



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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“The Heat is On” at Near West Theatre’s Production of *Miss Saigon*

Cleveland, OH (June 14, 2011) - Near West Theatre is pleased to announce its upcoming performances of *Miss Saigon*. Opening on July 22 and running through August 7, performances take place on the third floor of St. Patrick’s Club Building at the corner of West 38th Street and Bridge Avenue in Ohio City.

Based on Giacomo Puccini's opera *Madame Butterfly*, *Miss Saigon* tells the intriguing and heartbreaking story of a young Vietnamese bar girl, Kim (Mariah Victoria Burks), and an American G.I., Chris (Michael Glavan), who fall in love during the Vietnam War. When the two are unjustly separated, their lives unfold in ways they had not imagined. This spirited rock opera explores how far we are willing to go for someone we love, and celebrates the power of hope in a time of corruption and suffering.

A cast of 30 teens (ages 13-20) will be bringing this dynamic production to life. When asked about the relevance of a show about Vietnam to this generation, Artistic Director Bob Navis said, “*Miss Saigon* is a rare and challenging opportunity for the cast and staff of this production to engage our hearts and minds with the people who lived and died during the Vietnam War; both here in the USA and in Vietnam. This was an agonizing time of civil unrest, innocent lives lost, misplaced patriotism and national failure. We seek an artistic journey of integrity. Therefore, we are exploring and examining the stories of this war to learn, understand and create a production that moves everyone it touches to live peacefully and work for justice.”

Performances are Fri.-Sat. July 22 & 23, Thurs-Sat., July 28-30, and Fri.-Sun., August 5-7. Curtain times on Thursday, Fridays, and Saturdays are at 7:30 pm and Sunday at 3:00 pm. All offerings are at St. Patrick’s Club Building, located at W.38th and Bridge Avenue* in Ohio City and include free parking. Adult tickets are \$8 and children, 12 & under, are \$6. The Star Seat ticket, which helps Near West fill the gap between the affordable rate it offers its patrons and the actual cost of the production, is \$20 and includes a concession coupon. Tickets are available by calling (216) 961-6391 or can be ordered online at www.nearwesttheatre.org.

Miss Saigon is generously sponsored by Thompson Hine LLP. The Ohio Arts Council has helped fund this program with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. Near West Theatre receives public support with local tax dollars from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, to preserve and enrich our region’s artistic and cultural heritage. Near West is also a member of Greater Cleveland Community Shares. Community Shares supports local nonprofit organizations working for long-term, sustainable, solutions to build a stronger Cleveland.

*While accessibility is an important part of Near West Theatre’s Mission, our current location at W. 38th & Bridge is on the third floor and is unable to accommodate an elevator or chair lift to make it accessible to individuals in wheelchairs or those who have difficulty with stairs. We are focused on providing an accessible space as we continue our progress on our joint capital campaign to build a new theatre in the Gordon Square Arts District.

Learn more about Community Shares and supporting social justice through workplace giving at www.communityshares.org.

Star Seat Packages Available

Star Seat donors help bridge the gap between the true cost of an audience member's experience and the affordable rate we offer our guests. Buy this package to help Near West continue to offer affordable, high-quality theatre on the Near West Side. For \$120, you get 7 tickets for any combination of performances plus concession coupons, playbill recognition and other VIP opportunities and benefits. Star Seat Packages are available online at www.nearwesttheatre.org.

History

Since 1978, Near West Theatre has engaged youth on the Near West Side in a positive activity that taps into their energy, allowing them to discover their creativity and present themselves as contributing members of the community. Through a process that is intense, sometimes rugged and ragged, challenging and transforming, Near West Theatre, now intergenerational, engages participants and audience alike. Individuals from all walks of life come together and share their unique life stories and experiences in order to find their own voices and make personal connections with the production. Near West Theatre's unique blend of performing arts and community-building has played an instrumental role in the theatre's success with its audience, community and participants.

Near West Theatre is a partner in the Gordon Square Arts District, a collaboration between Near West, Cleveland Public Theatre, and Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization, where it will build a new, accessible performance venue. Go to www.gordonsquare.org for more information on Gordon Square Arts District which has completed Phase One of its capital campaign (includes completion of a streetscape, renovation of the historic Capitol Movie Theatre featuring art and independent films, site acquisition for Near West's new building & gateway plaza, doubled parking capacity, and expanded campus for CPT and seven new roofs for its historic structures).

For more information about the Near West Theatre, our programs, performances or for audition information, please contact the Near West business office at (216) 961-9750.

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