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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## THEATRE COMMUNICATIONS GROUP AND THE LEAGUE OF CHICAGO THEATRES TO PRESENT FREE NIGHT OF THEATER IN OCTOBER

*National Event to Include More Than 50 Chicago Area Theaters*

**(Chicago)**, September 11, 2008 - Theatre Communications Group (TCG) along with the League of Chicago Theatres is pleased to announce that the fourth annual *Free Night of Theater*, the unprecedented campaign to attract new audiences to live theatre, will open in Chicago for the first-time in October 2008. *Free Night of Theater* was conceived in 2003 as a way to remove perceived barriers that have historically prevented audiences from attending theater. This year more than 110 cities and 700 theaters nationwide are participating.

During the entire month of October in Chicago, people can see a production for free at a theater they've never previously attended. When possible, patrons are encouraged to attend a theater in the neighborhood or suburb in which they live. Reservations are limited to two tickets per person for the duration of the program. Tickets must be reserved online at the *Free Night of Theater* website and not through each theater's individual box office. Once tickets have been reserved through the website, patrons will be able to pick up their tickets at the individual theater's box office on the night of the show.

**Reservations for Chicago performances will begin September 23 at [www.freenightoftheater.net](http://www.freenightoftheater.net).** Additional tickets will be released every week throughout the month of October.

More than 50 Chicago area companies will be participating this year including: 16th Street Theater, American Theater Company, Babes With Blades, BackStage Theatre Company, Bailiwick Repertory, Barrel of Monkeys, Buffalo Theatre Ensemble, Caffeine Theatre, Chemically Imbalanced Comedy, Chicago Children's Theatre, Chicago Dramatists, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, ComedySportz, Corn Productions, Dog and Pony Theatre, First Folio Theatre, Hell in a Handbag Productions, The House Theatre of Chicago, Infamous Commonwealth Theatre, Lifeline Theatre, Light Opera Works, LiveWire Chicago Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre, Loyola University Chicago, Metropolis Performing Arts Centre, New World Repertory, Next Theatre, Noble Fool Theatricals, Northlight Theatre, Paramount Theatre, Porchlight Music Theatre, Premiere Theatre and Performance, Prop Thtr, Quade/Donovan Entertainment, Red Tape Theatre, Redmoon Theater, Remy Bumpo Theatre, Saint Sebastian Players, Shattered Globe Theatre, Silk Road Theatre Project, Stage Left Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Stockyards Theatre Project, The Neo-Futurists, The Second City, The Theatre School at DePaul University, TimeLine Theatre, Victory Gardens Theater, Village Players Theatre and more.

According to Brad Erickson, executive director of Theatre Bay Area and participant in every year of the program, "Since the campaign's pilot year here, we have seen an extraordinary response from theatres, audiences and the whole community. The demand for live theatre—when it's made accessible to all—is overwhelming. We're bringing in new audiences—young people, people of color, people from all walks of life—and the research tells us they are going back for more. *Free Night of Theater* has thrown the doors of our theatres open wide."

In response to the excitement generated by the program, Teresa Eyring, executive director of TCG, remarked, "The *Free Night of Theater* program has provided the theatre community a unique opportunity to open its doors to thousands of new

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theatergoers and introduce a new audience to the joys of live theatre. We are very excited that the program has proven to be so successful in bringing in non-traditional theatre audiences to theatres from coast to coast."

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**Theatre Communications Group (TCG)**, the national organization for the American theatre, offers a wide array of services in line with its mission: to strengthen, nurture and promote the professional not-for-profit American theatre. Artistic programs support theatres and theatre artists by awarding approximately \$3 million in grants annually, and offer career development programs for artists. Management programs provide professional development opportunities for theatre leaders through workshops, conferences, forums and publications, as well as industry research on the finances and practices of the American not-for-profit theatre. Advocacy, conducted in conjunction with the dance, presenting, opera and symphony orchestra fields, includes guiding lobbying efforts and providing theatres with timely alerts about legislative developments. The country's leading independent press specializing in dramatic literature, TCG's publications include *American Theatre* magazine, the *ArtSEARCH* employment bulletin, plays, translations and theatre reference books. As the U.S. Center of UNESCO's International Theatre Institute, a worldwide network, TCG supports cross-cultural exchange through travel grants and other assistance to traveling theatre professionals. Through these programs, TCG seeks to increase the organizational efficiency of its member theatres, cultivate and celebrate the artistic talent and achievements of the field, and promote a larger public understanding of and appreciation for the theatre field. TCG serves over 460 member theatres nationwide. More information about TCG is available at [www.tcg.org](http://www.tcg.org).

#### **CHICAGO THEATER BY THE NUMBERS:**

- More than **200** producing theater companies
- More than **5 million** tickets sold annually
- More than **800** total annual productions
- More than **110** world premiere productions and adaptations in the 07-08 season.
- Average ticket price to a Chicago theater production is approximately **\$23**
- More than **115** total performance venues
- More than **64,000** total seats in Chicago area performance venues
- **4** Tony Awards for Outstanding Regional Theatre (Chicago Shakespeare, Goodman, Steppenwolf, and Victory Gardens Theater)

#### **THE LEAGUE OF CHICAGO THEATRES**

Founded in 1979, the League is an 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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