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PLEASE NOTE: ROMEO & JULIET
VENUE CHANGE DECEMBER 5 & 6

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:
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EAST L.A. CLASSIC THEATRE CLOSES 2005
WITH ZOOT SUIT *ROMEO & JULIET*

LOS ANGELES, CA - (December 1, 2005) – East L.A. Classic Theatre is pleased to present Executive Artistic Director Tony Plana's Zoot Suit musical adaptation of *Romeo & Juliet*. 2 student shows will run December 5-6, 10 am, at the Nate Holden Performing Arts Center, 4718 W. Washington Blvd., in Los Angeles. 3 Saturday performances will be presented on December 3 at 11:30 am and 3pm and December 10, 11:30 am, at the El Portal Theatre, 5269 Lankershim Blvd. in North Hollywood. All shows run 75 minutes and are followed by a question and answer session with the actors.

Set in 1943 during the Los Angeles Zoot Suit riots, this bilingual production unfolds in an atmosphere infused with the brutality of World War II and the enmity borne of racial intolerance. "**Romeo and Juliet** inhabit a chaotic world rife with the kinds of xenophobia and casual violence that are borne of the urge for vengeance," says **Plana**. "Their passion has patterned young love for over 400 years – a love that proves to be more resilient than hatred or death." **Plana** emphasizes, "Many of our patrons will never have seen a play, let alone Shakespeare. We want to create context that enables kids to leave the theatre saying 'Hey, that Shakespeare is cool – I get it – I bet I can do that.'"

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Jennifer Paz, who starred as Kim in the first national tour of *Miss Saigon*, leads the cast of nineteen as *Juliet*. Dane Stokinger, who recently concluded his national tour with Miss Saigon, plays *Romeo*. Each cast member emphasizes both classical training and a wide range of performance skills. “All of our actors have to be able to sing, dance, improvise, interact with the kids – pretty much a little of everything,” Plana says. **The performances of Romeo and Juliet are free and open to the public, but reservations are required. Seat reservations can be made by calling East L.A. Classic Theatre at 213-572-0121.**

These performances are sponsored by the Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles, the National Endowment for the Arts, and real estate developer Richard Meruelo.

ABOUT EAST L.A. CLASSIC THEATRE:

Founded in 1992, **East L.A. Classic Theatre** provides comprehensive literacy and language acquisition education and engaging theatrical adaptations of literary masterpieces to disadvantaged youth and minority communities. Programming is designed to serve three complementary goals: to create a new bicultural theatre aesthetic emphasizing great classics of world drama; to develop literacy skills; and to cultivate minority readers, writers and audiences. To learn more, please visit www.eastlaclassic.org.

JUST THE FACTS

What: **East L.A. Classic Theatre** presents a Zoot Suit adaptation of **Shakespeare’s *Romeo & Juliet***.

When: **Student Shows, December 5 and 6, 10:00 AM**

Student Groups and General Public: **FREE, BUT RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED**

Where: The Nate Holden Performing Arts Center
4718 W. Washington Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA

When: **Saturday, December 3, 11:30 AM and 3PM**

Saturday, December 10, 11:30 AM

Student Groups and General Public: **FREE, BUT RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED**

Where: The El Portal Theatre
5267 Lankershim Blvd.
North Hollywood, CA

For seat reservations or more information, please call ECT at (213) 572-0121.

Who: Director/Adaptor – **Tony Plana**
Composer/Musical Director – **Danilo Lozano**
Choreographer – **Carlos Mendoza**
Co-Producers: **Richard Meruelo and Rio Hondo College**

Scenic Designer – **John Iacovelli**
Costume Designers – **Cliff Chally & Helen Dickenson**