

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 17, 2009

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**ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MICHAEL KAHN ANNOUNCES
THE SHAKESPEARE THEATRE COMPANY'S
2009-2010 SEASON**

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION FEATURES DAME HELEN MIRREN IN
ONLY NORTH AMERICAN ENGAGEMENT OF PHÈDRE**

Washington, D.C. – Shakespeare Theatre Company Artistic Director Michael Kahn announces the Company's 2009-2010 season, featuring Shakespeare's delightful comedy *As You Like It* and two of his best loved history plays, *Richard II* and *Henry V*, in repertory. The season opens with Euripides' Greek classic *The Bacchae*, and concludes with George Bernard Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, starring Dixie Carter.

In a very special addition to the season lineup, Dame Helen Mirren will star in the National Theatre of Great Britain's production of the sole North American engagement of Jean Racine's *Phèdre*, hosted by the Shakespeare Theatre Company, in a limited September run. Nicholas Hytner will direct a superb cast, including Dominic Cooper and Margaret Tyzack, in Ted Hughes' adaptation of this epic tragedy.

Rounding out the season, Michael Kahn will direct the World Premiere of a new adaptation of Pierre Corneille's *The Liar*. David Ives' adaptation of *The Liar* is the first result of a five-year grant awarded to The Shakespeare Theatre Company by The Beech Street Foundation in support of what Michael Kahn calls the Company's "commit[ment] to reestablishing the world's great forgotten plays with fresh interpretations." Two additional works have been commissioned for subsequent seasons: Moliere's *The Bourgeois Gentleman*, adapted by Barry Kornhauser (*Cyrano*), and Friedrich von Schiller's *Wallenstein*, adapted by Robert Pinsky, former United States Poet Laureate.

SHAKESPEARE THEATRE COMPANY'S 2009-2010 SEASON

Phèdre
by Jean Racine
adapted by Ted Hughes
directed by Nicholas Hytner
Sidney Harman Hall
September 17–26, 2009

"Look at me—see a woman in frenzy. I am in love."

Believing her husband to be dead, the passionate Queen Phèdre allows her forbidden love for her stepson to blossom. When the King returns from war very much alive, the entire family is catapulted into a desperate, impossible situation. The sole American engagement of the National Theatre of Great Britain's production of *Phèdre* starring Academy Award winner Dame Helen Mirren will be at Sidney Harman Hall for a limited 12 performance run. Artistic Director Nicholas Hytner directs a superb cast, including Dominic Cooper and Margaret Tyzack, in Ted Hughes' adaptation of Jean Racine's epic tragedy.

The Bacchae

by Euripides

adapted by Nicholas Rudall

directed by JoAnne Akalaitis

Lansburgh Theatre

Presented in association with The Public Theater in New York

September 29–November 15, 2009

“He thinks to master by force that which cannot be mastered.”

Dionysus, the god of wine and revelry, roars into Thebes with his wild band of female followers, the Bacchae. But when King Pentheus decrees that none may worship the young god, Dionysus unleashes the terrible power of the Bacchae on the King and anyone else who stands in his way. Visionary director JoAnne Akalaitis (*The Trojan Women*) brings her theatrical style to this exploration of the consequences of repression. Featuring an original score by composer Philip Glass (*The Hours*), *The Bacchae* is a co-production with The Public Theater in New York.

As You Like It

by William Shakespeare

directed by Maria Aitken

Sidney Harman Hall

November 17–December 20, 2009

“All the world’s a stage!”

In the Forest of Arden, exiles from a tyrannical kingdom search for freedom. The irrepressible Rosalind, Shakespeare’s most fully realized female character, finds freedom of a different kind as she pursues love in disguise. *As You Like It* is filled with the elements that make Shakespeare’s comedies so much fun: a wise fool, beautiful poetry, a magical land, young lovers and...wrestling! Maria Aitken will bring her signature directorial style that made her Tony Award winning production of *The 39 Steps* “the most entertaining show on Broadway.” (*The New York Post*)

Richard II

by William Shakespeare

directed by Michael Kahn

Sidney Harman Hall

February 2–April 11, 2010

“The ripest fruit first falls.”

King Richard neglects his subjects and spends lavishly, giving rise to his charismatic cousin Henry Bolingbroke. As the battle to rule England approaches, Richard’s supporters abandon him for his rival. Will Richard learn what it means to be a king before he loses the crown? Written entirely in verse, *Richard II* contains some of Shakespeare’s most thrilling language. Director Michael Kahn’s previous examination of this troubled leader was hailed by *The New York Times* as “an evening of dynamic jolts and surprises.” *Richard II* plays in repertory with *Henry V*.

Henry V

by William Shakespeare

directed by David Muse

Sidney Harman Hall

February 4–April 10, 2010

“What infinite heart’s ease must kings neglect, that private men enjoy!”

Young and brash King Henry V of England takes his nation to war with France. As he leads his troops into combat and experiences the true costs of war firsthand, Henry discovers that the challenges of leadership are greater than he ever imagined. From Henry’s rousing battle speeches to his quieter moments courting the Princess of France, Shakespeare explores what makes a man a king...and a king a man. *Henry V* is directed by Associate Artistic Director David Muse, whose *Julius Caesar* was praised by *The Washingtonian* as “one of the best productions of this or any season.” *Henry V* plays in repertory with *Richard II*.

The Liar

WORLD PREMIERE

by Pierre Corneille

translated and adapted by David Ives
directed by Michael Kahn
Lansburgh Theatre
April 6–May 23, 2010

“All the world’s a lie, and all the men and women merely liars.”

Dorante is charming, handsome...and a compulsive liar! When he arrives in Paris, Dorante’s outlandish tales amaze and convince all who hear them, but for each problem his clever lying solves, it creates two new ones. Will he manage to keep his stories straight, his dupes none the wiser and somehow still get the girl? This joyful French farce bursts onto the stage in Broadway playwright David Ives’s sparkling new adaptation. Michael Kahn brings his brilliant touch to this one-of-a-kind comedy.

Mrs. Warren’s Profession
by George Bernard Shaw
directed by Keith Baxter
Sidney Harman Hall
June 8–July 11, 2010

“There are no secrets better kept than the secrets everybody guesses.”

Originally banned from the stage, *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* scandalized audiences upon its debut. The world of the idealistic Vivie is turned upside down when she learns that her family’s considerable wealth comes from her mother’s management of a chain of brothels. Is Mrs. Warren’s profession an outrageous moral failure or a paragon of female achievement? STC favorite Dixie Carter (*Lady Windermere’s Fan*) returns to Washington to play the resourceful Mrs. Warren. Director Keith Baxter’s comedies have been hailed by the *Washington City Paper* as “splendiferous” (*Lady Windermere’s Fan*) and “hiccup-inducing hilarious” (*The Imaginary Invalid*).

Dates, titles, and other information subject to change.

About the Shakespeare Theatre Company at the Harman Center for the Arts

The Shakespeare Theatre Company’s innovative approach to Shakespeare and other classic playwrights has earned it the reputation as the nation’s premier classic theater company. By focusing on works with profound themes, complex characters and poetic language written by Shakespeare, his contemporaries and the playwrights he influenced, the Company’s artistic mission is unique among theater companies: to provide vital, groundbreaking, thought-provoking, vibrant, and eminently accessible theatre in a uniquely American style. Artistic Director Michael Kahn’s visionary leadership over many years has established the company as “the nation’s foremost Shakespeare company” (*The Wall Street Journal*) and “the best classical theatre in the country, bar none” (*The Christian Science Monitor*).

In its 2007-2008 season, the Company opened the 775-seat Sidney Harman Hall, adding a second venue to the 451-seat Lansburgh Theatre, both located in downtown Washington’s vibrant Penn Quarter neighborhood. A dynamic hub of activity, the homes of the Shakespeare Theatre Company showcase original productions as well as outstanding local performing arts groups and nationally renowned cultural organizations.

Subscriptions to the Company’s 2009-2010 season are now on sale. For more information, contact the Box Office at 202.547.1122, TTY at 202.638.3863 or Toll Free at 877.487.8849. Information will soon be available at our website at ShakespeareTheatre.org.

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