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CHICAGO THEATER COMMUNITY CELEBRATES THE NEW THEATER SEASON AT HOME AND ACROSS THE COUNTRY

(Chicago), September 1, 2009 – As Chicago theaters prepare for the fall season, the city has proven itself a leader on the national theater scene. Highlighted by two consecutive Pulitzer Prizes awarded to plays generated in Chicago—Tracy Letts' *August: Osage County* (Steppenwolf) and Lynne Nottage's *Ruined* (Goodman)—the Chicago theater season is poised to launch at home, while its influence is seen on Broadway.

Chicago's prominence will be especially evident on **September 29 and October 1** with the Broadway openings of **Keith Huff's *A Steady Rain*** and **Tracy Letts' *Superior Donuts***. Both plays were written, developed, premiered and set in Chicago.

"Chicago is a premier theater city, locally, nationally and internationally. We are proud of our recent successes and look forward to our upcoming season at home. With such a strong presence on Broadway and across the country, we can say with confidence that Chicago is a leader in generating and producing new work, classics and musicals," says **League of Chicago Theatres Executive Director Deb Clapp**.

Each season, Chicago boasts more than 200 producing theater companies, a total 115 performance venues with 5 million tickets sold annually and an average ticket price of only \$23. Chicago is the only city with 4 theaters that have been awarded the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre Excellence (Chicago Shakespeare, Goodman, Steppenwolf and Victory Gardens).

Information and links to all Chicago productions can be found online at **ChicagoPlays.com**. Half-priced tickets are always available online at **HotTix.org** and at the Hot Tix booth locations, 72 E. Randolph and 163 E. Pearson in downtown Chicago.

This season, a record number of New York productions have a strong Chicago influence, including:

- ***A Steady Rain***, opening September 29 at the Gerald Schoenfeld Theatre, was written by Chicago playwright **Keith Huff**. The production premiered at Chicago Dramatists before transferring to Chicago's The Royal George Theatre for an extended run.
- ***Superior Donuts***, opening October 1 at the Music Box, by **Tracy Letts**, was commissioned and produced by Steppenwolf.
- ***Brighton Beach Memoirs*** and ***Broadway Bound***, opening October 25 and December 10, respectively, will be directed by **David Cromer**. Cromer's recent New York hits including ***The Adding Machine*** and ***Our Town***.
- ***The Lady with All the Answers*** opens at The Cherry Lane Theatre, in association with Northlight Theatre, on October 14. The production is directed by Northlight Artistic Director **BJ Jones** and features two-time Tony winner, and Chicago native, **Judith Ivey**.
- ***Graceland*** by Ellen Fairey, first produced and developed by Profiles Theatre, is expected to be produced by Lincoln Center later this fall.
- ***Million Dollar Quartet*** has announced plans for a Broadway run beginning in Spring 2010.



In Chicago, highlights of the upcoming fall season schedule include:

- **Among the distinguished actors appearing on Chicago stages are:** **Kevin Anderson** (*A Guide for the Perplexed* at Victory Gardens Theater, July 2010); **Brian Dennehy** (*Hughie and Krapp's Last Tape* at the Goodman, January 2010); **Nathan Lane** and **Bebe Neuwirth** (*The Addams Family* at the Ford Center for the Performing Arts/Oriental Theatre, November 2009); **John Mahoney** (*A Life* at Northlight Theatre, March 2010); **William Petersen** (*Endgame* at Steppenwolf Theatre, April 2010); **Rondi Reed** (*Endgame* at Steppenwolf Theatre, April 2010), **Michael Shannon** (*Mistakes Were Made* at A Red Orchid Theatre, September 2009).
- **Notable directors working in Chicago include:** **David Cromer** (*A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams at Writers Theatre, May 2010); **Gary Griffin** (*Private Lives* by Noel Coward at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, January 2010); **Philip Seymour Hoffman** (*The Long Red Road* by Brett C. Leonard at the Goodman Theatre, February 2010); **David Schwimmer** (*Trust* at Lookingglass Theatre, (March 2010); **Anna D. Shapiro** (*A Parallelogram* by Bruce Norris at Steppenwolf, July 2010).
- **Notable productions playing on Chicago stages include:** a modern musical adaptation of **Animal Crackers** directed by Harry Wishkamper at the Goodman Theater; the Chicago Premiere of **Yeast Nation (the triumph of life)** by Greg Kotis and Mark Hollman, the creators of *Urinetown*, at American Theater Company; the Chicago premiere of **Late: A Cowboy Story** at Piven Theatre Workshop by Piven alumna Sarah Ruhl; the Midwest premiere of **The Mercy Seat**, marking Profiles seventh production of a Neil LaBute play; the second year of the Chicago run of **Million Dollar Quartet**; Chicago Shakespeare's World's Stage Series productions of Druid's **The Walworth Farce** and Maly Drama Theatre of St. Petersburg's **Uncle Vanya**.
- The Second City will host a weekend of **alumni reunion performances, panels and screenings**, December 11-13. The weekend highlights include the benefit "SCTV Reunion," featuring **Joe Flaherty, Eugene Levy, Andrea Martin, Catherine O'Hara, Harold Ramis, Martin Short** and **Dave Thomas** with special guests (TBA). Alumni panels and screenings will take place throughout the weekend.

A small selection of Chicago's 2009-2010 world premiere productions include:

- *Mistakes Were Made* by **Craig Wright** (A Red Orchid Theatre)
- *Welcome to Arroyo's* by **Kristoffer Diaz** (American Theater Company)
- *Lucinda's Bed* by **Mia McCullough** (Chicago Dramatists)
- *Will Rogers: An American Original* by **Kevin McKillip**, based on the life and writings of Will Rogers (First Folio Theatre)
- *Fake* by **Eric Simonson** and *A Parallelogram* by **Bruce Norris** (Steppenwolf Theatre)
- *High Holidays* by **Alan Gross**, *The Long Red Road* by **Brett C. Leonard** and *The True History of the Johnstown Flood* by **Rebecca Gilman** (Goodman Theatre)
- *Summer People* by **Jenny Connell** (The Gift Theatre)
- *A Shroud for Lazarus* by **Rotimi Babatunde** (Halcyon Theatre)
- *Fedra* by **J. Nicole Brooks**, *Icarus* by **David Catlin** and *Trust* by **Andy Bellin** and **David Schwimmer** (Lookingglass Theatre)
- *War with the Newts* by **Jason Loewith** and **Justin D.M. Palmer**, based on the novella by Karel Capek and *Return to Haifa*, adapted by **Ibrahim Miari** based on the novella by Ghassan Kanafani (Next Theatre)
- *Low Down Dirty Blues* by **Randal Myler** and **Dan Wheatman** (Northlight Theatre)
- *A Guide for the Perplexed* by **Joel Drake Johnson**, *Year Zero* by **Michael Golamco** and *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* by **Kristoffer Diaz** (Victory Gardens Theater)

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THE LEAGUE OF CHICAGO THEATRES

Founded in 1979, the League is a non-profit alliance of theaters that leverages its collective strength to promote, support and advocate for Chicago's theater industry locally, nationally and internationally. Currently, the League serves a diverse membership of nearly 200 theaters and theater companies, ranging from small storefront, non-union companies to major cultural centers with multi-million dollar facilities and productions.

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