

For Immediate Release:
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**SHAKESPEARE THEATRE COMPANY'S
2008-2009 SEASON OPENS WITH
Romeo and Juliet
BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
DIRECTED BY DAVID MUSE**

**Production Features All-Male Cast and
First Usage of Thrust Configuration at Sidney Harman Hall**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Shakespeare Theatre Company opens its 2008-2009 season with an all-male production of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by STC Associate Artistic Director **David Muse**. Staged in the thrust configuration, the production features period costumes and music influenced by the Renaissance to explore theatre traditions prevalent in Shakespeare's day. Muse directs a cast that includes **Finn Wittrock** as Romeo and **James Davis** as Juliet, with **Aubrey Deeker, Drew Eshelman, Ted van Griethuysen, Dan Kremer, Lawrence Redmond** and **Craig Wallace**. *Romeo and Juliet* plays at Sidney Harman Hall (610 F Street NW) from **September 9 to October 12, 2008**.

The world's greatest and most enduring love story, *Romeo and Juliet* follows its star-crossed lovers as they hurtle from their first shy glances to their last heartrending kiss. Caught between their feuding families, Romeo and Juliet desperately struggle to build a world insulated from the violence, but their love races toward a final confrontation with fate.

Romeo and Juliet is sponsored in part by **KPMG LLP**. Media partner **The Washingtonian magazine** provides promotional support throughout the run.

"Shakespeare was a writer of gorgeous poetry, but I believe that the love poetry in *Romeo and Juliet* is especially glorious in part because Shakespeare knew that two young men would be performing it," said Director David Muse. "Shakespeare knew that he couldn't count on two actors gazing at each other to portray being in love in a way that audiences were going to believe. And so the actors need to jump into the language and make its power convince us of the power of this love. Working with an all-male cast unlocks a world of imaginative collaboration between the audience and the actors, and I hope that people will walk away with an image of this play in their heads that is different from the romanticized, stereotypical *Romeo and Juliet* that's lodged in our consciousness. I hope it's a play that feels fresh and dangerous and transgressive, which is a way that we don't usually think of this play."

-more-

ROMEO AND JULIET CAST

Finn Wittrock makes his STC debut as Romeo. A graduate of the Los Angeles County High School of the Arts and the The Juilliard School, Wittrock's credits include performances with California's A Noise Within at the Hollywood Bowl and The Juilliard School. Television credits include the lead in the Disney Channel's *Halloweentown High* and appearances on NBC's *E.R.* and CBS's *CSI: Miami* and *Cold Case*.

James Davis makes his STC debut as Juliet. Davis' New York credits include *Hamlet* with the Pearl Theatre Company and performances with Rising Phoenix Repertory and Poor Tom Productions. Other credits include performances with St. Louis' Muny Theatre, Northwestern High School Institute, and others. Davis holds a BFA from The Juilliard School.

Romeo and Juliet also features **Aubrey Deeker** as Mercutio, **Drew Eshelman** as Juliet's Nurse, **Ted van Griethuysen** as Friar Lawrence, **Tyrone Mitchell Henderson** as Paris and **Dan Kremer** as Capulet with **Tom Beckett**, **Matthew Carlson**, **Dan Crane**, **Christopher Ryan Grant**, **Carl Holder**, **Jeffrey Kuhn**, **Cody Nickell**, **Hubert Point-Du Jour**, **Lawrence Redmond** and **Craig Wallace**.

THE DIRECTOR

The Associate Artistic Director for the Shakespeare Theatre Company, **David Muse** has previously directed three productions for the Company including *Julius Caesar*, which was featured as part of the Roman Repertory at Sidney Harman Hall, the inaugural Youth and Family Series production of *On the Eve of Friday Morning*, and the 2006 Free For All production of *Pericles* at Carter Barron Amphitheatre in Rock Creek Park. Muse served as assistant director for the mainstage productions of *Othello*, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *The Tempest*, *Pericles* and *Macbeth*. His regional credits include Studio Theatre's Secondstage production of *Frozen* and *The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow* (Helen Hayes Nominations for Outstanding Director and Outstanding Resident Play), *Frankie and Johnny in the Claire de Lune* at Arena Stage and *The Bluest Eye* at Theatre Alliance, among others. Additional credits include *Swansong* by Patrick Page at the New York City Summer Play Festival and multiple events for the Onassis Public Benefit Foundation. Muse was recipient of a 2006 DC Mayor's Arts Award for Outstanding Emerging Artist and the National Theatre Conference Emerging Artist Award. He is a graduate of Yale University and the Yale School of Drama.

THE DESIGNERS

Romeo and Juliet marks the first usage of the thrust stage configuration at Sidney Harman Hall, creating an opportunity to bring audiences literally into the production. Set Designer **Scott Bradley**'s designs include an Italianate courtyard and balcony space and a decorated wine cellar filled with multifunctional barrels. Costume Designer **Jennifer Moeller**'s (*Antony and Cleopatra*, *Julius Caesar*, *Tamburlaine*, *Richard III*) clothing is reminiscent of late 16th-century fashions but

carries a more contemporary feel with its fitted trousers and leather doublets. The *Romeo and Juliet* design team also includes Original Music, Sound Design and Musical Direction by **The Broken Chord Collective** (*The Taming of the Shrew*), Lighting Design by **Lap Chi Chu**, Fight Direction by **Robin McFarquhar**, Choreography by **Daniel Pelzig** and Text Coaching by **Ellen O'Brien**.

PRODUCTION SPONSOR

The Shakespeare Theatre Company is pleased to acknowledge **KPMG LLP's** generous support as a production sponsor for *Romeo and Juliet*. This partnership marks the seventh successive production KPMG LLP has sponsored, and we are deeply grateful for its dedication and commitment to the Company and its work.

KPMG LLP has maintained a continuous commitment throughout its history to providing leadership, integrity and quality. The Big Four Firm with the strongest growth record over the past decade, KPMG turns knowledge into value for the benefit of its clients, people, communities and the capital markets. Its professionals work together to provide clients access to global support, industry insights and a multidisciplinary range of services. KPMG LLP, the audit, tax and advisory firm (www.us.kpmg.com), is the U.S. member of KPMG International. KPMG International's member firms have 113,000 professionals, including 6,800 partners in 148 countries.

MEDIA SPONSOR

The Washingtonian magazine has been a steadfast and supportive Media Partner of the Shakespeare Theatre Company since 1999. Founded in 1965, *The Washingtonian* is the monthly magazine of the nation's capital and is known as "The Magazine Washington Lives By." *The Washingtonian* has won five prestigious National Magazine Awards and rates number one in market penetration of all city and regional magazines.

The mission of the magazine is to make the Washington area a better place for all who live here. One goal is to help its readers understand this dynamic and complicated city. To help its readers live better, the magazine publishes many service stories, such as guides to the area's best restaurants, top doctors and great weekend getaways. Washingtonian Online, the magazine's website (www.washingtonian.com) offers features on restaurants, schools, medicine, travel, business, shopping, the arts and theatre reviews. It was designed so that residents and visitors can tailor the website to match their needs and interests.

SPECIAL PERFORMANCES AND EVENTS

There will be audio-described performances of *Romeo and Juliet* on Thursday, October 9, at 8 p.m. and Saturday, October 11, at 2 p.m. Sign-interpreted performances are Saturday, October 4, at 2 p.m. and Tuesday, October 7, at 7:30 p.m.

On Wednesday, October 22, at noon, members of the Congressional Chorus and American Youth Chorus join forces in The Forum at Sidney Harman Hall for a free *Happenings at the Harman* performance with pieces inspired by Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Seating is limited. Box lunches are available for purchase for \$10 if desired and may be reserved in advance through our Box Office at 202.547.1122.

A series of special events will be held in conjunction with the production of *Romeo and Juliet* as part of Access to Classics, sponsored in part by American Express.

- On Sunday, September 14, at 1 p.m., members of the STC Artistic staff, Education Department and scholars will lead a lively Windows discussion about *Romeo and Juliet*. All are welcome. Call 202.547.1122 and press 4 or visit ShakespeareTheatre.org to reserve a space.
- Following the evening performance of *Romeo and Juliet* on Wednesday, September 17, all are welcome to Harman Hall for a post-performance discussion with members of the cast. Those attending the evening's performance are guaranteed seats. Limited additional seating is available on a first-come basis. Call 202.547.1122 for the approximate start time. No reservations required.
- On Saturday, October 4, following the 2 p.m. matinee, STC sponsors a Classics in Context discussion about *Romeo and Juliet* with local scholars and artists. Call 202.547.1122 and press 4 or visit ShakespeareTheatre.org to reserve a space.

FACT SHEET: *Romeo and Juliet*
By William Shakespeare * Directed by David Muse

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DATES: September 9-October 12, 2008
Press Night: Sunday, September 14, 2008
Opening Night: Monday, September 15, 2008

LOCATION: Sidney Harman Hall, 610 F St. NW

TIMES: Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. (except September 16, 24 and 30); Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. (except September 18); Sundays at 7:30 p.m. (except October 12); matinees on Saturdays and Sundays at 2 p.m. (except September 14); matinee at noon on Wednesday, October 8.

TICKETS: \$23.50-\$79.75 with discounts available for senior citizens and students.

ACCESSIBILITY: Sidney Harman Hall is accessible to persons with disabilities, offering wheelchair-accessible seating and restrooms, audio enhancement, and Braille and large print programs.

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PARKING:

Paid parking is available at the Interpark garage located directly beneath the Sidney Harman Hall and AARP Headquarters block; enter from E or F streets between Sixth and Seventh streets

METRO: Gallery Pl-Chinatown station (Red, Yellow and Green Lines): Patrons attending performances at Sidney Harman Hall should exit using the Arena/7th Street exit. Harman Hall is visible one block to your left. Judiciary Square station (Red Line): Take the F Street Exit toward the National Building Museum, turn left and walk one and one-half blocks along F Street to Sixth Street.

Box Office: 202.547.1122 (voice) TTY: 202.638.3863 Toll Free: 877.487.8849

ShakespeareTheatre.org