

For Immediate Release

**Ensemble Theatre Presents
Richard Greenberg's Comic Jazz-Age Tale,
*The Violet Hour.***

(Santa Barbara, CA)— **Ensemble Theatre Company (ETC) of Santa Barbara** will present *The Violet Hour*, a mysterious, smartly written comedy, by the award winning American playwright Richard Greenberg. This captivating play about love, friendship and the future will begin performances on Thursday, April 5 and continue through Sunday April 29, 2007. *The New York Times* said “*The Violet Hour* balances heights of wit with depths of feeling.” Opening night is Friday, April 6.

Set in 1919, *The Violet Hour* centers on a young up-and-coming New York publisher, John Pace Seaverling, who has enough money to print only one book. John is caught between his old friend, Denis, a very talented writer with an epic manuscript, and his secret lover Jessie, a popular black jazz singer who has written her memoirs. Both are determined to have their books published and both have what they think are life-altering reasons to see their novels in print. Adding to John's personal dilemma is the arrival of a strange machine of mysterious origin and purpose, which starts spewing out papers from books written in the future, books that contain information about the fate of John and his friends and which throw John's plans into turmoil.

With 25 plays and Tony and Drama Desk Awards to his credit, Richard Greenberg is one of America's hottest playwrights. Known for his urbane wit and poetic insights into contemporary angst and culture, Greenberg has had plays produced on Broadway and around the world, including his hit, *Take Me Out*.

“We have had a very exciting season so far, with ticket sales exploding,” said ETC's Executive Artistic Director, Jonathan Fox, “*The Violet Hour* is an intelligent, sensitive, and wickedly funny play, and one I'm very pleased to be presenting.”

The cast includes five top Los Angeles-based actors, new to the Ensemble Stage. Playing John Pace Seaverling is **Christian S. Anderson**, a classically trained actor who has appeared at Utah Shakespearean Festival, Kentucky Shakespeare Festival and Chicago Shakespeare Theatre. **Paul Tighe**, a graduate of

(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.

Yale School of Drama who has appeared in over 40 stage productions at prestigious theatres including Yale Rep, Dallas Theater Center, Soho Rep and Stage West, plays John's assistant, Gidger. The role of John's best friend Denis McCleary will be played by **Kasey Mahaffy**, who has performed at PCPA Theatrefest. Rounding out the cast are **Kourtney Kaas** and **Colette Divine**.

ETC has assembled a dynamic production team, which includes Barbara Lackner as costume designer, Tal Sanders as set and lighting designer. Robert Grande Weiss, ETC's Artistic Director Emeritus, will direct the production.

"I am very excited to direct this show, the play's humanity touched me profoundly" says Director Robert Grande Weiss, "it's a play about the 'gift' of living in the present."

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. ETC gratefully acknowledges Sara Miller McCune and Sage Publications for its generous sponsorship of this production.

Performances run Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8:00 pm and Sundays at 2:00 and 7:00 pm. Ticket prices for ***The Violet Hour*** range from \$25.00 to \$37.50. 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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