PRESS KIT:  *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, by Neil Simon

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 08/20/12

*Brighton Beach Memoirs*, by Neil Simon

**Coming of Age; a time of joy, pain, and wonder.**

*Brighton Beach Memoirs* is the bitter-sweet first play of Neal Simon’s autobiographical trilogy (followed by Tony award-winning *Biloxi Blues* and *Broadway Bound*). Winner of the New York Drama Critic’s Circle Award for Best Play 1983, it has been hailed as: “Simon’s finest and most artfully wrought play ... a joyful, loving embrace of life ... a sharply observed, hilarious comedy, seamlessly woven into the stuff of human spirit.” (Dennis Cunningham, WCBS, TV)

Set in the Brighton Beach section of Brooklyn, New York in September 1937, this coming of age comedy focuses, thru the eyes of its narrator, 15-year old Eugene Morris Jerome, writer-to-be and alternately perplexed and perceptive observer and guide, on life with the Jerome family. Eugene is a Polish Jewish American teenager who experiences puberty, sexual awakening and a search for identity as he tries to deal with his Depression-era family. Eugene (Matthew Jennings), his parents, Kate (Kelly Wallace) and Jack (Beau Phillips), and his brother Stanley (Chris Valentin) have shared their home for the last three years with Kate’s sister Blanche (Shannon Rossi) and her two daughters Nora (Chelsea Jarratt) and Laurie (Stevie Keese) since the death of their father. This extended family is troubled by illness, unemployment, poverty, deep resentments and foreboding signs of World War II, but as portrayed by Neil Simon, their lives are neither miserable or pitiful. The family meets their challenges with innocence, dignity, warmth, vigor and spirit, showing that life, at once humorous and poignant, is something to celebrate by all. “Brighton Beach Memoirs belongs to the family genre where the passwords are forgive and remember.” (T E Kalen, Time)

Sponsored by Pelham Architects, LLC, *Brighton Beach Memoirs* will be performed September 6 – 29, 2012 with 8 p.m. performances September 6-8, 13-15, 20-22, 27-29 and 3 p.m. performances September 9, 16, and 23. Shows **Thursdays – Sundays** only. Adult tickets are $25 with discounts available for seniors, juniors and groups. Student rush tickets are also available. All seats reserved.
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The box office can be reached at (864) 233-6733 on Tuesdays – Fridays from 2-6 p.m. and two hours before performances. Tickets may also be purchased online at www.centrestage.org. The theatre is located at 501 River Street inside the Smith Barney Morgan Stanley building just one block off Main Street in downtown Greenville. For more information, visit Centre Stage online at Centrestage.org.

MEDIA ONLY: FOR MORE INFORMATION
Allen Evans, Marketing Director
864-363-6401
Allen.evans@centrestage.org

Production details

| Play title: | *Brighton Beach Memoirs*  
By Neil Simon |
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<tr>
<td>Play type:</td>
<td>Heart-warming comedy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dates:</td>
<td>September 6-29, 2012</td>
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| Location: | Centre Stage  
501 River Street  
Greenville, SC  29601  
(*First floor of the Morgan Stanley Smith Barney building, one block behind the Westin Poinsett Hotel*) |
| Tickets: | All tickets are $25  
Senior, junior, and group discounts available |
| Box Office: | Hours are 2-6 p.m. Tues.-Fri.  
And 2 hours before show |
| Contact: | Allen Evans  
*Marketing Director*  
allen.evans@centrestage.org |
| Website: | www.centrestage.org |

CAST
Chelsea Jarratt, *Nora*  
Matthew Jennings, *Eugene*  
Stevie Keese, *Laurie*  
Beau Phillips, *Jack*  
Shannon Rossi, *Blanche*  
Chris Valentin, *Stanley*  
Kelly Wallace, *Kate*

Production Personnel
Benjamin P. Robinson, *Director*  
JeanE Bartlett, *Stage Manager*  
Lesley Preston, *Scenic Designer*  
Thom Seymour, *Lighting Designer*  
Lauren Hein, *Costume Designer*  
Deyah Cantrell, *Hair and Makeup Design*  
Donna Norman, *Properties Manager*  
Wofford Jones, *Sound Design*  
Christopher Nicholas, *Light/Sound Operator*  
Eren Brock, *Assistant Stage Manager*  
Graham Shaffer, *Backstage Crew*  
Dani Red Hawk, *Dialect Coach*
COMPANY BIOGRAPHIES

Chelsea Jarratt (Nora)
Past Centre Stage Roles: This is Chelsea's first role at Centre Stage.
A Greenville native, Chelsea has enjoyed participating in both community theatre and school productions. Past favorite roles include Cinderella, Cinderella's Glass Slipper (GCT), Taylor Mckessie, High School Musical (GCT), Cocaine, Trippin Up (SCCT), and Mrs. Martin, The Bald Soprano (Furman University). Chelsea is delighted to have this opportunity at Centre Stage to be part of the beautiful story of Brighton Beach Memoirs.

Matthew Jennings (Eugene Jerome)
Past Centre Stage Roles: This is Matthew's first role at Centre Stage.
Matthew is a sophomore at Greenville Technical Charter High School. He has been in theatre since the age of nine. His first play was Stuart Little with the South Carolina Children's Theatre in the title role. He has been in various productions at SCCT, FIRE, St. Joseph's Catholic School, and the Greenville Little Theatre. Matthew is happy to be in his first play at Centre Stage.

Stevie Keese (Laurie)
Past Centre Stage Roles: This is Stevie's first role at Centre Stage.
Stevie is a freshman at Wade Hampton and the Fine Arts Center (voice). She has had the pleasure of working around the upstate at various theaters. Her favorite roles include: "Madeline," Madeline and the Gypsies (SCCT), "Ghost of Christmas Past," Christmas Carol (GLT), "Annie," Annie (EFP), "Midas's daughter," Metamorphoses (Warehouse), "Attendant," Merchant of Venice (Warehouse). She thanks Ben, JeanE, Glenda, and Kelly for this wonderful opportunity.

Beau Phillips (Jack Jerome)
Past Centre Stage Roles: Odd/Grandpa - Christmas Memory; Uncle Billy-It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play; Dwayne Hightower - Messiah on the Frigidaire; G.W. - Sordid Lives
Beau is very excited to work on this phenomenal Neil Simon play with an awesome cast. He holds a Masters Degree in performance from UGA and works as the Box Office Manager for Centre Stage. He's traveled the country as an actor but has calls Greenville home. He dedicates his performance in Brighton Beach Memoirs to his son Willyum who, being 17, has given Beau great insight into playing this father.

Shannon Rossi (Blanche)
Past Centre Stage Roles: Director “Whose Wives Are They Anyway?”, Stage Manager, “Sweeney Todd”, Ensemble “Dirty Rotten Scoundrels”Upstate Shakespeare Festivals “Henry V” as Hostess Quickly & “Cymbeline” Queen. Clemson Little Theatre director “Phantom Tollbooth” & “Tom Sawyer”Prior to moving to the Greenville area she worked professionally in New York and throughout New England in theatre production. Shannon has also spent many years working in the fashion industry as a designer, buyer and visual merchandiser. But the greatest of her accomplishments and blessings are her three wonderfully talented children Joey, Chris and Amber.
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**Christopher Valentin (Stanley Jerome)**

**Past Centre Stage Roles:** This is Chris Valentin’s first role at Centre Stage. Chris has also performed at GLT in *The Music Man* (Tommy Djilas) and *A Christmas Carol* (Young Marley). He is a Woodmont High School senior where his favorite performances include: *Grease* (Kenickie), and *Spelling Bee* (Leaf Coneybear). Chris is grateful to Mr. Ragland for his unwavering support, and would like to thank Mr. Robinson for this opportunity.

**Kelly Wallace (Kate Jerome)**

**Past Centre Stage Roles:** Grace Hoylard in *Bus Stop*; Verbena Morris DeChamblay in *Our Leading Lady*; Mrs. Gill in *See Rock City*; and Reba in *Last Night of Ballyhoo*.

**Biography:** The role of Kate marks Kelly’s third Neil Simon show in a row, as she recently appeared as Gert in *Lost in Yonkers* at The Warehouse and as Claire Ganz in *Rumors* at CSSC. Locally, she also has appeared with Studio 444, The Distracted Globe and the South Carolina Children’s Theatre. Kelly would be delighted to work with Ben Robinson if he were staging a reading of the Greenville phonebook.

**PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES**

**Benjamin P. Robinson (Guest Director)** - an educator, director, writer, actor, designer with over fifty years of varied theatrical experience last directed and wrote "Kings of Country and Their Queens" at Centre Stage.

**JeanE Bartlett (Stage Manager)** - Recent Centre Stage Credits include onstage roles in *The Last Night of Ballyhoo & A Christmas Memory*. Recent Stage Manager credits include *Beehive, The 60’s Musical; Rock ‘n Roll Yule & Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*. 

**Biography:** JeanE has loved being part of the Centre Stage family since moving to Greenville in 1997. She is fortunate to have a day job she also loves as a Realtor with The Marchant Company, specializing in working with Buyers. She thanks her family and friends for their love and support that allow her to do as she pleases!!

**Lesley Preston (Set Designer)** - received her Master of Fine Arts in Design from the University of Calgary. Before moving to the United States, Ms. Preston worked professionally in Canada as a scenic artist and free-lance designer. Her latest professional work was with Centre Stage in Greenville, where she designed the set for *Kings of Country and their Queens*. Ms. Preston chairs the Department of Theatre at Presbyterian College.

**Christopher Nicholas (Lighting & Sound Operator)** - renewed his love for theatre when he met his wife while working on one of her productions. He holds an MA in Communication and works for a local internet firm. His recent credits at Centre Stage include stage crew for *Hairspray: The Musical* and light board operation for *Beehive: The 60s Musical*. He is excited to continue using his technical skills in another Centre Stage production!
Deyah Cantrell (Hair & MakeUp Design) - currently a stylist at Mod Studio, has over 13 years experience as a licensed stylist. Growing up in a salon for more than half her life, she took a brief sabbatical to join the U.S. Army as a Patriot Missile Operator. During her time in the Military, she missed her passion and continued doing hair in the barracks. After being honorably discharged, Deyah flew to France to experience methods of hair styling and the lifestyle there before returning to the states in 2003. In 2006 she became an educator for Keune Hair Cosmetics and a certified Socap Extensionist. Deyah extended her passion for design by becoming active in the theater and most recently worked as a stylist and makeup artist for the production of Hairspray at Center Stage. Deyah specializes in all forms of Hair Color, Color Correction, Hair Extensions, Makeup Artistry, Costuming, Custom Head Pieces (natural to avant-garde).

IN THE GALLERY AT CENTRE STAGE

The art of Peter Helwing will be on display August 28th through September 29th, Tues. – Fri. 2-6 p.m. The exhibit is presented in cooperation with the Metropolitan Arts Council. This partnership is sponsored by South Carolina Bank & Trust. Admission is free. Opening reception will be held 6:30-9:00 p.m. on Friday, August 24th.