



Old Globe Theatre | Cassius Carter Centre Stage | Lowell Davies Festival Theatre

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OLD GLOBE/UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO MFA PROGRAM **CELEBRATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY**

GLOBE TO DEDICATE DONALD AND DARLENE SHILEY STAGE **AS PART OF ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

San Diego – The Old Globe/University of San Diego (USD) Master of Fine Arts Program is pleased to announce its **20th anniversary**, beginning in the fall of 2007. The program will launch its anniversary celebrations on **Monday, June 18** with a special event taking place at The Old Globe. As part of the event, the stage of the Old Globe Theatre will be named the **Donald and Darlene Shiley Stage** (the theatre itself will retain its current name), in honor of longstanding Globe and MFA Program supporters Donald and Darlene Shiley. The June 18 event is generously underwritten by Globe benefactor **Audrey Geisel**.

In 1987, Globe Founding Director Craig Noel joined with University of San Diego Vice-President and Provost Sally Furay, RSCJ to establish The Old Globe/University of San Diego graduate acting program. The result has been one of the most acclaimed classical training programs in the United States. Currently the program recruits seven students each year from around the country to participate in an intensive two-year, year-round course of graduate study in classical theatre. With only a 2% acceptance rate, the program has become one of the most competitive MFA programs in the country.

“With the Globe’s reputation for Shakespeare and the classics, we are firmly committed to fostering the classically trained actors of the future,” said Executive Director Lou Spisto. “This first-rate graduate acting program is a wonderful asset for the Globe while offering its students tremendous opportunities to work on our stages.”

“Ours is one of the most successful programs in bridging the needs and goals of two such major institutions,” said Program Director Richard Seer. “I know of very few programs in which both the resident theatre and the university have such a strong commitment to the success of advanced actor training, and we couldn’t be more grateful for the generous support we receive from both institutions.”

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Each student accepted into the professional actor training program is awarded a full-tuition scholarship from the University and a monthly stipend from the Globe. Globe benefactors Donald and Darlene Shiley have been the MFA program's strongest supporters. In honor of their ongoing support and to recognize their \$20 million commitment to the Globe's current \$75 million Capital and Endowment Campaign, the Globe will be dedicating the stage of the Old Globe Theatre as the Donald and Darlene Shiley Stage.

"Craig once expressed his desire to have an academy for students studying at the graduate level and all that was needed was help with an endowment. Donald and I were more than pleased to help. Each year at a fellowship ceremony, we hear updates about former students and seeing those eager, talented – and young – faces reminds you of why you give to the Theatre," said Darlene Shiley.

Globe MFA graduates can be seen in national touring productions, television, feature films, as well as running their own theatre companies. Over the last five years, more than 25 Globe/USD graduates have appeared in Broadway productions. Two former MFA students, Scott Ferrara and Nisi Sturgis, are featured in the Globe's current production of Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*.

The MFA program shares both University and Globe staffing and training responsibilities. At the University, students receive a comprehensive curriculum including acting, voice and speech, movement, dramatic literature, as well as practical experience in staged productions. Additionally, a variety of workshops and classes are offered in scansion, period styles, stage combat, audition technique and singing. At the Globe, students receive invaluable practical experience at a major professional theatre, appearing in all the summer Shakespeare Festival productions and serving as understudies for most main stage plays in the Globe season. The Globe also produces an annual Shakespeare student production in the Cassius Carter Centre Stage. This year's production of *Pericles* runs December 1 – 9.

Program Director **Richard Seer** has served as Director of The Old Globe/University of San Diego professional actor training program since 1993. He has directed The Old Globe productions of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *Trying*, *Fiction*, *Blue/Orange*, *All My Sons*, *Da*, and *Old Wicked Songs*. He is also an award-winning actor and director in New York and Los Angeles. For over twenty years, Richard Seer performed on Broadway, off-Broadway, on film and television, and has directed or performed in over 60 productions at regional theatres in this country and Great Britain. Broadway credits include originating the role of Young Charlie (Theatre World Award) in the 1978 Tony award-winning production of Hugh Leonard's *Da*. Other credits include leading roles at the Goodman Theatre, The Kennedy Center, The Stratford Shakespeare Festival, The Brooklyn Academy of Music, The Huntington Theatre Company in Boston, Washington's Playwrights' Theatre, Studio Arena Theatre, the Edinburgh Festival, and the Sybil Thorndike Repertory Theatre in Great Britain, to name a few. He received a Master of Fine Arts degree in directing from Boston University, where he was awarded the prestigious Kahn Directing Award in 1985. He was invited to return to Boston University's School for the Arts in 1990 as Associate Professor of acting and directing.

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Residents of North County and dedicated supporters of The Old Globe for over two decades, the **Shileys'** latest gift was a \$20 million commitment in 2006 to help launch the Globe's \$75 million Capital and Endowment Campaign. The couple has served as sponsors for dozens of individual productions and has been Season Sponsors since the program's inception in 1995. With a \$500,000 gift in 2000, they established the Globe's annual Shiley Artist-in-Residence program which honors a featured performer each season. In addition, they have helped to fund many Globe projects, including the Shiley Terrace Apartments, which provides much-needed local housing for Globe artists, as well as a tremendous gift to the University of San Diego to permanently endow two students in The Old Globe/USD MFA Program each year and to support the undergraduate theatre department. The Shileys' generosity extends far beyond the Globe. Some of their many generous gifts have been made to support UCSD's Shiley Eye Center, USD's Shiley Center for Science and Technology, KPBS, Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation, and The Salk Institute. Recently, the Shileys made a gift of \$4 million to UCSD to support Alzheimer's research.

The internationally-acclaimed, Tony® Award-winning Old Globe is one of the most renowned regional theatres in the country and has stood as San Diego's flagship arts institution for over 70 years. The Old Globe produces a year-round season of 15 plays and musicals on its three stages, including its highly-regarded Shakespeare festival. The Globe has become a gathering place for leading theatre artists from around the world, such as Tom Stoppard, Daniel Sullivan and Chita Rivera, among many others. Numerous Broadway-bound premieres and revivals, such as *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *The Full Monty* and *Damn Yankees*, have been developed at The Old Globe and have gone on to enjoy highly successful runs in New York and at regional theatres across the country.

Highlights of the Globe's 2007 Summer Season include the acclaimed Summer Shakespeare Festival featuring *Hamlet*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Measure for Measure* playing in nightly rotation, Noel Coward's *Hay Fever*, John Van Druten's *Bell, Book and Candle*, and a special presentation of the hit Broadway musical *Avenue Q* at the Spreckels Theatre. Under the leadership of Executive Director Louis G. Spisto, Artistic Director Jack O'Brien and Resident Artistic Director Jerry Patch, the Globe is at the forefront of the nation's leading performing arts organizations, setting a standard for excellence in American theatre.

The University of San Diego is a Catholic institution of higher learning chartered in 1949; the school enrolls approximately 7,500 students and is known for its commitment to teaching, the liberal arts, the formation of values and community service. The opening of the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies will bring the university's total number of schools and colleges to six. Other academic divisions include the College of Arts and Sciences and the schools of Business Administration, Law, Leadership and Education Sciences, and Nursing and Health Science.

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