



**press
information:**

Astoria Performing Arts Center (APAC)

PO Box 195, 34-23 Steinway Street, Astoria, NY 11101
(718) 393-7505

www.apacny.org

Press Contact:

Kevin Hughes, *Media Relations for APAC*
347/423-7559 or khughespr@yahoo.com

THE YOUNG PERSON'S PEN IS DEFINITELY MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD

*Astoria Middle School Students Produce Original Works of Theatre with Live Performance by
Professional Actors as part of 2nd Annual Astoria Playmaking Program*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

February 1, 2007 -- (Astoria, New York) -- The Astoria Performing Arts Center (APAC) announced today that the Middle school students of Horace Greeley (Astoria Intermediate School 10 – IS 10) will present a series of short plays on Monday, February 12th, 2007 at the Horace Greeley Intermediate School.

This series comes to the Astoria community as part of the 2nd annual Astoria Playmaking Program, a 5-week cycle of twice-a-week after school classes with an end result of each student having written and produced one short play. The plays will be presented to the public – free of charge – in a staged reading by professional, adult actors and directors.

“Everything about APAC’s Playmaking Program is about validating the importance of kids finding their own voices,” said APAC Executive Director Taryn Drongowski. “They put a lot of work into their plays, and that work is honored with attention from a lot of adults, including teachers, volunteers, actors, directors, community leaders and audience members. The message to the students is clear – use your imaginations, work hard, be yourselves and have fun!”

With the support of Council Member Peter Vallone Jr., APAC was given a CASA Award from the NYC Department of Youth to start a playwriting program in Astoria.

The Astoria Playmaking Program is built around a specific method of teaching playwriting to children. Developed by Daniel Judah Sklar, the program came to life at the extremely successful Manhattan youth arts organization: The 52nd Street Project.

The program results at the 52nd Street Project have shown that children given “focused attention” by a teaching artist and supported by adult volunteers are able to build their self esteems as they develop new skill sets through playwriting. The classes are a mix of theater games, improvisations and writing.

“I’m so proud of these kids and all the work that APAC does,” stated Vallone Jr. “It’s also good to know that our youngest citizens of Queens are focusing their energies on writing and education.”

For more information regarding the APAC Playmaking Program or any other of APAC’s theatre and performing arts programs, please visit www.apacny.org.

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The Astoria Performing Arts Center (APAC) is dedicated to providing high quality theatre and entertainment at an affordable cost for the Astoria/LIC communities and to supporting local youth and senior citizens. Founded in 2001, APAC is a not-for-profit professional theatre that couples its mainstage programming with community outreach efforts. Each year, APAC brings extended networks of artists, technicians and interns together to produce major musicals, classical, and modern plays. Committed to bringing new voices to visibility in New York theatre, APAC has held 3 playwriting contests, and produced two staged readings, as well as a showcase of songs from as-yet-unproduced original works of musical theatre. Examples from its youth and senior programming portfolio include an annual free summer intensive musical theatre training program for Astoria’s 3rd –5th graders (“Summer Stars”), after-school playwriting classes for middle schoolers (“Astoria Playmaking Program”), and a popular training and performance program for senior citizens (“Senior Stars!”) APAC strives to create innovative and engaging work equaling that of the most established and accomplished New York theatre companies. In 2004, APAC was honored with an Off Off Broadway Review Awards for its production of “Is there Life After High School?” In 2006, APAC’s production of FOREVER PLAID

garnered three nominations from the New York Innovative Theatre Awards including best direction, choreography, and production. (Both productions were helmed by APAC's Artistic Director, Brian Swasey.) The work APAC produces is accessible, in a broad sense: the programming is varied in order to cultivate a broad audience, produced regularly each season, and affordable—so that theater-going can become a habit—not just a rare treat—for the people who see APAC's shows.