

**Media Contacts:**

Larry Berger  
Executive Director  
[slb@slbradio.com](mailto:slb@slbradio.com)  
P: 412.586.6300

**For Immediate Release**

Diane Nutting  
Director of Education  
City Theatre  
[DNutting@CityTheatreCompany.org](mailto:DNutting@CityTheatreCompany.org)  
P: 412.431.4400 x 274

## **World Premiere of Radio Dramas Authored by Students from Mifflin Elementary School and Rogers Middle School for the Creative and Performing Arts on The Saturday Light Brigade**

– Sponsored by SLB, City Theatre, and the National Audio Theatre Festivals –

**Pittsburgh, PA – June 15, 2006** – *The Saturday Light Brigade* (Pittsburgh's award-winning live public radio program), City Theatre and the National Audio Theatre Festivals are pleased to announce the world premiere of three radio dramas authored by students from Mifflin Elementary School and Rogers Middle School for the Creative and Performing Arts. The dramas were broadcast June 3, 2006 along with an on-air celebration during which students from both Mifflin Elementary and Rogers CAPA -- along with parents, teachers and actors -- were on-hand to introduce their works to the SLB audience on WRCT 88.3 FM, WURP 1550 AM and WSAJ 91.1 FM. The dramas continue to be available on-line at [www.slbradio.com](http://www.slbradio.com) for on-demand listening.

Diane Nutting, Director of Education for City Theatre and a long-time advocate of innovative ways to involve youth in theater experiences, developed the idea for these dramas about four years ago. "With our well-established Young Playwrights Program a great success, our goal was to develop another program to engage youth in a way that would help them appreciate theater, discover and develop their ideas, and share them with others. The Radio Drama Project turned out to be the perfect vehicle. We have produced seven dramas to date, and have expanded over the past three years to include more schools and students. We are excited to see what the future holds for this project" said Nutting. During the developmental phase of the project, Nutting contacted the National Audio Theatre Festivals (based in New York) with the idea for the radio drama project, and was paired with George Zarr, a New York City-based NATF artist who works as a director and producer. With 25-plus years of experience in connecting youth and radio, SLB was asked to become the broadcast partner. Pittsburgh-based audio engineer Skip Sanders provided technical and post-production support.

Together with Kathy Donnelly, a City Theatre teaching artist, and teachers from Mifflin Elementary School and Rogers CAPA Middle School, the team set up a six-week residency program enabling students to learn about the elements of radio drama and collaborate to write original scripts. Zarr then returned from New York and held a script development session to ready the scripts for production. The dramas were then rehearsed and recorded by professional actors in SLB Radio's studios – located in the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh -- under the direction of Zarr. Selected students provided manual sound effects that were then merged with the voice tracks in post-production. Over fifty 7th and 8th grade students participated in the project this year.

Since the inception of this program, seven radio dramas have been created. *Saturday Light Brigade* host Larry Berger, remarked, "These are professional, modern works with clear story-lines and evocative characters. The writing, acting and production levels are of national caliber and it is a pleasure to see teens enjoy radio from both sides -- creating original programming and listening to it. That radio is still a relevant and entertaining medium was evident as we witnessed students from each school enjoying the work of their counterparts".

This program was made possible in part through a grant from the Giant Eagle Foundation.

## **About City Theatre**

Theatre's mission is to provide an artistic home for the development and production of contemporary plays that engage a diverse audience. Located on Pittsburgh's South Side, City Theatre presents a full schedule of professional theater every year. With recognition that youth and education are critical in development of a future generation with love for theater, City Theatre maintains a number of educational programs including the radio drama project described above as well as the Young Playwrights Program, an at-large comprehensive arts education program serving teachers, students and the Pittsburgh community. The Young Playwrights program includes a Young Playwrights Teacher Institute, In-School Workshops, Young Playwrights Contest, and Young Playwrights Festival. More information can be found at <http://www.citytheatrecompany.org>.

## **About The Saturday Light Brigade (SLB)**

The Saturday Light Brigade (SLB) is a live, award-winning public radio program featuring acoustic music and family fun designed to encourage people of all ages to interact. Broadcast since 1978, it is one of the longest- running public radio programs in the United States. SLB broadcasts live from 6:00 a.m. to noon (Eastern) Saturdays from studios in the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh and is carried on WRCT 88.3 FM Pittsburgh (Allegheny and Butler Counties), WSAJ 91.1 FM Grove City (Butler, Mercer, Lawrence, and parts of Clarion, Venango and Beaver Counties), and WURP 1550 AM (Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties). Streaming and on-demand broadcasts are accessible at [www.slbradio.com](http://www.slbradio.com). The radio program is a service of SLB Radio Productions, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation that encourages children and adults to be together, respect one another, and learn with each other through the unique medium of radio. More information is available at 412.586.6300, [slb@slbradio.com](mailto:slb@slbradio.com) or [www.slbradio.com](http://www.slbradio.com).

## **About NATF**

Based in New York, National Audio Theatre Festivals (NATF) is a non-profit organization that promotes, supports, and produces audio theatre works and provides educational resources throughout the country. The organization is comprised of experienced audio and radio theatre producers and participants. NATF is a non-profit organization. Additional information is available at <http://www.natf.org>.

## **About the Participating Schools**

Mifflin Elementary School and Rogers Middle School for the Creative and Performing Arts are schools within the Pittsburgh Public School system. Rogers Middle School for the Creative and Performing Arts is located in the East Liberty/Garfield area of Pittsburgh and is attended by students from grades 6-8. Mifflin Elementary School is in Lincoln Place and is attended by students from grades K-8. More information on both can be found at <http://www.pps.k12.pa.us>.