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NEWS RELEASE

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Prominent English Children’s Theatre Author and Educator to be first “Artist in Residence” at Lewis Family Playhouse in Rancho Cucamonga

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rancho Cucamonga, California – Thanks to a grant from the Rancho Cucamonga Community Foundation, English playwright and author David Wood, dubbed 'the national children's dramatist' by Irving Wardle in The London Times and writer of more than 60 plays for young audiences, will be the first “Artist in Residence” at the Lewis Family Playhouse, in conjunction with the MainStreet Theatre Company’s production of his adaptation of Roald Dahl’s *James and the Giant Peach*. The residency will take place from October 17 – 22, 2008.

As part of the residency, Mr. Wood will participate in post-play discussions with the audience; conduct a lecture on children’s theatre for area scholars, teachers and members of the theatrical community; and hold workshops with children in local schools and at the Paul A. Biane Library. “We are so grateful to the Rancho Cucamonga Community Foundation for kick-starting what we hope will be an annual program,” says Susan Sluka-Kelly, Cultural Arts Supervisor for the City of Rancho Cucamonga. “We thought it appropriate to begin the program by inviting a leader in the world of children’s theatre, since our MainStreet Theatre Company is such a flagship of the programming we do at the Lewis Family Playhouse. We’re thrilled to be able to bring such a leading practitioner and advocate for Theatre for Young Audiences to our community.”

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“This is a double thrill for me,” says David Wood. “First, I’m delighted that my adaptation of Roald Dahl’s classic *James and the Giant Peach* is to play a season in Rancho Cucamonga. Second, it will be exciting for me not only to see the show, but to talk to students and children about the play and about my work as a children’s playwright. For me, children’s theatre is the most important theatre because it can trigger imaginations and enrich children’s lives. I’m also looking forward to showing off some of my children’s books! California here I come!”

David Wood began writing as a student at Oxford University in the 1960’s. He wrote his first play for children in 1967 and has since written over sixty more, with productions all over the world. He has directed many of his plays for his own company, Whirligig Theatre (founded with John Gould in 1979), which tours to major theatres around England, including Sadler’s Wells in London. He is the author of *Theatre for Children: Guide to Writing, Adapting, Directing and Acting*. He has also written for film, television and radio. For the last 20 years he has also toured *The David Wood Magic Show* to theatres all over the UK, and is a member of the Inner Magic Circle with Gold Star. He has been honored by the American Alliance of Theater and Education, is chairman of the charity Action for Children’s Arts, and was awarded an Order of the British Empire (O.B.E.) in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List in 2004, among many other achievements in his prestigious career.

The City of Rancho Cucamonga created the MainStreet Theatre Company in 2006 to provide imaginative productions specifically for children, school groups and families. To date, over 20,000 children and families have attended a production. The MainStreet Theatre Company is the only professional Theatre for Young Audiences company in the Inland Empire, and the only company in Southern California producing such high quality shows for children as their primary focus. *James and the Giant Peach* will be the second David Wood adaptation of a Roald Dahl favorite to grace the Lewis Family Playhouse stage. In it’s 2007/2008 season, MainStreet produced David Wood’s adaptation of *The BFG*.

James and the Giant Peach will run from October 18th – November 1st, on Saturdays at 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. There will be an additional performance on Sunday, October 26th at 1:00 p.m. Tickets are priced at \$16.50 for general admission, \$14.50 for seniors and \$13.50 for youth up to age 12. There is a 10% discount for those purchasing a subscription to all three MainStreet Theatre Company shows in the season. To purchase tickets, please visit www.lewisfamilyplayhouse.com or call (909) 477-2752 or (877) 858-8422. The three-acre, 89,000 square-foot Victoria Gardens Cultural Center is located at 12505 Cultural Center Drive. The Box Office is open Sunday through Thursday from noon to 6:00 p.m., and Fridays and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.