

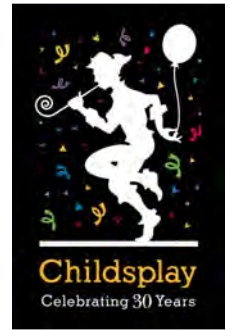
Childsplay's *A Tale of Two Cities* Press Release

For additional information for media purposes, contact:
Melissa Mattingly Parsons or Rosemary Walsh
mparsons@childsplayaz.org rwalsh@childsplayaz.org
480-858-2127 480-350-8103

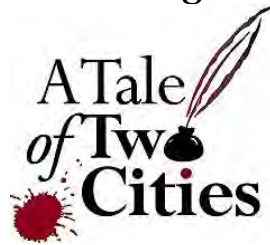
CHILDSPLAY NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release 3/17/08

Visit [Childsplay's Media Room](#) for photos



Passion. Chaos. Revenge... Redemption.



Childsplay Presents the World Premiere of
Dwayne Hartford's *A Tale of Two Cities*

"It was the best of times. It was the worst of times."-Charles Dickens

Tempe, AZ –Childsplay, Arizona's professional theatre for young audiences, presents a brand new adaptation for its older audiences. Adapted by Childsplay associate artist and long-time favorite Dwayne Hartford from one of Charles Dickens' most accessible works, this is the classic tale of love and hate, chaos and order, rich and poor, revenge and redemption set against the backdrop of the French Revolution in late eighteenth-century Paris and London. Hartford took on the challenge of adapting this story into a coherent, two-hour dramatic piece set on multi-levels and scaffolding on the Tempe Center for the Arts Studio stage.

A Tale of Two Cities is presented as part of Imagination Begins With US -- The US Airways New Plays Festival for Families. This three-city festival is supported by a major \$300,000 grant from US Airways to promote the production of three new plays for young theatre audiences. Each of the Spring 2008 world-premiere productions is a "page-to-stage" adaptation for young

~MORE~

Childsplay's *A Tale of Two Cities* Press Release

people aged 8 to 18 and their families: *A Tale of Two Cities* at Childsplay in Tempe, Arizona; *Getting Near to Baby* at People's Light & Theatre near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and *Surviving The Applewhites* at Children's Theatre of Charlotte in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Performances of *A Tale of Two Cities* are March 22 through April 6 at the Tempe Center for the Arts Studio, Saturdays at 2 pm and 7 pm, Sundays at 2pm. The **Target Storybook Preview Performance** will be on Sunday March 16 at 4 pm with tickets discounted at \$12 (plus applicable box office fees). Tickets for all other performances are \$25 for adults and \$20 for students, seniors and children (plus applicable box office fees). Tickets are on sale now through the Tempe Center for the Arts Box Office 480-350-2822 or online at www.childsplayaz.org/tca. This production is a part of the **US Airways Studio Series**.

About the Play

Dickens' novel includes complex plotlines and action reminiscent of that of Shakespeare.

Childsplay's *A Tale of Two Cities* takes the twists and turns of the characters and illustrates them visually and artistically for the audience, clarifying the plotlines for young audiences of nine and older.

When asked why he chose to write the adaptation of *A Tale of Two Cities*, Dwayne Hartford stated, "I have loved the book since reading it in high school. Its themes of redemption through love and the destructive power of hate and revenge have always resonated with me. On top of that, it's just a great story....Charles Dickens wrote epic novels with countless interweaving subplots. The challenge in adapting such a work for the stage is in creating a coherent, two-hour dramatic piece that speaks to young audiences today, without losing Dickens' very distinct

~MORE~

Childsplay's *A Tale of Two Cities* Press Release

voice. Major characters and plotlines had to be sacrificed in order to concentrate on what I felt were the core themes of the book.”

Synopsis

A Tale of Two Cities (1859) is one of Dickens' two historical novels, the other being *Barnaby Rudge*. The two cities in question are Paris and London at the time of the French Revolution. The heroic nobleman, Charles Darnay, renounces his status in opposition to his uncle, the Marquis de St Evremonde, and the evils of oppression he represents. Meanwhile, Dr. Manette the physician has become aware of the Marquis' ill-practice through a young peasant and his sister who have been hideously treated. After Darnay leaves France, he falls in love with Manette's daughter, Lucie, and they are married. The story continues after Darnay's happiness with Lucie as he returns to France during the Terror to save a servant. Darnay is arrested and condemned to death. Will Darnay survive or be punished for his noble act?

Designer Highlights

Connie Furr-Solomon, *Costume Designer*, designed the stunning costumes for last season's *Peter and the Wolf*. Connie's previous Childsplay credits include *The Secret Garden*, *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*, *Cyrano* and *Wind in the Willows*. For this production, Connie will present exciting goth- and punk-inspired costumes with an impression of the period during the French Revolution. Connie has designed over 250 productions for both stage and television. Her work has been seen in theatres such as the Syracuse Opera, Orlando Opera, Actor's Theatre of Louisville, Stage One, Taganka, the Kentucky Shakespeare Festival, The Fabulous Palm Springs Follies, and the Georgia Shakespeare Festival. Her puppet designs were part of the Emmy award

~MORE~

Childsplay's *A Tale of Two Cities* Press Release

winning children's television series *Salsa*. Connie is a member of the United Scenic Artists Union.

Carey Wong, *Scenic Designer*, was the scenic designer for Childsplay's *The Secret Garden*, *The Big Friendly Giant* and *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*. Wong has worked for over 30 years as a stage designer and arts administrator in the United States and Canada. He has designed sets and/or costumes for over 200 productions of operas, plays, musicals, and theatrical entertainments, including Seattle Children's Theatre and Ballet Arizona. Currently a freelance designer and theatre consultant based in the Pacific Northwest, he was General Production Manager and Resident Designer of Portland Opera for 8 seasons, and Artistic Administrator and Resident Designer of Opera Memphis for two seasons during the first decade of his career.

~MORE~

Childsplay's World Premiere
A Tale of Two Cities
By Dwayne Hartford
Based on the book by Charles Dickens

Directed by **David Saar**
Choreography by **David Barker**
Scenic Design by **Carey Wong**
Costume Design by **Connie Furr-Solomon**
Lighting Design by **Rick Paulson**
Sound Design by **Chris Neumeyer**

THE CAST:

Sydney Carton:	D. Scott Withers
Charles Darnay:	Joseph Kremer
Mr. Lorry:	Andrés Alcalá
Dr. Manette:	Graham Whitehead
The Marquis:	Jon Gentry
Defarge:	Christopher Mascarelli
Gaspard:	Tim Shawver
Lucie Manette:	Amanda Schaar
Mme. Defarge:	Debra K. Stevens
Miss Pross:	Katie McFadzen

PERFORMANCE DATES & TIMES

Sunday, March 16 - 4 p.m. (Target Preview \$12 GA)
Saturday, March 22 - 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. (Opening)
Sunday, March 23 - 2 p.m.
Friday, March 28 - 7 p.m.
Saturday, March 29 - 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.
Sunday, March 30 - 2 p.m. (ASL) ASL-American Sign Language Interpretation
Friday, April 4 - 7 p.m.
Saturday, April 5 - 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.
Sunday, April 6 - 2 p.m.

LOCATION

Tempe Center for the Arts-Studio
700 West Rio Salado Parkway
Tempe, Arizona 85281
Box office: 480-350-2822 or online at www.childsplayaz.org/tca

Childsplay also provides educational field trip performances Tuesday through Friday mornings. For more information about Field Trips contact Beth Olson at bolson@childsplayaz.org or 480-350-8107.

TICKET INFORMATION *RECOMMENDED FOR AGES 9 AND UP.

Tickets for *A Tale of Two Cities* are on sale through Tempe Center for the Arts box office at 480-350-2822 or online at www.childsplayaz.org/tca.

Target Storybook Preview Performance Sunday March 16 at 4 p.m.: \$12 (plus applicable box office fees).

Childsplay's *A Tale of Two Cities* Press Release

All other performances: \$25 Adults; \$20 Children, Students & Seniors (plus applicable box office fees).

This production is part of the US Airways ~MORE~ series & Imagination Begins with Us.

This production was generously supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Production Sponsor: The Arizona Republic

Childsplay's 2007-08 Sponsors:

Storybook Season Sponsor- Target

Media Sponsor- KTVK and My Sweet Connection.com

Childsplay, Inc. is a nonprofit theatre company of professional, adult artists who perform for and teach young audiences and their families. The mission of Childsplay is "to create theatre so strikingly original in form, content or both, that it instills in young people an enduring awe, love and respect for the medium, thus preserving imagination and wonder, the hallmarks of childhood which are keys to the future." For information on Childsplay performances, classes or educational presentations please call 480-350-8101 or visit our website at www.childsplayaz.org.

###