



PRESS RELEASE: A NEW WINNIPEG THEATRE SCHOOL

Merlyn Productions Theatre Company is pleased to announce the establishment of a new theatre school within its organisation. The school is now offering formal training for children, teens, and adults, taught by local professionals at competitive rates.

The initial Autumn/Winter session commences in September 2011 at the company's Albert Street studios in the Exchange District and culminates in March 2012 at the Ellice Theatre in the West End, where all students will perform onstage in a special showcase open to the general public.

Weekly acting classes are being offered for children ages 10 to 12, teens, and adults. Registrations close September 15th, and enrolments are on a first-come/first-served basis.

It is with decisiveness that this announcement follows the unfortunate, recent loss suffered by the local theatre community in June, when *Fantasy Theatre for Children and The Theatre School* (Winnipeg's oldest children's theatre company) closed its doors after thirty seasons of operation.

Each year since its founding in 1981, FTC stood as one of Winnipeg's only community-theatre-based performing arts schools, giving students from ages 7 to 70 a place to apply their skills with practical application in all areas of the theatre. It was there that several generations of performers realised their full creative potential, benefiting from the company's policy to regularly cast its own students in mainstage productions, and the credo that "*some companies use professionals - we create them*". In total, FTC staged over 200 productions and 2,000 performances during its thirty-year history.

It has now become the mission of *Merlyn Productions* to fill this void in Winnipeg's community theatre landscape, and to continue to offer aspiring performers the same quality training methods and practical opportunities that FTC made into a unique local tradition for the past three decades.

Spearheading this effort are two initial instructors:

- Youth Theatre Instructor TONY FROST is the founder and thirty-year veteran Artistic Director of *Fantasy Theatre for Children*. Over the past forty years, Mr Frost has directed over 300 productions for children and adults.
- Adult Theatre Instructor JOHN CHASE is the company Artistic Director, who has been involved in local live theatre for the past twenty years. Mr Chase has produced, directed, stage managed or performed in over ninety productions on stage and radio, and originally trained at FTC in 1991.

Course information and registration forms are online at MERLYN.BIZ.

For further information, please contact *Merlyn Productions* at (204) 415-2714 or info@merlyn.biz.

"Committed to staging quality theatrical entertainment at an affordable price."

