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THE SANTA MONICA CIVIC LIGHT OPERA ANNOUNCES THEIR 2004-05 SEASON, SHOWCASING PRODUCTIONS BY THE SANTA MONICA HIGH SCHOOL (SMHS) THEATRE PROGRAM AND ITS COMBINED PROFESSIONAL-ALUMNI-STUDENT ENTITY, THE SMCLO.

The Santa Monica Civic Light Opera (SMCLO), the professional presenting organization for the Santa Monica High School (SMHS) Theatre Arts Program, announces its 2004-05 season — a stunning array of musicals, comedy, and bonus workshop productions — that continues its award-winning tradition of excellence.

Season highlights include high-school productions of *Play It Again Sam*, *The Music Man*, workshop productions of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* and selected *David Ives one-acts*, culminating with a combined professional-alumni-student production of *My Fair Lady*.

Dr. Frank X. Ford, Director of Theatre Arts and Film at Santa Monica High School and Founder and Artistic Director of the Santa Monica Civic Light Opera, has said, "We are unique. Our students work with and learn from both our alumni and visiting guest professionals."

"The partnership between Santa Monica High School's Theatre Arts Program and SMCLO, in place since 1989, has resulted in an educational and professional experience unequaled by any other high school, anywhere," says Dr. Ford said. "The best news of all is that this will be our greatest year ever!"

Brett Fisher, Producer and Managing Director of the SMCLO, said, "Never before in the ten years I have been working with Frank at the high school and with the Theatre-Alumni Organization [SMCLO] has a season been programmed so well to design collaborative opportunities for our students and alumni." Fisher is especially looking forward to the season's big musicals: "I cannot wait to conduct all those musicians and singers in the restored Barnum Hall for our spring spectacle." Fisher has been Ford's Music Director and Conductor for all of the high school and the SMCLO's musicals since 1995.

The season begins next month with Woody Allen's comedy, *Play It Again Sam*, a homage to film noir and to Humphrey Bogart's legendary tough-guy detective who steps off the screen to help a nerdy film critic "get the girl." The show runs November 11 through December 18, at the Humanities Center Theater on the SMHS campus, 601 Pico Blvd. in Santa Monica. Tickets are \$15.

The Music Man, Meredith Willson's celebration of small-town Americana, gets a spectacular spring production, with full orchestra, chorale, marching band, and a cast of — literally — hundreds. The show — about a fast-talking traveling salesman who cons

the people of River City, Iowa, into buying band uniforms and instruments but then falls in love before he can skip town — plays March 3-12, 2005, at the newly restored Barnum Hall, the art-moderne landmark that has recently undergone an \$8.1 million renovation, on the SMHS campus at 601 Pico Boulevard. Tickets are \$20.

The SMCLO/SMHS season also includes a workshop production of Edward Albee's searing drama, ***Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf***, playing May 19-28, 2005, and the selected One-Act comedies of David Ives, playing June 3 and 4, 2005, both in the Humanities Center Theater on the SMHS campus, 601 Pico Boulevard. in Santa Monica. Tickets are \$10-15.

My Fair Lady, the Lerner and Loewe musical, gives the season its grand finale — an SMCLO production featuring talented alumni, working professionals and accomplished high-school students. The unlikely romance between Professor Henry Higgins, England's most brilliant (and crotchety) phoneticist and Eliza Doolittle, the little cockney gutter sparrow, returns the blockbuster musical to the Barnum Hall Theater on the SMHS campus, 601 Pico Blvd. in Santa Monica. The show runs July 14-30, 2005. Tickets are \$15-30.

The Santa Monica Civic Light Opera is grateful for the support of many community partners, most notably their presenting season sponsor, Washington Mutual, and additional season sponsors, the Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel and Gramercy Partners, LLC, the publishers of Santa Monica Magazine and Santa Monica Business.

The SMCLO serves as the educational partner to the Santa Monica High School's Theatre Arts Program, developing productions for the Humanities Center and Barnum Hall stages and enhancing the student experience through mentoring with alumni and theatre professionals.

Tickets for all productions are available through the SMCLO Box Office, in the Humanities Center Theater, 601 Pico Boulevard, Santa Monica, 90405, by phone at 310-458-5939 or on the web at www.smclo.org. Discounts are available for students under 18, subscribers and groups. *[Patrons are encouraged to take advantage of SMCLO's three and four-play subscription packages for \$40 and \$50 which offer premiere seating and \$5 discounts off each ticket.]*

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