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Musical Theatre celebrates 50 years

By Monica Levette Clark
On-line Forty-Niner

Musical Theatre West, acclaimed as one of the most respected, regional musical theater companies in Southern California, is celebrating its 50th anniversary Sunday at the Carpenter Performing Arts Center at Cal State Long Beach.

Richard Carpenter, Dale Kristien, Rod McKuen, Brock Peters and other celebrities are scheduled to appear in the gala performance, singing songs from musicals like "Kiss Me Kate," "Brigadoon," "The Scarlet Pimpernel," "Will Rogers Follies," and "The King and I."

"This is a benefit concert for our 50th anniversary, so it will be a variety show, with each of the stars singing the popular songs from the 1950s of musicals that we have done over the years," said Paul Garman, executive director and producer of the musical theater company.

Garman said he started as a childperformer in the company and has been involved with it now for 40 years.

According to the CPAC, the company has been holding its performances at the center for five years. After its first season at the CPAC in 1997, Musical Theatre West made the center its exclusive home beginning with its 1999-2000 season.

"A VIP reception will be held before the show for those who buy the most expensive tickets, and a cast party will follow after the show for sponsors of the company," Garman said.

The reception will be held at 5:30 p.m. and the show



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starts at 7 p.m. Tickets for the show can only be purchased at the Musical Theatre West box office which is located in Long Beach at 1800 Palo Verde Ave. Ticket prices for the Sunday gala are \$10 for students, and range from \$35-\$95 for the general public.

To premier its 2002-2003 season at the CPAC, Musical Theatre West said it will present the musical "Mame," featuring "All in the Family" actress, Sally Struthers as Auntie Mame. The musical is scheduled to run from Nov. 2 to 17 at the CPAC with evening and matinee performances. For more information Musical Theatre West can be contacted at (562) 430-2324.

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