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METRO THEATER COMPANY'S "WHALE" OF A PROJECT Second Reading of New Work Announced

Respected Local Writer and Premiere Theater Company Collaborate on New Telling of an Old Tale

St. Louis, MO — Metro Theatre Company will host the second staged reading of its new work, *MOBY* on Monday, April 28 at 7:30 p.m. at the Clayton Little Theatre, Clayton High School, One Mark Twain Circle. This high theatrical new approach to *Moby Dick* will have its world premiere in Metro's 2008/2009 season. Seating is limited and reservations are strongly recommended. Please RSVP by calling 314-997-6777 or by email, mail@metrotheatercompany.org

Composer Greg Bolin, who also composed the score for Metro's Earth Songs, will unveil portions of his original score for *Moby* at the reading. "It was 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.

The project grew out of a dinner 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.

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 other words, 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.

Moby has good company as it grows and develops to a full-fledged theater piece. Since 1973, Metro 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. To learn more visit www.metrotheatercompany.org or call 314-997-6777.

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