

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 7, 2008

The Theatre School at DePaul University Announces the 2008-2009 Season

The Theatre School at DePaul University (John Culbert, Dean) is pleased to announce upcoming productions for its 2008-2009 Season, including performances at DePaul's Merle Reskin Theatre, the Bailiwick Repertory Mainstage and the Athenaeum Studio Three.

Throughout its 80+ year history, the school has provided Chicago audiences with affordable and meaningful theatrical experiences. Students are involved in all aspects of production — as actors, designers, dramaturges, technicians, directors and production staff. This season will feature everything from classic children's tales to a world premiere of a play written and developed in class at The Theatre School. Add into the mix guest director Sean Graney (the Hypocrites), an American classic, the debut of two talented directors, some dance numbers and a pirate ship - and this season is sure to delight audience members of any age.

The Showcase Series of Contemporary Plays and Classics, Artistic Director **Dexter Bullard**, will open the season with the American classic *A Streetcar Named Desire* (by Tennessee Williams) directed by **Damon Kiely**. Celebrate the official beginning of the season on opening night, October 3rd. *A Streetcar Named Desire* will run through October 12, 2008 with previews on 10/1 and 10/2. In 1940s New Orleans on a street named Elysian Fields, the air is thick with jazz piano, whiskey, violence, love, and desperate choices. A timeless classic of the American Theatre and winner of the 1948 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, Tennessee Williams' poetic realism wears its heart on its sleeve. For mature audiences.

The second installment of the Showcase Series will open on February 6, 2009. *Dancing at Lughnasa*, (by Brian Friel) directed by Jane Drake Brody, will run through February 15, 2009, with previews on 2/4 and 2/5. Set in a small Irish town in County Donegal in 1936, this Tony Award-winning play follows the revelry of the five Mundy sisters during the ancient festival of Lughnasa. With dancing, bonfires, and a wild celebration of life, love, and change, the sisters continue to shine on in the memory of their relatives.

In the spring, the Showcase Series will feature *Urinetown*, (book and lyrics by Greg Kotis, Music and lyrics by Mark Hollmann) directed by **Dexter Bullard** with musical direction by **Mark Elliott**. *Urinetown* will open on April 17 and run through April 26, 2009, with previews on 4/15 and 4/16. Winner of three Tony Awards, this musical is a romp through the alleys of power, greed and rebellion during desperate times. Laced with biting satire, terrific songs, and scruffy dance numbers, *Urinetown*

is a fable of absurd government regulation meeting rampant social irresponsibility – all in the spirit of affectionate sooth-saying for a troubled society.

The Theatre School is also pleased to conclude its season with a brand new series featuring the Class of 2009 Master of Fine Arts in Acting Candidates. This ensemble piece will be directed by a guest from the Chicago theatre community. The title will be announced shortly. **MFA 09** will run May 15 – 24, 2009, with previews on 5/13 and 5/14.

Chicago Playworks for Families and Young Audiences, Artistic Director **Lisa Portes**, will offer an imaginative season starting with *Still Life with Iris* (by Steven Dietz) directed by **John Jenkins**. *Still Life with Iris* opens October 28 and will run through December 6, 2008. In a wonderful world of snowflake pairs, ladybug spots, and teaching the wind to whistle, *Still Life with Iris* celebrates the seeking and finding of personal history. With the help of Poe's Annabel Lee (½ pirate, ½ sea), and an 11-year old Mozart, Iris and her friends set out on a touching adventure in search of a ship, a song, the way home, and the recovery of lost and treasured memories. Recommended for ages 9 and up.

Next, Chicago Playworks extends a warm welcome to guest director **Sean Graney** for the second show of the series, *Alice in Wonderland* (by Lewis Carroll, adapted for the stage by Sharon Holland) with music direction and original compositions by **Mark Elliott**. *Alice in Wonderland* will open on January 13, run through March 3, 2009. Join us for guest director Sean Graney's quirky new take on this highly imaginative classic. Watch Alice fall down the rabbit hole and drop into Wonderland, complete with the Mad Hatter's tea party and a Cheshire grin. *Alice in Wonderland* is sure to surprise and delight the young and young at heart. Recommended for all ages.

Chicago Playworks will conclude the season with an adaptation of the beloved children's novel *Bud, not Buddy* (by Christopher Paul Curtis, adapted for the stage by Reginald André Jackson) directed by **Phyllis E. Griffin**. The production will open on March 31 and run through May 23, 2009. Winner of the Newbery Medal and the Coretta Scott King Award, *Bud, Not Buddy* follows the journey of a young African-American orphan, Bud, as he discovers clues in the search for his father in Depression-era Michigan. An advertisement leads him to adventures in Chicago, where he finds community among a group of jazz musicians and an unexpected sense of home. Recommended for ages 9 and up.

All Chicago Playworks & Showcase Series performances are held at **DePaul's Merle Reskin Theatre**, 60 E. Balbo Drive. Performances interpreted in **American Sign Language** are scheduled for each production. TYY 773-325-7975. Tickets to all performances are available online at <http://theatreschool.depaul.edu> or by calling the Box Office at **(312) 922-1999**. Single tickets for the Showcase Series are \$6 - \$15. For Chicago Playworks, single tickets are \$8. Subscribers to either series are entitled to free ticket re-scheduling, parking coupons and other benefits. For complete details or to purchase a subscription, call DePaul's Merle Reskin Theatre Box Office at (312) 922-1999. For more information about special events held in conjunction with these performances, including **Community Partner Days** and **Opening Night Parties**, contact Andrea Tichy at atichy@depaul.edu.

The New Directors Series will feature the work of MFA Directors **Keira Fromm** and **Thomas Weitz**. Launching this year's series will be Fromm's production of *The House of Blue Leaves* by John Guare. The show opens November 7 and runs through November 16, with previews on 11/5 and 11/6. *The House of Blue Leaves* follows Artie Shaughnessy, a zookeeper from Queens, as he pursues his lifelong dream of becoming a famous singer-songwriter. Set in 1965 on the day that Pope Paul VI

visits New York, Artie struggles between pursuing his dreams of success and celebrity and caring for his demanding, middle-class family. John Guare's Tony Award-winning dark comedy illuminates the fraud of the American Dream and the destructiveness of searching for it.

Weitz will direct ***Iphigenia 2.0*** (by Charles L. Mee) which opens on February 13 and runs through February 22, 2009, with previews on 2/11 and 2/12. *Iphigenia 2.0* is the unorthodox retelling of Euripides' classic *Iphigenia in Aulis* set in today's world. When Agamemnon, the leader of the Greek army, decides to take his troops into battle, he must first make the ultimate sacrifice of his only daughter in the name of honor, duty and leadership.

The New Directors Series productions are directed in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Fine Arts in Directing and will be held at the Bailiwick Repertory Mainstage, which is located at 1229 W. Belmont Avenue. Tickets for the New Directors and New Playwrights Series are free. Reservations are recommended.

The New Playwrights Series will feature the **world premiere** of a new play to be announced, written by a current Theatre School student or recent graduate. This production will open May 8 and run through May 17, 2009, with previews on 5/6 and 5/7 at the Athenaeum Studio Three, located at 2936 N. Southport Avenue. For more information, visit <http://theatreschool.depaul.edu>.

The Theatre School at DePaul University, founded as the Goodman School of Drama in 1925, educates, trains and inspires students of theatre in a conservatory setting that is rigorous, disciplined, culturally diverse and that strives for the highest level of professional skill and artistry. A commitment to diversity and equality in education is central to our mission. As an integral part of the training, The Theatre School produces public programs and performances from a wide repertoire of classic, contemporary and original plays that challenge, entertain and stimulate the imagination. We seek to enhance the intellectual and cultural life of our university community, our city and the profession.

Media comps, event information and interviews for the 2008-2009 Season are available upon request. Please contact Andrea Tichy at atichy@depaul.edu or 773 325 7819 for more information.