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'King Midas' Continues Culver City Public Theatre's Popular 'Children's Popcorn Theatre' Series

Culver City, California-- Culver City Public Theatre ("CCPT") will continue its tradition of presenting theatre for young audiences, the Children's Popcorn Theatre. This year's offering will be a new adaptation of *King Midas*, written and directed by CCPT Co-Executive Director Heidi Dotson. Ms. Dotson explains, "Ole King Midas wants to be the richest man in the world ... he learns valuable lessons about greed and power ... but is it too late?" Performances run in tandem with CCPT's mainstage season and are scheduled for Saturday and Sunday afternoons at Noon from July 14th - August 19th. Admission will be Free for children of all ages.

In this fascinating tale based on Greek mythology, *King Midas* is a gentle man who rules his kingdom with fairness, but he doesn't always think before he speaks. One day, while walking about,

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he discovers an elderly satyr sleeping in the royal garden. King Midas kindly lets him go without punishment. The gods decide to reward King Midas by granting him one wish. The king impulsively blurts out, "I wish for everything I touch to turn to gold!"

The King quickly discovers the excesses of his wish ... the beautiful flowers in his garden turn rigid and gold immediately after he touches them; he quickly grows hungry and thin, because he finds that all of his meals turn to gold before he can eat. Even lovely daughter, at his loving touch, turns hard and fast to gold.

He asks the gods to take back his golden touch and the suspense builds; will the gods take pity on him and grant his request? In this enchanting tale, we discover what true wealth really means and what counts most in life.

Directing and adapting this production is CCPT's Heidi Dotson. Ms. Dotson has an impressive background in musical theatre and dance and has performed with San Gabriel Valley Music Theatre, Riverside Civic Light Opera, and the Redlands Bowl. She has been featured in CCPT's productions of *An Enemy Of The People*, *King Stag*, *Antigone*, *Thieves' Carnival* and *The Poet Who Wouldn't Be King* and has served as CCPT Co-Executive Director since the fall of 2005.

Regarding the inclusion of Children's Theatre to the season's programming, Culver City Public Theatre Board President Dean Edward explains, "It is very important that we develop audiences of today as well as those of tomorrow. When youngsters are exposed to theatre at an early age, they often develop a life-long appreciation of theatre and the arts and they usually excel scholastically, socially and civically as they grow into adulthood. Theatre ignites a child's imagination and instills a passion for dreaming that nothing else can in quite the same way."

Heading the cast as the royal and charismatic titular character, *King Midas* is CCPT company member Leon Cohen. Cohen has spent 6 seasons in Carlson Park and is an audience favorite for his performances in *An Afternoon with Hans Christian Anderson*, *An Enemy of the People*, *The King Stag*, *Madwoman of Chailot* and *The Poet Who Wouldn't Be King*.

Rounding out the cast are company members Sharon Savene and Teresa Waxer as well as guest artists Blake Anthony, Laurie Baron, Frantz Delsoin, Bethany Hilliard, Shannon Pritchard and Susan Odom. Costumes are designed by Andrea Westby Toaso.

The Children's Popcorn Theatre will run in tandem with CCPT's mainstage season, announced earlier this spring, featuring Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* and Neil Simon's *The Good Doctor*.

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One of Shakespeare's most enduring romantic comedies, *Much Ado About Nothing* kicks off Culver City Public Theatre's 2007 mainstage Summer Season in Dr. Paul Carlson Memorial Park on Saturday, July 14th at 2pm. This classic entertains with uncommon wit, humor and exquisitely clever dialogue. The fun unfolds at a brisk pace as love, infidelity and miscommunication wreak havoc. The story features lively contrasting plots; a battle-of-the-sexes between Beatrice and Benedick, and the more conventional romance of Hero and Claudio. **Performances are scheduled for weekend afternoons at 2pm from July 14-29.**

CCPT will round out its mainstage season with Neil Simon's *The Good Doctor*, based on the charming short stories of Anton Chekhov. Laugh as our narrator, a distinguished writer, leads you through a series of vignettes that include a sneeze that ruins a man's career, a visit to the dentist that goes comically awry, and a sweetly innocent woman who turns out to be quite a handful! **Performances are scheduled for weekend afternoons at 2pm from August 4-19.**

Founded in 1998, Culver City Public Theatre (an AEA LOA company) continues a 21-year tradition of presenting an annual summer season of free, outdoor, classical theatre in beautiful Dr. Paul Carlson Memorial Park, located at the corner of Motor Avenue and Braddock Drive (near the 405 and 10 Freeways) in historic Culver City, CA. All performances are held during the summer on Saturdays and Sundays at 2:00 p.m., with the Children's Popcorn Theater performance at 12 Noon. The public is invited to bring their lawn chairs and blankets to attend the productions that are intended for young and adult audiences alike.

CCPT has experienced enormous growth each year, has become a popular attraction to more than 2,000 patrons each summer and has received critical acclaim for such productions as *Electra*, *The Misanthrope* (L.A. Times 'Best Bet'), *3 By Shakespeare's Skum*, *Scapin*, *Hay Fever* and *An Enemy of the People*. In 2006, ReviewPlays.com named CCPT's production of *The Madwoman of Chailot* as the Comedy of the Year.

Culver City Public Theatre is an incorporated, not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization that is sponsored by the Culver City Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services and by the generous contributions and grants from the City of Culver City, The Cultural Affairs Commission, The Culver City Parks and Services Foundation and Sony Pictures. Additional funding comes from donations from local businesses and patrons.

For general information call (310) 712-5482 or visit the official website at www.CCPT.org.

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**Heidi Dotson, Co-Executive Director, CCPT
Director, *King Midas*
Photo Credit: CCPT Archives**



**Culver City Public Theatre Presents *King Midas*,
L-R: Shannon Pritchard (Princess), Leon Cohen (King Midas)
Photo Credit: Culver City Public Theatre Archives**



**Culver City Public Theatre Presents *King Midas*,
L-R: Shannon Pritchard (Princess), Leon Cohen (King Midas)
Photo Credit: Culver City Public Theatre Archives**

Note: Full sized originals are available as well as additional images from Culver City Public Theatre productions and individual cast-member headshots. We will happily provide these photos by email or snail-mail upon request or they may be downloaded at www.ccpt.org/PressRoom.htm