

Valley Youth Theatre

For Immediate Release
August 11, 2006

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Valley Youth Theatre Launches Season with CATS

*Broadway's long-lived musical springs to the
Herberger Theatre Center Stage August 11-27*

(Phoenix) Valley Youth Theatre opens the 2006-2007 Season with CATS live on stage at the Herberger Theater Center, 222 E Monroe in Copper Square, downtown Phoenix. Stunning choreography and costumes, along with a musical score by Broadway legend Andrew Lloyd Webber, have kept audiences coming to experience CATS for 25 years. Valley Youth Theatre is the first non-equity company in Arizona to stage the show.

"CATS is one of our most ambitious undertakings to date." says Bobb Cooper, Producing Artistic Director of Valley Youth Theatre. "We are thrilled to have received the rights to be the first theatre company without contract performers to produce this Broadway epic. It promises to be an exciting visual and vocal experience for our young performers and audiences alike."

Set in a junkyard, the cats gather once a year to sing of their unique qualities. When the show opens, the cats are reluctant to reveal their private society to strangers, but eventually we as observers learn that each cat has three names- the one used by family and friends, a regal name and a secret name. This evening, the cats await their leader, Old Deuteronomy who will name one cat to embark upon a journey of rebirth. One by one, the cats emerge to jockey for this esteemed position at the Jellicle Ball.

Andrew Lloyd Webber's beloved musical celebration of the supremacy of cats has delighted audiences around the world since opening in London in 1981. It ran continuously on Broadway for nearly 18 years making it the longest running musical in American history until it was succeeded this year by Webber's *Phantom of the Opera*. Imaginative dance, costuming and makeup have made CATS a classic, and Valley Youth Theatre's production will not be lacking in any of those areas. Broadway Director/Choreographer Tony Spinosa from will design and lead dancing for this production of CATS. "As the most-honored theatre for youth in the state of Arizona, many of which have been for costuming, makeup and staging, we are working to make this a stunning piece of theatre, for all ages to remember for a long, long time," says Valley Youth Theatre Producing Artistic Director Bobb Cooper.

CATS performs live on the mainstage at the Herberger Theater Center August 11-27. Thursday and Friday performances are at 7:30 p.m. Saturdays at 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 2:00 p.m. Tickets are \$19.50-\$25.50 and are available by calling the Herberger Box office at 602-252-8497. More information available at www.VYT.com.

Valley Youth Theatre is a non-profit organization that targets young people age 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 most recently winning 31 ariZoni Awards for theatrical excellence in the 2004-2005 season. 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 Office of Arts and Culture through appropriations from the Phoenix City Council.

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