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For Immediate Release
April 18, 2007

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***WARNER ANNOUNCED AS SITE FOR PREMIERE OF NEW MUSICAL BASED ON
NY TIMES BEST-SELLING CHILDREN'S BOOK SERIES, MAGIC TREE HOUSE!***

TORRINGTON, CT— During the Warner Theatre's Artist and Author series held on Sunday, April 15, 2007 which featured #1 NY Times Best-selling Children's author Mary Pope Osborne and her husband Will Osborne, author of the Magic Tree House Research guides, it was announced that the historic art deco theatre was selected as the site for the world premiere presentation of a professional, Broadway-style musical adaptation of the Magic Tree House series entitled **Magic Tree House: The Musical**. The world premiere is set for September 15, 2007 at 8PM.

Will Osborne has been working for the past couple of years with composer **Randy Courts** and director **Joe Harmston** on the project. They finished writing the show last spring, developed it through several readings and have now recorded the songs for a full-length CD that will be released this summer. The authors and their creative team will be working closely with the Warner's Executive Director James Patrick and the Warner production team on coordinating all aspects of the collaboration to bring this production from page to stage. **Casting for the musical will take place locally, as well as in New York, Chicago and Florida.**

"The Warner is so honored to have been chosen as the site for a world premiere of this caliber," said Patrick. He continued, "The Magic Tree House franchise is an international phenomenon and having the premiere in Torrington supports our mission as a major catalyst and destination for live theatre." The Warner has also been the site for other world premieres, including a local production of an original Connecticut musical entitled **JACQUELINE** (based on the life of Jacqueline Kennedy), as well as performances by international dance troupe **MOMIX** and most recently the chamber ensemble **New World Trio**.

The musical will have six performances at the historic art deco theatre, starting with the world premiere on September 15th. The other performance dates include Sunday, September 16, 2007 at 2:00 PM; Friday, September 21, 2007 at 8:00 PM and Saturday, September 22, 2007 at 2:00 PM and 8:00 PM. The final performance will take place on Sunday, September 23, 2007 at 2:00 PM. Warner Theatre Subscribers will be offered the production as an add-on to their 2007-2008 season subscription plan.

Tickets are **\$24.50, \$21.50, 18.50**. There is an additional \$1.50 per ticket Preservation Fee charged to help maintain the historic Warner Theatre facilities. For more information, on Magic Tree House: The Musical please visit

<http://www.mthmusical.com>. For more information on purchasing tickets, please contact the Warner Theatre Box Office at (860) 489-7180 or visit the Warner Theatre Online at www.warnertheatre.org.

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Magic Tree House® By the Numbers

Just how popular is Mary Pope Osborne's Magic Tree House® series? The Numbers Speak for Themselves...

47+ million

The number of Magic Tree House books sold (North America only)

1.5+ million

The number of Magic Tree House Research Guides sold since the non-fiction series launch in 2000

26,000

The number of teachers subscribing to Teachers' Tree House a teaching guide for using Magic Tree House in the classroom

1,500

The average number of people per night attending Magic Tree House Book signing events on Spring '07 publicity tour

132

The number of weeks the Magic Tree House series has spent on the New York Times Bestseller list — The same number of weeks as the Harry Potter books

37

The number of Magic Tree House titles in the series,

26

The number of languages into which Magic Tree House titles have been translated

15

The number of years that the Magic Tree House series has been entertaining generations of readers

And finally...

#1:

The position of The Magic Tree House series on the New York Times and Booksense Bestseller lists with the release of each new title.

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About Mary Pope Osborne

"I'm one of those very lucky people who absolutely loves what they do for a living. There is no career better suited to my eccentricities, strengths, and passions than that of a children's book author."

—Mary Pope Osborne

Mary Pope Osborne is the author of the popular Magic Tree House series. She works with her husband Will and her sister Natalie on the nonfiction companion series, Magic Tree House Research Guides. Many of her books have been named to best-books lists.

"I grew up in the military. By the time I was 15, I had lived in Oklahoma, Austria, Florida, and four different army posts in Virginia and North Carolina. Moving was never traumatic for me, but staying in one place was. When my dad finally retired to a small town in North Carolina, I nearly went crazy with boredom. I craved the adventure and changing scenery of our military life. Miraculously, one day I found these things, literally only a block away—at the local community theater. From then on, I spent nearly every waking hour after school there.

'After graduating from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the early 1970s, I lived an intensely varied life. For a while I camped in a cave on the island of Crete. Then I joined up with a small band of European young people heading to 'The East.' We traveled through 11 Asian countries and nearly lost our lives, first in an earthquake in northern Afghanistan and then in a riot in Kabul. My trip came to an abrupt halt in Katmandu when I got blood poisoning. During the two weeks I spent in a missionary hospital there, I read all of the Tolkien trilogy. To this day, my journey to 'The East' is tangled up in my mind with Frodo's adventures.

'After I returned home and recovered from my illness, I promptly headed back into the real world. I worked as a window dresser, as a medical assistant, and as a Russian travel consultant. One night I attended the opening of a musical about Jesse James. From the balcony, I fell in love with Will Osborne, the actor/musician playing Jesse. I loved his boots and his white cowboy hat; I loved how he sang and strummed the guitar. A year later, in New York City, we were married.

'Thereafter, when I wasn't on the road with Will, I worked as a waitress, taught acting classes in a nursing home, was a bartender, and had a job as an assistant editor for a children's magazine.

'Then one day, out of the blue, I began writing a story about an 11-year-old girl in the South. The girl was a lot like me, and many of the incidents in the story were similar to happenings in my childhood. The first draft was crudely written, but it must have communicated something to an editor, because shortly after I finished, it became a young adult novel called *Run, Run Fast as You Can*. Finally, I knew what I wanted to be when I grew up.

'Now 24 years and 80 books later, I think I'm one of the most fortunate people on earth. Whenever I work on a book, I feel as if I've traveled to some amazing place in the world. Writing *Tales from the Odyssey*, I sailed with Odysseus through the ancient Greek world. Working on the *Spider Kane Mysteries*, I spent time in an abandoned cottage garden with a group of nutty and wonderful insects. Working on my novel *Haunted Waters*, I lived in a haunted castle with a sea spirit. While working on my new picture book, *Pompeii: Lost and Found*, I felt as if I myself were excavating an ancient Roman city. And of course, with my *Magic Tree House* series, I take daily journeys with Jack and Annie to different times and places, from the prehistoric world of dinosaurs to the world of Camelot. Though there are 36 books of fiction and 13 non-fiction books in the *Magic Tree House* series now, I don't think I'll ever run out of places to travel to in my imagination.

'The *Magic Tree House* has also whisked me to schools all over the country, and the contact I now have with millions of readers has brought overwhelming joy into my life. I love the letters I get and I love reading the countless *Magic Tree House* stories that children themselves have written. I feel as if my readers and I are all exploring the creative process together, using our imaginations and writing skills to take us wherever we want to go. This, I tell my small fellow authors, is true magic."

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About the Warner

Built by Warner Brothers Studios and opened in 1931 as a movie palace, the Warner Theatre was described then as "Connecticut's Most Beautiful Theatre." Damaged extensively in a flood, the Warner was slated for demolition in the early 1980s until the non-profit Northwest Connecticut Association for the Arts (NCAA) was founded and purchased the theatre. The Warner reopened as a performing arts center in 1983, and restoration of the lobbies and auditorium was completed in November 2002. Today, the Warner is in operation year-round with more than 140 performances and some 92,000 patrons passing through its doors each season. NCAA's mission is to preserve the Warner Theatre as an historic landmark, enhance its reputation as a center of artistic excellence and a focal point of community involvement, and satisfy the diverse cultural needs of the region. To learn more about the Warner Theatre, visit our website: www.warnertheatre.org.