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Contact:
Andrea Tichy, Manager of PR & Special Events
Phone: 773.325.7819 | atichy@depaul.edu

The Theatre School at DePaul University: 2015-16 Season
Contemporary Plays, Classics, and New Work at Racine & Fullerton
Chicago Playworks for Families and Young Audiences at the Merle Reskin Theatre

CHICAGO, IL, (August 13, 2015) The Theatre School at DePaul University’s 2015-2016 season features two world premiere productions, reimagined classics, contemporary pieces, and engaging entertainment for the whole family. Productions for the general public will continue for the third full season at The Theatre School’s award-winning new facility in Lincoln Park, and Chicago Playworks for Families and Young Audiences will continue to welcome young people and their families to the historic Merle Reskin Theatre in the South Loop.

Students are involved in all aspects of production—as actors, designers, dramaturges, technicians, directors and production staff. Their work is fully supported by the school’s professional guest artists, faculty, advisors, and staff mentors. With an emphasis on the concept of learning by doing, The Theatre School’s public performances represent the work of students in their final stages of conservatory training, as they fine-tune their craft for external audiences.

Throughout its 90+ year history, the school has educated, trained, and inspired students of theatre in a conservatory setting that is rigorous, disciplined, culturally diverse, and that strives for the highest level of professional skill and artistry.

ON THE FULLERTON STAGE

Phyllis E. Griffin will direct August Wilson’s Joe Turner’s Come and Gone. The production opens on November 6, with previews on November 4 and 5, and closes on November 15, 2015. Joe Turner’s Come and Gone is the second play in August Wilson’s The Pittsburgh Cycle, chronicling the lives of African Americans throughout each decade of the 20th century. About the play: It is 1910 and the Holly’s boardinghouse welcomes the descendants of freed slaves heading north in search of opportunity, identity, and a place to call home. When a mysterious man and his daughter arrive, the residents share the struggle of reconciling their pasts in order to create a new future.

Andrew Peters (MFA Directing, Class of 2016) will direct God’s Ear by Jenny Schwartz. A haunting, hilarious, and heartbreaking look into expressions of grief, the production will open February 12, and run through February 21, 2016, with previews on February 10 and 11. About the play: A child dies and a family shatters. Two parents grapple with the language of loss as they fight to pull their family back together. The couple navigates their new reality using dark humor, disjointed poetry, and rampant clichés—with the occasional visit from the Tooth Fairy and G.I. Joe.

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Brian Balcom (MFA Directing, Class of 2016) will direct Richard Wilbur’s translation of *The Misanthrope* by Molière. A satire focused on flattery and flaws, the production opens April 15, with previews on April 13 and 14, and runs through April 24, 2016. About the play: Join us for a modern retelling of Molière’s classic comedy of manners and social niceties. When Alceste rails against the insincerities in his social circles, he risks losing his freedom, the attention of the lovely and flirtatious Celimene, and his place in high society.

To conclude the season, The Theatre School is pleased to present the world premiere of *The Women Eat Chocolate* by Caroline Macon (BFA Playwriting, Class of 2016), and directed by Heidi Stillman. The production will open on May 20, with previews on May 18 and 19, and run through May 28, 2016. Selected by The Theatre School’s faculty for production as the official New Playwrights Series installment of the 2015-16 season, Macon’s new play focuses on two sisters struggling to reclaim love and innocence while navigating the ickiness of puberty. About the play: At age 13, Alexandra Appleton is certain she’s a poet. Her life spirals out of control when her younger sister, Dot, passes her in the race to womanhood. After a psychedelic trip, Alex struggles to distinguish fantasy from reality. Are the adults in Alex’s life out to get her? Is her poetry teacher more than just a friendly mentor? And most importantly, will Alex’s body catch up with her brains?

**IN THE SONDRA & DENIS HEALY THEATRE**

To begin the season in the Healy Theatre, Erin Kraft (MFA Directing, Class of 2017) will direct *The Lady From The Sea*, by Henrik Ibsen and translated by Pam Gems. This rarely produced Ibsen work will run from October 23 through November 1, with previews on October 21 and 22, 2015. About the play: Ellida Wangel has a secret. Her marriage is on the rocks, and a former flame haunts her. When a mysterious stranger arrives, Ellida’s fears and desires come to the surface. She must decide once and for all where she belongs—should she embrace her connections on land or succumb to the siren song of the sea?

Nathan Singh (MFA Directing, Class of 2017) will direct *In the Blood*, by Suzan-Lori Parks. The production opens January 22, with previews on January 20 and 21, and closes on January 31, 2016. About the play: In this modern day riff on Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*, Hester la Negrita is a homeless single mother of five who dreams of finding beauty and love for her family despite her poverty-stricken life. As she struggles to defy the odds, she runs into a series of harsh and unexpected obstacles.

In May, The Theatre School is proud to present the world premiere of *The Translation of Likes* by Theatre School alumna Nambi E. Kelley, and directed by Ron OJ Parson. The production opens May 6, with previews on May 4 and 5, and runs through May 15, 2016. This new play focuses on personal identity in the age of the internet, featuring and written for the Class of 2016 Master of Fine Arts in Acting candidates. Additional information about the production will be announced on theatre.depaul.edu.

The Theatre School’s 2015-16 in Lincoln Park is generously supported by presenting level sponsor PNC Bank. For specific performance dates and times, please visit theatre.depaul.edu. Tickets to all performances are available online at theatre.depaul.edu or by calling the Box Office at (312) 922-1999. Single tickets for performances in the Fullerton Stage and Healy Theatre are $15. Student tickets are always $5. Subscriptions and group discounts are available. The Fullerton Stage Theatre and the Sondra and Denis Healy Theatre are both located at The Theatre School, 2350 N. Racine Ave., Chicago, IL, 60614.

**AT DEPAUL’S HISTORIC MERLE RESKIN THEATRE**

The Merle Reskin Theatre is located at 60 E. Balbo Drive (at Michigan) in Chicago’s thriving South Loop neighborhood. Founded as the Goodman Children’s Theatre in 1925, and recognized as a pioneer of theatre for families, Chicago Playworks is dedicated to reflecting our audience’s experiences in an urban, contemporary, and multi-ethnic environment. Free Teacher Guides are available online, which highlight...
activities, curriculum connections, and learning opportunities for teachers, parents, and care-givers to share with young audience members before and after attending a performance.

Chicago Playworks opens the season with *Esperanza Rising* by Lynne Alvarez, based on the book by Pam Muñoz Ryan, music by Victor Zupanc, directed by Lisa Portes, with musical direction by Mark Elliott. About the play: Esperanza loves fancy dresses, pretty dolls, and birthday parties, but when tragedy hits her home in beautiful Mexico, she is forced to flee to the United States where things are very different for her. Facing new challenges, Esperanza learns to take care of herself and her family. In the process, she discovers her own power to create a new home. This production is recommended for ages 8 and up. Themes include: culture; customs and traditions; home; hopes and dreams; immigration; justice; perseverance; prejudice; principles; social studies; society and class. *Esperanza Rising* opens on October 8, and runs through November 14, 2015, with performances on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday at 10 AM, and Saturday and Sunday at 2 PM.

In January, Chicago Playworks presents the premiere of *Prospero’s Storm*, based on William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, adapted and directed by Damon Kiely. About the play: Wizard Prospero wields crashing sea-storms, airy spirits, savage ghost hounds, and terrifying creatures to exact revenge on his enemies—trapping them on his magical island. Will he learn mercy from his teenage daughter, or sink everyone into the sea? This vaudeville adaptation of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* uses puppets, singing, slapstick, and magic to weave an enchanting tale of fatherhood and forgiveness. This production is recommended for ages 8 and up. Themes include: adaptation; forgiveness and revenge; justice; literature; magic; men vs. monsters; power and control; and Shakespeare. *Prospero’s Storm* opens on January 14 and closes on February 20, 2016, with performances on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday at 10 AM, and Saturday and Sunday at 2 PM.

The 15-16 Chicago Playworks season concludes with *Peter Pan and Wendy*, adapted by Doug Rand from the novel by J.M. Barrie, and directed by Ernie Nolan. About the play: Wendy dreams of freedom and adventure outside of the nursery walls. When carefree Peter Pan flies into her life, she and her brothers jump at the chance to visit Neverland. Faced with boisterous Lost Boys and battles with Captain Hook, Wendy must ultimately decide whether or not to embrace the most exciting adventure yet: growing up. Rediscover J. M. Barrie’s classic tale and a world that is “made of faith, and trust, and pixie dust.” This production is recommended for all ages. Themes include: adventure; believing in something; duty & responsibility; family; fantasy vs. reality; gender roles; growing up; imagination; and storytelling. *Peter Pan and Wendy* opens April 21 and closes on May 28, 2016, with performances on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday at 10 AM, and Saturday and Sunday at 2 PM.

For specific performance dates and times, please visit theatre.depaul.edu. Tickets to all performances are available online at theatre.depaul.edu or by calling the Box Office at (312) 922-1999. Single tickets for Playworks performances at DePaul’s Merle Reskin Theatre are $10. College students (with ID) can purchase tickets for $5. Subscriptions and group discounts are available.

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MEDIA: Complimentary tickets, event information, and interviews for the 2015-2016 season are available upon request. Please contact Andrea Tichy at atichy@depaul.edu or (773) 325-7819 for more information.

The Theatre School at DePaul University educates, trains, and inspires students of theatre in a conservatory setting that is rigorous, disciplined, and culturally diverse. The school and its students strive for the highest level of professional skill and artistry. A commitment to diversity and equality in education is central to its mission. As an integral part of the training, The Theatre School produces public programs and performances from a wide repertoire of classic, contemporary, and original plays that challenge, entertain, and stimulate the imagination. The school seeks to enhance the intellectual and cultural life of the university community, the city, and the profession.