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**THEATRE 40 WILL CELEBRATE THEIR UPCOMING 45TH SEASON,
WITH INTRIGUE AND SUSPENSE,
HOPE, NOURISHMENT AND LAUGHTER, SHOCKING SURPRISES,
EMOTIONAL BOMBSHELLS AND COMICAL TWISTS,
BITING SATIRE, HEARTFELT DRAMA OF PERSONAL CHOICES,
EMOTIONALLY GRIPPING DRAMA AND CRISP AND SOPHISTICATED WIT!**

TWO WORLD PREMIERES AND TWO WEST COAST PREMIERES

THEATRE 40 will open their **2010-2011 season** on July 7th, 2010 with ***BLACK COFFEE***, **AGATHA CHRISTIE'S** first play and the only one to feature her most memorable character, **HERCULE POIROT**. Sir Claud Amory's formula for a powerful new explosive has been stolen, presumably by a member of his large household. He assembles his suspects in the library and locks the door, instructing them that when the lights go out, the formula must be replaced on the table - no questions asked. But when the lights go on - Sir Claud is dead! **AGATHA CHRISTIE was, of course, a remarkable creator of mysteries** - she made her debut as a crime novelist in 1920 with *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* - but ***BLACK COFFEE*** was her first play and it became a rousing success. The inimitable **BRUCE GRAY**, a favorite of Theatre 40 audiences, will direct. Gray's most recent production at Theatre 40 was the critically-acclaimed *THE VOYSEY INHERITANCE*. Other very successful recent Theatre 40 shows helmed by Gray were the American premiere of *HALO*, *DANGEROUS CORNER* and *THE LITTLE FOXES*, a production called "fabulous" by one critic and one which garnered several 'Critic's Choices' as a result. ***BLACK COFFEE*** opens July 7th and closes August 1st, 2010.

Theatre 40's second production in their new Season opening September 1st, will be the West Coast Premiere of ***MEN OF MAH JONGG*** by **RICHARD ATKINS**, a poignant and hilarious tale about four older buddies from Manhattan, who struggle with the pitfalls of old age only to discover the unlikely game of mahjong as the key to their unbridled happiness. The ancient Chinese game becomes the emotional conduit for these men who are dealing with the loss of the women in their lives. As they play this traditionally female game in secret once a week, they begin to open up to each other thereby finding that they can offer one another hope and nourishment. **RICHARD ATKINS** is a freelance travel writer, playwright, accomplished pianist (formerly with Guy Lombardo) actor and composer. The director is **TBA**. ***MEN OF MAH JONGG*** opens September 1st and closes September 26th.

The World Premiere of ***LULU'S LAST STAND*** by Award-winning filmmaker, screenwriter, playwright and director **VERONICA DI PIPPO**, will open in the third slot of Theatre 40's 2010-2011 Season on October 27th. When an eccentric, Southern matriarch's husband dies suddenly, she summons her quarrelsome offspring to the family's lakeside

home in Georgia. The three offbeat, strong-willed daughters arrive expecting to mourn their father in the usual way. Instead, they experience a weekend full of shocking surprises, emotional bombshells and comical twists and turns that will change their lives forever. As a playwright, **VERONICA DI PIPPO** has had over thirty productions of her plays and one-acts at theatres across the country including Riverside Shakespeare in NYC, The Writer's Theatre (NYC), The Nat Horne (NYC), The Complex (CA) and American Globe (NYC - Best New Play Award), to name a few. Di Pippo has directed numerous original works for theatre including *Sins of the Father* at the MET in LA, *Off-The-Wall* at the Writers Theatre in New York and *Fences* at Theatre 40. She is a member of the WGA, Women In Film, the Alliance of Women Directors and The Dramatists Guild. **Ms. Di Pippo** will direct ***LULU'S LAST STAND*** which opens October 27th and closes November 21st.

On December 8th Theatre 40 will present their Season's 4th production - ***MURDERERS*** by **JEFFREY HATCHER** - a delightful, very funny comedy with some biting satire and terrific storytelling! ***MURDERERS*** consists of three monologues from people who take a perverse pride in their crimes. However, these three people are residents at the Riddle Key Retirement Community in Florida - and do they ever have a story to tell! Playing with the conventions of the mystery genre, the three stories are told directly to the audience by the murderers themselves, so the fun is not in solving the crimes but in seeing how the plots are concocted and how those plots (sometimes) fall apart. **JEFFREY HATCHER** is fast becoming one of the most prolific and frequently produced playwrights in the U.S. He adapted his acclaimed stage play *Compleat Female Stage Beauty* for the screen and wrote the screenplay for *Casanova* for director Lasse Hallstrom, as well as screen plays *Secretary*, *Boys Don't Cry* and *The Duchess*. After a brief career on stage, he turned his hand to writing. His many award-winning original plays have been performed on Broadway, off-Broadway and regionally across the US and abroad. He is a multi-award and grant winning playwright. **DAVID COLEMAN**, who directed the world premiere of *VIOLET SHARP* at Theatre 40, will helm ***MURDERERS*** which opens December 8th and closes December 19th.

Opening in the New Year on February 2nd, 2011 with the 5th production in their 2010-2011 Season, Theatre 40 will present ***TUCUMCARI***, the "pick of the season" in the Tony Award-winning Utah Shakespearean Festival's Plays in Progress Series, written by Los Angeles actress and playwright, **RILEY STEINER**. It is America in the late 1920's and a sweet country waltz is playing in New Mexico. Lillian and Lyle Watkins are trying to make a go of their life with a modest 'tourist court' on the newly booming Route 66. A wanderer from the past appears on the front steps of the Watkins' porch and tells tales of adventure. When the Stock Market crashes, the wanderer is stranded in Tucumcari, finding his way into the lives of Lill and Lyle. This is a story of choices. **RILEY STEINER** has worked in theater and television for three decades. In addition to her stage and television appearances, Riley is a playwright that has had two of her plays included in the Plays in Progress Series at the award-winning Utah Shakespearean Festival. The Director is **TBA**. ***TUCUMCARI*** opens February 2, 2011 and closes February 27th.

Show #6, The World Premiere of ***RETURN FROM THE ASHES*** by **BRAD GEAGLEY** opens on March 30th. Paris, 1945. A Jewess, Elizabeth Wolf Pilgrin, has recently returned from a concentration camp. She is the sole survivor of an immensely wealthy family, and is eager to return to her younger husband and her daughter by another man. But...her family doesn't need a survivor...they need a corpse! **BRAD GEAGLEY** is a film producer, screenwriter, playwright and author. He worked for many years as a producer in the entertainment industry. History and writing were his real loves

and he has combined his passion for Ancient Egyptian history with his vast background in writing to write his first historical mystery novel *Year of The Hyenas* which was named one of the five best novels of the year by *Library Journal*. Geagley is also the world's expert on Cleopatra, the movie starring Elizabeth Taylor, and is featured in "Cleopatra: the Film that Changed Hollywood" for AMC. **STUART HOWARD**, an actor, director, producer, teacher, dramaturg, fight arranger, writer, television stage manager and a member of the Directors' Guild of America since 1995, has been assigned the directorial duties for ***RETURN FROM THE ASHES*** which opens March 30th and closes April 24th.

THEATRE 40 will close their 2010-2011 Season on May 25th with ***ART***, the Tony Award Best Play for 1998, written by **YASMINA REZA** and translated by **CHRISTOPHER HAMPTON**. ***ART*** concerns the cataclysmic effect on three friends, when one of them purchases an expensive work of abstract art -- a large painting consisting of white lines on a white canvas. As the three men engage in an ongoing debate over the value of the painting, emotions run high and the conflict escalates to the point of nearly destroying a long-standing friendship. "A remarkably wise, witty and intelligent comedy..." *The Times*. **YASMINA REZA** began work as an actress. In 1987 she wrote *Conversations after a Burial* which won the Molière Award. In 1990 her second play, *Winter Crossing*, also won a Molière Award as did ***ART*** in 1995. The London production of ***ART*** received the 1996-97 Laurence Olivier Award and Evening Standard Award. ***ART*** also won the Tony Award for Best Play. **BRUCE GRAY** will again grab the helm to direct this exceptional play. ***ART*** opens May 25th and closes the season on June 19th, 2011.

SCHEDULE FOR THEATRE 40 PRODUCTIONS

Theatre 40 is a professional theatre company conveniently located on The Beverly Hills High School Campus at 241 Moreno Drive - just off Little Santa Monica Blvd. Adjacent to Century City.

Performances are Wednesday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday evenings at 8:00 PM and Sundays at 2:00 PM

Tickets Wednesday through Friday: \$23.00; Saturday and Sunday: \$25.00

Students and members of theatrical unions are half-price at the door on stand-by

RESERVATIONS and INFORMATION: 310-364-0535 On the web: www.theatre40.org

Theatre 40 is newly and luxuriously renovated - there is ample FREE indoor parking

There is Wheelchair accessibility and the theatre is comfortably air-conditioned - Credit Cards accepted

HOW TO FIND OUR THEATRE

Theatre 40 is at 241 Moreno Drive - just off Little Santa Monica Blvd. Adjacent to Century City. (On Little Santa Monica - if you are coming from the 405 - turn right on Moreno Drive - if you are coming from the opposite direction turn left on Moreno Drive - it does not cut through to Big Santa Monica)

The entrance to Theatre 40 is **NOT** in the front of the school building. When you turn onto Moreno Drive towards the school building, there is a traffic light. A few yards beyond that light is a road (just before the gate to the road that separates the two buildings). Turn right onto that road and follow it around the back of the building to the huge FREE indoor parking area. (there is no other road there so you will NOT get lost). After you park - go to the lighted area where the theatre is located - there is no other place to go.