'Man of La Mancha' Comes to Cal Poly Nov. 24

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA – Writer Miguel Unamuno once said: "Only he who attempts the ridiculous may achieve the impossible."

Such is the inspiration for Dale Wasserman’s “Man of La Mancha” – a timeless musical based on the epic tale written by Miguel de Cervantes, embodied by the classic character, Don Quixote.

Cal Poly Arts is pleased to present the national touring production of "Man of La Mancha" on Friday, November 24, 2006 at 8 p.m. in Harman Hall/Christopher Cohan Center.

"One of the modern classics of the American Theatre...as vibrant as ever." (N.Y. Times)

"An exquisite musical play." (N.Y. News)

"The musical that's set above and apart from all others by touching the heart." (N.Y. Daily News)

One of the all-time great successes of American stage history, "Man of La Mancha" is worthy of Miguel de Cervantes' "Don Quixote," the book on which it was based.

Since Cervantes' death in 1616, more than 200 theatrical adaptations of his book have been made, but none of them match the popularity of the musical.

The rousing "Man of La Mancha (I, Don Quixote)," the lyrical "Dulcinea," and the triumphant "The Impossible Dream (The Quest)" are just a few of the beloved numbers from the extensive score.

Dale Wasserman wrote a 1960 TV drama, "I, Don Quixote" which was nominated for an Emmy and won that year's Writers Guild award.

Wasserman enlarged his television script into a non-musical stage play and it was optioned for Broadway. But he was persuaded to rewrite it as a musical and was brought together with Mitch Leigh and Joe Darion, who provided the music and lyrics.

Their collaboration opened on November 22, 1965 with Richard Kiley in the title role; it became an instant hit. The show won five Tony awards and all the major theatre awards for the season, being named as Best Musical by the N.Y. Drama Critics’ Circle, The Outer Circle, The Variety
“Man of La Mancha” ended its long run in June 1971, after amassing a total of 2,328 performances both on and off Broadway and launching a series of acclaimed worldwide productions.

In 1972, “Man of La Mancha” became the third American musical to be performed in the Soviet Union, following “West Side Story” and “My Fair Lady.”

The film version was released in 1972 with Peter O’Toole portraying Don Quixote, Sophia Loren as Aldonza, and James Coco as Sancho Panza. Film publicity touted that “Man of La Mancha” had been translated into 28 languages and had been performed with success in 24 countries.

There have been many successful long-running Broadway revivals since the original production closed in 1971; the most recent in 2002, starring Brian Stokes Mitchell in the title role.

A pre-show lecture will be held by Cal Poly professor Allyson McLamore at 7 p.m. in the Philips Recital Hall.

Tickets for the performance range from $56 to $68, with student discounts available, and may be purchased at the Performing Arts Ticket Office, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays.

To order by phone, call 805/756-2787; to order by fax: 805/756-6088. Order online at www.pacslo.org.

Sponsored by Jules and Brenda Hock, Adam Graves and Aaron Graves, and Jim Sargen. For audio and video samples of Cal Poly Arts events, visit www.calpolyarts.org.

- 30 -