

## “BRINGING LITERATURE TO LIFE” THE PRIME STAGE STUDENT MATINEE SERIES

### The Mission

The mission of Prime Stage is to entertain, educate, and enrich families, students, and educators in the discovery of theatre and literature. We accomplish this by addressing adolescent literacy with theatrical adaptations of literature, new plays, and educational programs that are relevant and accessible to our audience.

### Vision

Incorporated in 1996, Prime Stage enlightens and educates, as well as entertains by:

- Blending compelling theatrical adaptations of literature from school reading lists with educational programs to make literature relevant, accessible, affordable, and enjoyable.
- Presenting research and standards-based resources for teachers to help them build motivation, along with reading and critical thinking skills of students.
- Providing opportunities for adolescents to participate in the creation and production of theatre.
- Developing partnerships with organizations and schools to motivate middle and high school students to discover, read, respond, and enjoy theatre and literature.



*Hound of the Baskervilles* 2008

### Student Matinee Series

The Prime Stage Student Matinee Series consists of nine weekday presentations of our evening productions that are designed to help teachers transform their reluctant and struggling adolescent readers into students who are motivated to read the literature that is taught in middle and high schools. This Series includes a special focus on Theatre Etiquette and features post show “chat sessions” where audiences are able to ask the actors and staff from the shows questions about the adaptations, the theatre, and the process of adapting literature to the stage.

This year, Prime Stage is adding a new technology feature. Since adolescents communicate with text messages, students and teachers will be encouraged to text their immediate responses to the plays and other questions for specific actors during return trips on busses back to their schools.

A teacher who serves on our Teacher Advisory Council and the Prime Stage Education staff are developing prompts for teachers to use. The Prime Stage Education Director and staff will receive the messages. Then the messages will be collected, collated and distributed to members of the cast or staff who will respond to any questions. Their messages will be posted on the Prime Stage website or texted to those who requested feedback. The goals are to help teachers keep the experiences alive by generating critical thinking responses to what the students saw and read and providing a relevant forum for students to express their ideas.

### Statement of Prime Stage Theatre's commitment to literacy

“Where Literature Comes to Life,” is more than a motto. It’s a commitment and obligation to provide opportunities and accomplish the best of education and theatre by blending the disciplines. Prime Stage, with funding from foundations and corporations, addresses adolescent literacy through theatrical productions and educational programs. Our exclusive *Adopt-a-School Program*, along with Resource Guides, Student Matinee Program, “Chat Sessions,” Teacher Workshops, the Technical Theater Mentor Program make theater and literature relevant, comprehensible, and enjoyable to middle school and high school students, educators, and families.



*The Outsiders* 2008

### Responses from teachers, students, patrons and reviews

“The entire play helped me understand *The Outsiders* better. Once I saw the actors, it put so much more life into the story. It was a lot more meaningful and dramatic” (South Allegheny Middle School, 2008).

“Today I attended a student matinee of *The Westing Game* with 200 sixth grade students from Jefferson Middle School. The play was magnificent and well received by students and adults! I do not know of any other theater organization that goes to such lengths to accommodate and educate“(Jefferson Middle School, 2009).



*The Westing Game* 2009

“The teens enjoyed the play; they have never been to a play before. They especially enjoyed the “chat session” with the director and the actors. What a rewarding time! Thank you for making this possible” (Bradley Center, 2009).

“Words cannot express the thanks I have for you to make literature come alive for my students. Without individuals like you, many of my students would never have the experience of live theater to get them further interested in reading and writing . . . As students experience these plays, they go home, into their communities, and to their churches and speak about the experiences in and out of the classroom and theater. These experiences gave me opportunities to teach a novel or drama in ways that have not been done before” (Lincoln School, 2009).



*Of Mice and Men* 2008

“There's no denying the emotional power of Steinbeck’s story, *Of Mice and Men*, realized . . . at the New Hazlett Theatre by Prime Stage director Rich Keitel and his cast of pro, semi-pro and community actors” (Post-Gazette, 2008).

“I was quite pleased to talk to several parents and their kids after the show and to discover how loyal they are to Prime Stage. Giving young people an immersion in the theater, especially serious theater, is a wonderful and important mission. I applaud Prime Stage and encourage you to keep up the good work“(Bob Hoover, Post-Gazette, 2009).

## Target audiences and demographics

Prime Stage serves a diverse population of middle and high school students, educators and families of all races, ethnicities, and socio-economic levels in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Typically, the Student Matinee Series serves over 3,000 patrons each season. For the past three seasons, the series has been selling out with requests from teachers for additional performances of these theatrical adaptations.

## The 2009-2010 Season of “bringing literature to life”

The literature selected for the 2009-2010 season include: “Our Town” in October, 2009 “Tuesdays with Morrie” in February 2010, and “Romeo and Juliet” in April 2010. All works of literature are on schools’ reading lists used in the classroom. “Tuesdays with Morrie” was specifically selected on the recommendation of a teacher who wants his students to connect with non-fiction literature in ways that extend beyond academic exercises and projects

To accommodate the requests of teachers and continue making these experiences affordable at \$8.00 for students with a complimentary chaperone ticket for every 15 tickets reserved, support from Kennametal will enable Prime Stage to present this successful series for over 3000 students and educators during the 2009 and 2010 seasons.



Prime Stage Theatre

[www.PrimeStage.com](http://www.PrimeStage.com)