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Casa Mañana Theatre is located in
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Casa Mañana Presents
Annie
The Musical

At Bass Performance Hall, December 23 – 28, 2008

(Fort Worth, Texas) – Annie, Sandy, Daddy Warbucks, Miss Hannigan, FDR, Rooster and all those adorable orphans return in Casa Mañana's production of *Annie* at the Bass Performance Hall, December 23 – 28, just in time for the holidays.

"Spectacular" is the word used again and again to describe this Broadway smash hit musical. Annie is a spunky Depression-era orphan determined to find her parents, who abandoned her years ago on the doorstep of a New York City orphanage. Winner of seven Tony Awards including Best Musical, Best Book and Best Score, *Annie* features the classic songs "Tomorrow," "It's A Hard Knock Life," "You're Never Fully Dressed Without A Smile," and "A New Deal For Christmas." As long as *Annie* is around, the sun will always come out tomorrow!

Kelsey Lee Smith is playing the role of "Annie" for the third time in her acting career, most recently for Atlanta's Theater of the Stars. She has also performed on stage all across her home state of California and with a national tour of *Care Bears Live*. Smith's recent television credits include an appearance on the hit ABC comedy *Samantha Who?*

"Oliver Warbucks" is played by Brian Mathis. Mathis has performed on the Broadway national tours of *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Seussical the Musical*. He has also appeared in several Casa Mañana productions including *Cinderella*, *Man of La Mancha* and *A Christmas Carol* at Bass Performance Hall.

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“Sandy,” the dog, is played by Lola. Lola was discovered by her guardian and trainer, William Berloni, at the Connecticut Humane Society in 1998. This is also the same shelter Berloni adopted the original “Sandy” for the Broadway debut of *Annie* in 1977. Lola was the understudy for the role of “Sandy” in the 20th Anniversary Tour of *Annie* and took over the role for the 30th Anniversary Tour. Brian Hoffman is the dog handler for this production.

Ellen Harvey is playing “Miss Hannigan.” Harvey performed on Broadway in *Thou Shalt Not* and *The Music Man* and has performed in several national tours including *Mamma Mia!* and *Disney’s High School Musical*. Amy Bodnar is playing “Grace Farrell.” Bodnar has appeared in the Broadway productions of *Ragtime* and *Oklahoma* and in a regional production of *Annie*. The role of “Rooster Hannigan” is played by Laurent Giroux. Giroux has had experience on Broadway in *Chicago* and *Pippin* and was in the national tour of *Annie*. Stacey Harris is playing “Lily St. Regis.” Harris has performed in the national tours of *Showboat*, *Cinderella* and *Dreamgirls*. Other cast members include: Joel Ables as “Bert Healey,” and Danielle Erin Rhodes as “Star to Be.”

“FDR” is played by Willy Welch. Welch has performed for Casa Mañana in *Man of La Mancha* at Bass Performance Hall. Doug LoPachin is playing “Drake.” LoPachin has performed in many Casa Mañana productions including *Cinderella*, *Man of La Mancha* and *A Christmas Carol* at Bass Performance Hall, and most recently *Damn Yankees* at Casa Mañana Theatre.

The orphans include: Sarah Youngblood, Taylor O’Toole, Elise Moran Christiansen, Lauren Diane Craine, Erika Pope, Molly Franco, Kenady Shope, Mallory Brophy, Lauren Hughes, Millicent French, Autumn Hartt and Chloe Voeris.

Dancers and ensemble cast include: Ashley Adamek, Missy Matherne, Christopher Ryan, J. David Anderson, Marnee Hollis, Kristi Rowan, Kelly Holmes, Frances Bordlee, Lois Sonnier Hart, Joel Abels, Jackson Ross Best, Jr., Christopher Deaton and Aaron Thacker.

Annie is directed and choreographed by Norb Joerder. Wally Jones is the Executive Producer and Todd Hart is the Associate Producer. Eugene Gwozdz is the Musical Director. Theresa Furphy is the Production Manager, John W. Calder III is the Production Stage Manager, and Max Marquez is the Assistant Stage Manager. Brad Jackson is the Company Manager. Jeffery Meeks is the Costume Designer, Patricia Delsordo is in charge of wigs, and Tammy Spencer is the Wardrobe Supervisor. Jonathan Parke is the Sound Designer and Jennye James is the Properties Designer.

Casa Mañana’s production of *Annie* is presented for an exclusive limited engagement at the Nancy Lee and Perry R. Bass Performance Hall in Fort Worth. Performance dates are: Tuesday, December 23 at 7:30 p.m.; Thursday, December 25 at 7:30 p.m.; Friday, December 26 at 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.; Saturday, December 27 at 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.; and Sunday, December 28 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. **This show is suitable for all audiences.**

Tickets for *Annie* are on sale and can be purchased by calling the Casa Mañana Theatre box office at **817-332-2272** or the Bass Performance Hall box office at **817-212-4280**. You can also visit the box office at Casa Mañana Theatre, 3101 West Lancaster Avenue, Fort Worth, or at the Bass Performance Hall, 525 Commerce Street, Fort Worth. Ticket prices are \$30 to \$75, depending upon seating location. For more information, visit www.casamanana.org.

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About Casa Mañana

Now celebrating its 50th Anniversary Season, Casa Mañana is a Fort Worth-based live theatre company that offers a diverse range of services to the benefit of the communities in North Texas.

Casa Mañana produces and presents up to 20 live theatre productions each year at two distinct performance venues – Casa Mañana Theatre and the Nancy Lee and Perry R. Bass Performance Hall. By combining the talent of award-winning directors, choreographers and musicians with outstanding professional actors from across the United States to Broadway and Hollywood, Casa Mañana’s self-produced musicals, plays and world-premieres are among the best in the nation. Casa Mañana is also proud to be Fort Worth’s premiere presenter of Broadway’s hottest national touring shows, making Casa Mañana the largest performing arts organization in Tarrant County.

Casa Mañana also produces a series of Children’s Playhouse performances that strive to bring the magic of live professional theatre to the youth of North Texas. During the 2007 – 2008 Season, over 124,000 patrons, including students from area independent school districts and various special interest groups, attended a Children’s Playhouse production. Tickets for this popular series are kept affordable through generous donations to Casa Mañana’s Annual Campaign. The Playhouse Season features live theatre productions that offer a rich assortment of life lessons and educational values to theatre lovers of all ages.

Casa Mañana also makes a committed effort to reach out to adults and children across North Texas through its nationally-recognized arts education and outreach programs. Each year, over 900 students enroll in Casa Mañana’s Theatre School program, which is one of the largest acting schools for children and adults in the United States. The Casa Kids is a company of young performers chosen from the Theatre School to perform at after-school programs, nursing homes, hospitals and other community-wide organizations. The Casa Playaz is a performance troupe of professional actors who not only entertain students, but also address the essential arts requirements of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum requirements that help prepare students for the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). The Betty Lynn Buckley Awards, named in honor of Fort Worth’s own Tony Award winning actress Betty Lynn Buckley, honors excellence in musical theatre among participating Tarrant County high schools. In the summer, Camp Casa offers an exciting educational experience that blends arts education with the magic of performing on stage at Casa Mañana Theatre. And throughout the school year, Casa Mañana partners with the Fort Worth ISD on the Adopt-A-School Program to provide students from the Applied Learning Academy with hands-on theatre training through scholarships and scenic, technical and production assistantships. As a performing arts organization, Casa Mañana strives to create, nurture and advance live professional theatre unparalleled in artistic excellence for the enrichment and education of our diverse community and its future generations of artists and patrons.

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