

Prime Stage Theatre



Bringing Literature to Life

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Award-Winning Artist Shares Memoir of Growing up in Pittsburgh

Monday, February 27, 2012 – 7:30 pm

**Pittsburgh, PA**— The second of Prime Stage Theatre’s new reading series, *Dark Nights*, will feature the newly published memoir by award-winning multi-media artist Shirley Barasch, *For Professional Purposes: An Artistic Journey*. The reading, reception, and book signing will take place on Monday, February 27, 2012 at 7:30 pm at the New Hazlett Theater.

Reviewers of the book have called it “[a]n amazing look into the early development of an artist and a person. I give it my highest recommendation.” Barasch takes the reader on a visual and sensory journey of a gifted, head-strong girl through the depression and World War II years in Pittsburgh. By age four-and-a-half, Shirley Barasch already showed artistic talents. She wrote poems before she could spell or pronounce all of the words, and played the piano by ear -- her “parlor trick” according to her father. With her mother’s tragic death, she was thrown into an environment where a strict religious social order did not encourage girls to be independent or creative. Instead, she became even more determined to fulfill her dreams, often using her creativity secretly to finagle free professional lessons.

Barasch paints Pittsburgh characters working in local bakeries, synagogues, schools, and businesses who made an impact on her life. In vivid details and from a child’s perspective, she describes the experience of riding trolleys, taking forbidden backyard shortcuts, and visiting Kennywood Park. Her coming-of-age adventure is nostalgic, touching, and funny. Her celebration of family life also includes a chapter of treasured Jewish recipes.

Actress Lynne Franks will read excerpts from the book. Franks has delighted Prime Stage audiences in *The Westing Game*, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. She has also entertained audiences and received awards for performances in theatres throughout Western Pennsylvania.

### **More about Shirley R. Barasch, Ph.D.**

Barasch currently lives in Mt. Lebanon, PA. She is a composer, lyricist, voice teacher, published poet/playwright, and educator.

Her awards include recognition for her appearance in the Warner Cable Television Award Winning “The Value

of Music-Movement in Early Childhood Education"; the "Performing Arts Partnership Award" for contributions to the arts; and fifteen ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers) awards. She has also been featured as a Guest Poet of Taproot Literary Journal.

At Point Park University, Dr. Barasch served as Chair for the Conservatory of Performing Arts, Director of Music and Fine Arts, and as Teacher Educator/ Director of Student Teachers. She created the "Starmakers Gala" and the "PAPA Award" for the Conservatory, raising money for the Pittsburgh Playhouse and Point Park University. She has often accommodated students who wanted a voice lesson over the phone and now she helps them prepare for auditions via Skype.

## **MORE ABOUT PRIME STAGE THEATRE:**

Prime Stage Theatre is a non-profit organization committed to producing high-quality, artistic experiences for adults, families, students, and educators as they discover the fusion of live theatre and literature. With education as the cornerstone of its mission and vision, the Company offers unique programs designed to support educators and families in the sharing and appreciation of great literature, and that encourages both literacy and a love of theatre.

## **EVENT DETAILS**

**WHO:** Prime Stage Theatre

**WHAT:** Book Reading from *For Professional Purposes: An Artistic Journey*  
A memoir by local multi-media artist Shirley Barasch

**WHEN:** Monday, February 27, 2012 – 7:30 pm

**WHERE:** New Hazlett Theater  
6 Allegheny Square E  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212  
412-320-4610

**TICKETS:** \$10  
Online via ShowClix at: <http://www.showclix.com/event/ProfessionalPurposes>  
or by phone at: 1-888-71-TICKETS

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