



Old Globe Theatre | Cassius Carter Centre Stage | Lowell Davies Festival Theatre

P.O. Box 122171 Tel (619) 231-1941
San Diego, CA Fax (619) 231-5879
92112-2171 www.TheOldGlobe.org

Louis G. Spisto, *Executive Director*
Jack O'Brien, *Artistic Director*
Jerry Patch, *Resident Artistic Director*

Craig Noel, *Founding Director*

For Immediate Release: November 16, 2006
Contacts: Jessica Padilla, (619) 231-1941 x 2356
Erin Anderson, (619) 231-1941 x2355
Web: www.TheOldGlobe.org

TEATRO MÁSCARA MÁGICA'S DELIGHTFUL NATIVITY
PLAY, *LA PASTORELA DE LA ESTRELLA*, LIGHTS UP GLOBE'S
CASSIUS CARTER CENTRE STAGE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

San Diego – The Old Globe is pleased to present **Teatro Máscara Mágica's** award-winning production of *La Pastorela de la Estrella*, by **Max Branscomb**, directed by **William Virchis**, playing in the **Cassius Carter Centre Stage December 7 – 23** (press opening: Friday, December 8 at 7:30pm). Performances take place at 7:30pm on December 7-10, 13-17, and 19-23; matinees December 9, 10, 16, 17 and 23 at 2pm. Tickets are \$22 for adults, \$16 for students/military/seniors, and \$10 for children under 17. For tickets and information please call **(619) 23-GLOBE (234-5623)** or visit www.TheOldGlobe.org.

Teatro Máscara Mágica's Mexican-inspired holiday musical is the newest twist on the traditional story of the shepherds' journey to Bethlehem to witness the first Christmas. Called to action by Archangels Michael and Gabriel, the shepherds face temptation and danger from evil Lucifer and his nasty minions. The bilingual script is primarily in English with more than a dozen beautiful Christmas carols sung in Spanish.

Celebrating its 16th anniversary this year, the musical is trendier than ever. Where else will theatre lovers find Archangels Michael and Gabriel, Lucifer, super models, Nacho Libre, Howie Mandel and Superman sharing the stage? The cast include some of San Diego's most popular actors: television star Willie Green (Michael), Ed Hollingsworth (Lucifer), Timothy Evans (Satan), and Joey Molina (Moloch).

La Pastorela has been acclaimed by critics: "A rambunctious pageant of song, jokes and mock battles between the angels and simple folks against the forces of evil," wrote *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, *The L.A. Times* raved that the show is "packed with humor and song," while *El Sol de San Diego* called it "great fun ... a gift the whole community can enjoy."

-- more --

La Pastorela is the tale of the shepherd's journey to Bethlehem to witness the first Christmas — a journey fraught with temptations, distractions and mortal peril as the devils try to prevent the shepherds from reaching their special destination. This delightful morality play is full of choices and introspection, but presented with levity, music, and hilarious contemporary references.

Teatro Máscara Mágica and The Old Globe developed and produced the first English language pastorela in San Diego in 1991 at the Globe. Following a tradition established by Globe Education Associate Raúl Moncada, who wrote the 1991 pastorela, Branscomb's devils and angels are masters of disguise who appear throughout the shepherd's journey as historic and contemporary characters. TMM's pastorelas have inspired theatre companies throughout the Southwest United States to produce their own.

A journalism professor at Southwestern College, playwright **Max Branscomb** has written 14 *Pastorelas* for Teatro Máscara Mágica, and several others for theatres in Los Angeles, Tucson, and Bakersfield, and other cities. Besides his work with Teatro Máscara Mágica, Branscomb is the founder and artistic director of the annual Bonitafest Melodrama, which just concluded its 28th season. Branscomb is San Diego County's most commissioned playwright. He has authored more than 70 produced plays and musicals for more than 20 theatre companies. He is a professor of journalism at Southwestern College and faculty advisor of *The Sun*, America's #1 ranked community college publication.

William Alejandro Virchis, former professor and artistic director at Southwestern College, is Director of Visual and Performing Arts at the Sweetwater Union High School District. In the 1970s, Virchis directed the Old Globe's GET Tour. In 1981, he and Dr. Jorge Huerta, along with Old Globe Founding Director Craig Noel, founded Teatro Meta, the Globe's bilingual playwriting program. Virchis and Huerta co-directed the Puerto Rican play, *The Fanlights/Los Soles Truncos*, in the Carter in 1983, offering performances in English and Spanish. He has also directed productions at Starlight, SDSU, UC Riverside, San Diego Gilbert and Sullivan Repertory, Centro Cultural de la Raza, and many others. Virchis serves on the Public Arts Advisory Council for the County of San Diego and previously on the Commission for Arts & Culture. In 1999 he directed the national touring production of *Selena*.

Virchis and Branscomb first teamed up in 1992 to update and revise the Lerner-Lowe musical "*Paint Your Wagon*" at Starlight Musical Theatre. Virchis hired Branscomb to rewrite the cliched Latino character Julio from a shuffling Mexican knockabout to a proud indigenous hero. The revision played to sold-out audiences at Starlight and was named Best Play of the Season by San Diego's theatre critics. They also worked together as playwright and director of DiverCity Works Theatre and the annual Martin Luther King Breakfast for the National Conference of Community and Justice, America's oldest civil rights organization.

-- more --

Teatro Máscara Mágica was founded in 1989 by Virchis and UCSD professor Dr. Jorge Huerta to increase the production of multicultural theatre and to provide professional theatrical opportunities to underrepresented segments of the population. Another mission of TMM is to subsidize ticket prices in order to make live theatre affordable to families and underserved populations. The company is a national leader in multicultural theatre that has been honored by the National Endowment for the Arts as well as numerous human rights organizations. In 2004, TMM and *La Pastorela* were recipients of the Multicultural Heritage Award for leadership in multicultural theatre.

This year's production will also include **La Posada**, a longstanding Mexican Christmas tradition, in which actors and audience members re-enact Joseph and Mary's journey through Bethlehem looking for shelter. The wanderers go from door to door, and are consistently refused sanctuary until they reach the manger where the Christ child is born. The name refers to the specific song ("Las Posadas") that is sung in which tells of the search for shelter and the "homeowners" who turn them away. La Posada will take place on the Globe Plaza at about 30 minutes before curtain on the evening of each performance.

#

The internationally-acclaimed, Tony® Award-winning Old Globe is one of the most renowned regional theatres in the country and has stood as San Diego's flagship arts institution for over 70 years. The Old Globe produces a year-round season of 15 plays and musicals on its three stages, including its highly-regarded Shakespeare festival. The Globe has become a gathering place for leading theatre artists from around the world, such as Tom Stoppard, Daniel Sullivan and Chita Rivera, among many others. Numerous Broadway-bound premieres and revivals, such as Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, The Full Monty and Damn Yankees, have been developed at The Old Globe and have gone on to enjoy highly successful runs in New York and at regional theatres across the country.

Highlights of the Globe's 2006/7 Season include the acclaimed production of Hershey Felder as George Gershwin Alone, the west coast premiere of the musical Ace, as well as Amy Freed's Restoration Comedy, the co-world premiere of Pig Farm, August Wilson's Two Trains Running and Edward Albee's Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf. Under the leadership of Executive Director Louis G. Spisto, Artistic Director Jack O'Brien and Resident Artistic Director Jerry Patch, the Globe is at the forefront of the nation's leading performing arts organizations, setting a standard for excellence in American theatre.