



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JANUARY 17, 2008

CONTACT: BARB BYRD, MARKETING MANAGER

CALL: 419-522-2726 • FAX: 419-524-7005 • EMAIL: barb@mansfieldtickets.com

WEBSITE: www.mansfieldtickets.com

MICHAEL THOMAS APPOINTED ARTIST IN RESIDENCE AT THE RENAISSANCE

MANSFIELD, OHIO. The Renaissance Performing Arts Association is thrilled to announce the appointment of Michael Thomas as Artist in Residence for the Young Playwright's Unit. As part of the new education programs funded by the Fran and Warren Rupp Foundation, Thomas will spend the next six months researching and implementing a pilot Young Playwright's Unit in collaboration with North Central Ohio's high schools. Schools targeted as part of the pilot program include Mansfield Senior High, Lexington High School, Ontario High school, Madison Comprehensive High School, and St. Peter's High School.

Michael Thomas comes to this pilot program with a wealth of writing experience. He has written for film, television, radio, the New York stage and Chicago stage including *Shrek II*, *The Incredibles*, *Broken Flowers*, *Head of State*, *Gizmo*, *Mean Girls*, *Nurse Betty*, *Shark Tale*, *Dreamboat*, *Broadway Danny Rose*, *The Loved One*, *Nonsense and Imbecility*, *Hamlet: The Musical*, *Great Exploitations*, *The Second City* and many others. In collaboration with The Julliard School and the Literacy/Writing/Playwriting Program, he lead writing/performance workshops in over 60 schools in the greater New York metropolitan area, culminating in a final performance based on student's writings. Thomas also lead writing/performance

workshops in over 250 schools in the greater Chicago area and across the U.S. in collaboration with Child's Play Touring Theater, a nationally known company dedicated solely to performing works written by students. He also wrote the script and jingles for the *Holiday Pops* program at the Renaissance this past December. Thomas, who has recently moved back to the area, is very excited to work with this pilot program and looking forward to getting the Young Playwright's Unit up and running.

Renaissance President and CEO Terri Bergman notes, "I am thrilled to have someone of Michael Thomas' caliber heading up this exciting pilot program to teach and encourage writing by the young people in the Mansfield community. We are so grateful to the Fran and Warren Rupp Foundation for their incredible generosity and are honored to have the opportunity to give to the community and have a positive impact on area youth."

Executive Director Matt Joslyn adds, "Michael Thomas is a wonderful addition to the Renaissance team. With his excellent writing and teaching skills and his exuberant and humorous personality, I know the students will have a fantastic experience working with him and some promising new writers will come out of the program."

###