



**NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

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## **INTO THE WOODS CAST MEMBER COUPLE LIVING REAL-LIFE FAIRY TALE ON NEAR WEST THEATRE STAGE AND OFF**

Cleveland, OH (April 27, 2011) - Cleveland – When Joe Kenderes first answered a Near West Theatre casting call for a production of *South Pacific* in the Summer of 1996, the then-high school sophomore never imagined that he would meet his future wife. Now Joe, 30, from Brunswick, and wife Jill Kenderes, 27, from Avon, who began performing at Near West in a Summer Teen production in 2004, are both starring in the upcoming Near West Theatre production of *Into the Woods*, the fairy tale-themed Stephen Sondheim musical. Now, as the Kenderes' prepare to welcome their first child in November, it would seem this performing couple is living a real-life fairy tale, inspired by their experiences throughout the years at Near West Theatre.

The couple actually met in 2005 while performing in the annual Near West Theatre benefit. Joe had noticed Jill in a previous production and wanted to get to know her. "I tried to initiate a conversation with her and failed miserably," Joe recalls, "I had a little reputation." "Pretty much everyone said he was a player," adds Jill, laughing. But the couple struck up a friendship and continued performing in Near West shows until romance blossomed during a production of *Godspell* later that year. In 2008, while on a trip to St. Louis, Joe proposed to Jill by singing a song from the musical *Pippin*, which he also performed in at Near West. They were married in May of 2009 and the week before rehearsals began for the current production of *Into the Woods*, received the happy news that they are expecting their first child on 11/11/11. "We can chronicle our life events at Near West Theatre," says Jill, "now we can add this one to the list." Joe adds, "The culture at Near West cultivates an environment where you get to know people and find commonalities." "It's extremely cool to be doing a show here and be part of this family, experiencing this together – our first pregnancy," he says.

Near West Theatre's production of *Into the Woods* opens on May 6<sup>th</sup>. Performances are Fri.-Sat. May 6 & 7, Thurs-Sun., May 12-15, and Fri.-Sun., May 20-22. Curtain times on Thursday, Fridays, and Saturdays are at 7:30 pm and Sundays at 3:00 pm. All offerings are at St. Patrick's Club Building, located at W.38<sup>th</sup> and Bridge Avenue\* in Ohio City and include free parking. Adult tickets are \$8 and children, 12 & under, are \$6. The Star Seat ticket, which helps Near West fill the gap between the affordable rate it offers its patrons and the actual cost of the production, is \$20 and includes a concession coupon. Tickets are available by calling (216) 961-6391 or can be ordered online at [www.nearwesttheatre.org](http://www.nearwesttheatre.org).

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. Near West Theatre receives

\*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 those who have difficulty with stairs. We are focused on providing an accessible space as we continue our progress on our joint capital campaign to build a new theatre in the Gordon Square Arts District.

public support with local tax dollars from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, to preserve and enrich our region's artistic and cultural heritage. Near West is also 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).

### **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 Near West 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).

### **History**

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.

Near West Theatre is a partner in the Gordon Square Arts District, a collaboration between Near West, Cleveland Public Theatre, and Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization, where it will build a new, accessible performance venue. Go to [www.gordonsquare.org](http://www.gordonsquare.org) for more information on Gordon Square Arts District which has completed Phase One of its capital campaign (includes completion of a streetscape, renovation of the historic Capitol Movie Theatre featuring art and independent films, site acquisition for Near West's new building & gateway plaza, doubled parking capacity, and expanded campus for CPT and five new roofs for its historic structures).

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

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