

## PRESS RELEASE

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VENUE: 533 Sutter Street, @ Powell  
Contact: Susi Damilano  
[susi@sfplayhouse.org](mailto:susi@sfplayhouse.org)

# ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST

By Dale Wasserman

Based on the novel by Ken Kesey

DIRECTED BY BILL ENGLISH

Opens (Press Night) June 27 through September 5, 2009

Previews June 24, 25 and 26

San Francisco, CA (May 2009) – The SF Playhouse (Bill English, Artistic Director; Susi Damilano, Producing Director) is pleased to announce casting for the final show of their sixth season, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

*Wire, bliar, limber-lock  
Three geese in a flock  
One flew east, one flew west  
One flew over the cuckoo's nest*

*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* left an indelible mark on the literature, theater, and film of our time. Boisterous, ribald, and ultimately devastating, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is the unforgettable story of a mental hospital and its inhabitants. In a world where sanity means conformity and following the rules is the only way to survive. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is a powerful exploration of the beauty and the danger of being an original.

Bill English will direct a non-traditional cast starring: **Hansford Prince\*** as Randall P. McMurphy, **Michael Torres\*** as Chief Bromden, **Susi Damilano** as Nurse Ratched, and **Louis Parnell\*** as Dale Harding. Also featured are **Patrick Alparone\***, **Madeline H. D. Brown**, **Gilberto Esqueda**, **Catz Forsman**, **Dwight Huntsman**, **Marissa Keltie**, **Yusef Lambert**, **Joe Madero**, **Brian Raffi**, and **David Sinaiko**. (\*Appear courtesy of Actors Equity).

Dale Wasserman adapted *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* from the novel by Ken Kesey; the play opened on Broadway in 1963 with Kirk Douglas as McMurphy, Ed Ames as the Chief and Gene Wilder as Billy. After opening on Broadway, The New York Times called the play "scarifying and powerful," while The New York Daily News called it "funny, touching, and

## THE SF PLAYHOUSE

### *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*

*Continued:*

exciting." In 1971 the play was rewritten and presented off Broadway directed by **Lee Sankowich** (Former Artistic Director of Marin Theater Company) starring William Devane as McMurphy and Danny Devito as Martini. In 1975, a film version was released and it won Oscars for Jack Nicholson as McMurphy and Louise Fletcher as Nurse Ratched. It was also the first film to win Academy Awards for Best Picture, Director, Actor, Actress and Screenplay since *It Happened One Night* in 1934. It remains one of only three films to have swept the top five categories at the Oscars.

**Ken Kesey** published *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* to great critical and commercial success. The novel combines the personal and professional experiences of Ken Kesey and reflects the culture in which it was written. Kesey developed the novel while a graduate student in Stanford University's Creative Writing Program. The novel was partly inspired by his part-time job as an orderly in the Palo Alto Menlo Park Veterans' Hospital. Kesey also had begun participating in experiments involving LSD and other substances for Stanford's Psychology Department. Speaking to patients under the influence of LSD, Kesey began to perceive that society had turned functional people insane instead of allowing them to find their way back to functioning in society. Kesey's use of LSD also prompted him to have hallucinations while working as an orderly. He often imagined seeing a large Indian mopping the floors of the hospital, prompting him to later add the character of Chief Bromden as the novel's narrator.

Founded by **Bill English and Susi Damilano** in 2003, **The SF Playhouse** is Union Square's intimate, professional theatre. Using professional actors and world class design, The SF Playhouse, which won the SF Weekly 2007 Best Theatre Award, Bay Guardian's 2006 Best Off Broadway Theatre Award and about which the *San Francisco Chronicle* raved, "San Francisco's newest theatre isn't just another tiny stage carved out of a storefront . . . its an enticing introduction to a new company," has become an intimate theatre alternative to the traditional Union Square theatre fare, garnering multiple awards for its productions and providing a creative home and inspiring environment where actors, directors, writers, designers, and theatre lovers converge, The SF Playhouse, hailed as a "small delicacy" by *SF Weekly* , "eclectic" by the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* and "local theater's best kept secret" by *San Francisco Magazine*, strives to create works that celebrate the human spirit.

**THE SF PLAYHOUSE**

***One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest***

*Continued:*

**FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

**WHAT:** Based on the seminal 1960s novel by Ken Kesey, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* left an indelible mark on the literature, theater, and film of our time. Boisterous, ribald, and ultimately devastating, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is the unforgettable story of a mental hospital and its inhabitants. In a world where sanity means conformity and following the rules is the only way to survive. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is a powerful exploration of the beauty and the danger of being an original.

**DATES:** Previews: **June 24, 25 and 26, 2009**  
Open: **June 27, 2009**  
Close: **September 5, 2009**

**SHOWS:** Tuesday 7pm, Wednesday through Saturday at 8 p.m., plus Saturdays 3p.m.  
NEW: Thursdays are now "Talkback" night.

**WHERE:** **The SF Playhouse**  
533 Sutter Street (one block off Union Square, b/n Powell & Mason)

**TICKETS:** For tickets (\$30 previews, \$40 regular) or more information, the public may contact The SF Playhouse box office at **415-677-9596**, or **[www.sfplayhouse.org](http://www.sfplayhouse.org)**.