

Feb. 10, 2010

Rogers Little Theater

116 S. Second St., Rogers, AR 72756

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **RLT ANNOUNCES AUDITIONS FOR 'THE SECRET GARDEN'**

ROGERS, Ark. — Auditions for Rogers Little Theater's next musical production, *The Secret Garden*, will be held March 1-2 at 7 p.m. at The Victory Theater in historic downtown Rogers.

Audition materials are available for \$5 per packet at the RLT Box Office, 116 S. Second St., or free via RLT's Web site, [www.rogerslittletheater.org/secretgarden](http://www.rogerslittletheater.org/secretgarden). Performances are April 30-May 2, May 6-8. A special catered lunch is scheduled for Mother's Day, May 9.

Based on the novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden* is an enchanting classic of children's literature that was turned into a musical by Pulitzer Prize winning playwright Marsha Norman (author of *'night, Mother*) and composer Lucy Simon. Norman won a Tony Award for *The Secret Garden* book and lyrics, and Simon's musical score was nominated for the Tony Award.

"*The Secret Garden* includes some of the most beautiful music ever written for Broadway. Many of the 22 characters sing at least one solo or duet containing musical passages weighted with emotions of hope and despair," said Juan Martinez, the director.

"The music does such a good job in expressing the story, and the songs require stellar vocal talent. They are challenging for both the children and the adult roles," Martinez added.

The story begins with 11-year-old Mary Lennox as an orphan in India. After her

parents die of the cholera, Mary returns to Yorkshire, England to live with her bitter, reclusive uncle, Archibald Craven, and his invalid son, Colin Craven. The cast roles include Dr. Neville Craven, whose greed over his brother Archibald's estate gets the best of him and he orchestrates keeping Colin, heir to the estate, locked in his bedroom. The rest of the household fears a perceived illness will cause Colin to die if he were to go outside. Martha, the maid, encourages Mary to befriend Colin as the whimsical Dickon – brother of Martha – helps Mary restore a garden that ultimately casts the “magical spell” needed for Colin's survival. Flashbacks, dream sequences and a strolling chorus of ghosts dramatize the musical's compelling tale of regeneration.

“Not only does Mary rescue Colin, in a sense she rescues everyone from the spirit of despair that was cast over the household when Archibald's wife, Lily, died giving birth to Colin,” said Richard Dean Prudenti, assistant director.

The cast of characters include ethnic-specific roles: a Fakir and the Ayah, male and female roles, who play a part in Mary's life in India.

“Those not familiar with the show will quickly become enamored with the music and storyline, and those who already know this show will grow in their fondness for the fantasy and the reality that makes this musical so powerful,” Prudenti said.

The following identifies the characters, with gender, vocal part, age range, and role type:

- Mary Lennox, female, mezzo, 8–12, lead
- Archibald Craven, male, tenor, 35–45, lead
- Colin Craven, male, soprano, 8–12, lead
- Lily Craven, female, soprano, 26–37, supporting
- Dr. Neville Craven, male, baritone, 25–40, supporting
- Martha, female, mezzo, 18–30, supporting
- Dickon, male, tenor, 16–28, supporting
- Rose, female, mezzo, 21–35, supporting

- Albert, male, tenor, 30–45, supporting
- Ben Weatherstaff, male, tenor, 40–65, supporting
- Mrs. Medlock, female, spoken, 30–45, supporting
- Ayah, female, alto, 21–40, supporting
- Fakir, male, tenor, 25–40, supporting
- Mrs. Winthrop, female, spoken, 30–50, cameo
- William, male, tenor, 18–30, cameo
- Betsy female alto 18–30 cameo
- Lt. Ian Shaw, male, tenor, 24–34, cameo
- Alice, female, soprano, 21–3, cameo
- Claire, female, soprano, 30–45, cameo
- Major Holmes, male, bass, 32–48, cameo
- Lt. Peter Wright, male, baritone, 24–34, cameo
- Timothy, male, bass, 18–30, cameo

For more information, contact the RLT Box Office at (479) 631-8988, visit the RLT Website at [www.rogerslittletheater.org](http://www.rogerslittletheater.org), and/or contact **Director Juan Martinez**, [me@therealjuanmartinez.com](mailto:me@therealjuanmartinez.com).

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