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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**HOPE THEATRE PRESENTS THE WORLD PREMIERE
OF KELLY McALLISTER'S *MUSE OF FIRE*
AS PART OF THE NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL FRINGE FESTIVAL 2003
AUGUST 8 – AUGUST 24
AT HISTORIC CHERRY LANE THEATRE**

**THE McALLISTER SIBLINGS, CREATORS OF 2002's AWARD-WINNING *LAST CALL*,
RETURN TO FRINGE FESTIVAL**

**75-Year-Old Cherry Lane Theatre's Alternative Space Is Ideal Venue for
Edgy Yet Historically-Conscious Play *Muse Of Fire***

hope theatre presents the **World Premiere** of Kelly McAllister's *Muse Of Fire*, an exciting new comedy about life, love, and art, as part of the **New York International Fringe Festival 2003** at **The Cherry Lane Theatre's Alternative Space, August 8 – August 24**. Written in Mr. McAllister's unique style, which has been described as a "cross between Eugene O'Neill and John Patrick Shanley," *Muse Of Fire* follows the success of hope theatre's production of McAllister's play *Last Call* at last year's Fringe Festival. *Last Call* received the Fringe's Excellence in Playwriting Award, and hope theatre had to schedule an additional performance of *Last Call* in response to the high demand for tickets. Performances of *Muse Of Fire* will take place in **The Cherry Lane Theatre's Alternative Space**, home of the 75-year-old venue's new works and emerging playwrights programs. The Cherry Lane, located in Greenwich Village, is an Off-Broadway institution where many classic American plays received their premiere performances and important revivals, is a particularly appropriate venue for *MuseOfFire*, which makes use of classic references (Shakespeare's *As You Like It*) while remaining strikingly original in the spirit of the FringeNYC Festival. *Muse Of Fire* is a "Brooklyn entry" in the NY Fringe Festival 2003. **The Cherry Lane Theatre is located at 38 Commerce Street, just off of 7th Avenue. Take the 1 or 9 Train to Christopher Street, or the A, C, or E to West 4th Street.**

Tickets (\$15) are available by calling 212-279-4488 (inside NY) or 1-888-fringenyc (outside NY). A complete performance schedule can be found at the end of this release. Press tickets can be arranged by calling (212) 279-4488. To request a high-resolution digital photo of *Muse of Fire*, please e-mail hopetheatreinc@yahoo.com.

Mr. McAllister directs his script for this production, which features actors Brett Christensen, Christine Goodman, Jack Halpin, R. Paul Hamilton, Heather McAllister, Jerry McAllister, Vinnie Penna, and Sara Thigpen, all of whom have appeared in past hope theatre productions. Actress Jackie Kamm gives her first performance for hope theatre in *Muse of Fire*. The production stage manager and assistant director is Matthew Rankin. Heather McAllister is Artistic Director of hope theatre.

The story of *Muse Of Fire* is an exhilarating mixture of the surprising and the familiar: Two novice muses, as different as night and day and constantly at each other's throats, are sent to Earth to inspire a young woman to write the "Great American Novel." The problem: all she's ever written are poems about her cat. Into the mix is thrown a college production of *As You Like It*; an insane director who may or may not be the reincarnation of the Trojan prophetess Cassandra; Lenny, a hipster obsessed with jazz-age lingo; and Carlos, a celestial being who calls himself "The Toad of Infinite Waters." What follows is a darkly hilarious look at the lengths we are willing to go to in the pursuit of artistic expression - written by an exciting new voice in New York theatre, and produced by an intrepid new theatre company.

hope theatre was founded in 2000 by siblings Heather, Jerry, and Kelly McAllister. The company's first production was the 2001 **U.S. Premiere of Shakespeare's *Edward III*** at the Bank Street Theatre, which was hailed as "Compelling, solid, particularly strong" by Jocelyn Simpson of *The New Yorker*. hope theatre followed the success of *Edward III* with *Last Call* ("Immensely moving" - Martin Denton, *nytheatre.com*), which was a hit at last summer's FringeNYC Festival and was published in the anthology "Plays and Playwrights 2003" by The New York Theatre Experience in February 2003.

BIOS

***Heather McAllister (Cassandra/Artistic Director, hope theatre)** founded hope theatre, inc. with her brothers Kelly and Jerry. Among her many theatrical credits are *Edward III* (hope theatre); *The Head* (Riverside Theatre); *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Seagull* (Expanded Arts); *Julius Caesar*, *Henry IV* parts I & II (Shakespeare in the Park(ing Lot)). Heather has appeared in the films *A.K.A. Lobster Boy*, *Tallulah*, *Wallpaper Girl*, and *Bigfoot*, and she was just cast in *Reality Lost*. Her TV credits include *Law & Order*, *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, *Aliens in the Family*, and *Wake Up! Television* (FUJI-TV, Japan). Heather also is a playwright and poet. She has directed *Edward III* (hope theatre); *Hothouse Rose* (Oberon Theatre); *A Christmas Carol*, *Maybe On Monday*, *The Seagull - 1985*, *The Bald Soprano* (Expanded Arts); *Our Trip* (Joseph Glickman House); *The Realer Than Real* (David Blanc@Producer's Club); and *SOON, NOT YET, Acting Solo*, and *The End of It*, adapted from a short story by the late Jay McAllister, at FirstStage, Hollywood.

***Jerry McAllister (Phil/Executive Director, hope theatre)** founded hope theatre, inc. with his siblings Heather and Kelly. His acting roles include Caesar in *Julius Caesar*, Lysander in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet*, and Albany in *King Lear* for Shakespeare in the Park(ing Lot); Friar Francis in *Much Ado About Nothing* and Touchstone in *As You Like It* (Princeton Rep); Tiny Duffy in *All the King's Men*, Smee in *Peter Pan*, Richards in *A Cry of Players*, Moritz in *Spring Awakening*, and Ronnie in *House of Blue Leaves* (Western Stage, CA); and Clown/Polonius in *A Marowitz Hamlet* (City Lights, CA). Jerry directed last year's hope theatre Fringe Festival hit, *Last Call*, as well as *Mishkin's Paradise* (Theatre at St. Clements, NY); *Ghosts*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *New Shoes* (Expanded Arts); *Henry IV* parts I & II, *Macbeth*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Henry V*, *Measure for Measure* (Shakespeare in the Park(ing Lot)); and *Charlotte's Web* and *Bunnacula* (Children's Theatre Workshop, CA).

***Kelly McAllister (Playwright/Director)** is author of *Last Call*, which won the Excellence In Playwriting award from the New York International Fringe Festival 2002; *Last Call* has been published in the anthology The New York Theatre Experience's "Plays and Playwrights 2003" (www.newyorktheatreexperience.org). He also wrote the libretto for a musical version of *The Snow Queen* for Children's Theatre Workshop in California, and has had a chapter from his first novel, *The Aviary*, published in *(t)here* magazine. Mr. McAllister also writes theatre reviews for nytheatre.com. Favorite acting roles include the title character in *Edward III*, Cassius in *Julius Caesar*, and Adam/Aron in *East of Eden*. In April of this year, he was named Graduate of the Last Decade for the School of Humanities at San Jose State University, San Jose, California.

Brett Christensen (Mick) originated the role of David in *Last Call*, produced by hope theatre in last year's Fringe Festival. Currently, Brett also can be seen performing with the long-form improv group, Dillinger, at the Upright Citizens Brigade Theater in Chelsea and other venues around the city. Brett also was a cast member for six months in the long-running OOB hit play, *Mono*.

***Christine Goodman (Jessie)** is pleased to be returning to the hope theatre and the Fringe Festival. A graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, Christine was last seen in *Sirens Festival 3: New Works by Women* at HERE. Favorite roles include Caliban in *The Tempest* (RADA/TSOA), Laura in *Look Homeward, Angel* (Hudson Theatre Ensemble), and Snug/Snout in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Gorilla Rep). Christine also performs spoken word around town and hosts community-based performance nights in NYC and Jersey City, NJ. Poems will be appearing in the upcoming LummoX Journal and 2002 Dialogue Through Poetry Anthology.

***Jack Halpin (Dion)** appeared (nude) in last summer's Fringe hit *Last Call*. He has worked in theaters in California, New York City, North Carolina, and on tours across the country. Jack is Volunteer Coordinator for the New York International Fringe Festival for the third year running.

***R. Paul Hamilton (Carlos)** appeared in the World Premiere productions of Tina Howe and Glen Berger's *Napkin Plays* (Berkeley Rep/Irish Arts Center); David Gilman's *At Sea Between the Wars* (Primary Stages); Ty Adams' *Morphs* (VitalSigns 2003); Joshua James' *Quitting* (MTS/The Defiant Ones); and Kelly McAllister's *Last Call* (NY Int'l Fringe Festival 2002). His credits also include *The Seagull* (Sorin), Target Margin's *Tamburlaine*, Shakespeare In The Park(ing Lot)'s *Henry IV* (Falstaff), and Rev Theatre's *The Witch of Edmonton* (Carter). His film and television appearances include *Goodfellas*, *Law and Order*, *All My Children*, and *She-Devil*.

Jackie Kamm (Emily) most recently was seen as Julia in *Shakespeare's Women* at the American Theater of Actors. She also just completed her first film, *Mortal Thoughts*. Favorite New York credits include the World Premiere of *Flights of Angels* at the Emelin Theatre, *Prey for Rock and Roll* at CBGB'S, and every show she's ever done with the amazing Kevin Kittle.

***Vinnie Penna (Lenny)** is a native of Long Island and a graduate of New York University. He appeared at the Fringe last summer in hope theatre's *Last Call*. Other New York and regional credits include *As You Like It*, *Our Country's Good* (Arena Players); *Romeo and Juliet*, *Dracula 2K*, *The Seagull*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Comedy of Errors* (Expanded Arts); *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night* (The Unrehearsed Shakespeare Company); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (BAM); *Richard III* (title role), *Much Ado About Nothing* (The National Shakespeare Company); and *The Cmplt Wrks of Wllm Shkspr (abridged)* (The Hudson River Theatre). Vinnie's film work includes *Reflectress IV* and *Reel Love*. Vinnie is an accomplished voiceover artist whose work has appeared on *Kids' WB* and the *FoxBox*, and as the voice of the Fashion Police on *ABC Family*. He also performs with the sketch comedy group DumbShows and Noise in.

***Matthew Rankin (Stage Manager/Assistant Director)** appeared as Jerry in hope theatre's *Last Call*, but began his alliance with the McAllisters in 1994 while acting in Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, in Salinas, California. As a stage manager, Matthew has worked with the Radio City Christmas Spectacular, Old Greensborough Storybook Theatre, and the Holderness Theatre Co. Matthew also can be found on stage playing guitar and singing with either his own bands, Han Shot First and HapiKraK, or as a member of the Indie Music Explosion's Rock'n'Roll Time Capsule. Matthew works as a marketing associate for Lincoln Center's List Art Collection.

***Sara Thigpen (Paulina)** portrayed Molly in hope theatre's 2002 Fringe Festival effort, *Last Call*. Her other work includes Abra in the 9-hour adaptation of *East of Eden* by Alan Cook, Linda in *Turning Points* by Kim Moore, and Hope in *Johnny Sunshine* by Kirk White. Most recently, Sara directed *Apt. #1D*, a new work by Shannon Thomason, as part of The Gallery Players' Black Box New Play Festival.

***Member Actor's Equity Association**

hope theatre
presents

MUSE OF FIRE

By Kelly McAllister

New York International Fringe Festival 2003

The Cherry Lane Theatre

38 Commerce Street near 7th Avenue

1 or 9 Train to Christopher Street / A, C, or E to West 4th Street

Performance Schedule:

Saturday, August 9
5:15PM

Sunday, August 10
12:00PM

Wednesday, August 13
7:30PM

Saturday, August 16
2:45PM

Wednesday, August 20
9:30PM

Saturday, August 23
1:00PM

fringe_{NYC}SM

the new york international fringe festival

a production of the present company

august 8 to 24th, 2003

FOR TICKETS **{ \$15 }** AND INFORMATION

INSIDE NY: 212.279.4488 OUTSIDE NY: 1.888.fringenyc

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