



## **NEWS RELEASE**

## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Near West Theatre looks to “Ease On Down The Road” into 2009-2010 Season**

Cleveland, OH (August 13, 2009) – Near West Theatre (NWT) enters its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of providing high quality, affordable theatre in the 2009-2010 season with productions of *The Wiz* (Nov 20-Dec 6, 2009), *The Secret Garden* (May 7-23, 2010) and *Rent School Edition* (July 23-Aug 8, 2010). All performances will take place at Near West Theatre’s long time home, St. Patrick’s Club Building\* at West 38<sup>th</sup> Street and Bridge Avenue in Ohio City.

These three productions provide a message of hope and the power of community in a time when America is struggling to adjust to a changing economic landscape. Artistic Director, Bob Navis, says of the season, “each piece speaks in its own way to the power and possibilities inherent in life for choice, re-direction and new insight.”

As Near West Theatre works to expose people of all backgrounds to the world of live theatre, tickets for all performances are priced reasonably at \$8 for adults and \$6 for children 12 & under. Tickets and more information about these programs are available by calling (216) 961-6391 or by visiting [www.nearwesttheatre.org](http://www.nearwesttheatre.org).

#### **The Wiz**

**Performance Dates: November 20 – December 6, 2009**

**Auditions: August 11 – 13, 2009**

"Ease On Down The Road" with us as this Tony Award winning Best Musical of 1975 storms onto our stage for the third time in NWT'S history. Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tinman and the Lion travel a fantastical, futuristic road trip and learn some things along the way about rising above one's background and the expectations of others.

#### **The Secret Garden**

**Performance Dates: May 7 – 23, 2010**

**Auditions: February 23 – 25, 2010**

This enchanting classic of children's literature is now a brilliant musical by a Pulitzer Prize winning playwright, Marsha Norman. Orphaned in India, Mary Lennox, an 11-year old girl returns to Yorkshire to live with an embittered, reclusive uncle and his invalid son. The estate includes a magic locked garden. Flashbacks, dream sequences, a strolling chorus of ghosts, and some of the most beautiful music ever written for Broadway dramatize this inspiring story about the restorative powers of love, regeneration and rebirth.

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## **Rent School Edition**

**Performance Dates: July 23 – August 28, 2010**

**Auditions: May 25 – 27, 2010**

Jonathan Larson's Pulitzer Prize winning Broadway musical based loosely on Puccini's opera *La Bohème*. In its examination of the lifestyles of the young men and women who inhabit the slums of the Village, the play becomes a celebration of life and the heroic struggle to survive.

## **Star Seat Packages Available**

Star Seat donors help bridge the gap between the true cost of an audience member's experience and the affordable rate we offer our guests. Buy this package to help NWT continue to offer affordable, high-quality theatre on the Near West Side. For \$120, you get 7 tickets for any combination of performances plus concession coupons, playbill recognition and other VIP opportunities and benefits. Star Seat Packages are available online at [www.nearwesttheatre.org](http://www.nearwesttheatre.org).

Since 1978, Near West Theatre has engaged youth on the Near West Side in a positive activity that taps into their energy, allowing them to discover their creativity and present themselves as contributing members of the community. Through a process that is intense, sometimes rugged and ragged, challenging and transforming, Near West Theatre, now intergenerational, engages participants and audience alike. Individuals from all walks of life come together and share their unique life stories and experiences in order to find their own voices and make personal connections with the production. Near West Theatre's unique blend of performing arts and community-building has played an instrumental role in the theatre's success with its audience, community and participants.

NWT proudly recognizes the 2009 Season sponsorship of Today's Soft Rock, WDOK 102.1 F.M. The Ohio Arts Council has helped fund this program with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. NWT is generously funded by Cuyahoga County residents through Cuyahoga Arts and Culture and is a member of Greater Cleveland Community Shares. Community Shares supports local nonprofit organizations working for long-term, sustainable, solutions to build a stronger Cleveland. Learn more about Community Shares and supporting social justice through workplace giving at [www.communityshares.org](http://www.communityshares.org).

For more information about the Near West Theatre, our programs, performances or for audition information, please contact the NWT business office at (216) 961-9750.

\*\*\*While accessibility is an important part of Near West Theatre's Mission, our current location at W. 38<sup>th</sup> & Bridge is on the third floor and is unable to accommodate an elevator or chair lift to make it accessible to individuals in wheelchairs or to those who have difficulty with stairs. We are working diligently to raise the funds to build an accessible new theater space in the Gordon Square Arts District.

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