



# MEDIA

FOR RELEASE: July 30, 2007  
Contact: 714-690-2900 Press@phantomprojects.com

## **PHANTOM PROJECTS EDUCATIONAL THEATRE GROUP ANNOUNCES PLAY TITLES FOR ITS 2007-08 SEASON, OPENING OCTOBER 25 WITH ABRIDGED SHAKESPEARE**

LA MIRADA, CA. — Phantom Projects Educational Theatre Group, which brings teens and adults together as actors and audience, has announced its 2007-08 Season. A blend of classic and socially conscious plays will be offered at the La Mirada Theatre for the Performing Arts and in tours to local schools.

Phantom Projects' 11th season will again combine three fully staged productions in La Mirada, five touring productions to schools in Los Angeles and Orange Counties, and a three-week Young Artist Workshop that ends with a showcase before a paying audience.

The three productions in La Mirada are *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)* on October 25, *The Diary of Anne Frank* on February 28, and *Out, Out, Brief Candle* on April 3.

As a bonus, Phantom Projects will also stage its first Christmas show at the La Mirada Theatre for the Performing Arts on December 15 at 7 p.m.

The five touring productions include one for Grades K-5 – *Stuart Little*, available April-June – and four for Grades 6-12: *Out, Out, Brief Candle*, the same drug and alcohol prevention show mounted as part of the season (available October-November); *The Center of the Universe*, which addresses prejudice (January-April); *Through These Eyes*, about poor self-image and eating disorders (March-May); and *No Way to Treat a Lady*, concerning teen pregnancy (April-May).

The Young Artist Workshop will begin on July 16, 2008 and present its showcase production at the La Mirada Theatre on August 2. It brings together aspiring theater artists between the ages of 15 and 25 to merge their unique talents – whether writing, directing, acting, singing, dancing, etc. – in a collaborative effort to develop one-act plays and performance pieces by members of the group. All are asked to contribute in more than one area over the three-week rehearsal process leading up to the public performance.

On December 15, Phantom Projects will celebrate the holidays by launching a tradition of its own based on Mexico's *Tradiciones de Oro: 'Antigues y Nuevas.'* It will be a night of colorful decorative lights and exquisite dancing, bringing together old and new traditions from Mexico and the United States. This production will feature the award-winning Paso de Oro Dance Company led by Alicia Mendibles Vaca.

"This schedule is a healthy expansion over previous seasons," said Phantom Projects Producing Artistic Director Steve Cisneros, who founded the company in 1996 at the age of 17, "Not only do we have Shakespeare and *Anne Frank*, both regular parts of high school curricula, we have a powerful issue play on the timely subject of substance abuse. I'm excited to be able to offer something for teens and their families to enjoy together during the holidays and also look forward to our second annual Young Artist Workshop."

### **THE LA MIRADA PRODUCTIONS**

*The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)* by Adam Long, Daniel Singer & Jess Winfield and directed by Janet Miller is an irresistibly light-hearted introduction to the Bard. All 37 of his plays are performed in 97 minutes in an irreverent, fast-paced romp through the canon. Three actors portray the key heroes, villains, kings, servants and damsels in distress in a play that was London's longest-running comedy. It is a deceptively intelligent take on the English language's most cherished works, done in wildly funny style that is accessible to everyone. There will be two performances on October 25 at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.

*The Diary of Anne Frank* by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett has been re-adapted by Wendy Kesselman. In the play based on the extraordinary diary kept by Miss Frank while in hiding from the Nazis, this bright young girl again emerges from history as a living, lyrical, intensely gifted writer able to confront her rapidly changing life and the increasing horror of her time. With astonishing honesty, wit and determination she provided a portrait of eight people hiding in a concealed storage attic during World War II. It is a story at once historic and still timely as we enter the 21st Century with persecuted families around the globe. There will be two performances on February 28 at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.

*Out, Out, Brief Candle* by Bruce Gevirtzman, paints a realistic picture of teen drug and alcohol use, and its all-too-real and deadly consequences. The play, which also will be part of the touring schedule in a separate production, brings the harsh truth into focus, without sentimentality or glorification. Audiences will relate to the real-life issues acted out on stage; they will also meet

teens during the post-performance discussion who have overcome obstacles in their own road to recovery. In candid and deeply personal accounts, cast members will share how drugs and alcohol can and have impacted their young lives. There will be two performances on April 3 at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Performances of these three productions will be at the La Mirada Theatre for the Performing Arts. Morning performances are \$6 and the evening show tickets are \$15, with reduced prices of \$12 for High School students and \$6 for Middle School students.

## **THE TOURS**

The five touring productions available between October 2007 and May 2008 include one for Grades K-5 and four for grades 6-12.

*Stuart Little* will be available for tours to students in Grades K-5 from April to June. Based on E.B. White's popular children's story and offering a valuable lesson on getting along with those different from you, *Stuart Little* follows the tale of a mouse born into a human family.

The four touring productions for older students, all by La Mirada High School teacher Bruce Gevirtzman and directed by Cisneros, will be *Out, Out, Brief Candle*, a drug and alcohol prevention show (October-November); *The Center of the Universe*, addressing prejudice (January-April); *Through These Eyes*, about poor self-image and eating disorders (March-May); and *No Way to Treat a Lady*, concerning teen pregnancy (April-May).

*Through These Eyes* examines the painful causes and effects of teenage eating disorders. Introduced in May 2007 as part of Phantom Project's 10th Anniversary Season, *Through These Eyes* received strong audience feedback during post-show discussions. Teenagers clearly appreciated this straight-talking dramatization of an issue that, despite the absence of reliable statistics, is something that concerns a vast number of teens who are usually too ashamed to talk about it. Sometimes they are not even aware they have the problem. *Through These Eyes* follows the lives of a group of teens struggling to live up to the standards of society, the media, their friends, and the vision they see of themselves everyday in the mirror. This brand new play is a must-see for teens, and their parents.

*Out, Out, Brief Candle*, the same drug and alcohol prevention show mounted as part of the season (see description above) will be available in October and November in a separate touring production.

Marileyn Castro, a Buena Park High School parent, wrote after attending a performance, “Kudos to the kids on the show who were brave enough to share their experience with substance abuse, whether it was from their own personal experience, or someone they cared about. I applaud Bruce Gevirtzman for his ingenious approach to addressing one of the most complicated and detrimental issues facing the children of today.

*The Center of the Universe* attacks the problem of prejudice, racism, and violence in a compelling drama centered around two high school sweethearts torn apart by a senseless act of cruelty. Through stories from slavery days and the Holocaust, woven with events inspired by today's headlines, audiences gain new perspective on the present and a timeless message about the value of human life.

Kristin Velazquez, the Safe School Coordinator for Ridgecrest Intermediate School, called a recent tour of *The Center of the Universe* “the highlight of Yellow Ribbon Week at Ridgecrest. The messages of tolerance and respect, and the importance of every human life deeply moved our students and staff.”

*No Way to Treat a Lady*, Phantom Project’s original play about teen pregnancy, is based on true stories from teens struggling with parenting while still of high school age. A cast of young actors tell the story of a pregnant teen, a baby with HIV and a young couple at the crossroads of their relationships. *No Way to Treat a Lady* seeks to create a realistic portrayal of today's youth with a simple message about alternatives.

Holly Mora, a counselor with Dexter Intermediate School, thanked the program for “giving teens what they really need: a dose of reality.”

### **MORE INFORMATION**

*Stuart Little* can be booked at any Los Angeles or Orange County elementary school or community center for \$750 for a single performance, with multiple performance discounts of \$350 for two, and \$700 for three.

The four productions for Grades 6-12 may be booked for \$375, with discounts for multiple bookings of \$100 off two and \$250 when booking three.

For more information, to purchase tickets or book a touring production, call 714-690-2900 or visit [PhantomProjects.com](http://PhantomProjects.com).

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