

For Immediate Release

**Stephanie Zimbalist Leads Cast in
Ensemble Theatre Company's Production of
*The Memory of Water***

(Santa Barbara, CA)— Ensemble Theatre Company (ETC) of Santa Barbara will present *The Memory of Water*, a witty and moving exploration of family dynamics, by British playwright Shelagh Stephenson. Winner of the “Laurence Olivier Award for Best Comedy,” this absorbingly entertaining play, full of dark humor and heart, begins performances on Thursday, February 15 and continues through Sunday, March 11, 2007. Opening night is February 16. Stephanie Zimbalist leads the cast; Jenny Sullivan directs.

Three sisters – paranoid Mary, uptight Teresa, and strung out and bratty Catherine – have returned home to the north of England for their mother’s funeral, setting the stage for hilarious sibling jealousies, witty bickering, and doped-up soul searching. Making her appearance as well is the ghost of their mother. Each sister holds distinct memories of their childhood, each has her own unique perspective on what these memories mean. A hit in London’s West End, *The Memory of Water* vividly brings home all the joys and sorrows of family.

First presented in London in 1998, where it received unqualified rave reviews and an extended run in London’s West End, *The Memory of Water* has been hailed as “barbed, lyrical, witty and full of a rare emotional intelligence”, and “wickedly funny and moving.”

Like the three sisters in *The Memory of Water*, Ms. Stephenson hails from England’s North Country. *The Memory of Water* was her first stage play which opened in Hampstead Theatre London in 1996 soon moving to the West-End where it enjoyed great success. Her second stage play, *An Experiment with an Air Pump* premiered in 1998. She has written five original plays for BBC Radio.

ETC’s new Executive Artistic Director Jonathan Fox is pleased to welcome back Jenny Sullivan as guest director. Last season, Ms. Sullivan directed *Dublin Carol*. Locally, Ms. Sullivan has also been a teacher at the University of California at Santa Barbara, College of Creative Studies and for many years was the producer of Summer Solstice Celebration in Santa Barbara.

(more)

914 Santa Barbara St., • Santa Barbara, CA 93101 • Administrative Office (805) 965-6252 • Box Office (805) 962-8606

The Ensemble Theatre is a professional theater employing members of Actor’s Equity Association and maintains a policy to hire, without discrimination regarding race, color, national origin, gender, handicap, or political or sexual persuasion.

“This play confronts the issues everyone must deal with when it comes to family,” said director Jenny Sullivan. “The notion that each sister perceives her family history in varying ways, creating her own “memory” of their collective childhood, is fascinating.”

Stephanie Zimbalist will play Mary. This will be her seventh production with Ms. Sullivan as director and her first at ETC. Perhaps best known for her starring role in the television hit, “Remington Steele” (1982 to 1987) with Pierce Brosnan, Ms. Zimbalist has appeared in numerous television movies and in guest appearances on several television programs. Her recent stage work includes *The Rainmaker*, *Dancing at Lughnasa* and *Defying Gravity*. The role of Teresa will be played by **Laurie Walters**, who starred as Joannie in the long-running television series “Eight is Enough”. Her extensive stage experience includes the Mark Taper Forum, South Coast Repertory Theatre and Berkeley Repertory Theatre.

The excellent cast also includes **Bairbre Dowling**, whose stage experience includes distinguished work at some of the most respected regional theatres in southern California, including the Mark Taper Forum, Laguna Playhouse, La Jolla Playhouse and Odyssey Theater. Ensemble Theatre is pleased to welcome back **Leonard Kelly-Young**, who was acclaimed in last season’s *Humble Boy*.

Rounding out the cast are two Santa Barbara based actors. Playing the role of Catherine is **Emma-Jane Huerta** whose work at ETC began in 1991, and **Mitchell McLean**, an acting instructor at Westmont College and member of the award-winning Lit Moon company.

The Ensemble Theatre Company of Santa Barbara was founded in 1979 and is housed at the intimate Alhecama Theatre located in the historic Presidio District in downtown Santa Barbara at 914 Santa Barbara Street. ETC is Santa Barbara’s longest running, most award-winning professional resident theatre company, now in its 27th anniversary season.

Ensemble Theatre Company performs Tuesday through Saturday at 8:00 pm and Sundays at 2:00 and 7:00 pm. Opening night is Friday, February 16. Ticket prices for *The Memory of Water* range from \$25.00 to \$37.00. Performances run Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8:00 pm and Sundays at 2:00 and 7:00 pm. ETC offers discounts to students, seniors and groups of 10 or more. Subscriptions, single tickets and group tickets are available through the **Ensemble Theatre Box Office at (805) 962-8606** or online at www.ensembletheatre.com.

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