

DEMAND PR

David Elzer Marketing AND Public Relations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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 Third Production of their 2007/2008 Season!

DRIVING MISS DAISY

Written by Alfred Uhry

Directed by Brian Kite

Starring Michael Learned

***Limited Engagement begins February 1, 2008
at La Mirada Theatre for the Performing Arts!***

(Press Opening Saturday, February 2)

January 2, 2008...La Mirada, Calif...LA MIRADA THEATRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS & MC COY RIGBY ENTERTAINMENT present the third production of their 2007-2008 season, **DRIVING MISS DAISY**, written by Alfred Uhry, directed by Brian Kite (*Proof*) and starring Emmy Award-winning actress Michael Learned ("The Waltons"). **DRIVING MISS DAISY** will begin performances on Friday, February 1 (with a press opening on Saturday, February 2) and will run through Sunday, February 17 at La Mirada Theatre for the Performing Arts, 14900 La Mirada Boulevard in La Mirada, near the intersection of Rosecrans Avenue.

Alfred Uhry's much awarded play is about the relationship an elderly Jewish lady shares with her African-American chauffer, over a span of several decades. It's a funny, warm and engaging comedy that effectively captures the blossoming friendship between two very unlikely people.

This was Mr. Uhry's first play after writing for the musical theater for twenty-five years. It was originally slated to run for five weeks at a small theater in New York City, however, it proved so popular that it moved to a larger theater where it ran for about three years. Uhry also won the Pulitzer Prize in 1988. **DRIVING MISS DAISY** went on to become an equally successful movie, winning best picture, best actress, and best screenplay adaptation for Uhry.

(more)

ABOUT THE CREATIVE TEAM

ALFRED UHRY (Playwright) was born in 1936 to an upper-middle-class German-Jewish family in Atlanta, Georgia. His father was a furniture designer and artist, and his mother was a social worker. He attended Brown University in Rhode Island, graduating with a degree in English in 1958.

Uhry had worked on varsity shows at Brown with Robert Waldman; Uhry wrote the script and lyrics, and Waldman wrote the music. After college, Uhry moved to New York to begin his career in show business, where he continued to collaborate with Waldman. Their musical, *The Robber Bridegroom* (1975), was based on a novella by southern writer Eudora Welty. Uhry wrote the script and the song lyrics. The play was a surprise hit Off-Broadway and moved to Broadway for the 1976-1977 season. It earned Uhry a Tony Award nomination and a Drama Desk nomination.

Uhry continued to work on other musicals, but these projects were unsuccessful, either closing on opening night, or soon thereafter, or never opening at all. Uhry began to write comedy scripts for television shows and lyrics for commercials and also taught English and drama at a New York high school. In 1984, as Uhry was struggling to get a musical about Al Capone off the ground, the idea came to him to write a play instead.

The characters in *Driving Miss Daisy* (1987) are based on people that Uhry knew growing up, including his grandmother and her African-American chauffeur. *Driving Miss Daisy*, Uhry's first play, was an instant success, running for three years in New York. Uhry won a Pulitzer Prize in 1988 for it. Uhry also wrote the adaptation for the film version of this work.

After his surprise hit, Uhry was approached by the Olympic Games' Cultural Olympiad to produce a play for the 1996 Olympic Games that would be held in Atlanta. He revisited Atlanta's Jewish milieu that he knew so well to create his story about intra-ethnic prejudice. *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* went on to win Uhry another Tony Award. In 1998, he wrote the book for the musical *Parade*, which played at Lincoln Center in New York. It also had anti-Semitism as a central focus. Uhry most recently wrote the book to *LoveMusik*, based on the lives of Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya.

Uhry lives in New York, where he is active in the Dramatists Guild. He also has served as an advisor to the Guild's Young Playwrights Festival.

(more)

BRIAN KITE (Director) is the Associate Director of La Mirada Theatre for the Performing Arts. He has directed across the United States, and last season, directed La Mirada's critically acclaimed production of *Proof*. He recently helmed a production of *Cabaret* in Bermuda under the patronage of the Queen's Governor. Before that he directed two Los Angeles revivals, *J.B.* by Archibald MacLeish, *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller, and the West Coast premiere of Václav Havel's *The Beggar's Opera*. He directed the Philadelphia production of Glenn Wein's *Grandma Sylvia's Funeral* and he worked with Tony Award-winning director Daniel Sullivan on The Geffen Playhouse's production of *Hedda Gabler* starring Annette Bening. He directed over 20 productions at French Woods Festival in New York where he was the Director of Theater Programs for over 7 years. Brian served on the Board of Governors of Los Angeles Stage Alliance for six years. He is currently a member of the directing faculty at U.C.L.A.'s School of Theater, Film and Television and is the Artistic Director of the award-winning Buffalo Nights Theatre Company.

MICHAEL LEARNED (Daisy Werthan) is a four-time Emmy award-winning actress, three for her work as Olivia Walton on the acclaimed TV series, "The Waltons," and one for her role as Mary Benjamin in her own series "Nurse." She is also a three-time Golden Globe nominee. On stage she most recently co-starred with Tom Bosley in the national tour of *On Golden Pond*; and also in Lewis Black's *One Slight Hitch* at The Falcon Theatre. Other theatre appearances include *Elizabeth the Queen* at the Folger Shakespeare Library, Edward Albee's *All Over* at The Gramercy Theatre and the McCarter Theatre, on Broadway in Gore Vidal's *The Best Man* and Wendy Wasserstein's *The Sisters Rosenzweig*. West Coast premieres include *Woman in Mind* and *Hapgood* both for American Conservatory Theatre.

Ms. Learned's involvement as a leading lady with ACT dates back to 1967. In Los Angeles she has appeared at the Ahmanson in *Mary Stuart* and *Picnic*, at The Mark Taper in *A Month in the Country* and at the Geffen in *Looking for Normal*. She has toured in A.R. Gurney's *Love Letters* and Edward Albee's *Three Tall Women*. Michael premiered in Arthur Miller's *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan* at Williamstown Theatre Festival. The eldest of six sisters, Ms. Learned spent her first decade on her family's farm in Connecticut. When she was eleven, Ms. Learned moved to Austria where her father worked for the U.S. State Department. While attending boarding school in England, she discovered the theatre and made it her life's work. She trained at San Francisco's American Conservatory Theatre where she frequently appeared with her first husband, actor Peter Donat. Ms. Learned has appeared in the films "For the Love of Mary," "Life During Wartime," "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story" and "Power," directed by Sidney Lumet. Television appearances include "Law and Order: SVU," "Living Dolls," "Profiler," "A Father for Brittany," "A Walton Easter," "A Walton Wedding," "Murder in New Hampshire," "Roots: The Gift" and "All My Sons," to name a few.

The cast of **DRIVING MISS DAISY** will also feature Lance E. Nichols as Hoke and Morgan Rusler as Boolie.

(more)

DRIVING MISS DAISY has assembled an award-winning design team. The set design is by John Iacovelli. The lighting design is by Craig Pierce. The sound design is by Craig Wolynez. The costume design is by Judy Jou. The Casting is by Julia Flores. The Production Stage Manager is Conwell Worthington III.

DRIVING MISS DAISY will begin performances on Friday, February 1 (with a press opening on Saturday, February 2) and run for three weeks through Sunday, February 17. Performances will be Tuesday through Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.; Fridays at 8 p.m.; Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. (There will be no 2 p.m. performance on Saturday, February 2 or 7 p.m. performance on Sunday, February 3). 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.

For press interviews, photos or tickets, please contact David Elzer/DEMAND PR at 818-508-1754 or at ElzerD@aol.com.

LA MIRADA THEATRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, now in its 30th 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

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-Logue Awards, 3 Backstage Garland Awards and 3 Tony Award 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

#