

# MUSE of FIRE

## SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

for immediate release  
contact: *(contact information here)*

**David Katz**  
in  
**MUSE of FIRE**  
**new acclaimed one-man play about the art of conducting**

It has been called “the most compelling theatrical celebration of classical music since *Amadeus*” and “a remarkable exploration of what it means to be a conductor.” David Katz’s acclaimed one-man play, MUSE of FIRE, will be performed *(date, time, theater and ticket information here.)*

The last play directed by Tony Award-winning actor and Broadway director Charles Nelson Reilly, who created *The Belle of Amherst* for fellow Tony Award-winner, Julie Harris, MUSE of FIRE lifts the veil on the conductor’s secret life to reveal that maestros of the baton are not born—they are forged in *fire*.

MUSE of FIRE brings the awesome and terrifying brilliance of an extraordinary teacher thrillingly to life in a play that has been called “absorbing,” “frightening,” “shockingly funny,” and “ultimately deeply moving.” Integral to the drama are beautifully recorded musical excerpts by more than a dozen composers, including Wagner, Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky, Schumann, Schoenberg and Ravel.

Since premiering at Acadia Repertory Theater in Bar Harbor, Maine in 2005, MUSE of FIRE has played to critical raves and standing ovations throughout the Northeast and Atlantic Canada and in an extended engagement in Chicago. The play will tour Maine, New England and the Midwest in 2009-10 before a planned off-

Broadway opening and an international tour.

### **Sorcerers and Apprentices...**

Great conductors are like sorcerers with magic wands, wielding enormous power and perfect control, seemingly at will. Silently, apparently with baton alone, they “play” the one hundred musicians of a symphony orchestra with the same ease others handle a single instrument, while the greatest of them can make the experience of listening so profound, they bring whole audiences to tears. How do great conductors do it? What dark powers become theirs to command?

The answers are to be found in MUSE of FIRE, the story of a modern-day sorcerer and his apprentice. Based on true events, it dramatizes the playwright’s experiences studying with Charles Bruck (1911-1995), the notorious Master Teacher of the Pierre Monteux Conducting School in Maine, who ruled godlike over that world-renowned institution for more than a generation.

### **A great and frightening maestro...**

Bruck was a maestro from the “old school,” tyrannical, demonic in his fury. He intimidated students, insulted them, screamed at them, even hit them—going to any lengths to forge them in the flames of his passion for the art. Even as his rages became legendary, so too was his acerbic wit, and his uncompromising belief in the power and importance of music. Undeniably one of the 20th century’s greatest teachers of conducting, Charles Bruck was also one of the most feared.

Although there is only one actor onstage, MUSE of FIRE is a two character tour-de-force, so deftly and swiftly is Katz able to shift from teacher to student and back again. From the moment the young novice first experiences the wrath of the man who would become his mentor, until he last visits him on his deathbed years later, MUSE of FIRE forms perfect arcs: from hatred to love, failure to triumph, life to death.

Hailed by critics and audiences alike as “brilliant,” “a searing and unforgettable portrait of a man who forged a generation of conductors,” MUSE of FIRE has been

called “so suspenseful, it is like watching a close football game from the sidelines.” If you love great music and have ever wondered how conductors learn to make it live, don’t miss David Katz in MUSE of FIRE.

For additional information, review quotes and tickets, please visit our website: [www.museoffiretheplay.org](http://www.museoffiretheplay.org). MUSE of FIRE is produced by Hat City Music Theater, Inc., a non-profit performing arts organization based in Danbury, Connecticut.

David Katz is delighted to return to Maine with MUSE of FIRE. After attending the Pierre Monteux School for Conductors in Hancock, David founded and conducted Opera Maine, which toured throughout coastal Maine. He has guest conducted the Bangor Symphony on a number of occasions, and founded and conducted the Chamber Orchestra of Maine. He has presented MUSE of FIRE in many theaters in the state, including in Bar Harbor, Camden, Deer Isle, Prospect Harbor, Steuben and the University of Maine at Orono.

An award-winning composer, arts entrepreneur and author, Katz’s first stage work, an opera called *Light of the Eye*, for which he wrote both words and music, won special recognition in the Brooklyn College opera competition and has been performed many times. As an actor, Katz’s experience extends from straight drama, with major and supporting roles in such works as *The Crucible* and *Inherit the Wind*, to opera (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Die Fledermaus*). Katz also regularly appears as a dramatic narrator with orchestras, in such works as *Peter and the Wolf*, Copland’s *Lincoln Portrait*, Schoenberg’s *A Survivor from Warsaw*, Walton’s *Facade* and Poulenc’s *Babar*, among many others.

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