

Contact: Jill Arnone
Communications, Mexican Heritage Plaza
Office: 408 298 8905 Cell: 408 315 5121
jilla@thearnonegroup.com
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Mexican Heritage Plaza Opens 2007 Season Bay Area Theatre Premier and Retrospective of California Artist Bob Freimark

San José, California – January 9, 2007 - Mexican Heritage Plaza (MHP) is launching its 2007 multi-disciplinary season with back-to-back visual exposés.

On Wednesday, January 31, MHP live performance art meets silent cinema in the West Coast Premier, *El Automóvil Gris*. MHP will also host an exhibition of the art of protest by San José artist Bob Freimark, opening February 8.

El Automóvil Gris is a unique interpretation of the 1919 Mexican silent movie classic of the same name, by Teatro de Ciertos Habitantes, directed by Claudio Valdés, from Mexico City. Using the Japanese Benshi-style of narrating silent films, this brilliantly entertaining theater company is a roller coaster ride of entertainment and artistry---multilingual subtitles, multi-media performance and multitalented actors.

Film critic, Roger Ebert, wrote about “*The Grey Automobile*” in the Chicago Sun-Times in 2003, “...my four-star rating refers to the entire theatrical experience.” Ebert adds, “I avoid clichés like ‘You’ve never seen anything like this before,’ but the fact is, you haven’t.”

"January opens with a bang at the Plaza with our presentation of *Automóvil Gris*," said Marcela Davison Avilés, CEO of Mexican Heritage Plaza. "This is a multi-faceted jewel -- cinema, performance art and music combined -- that is not to be missed."

A perfect blend of entertainment and history, *El Automóvil Gris* (*The Grey Automobile*), is based on the real-life bandits of The Grey Automobile Gang from Mexico City who robbed the homes of the wealthy. The movie follows the gang, and films actual houses where the robberies took place, giving it a

documentary feel. Several of the victims and the police inspector played themselves. The film is known for its shocking footage of the actual execution of the gang. Its scenic work relies entirely upon the multidisciplinary artist-actor-musician-dancer who will draw upon all of his or her abilities to the utmost.

El Automóvil Gris has many fascinating elements:

- In the early years of Japanese cinema, the Benshi, or film-teller, narrated the silent films during the screening so that the audience understood the actions and emotions of the characters. This style endured until the mid 1930's, when talkies became the norm.
- In 1997 Teatro de Ciertos Habitants was founded and is acclaimed for its artistic spirit. Its scenic work relies entirely upon the multidisciplinary artist-actor-musician-dancer who will draw upon all of his or her abilities to the utmost.
- *El Automóvil Gris* is one of the most avante-garde pieces in the history of film.

El Automóvil Gris will be shown in the MHP Theater on Wednesday, January 31 at 7 p.m. Tickets will be \$10 adults, \$5 seniors
A special student showing at 10 a.m. on January 31 (recommended high school and above), tickets are \$2 each, 1 adult chaperone per 10 students free, additional adults \$5. For information or to purchase tickets, call 408.928.5563

MHP will also host an exhibition by artist Bob Freimark February 8 with an opening reception at 7 p.m. featuring a dialogue with artist Bob Freimark and Curator Peter Selz.

“February is equally exciting with the Plaza's opening of a retrospective on one of the most important visual artists to come out of the wild and woolly days of California's 1960's arts scene, adds Davison Avilés. “San José's Bob Freimark wears his commitment to social justice on his canvas and this show offers timely reflection on the issues of the day.”

The exhibit, *Bob Freimark: Protests on Canvas*, demonstrates Freimark's dissident voice as expressed in artworks that examine the two U.S. wars in Iraq, Los Desaparecidos of Argentina, the maltreatment of Dolores Huerta at the hands of the San Francisco Police, and his visit to extermination camps

in Germany. The solo art show is a retrospective of the work of the retired art professor from San Jose State University.

Bob Freimark: Protests on Canvas will be in La Galería at MHP and will run through April 8, 2007. Curator Selz is the Founding Director of the UC Berkeley Museum of Art and Professor Emeritus of Art History at Berkeley.

The exhibit is open to the public with free admission. La Galería is open Monday through Fridays 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Weekends and after-hours by appointment.

For more information and to purchase tickets, call 408.928.5563

Or visit www.mhcviva.org for more information.

Mexican Heritage Plaza is located at 1700 Alum Rock Avenue, San Jose, CA 95112.

###

About Mexican Heritage Corporation:

The Mexican Heritage Corporation, the operating organization of the Mexican Heritage Plaza, was founded by a group of San José's Mexican-American community leaders. That vision grew into a 55,000 square-foot cultural center with state of the art theatrical venues, a Smithsonian-affiliated gallery space and luscious thematic gardens that serve as a regional resource for cultural programming and education. Built in association with the City of San José and the San José Redevelopment Agency, it is one of the largest Latino cultural centers in the nation.

The mission of the Mexican Heritage Plaza of San José is to affirm, celebrate and preserve the rich cultural heritage of the Mexican community and showcase multicultural arts within the region. The vision extends well beyond the boundaries of East San José. The Mexican Heritage Plaza, Centro Cultural de San José, is a destination point for everyone who lives in or visits the Bay Area. www.mhcviva.org

Visit the art and soul of Silicon Valley, Mexican Heritage Plaza, surrounded by the Mayfair and San Antonio Neighborhoods, two of San José's oldest Latino communities.

###