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**For Immediate Release**

## **Ensemble Theatre Company Announces 2008-09 Season of Exciting American Work**

**Ensemble Theatre Company of Santa Barbara (ETC)**, under the artistic direction of Jonathan Fox, announced its upcoming season of five plays, to run from September 2008 through June of 2009. The season, comprised entirely of American work, is a blend of Broadway and off-Broadway hits, exciting new plays and a revisit of an American classic, and – in a rare departure for ETC – a new musical.

The season will open with Richard Greenberg's 2003 Tony-Award winning dramatic comedy, *Take Me Out* (September 25 to October 19, 2008). Darren Lemming is a star baseball player, an African-American who is handsome, charismatic, an extraordinary athlete ... and gay. The public announcement of his sexuality throws his team into turmoil, engendering surprising – and tragic – consequences. Richard Greenberg is one of America's most prolific and successful contemporary playwrights, with several Broadway hits to his name, including *Eastern Standard* and *Three Days of Rain*. *Take Me Out* has Greenberg's intellectual and verbal wit, and touches on issues of sexuality, race, class, hero-worship, and that great symbol of American culture, baseball.

In December, ETC will present a new holiday musical, *Striking 12* (December 4 to December 28, 2008), an off-Broadway hit and nominated for the 2007 Lucille Lortel award for Outstanding Musical. Developed by the NY-based rock band, Groovelily, *Striking 12* is an urban answer to holiday sugar overload, a story of a grumpy New Yorker who resolves to spend New Years Eve alone, and in the process dreams up a musical adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Match Girl."

(more)

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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.

The season continues with Sam Shepard's masterpiece, *Buried Child* (January 29 to February 22, 2009). Winner of the 1979 Pulitzer Prize, this darkly comic story of a family coming apart at the seams catapulted Sam Shepard to national fame. After spending several years in Los Angeles, Vince and his girlfriend pay a visit to his family in Illinois. But no one seems to recognize him, and he discovers that all is not right with this Norman Rockwellian scene.

In March, ETC will present a beautiful and uplifting play, *In The Continuum* (March 26 to April 19, 2009), a tale of two women, continents apart, whose lives parallel each other. Two actresses play several characters in each woman's personal journey, as they encounter cultural bias and inner strength. The New York Times called the play "humanized with emotional vibrancy" and named it one of the ten best plays of 2005.

ETC will close its season with a new urban comedy, *The Scene* (May 28 to June 21, 2009), by Theresa Rebeck. Charlie, an ex-television sitcom star, finds himself in the throes of a mid-life crisis. His marriage is tense, and he's been uncomfortably unemployed for quite some time. When he meets Clea – a 25-year old sexpot, who makes up with vitality what she lacks in polish – his world is upended. Filled with Rebeck's caustic wit and with intriguing turns of plot, *The Scene* is brutally hilarious and surprising.

"I'm delighted to bring such fun and provocative plays to Santa Barbara," said ETC's Executive Artistic Director, Jonathan Fox. "Each play is thoughtful, intelligently written, and entertaining."

**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, the 2008-09 season is its 29th anniversary season.

Four and five play subscriptions are now available and range from \$106 to \$190. For more information please call the Ensemble Theatre box office at 805-965-5400 x109, or visit [www.ensembletheatre.com](http://www.ensembletheatre.com).

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