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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Luis Valdez’s *Zoot Suit* Hits the Stage at Santa Ana College
*Production runs March 8-18***

(Santa Ana)—Since its original production by the Centre Theatre Group and El Teatro Campesino in 1978, Luis Valdez’s *Zoot Suit*, the first Chicano play produced on Broadway, has retained its relevancy. The play is a fictionalized version of the notorious 1942 Sleepy Lagoon murder trial in Los Angeles.

Thirty-four years later, Santa Ana College (SAC) brings *Zoot Suit* to the stage beginning March 8 at Phillips Hall Theatre, 1530 W. 17th St. in Santa Ana. Show dates are March 8, 9, 10, 15, and 16 at 8:00 p.m. and March 11 and 18 at 2:30 p.m. General admission is \$14; students/seniors/staff tickets are \$12. This production is recommended for mature audiences.

“Sleepy Lagoon murder” was the name that newspapers and radio reporters used to describe the murder of José Díaz, whose body was found near a lagoon in southeast Los Angeles, California, on August 2, 1942. The murder led to the criminal trial of 21 Latino young men; whose convictions were reversed in 1944. The trial is perceived as the precursor of the Zoot Suit Riots in 1943, a series of riots between Caucasian sailors and Marines and Latino youths, who were known for the zoot suits they often wore.

The SAC production of *Zoot Suit*, written by Luis Valdez known as the father of Chicano theater in the U.S., is directed by Chris Cannon, SAC assistant professor of theatre.

“The play is influenced by the Living Newspaper style of theatre popular in the 1930s,” said Cannon. “This genre exposes current events through dramatizations. *Zoot Suit* is about prejudice, heritage, and defiance. It is a reminder that the strongest moments in our nation’s history may not always be the brightest. And as Luis Valdez has stated if we do harm to any of our citizens, we do harm to ourselves and to our nation.”

The ensemble cast of *Zoot Suit* features:

From Anaheim Hills: Megan King [Press]

From Campbell, CA: Justin Powell [George Shearer]

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From East Los Angeles: Jesus Peña [Enrique Reyna]
From Fountain Valley: Priscilla Amezola [Alice Bloomfield]
From Garden Grove: Aurea Gandarilla [Bertha Villarreal]
From Murrieta: Chris Gallardo [Joey Castro]
From Oceanside: Linda Gallardo [Lupe Reyna]
Dominick Gallardo [Smiley Torres]
From Santa Ana: Joel Mijares [El Pachuco]
Danny Gonzalez [Henry Reyna]
Ana Reyes [Dolores Reyna]
Anthony Aguirre [Rudy Reyna]
Kelly Caballero [Della Barrios]
Ivonne Ortega [Elena Torres]
From Yuma, AZ: Vontre Stubblefield [Tommy Roberts]

For more information and to purchase tickets, please visit www.sac.edu/theatre or call (714) 564-5661. Tickets purchased online are discounted by \$1 each.

About Santa Ana College

Santa Ana College (SAC), which will turn 100 years old in 2015, serves about 18,000 students each semester at its main campus in Santa Ana. The college prepares students for transfer to four-year institutions, provides invaluable workforce training, and customized training for business and industry. In addition, another 13,000 students are served through the college's School of Continuing Education located at Centennial Education Center. Ranked as one of the nation's top two-year colleges awarding associate degrees to Latino and Asian students, the college is also recognized throughout the state for its comprehensive workforce training programs for nurses, firefighters, law enforcement and other medical personnel. SAC is one of two comprehensive colleges under the auspices of the Rancho Santiago Community College District. Visit <http://www.sac.edu> to learn more.

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