



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Kevin Kopjak, Charles Zukow Associates | 415.296.0677 | kevink@charleszukow.com

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER'S YOUNG CONSERVATORY PRESENTS ITS SUMMER YOUNG CONSERVATORY FESTIVAL

Summer productions include *Top of the Pyramid*—a collaborative youth arts project featuring young actors from A.C.T.'s Education & Community Programs, Destiny Arts Center in Oakland, and A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory—and *Fields of Gold: The Music of Sting*

July 26–August 27, 2016

SAN FRANCISCO (July 6, 2016) – American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.) Young Conservatory Director Craig **Slaight** announced today the shows that will comprise the summer Young Conservatory (YC) Festival. Productions include the world premiere of *Top of the Pyramid*, a collaboration among A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory, A.C.T.'s Education & Community Programs, and Oakland's Destiny Arts Center, and *Fields of Gold: The Music of Sting*, a celebration of the music of singer-songwriter Sting. *Top of the Pyramid* will perform **July 26–30, 2016**, in **The Rueff** at A.C.T.'s Strand Theater (1127 Market Street, San Francisco) and **August 5–7, 2016** at **Destiny Arts Center** (970 Grace Ave, Oakland). *Fields of Gold: The Music of Sting* will perform at A.C.T.'s Strand Theater from **August 16–27, 2016**. Tickets for *Top of the Pyramid* are \$20. Tickets for *Fields of Gold: The Music of Sting* are \$30. Both are available now by calling the A.C.T. Box Office at **415.749.2228** or online at www.act-sf.org/YCshows. Tickets to performances at Oakland's Destiny Arts Center are available online at www.destinyarts.org.

Featuring a cast of young actors from A.C.T.'s Education & Community Programs, Destiny Arts Center in Oakland, and A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory, *Top of the Pyramid* is a new commission by OBIE Award-winning and Pulitzer Prize-nominated playwright **Nikkole Salter** (*In the Continuum*) and directed by A.C.T. Community Artistic Director **Tyrone Davis**. When a school district in Ferguson, Missouri, loses accreditation, a group of friends opt to get bused to a high school across the tracks. Amid opportunities and trials, some navigate the unfamiliar environment better than others, threatening both their friendships and their futures. Now in its second year, this collaborative initiative brings together a diverse group of young actors from the Bay Area to

create a play articulating the needs and challenges of youth in today's world. The cast of *Top of the Pyramid* includes Kiya Bailey, Phoebe Brady, Isabella Sonia Choy, Dario Drakes, Anna Granados, Kyla Henderson, Naomi Ladenburg, Desiree Lewis, Chelsea Looy, Lucian Patton, Alexander Richardson, and Makhissa Sano.

Says A.C.T. Director of Education & Community Programs Elizabeth Brodersen: "As A.C.T.'s partnerships with Bay Area public schools and community-based organizations continue to grow, we are delighted to connect their students to performance opportunities at A.C.T., providing young people from three different communities the chance work together on both sides of the bay. We are honored to deepen our partnership with Destiny Arts Center, a leading violence prevention, youth development, and arts education center that directly serves more than over 4,000 young people annually."

From the overwhelming success of the rock band Police to his breakout solo career, Gordon Matthew Sumner, known in the music world as Sting, is one of the all-time great singer-songwriters. Part of the ongoing series of musical tributes from the A.C.T. Young Conservatory, *Fields of Gold: The Music of Sting* features 30 years of music, interwoven with a unique story concerning a group of Amish and non-Amish youth coming of age in the American heartland. Featuring a book by Craig Slight and direction by Domenique Lozano and Slight, *Fields of Gold: The Music of Sting* will include such hits as "Be Still My Beating Heart," "If You Love Somebody," "Every Breath You Take," "Fields of Gold," "Synchronicity," and "When We Dance." Music direction by Krista Wigle and choreography by Christine Mattison. The cast of *Fields of Gold: The Music of Sting* includes Ethan Bartley, Quincy Corcello, Penny Devlin, Ariane Evans, Ross Graham, Oliver Klein, Michaela Kuni, Tobiah Richkind, Casey Schryer, Amy Semmelmayr, and Kaitlyn Tom.

Says Slight: "I am thrilled that for the second year in a row we are offering two exciting theatrical journeys – a new play commissioned especially for our collaborative efforts among three groups of young artists and a unique musical paying tribute to an international artistic icon. In both works the world is keenly observed through the eyes of the young and grapples with compelling issues facing youth today. It is always our way in the Young Conservatory to explore plays and musicals by leading professional artists. This summer's festival, playing at our new extraordinary theater complex, The Strand, and at Destiny Arts in Oakland, allows us this and to feature remarkable talent."

The YC Festival is made possible by a generous grant from The Bernard Osher Foundation and Jewels of Charity. Additional support provided by the Crescent Porter Hale Foundation and donors to A.C.T.'s season gala.