

N E W S R E L E A S E

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**Chicago Playworks for Families and Young Audiences
Opens with World Premiere of TALES AS OLD AS AFRICA**
Nelson Mandela's Favorite African Folktales Come Alive in This Colorful Retelling

The Theatre School at DePaul University presents the world premiere of *TALES AS OLD AS AFRICA*, written and directed by Ann Wakefield, as the opening production of its Chicago Playworks for Families and Young Audiences 2007-2008 season. This delightfully imaginative collection of time-honored fables opens Tuesday, October 30 and runs through Saturday, December 8 at DePaul's Merle Reskin Theatre. Performances are Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10 a.m. and Saturdays at 2 p.m. This production is sponsored in part by LaSalle Bank. To purchase tickets, call the Box Office at (312) 922-1999.

Inspired by *Nelson Mandela's Favorite African Folktales*, this **world premiere** features three magical stories illustrating how the animals received their unique personalities and traits. Brought to life by two mystical sangomas, or witchdoctors, these tales will delight audiences just as they have for generations throughout Africa. *Recommended for ages 5 and up.*

Tickets are \$8. Group rates are available for 15 or more people. Seniors (over 60), DePaul employees and alumni and college students may receive a discount (with ID). Tickets for Saturday performances are available online at www.ticketweb.com.

Performances are at DePaul's Merle Reskin Theatre, 60 E. Balbo Drive at Michigan, Chicago. Discount parking is available with coupons from the Box Office, and the theatre is accessible via CTA busses (3-King Drive, 29-State Street, 146-Michigan/Museums and others), and CTA El stops (Red, Blue, Brown, Green, Orange, Purple and Pink).

SPECIAL EVENTS: A wide range of events will be held in conjunction with this production including an ice cream social, post show discussion, autograph session and more! For details visit <http://theatreschool.depaul.edu> or call the Box Office at (312) 922-1999.

The cast features Wardell Clark (Sango), Mercedes Frierson (Leopard/Snake/Lurie Bird), Zach Kenney (Lion/Death/Croc), Kate Lane (Elephant/Moon/Lilac Breasted Roller), Lauren Malara (Goma), Falashay Pearson (Zebra/Manjuza/Crowned Crane), Josh Rowe (Kudo/Mopani/Cric) and William VonVogt (Rhino/Mantis/Kwaku Anansi).

The crew includes Heather Ireland (scenic design), Meghann Plummer (costume design), Alec Bernstein (lighting design), Jeremy Chalmer (sound design) and Danielle Shindler (stage management).

Ann Wakefield (playwright and director) has worked in South Africa, England, France and the U.S. as an actor, director and teacher. Ann has directed and written theatre for children and has created touring shows that have played to junior and senior schools and universities. In England, she worked with the Brian Way Theatre in Education Company and was Assistant Director on the highly acclaimed *Zulu Macbeth*, *Umamatha*, which was invited by the Royal Shakespeare Company to their World Theatre Season in London. In Chicago she has been awarded Jeff citations for her performances in *The Road to Mecca* and *Another Part of the Forest*, and most recently an After Dark award for her performance in *The Lion in Winter*. She is a teacher in the residency program at Lifeline Theatre; has collaborated on a translation of *The Barber of Seville* for Court Theatre; has served as a dialect coach for British and South African plays; and has served as dramaturg and vocal coach at Loyola University. At The Theatre School, she teaches Acting Technique and World of Theatre classes and has directed *Introducing Mr. Charles Dickens*, *The Underground Lovers*, *The Butterfingers Angel*, *The Physicists*, *Bar and Ger and Others*, *The Idiot*, *The Illusion*, *The Blue Room*, *Vieux Carre*, *The Man Who*, *The Chekov Machine* and *Antigone*. For Chicago Playworks for Families and Young Audiences she has directed *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Owl and the Pussycat Went to See*, *Tokoloshe* and *Mango Leaf Magic*.

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 and culturally diverse. The school and its students strive for the highest level of professional skill and artistry. A commitment to diversity and equality in education is central to its 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. The school seeks to enhance the intellectual and cultural life of the university community, the city and the profession.