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**SHAKESPEARE THEATRE COMPANY
HOSTS HARMAN CENTER FOR THE ARTS ANNUAL GALA
ON OCTOBER 27, 2008**

Event Is Inspired by Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet

***Rennie Harris, Peter Martins and Chita Rivera To Be Honored with
William Shakespeare Award for Classical Theatre***

***The Harman Family Foundation To Be Honored with
Sidney Harman Award for Philanthropy in the Arts***

Washington, D.C. – The Shakespeare Theatre Company will host the Harman Center for the Arts Annual Gala on Monday, October 27, 2008, at Sidney Harman Hall (610 F Street NW) and The National Building Museum (440 G Street NW). Titled “A Night in Verona,” the gala is inspired by Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* and will honor artists who have reinterpreted the play in their work. Rennie Harris, Founder of Rennie Harris Puremovement and choreographer of *Rome and Jewels*; Peter Martins, Ballet Master in Chief of the New York City Ballet and choreographer of *Romeo and Juliet*; and Chita Rivera, Anita in the original Broadway cast of *West Side Story*, will receive the William Shakespeare Award for Classical Theatre (the Will Award). Additionally, the Harman Family Foundation will be awarded the inaugural Sidney Harman Award for Philanthropy in the Arts.

The evening’s events will begin with a cocktail reception and gala performance at Sidney Harman Hall, including appearances by the New York City Ballet, Rennie Harris Puremovement, an excerpt from Chita Rivera’s Broadway show *The Dancer’s Life*, Soprano Elizabeth Futral and the actors of the Shakespeare Theatre Company. Following the performance, guests will join a gala parade to The National Building Museum where the dramatic scene for dinner and dancing has been set by renowned event designer David Stark.

The Harman Center for the Arts Annual Gala benefits the Shakespeare Theatre Company Free For All—two weeks of free Shakespeare presented by the Company—as well as other artistic programs. The gala is chaired by Beth Dozoretz and Samia Farouki. The gala’s honorary patrons are His Excellency the British Ambassador and Lady Sheinwald.

The Will Award is an annual honor given by the Shakespeare Theatre Company to a person (or persons) who has made a significant contribution to classical theatre in America. Past recipients include the Shakespeare Theatre Company’s Acting Company, Kevin Spacey, Jeremy Irons, Dame

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Judi Dench, Fiona Shaw, Ralph Fiennes, Sir Anthony Hopkins, Dame Maggie Smith, Hal Holbrook, Patrick Stewart, Sam Waterston, Lynn Redgrave, Christopher Walken, Morgan Freeman, Mel Gibson, Kenneth Branagh, Christopher Plummer, Kevin Kline, the late Joseph Papp and Shakespeare Theatre Company Artistic Director Michael Kahn.

The inaugural Sidney Harman Award for Philanthropy in the Arts will be given to the Harman Family Foundation not only for their support of the Shakespeare Theatre Company and the Harman Center for the Arts but also for their long-standing support of many other Washington, D.C., arts institutions. The Harman Family Foundation will be represented by Dr. Sidney Harman, The Honorable Jane Harman and Barbara Harman.

Individual tickets and tables to the Harman Center for the Arts Annual Gala range from \$1,000 to \$50,000. For further information about the Will Award and Annual Gala, call Joanne Coutts, Associate Director of Special Events, at 202.547.3230 ext. 2330. **Limited space is available for press wishing to cover this event. Press should contact Lauren Beyea at 202.547.3230 ext. 2314.**