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LEAGUE OF CHICAGO THEATRES ANNOUNCES THE SIDE PROJECT AS THE RECIPIENT OF THE 2009 *BROADWAY IN CHICAGO* EMERGING THEATER AWARD

CHICAGO (April 1, 2009) – The League of Chicago Theatres is pleased to announce **the side project** as the recipient of the 2009 *Broadway In Chicago* Emerging Theater Award. The side project will receive a \$5,000 prize, marketing consultation and support and an advertising package from the *Chicago Tribune* and *TimeOut Chicago*. This is the third year of a five year support pledge for this program from Broadway In Chicago.

The award was created in 2007 to encourage, support and promote emerging theaters in Chicago that have demonstrated great ability and promise, artistic excellence and fiscal responsibility in business practices. The side project has been selected by a majority vote of their peers – member companies of the League of Chicago Theatres.

The side project is a non-profit collective of artists that formed in 2000 and is currently producing and operating in its ninth season in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood. The company includes playwrights, directors, actors, technicians and designers who also serve as administrative staff. Their home is an intimate 43-seat theatre, located at 1439 W. Jarvis, in the Jarvis Square area of Rogers Park. They primarily focus on producing new works, presenting more than 100 world premieres in their history and 35 new plays this season alone, as well as serving as an incubator for other emerging theater companies through their Visiting Artists Series. Visit www.thesideproject.net for more information.

Lou Raizin, President of Broadway In Chicago says, "We are proud to be associated with the Emerging Theater Award for the third year. This award helps us bring focus to our vibrant community, which so enhances Chicago with world-class theater."

"The side project is a company indicative of Chicago," says Eileen LaCario, Vice President of Broadway In Chicago and Chair of the League of Chicago Theatre's Foundation. "They stretch the bounds with new works and understand the value of community."

"We are very excited and grateful to receive this year's Emerging Theater Award," said Adam Webster, Artistic Director of the side project. "Not only for the instant visibility this provides to the theatergoing public, but also for the opportunity this award represents for the side project to revisit our collective goals as a theatre company, recommit ourselves to the side project mission statement of producing work that redefines immediacy in the theatre, and explore new ways to ensure that this work enjoys sustained visibility in the Chicago artistic community."

Nominations for the award were accepted from December through January. Eligible companies must be a member of the League of Chicago Theatres, have been in existence at least three and no longer than ten years and have demonstrated artistic excellence and fiscal responsibility in business practices.

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A nomination committee comprised of Chicago theatre administrators, artists and educators reviewed the applications and selected five finalists. The 2009 finalists were Adventure Stage Chicago, Chicago Children's Theatre, Dog and Pony Theatre, the side project and TUTA Theatre Chicago.

The finalists were presented before the entire League membership for a vote in late February and early March. **The award recipient was determined by majority vote from the entire League membership.** Each member company is permitted to cast one vote towards the finalist of its choice. The House Theatre of Chicago and Silk Road Theatre Project are the 2007 and 2008 recipients of the award respectively.

The award will be presented at the League of Chicago Theatres 30th Anniversary Showtime Gala. This theatrical celebration will take place **Monday, May 18, 2009** beginning at 5:30 p.m. at the Palmer House Hilton, 17 E. Monroe St. Guests will dine at the Empire Room of the historic Palmer House Hilton in downtown Chicago and be entertained as they pay tribute to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Marcelle McVay and Janet Davies for their roles in developing and supporting Chicago theater. The Emerging Theater Award will be presented by Broadway In Chicago along with a member of Silk Road Theatre Project, the 2008 recipient of this award. Evening will kick off with celebrity host, Emmy award-winning Rue McClanahan, currently appearing on *Sordid Lives* and best known as Blanche on *The Golden Girls*.

The League of Chicago Theatres invites the Chicago community to attend this exciting and elegant 30th anniversary celebration of Chicago Theatre. Tickets are available for \$300 per person and all proceeds benefit The League of Chicago Theatres, which supports and promotes live theater in Chicago. To purchase tickets, or for sponsorship opportunities and participation information, visit ChicagoPlays.com or call 312-554-9800.

THE SIDE PROJECT

the side project strives to apply its hyper-intimate use of space to redefine immediacy in the theatre. By presenting theatrically exciting new work and explorations of known works in this way, we aim to expose in sharp detail the delicate interworkings of humanity's vulnerability and resiliency.

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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 more than 190 theaters and theater companies, ranging from small storefront, non-union companies to major cultural centers with multi-million dollar facilities and productions.