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***Crooked Road* Displaces Jane Austen’s *Persuasion* into Recession-Ridden Los Angeles**

LOS ANGELES, CA (February 22, 2011) – Streetlamp Studio debuts *Crooked Road* as the bookend to a season dedicated to examining gender roles and issues in the South Los Angeles community. Whereas the previous production, *Catch* (with *Sideline*), focused on a man’s waning responsibility to himself and his family, *Crooked Road* exposes a woman’s tendency to be overly responsible for others at the cost of herself. Meant to be both a complement and a contrast to the male narrative, *Crooked Road* is set against the framework of Jane Austen’s *Persuasion* and shifts the perspective of the story onto a modern-day African-American family in Los Angeles. *Crooked Road* is written by Erin Gaw, directed by award-winning director Naisa Wong and features original music by indie singers/songwriters Thena and Ted Beam. *Crooked Road* opens on Friday, March 18, 2011 and runs from March 18 – 27 at The Lost Studio.

The tensions and troubles of real-life women in Los Angeles is captured in this story about Anne Morris, a young African-American woman who leaves behind her first love and personal aspirations for her family after her mother dies. Now, eight years later, Anne’s once affluent family is hit hard by the economic recession and Anne tries to salvage her father’s reputation and wealth by renting their home to an up-and-coming indie band, *Local Boy*. Nevertheless, Anne’s emotions are thrown into disarray as she re-encounters Erik Miller, the band’s lead singer and the man she had loved nearly a decade ago. While Anne is forced to confront the reality that could have been hers, she is also given a rare second chance to follow her heart. With this opportunity, Anne bravely battles through stifling family obligation, fear and discouragement to reclaim her life on her own terms.

In this timeless narrative that intersects cultural and generational boundaries, writer Erin Gaw explains that “*Crooked Road* is an attempt to explore important questions about longing, fear and courage that Austen first asked two centuries ago.” Director Naisa Wong adds that “the themes extracted from our community stories seamlessly blend into Jane Austen’s story of *Persuasion*. The issues of economy, status and societal pressures that governed the discrimination of women in Austen’s world are still, sadly, center stage for woman in the 21st century and more particularly, within the community of women in South Los Angeles.”

The magnitude and pervasiveness of these questions in our post-modern society allow *Crooked Road* to be a redemptive and reflective piece for audiences of all backgrounds. *Crooked Road* invites both men and women “to look at the ways that they give up on themselves in large and small ways, and the chances they have to change their own story at any time,” notes Gaw. Offering a word of hope, Wong suggests that “our advantage today is one of choice” and that the courage to pursue our deepest desires in the face of fears lies in each of us.

Crooked Road

Written by Erin Gaw

Directed by Naisa Wong

Original Music by Thena and Ted Beam

Producing company: Streetlamp Studio

Performances: March 18 – 27, 2011

Friday, March 18, 2011 at 8pm

Saturday, March 19, 2011 at 8pm

Sunday, March 20, 2011 at 7pm

Friday, March 25, 2011 at 8pm

Saturday, March 26, 2011 at 8pm

Sunday, March 27, 2011 at 2pm

Sunday, March 27, 2011 at 7pm

Press performance: March 18, 2011

Talk-back sessions: March 19, 2011 and March 26, 2011

Location: The Lost Studio

130 South La Brea Avenue

Los Angeles, CA 90036

Running time: 2 hours and 15 minutes (including intermission)

Cast (in alphabetical order): Kristal Adams, Lee Biolos, David Gaw, Helena Geefay, Jenny Vaughn Hall, Steve Julian, Stephanie T. Keefer, Anna Klein, Kélicea Meadows, Mo A. Ojarigi, Corissa Pacillas Smith, Erik Snodgrass, Kabin Thomas, Justin Yi

BIOGRAPHIES

Naisa Wong (Director)

Naisa Wong is a Los Angeles-based director and producer. She is the Resident Director/Artistic Advisor for Streetlamp Studio. *Crooked Road* is her fifth collaboration with the company. She worked as the Production Manager and Associate Director for several television productions including *Everybody Loves Raymond*, *Becker* and *Girlfriends*. Her most recent theatrical credits include the reading series of *Wicked Lit* (Nom de Guerre Theatre Company/Theatre 40), *Within/Out* for the WECSOR Regional and Claremont University's School of Religion & Philosophy and *Catch with Sideline* (Streetlamp Studio). Her professional theatre credits include Company Manager for the Pasadena Playhouse and Literary Manager and Dramaturge for Ebony Repertory Theatre in Los Angeles. She was an invited director and lecturer for Lincoln Center's Director's Lab in 2005 and was a panelist for the American Pavilion of Cannes Film Festival in 2007. Last year, Naisa produced a documentary with Blair Underwood, Tommy Morgan Jr. and Wren T. Brown in association with Associated Television International. She is fresh off of her Directing Fellowship with Broadway Director Leigh Silverman on the production of *In The Wake* at the Kirk Douglas Theatre (CTG/Berkeley Rep. production), which was written by Tony-nominated playwright, Lisa Kron. *In The Wake* opened at the Public Theatre in NY in 2010. Naisa is a proud member of the Director's Guild of America and an associate member of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC).

Erin Gaw (Playwright)

Erin Gaw studied English and Theater at Azusa Pacific University, and received her MA at Fuller Theological Seminary where she studied Theology and the Arts. She is a professor in the Theater, Film and Television department at Azusa Pacific, teaching several classes including "Christianity and the Creative Process" and "Civic Theater".

As a playwright, she adapted Jane's Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* for a stage production in 2005. As a screenwriter she wrote *Beyond Beautiful* for the "36 Parables" film series. An accomplished director, she is currently preparing for a production of *Our Town* for May 2011. She has worked as an acting coach and director on many stage productions, including *The Philadelphia Story*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Importance of Being Ernest*, *Antigone*, and *Dancing at Lughnasa*.

She co-founded Azusa Renaissance, a community based theater company, and has worked in several capacities on community shows such as *Peter Pan*, *Robin Hood* and *Once Upon A Mattress*.

Thena Beam (Songwriter)

Thena Beam is a performer, vocalist, songwriter, educator and all-around artist, who has made Los Angeles her home for the last twelve years. She currently serves as Director of the Los Angeles Music Academy's Singer-Songwriter program, where she also teaches songwriting and vocal performance. A graduate of the USC Thornton School of Music Jazz Studies program, Thena has released three albums, written songs for film, and works as a session singer.

Ted Beam (Songwriter)

Ted Beam studied creative writing at the University of Houston and has worked as a technical writer, barista, fourth grade teacher and a production manager in the world of entertainment marketing. He moved out to Los Angeles from Houston seven years ago with the dream of being a professional songwriter and writes music with his wife, Thena Beam.

About Streetlamp Studio

Streetlamp Studio is an ensemble-based, non-profit theater company founded in 2006. The organization gathers artists who collaborate with members in South Los Angeles to make theatre that inspires creativity and community engagement. Streetlamp Studio has produced five original stage productions and nine youth productions to date and has performed for sold out audiences.

For additional information, please contact Jocelyne Liu at 408-439-6337 or e-mail Jocelyne@Streetlampstudio.com

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