

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**September 16, 2011**

Media Contact: Lindsay Tolar  
202.547.3230 ext. 2336  
Press@ShakespeareTheatre.org

**SHAKESPEARE THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS  
THE EMERY BATTIS AWARD FOR ACTING EXCELLENCE  
TO HOLLY TWYFORD AND MARK NELSON**

**Washington, D.C.** – The Shakespeare Theatre Company is pleased to announce the 2010-2011 winners of the **Emery Battis Award for Acting Excellence**. Awards were presented to **Holly Twyford** and **Mark Nelson** at the Opening Night dinner for the first play of the 2011-2012 Season, Michael Kahn's production of *The Heir Apparent*, on **Monday, September 12, 2011**. This award, accompanied by a prize of \$5,000, is funded by a generous anonymous donor.

One of Washington's most versatile performers, **Holly Twyford** was honored for her engaging performance as Anna in Harold Pinter's *Old Times*, directed by Michael Kahn. She is a prodigious local actor who has performed in over 50 productions in and around Washington, D.C., at Arena Stage, Signature Theatre, the Folger Theatre, Studio Theatre, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Theater J and Round House Theatre, among others. Twyford has been acting on Washington stages since 1993, and has won four Helen Hayes Awards out of 13 nominations. *Old Times* was her first performance with STC.

**Mark Nelson** was chosen for his incredible performance as Shylock in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, directed by Ethan McSweeney. Nelson has appeared on Broadway in numerous productions including *The Invention of Love*, *After the Fall*, *Three Sisters*, *A Few Good Men*, *Rumors*, *Broadway Bound*, *Biloxi Blues*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs* and *Amadeus*. He appeared off-Broadway at The Public Theater in *Timon of Athens* with Richard Thomas and at Primary Stages in *Secrets of the Trade*. Shylock was Nelson's first performance in Washington and his STC debut.

Named for beloved Shakespeare Theatre Company actor **Emery Battis**, this annual honor recognizes an actor whose work in a mainstage production demonstrates outstanding classical technique. Emery Battis has performed in nearly every Shakespeare play at STC and is known not only for his talent in the craft of acting, but also for his emphasis on ensemble. When asked by the Award's establishing donor what

kind of contribution would have the greatest positive impact for the Company, Artistic Director Michael Kahn responded, simply, “a prize for actors.” Michael views the award as an opportunity to reward STC’s actors for their dedication and perfection of the craft of classical acting, as well as an opportunity to inspire future actors. The recipients are chosen each year by a dedicated award committee composed of theatre professionals, theatre critics and STC Board members. Committee members are required to attend each production within each season. Nominations are made at the close of the season. After considering all nominees, the committee chose two Award recipients to be honored.

### **About the Shakespeare Theatre Company**

As the 2011-2012 Season begins, the Shakespeare Theatre Company is set to celebrate! Not only is it the 25th year of Michael Kahn’s leadership, vision and artistic direction but, over the past quarter of a century, STC has become one of the nation’s leading theatre companies. Today, STC is synonymous with artistic excellence and making classical theatre more accessible.

The Shakespeare Theatre Company’s innovative approach to Shakespeare and other classic playwrights has earned it the reputation as the nation’s premier classical theatre 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 theatre companies: to present theatre of scope and size in an imaginative, skillful and accessible American style that honors the playwrights’ language and intentions while viewing their work through a 21<sup>st</sup>-century lens.

In its 2007-2008 Season, the company opened the Harman Center for the Arts, consisting of the new 774-seat Sidney Harman Hall and the 451-seat Lansburgh Theatre, both located in downtown Washington’s Penn Quarter neighborhood. A dynamic hub of activity, the Harman Center showcases the company as well as outstanding local performing arts groups and nationally renowned organizations. STC’s annual Free For All performance, a re-creation of a production from seasons past staged for free in August and September, is now held at Sidney Harman Hall. Sidney Harman Hall is located at 610 F Street NW. The Lansburgh Theatre also plays host to a number of different performing arts organizations, among them Synetic Theater and several of STC’s mainstage productions. The Lansburgh Theatre is located at 450 7<sup>th</sup> Street NW.

###