



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LOS ALTOS STAGE COMPANY

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**Los Altos Stage and Los Altos Youth Theatre
to co-present *The Wizard of Oz***

The Los Altos Stage Company (LASC) proudly announces its first-ever co-production and collaborative project with the Los Altos Youth Theatre (LAYT), *The Wizard of Oz*. A family musical production including both youth and adult performers, *The Wizard of Oz* opens at the Bus Barn Theater in Los Altos on July 18 and runs through August 3, 2014.

Written in 1900 by L. Frank Baum, "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" was the first totally American fantasy for children and one of the most-read children's books (according to the Library of Congress). The 1939 film starring Judy Garland was nominated for six Academy Awards but lost Best Picture to *Gone with the Wind*. It did win Best Original Song for "Over the Rainbow" which nearly didn't make it into the final cut. The film was reintroduced to the public with annual broadcasts that began in 1956 earning it the title of "the most-watched motion picture in history!"

Among the stage adaptations is the popular 1942 musical that was based on the book and the film using Harold Arlen and E.Y. Harburg's popular songs. It was commissioned by the St. Louis "Muny" Opera. LASC/LAYT's production is based on the 1987 version by John Kane who adapted the film's screenplay for the Royal Shakespeare Company and that is even more like the film than the Muny version.

Despite the fact that LASC and LAYT have shared the same theater facility for nearly 20 years, the two organizations have never before collaborated on a production or shared production resources in any significant way. Based on the success of this pilot project, LASC and LAYT intend to mount additional co-productions on an annual basis with the goal of creating greater integration and synergy between our two organizations.

In addition to the production, LASC and LAYT are providing the youth performers with a deeper educational experience through a series of four intensive workshops. These workshops are taught by the adult performers in the production, all skilled educators, and focus on singing, acting, movement, and audition techniques.

Through this combination production/workshop format, participating youth have the unique opportunity to work and learn alongside professional actor/educators in a fully produced, high-quality production. The actor/educators serve as coaches and mentors to the younger performers, providing invaluable instruction and encouragement throughout the rehearsals and performances.

The Wizard of Oz is directed by Ian Leonard, a local actor, director, and teacher who has staged productions at Children's Musical Theater San Jose, Theatre in the Mountains, and high schools and middle schools throughout the Bay Area. Adult actor/teachers include Daniel P. Wilson, LASC Associate Artistic Director, as the Wizard of Oz; Sheila Townsend, local actress and vocal director, as Glinda the Good Witch; and Kimberly Kay, local actress and educator, as the Wicked Witch of the West.

Nearly 40 local youth divided into two separate casts fill out the production, including: Osher Fein and Shaina Hammer as Dorothy; Sarah Traina and Natasha Balogh as Scarecrow; Timmy Smith and Dana Levy as Tinman; and Rebecca Krieger and Elizabeth Kristian as The Cowardly Lion. Additional youth performers include: Will Aney, Camden Boyd, Megan Branstad, Rachel Bratt, Emma Burtin, Stephanie Campa, Ashley Chen, Elise Cording, Avery Dean, Isabel Guerrero-Lubarsky, Roxy Karrer, Rohan Kumar, Ronni Kurzion, Paige Lai, Mia Lee, Annie Leonard, Kat Meter, Madeleine Meier, Jamie Minden, Jamie Penilla, Molly Philipson, Catrina Riordan, Simran Sood, Val Swildens, Bella Vandenberg, Peyton White, and Shiva Zokaei.

Performances are Thursday through Saturday evenings at 7:30 pm (excluding Thurs, 7/24), and Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2 pm. An additional performance will be held on Wednesday July 23 at 7:30 pm. Ticket prices are \$15 for youth/senior and \$20 for adult.

Opening night gala tickets, which include a festive garden party reception immediately following the performance, are \$30 for youth/senior and \$40 for adult. Twenty dollars of each gala ticket is a tax deductible donation that goes directly to supporting this project.

Please note: There are two separate youth casts for this production and there will be TWO OPENING NIGHT GALAS for *The Wizard of Oz*, the first on July 18 and the second on July 19, both starting at 7:30 pm.

Tickets are available on-line at www.losaltosstage.org or by calling the Los Altos Stage Company Box Office at 650-941-0551.

The Los Altos Stage Company is a quintessential American neighborhood playhouse, serving Los Altos and the greater South Bay area, and paying tribute to the full cannon of American musicals, comedies, and dramas. This 19-year-old theater company strives to bring together a diversity of theater enthusiasts, practitioners, and supporters to create, explore and celebrate the rich tapestry of American culture and experience through live theater. The Los Altos Stage produces five to six shows annually at its intimate 99-seat theater located on the Los Altos Civic Center campus.

The Los Altos Youth Theatre is an educational theater program of the City of Los Altos dedicated to developing skills and interest in the dramatic arts in young people ages 10 to 21. Growing out of a series of theatre programs, and dating back to the beginning of the Los Altos Recreation Program in 1952, LAYT operates year-round, producing three shows per year at the Bus Barn Theater.

If you'd like more information about *The Wizard of Oz* or this educational project, please call Gary Landis, Executive Director, at Tel: 650-941-5070/Cell: 415-269-7349 or email Gary at garylendis@losaltosstage.org.

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Calendar Listing

The Wizard of Oz

July 18 – August 3, 2014

Los Altos Stage Company and Los Altos Youth Theatre

Bus Barn Theater

Little Dorothy Gale of Kansas, like so many girls her age, dreams of what lies over the rainbow. One day a twister hits her farm and carries her away over the rainbow to another world. Come join Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tinman, the Cowardly Lion and Toto as they travel the universe of Dorothy's imagination. Be transported to the wondrous discoveries of the Emerald City and the characters of Oz. Journey on a quest to find heart, courage, brains and most importantly, home.

Tickets: \$15-\$20 (excluding opening night)

On the Web: <http://www.losaltosstage.org>

Contact: Box Office: 650-941-0551