

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Media Alert for Theatre Editors and Journalists

## The Final Encore of Chance Theater's "Bold New Home" Capital Campaign

A special \$50,000 challenge gift enters the Chance into  
the final phase of its fundraising drive



**June 30, 2015 in Anaheim, CA ...** Chance Theater is excited to announce that we are entering the final push in our bold new home capital campaign drive, thanks to a \$50,000 challenge gift from a group of Chance supporters – community leaders Wylie & Bette Aitken, Larry & Sophie Cripe, Mary Kay Fyda-Mar, and Tod & Linda White. “So many people have worked so hard and given so much to help make this dream come

true,” says Mary Kay Fyda-Mar, immediate Past Chair of the Chance Theater Board. “They say it takes a village, but I like to say that it takes a family.”

The challenge deadline is November 1, 2015 in order to avoid incurring any additional interest on the construction loan. “We would love to say that we’re through, but we’re not. We still have a bit of a gap,” said Board Vice-Chair, and campaign chair, Larry Cripe. “To that end, we have found a solution that will bring this fundraising drive to a close.”

During the last 20 months, over 150 individuals stepped forward to make major naming gifts including Mary Kay Fyda-Mar, Wylie Aitken (who surprised his wife Bette at the Phase One Opening in January of 2014 by announcing a \$250,000 donation to name the new theater arts center after her) and Tod & Linda White and Larry & Sophie Cripe issued a \$75,000 challenge gift at the official dedication ceremony for the new building. That same night, Wylie & Bette Aitken pledged \$25,000 toward the challenge, and the White & Cripe Challenge Gift was matched by the end of May. “I can’t tell you how strongly Bette and I feel about this amazing troupe of artists,” said Wylie Aitken, a prominent attorney and former Chair of the California Arts Council. “I can tell you that their passion is only exceeded by their incredible talent. We believe they have become part of our family, and this has been a great rebirth of what is an unbelievable theater.”

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When we started this project, the campaign goal was \$770,000, and the Chance has currently raised \$790,000. However, due to new state code requirements and unforeseen construction costs and delays during the building of the second phase of the Bette Aitken *theater arts* Center, the total budget rose to \$890,000, leaving the theater company with \$100,000 left to raise. "We had a goal to build a new theater that was twice the size of our original theater and eventually expand beyond that to provide more opportunities for education and outreach into the community," said Board Chair Scott B. Well. "We set a reasonable goal, but a lot can happen when you're building a new home. Ticket prices alone do not support a theater, and that's true at any non-profit theater in this country. It's through the help of the community members, of those who believe in the theater, that open up their wallets and open up their hearts that keep us thriving. It's wonderful to have heroes like this that will help us get things accomplished."

Chance Theater's goals when moving into their new home were to expand their programming, offer additional education outreach programs, and truly allow the company to make its mark as a mid-size theater that does innovative and personal work while serving its community in new and different ways. Since moving into their new home in 2014, the company has achieved some amazing things, including:

- Received an Ovation Award from LA Stage Alliance for Best Choreography for its inaugural production, *Lysistrata Jones*, which was also nominated for Best Musical.
- Expanded its Speak Up – Take a 'Chance' summer program to include double the number of at-risk students
- Currently producing its first Theater for Young Audiences series
- The first in our region to begin a "Relaxed Performance" initiative, making theater accessible to children and adults who have an Autism Spectrum Condition, sensory and communication disorders, or learning disabilities.
- Produced seven regional premieres and two world premieres, including *Loch Ness*, which was developed and workshopped entirely at the Chance as part of the On The Radar New Play Series.
- Produced readings of six new shows in development, four of which have gone on to receive world premieres in major regional theaters, including Lincoln Center and Cleveland Playhouse.
- More than doubled its subscriber base, and increased ticket revenue by over 140%.
- The first season of shows was also recognized by the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle, Robby Awards, *San Diego Story*, *Orange Curtain Review*, and other press outlets.

"What this mid-size company can accomplish is astounding," said Tod White. "This wonderful new space is almost all paid for, but not quite. Community support for the Chance has been fantastic. Now we need a few more contributions to help us finish the job."

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## DOUBLE YOUR SUPPORT

To contribute to the Final Encore of our Bold New Home Capital Campaign, or to get more information about the Chance, visit [www.ChanceTheater.com/FinalEncore](http://www.ChanceTheater.com/FinalEncore) or [www.Razoo.com/story/Final-50k-Encore](http://www.Razoo.com/story/Final-50k-Encore). You can also call the main theater line at (714) 777-3033.

To schedule interviews, request photos, or for any additional information, please contact Casey Long at (714) 900-3284 or by e-mail at [casey@chancetheater.com](mailto:casey@chancetheater.com).

## ABOUT CHANCE THEATER

Proud to be one of the leading ensemble-driven theatre companies in Southern California, CHANCE THEATER has won five Ovation Awards (including two for Best Production of a Musical--Intimate Theater for *Triassic Park -- The Musical* and *Jerry Springer: The Opera*). The Chance also received an LADCC Award last year for its reimagined revival of *West Side Story*. The Anaheim City Council recently named Chance Theater "the official resident theater company of Anaheim". Twice named "Outstanding Arts Organization" by Arts Orange County, Chance Theater is also a recipient of the LADCC's Polly Warfield Award for Excellence. Founded in 1999, Chance Theater is focused on its goal of being Orange County's premiere mid-size contemporary theater by contributing to a more compassionate, connected, and creative community. As a constituent member of Theatre Communications Group, Network of Ensemble Theaters, and the LA Stage Alliance, Chance Theater continues to bring national attention to the Southern California and Orange County theater scenes.

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