



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Moonlight Stage Productions Closes 2011 Winter Season with *Foxfire*

VISTA, CA – A heartfelt drama will mix with live bluegrass music onstage when Moonlight Stage Productions presents Susan Cooper and Hume Cronyn's play **FOXFIRE** from Thursday, March 24 through Sunday, April 10 at the AVO Playhouse. Tickets, priced \$22-\$30, are on sale now through the VisTix Ticket Office at (760) 724-2110 and online at moonlightstage.com. **FOXFIRE** features a cast of well-known San Diego actors and is being helmed by Director Kathy Brombacher with Associate Guest Director Howard Bickle, Jr.

FOXFIRE premiered on Broadway in 1982 starring Jessica Tandy, but the play's roots go back decades when, in 1966, a Georgia high school teacher and his students embarked on a mission to chronicle the older residents of Rabun County documenting the skills, traditions, experiences and history of the Appalachian culture. The *Foxfire* project, which still exists, has produced books, records, videotapes, a museum, web site, an ongoing magazine, the Broadway play and its film version.

In the stage version of **FOXFIRE**, we meet Annie Nations (**Jill Drexler**), an indomitable Appalachian widow of 79, who lives on her mountain farm with the acerbic ghost of her husband, Hector (**Charlie Riendeau**). Her tranquility is threatened by a brash real estate developer (**Howard Bickle, Jr.**) who wants to turn her land into a vacation resort; and by concern over her son, Dillard (**Ted Leib**), a country singer who has come home to convince his mother to leave the mountain. Annie's battle to decide her future takes her through some funny, touching, and magical flashbacks to her life with Hector. Dillard, still singing the music which used to infuriate his father, has an exuberant scene in which the audience becomes his public at a fairground concert. Can Dillard woo his mother away from the life she's known for seven decades? Will development swallow up the family farm? Only Annie can decide. Other cast members are **Sharon Wezelman** as family friend Holly Burrell and **Fred Harlow** as the Doctor. The live, onstage bluegrass band will be members of Vista-based "**Needle in a Haystack**," a family of bluegrass musicians.

The creative team includes N. Dixon Fish (Scenic Design), Paul A. Canaletti, Jr. (Lighting Design), Peter Hashagen (Sound Design), Roslyn Lehman and Renetta Lloyd (Costume Design), Bonnie Durben (Properties), Ted Leib (Musical Coordinator), and Sarah Ahlquist (Stage Manager).

ABOUT THE COMPANY

HOWARD BICKLE, JR. (Prince Carpenter/Associate Guest Director) AVO Playhouse credits: BAREFOOT IN THE PARK, RING ROUND THE MOON, THE FOREIGNER, DRIVING MISS DAISY, MOON OVER BUFFALO, SYLVIA, TO GILLIAN ON HER 37TH BIRTHDAY, SEE HOW THEY RUN, LOST IN YONKERS, and THE FANTASTICKS. Moonlight Amphitheatre credits: RAGTIME THE MUSICAL, DAMN YANKEES, CRAZY FOR YOU, GREASE, SOUTH PACIFIC, and GYPSY. Locally Howard has performed, directed, or taught for The Old Globe, La Jolla Playhouse, Lamb's Players Theatre, North Coast Repertory Theatre, San Diego Repertory Theatre, Intrepid Shakespeare Company, Scripps Ranch Theatre, and The Theatre in Old Town.

JILL DREXLER (Annie Nations) wishes with all her heart that Sandra Ellis-Troy was playing the role of Annie in this production of FOXFIRE, but since Sandy can't, she will do it in her honor. It is a privilege to work with the lovely people at Moonlight again. Previous roles at the AVO Playhouse include RING ROUND THE MOON, MOON OVER BUFFALO, and YOU NEVER CAN TELL. Other favorite roles include TORCH SONG TRILOGY and FIT TO BE TIED (Patté award, Critics Circle award) Diversionary Theatre; WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE, BURIED CHILD, THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK, and THE SISTERS ROSENSWIEG, North Coast Repertory Theatre; PAINTING CHURCHES, Scripps Ranch Theatre, where Ms. Drexler is Artistic Director.

FRED HARLOW (Doctor) is flushed with excitement to make his Moonlight debut. Fred was born in Tulsa, OK and lived in NYC for 17 years where he appeared in nearly 50 Off and Off Off Broadway productions. In 1996 he participated in the Actors Alliance Festival in San Diego and moved to the west coast a year later. He's worked at Diversionary Theatre, Moxie Theatre, North Coast Repertory Theatre, Starlight Musical Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, The Globe and many others. Favorite local credits: LA BETE (Valere), Fritz, THE BEST MISTAKE (Roy), Playwrights Project, A TUNA CHRISTMAS, Compass Theatre.

TED LEIB (Dillard Nations/Musical Coordinator) returns to the AVO Playhouse stage for the first time since playing Tony Hendon in LUCKY STIFF in 2003. Moonlight Stage Productions: THE BOYS NEXT DOOR (Jack), RAGTIME THE MUSICAL (Admiral Peary), GUYS AND DOLLS (Lieutenant Branigan), and SWEET CHARITY (Manfred). Credits elsewhere: BACKWARDS IN HIGH HEELS (Jack Culpepper), and BRIGADOON (Jeff Douglas), Fullerton Music Theatre. Also a writer and director, Ted has directed for Stages Theatre (PIRATES OF PENZANCE), Hunger Artists (Tracy Letts' BUG), Vanguard (BUS STOP), and the Orange County Pavilion (FOREVER PLAID, THE 12 PLAYS OF CHRISTMAS). Lighting Designer credits: THE LION IN WINTER, FOREVER PLAID, and BUG; Sound Designer credits: ONE FLEA SPARE, BUG, and 12 PLAYS.

CHARLIE RIENDEAU (Hector Nations) AVO Playhouse credits: THE FOREIGNER, BEDROOM FARCE, HAYFEVER, and ON GOLDEN POND. He has also appeared in Broadway Theatre's PLAZA SUITE and LION IN WINTER for which he received a Patté Award for best actor. Elsewhere: I'M NOT RAPPAPORT, and ARSENIC AND OLD LACE, Scripps Ranch Theatre; RIDE DOWN MT. MORGAN, Poway Performing Arts Center; DIARY OF ANNE FRANK, TALLEYS FOLLY, THE ADJUSTMENT, BURIED CHILD, THE HEIRESS, and DEFYING GRAVITY, North Coast Repertory Theatre; VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE and OF MICE AND MEN, Renaissance Theatre. SECRET LIFE OF EMILY DICKINSON, New York: Lynx Theatre; AND THERE WILL COME SOFT RAINS, London: Bradbury Theatre.

SHARON WEZELMAN (Holly Burrell) is proud to be making her San Diego acting debut at the AVO Playhouse and is excited to finally put all of her acting training to good use! She has a BA in Theatre from UCLA, where she was in both the Acting Track and the Directing Continuum, and holds an MFA in acting from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Sharon also enjoys the technical side of theater. She has had the pleasure of working at La Jolla Playhouse in the Wardrobe, Electrics, and Sound departments.

NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK (Stony Lonesome Band) is a local group of musicians that began playing together eight years ago in a home school music program. Largely self-taught, their natural talent and love of music is evident in the wide variety of old-time, Celtic, country, and traditional bluegrass tunes they select for their repertoire. Their driving energy and creativity makes them a local favorite at community and private events, and the band is also a regular at the Vista Viking Festival every year. The band members are: Jonathan Broberg (banjo), Rebecca Broberg (fiddle), Joshua Broberg (guitar), Brent Wong (mandolin), and Tim Broberg (bass).

KATHY BROMBACHER (Producing Artistic Director/FOXFIRE Director) the original founder of Moonlight's Summer Musicals and Winter Playhouse seasons, has produced or directed over 150 musicals and plays since 1981. Directorial credits include: OKLAHOMA!, THE FOREIGNER, THE MAGIC FIRE, THE MOST HAPPY FELLA (co-directed), SYLVIA, RAGTIME THE MUSICAL, THE SPITFIRE GRILL, SEUSSICAL THE MUSICAL, and NOISES OFF. Kathy's most recent awards include: Patté Awards for Best Ensemble, (THE MAGIC FIRE in 2007), and for Lifetime Achievement in 2006 as well as a Craig Noel Award for Theatrical Trailblazer in 2005 from the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle. Kathy holds an MFA from the University of Denver and a BA in Theatre from the University of Redlands.

TICKET INFORMATION

\$30 for adults

\$28 for seniors/students/military

\$22 for students 12 and younger

Beginning 30-minutes prior to each performance, students with a valid student ID may purchase a \$15 student rush ticket, subject to availability.

Tickets are on sale now at the VisTix ticket office, located at the Vista Civic Center, 200 Civic Center Drive, weekdays from Noon to 5:00 pm. Tickets can be purchased by phone during the same hours by calling (760) 724-2110. Tickets are also on sale online at www.moonlightstage.com. The box office at performances opens one hour prior to curtain.

AVO PLAYHOUSE

The AVO Playhouse is located in the heart of the Vista Village and is located downtown at 303 Main Street. Parking is free. The Vista Village offers numerous dining options, all within walking distance of the AVO Playhouse. For weekend performances, consider taking the Sprinter to the Vista Transit Center which is a short walk from the AVO. For more information on amenities, visit www.moonlightstage.com.

SPECIAL EVENTS

"Talk-Back Forums" are offered after each Friday evening performance. These are informal

discussions with the cast enabling the audience to engage in a dialogue with and ask questions of the company.

ABOUT MOONLIGHT STAGE PRODUCTIONS

Moonlight Stage Productions is the cultural arts program of the City of Vista and is partially funded by its non-profit fund-raising arm the Moonlight Cultural Foundation. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Kathy Brombacher and Managing Director Daniel Kays, Moonlight is an award-winning theatre company receiving accolades from the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle and the Patté Awards for Theater Excellence among others. In addition to its popular Summer Season outdoors at the 2000-person capacity Moonlight Amphitheatre, the company moves indoor each winter to present a three-show season of intimate plays and musicals at the 300-seat AVO Playhouse located in the Vista Village.

CALENDAR INFORMATION

Foxfire

Presented by Moonlight Stage Productions

March 24-April 10

Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays at 7:30 pm

Saturdays and Sundays at 2:00 pm

AVO Playhouse

303 Main Street, Vista

Tickets: \$22-\$30

Tickets/information: (760) 724-2110

Website: www.moonlightstage.com

MORE ABOUT FOXFIRE

Foxfire began in 1966 with an English teacher's effort to get his students involved in their education and the history and culture of Rabun County, GA. A magazine, published in early 1967, was the first effort, and the students named their publication *Foxfire* after the blue-green glow given off by bioluminescent lichens growing on decaying logs. In 1972, Doubleday began anthologizing the magazine into a series of books. Twelve volumes have been published, including special collections that have offered cookbooks amongst other topics that have an Appalachian theme. Today, the Foxfire project continues with a biannual magazine written by high school students that cover a wide variety of topics. Foxfire has spawned a grassroots movement of "cultural journalism" programs linked to curriculum reform throughout the United States and the world. The Foxfire model has influenced classrooms in 47 states, as well as in such faraway locations as Japan, Australia, Scotland, Costa Rica, Guam, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic.

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