



NEWS RELEASE

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BAKERSFIELD MIST

a new comedy about art by Stephen Sachs

The Fountain presents the World Premiere and first of numerous productions slated to follow across the country

LOS ANGELES, CA – May 12, 2011 – The world premiere of a funny, touching and thought-provoking new comedy about art by **Stephen Sachs** is next up at the multiple award-winning **Fountain Theatre**. Starring veteran actors **Jenny O'Hara** and **Nick Ullett** and directed by Sachs, ***Bakersfield Mist*** opens on **June 11**, the first in a series of productions set to take place at regional theaters across the U.S. as part of a **National New Play Network** rolling world premiere.

Bakersfield Mist is a lively comedy inspired by true events. Maude Gutman, an unemployed, chain-smoking ex-bartender living in a run down California trailer park, believes the painting she bought in a thrift store for \$3 is really an undiscovered masterpiece worth millions. When stuffy New York art expert Lionel Percy arrives to evaluate the work, a fiery battle erupts over class, truth, value, and the meaning of art.

"Writing this play was such delicious fun," says Sachs. "I was excited by the idea of a bawdy, colorful, foul-mouthed character who clashes with a sophisticated know-it-all art expert as she fights to convince him that the painting she found in a junk shop is authentic. She's fighting to make real her own dream for meaning and validation, for deeply personal reasons. I was struck by the very personal nature of what we hold dear and consider valuable, and why. The intimate meaning of art. A painting's value and its worth can be two different things."

The Fountain Theatre production of *Bakersfield Mist* is supported in part by the National New Play Network's flagship program, the Continued Life of New Plays Fund, which is a cooperative venture designed to ensure that new plays see future productions beyond the initial world premiere. Partnerships of three theaters receive funds in support of multiple productions of the same new play. Following the world premiere production at The Fountain, *Bakersfield Mist* is already slated for 7 other productions across the country including at Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theatre in Wellfleet, MA; Florida Stage in South Beach, FL; New Jersey Repertory in Long Branch, NJ; the Prop Thtr in Chicago; New Repertory Theatre in Waterford, MA; Phoenix Theatre in Indianapolis; and the Invisible Theatre in Tucson, AZ. Recent readings featuring O'Hara and Ullett and directed by Sachs were audience favorites at the National New Play Network's Showcase of New Plays in Denver, and at Orlando Shakespeare Theater's "PlayFest" festival of new plays, where *Bakersfield Mist* was named "Best of the Fest" by City's Best.

Set design for *Bakersfield Mist* is by **Jeff McLaughlin**; lighting design is by **Ken Booth**; costume design is by **Shon LeBlanc**; sound design is by **Peter Bayne**; fight choreography is by **Doug Lowry**; prop design is by **Misty Carlisle**; and the production stage manager is **Terri Roberts**. *Bakersfield Mist* is produced by **Simon Levy** and **Deborah Lawlor** and is a presentation of **The Fountain Theatre** and the **National New Play Network**.

Stephen Sachs is a multi-award winning playwright and director. As a playwright, Sachs is the author of 8 plays produced around the country: *Bakersfield Mist* (NNPN Rolling World premiere at 8 theaters nationwide), *Miss Julie: Freedom Summer* (Fountain Theatre, Vancouver Playhouse, Canadian Stage Company, LA Drama Critics Circle award and *LA Weekly* award nominations for Best Adaptation), *Gilgamesh* (Theatre @ Boston Court), *Open Window* (Pasadena Playhouse, Media Access award for Theater Excellence), *Central Avenue* (PEN USA Literary Award finalist, *Back Stage* Garland award, Best Play), *Sweet Nothing in My Ear* (PEN USA Literary Award finalist, Media Access award, NEA grant award), *Mother's Day*, *The Golden Gate* (Best Play, *Drama-Logue*), and *The Baron in the Trees*. He wrote the teleplay for *Sweet Nothing in My Ear* for Hallmark Hall of Fame which aired on CBS starring Marlee Matlin and Jeff Daniels. As a director, Sachs recently directed the U.S. premiere of *The Train Driver* by Athol Fugard and Warren Leight's *Side Man*, starring Christine Lahti and Tony-winner Frank Wood, for LA Theatre Works. Sachs was nominated

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for the SDC Foundation's 2009 Zelda Fichandler Award, honoring outstanding stage directors in the Western United States. Other directing credits include: the Los Angeles premiere of Conor McPherson's *Shining City* ("Best of 2009", *Los Angeles Times*; Best Production, *LA Weekly* award); the West Coast premiere of Athol Fugard's *Coming Home* (Best Director, *LA Weekly* award); the U.S. premiere of Athol Fugard's *Victory* ("Best of 2008" *Los Angeles Times*, NAACP award for Best Director); the world premiere of *Miss Julie: Freedom Summer* at the Fountain and the Canadian Stage Company (Toronto) and the Vancouver Playhouse; the world premiere of Fugard's *Exits and Entrances* at the Fountain (3 Ovation awards including Best Director, 5 LA Drama Critics Circle awards including Best Production and Best Director) and Off-Broadway at Primary Stages in New York (NY Outer Critics Circle nomination Best New Play), and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland; Euripides' *Hippolytos* at the Getty Villa in Malibu, *Gilgamesh* at Theatre @ Boston Court, West Coast premiere of *String of Pearls* at The Road Theatre, the L.A. premiere of Fugard's *The Road to Mecca*, Arthur Miller's *After the Fall* (4 Ovation awards including Best Production and Best Director), *Sweet Nothing in My Ear* (Fountain Theatre, Victory Gardens Theatre in Chicago, Mixed Blood Theatre in Minneapolis), the L.A. premiere of Steven Dietz's *Lonely Planet*, *The Seagull* (starring Philip Bakert Hall and Salome Jens), *The Boys in the Band*, and many others. Sachs co-founded The Fountain Theatre with Deborah Lawlor in 1990.

Jenny O'Hara (Maude Gutman) has starred on Broadway in the female version of *The Odd Couple*; *The Iceman Cometh*; *Promises, Promises*; *The Kid*; and *The Fig Leaves Are Falling*. Off Broadway credits include John Guare's *New York Actor*; Steve Martin's *Wasp*; Peter Hedges' *Good as New*; *EST's Marathon '93*; and Allan Miller's *The Fox*. Regional and Los Angeles: *Mother's Brief Affair* (South Coast Rep); *A Skull in Connemara*; *The Last Seder*; *Little Egypt*, *The Musical*; *The Bold Girls* (Matrix); *The Body Of Bourne* (Taper); Lanford Wilson's *Sympathetic Magic*; the LADCC-nominated *Book Of Days* at Theatre Tribe; and the *Drama-Logue* award-winning *The Fox*. Other theater credits include *Hello and Goodbye* (Yale Rep); *Bitter Women*; *Chess*; *Tight Pants*; and the *Drama-Logue* award-winning *Little Egypt*. Recent TV credits: *NCIS*, *The Closer*, *House*, *Cold Case*, *CSI*, *Nip/Tuck*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Ghost Whisperer*, *Six Feet Under*, *The Practice*, and *If These Walls Could Talk 2*. Films: M. Night Shyamalan's *Devil*; *Heartbeat*, Ridley Scott's *The Matchstick Men*, Clint Eastwood's *Mystic River*, *Forty Shades of Blue*, *Two Weeks*, *Jonathan Toomey*, *How To Make Love To A Woman*, *Hit List*, *Extract*, *Angie*, and *Career Opportunities*. She is a founding member of Ensemble Studio Theatre in N.Y.C. and L.A., and a member of the Matrix and Theatre Tribe Companies.

Nick Ullett (Lionel Percy) has appeared on Broadway in *Me and My Girl* and *Loot*. Off Broadway credits include *Tooth and Claw* (Ensemble Studio Theatre), *Laughing Matters* (Primary Stages), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Samuel Beckett Theatre) and Cole Porter's *Gay Divorce* (Carnegie Hall). California audiences have seen Nick on stage at the Mark Taper Forum, South Coast Rep, La Jolla Playhouse, Laguna Playhouse, Ensemble Studio Theatre-LA, Greenway Court Theatre, and the Zephyr, among many others. Some of his most memorable roles include the Pinball Wizard in The Who's *Tommy* at Hollywood's Aquarius Theatre, the pirate jailer in Stephen Spielberg's *Hook*, one of the more bizarre of Murphy Brown's secretaries, and as an irritant to Tim Allen on one of the final episodes of *Home Improvement*. As a writer, Nick has seen two plays produced by EST-LA and has written for network television. His solo show, *Dying is Easy... Comedy is Hard* had a run at L.A.'s Matrix Theatre last fall. Radio listeners may recognize his voice as a commentator on NPR's "All Things Considered."

Housed in a charming two-story complex in Hollywood, California, The Fountain Theatre is one of the most successful intimate theaters in Los Angeles, providing a nurturing, creative home for multi-ethnic theater and dance artists. Activities include a year-round season of fully produced new and established plays; a new play development series; educational outreach programs; and off-site presentations/tours. Fountain Theatre productions have won more than 200 awards for all areas of production, performance, and design. The Fountain Theatre has the distinction of being honored with more nominations and awards than any other intimate theatre in the history of the Ovation awards, and is the only intimate theater to win the Ovation award for Best Production of a Play five times. Fountain projects have been seen in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Seattle, Florida, New Jersey, Minneapolis and Edinburgh. Recent highlights include its Off-Broadway production of *Exits and Entrances* in New York, the making of *Sweet Nothing in My Ear* into a TV movie on CBS, and the recent multi-award-winning productions of *The Ballad of Emmett Till* and *Opus*. The Fountain has been honored with a Certificate of Appreciation from the Los Angeles City Council for demonstrating years of artistic excellence and "enhancing the cultural life of Los Angeles." The Fountain Theatre was recently honored with 7 Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle and 5 Ovation awards for 2010, including the Ovation for "Best Season."

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Bakersfield Mist opens on Saturday, **June 11**, with performances **Thursdays, Fridays**, and **Saturdays @ 8 pm** and **Sundays @ 2 pm** through **July 31**. Preview performances take place June 4, 5, 9 and 10 on the same schedule. Tickets are **\$25** on Thursdays and Fridays and **\$30** on Saturdays and Sundays, except opening night (June 11), which is **\$35** and previews which are **\$15**. On Thursdays and Fridays only, students with ID are **\$18** and seniors are **\$23**.

The Fountain Theatre is located at **5060 Fountain Avenue** (at Normandie) in Los Angeles. Secure, on-site parking is available for \$5. The Fountain Theatre is air-conditioned and wheelchair accessible. For reservations and information, call **323 663-1525** or go to www.FountainTheatre.com.

Details for Calendar Listings

BAKERSFIELD MIST

WHAT:

Bakersfield Mist - A lively comedy, inspired by true events. Maude Gutman, an unemployed, chain-smoking ex-bartender living in a run down California trailer park, believes the painting she bought in a thrift store for \$3 is really an undiscovered masterpiece worth millions. When stuffy New York art expert Lionel Percy arrives to evaluate the work, a fiery battle erupts over class, truth, value, and the meaning of art.

WHO:

Written and Directed by **Stephen Sachs**
Starring **Jenny O'Hara** and **Nick Ullett**
Produced by **Simon Levy** and **Deborah Lawlor**
Presented by **The Fountain Theatre** and the **National New Play Network**

WHEN:

Previews: June 4 - 10

Performances: **June 11 – July 31**

Thursdays @ 8 pm: June 9 (preview), 16, 23, 30; July 7, 14, 21, 28

Fridays @ 8 pm: June 10 (preview), 17, 24; July 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

Saturdays @ 8 pm: June 4 (preview), 11 (Open), 18, 25; July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

Sundays @ 2 pm: June 5 (preview), 12, 19, 26; July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

WHERE:

The Fountain Theatre
5060 Fountain Ave.
Los Angeles CA 90029
(*Fountain at Normandie*)

HOW:

323-663-1525 or www.FountainTheatre.com

TICKETS:

Opening Night (June 11): **\$35**

Thursdays and Fridays: **\$25**

Saturdays and Sundays: **\$30**

Seniors over 62 (Thursdays and Fridays only): **\$23**

Students (Thursdays and Fridays only, with ID): **\$18**

Previews: **\$15**

Parking:

Secure, on-site parking: **\$5**