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### **Cal Poly Arts Brings Tony Award-Winning Musical 'contact' to PAC April 26**

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- The winner of four Tony Awards, including Best Musical and Best Choreography, "contact" is the musical Time Magazine called "exhilarating, magical! Something really fresh."

Cal Poly Arts presents "contact" on Tuesday, April 26, 2005 at 8 p.m. at the Christopher Cohan Center. The show is directed and choreographed by Susan Stroman (recreated by Fergus Logan), written by John Weidman, and boasts a striking cast of 24 dancers/actors.

"'contact'...is one of the rare absolutely perfect things I have ever seen in a theater," reports famed entertainment columnist Liz Smith. "Not since Bob Fosse and Michael Bennett has a choreographer-director made such an intelligent creative impact on the American musical scene.

"Everything about this evening is delightful," Smith continues. "The first part is erotic and playful, the second is Lucille Ball-type funny and the third is a tour de force of contemporary dance. You'll be sitting on the edge of your seat, electrified."

Ben Brantley of the New York Times agrees: "'contact' is a sustained endorphin rush of an evening. Throbbing with wit, sex appeal and a perfectionist's polish, 'contact' restores the pleasure principle to the American musical. It is that rare entertainment that leaves you floating all the way home."

"contact" is comprised of three sensual stories about people in the wild pursuit of love, told entirely through dance and performed to a wide range of music -- from Stephane Grappelli's rendition of Rodgers & Hart's "My Heart Stood Still," to pieces by Grieg, Tchaikovsky and Bizet to the diverse sounds of Robert Palmer, Dean Martin, the Beach Boys and The Squirrel Nut Zippers .

"contact" opened in October 1999 at Lincoln Center Theater's Mitzi E.

Newhouse Theater. Immediately upon opening, the show was an instant success and soon moved to Lincoln Center Theater's larger, Broadway house, the Vivian Beaumont Theater, where it continues to play to sold-out houses,

In 2000, "contact" won every major award, including the Drama Desk Award, Outer Critics Circle Award and Drama League Award for Best Musical.

Director/choreographer Stroman is finding that as the show continues to play to audiences, the rewards continue as well.

"With 'Contact, 'I wanted to reach out to a contemporary audience," says Stroman, "When one lives in New York City, or any city, we fight to live on top of each other. Yet we all have friends who can't seem to meet anyone, who can't make contact. I wanted to create characters that people in the audience could relate to and find accessible."

Ms. Stroman also won Tony Awards for her choreography of the hit Broadway musicals "Crazy For You" and director Harold Prince's new production of the classic musical, "Showboat," both of which enjoyed long runs both on Broadway and on tour.

Ms. Stroman's other Broadway credits include the musicals "big" and "Steel Pier" and the annual Madison Square Garden spectacular "A Christmas Carol."

She won London's coveted Olivier Award for her choreography of the acclaimed Royal National Theatre production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Oklahoma!" and was the director/choreographer of the hit Broadway revival of Meredith Willson's "The Music Man."

She has also created ballets for the New York City Ballet and Martha Graham Dance Company and choreographed the dances in the recent feature film "Center Stage." Ms. Stroman collaborated, again as director/choreographer with Mel Brooks on the musical version of his classic film comedy, "The Producers," which swept the 2001 Tony Awards.

Writer John Weidman wrote the books for the musicals "Pacific Overtures" (Tony nomination) and "Assassins," both with scores by Stephen Sondheim, "big," (Tony nomination) and co-wrote the book with Timothy Crouse for Lincoln Center Theater's hit revival of Cole Porter's "Anything Goes."

He is currently working on a new musical with Stephen Sondheim and Harold Prince. Mr. Weidman won nine Emmy Awards for his writing for the PBS series "Sesame Street."

A pre-concert lecture will be held by Cal Poly Music professor Alyson McLamore, beginning at 7 p.m. in the Philips Recital Hall.

Tickets for the performance range from \$46 - \$58, 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 on-line at [www.pacslo.org](http://www.pacslo.org).

Sponsored by Julia Johnson, the Foundation for the Performing Arts Center, and Peach Tree Inn.

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- 30 -

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