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## ***THE VIERTEL/FRANKEL/BARUCH/ROUTH GROUP***



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### **BROADWAY LUMINARIES LEND SUPPORT TO FIDELITY FUTURESTAGE®**

*Landmark Theater Program Brings Arts Education and Broadway Stars into New York City Schools*

#### **CELEBRITY SUPPORTERS INCLUDE:**

S. EPATHA MERKERSON, LIEV SCHREIBER, KATHLEEN MARSHALL,  
VANESSA WILLIAMS, CHARLES S. DUTTON, JOHN LITHGOW,  
ROGER BART, CHAZZ PALMINTERI, MEGAN MULLALLY,  
JERRY ZAKS, WILLIAM IVEY LONG AND MORE...

NEW YORK, March 20, 2008 -- **FIDELITY INVESTMENTS**, in partnership with **THE VIERTEL/FRANKEL/BARUCH/ROUTH GROUP** and **LEAP** (Learning through an Expanded Arts Program), announced today that Emmy and Golden Globe Award winner **S. Epatha Merkerson** ("Law & Order", *Come Back, Little Sheba*), two-time Emmy Award winner and Tony Award nominated actor **Charles S. 'Roc' Dutton**, Tony Award winner **Liev Schreiber** (*Talk Radio, Henry V*) and Tony and Emmy Award winner **John Lithgow** ("Third Rock from the Sun", *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*) headline an impressive roster of Broadway luminaries lending time and support for **Fidelity FutureStage®**, a comprehensive arts education initiative designed to bring professional theater into the classrooms of participating New York City schools.

Also lending their support for year two of the Fidelity FutureStage program are award-winning actors **Vanessa Williams** ("Ugly Betty", *Kiss of the Spider Woman*), **Chazz Palminteri** (*A Bronx Tale, The Usual Suspects*) and **Megan Mullally** ("Will & Grace", *Young Frankenstein*).

- more -

The school-year program provides a unique playwriting and production curriculum for more than 800 area students, representing 10 underserved inner-city schools. Fidelity FutureStage gives students the extraordinary opportunity to learn from some of the Broadway community's leading playwrights, directors, designers and actors – both in their classrooms and at Broadway theatres – and ultimately experience the thrill of bringing their own creativity to life on a professional stage.

“Fidelity FutureStage is designed to bring theatre to life for these students and to encourage them to explore and develop their own interests and talents in the arts,” said Jennifer K. Brown, Executive Vice President of Fidelity Investments. “Having so many renowned artists share their experiences and passion for their craft is a great addition to this year's program.”

As the presenting sponsor of the current Broadway production of *The New Mel Brooks Musical Young Frankenstein*, and recent productions of *Company* (2006-07), *The Fantasticks* (2006-07, Off-Broadway) and *Sweeney Todd* (2005-06), Fidelity first collaborated with The Viertel/Frankel/Baruch/Routh Group in developing Fidelity FutureStage in 2006.

Tom Viertel, one of *Young Frankenstein's* producers added, “We are thrilled that our relationship with Fidelity Investments continues to grow, both in the theatre with this season's production of *Young Frankenstein*, and in the community as Fidelity FutureStage brings the world of theatre to hundreds of kids in our local schools.”

Over the course of the eight-month program, Fidelity FutureStage students learn the art of playwriting and production through a series of workshops and guest lectures from professionals covering a comprehensive range of theater disciplines. A number of Broadway stars will host workshops at individual schools and visit with students as they attend Broadway shows throughout the spring, including *The New Mel Brooks Musical Young Frankenstein*, *A Bronx Tale*, *In the Heights*, *GREASE* and *Come Back, Little Sheba*.

Some of the artists sharing their insights and experiences with students in conjunction with these shows include:

- **S. Epatha Merkerson**, (“Law & Order”), star of the recent Broadway production *Come Back, Little Sheba*
- **Chazz Palminteri**, author and star of the recent Broadway production of *A Bronx Tale*
- **Jerry Zaks**, director of *Caine Mutiny Court-Martial*, *Little Shop of Horrors* and *La Cage* revivals
- **Roger Bart**, (“Desperate Housewives”) currently starring in the hit Broadway musical *Young Frankenstein*
- **Charles S. Dutton**, two-time Tony Award nominated actor of *The Piano Lesson* and *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom*
- **Frankie Faison**, Tony Award nominated star of *Fences*
- **Laura Osnes and Max Crumm**, the 21 year-old stars of the new Broadway production of *GREASE*, discovered on the NBC reality series, “You’re the One that I Want”
- **Kathleen Marshall**, director and choreographer of the recent revivals of *GREASE* and *The Pajama Game*
- **Tamara Tunie**, Tony Award winning producer of *Spring Awakening*, current star of the hit TV series “Law & Order: SVU”
- **Lin-Manuel Miranda**, creator, star and lyricist of *In the Heights*, currently on Broadway

These special guest visits complement the ongoing curriculum that is the foundation of the FutureStage program. Over the course of the eight month program, Leap professional teaching artists work closely with the classroom teachers at each participating school to lead classes in playwriting, casting, acting, set construction, costume design and technical elements, such as lighting and sound. At the conclusion of the playwriting portion of the curriculum, one student-written play is selected from each of the ten Fidelity FutureStage schools. Students then work together to cast, rehearse, direct, design and produce the selected plays for a special finale celebration. Fidelity, The Viertel/Frankel/ Baruch/Routh Group and Leap will host the finale performances at New World Stages in June 2008.

Leap, with more than 30 years of experience and expertise in bringing the arts into city classrooms, worked closely with Fidelity and The Viertel/Frankel/Baruch/Routh Group to select the 10 schools participating in this year’s Fidelity FutureStage program. Leap provides the core playwriting and play production classes at each of the participating schools throughout the school year.

“For many students, participating in the Fidelity FutureStage program has opened their eyes to a world far beyond their imagination, and in the process instilled newfound confidence and pride,” said Leap Associate Executive Director Alice Krieger. “Writing and developing their own plays, attending Broadway performances and working with professional artists right in their own classrooms – the value of those experiences is priceless.”

Fidelity FutureStage workshops and guest lectures are currently underway with instructional elements continuing through the school year. The second year of the program concludes in June 2008, culminating in a gala performance of 10 student-written, produced and acted original plays on a Broadway stage, one from each of the 10 Fidelity FutureStage schools.

### **FIDELITY FUTURESTAGE PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS**

- Adlai E. Stevenson High School\* (Bronx)
- Millennium Art Academy and School for Community Research and Learning (Bronx)
- JHS 22X, Jordan L. Mott\* (Bronx)
- JHS 383K, Phillippa Schuyler\* (Brooklyn)
- The High School for Enterprise, Business and Technology\* (Brooklyn)
- Hillcrest High School\* (Queens)
- Long Island City High School\* (Queens)
- Forest Hills High School (Queens)
- Manhattan East School for Arts and Academics (MS 224) (Manhattan)
- High School of the Arts and Technology at MLK Campus (Manhattan)

*\*Second year as a Fidelity FutureStage school*

### **About Fidelity Investments**

Fidelity Investments is one of the world's largest providers of financial services, with custodied assets of \$3.3 trillion, including managed assets of more than \$1.5 trillion as of February 29, 2008. Fidelity offers investment management, retirement planning, brokerage, and human resources and benefits outsourcing services to 24 million individuals and institutions as well as through 5,500 financial intermediary firms. The firm is the largest mutual fund company in the United States, the No. 1 provider of workplace retirement savings plans, the largest mutual fund supermarket and a leading online brokerage firm. For more information about Fidelity Investments, visit [www.fidelity.com](http://www.fidelity.com).

### **About The Viertel/Frankel/Baruch/Routh Group**

**Tom Viertel, Richard Frankel, Steven Baruch and Marc Routh** are among the most prolific commercial theatrical producers in the world, with multiple productions currently in New York, on tour in North America, in London, in Las Vegas and in Asia. Over the past 23 years they have provided integrated production, management, booking, and marketing services for more than 60 theatrical productions. Their current shows include *The New Mel Brooks Musical Young Frankenstein*, *Gypsy* and *Hairspray* on Broadway, *Stomp* off-Broadway, a North American tour of *Sweeney Todd*, *Hairspray* in London, *Stomp* in Las Vegas, and *42nd Street* in English on tour in Asia. Previous productions include *The Producers*, *Company*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Smokey Joe's Café*, *The Weir*, *Angels in America*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Penn and Teller*, *Love Letters*, *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune* and many others. For 2009 their projects include *Leap of Faith* with music and lyrics by Alan Menken and Glenn Slater, a musical based upon *The Hudsucker Proxy* and *The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess* on Broadway; *SpongeBob SquarePants: The Musical* in the United Kingdom and *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella* in Asia.

**About Leap**

**Leap (Learning through an Expanded Arts Program)**, serving over 200,000 students a year, is a non-profit educational service organization committed to improving the quality of public education through a hands-on, arts-based approach to learning. For the past 31 years, Leap has brought professional artists and educational experts to under-served students in the New York metropolitan area and continues to develop and deliver customized programs to schools, cultural institutions and community based organizations. By training teachers and working with students, Leap's goal is to improve academic performance, cultivate creativity and empower all students to reach their full potential. Leap Executive Director **Ila Lane Gross** and Associate Executive Director **Alice Krieger** founded Leap in 1977, after working as educators in NYC, and have expanded Leap from a small, volunteer program in four Manhattan schools to a trusted, quality arts-in-education organization that currently reaches over 300 schools.

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*Fidelity FutureStage* is a community arts education initiative of Fidelity Investments.  
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