



“Enter – and we will celebrate your lives ...” Peter Shaffer, *Amadeus*

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MEDIA CONTACT

Michelle Morin

Tel: (401) 580-8766

E-mail: mmorin@jwu.edu

**ACTORS, EDUCATORS & STUDENTS COLLABORATE
TO INSPIRE ARTS EDUCATION IN RI**

PROVIDENCE, R.I., June 30, 2009 – A group of actors, educators and students today unveiled The Amadeus Project. Taking a cue from the creativity that composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart displayed in the face of adversity, the group wants to inspire access to the arts in Rhode Island in the face of inexorable cuts in arts education.

The project began when Trinity Conservatory graduates Max Vogler and Alexander Platt, who dreamed of creating a fresh and compelling production of Peter Shaffer’s Tony Award-winning play *Amadeus*, sought the help of retired teacher Rosemary “Lolly” Wardle, with whom they had worked on previous projects. She enlisted the help of friends, neighbors, professionals and students from varied backgrounds such as Johnson & Wales University, Rhode Island College, the Community College of Rhode Island, the Warwick and West Warwick public schools, Beacon Charter School and Woonsocket Tech, and the list continues to grow.

Their immediate goals are to provide mentoring opportunities for students and to raise enough funds to make attendance at a fall production of *Amadeus* affordable for all. From its inception, The Amadeus Project has been centered on community engagement and demonstrating how theater enriches people’s lives.

“We are involving students and educators from schools throughout the state to help us build an Equity production of *Amadeus*.” Wardle said. “It’s a unique approach to inspiration and mentorship,” she emphasized, “since each participant will perform a significant role in helping to bring the production to life.”

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P.O. Box 1255 Hope Valley, Rhode Island, 02832



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“The Amadeus Project is founded on the principle of mentorship in education – learning through real-life experience,” said Vogler. “It’s different from most Arts Education initiatives. Instead of just inviting students to come and see the play, students have become involved in all aspects of the production – from business plans, financial paperwork, fundraising, advertising and marketing, design and construction. And, they’re getting school credit for their efforts. Student involvement has been critical to the success of the Project – we couldn’t have done this without them.”

Inspiration, Community, Learning

Students from Beacon Charter and West Warwick will work under the tutelage of a professional designer to help design the set. CAD (Computer-aided design) and Construction Tech Ed students from Warwick will be drafting the dimensions of the performance space and building the set and seating at the Beneficent Congregational Church’s Roundtop Center. The church is providing the space for the performance, which will open Thursday, Nov. 5, for two weeks. Auditions are scheduled for student and professional musicians to perform during and/or before the show.

Over 50 JWU business and technology students gained college credit as they and their professors helped form a nonprofit corporation, draft a business plan, develop a website (www.theamadeusprojectri.org), inaugurate a PR and marketing plan, and prepare and hold a fundraiser and media briefing.

The growing troupe of grassroots supporters is turning the project into a statewide focus on the inspiration that the arts can bring to everyone’s everyday lives. Advertising and communications students from Johnson & Wales University are working under the mentorship of professionals to capture the entire project with an eye to a documentary. They also will canvas the state asking a key question: "What inspires you?" Previewing the project theme at a press briefing at Pizzico Ristorante, Providence, students asked

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the same question of reporters and other attendees, and encouraged participants to write their thoughts on a wallboard. A student-created video showed responses to the same question by college and high school students, educators and other members of The Amadeus Project community. Art works by students and teachers from the project’s pilot schools were on display at the restaurant. In the spirit of supporting the arts, Pizzico Ristorante created \$1,000 worth of free hors d’oeuvres for the occasion, and Graphic Innovations, Providence, donated more than \$1,000 worth of printing of student art, signage and advertising materials for the project.

Fundraising Efforts

The art installation at the restaurant included donated works already sold at the June 13th fundraiser as well as others to be sold in future fundraising efforts. These art pieces were sold in a silent auction along with other professional art, photography and donated items. A golf tournament designed and run by JWU student interns is scheduled for Monday, Aug. 3, at the Quidnessett Country Club, North Kingstown and is expected to be the primary fundraiser for the production.

Anyone wishing to take part in the golf tournament or assist the project in any way can find more information at the student-created Amadeus Project website at www.theamadeusprojectri.org.