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METRO THEATER COMPANY EMBARKS ON A "WHALE" OF A PROJECT
Respected Local Writer and Premiere Theater Company Collaborate on
New Telling of an Old Tale: *Moby* as Inspired by Herman Melville's American Classic

St. Louis, MO — Born out of a conversation between **local writer Pat Corrigan** and **Artistic Director Carol North** about Metro's interest in developing a literature-based theater piece that would capture the attention of middle and high school students with provocative themes and high theatricality comes a new approach to *Moby Dick*.

The first of two public readings of the developing script is scheduled for **7:30 PM on Monday, October 29, 2007 at Third Baptist Church in Grand Center**. The second will occur in April 2008, with full production planned as part of Metro's 2008-2009 season.

Corrigan has been watching whales in the wild for 25 years and writing journalistic wildlife conservation articles about them for two decades. She believes that this is an important story to bring to the stage for young people.

"This is a story of one culture killing another culture about which they knew nothing. The parallels to what is currently happening in our world speak for themselves. It is almost unfathomable that, despite so-called global awareness, war is too often reduced to a conflict between good and evil," Corrigan said.

A long-time friend of Corrigan, Artistic Director Carol North was intrigued with the idea of exploring the original story from the whale's perspective. Both Corrigan and North agreed that while this project might be a portal of access to classic literature, it will not be an adaptation of Melville's novel.

Metro's piece will be inspired by the terrifying, real life story of the sinking of the Essex, the basis for Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. The whale ship Essex, with a crew of 20 aboard, left Nantucket on its last whaling voyage in 1819. The ship, according to the records provided by members of the crew, was 'stove by a whale' on that journey. In modern-day language, that means that an 80-ton sperm whale in a pod under attack by the whalers fought back, ramming first the port side and then the bow of the Essex, causing the ship to sink.

Using both the factual event and the fictional storytelling, and driven by the larger metaphor of senseless warfare, Metro's production will explore the incident anew, weaving Melville's characters with mysteries of the deep in a dual commission with composer Greg Bolin.

Bolin, who also composed the score for Metro's *Earth Songs*, will unveil portions of his original score for *Moby* at the second public reading next spring. "It is clear to the creative team that *Moby* is a theater piece in which music and dance are equal partners to poetic text and visual imagery. We know the final piece will not be plot-driven, yet a story underlies the project," North said.

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Moby has good company as it grows and develops to a full-fledged theater piece. Since 1973, Metro Theater Company has created and developed 31 original plays, many of which have gone on to production by other theaters around the country and are considered to be among the best examples of contemporary dramatic literature for young people.

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Metro Theater Company celebrates 35 years of delivering innovative theater experiences to young people and their families in St. Louis, throughout the state, across the country and around the world. The Company has presented at major venues, including the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., in over 40 states and has performed in Canada, Italy, Japan and Taiwan. For more information please visit, www.metrotheatercompany.org

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