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**Oscar®-nominated actress Shohreh Aghdashloo endorses “Accepting Rumi,” a new musical play celebrating the life of 13<sup>th</sup> century mystic poet, Jalálu’ddin Rumi**

*The musical is the first to fuse traditional Persian music with classical Western orchestration*

Los Angeles – October 22, 2005 – In 13<sup>th</sup> century Turkey, a time and a place ruled by tyrannical despots and ripped apart by religious wars, **Jalálu’ddin Rumi** united people throughout the Middle East with his poetry and spiritual teachings. After his family was driven out of Afghanistan, and then Syria, by the rampaging Genghis Kahn, Rumi settled for the majority of his life in Konya, Turkey, a lush center of commerce through which much trade flowed from east to west and vice-versa. There, Rumi lived amongst, and strived to forge harmony between, a diverse population that included Muslims, Sufis, Christians, Jews, Greeks, Turks, Zen Buddhists and others.

A prolific storyteller, and son of a renowned Muslim scholar, Rumi composed thousands of poetic verses into three volumes of work, and taught, almost daily, whomever arrived in his garden to worship and study with him. Now, nearly 800 years later, at a time when his universal messages of love and acceptance are just as, if not more, pertinent than ever, “**Accepting Rumi**,” a new musical play based on his life and poetry, examines the seed of human evolution, the conflicts that arise between loved ones, and the quest for enlightenment through the art of acceptance and living each moment in the present.

From November 18-20 at Deaf West Theatre in North Hollywood, for four performances only, the Friends of Rumi, in association with Out of the Park Entertainment, will present a workshop production of “**Accepting Rumi**.” Admission to the workshop is by invitation only. There is a suggested donation of \$20-50, the proceeds from which will be donated to Girls and Boys Town in the name of Oscar-nominated Persian-American actress, Shohreh Aghdashloo.

The workshop is directed by **Coy Middlebrook**, whose Broadway credits include Associate Director work on *Big River* and *Brooklyn*, and whose off-Broadway and regional directing credits include the world premiere of Tennessee Williams’ *Spring Storm* (off-Broadway), The Ford Theatre’s production of *Big River*, and award-winning productions of *Hair*, *Into the Woods*, *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *The Wizard of Oz* at various Bay area theatres.

Book writer and lyricist **Parker Moody Jackson** is a playwright, producer and fashion journalist who writes for several national and international publications, and whose past theatre credits include the world premiere of Sam Shepard's *True Dylan*, the critically-acclaimed *The Shvitz* (in Detroit), and the hip-hop Greek farce *Luna* at The MET Theatre in Hollywood, where she first collaborated with her partner and composer, Flipper Dalton.

Much sought after music producer and composer **Flipper Dalton** has worked with such prominent pop artists as Madonna, P. Diddy, Alanis Morissette, Prodigy, Sasha and John Digweed. He has also played concert piano at Royal Albert Hall in London, toured the world extensively with such acts as Fat Boy Slim, Moby, Carl Cox, and Brian Transeau, and composes music for film and television, most recently completing his first feature film, *Citizen's Arrest*, directed by Beeaje Quick, and the Sundance-bound short *Premiere*, starring Brandon Williams and Amy Smart.

Musical Director **Gerald Sternbach** is the resident MD for the Reprise! Best of Broadway in Concert series; his Broadway credits include *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, *Merlin* and *The Tap Dance Kid* (all as Associate Conductor). Additionally, he was the Associate Conductor for the Los Angeles premiere of *Les Miserables*, and the conductor for the national tour of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Andrew Lloyd Webber's Song and Dance*, starring Melissa Manchester.

Set Designer **Shane Guffogg** is a renown painter whose works has been shown in galleries across the country (notably NY, LA, Chicago and La Jolla), and collected by museums, corporations and collectors around the world.

Lighting Designer **Michael Gilliam's** Broadway credits include *Brooklyn*, *Big River* and *Stand-Up Tragedy*. Off-Broadway credits include *Blue*, *End of the World Party*, *Zooman and the Sign*, and *Menopause The Musical*. He has also designed national tours of *Guys and Dolls* and *Big River*, and worked in most of the major regional theatres in the U.S.

Costume Designer **Beth Morgan** has designed or assisted on numerous productions in Los Angeles, including *Madness of Esme of Shaz* at Celebration Theatre, and *Bicostal Woman* at Pasadena Playhouse, where she has also worked as the Wardrobe Supervisor for a number of years. She has also designed several films, as well as assisting Katherine Jane Byant for two seasons on the Emmy nominated *Deadwood*.

Sound Designer **Jake Eberle** has designed or edited sound for over 40 motion pictures, and more theatre productions than he can count. Some notable film credits include *Narc* with Jason Patric and Ray Liotta; *In The Shadows* with Matthew Modine, James Caan, Joey Lauren Adams and Cuba Gooding Jr.; and *I Witness* with Jeff Daniels, James Spader and Portia de Rossi.

Production Stage Manager **William Coiner** has been stage managing Broadway musicals for the past 15 years including the Tony and Emmy award winning *Blast!* on Broadway, and the national tours of *Rent*, *Sunset Blvd.*, *Angels in America*, *Tommy*, *Big River*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Grease!* and *Annie Get Your Gun*.

Casting director **Michael Donovan**, C.S.A. has cast 40 films, 9 TV series, over 1,000

commercials, and numerous critically-acclaimed productions for the theatre. A double Artios nominee (C.S.A.'s award for Outstanding Casting), Michael's theatre credits include *Snoopy* and *Johnny Boy* at the Falcon Theatre, *Dinah Was* and *My Boy Jack* at I.C.T., *Grand Hotel*, *The Musical* at The Colony, *Twelfth Night* for Shakespeare Festival/L.A., *Summertime at the Theatre @ Boston Court* in Pasadena, *The Sleeper* at Arkansas Repertory, *Bark* at the Coast Playhouse, and a touring production of *Aida*.

**Out of the Park Entertainment** is a multi-tiered feature film and live theatrical production company, which also serves as the development arm of Jaret Entertainment, working specifically with new writers. Additionally, its principals, **Kevin Allen Jackson and Adam Jaret**, function as development consultants to outside production companies. Past and current clients include East of Doheny and Lobo Productions, for both of which OPE has developed feature-length material.

The cast includes veterans of Broadway, off-Broadway, the West End, and major regional theatres across the country, as well as film and television.

**What:** Friends of Rumi present, in association with Out of the Park Entertainment, a workshop production of “Accepting Rumi,” a new musical play celebrating the life of mystic poet, Jalálu’ddin Rúmí

**Who:** Book & Lyrics by Parker Moody Jackson; Composed by Flipper Dalton; Directed by Coy Middlebrook; Musical Direction/Supervision & Vocal Arrangements by Gerald Sternbach; Produced by Kevin Allen Jackson & Adam Jaret; Set Design by Shane Guffogg; Lighting Design by Michael Gilliam; Costume Design by Beth Morgan; Sound Design by Jake Eberle; Production Stage Manager, William Coiner; Casting by Michael Donovan, C.S.A.; Creative Consultant, Zsa Zsa Modjallal; featuring John Altieri, Jonah Blechman, Ron Butler, Joshua Wolf Coleman, Laila Dagher, Jamen Nanathakumar, Ali Spuck, Joe Settineri, Hollis Turk, Melissa van der Schyff, Krystal L. Washington, Robert L. Williams, Jacob Witkin, Andrew Ross Wynn

**Where:** Deaf West Theatre, 5112 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood.

**When:** Friday 11/18, 8pm; Saturday 11/19, 8pm; Sunday 11/20, 2pm & 7pm