



For Immediate Release

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**MO`OLELO PERFORMING ARTS COMPANY ANNOUNCES
PERMANENT COLLECTION
Play raises impassioned debate on art, race, and the role of the media**

Press Night: Friday, February 22, 7:30pm

December 6, 2007 - San Diego, CA – Critically-acclaimed Mo`olelo Performing Arts Company begins 2008 with a staging of Thomas Gibbons' powerful drama ***Permanent Collection***, opening February 22, and running through March 16, 2008 at the 10th Avenue Theatre (930 10th Avenue, Downtown).

Permanent Collection begins with a challenge: "Put yourself in my place," says Sterling North, an African American professional and the recently appointed Director of the fictional Morris Foundation. When North discovers a collection of significant African art gathering dust in the storage department of the Foundation, he proposes to display the pieces in the Foundation's prestigious art galleries. He is swiftly reminded by the Museum's Caucasian Education Director Paul Barrow, that the Foundation legacy stipulates that no pieces are to be added or moved in the museum's "permanent collection." When their conflict over the legacy is uncovered by a curious journalist, a complex and bitter clash erupts over race, representation, legacy, art and the role of the media, asking the question: can we ever truly set aside our own perspective and see the world from someone else's viewpoint?

Playwright Thomas Gibbons based his play on actual events surrounding the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia, which encapsulated something he had noticed about public controversies about race: they frequently start out as being about something else. "Once race is introduced it quickly overwhelms all other things," observed Gibbons. "It's indicative of how race is just beneath the surface -- or overt -- in all aspects of American life."

The production will be directed by Mo`olelo's Artistic Director, Seema Sueko. "*Permanent Collection* is a perfect match for our Company: a riveting script, a complex and emotionally-charged topic vigorously explored from multiple perspectives and wonderfully juicy acting opportunities for a diverse group of actors."

This San Diego premiere production features a superb cast of local veteran actors, led by **Walter Murray** as Sterling North and **John Tessmer** as Paul Barrow. They are joined by **Debra Wanger** as the journalist Gillian Crane, **Tanya Johnson** as Kanika Weaver, the young voice of reason, **Valerie J. Ludwig** as Ella Franklin, who represents the Foundation's history, and **Joe Powers** as the truculent Alfred Morris.

In addition to the public performances, Mo`olelo will continue their partnership with Young Audiences of San Diego by offering special High School Matinees, along with in-class pre- and post-show workshops for Social Science, English, and Drama classes. Mo`olelo's unique arts education program deepens the students' experience of the play while aligning with the required California Department of Education Content Standards and Analysis Skills.

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**Mo'olelo Performing Arts Company
Permanent Collection
Fact Sheet**

What: *Permanent Collection*
A play by Thomas Gibbons

When: **February 21 – March 16, 2008**
Press Opening Friday, February 22, 7:30 p.m.
February 21, 22, 23, 29 and March 1, 7-8, 13-15 at 7:30 p.m.
February 24 and March 2, 9, 16 at 2:00 p.m.
High School Matinees February 27-28, March 5-6 and 12 at 9:30 a.m.

Where: **Mo'olelo at 10th Avenue Theatre**
930 10th Avenue, San Diego, CA 92101 (Downtown)

Who: **Produced by Mo'olelo Performing Arts Company**
Director: Seema Sueko*
Scenic Design: David F. Weiner
Lighting Design: Jason Bieber
Costume Design: Michelle Hunt
Stage Manager: Elizabeth Stephens*

Cast:

Tanya Johnson	<i>Kanika Weaver</i>
Valerie J. Ludwig*	<i>Ella Franklin</i>
Walter Murray	<i>Sterling North</i>
Joe Powers*	<i>Alfred Morris</i>
John Tessmer	<i>Paul Barrow</i>
Debra Wanger*	<i>Gillian Crane</i>

** Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.*

Synopsis: *Permanent Collection* is the story of Sterling North - the African American Director of the Morris Foundation & Museum, and Paul Barrow - the Caucasian Education Director passed over for Sterling's job. When their conflict over eight important pieces of African art is uncovered by a curious journalist, a complex and bitter clash erupts over race, representation, legacy, art and the role of the media.

Produced by special arrangement with Playscripts, Inc.

Tickets: \$18-\$30

Box Office: 619-342-7395 and www.moolelo.net

High School Matinees Box Office: Young Audiences of San Diego, 619-282-7599 x112

Green Discounts: As part of Mo'olelo's Green Initiative, we offer incentives and discounts when you bring proof of using green transportation to the theatre. See our website for more details.

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About Mo`olelo

Mo`olelo means *story* in Hawaiian. A recipient of the Patté, McDonald Playwriting and the Anti-Discrimination Awards, Mo`olelo Performing Arts Company is dedicated to broadening the scope of San Diego theatre by telling powerful stories that are as diverse as the islands of Hawaii. Its mission is to create new works based on research within various communities, produce lesser-known works by master and contemporary playwrights, and educate youth. To learn more, visit www.moolelo.net or call 619-342-7395.

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