



**For Immediate Release (May 5, 2008)**

**Who:** Pensacola Opera and Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services of Northwest Florida

**What:** *Silent Salzburg*

**When:** Friday May 9<sup>th</sup> and Saturday May 10<sup>th</sup> at 7pm, Sunday May 11<sup>th</sup> at 2pm.

**Where:** University of West Florida Studio Theatre

**Tickets:** \$10

**Contact:** Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services of Northwest Florida  
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**Pensacola Opera and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services present *Silent Salzburg* at the University of West Florida**

*Silent Salzburg*, a new, powerful play about an Austrian Christian family that goes into hiding in 1940 to protect their deaf teenage son from sterilization by the Nazis will receive its world premiere staging at the UWF Studio Theatre May 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> by Pensacola Opera in a partnership with the Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services of Northwest Florida.

The drama, written by Richard Medugno, author of "Deaf Daughter, Hearing Father," will be directed by Pensacola Opera's director of Education and Community Outreach Timothy Kennedy, who plans to incorporate musical interludes and pantomimed sequences between the scenes.

While the story is not based upon an actual family, it is based upon historical events and actual Nazi persecution of the deaf. "Silent Salzburg" is unique as it was created for deaf and hearing actors to be performed for both deaf and hearing audiences. The play received its first public performances in a workshop production at the California School for the Deaf – Fremont's Little Theatre in the fall of 2006.

Playwright Medugno said, "I was inspired to write 'Silent Salzburg' when I thought about Anne Frank and her family and how using sign language in a hiding situation could be a huge benefit. I also considered the irony of a Christian family, who might have been supporters of the Nazis and Hitler, being confronted with a difficult decision when their own child is marked for treatment or extermination because of a disability."

*Silent Salzburg* is a continuation of last year's "Two Worlds" project, collaboration between Pensacola Opera and Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services of Northwest Florida, which uniquely uses opera as an education and outreach tool to bring hearing and deaf and hard of hearing audiences and performers together. The production features Justin Mapps and Aliona Guernsey as Hans and Marlena, deaf Austrian teenagers facing sterilization from the Reich. Other deaf and hard of hearing teens appear as Hans' friends, Gestapo officers, and others.

*"Silent Salzburg* is such a powerful play, and so perfect for our work with DHHS," said director Timothy Kennedy, "because it shows that treating any difference as an inferiority, a defect, can result not only in the horrors of the Holocaust, but in smaller ways of alienation – this is a family that goes into hiding to protect a son they've never learned to understand."

*Silent Salzburg* will be performed May 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> at 7pm and May 11<sup>th</sup> at 2pm at the University of West Florida's Studio Theatre. Tickets are \$10, and can be purchased from Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services at (850) 433-7128 (voice and TTY). After each performance, there will be a talk-back with the director, playwright, and a staff member of UWF's ADA Services Department. The production is a benefit for Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services of Northwest Florida, with all proceeds going to support their mission of providing quality services, resources, and information to persons who are Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing, Hearing, or Speech Impaired throughout Northwest Florida.