



## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, April 7, 2010

CONTACT: Patrick Finlon, Marketing Director  
315-443-2636 or [pjfinlon@syr.edu](mailto:pjfinlon@syr.edu)

### Stage Offers Open Captioning for Hearing Impaired Patrons

(Syracuse, NY)—Syracuse Stage is pleased to offer open captioned performances for hearing impaired patrons starting with the current production of *Almost, Maine*. Captioning is intended to be an alternate form of accessibility for the estimated population of 30 million hard of hearing and deaf in the United States, and specifically the 98% who do not use American Sign Language. Open Captioning will be available during the performance of *Almost, Maine* on Sunday, April 11 at 2 p.m., and during the performance of *Fences* on Sunday, May 23 at 2 p.m. Tickets may be purchased by calling the Syracuse Stage Box Office at 315-443-3275 and asking for seats in view of the Open Captioning.

Open Captioning is being provided, in part, by a grant from Theatre Development Fund's TAP Plus program in partnership with the New York State Council on the Arts. c2 (caption coalition) inc., a national leader in Live Performance Captioning, will provide Open Captioning services at Syracuse Stage.

Open Captioning is a term used to describe text displayed alongside live speech, dialogue or performance. Open captions do not require the user to have any special equipment for viewing the text and are always "open" to anyone. In 1996, Open Captioning was first introduced inside a theatre at the Paper Mill Playhouse production of *Gigi*. Open Captioning in theatre has gained worldwide attention and support for its universal appeal, ease of integration and program enhancement. It has introduced a wave of new audiences and, especially, offered opportunities to those who can finally return to the theatre.

c2 subscribes to the model of "universal design" and the "passive assistance" of OC so patrons may enjoy captioning discretely, as part of the general audience at large, without being singled out and needing "distinguishing" equipment. Open captions have the additional benefit of enhancing the enjoyment of audience members who have either not self-identified their hearing loss or merely wish to catch a missed word or phrase.

#### ACCESSIBILITY PROGRAMS AT SYRACUSE STAGE

**Wheelchair Accommodations:** Syracuse Stage is wheelchair accessible. Please call the Box Office at 315-443-3275 to arrange wheelchair seating.

**Audio Enhancement:** Syracuse Stage offers an infrared hearing system for patrons with up to a 70% hearing loss. Headsets can be reserved free of charge through the Box Office or at the Coat Room before curtain.

**Signed Performance Series:** American Sign Language interpreted performances are offered during a Saturday matinee performance of each production. Supported by Welch Allyn in memory of Susan Thompson.

## C2 (CAPTION COALITION) INC.

c2 (caption coalition) inc. is the pioneer of Live Performance Captioning for Hard of Hearing and Deaf patrons at live theatrical and cultural events, and is nationally recognized as the leading authority in the field. c2 members have captioned at least 800 theatrical productions in over 180 venues, and members hold the distinction of being the first ever to caption live theatre, and the first to debut on Broadway. In collaboration with the Theatre Development Fund's (TDF) Theater Access Project (TAP) and The League for the Hard of Hearing, c2 members introduced the first ever theatrical captioned performance in London. c2 was formed in 2002 by David Chu and Donald DePew as a non-profit advocate for the provision, growth, research and development of professional Live Performance Captioning for the arts. c2's mission is to build a national and international network of advocates, audiences, operators and venues to make the service readily available to all patrons. [www.c2net.org](http://www.c2net.org)

## NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

The New York State Council on the Arts is dedicated to preserving and expanding the rich and diverse cultural resources that are and will become the heritage of New York's citizens. The Council believes in supporting the following: artistic excellence and the creative freedom of artists without censure, and the rights of all New Yorkers to access and experience the power of the arts and culture, and the vital contribution the arts make to the quality of life in New York communities. [www.nysca.org](http://www.nysca.org)

## THEATRE DEVELOPMENT FUND (TDF)

Theatre Development Fund, a not-for-profit organization, was created with the conviction that the live theatrical arts afford a unique expression of the human condition that must be sustained and nurtured. TDF's twofold mission is to identify and provide support, including financial assistance, to theatrical works of artistic merit, and to encourage and enable diverse audiences to attend live theatre and dance in all their venues. [www.tdf.org](http://www.tdf.org)

## SYRACUSE STAGE

Syracuse Stage is Central New York's premier professional theatre. Founded in 1974, Stage has produced more than 220 plays in 36 seasons including a number of world, American, and East Coast premieres. Each season 90,000 patrons enjoy an adventurous mix of new plays and bold interpretations of classics and musicals featuring the finest theatre artists. In addition, Stage maintains a vital educational outreach program that annually serves over 30,000 students from 24 counties. A solid core of subscribers and supporters helps keep Syracuse Stage a vibrant artistic presence in Central New York. Additional support comes from the government, foundations, corporations and Syracuse University. Syracuse Stage is a constituent of the Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre, and a member of the Syracuse Chamber of Commerce, the Arts and Cultural Leadership Alliance (ACLA), the University Hill Corporation and the East Genesee Regent Association. Syracuse Stage is a member of The League of Resident Theatres (LORT), the largest professional theatre association in the country.

###

Syracuse Stage | Producing Artistic Director: Timothy Bond | Managing Director: Jeffrey Woodward  
820 E. Genesee St. | Main: 315-443-4008 | Box Office: 315-443-3275 | [www.syracusestage.org](http://www.syracusestage.org)