



**For Immediate Release  
through October 26th, 2003**

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**Valley Youth Theatre presents**  
The Family Classic:  
**Charlotte's Web**

Phoenix (August 11, 2003) Valley Youth Theatre spins *Charlotte's Web* Friday October 10<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, October 26<sup>th</sup>. This production of *Charlotte's Web* is a musical version of the timeless classic by E.B. White about Charlotte, a spider who teaches a pig named Wilbur the true meaning of friendship.

Directed by VYT's Producing Artistic Director, Bobb Cooper, *Charlotte's Web* runs at Valley Youth Theatre, 525 N. First Street in downtown Phoenix, from Friday, October 10 through Sunday, October 26, 2003. Performance times are: Fridays at 7 p.m., Saturdays at 12 and 3 p.m., and Sundays at 12:30 and 3:30 p.m. Tickets are \$12 per person, adults and children, and can be ordered through Valley Youth Theatre's box office at 602-253-8188, ext. 2.

This production of *Charlotte's Web* features a cast of young actors from all over the Valley ranging in age from 8 to 19 years old. Featured cast members include Ashley Stults of Phoenix in the title role, Bryan Madden (Scottsdale) as Wilbur and Krysten Smalley (Phoenix) as Fern Arable. Other roles feature Emily Pelzer (Mesa) as Goose, Tyler Hornacek (Paradise Valley) as Templeton, Lily Hannan (Scottsdale) as Sheep, Samantha Shipp (Phoenix) as Lamb, Jeff Reynolds (Glendale) as Gander and Wolfram Ott II (Avondale) as John Arable.

E.B. White began his career writing for *The New Yorker* magazine and also wrote *Stuart Little* (1945) and *The Trumpet of the Swan* (1970). White began work on *Charlotte's Web* in 1949 (published in 1952). He conceived the idea for *Charlotte* while in his barn feeding his pig, and knowing the pig was doomed to die, thought of ways to save him. He also saw a spider and her amazing web and, of course, weaved her into the story.

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E.B. White's story was adapted for the stage by Joseph Robinette who is author of more than 30 published plays and musicals, including *The Paper Chase* and *A Rose for Emily*. Charles Strouse wrote the music and lyrics for *Charlotte's Web*. He also wrote the music for *Bye Bye Birdie*, *Applause* and *Annie* (which VYT will perform June 2004), and won Tony Awards for all of them. In addition, he had an extensive career in television and movies. He wrote the film scores for *Bonnie & Clyde* and *All Dogs Go To Heaven*, among others, and co-wrote the theme song of the CBS television hit "All in the Family."

Valley Youth Theatre is a non-profit organization that targets youths aged 7 – 19 for participation in and attendance at quality live theatre productions. Its positive impact on youth provides them with lifelong lessons through a wide range of performing arts opportunities. VYT is an award-winning theatre company voted "Rep's Best Children's Theatre" in 2001 and received 32 ariZoni Awards for theatrical excellence in the 2000-2001 season.

This production is sponsored in part by IBM and Avnet. Valley Youth Theatre is supported in part by the Arizona Commission on the Arts with funding from the State of Arizona and the National Endowment for the Arts. Partial funding also is provided by the Phoenix Arts Commission through appropriations from the Phoenix City Council.

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