring production of "Jesus Christ Superstar." In addition, the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences awarded McCoy Rigby Entertainment an Emmy for Best Scene Design as part of four nominations for the A&E network production of "Peter Pan." www.mccoyrigby.com

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