

For Immediate Release
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**SHAKESPEARE THEATRE COMPANY SELLS OUT
NATIONAL THEATRE'S PRODUCTION OF
Phédre
STARRING HELEN MIRREN**

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Less than five hours. That's how long it took for patrons of **Shakespeare Theatre Company** to gobble up tickets to the September 2009 performances of *Phédre* starring **Dame Helen Mirren**. While STC's subscribers and donors were able to purchase a limited amount of tickets beginning February 17, single tickets went on sale to the general public on May 1. The show sold out almost immediately. "The phones were ringing off the hook," said STC's Associate Director of Marketing Neal Racioppo. "There was so much traffic on our website that we had to ask non-essential staff to limit their use." A limited number of tickets are still available for new and renewing subscribers.

Written by seventeenth-century French playwright **Jean Racine**, *Phédre* follows the story of a passionate queen, who, believing her husband to be dead, succumbs to a forbidden love for her stepson. When the King returns from war very much alive, the entire family is catapulted into a desperate, impossible situation. This particular production of *Phédre*, adapted into English verse by late **Poet Laureate Ted Hughes**, comes to STC from the **National Theatre** of London for its sole North American engagement. Directed by Tony winner **Nicholas Hytner**, *Phédre* boasts an impressive cast, including **Dominic Cooper** and **Margaret Tyzack**, in addition to **Mirren**.

The success of *Phédre* ticket sales follows on the heels of four wins for **Shakespeare Theatre Company** at the **2009 Helen Hayes awards**, including Outstanding Lead Actor (Ted van Griethuysen, *Major Barbara*), Outstanding Supporting Actress (Helen Carey, *Major Barbara*), Outstanding Supporting Actor (Floyd King, *Twelfth Night*) and Outstanding Resident Play (*Twelfth Night*).

Prior to the *Phédre* performances, STC audiences can look forward to the **May 12-June 28** run of **Noël Coward's *Design for Living***, directed by STC's Artistic Director **Michael Kahn**, at the Lansburgh Theatre (450 7th St NW). From **June 16-July 19** director **Robert Falls** reprises his 2006 in-your-face production of ***King Lear*** at Sidney Harman Hall (610 F St NW). **Stacy Keach**, fresh from his Helen Hayes award winning performance in *Frost/Nixon*, stars as the aging patriarch. For subscription packages and tickets contact the STC Box Office. Phone: 202.547.1122, Toll Free: 877.487.8849, TTY: 202.638.3863 or visit www.shakespearetheatre.org.