FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Open Dream Ensemble Announces Winner of Script Competition

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (May 5, 2011) – The Open Dream Ensemble, a professional multi-disciplinary children’s theater group sponsored by the Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA), announces the winner of their first original script competition. The winner, Michaela Morton, won for her play entitled Big Shoes: The Abbreviated but None-the-less Epic Tale of a Journey of the Soles of Gordy Brown.

Morton’s winning play is geared towards children in kindergarten through fifth grades and is about a young boy named Gordy, who wants to be just like his big brother. As the play progresses, Gordy realizes that filling someone else’s shoes isn’t really all that satisfying. He has much more success once he puts on the shoes that are “right” for him. It’s a delightful and inventive tale of self-discovery and finding the creative spark that makes each of us unique. As with all Open Dream Ensemble productions, Big Shoes aligns its subject matter with current school curriculum. Morton’s play incorporates math, science, language arts and guidance, as well as art.

“Michaela’s play fits the mission of the Open Dream Ensemble perfectly,” said Rebecca Nussbaum, general manager of the Open Dream Ensemble. “It’s entertaining, kid-oriented, educational and last but not least, great fun. We can’t wait to perform it in front of an audience of kids.”

Morton was chosen from a pool of UNCSA Alumni applicants. “I was thrilled to start working on a children’s play, but after several months I’d come up with nada,” said Morton. “Then I took a cross-country flight from Boston to Portland, OR, and got stuck in Dallas. I bought frozen yogurt, I bought Anna Karenina, I took out my laptop and started writing. The first sentence was ‘In Gordy’s world, everything was just Gordy’s size.’ The idea was a kid whose whole life fit him to a T, but all he could see was his brother’s world, which was bigger than his. I’m so grateful for all of the mentoring and
encouragement that Open Dream has provided throughout this process—they’re an incredible group with an incredible mission, and I’m honored to play a part!”

Morton grew up in Winston-Salem and is an alumna of the UNCSA School of Drama High School Program. She has studied physical theater with Randolph Curtis Rand and solo performance under David Eppel, founding member of the Market Theatre of Johannesburg. She also has been the director’s assistant to Alison Chase, founding artistic director of Pilobolus Dance Theater and Apogee Arts. She is a junior at Williams College where she is majoring in English. Her poetry has received honorable mention in contests judged by former poet laureate Louise Glück and Pushcart Prize winner Chris Forhan. Morton is currently spending her junior year in Paris, France, where she studies art, acting, translation—and children’s literature.

All Open Dream Ensemble productions and residencies highlight the importance of responsibility, teamwork, diligence, imagination, and intellectual curiosity. Ties to science, social studies, and guidance goals are staples of the Open Dream Ensemble repertoire. Each Open Dream Ensemble performer is a trained Teaching Artist dedicated to creating and implementing elementary school residencies that have a lasting impact.

The Open Dream Ensemble is a professional outreach program of UNCSA in Winston-Salem and is comprised of professional artists who trained in dance, drama, and music at UNCSA. Using the diverse skills of its cast, Open Dream Ensemble presents original performances to school students throughout the Southeast. Open Dream combines the power of live performances with artist residencies and educational workshops, aligning the content with current school curriculum. More information on the Open Dream Ensemble is available at www.OpenDreamEnsemble.com or by calling (336) 782-7837.

The Open Dream Ensemble is a project of the Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts, which incubates projects that sustain artists at every point in their creative development through strategic partnerships that capitalize on visionary thinking in the arts. For more information, visit www.kenanarts.org.

The University of North Carolina School of the Arts (www.uncsa.edu) is the University of North Carolina’s conservatory for the arts, dedicated entirely to the professional
training of students possessing exceptional talents in the performing, visual and moving image arts. UNCSA offers students focused, intense, professional training at the high school, baccalaureate, and masters levels in its schools of Dance, Design and Production, Drama, Filmmaking and Music.

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