

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***To Kill a Mockingbird* Premiered in Hong Kong
Alabaman Hometown Cast Performs at Asia Society Hong Kong Center**

(Hong Kong, October 2, 2012) The novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* has made several unbreakable records since its publication in 1960. Hong Kong is about to continue this Mockingbird legend and to spark a Mockingbird wave, with the Mockingbird Players of Monroeville staging five performances at Asia Society Hong Kong Center between October 12 and 14.

Of all the legends this all-time classic has made, one is Gregory Peck playing the novel's protagonist Atticus Finch in the 1962 movie rendition of the Pulitzer Prize-winning book written by Harper Lee in 1960.

Peck is the one and only Atticus Finch in movie history and this screenplay won him the Oscar for Best Actor. The screenplay also marked the beginning of Peck's lifelong friendship with writer Harper Lee, who, after *To Kill a Mockingbird*, has never had another book published.

As a prelude to the stage play of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Asia Society Hong Kong Center will screen the digitally-restored 1962 classic on October 3. This will be followed by a screening on October 4 of the documentary *Hey Boo: Harper Lee and To Kill a Mockingbird* directed by Mary Murphy.

The documentary unravels some of the mysteries surrounding the media-shy Harper Lee, including why she never published again. It also gives an account of the social changes her work has inspired since its publication 50 years ago, having been translated into 40 languages and having sold 79 million copies worldwide.

S. Alice Mong, executive director of Asia Society Hong Kong said: "It is no coincidence that we are bringing *To Kill a Mockingbird* to Hong Kong. Celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, the black and white movie brings back memories to many people around the world.

Youths having read this great novel and watched the movie had their first moral lesson in defending human dignity and upholding civil rights despite all odds. The play by the Mockingbird Players enacts this very telling portrait of life – no matter when and where the play takes place."

Consistently recommended as a lifetime must-read book, *To Kill a Mockingbird* was adapted by playwright Christopher Sergel in 1970 and has since 1991 become a must-see play performed by amateur theatre group The Mockingbird Players.

Performing annually in the Old Courthouse at Harper Lee's birth place, Monroeville, the literary capital of Alabama, the actors and actresses of the Mockingbird Players are all volunteers.

Its co-director, Dawn Hare, who also plays Miss Maudie and famously utters the line "It is a sin to kill a mockingbird," is in Alabama a judge by profession. Playing Scout the narrator and protagonist is 10-year-old Laura Grace King, who is the youngest actress of the Mockingbird Players.

The full cast playing in Monroeville will fly to Hong Kong bringing with them their superb performance, the authentic speech of Alabamans, and the modern day relevance this all-time classic holds.

The performances of the Mockingbird Players have always been quick sell-outs because the group offers its audience the unique experience of an authentic hometown cast performing in the very courtroom where Harper Lee's father practiced law.

Outside Alabama, the group offers its enchanting appeal to its audience by telling a story of prejudice, while underscoring the timeless, cross-cultural principles of respect for the rule of law, and the importance of moral integrity.

The play also breaks traditional conventions of space, movement, and the role of the audience by placing audience members in the play. The all-male jury ultimately convicting Tom Robinson, a black man falsely accused of raping a white girl, is chosen from the audience of each performance.

The rest of the audience watches from the courtroom floor, along with actors and actresses playing Jem, Scout, Dill, the choir, and other Maycomb residents.

Asia Society Hong Kong Center will reconstruct the indoor and outdoor scenes in the same way the Mockingbird Players does. Hong Kong audience members, following the Mockingbird Players' tradition, will have the opportunity to get onstage to make the ultimate verdict.

The Mockingbird Players' *To Kill a Mockingbird* is presented jointly by Asia Society Hong Kong Center, Alabama China Partnership and Sozo Group.

Asia Society Hong Kong Center will launch a Facebook contest at <http://www.facebook.com/Asiasocietyhongkong>. Winners of the contest will be given two tickets to watch the play.

A special performance for local students will also be staged, followed by a series of literary and drama activities for schools in Hong Kong.

For more information about *To Kill a Mockingbird* performed by The Mockingbird Players in Hong Kong and related film screenings and activities, visit the website of Asia Society Hong Kong Center: www.asiasociety.org.hk.

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Notes to the Editor:

- Media representatives will be invited to view the rehearsal by The Mockingbird Players on October 10. Invitations will be sent by Asia Society Hong Kong Center shortly.
- Images of the performances of The Mockingbird Players in Monroeville, Alabama are available for download at www.flickr.com/photos/49207908@N02 until Monday, October 15, 2012.

About Asia Society Hong Kong Center

Asia Society Hong Kong Center, being the first overseas center of the eleven centers of Asia Society, has established its new home at The Hong Kong Jockey Club Former Explosives Magazine in February 2012.

This adaptive re-use of a heritage site has enabled the public to view and to access the facilities and heritage buildings for the first time in the history of Hong Kong. The interface of old and new structures also allows visitors to explore the history and heritage of the site while engaging in a wide range of arts, cultural and intellectually enriching programmes.

About Alabama China Partnership

The Alabama China Partnership is a non-governmental organization formed by Raymond Cheng, CEO of SoZo Group, Ltd. of Hong Kong, and George Harris, President of SoZo Group LLC in the United States. Its chairman is George Landegger, Chairman of Parsons & Whittemore. The Partnership works closely with public and private entities to increase education and cultural exchanges, as well as business opportunities, between China and Alabama. For more information, visit: www.alabamachina.com.

About SoZo Group

SoZo Group, formed by Raymond Cheng, is a Corporate Advisory and Economic Development Company with a social consciousness and a mission to redefine success. At SoZo, Ray leads a multicultural team of passionate professionals, who work to deliver exceptional results for companies and communities. The intent is not just to make money but to also make a difference.

The word "SoZo" is Greek for healing or restoring to health. The three leaves in the SoZo logo are emblematic of our belief that business has a responsibility to impact our world positively in three key areas of sustainability: financial, environmental and socio-cultural. For more information, visit: www.sozonet.com.

Stage Performance and Film Screening

- Full-length play by Christopher Sergel
 - (1) Gala Benefit Performance
Friday, October 12, 2012 starting 6pm
 - (2) Public Performance
Saturday, October 13, 2012, (two performances starting 1pm and 6pm respectively)
Sunday, October 14, 2012 (two performances starting 1pm and 6pm respectively)
- *To Kill A Mockingbird* (1962, USA, 129 min)
Director: Robert Mulligan
In English with Chinese subtitles
Wednesday, October 3, 2012 starting 7.30pm
- *Hey Boo: Harper Lee and "To Kill a Mockingbird"* (2010, USA, 82 minutes)
Director: Mary Murphy
In English with no subtitles
Thursday, October 4, 2012 starting 7.30pm



Media enquiries

For further information or to arrange an interview, please email: mediahk@asiasociety.org