

For Immediate Release
June 18, 2009

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**CALIFORNIA SHAKESPEARE THEATER ANNOUNCES
CASTING AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR
*PRIVATE LIVES***

**All Performances Presented at Bruns Amphitheater July 8–August 2
Single Tickets and Season Packages on Sale Now
Call 510 548 9666 or www.calshakes.org**

Berkeley, Calif., June 18, 2009—California Shakespeare Theater (Cal Shakes) today announced casting and creative teams for the second production of the company's 35th anniversary season, Noël Coward's smart and spiky comedy *Private Lives*, directed by Cal Shakes Associate Artist **Mark Rucker**. The production will run July 8-August 2 at the Bruns Memorial Amphitheater.

This elegant battle of wits—Rucker's first non-Shakespeare production for Cal Shakes—is what the director calls “a beautifully crafted play. In a way, it's the quintessential situation comedy,” following the exploits of a pair of worldly, newly remarried divorcees whose love for each other remains as overwhelming as it is toxic. Brash but sophisticated lead Elyot Chase will be played by **Stephen Barker Turner**, a Cal Shakes Associate Artist who has portrayed such diverse roles on the Cal Shakes stage as the titular character in *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby* and Count Orsino in *Twelfth Night*. **Diana LaMar**—a frequent player in Baltimore CENTERSTAGE's Shakespeare productions who has appeared locally at A.C.T. (*The Real Thing*) and Berkeley Rep (*The Beaux' Stratagem*)—makes her company debut as Amanda, the glamorous, impulsive woman who Elyot cannot live with or without. Two familiar faces from this season's Cal Shakes production of *Romeo and Juliet*, **Sarah Nealis** (Juliet) and **Jud Williford** (Mercutio) appear in *Private Lives* as Elyot and Amanda's confounded new spouses. And rounding out the cast is the charming, French-fluent **Liam Vincent**—Paris in *Romeo and Juliet*—as the butler Louis.

“This play has been a revelation to me thus far,” Rucker explains. “I've been delighted and surprised at what I've found—just how complicated it is. Beneath a veneer of sophistication, private lives can be incredibly brutal and sensual.”

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Once again showing her award-winning flair for creating interiors on the outdoor stage at the Bruns, **Annie Smart** (*An Ideal Husband*, *Man and Superman*, *The Tempest*) will design *Private Lives*' Parisian apartment and adjacent oceanfront hotel balconies, creating what Rucker calls "one of the more intimate spaces I've seen at the Bruns." **Katherine Roth**, who previously designed costumes for Cal Shakes' 2006 production of *As You Like It*, returns to create *Private Lives*' sumptuous, circa-1930s fashions. Sound design for *Private Lives* will be created by **Jeff Mockus**, who created the rural soundscape of *Uncle Vanya*, the repressed hush of *An Ideal Husband*, and the sounds of *Pericles*' many lands. Associate Artist **Scott Zielinski** (*An Ideal Husband*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*) is the production's lighting designer, Cal Shakes Resident Fight Director **Dave Maier** will choreograph the lovers' glass-shattering spats, and Associate Artist **Lynne Soffer** is the text and vocal coach.

Single tickets start at \$20; discounted group tickets for groups of 10 or more are also available. For information or to charge tickets by phone with VISA, MasterCard or American Express, call the Cal Shakes Box Office at 510.548.9666. Additional information and online ticketing is available at www.calshakes.org.

California Shakespeare Theater's 2009 season is sponsored in part by BART, City National Bank, KDFC, Lafayette Park Hotel and Spa, Meyer Sound, and Peet's Coffee & Tea, and receives institutional support from The Dean & Margaret Leshner Foundation and The Shubert Foundation. Artistic Learning programs are underwritten by generous support from Citigroup Foundation, The Dale Family Fund, The Thomas J. Long Foundation, Koret Foundation, Oakland Fund for the Arts, The San Francisco Foundation, and Yahoo! Employee Fund.

Photos are available upon request.

ABOUT CAL SHAKES

Founded in 1974, California Shakespeare Theater is a fully professional, critically acclaimed theater known for its innovative productions of the plays of William Shakespeare and other reimagined classics. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Jonathan Moscone and Managing Director Susie Falk, Cal Shakes is committed to being a leading community citizen by nourishing the imaginations of audiences, artists, and learners of all ages. Cal Shakes makes boldly imagined and deeply entertaining interpretations of Shakespeare and the classics; provides in-depth, far-reaching artistic learning programs for learners of all ages and circumstances; and brings disparate communities together around the creation of new American plays that reflect the cultural diversity of the Bay Area.

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ATTENTION CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: *Private Lives*

WHO: Written by Noël Coward
Directed by Mark Rucker

Designed by Annie Smart (sets), Katherine Roth (costumes), Jeff Mockus (music and sound), Scott Zielinski (lighting), Dave Maier (fight choreography), and Lynne Soffer (text and vocal coach)

Starring Diana LaMar, Stephen Barker Turner, Sarah Nealis, Jud Williford, and Liam Vincent

WHEN: Jul 8 – Aug 2
Previews Jul 8-10 at 8pm
Opening Jul 11 at 8pm
Tuesdays through Thursdays at 7:30pm
Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm
Saturday Matinee, Aug 1 at 2pm
Sundays at 4pm
Grounds open two hours prior to showtime for picnicking.

WHERE: Bruns Amphitheater, 100 Gateway Blvd., Orinda, CA 94563 (just off Highway 24 at the Shakespeare Festival Way/Gateway Exit, one mile east of the Caldecott Tunnel.)
Complimentary shuttle from Orinda BART beginning 90 minutes prior to curtain. Complimentary parking onsite.

TICKETS: All tickets are available through the California Shakespeare Theater Box Office, 701 Heinz Avenue, Berkeley CA, 510.548.9666, or online at www.calshakes.org.
Single ticket prices start at \$20.
Group Sales Groups of 10 or more save \$10 off the single ticket prices; complimentary ticket available for groups of 15+. For more information, call 510.809.3290.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

- Inside Scoop Monday, June 22, 7pm, Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way
Audiences are invited to meet and converse with the director, actors and designers to learn about directorial points of view, actors' methods, and design ideas for the upcoming production. Complimentary Peet's coffee and Loard's ice cream is served. This event is free and open to the public.
- Grove Talks Led by resident Grove Talks speakers, these free, informal 20-minute talks are held on site 45 minutes before each and every performance, offering invaluable insight into the play and the production.
- Tastings Tuesdays and Wednesdays
Taste the best of the Bay Area's wine, beer, coffee, sweets, and savories for free on Tuesdays and Wednesdays before the performance.

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LGBT Night Jul 10, 6:30pm; 8pm performance
Pre-show cocktail party for the LGBT crowd featuring music and games; starting at 6:30pm at the Theater. Free with ticket to the show. Performance tickets only \$20 for age 30 or under.

Meet the Artists Jul 12 and Jul 26, following the 4pm performance
Audience members enjoy an opportunity to engage in a lively discussion about the production with cast members following select 4pm matinee performances.

Behind the Scenes Jul 16, 5:30pm event; 7:30pm performance
Share an intimate chat with actors from each production. The evening includes a backstage tour, hors d'oeuvres, wine, and a catered dinner beginning at 5:30pm. Cost: \$40 (not including theater ticket). Call 510.548.9666 to order.

InSight Jul 19, following the 4pm matinee
Explore the world of the play through an informal dialogue with the production's dramaturg following select 4pm performances.

INFO: 510.548.9666, calshakes.org, or boxoffice@calshakes.org.

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