**FORT SALEM THEATER WELCOMES**

**THE ROSE CENTER THEATER PRODUCTION OF**

***THE SECRET GARDEN***

SALEM, NY – Fort Salem Theater begins its Summer Season on June 19 with the sixth annual visit from a touring troupe from The Rose Center Theater in Westminster, California. This year, The Rose offers *The Secret Garden,* the Tony Award-winning musical adaptation of the 1911 [novel of the same name](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Secret_Garden) by [Frances Hodgson Burnett](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frances_Hodgson_Burnett). The musical's book and lyrics are by [Marsha Norman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marsha_Norman), with music by [Lucy Simon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucy_Simon). It premiered on [Broadway](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broadway_theatre) in 1991 and ran for 709 performances.

Set at the turn of the twentieth century, *The Secret Garden* follows Mary Lennox, a spoiled eleven-year-old British girl orphaned in [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India) by a [cholera](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cholera) outbreak, as she is sent to [Yorkshire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yorkshire), [England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England), to live with relatives whom she has never met. Her own personality blossoms as she and a young gardener bring new life to a neglected garden, as well as to her sickly cousin and uncle.

The popular story was most recently adapted for television in 1987, and made into a film, starring Maggie Smith, in 1993. Soaring music in Fort Salem’s version, shared by Rose Center’s accomplished youthful cast, punctuates the up-lifting classic and provides an affordable excursion into live theater that an entire family can enjoy.

Every year, Rose’s artistic director, Tim Nelson, brings a cast of actors east for a whirlwind eight days. They start out by rehearsing in Salem. Then they travel south to take in some Broadway shows in Manhattan. At week’s end they return from their excursion to remount at Fort Salem one of their successful classic musicals from the previous season at their Orange County theater home.

Director Nelson, who owns a summer cabin in Salem, teaches voice and theater at the Huntington Beach School of Performing Arts and has been named Teacher of the Year by the National Arts School Network. His students likewise consistently win and place in national award competitions. This year the cast of *The Secret Garden* features twenty-five of his students, currently in high school and college, including vocal award finalist Lillian Buonocore in the role of Lily.

It was twelve years ago, while working at Albany’s Park Playhouse, that Nelson took a job at Fort Salem and fell in love with the area. He continues to commute to Salem from California and Albany from Salem as he shares his considerable musical and directorial skills from coast to coast.

Fort Salem presents The Rose Center Theater’s production of *The Secret Garden* June 19-21, Friday and Saturday nights at 8 PM, and Sunday afternoon at 2 PM. To order tickets or get more information, visit the theater online (fortsalemtheater.com) or call the box office, (518) 854-9200.