

ABOUT "PERMISSION TO SPEAK"

Four of the most brilliant minds in TV and movies come together to present the ground-breaking, hilarious and emotional live theater experience ***Permission to Speak***.

Fresh off a critically acclaimed, sold-out run off-Broadway, ***Permission to Speak*** features hilarious and jaw-dropping stories from audience members co-starring alongside Emmy and Peabody Award-winning comedian/actor/host **Paul Mecurio**, who works and is a recurring performer on ***The Late Show with Stephen Colbert***. Paul punctuates the evening with his own jokes and anecdotes and in the process brings people together through shared stories and organic connections. Through the use of his customized multimedia presentation, developed by a creative team with a combined 33 Emmys, 6 Peabodys and 1 Grammy award - Paul weaves a cohesive interaction with audience members in a way that's never been done before. The real stars of the show, however, are the audience themselves. In ***Permission to Speak***, audience members volunteer to join Paul on stage. With Paul at the center of the action, driving and guiding the fun, the evening takes on a life of its own. Paul fearlessly, but respectfully, uses humor and compassion to create dynamic exchanges that lead to meaningful and often surprisingly unexpected connections. Audience members are comfortably and confidently empowered to reveal personal stories that are fun, inspiring, compelling and relatable. One fan remarked, "You could see this show a dozen times and never see the same show twice."

If Paul's name sounds familiar, it's probably because you saw him on one of his countless appearances on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, *CBS Sunday Morning*, *The Tonight Show*, NBC, ABC, MSNBC, as recurring co-host of *StarTalk with Neil deGrasse Tyson* or his own Comedy Central and HBO specials.

The show's Director and Producer, **Frank Oz**, brings a touch of his movie and TV magic to the stage of ***Permission to Speak***. Frank's credits include the major motion pictures *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *Bowfinger*, *Stepford Wives*, and *Little Shop of Horrors*. Oz's close collaboration with Jim Henson creating and performing many well-loved Muppet characters led to his iconic work as the voice and puppeteer of Yoda in the *Star Wars* franchise.

The set of *Permission to Speak* is as much a star of the show as anyone on stage and it's no wonder why. Behind the show's ingenious environment are 23-time Emmy Award Winner for Production Design, **Jim Fenhagen**, who is best known for countless late night TV shows, the Olympic Games and five Super Bowls, and animator **J.J. Sedelmaier**, the artist behind ground-breaking animation on MTV's *Beavis & Butt-Head*, Saturday Night Live's *TV Funhouse* cartoons (including *The Ambiguously Gay Duo*), ABC's relaunch of *Schoolhouse Rock*, and Cartoon Network's *Harvey Birdman, Attorney at Law*.

For all of the high-octane credentials of its A-List star and creators, the real magic of ***Permission to Speak*** is the sheer fun, humanity and candor of its participants and Paul. All participants willingly share their fascinating stories, bringing the entire audience along on a fun, emotional journey that connects them all.

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