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Press Contact: Marilyn Langbehn
510.548.3422 x118
510.910.3129 cell
mlangbehn@calshakes.org

California Shakespeare Theater opens 2010 Season with *John Steinbeck's The Pastures of Heaven*

**Company celebrates 10 years of Jonathan Moscone's Artistic Leadership
with first-ever world premiere at the Bruns Amphitheater**

**Theater set to celebrate completion of Phase One of capital campaign
with the opening of new 7,850-square-foot
Sharon Simpson Center at the Bruns Amphitheater**

Berkeley, CA, April 12, 2010 – A brand-new play, and a brand new building: The beginning of California Shakespeare Theater's season will be unlike any other in the company's 36-year history.

The season opens with the world premiere of ***John Steinbeck's The Pastures of Heaven* June 3-27**. Developed as part of Cal Shakes' **New Works/New Communities** program in collaboration with San Francisco's **Word for Word Performing Arts Company**, this richly theatrical play is adapted from the 1932 Steinbeck novella by renowned San Francisco playwright **Octavio Solis** and directed by Cal Shakes Artistic Director **Jonathan Moscone, celebrating his 10th anniversary with the company**. *Pastures* was selected as one of five inaugural Distinguished New Play Projects in the National Endowment for the Arts' New Play Development Program.

"This piece is the culmination of years of collaboration between Octavio, Word for Word, our company, and communities in Salinas to bring this little known literary gem to theatrical life," says **Jonathan Moscone**. "Steinbeck has written a work that is funny, heartbreaking, witty, and ultimately deeply compassionate, and Octavio has captured all that in his own, distinctly poetic voice. We are also beyond thrilled that *Pastures* will open alongside another premiere, a new home for our artists and for our audiences. This stunning, sustainably designed Patron and Artist Center is unlike anything I've ever seen at any other theater in this country. Years of work have gone into making this play, as well as this home, a reality. And I cannot wait to share both with our communities. This is the best way I can imagine to celebrate my 10th anniversary at Cal Shakes."

John Steinbeck's The Pastures of Heaven is an adaptation of Steinbeck's beautifully rendered early novel, a collection of interrelated short stories, rich in the feeling for the land and for the hardworking people so characteristic of his work. In these beautifully crafted, funny, poignant vignettes, Steinbeck charts the highs and

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lows of a close-knit farming community in a lush California valley. As he writes of an unconventional family whose worldview shatters due to the misguided charity of a neighbor, of the community's struggle to get a disabled boy to conform, and of two sisters trying to build a business on tortillas, faith and a secret, Steinbeck compassionately depicts a world caught between dreams and reality.

Pastures is the third project of Cal Shakes' **New Works/New Communities** (NW/NC) program, brings disparate communities together to engage directly in the creation of new works of theater inspired by classic literature. New Works/New Communities aims to make concrete connections between the work of classical writers and marginalized communities that do not see themselves reflected in those plays, or in theater itself. Launched in October 2007, *Pastures* emerges from two-plus years of field research and community conversations in the Salinas Valley, along with development workshops and open process readings. The creative team is comprised of nationally-renowned playwright Octavio Solis, Cal Shakes Artistic Director Jonathan Moscone, and both Cal Shakes actors and Word for Word company members. They collaborated with diverse Salinas-area partners including The National Steinbeck Center, Alisal Center for the Fine Arts, and Hartnell College. As part of their field research, the team explored the landscape itself, with several trips to Corral de Tierra, the breathtakingly beautiful, real-life setting of *Pastures*, worked the land under the tutelage of The Farm, an agricultural education center, and heard first-hand stories from the long-time residents of the Valley at the Firehouse Recreation Center. New community events with those Salinas partners are scheduled for late April and early May, including the unveiling of a *Pastures*-inspired mural by young artists at Alisal that will be on display at the Bruns Amphitheater in Orinda during the play's world premiere run.

Jonathan Moscone (Director) was recently awarded the inaugural Zelda Fichandler Award by the Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation (SDCF) for "transforming the American theatre through his unique and creative work." Regional credits include Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Huntington Theatre, Intiman Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Goodspeed Musicals, Dallas Theatre Center, Portland Stage Company, San Jose Repertory Theater, and Magic Theatre. His work at Cal Shakes and elsewhere has earned him Bay Area Critics Circle and Dean Goodman Choice Awards for Best Direction and Production. Mr. Moscone is the recipient of a Stanford Graduate School of Business Center for Social Innovation Fellowship and currently serves on the board of LoveLife Foundation in Oakland. He is an adjunct faculty member with A.C.T.'s MFA program and has served as a grant review panelist for the Massachusetts Cultural Council, Theater Communications Group, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Octavio Solis (Playwright) is a playwright and director living in San Francisco. His works have been mounted at Yale Repertory Theatre, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, the Dallas Theater Center, the Magic Theatre, Intersection for the Arts, South Coast Repertory Theatre, the San Diego Repertory Theatre, the San Jose Repertory Theatre, Shadowlight in San Francisco, the Venture Theatre in

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Philadelphia, Latino Chicago Theatre Company, the New York Summer Play Festival, Teatro Vista in Chicago, El Teatro Campesino, the Undermain Theatre in Dallas, Thick Description, Campo Santo, the Imua Theatre Company in New York, and Cornerstone Theatre. Solis has received an NEA 1995-97 Playwriting Fellowship, the Roger L. Stevens award from the Kennedy Center, the Will Glickman Playwright Award, a production grant from the Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays, the 1998 TCG/NEA Theatre Artists in Residence Grant, the 1998 McKnight Fellowship grant from the Playwrights Center in Minneapolis, and the National Latino Playwriting Award for 2003. He is the recipient of the 2000-2001 National Theatre Artists Residency Grant from TCG and the Pew Charitable Trust for *Gibraltar* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Solis is a Thornton Wilder Fellow for the MacDowell Colony, a New Dramatists alum, and a member of the Dramatists Guild.

Word for Word Performing Arts Company (Collaborators), a Z Space theatre program, is an ensemble group whose mission is to tell great stories with elegant theatricality, staging performances of classic and contemporary fiction. Founded in 1993 by Susan Harloe and JoAnne Winter, Word for Word believes in the power of the short story to provide solace, compassion, and insight into our daily lives. Word for Word transforms works of literature by presenting them verbatim, on stage, in a genre unique to their company.

Creating the 40+ inhabitants of Steinbeck's idyllic valley will be an ensemble of some of the Bay Area's finest actors: Cal Shakes Associate Artists **Catherine Castellanos** (*Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night*), **Julie Eccles** (*An Ideal Husband*, *King Lear*), **Dan Hiatt** (*Uncle Vanya*, *Man and Superman*), and **Andy Murray** (*The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby*, *As You Like It*); and Word for Word Artistic Director **JoAnne Winter** and company member **Amy Kossow**. Also included are **Rod Gnapp**, last seen in A.C.T.'s *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, and **Charles Shaw Robinson**, who played Shagspeare in Marin Theatre Company's recent production of *Equivocation*. **Richard Thieriot**, best remembered as Demetrius in Cal Shakes' 2009 sold-out production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and recent A.C.T. MFA graduates **Tobie L. Windham** and **Emily Kitchens** round out the company.

Moscone has assembled a team of talented designers to evoke Steinbeck's Salinas Valley in the Siesta Valley of the Bruns Amphitheater: **Annie Smart** (set design), whose work has been seen on stages from the UK to Broadway to numerous Bay Area theaters including Cal Shakes' productions of *An Ideal Husband*, *Man and Superman*, and *Private Lives*; Associate Artist **Meg Neville** (costume design), whose work has been seen off-Broadway, regionally and locally, most recently for the Berkeley Rep/Centre Theater Group world premiere of Lisa Kron's *In the Wake*; **York Kennedy** (lighting design) who has lit countless Bay Area and regional theater productions, including Cal Shakes' *Uncle Vanya* and *Happy Days*; **Obadiah Eaves** (composer), whose soundscapes were heard in the Broadway productions of *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, *Come Back Little Sheba*, and the current production of *Collected Stories*; **Julie Wolf** (music director), fresh off her recent stint as music

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director for Berkeley Rep's *Girlfriend*; and **Erika Chong Shuch** (movement), resident artist at Intersection for the Arts and recipient of Gerbode Foundation's Emerging Choreographers Award.

The celebration of Moscone's decade with Cal Shakes coincides with another significant event for the Theater: the opening of its **brand-new, 7,850-square-foot Sharon Simpson Center** to replace the dilapidated temporary structures that have been in use since the site opened in 1991. The new Center, designed to LEED certification standards, will include plentiful new restrooms with low-flow plumbing features to reduce water consumption; energy-efficient dressing rooms, wardrobe area and green-room for the artists; a modern café; a theater store; offices for house management and volunteers; and much-needed storage space. The entire structure will be topped with a "living roof" designed to provide insulation, habitat for plants and animals, and a visual link to the hillside beyond.

Single tickets for *John Steinbeck's The Pastures of Heaven* go on sale May 3 and range from \$34–\$70, with discounts available for seniors, students, persons age 30 and under, and groups. Prices, dates, and artists subject to change. 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 are available at www.calshakes.org.

California Shakespeare Theater's 2010 season is supported in part by the generosity of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Dean & Margaret Leshner Foundation. *John Steinbeck's The Pastures of Heaven* has been selected as a National Endowment for the Arts Distinguished New American Play as part of the NEA New Play Development Program, hosted by Arena Stage. The development of *John Steinbeck's The Pastures of Heaven* is underwritten by numerous individual donors and generous support from East Bay Community Foundation, Fleishhacker Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Phyllis E. Wattis Foundation, and Zellerbach Family Foundation. Corporate partners for the 2010 season include BART, City National Bank, Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa, Meyer Sound, Peet's Coffee & Tea, and San Francisco magazine.

Photos are available from Cal Shakes online press room at <http://www.calshakes.org/v4/press/index.html>.

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 The world premiere of *John Steinbeck's The Pastures of Heaven*

WHO Written by Octavio Solis

Developed in collaboration with Word For World Performing Arts Company

Directed by Cal Shakes Artistic Director Jonathan Moscone

Designed by Annie Smart (sets), Meg Neville (costumes), York Kennedy (lights), Obadiah Eaves (composer), Julie Wolf (music director), and Erika Chong Shuch (movement).

Featuring: Catherine Castellanos* (Rosa Lopez, Cleo Banks, and others); Julie Eccles* (Mrs. Munroe, Helen van Deventer, and others); Rod Gnapp* (Pat Humbert, Shark Wicks, and others); Emily Kitchens* (Molly Morgan, Mae Munroe, and others); Amy Kossow (Hilda van Deventer, Miss Martin, and others); Dan Hiatt* (John Whiteside, Jakob Stutz, and others); Andy Murray* (TB Allen, Raymond Banks, and others); Charles Shaw Robinson* (Bert Monroe, Junius Maltby, and others); Richard Thieriot* (Richard Whiteside, Jimmie Munroe, and others); Tobie L. Windham* (Tularecito, Manny Munroe, and others); and JoAnne Winter* (Willa Whiteside, Maria Lopez, and others.)

*Member, Actor's Equity Association

WHEN June 3–27
Previews June 3–4 at 8pm
Opening June 5 at 8pm
Tuesdays through Thursdays at 7:30pm
Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm
Saturday Matinee, June 26 at 2pm
Sundays at 4pm
Grounds open two hours prior to showtime for picnicking.

WHERE Bruns Amphitheater, 100 California Shakespeare Theater Way. (formerly 100 Gateway Blvd.), Orinda, CA 94563
(just off Highway 24 at the California Shakespeare Theater Way/Wilder Rd. 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 tickets range from \$34–\$70, with discounts available for seniors, students, persons age 30 and under, and groups. Prices subject to change.

GROUPS 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.

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SPECIAL EVENTS

Steinbeck Night, Tuesday, April 20, 7-8pm, Lafayette Library and Learning Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette, CA 94549

Join Cal Shakes Artistic Director Jonathan Moscone, playwright Octavio Solis, and Word for Word Artistic Director JoAnne Winter for a lively conversation about the process of adapting Steinbeck's *The Pastures of Heaven* for the stage, moderated by theater critic Chad Jones. Event is free and open to the public; seating is limited.

Inside Scoop, Monday, May 17, 7pm, Santa Maria Church, 40 Santa Maria Way, Orinda, CA 94563

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 ice cream and Peet's coffee is served. This event is free and open to the public.

Grove Talks, 45 minutes before each performance

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, beginning at 6pm

Taste the best of the Bay Area's wine, beer, coffee, sweets, and savories for free on Tuesdays and Wednesdays before the performance.

Meet the Artists, Sunday, June 6 and 20, 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, Thursday, June 10, 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: \$45 (not including theater ticket). Call 510.548.9666 or visit calshakes.org to order.

Shindig, Friday, June 11, 6:30pm event, 8pm performance

Pre-show party for young professionals with cocktails, music, and more; event free with purchase of ticket to that night's performance

InSight, Sunday, June 13, 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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