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## **ABOUT A NOISE WITHIN**

A Noise Within (ANW) is the only year-round classical repertory company in Southern California and one of only a handful in the entire country dedicated solely to producing classical dramatic literature in the repertory tradition of rotating productions with a resident company of professional artists. Led by Co-Founders and Co-Artistic Directors Geoff Elliott and Julia Rodriguez-Elliott, A Noise Within has been hailed by critics as "adventurous," "compelling and current," "ingenuity at work," "a bona fide class act," and "what great theatre is all about."

Founded nineteen years ago, ANW quickly established itself as one of the region's key theatre companies, attracting fiercely loyal audiences and consistently high praise from the media for its productions and as a leading force in arts education.

The company has presented more than 120 plays from the classics of world literature, each season producing works from authors ranging from Shakespeare and Molière to Ibsen, O'Neill and Shaw to Miller and Williams. ANW's consistent dedication to quality has been rewarded with more than two dozen Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Awards as well as numerous LA Weekly and Backstage Garland awards. Past highlights include a collaboration with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in a performance of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Hollywood Bowl.

### **A NOISE WITHIN'S NEW PASADENA THEATRE OPENING FALL 2011**

A Noise Within's next chapter provides the long-awaited opportunity to sink deep and lasting roots when the company moves in 2011 from its long-time base in Glendale to a spectacular, permanent home in a Pasadena mixed-use development at the corner of Foothill Boulevard and Sierra Madre Villa Avenue. The facility, hailed as an anchor in East Pasadena's arts growth, is

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designed to broaden A Noise Within's artistic possibilities, offer a greater scope of educational opportunities, meet ticket demand and allow the company to expand its role as a leader in the presentation and preservation of classical theatre.

The company's long history of fiscal stability is reflected not only by its 18 seasons "in the black" but also by its ability -- in a challenging economic climate -- to raise more than \$10.1 million to date toward its \$13.3 million goal for the new venue. Groundbreaking took place on July 20, 2010, and A Noise Within opens its 20th season there in Fall 2011.

The 33,000 square-foot venue is being built in the former Stuart Pharmaceutical building, a historic, mid-century modern masterpiece designed by celebrated architect Edward Durell Stone, known for landmark buildings around the country including the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC and Radio City Music Hall in New York. Constructed in the mid-1950s, the Stuart Pharmaceutical building was listed on the National Register in 1998.

A Noise Within's new 300-seat state-of-the-art performance space contains a thrust stage, offering the same intimacy that audience members enjoy in ANW's current location and allowing increased audience capacity to 55,000 people annually. The venue also offers ample backstage and support facilities, offices, classrooms, storage, plentiful convenient parking, and a striking landscape garden designed by Thomas Church. Additionally, the project features an educational *Classics Live!* Learning Center for teachers and students with a library of audio-visual resources as well as a wealth of study guides and reference and curricular materials all designed to bring the classics to life. ANW's highly regarded education program will be able to double the number of students served each year.

### **A NOISE WITHIN'S HIGHLY REGARDED EDUCATION PROGRAMS PROMOTE LITERACY AND CULTURAL AWARENESS**

An integral element of A Noise Within's mission is to make the classics accessible to all audiences, with particular attention paid to leveraging the company's resources for the benefit of area students and teachers. A Noise Within has always been committed as a priority to augmenting middle and high school students' classroom discovery of classic texts with educational programming designed to complement classroom studies and enable teachers to promote literacy and cultural awareness. The company's educational programming serves a diverse population of students from public, private and parochial schools, from the inner city to the suburbs, from middle school through college.

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Approximately 30% of ANW's budget is dedicated to educational programs.

As all productions at A Noise Within are based in classical literature, the company's programs not only effectively expose young people to the performing arts, but also support student literacy strategies in the classroom. Conforming to California's educational content standards, ANW's programs primarily attract English and Literature classes but have also proven to be valuable for ELL (English-Language Learner) students and those studying foreign languages.

Over the last 16 years, Lennox Middle School teacher Mary Lang's 11- and 12- year-old ELL students embark on an in-depth journey studying a Shakespearean comedy, tragedy or history, the choice depending on what's being performed that season at A Noise Within. Youngsters from the school (located between Inglewood and Hawthorne) then come to the theatre, courtesy of ANW, to see the production come to life. "I wouldn't even attempt to teach Shakespeare if I couldn't take my students to see a live performance of it," wrote Lang in a May 2010 letter to the company. "Only two of the 44 students that I brought had ever been to *any* live theatre. [The entire experience] not only improved my students' reading comprehension, but also gave them a boost in self esteem." A Lang student named Erik noted in a thank you letter to A Noise Within after seeing *Much Ado About Nothing*, "I am the first one to see a Shakespeare play in my family, and it was cool that I got to share it with them."

Through programs such as *Classics Live!*, A Noise Within has brought students into the theatre with free or deeply discounted tickets and busing scholarships, sent resident artists into classrooms for workshops, and supplied tools that vividly portray the classics, including study guides, post-show discussions and professional development opportunities for teachers.

The company is also committed to the development of future theatre artists and continuing education of theatre professionals. *Classics Conservatory* offers programs such as *Summer with Shakespeare* for children ages 10-18 as well as individual classes for career professionals to hone their skills. A Noise Within also offers a *Professional Internship Program* designed to provide early-career artists with intensive training (acting, voice, speech, textual analysis, etc.) and performance opportunities in classical repertory theatre.

The company's educational initiatives have introduced more than 180,000 students (approximately 10,000 per year) to the magic of live classical theatre. Two-hundred forty-five schools across 22

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unified school districts in Southern California (middle and high school through college) have participated in A Noise Within programs, and 200 serious young actors have graduated from its Professional Internship Program.

Among A Noise Within's stimulating audience enrichment offerings to complement the theatre-going experience are pre-show *Symposia* featuring notable scholars' unique perspectives on the classic literature featured in ANW plays, post-show discussions with actors and directors offering a behind the scenes view, and the literary-based *Scholar's Society*, which offers an entire year's worth of intellectually vibrant workshops and gatherings.

### **A NOISE WITHIN'S HISTORY**

A Noise Within was born in Fall 1991 with \$3,000 from the Elliotts' savings account. The first performance, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, was staged in a privately-owned building in Glendale, California. The production was well received and led to two more the following spring. The DePietro family, owners of the Glendale building, a former Masonic Temple, had no immediate plans for it and allowed the company to continue residence under a generous agreement. The first full season was staged in 1992-93, and the company grew quickly, producing high-quality productions and attracting enthusiastic, devoted audiences. In the 2009-10 season, ANW had approximately 1,200 subscribers and an 83% subscriber renewal rate (17% higher than the national average), operating at capacity. Education programs also operated at 100% capacity, with many schools being turned away. After necessary improvements to the 145-seat theatre were unable to accommodate larger audiences and education programs, ANW discovered it was absolutely vital to secure a new and permanent home.

The company was fortunate to find a friend and champion in Charles Redmond, former executive vice president of the Times Mirror Company and president/CEO of the Times Mirror Foundation. Until his passing in 2001, Redmond served as chairman of ANW's Board of Directors and was passionate about ANW, making securing a permanent home a top priority.

In 2005, A Noise Within was invited by SMV Technology Partners, LLC -- owned by real estate developers David Worrell and Jeff Allen -- to relocate in its mixed-use Pasadena project which currently includes residential units and the empty former Stuart Pharmaceutical building. The company's new home is a textbook example of adaptive reuse which breathes fresh life into the noteworthy structure.

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Key gifts have come from David Worrell and Jeff Allen, SMV Technology Partners, LLC (a gift of land); The Ahmanson Foundation; Elizabeth F. Redmond, ANW Board of Directors (widow of Charles Redmond); the Weingart Foundation; The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation; the Ajax Foundation; The Rose Hills Foundation; and a member of ANW's board of directors who prefers to remain anonymous.

A Noise Within's coming move to Pasadena has received full enthusiasm and support from Pasadena Mayor Bill Bogaard, a long time fan of the company, City staff and Council. Pasadena's long history of nurturing the arts and the significant number of ANW patrons currently residing in the area make this location an ideal environment for the company.

The Stuart Pharmaceutical building, according to the National Register Registration Form, is significant “as an outstanding example of mid-century modern architecture in California...one of the earliest expressions...of the New Formalist (or Neo-Formal) style and of architect Edward Durell Stone’s philosophy and work.” Landscape architect Thomas D. Church's front yard setback garden is one of the property's character-defining features, described in the National Register nomination as “...sculpted and simple, with a highly stylized and restrained planting scheme, and suggests an intimacy between the landscaping and the building that seamlessly unifies the two.” Renovating the Stuart Pharmaceutical building celebrates the work of the renowned architect and the pioneering landscape designer and introduces it to future generations.

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