

For Immediate Release

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## **Cal Shakes 2010 Season: Celebrating 20 years at the Bruns Amphitheater and 10 years of Jonathan Moscone's Artistic Leadership**

**Season Includes World Premiere adaptation of *John Steinbeck's The Pastures of Heaven* by Acclaimed Playwright Octavio Solis; a Return to George Bernard Shaw with *Mrs. Warren's Profession*; and Bold New Productions of *Macbeth* and *Much Ado About Nothing***

Berkeley, CA – California Shakespeare Theater Artistic Director **Jonathan Moscone** today announced his plans for his 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary season, which includes the company's first world premiere in more than 25 years, a return to the provocative comedy of George Bernard Shaw, and brand-new productions featuring two of Shakespeare's most intriguing couples.

"I am extremely happy to be celebrating my 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary season with this talented, daring, and altogether original group of artists and one of the smartest, most passionate audiences anywhere in the county," enthused Moscone. "I am honored to welcome back **Timmy Near** and **Joel Sass**, following their triumphant productions of *Uncle Vanya* and *Pericles* in 2008. Most of all, I am beyond thrilled to produce our first-ever commissioned new play for our Main Stage, the world premiere of *John Steinbeck's The Pastures of Heaven*. This uniquely California story is the culmination of a two-year process with playwright **Octavio Solis** and **Word for Word Performing Arts Company** in San Francisco. Octavio is one of our country's most poetic, wittiest and utterly original playwrights, and his adaptation of Steinbeck's early novel promises to be a very special event in our company's 36-year history."

The season begins with *John Steinbeck's The Pastures of Heaven*, adapted from the novel by renowned San Francisco playwright **Solis** and directed by **Moscone**, from **June 5-27**. Developed as part of Cal Shakes' **New Works/New Communities** program in collaboration with San Francisco's **Word for Word Performing Arts Company**, and based on Steinbeck's 1932 novel of interconnected short stories, this richly theatrical play depicts comic and heartbreaking characters in their quest for happiness in the seemingly idyllic landscape of Steinbeck's own Salinas Valley.

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**Timothy Near**, former artistic director of San Jose Repertory Theatre, returns to the Bruns with the season's second production, ***Mrs. Warren's Profession*** from **July 10-August 1**. Fortright Cambridge student Vivie Warren comes home to discover a shocking secret about her mother and the source of her family fortune in this brilliant, provocative comedy by master playwright **George Bernard Shaw**. Ms. Near's previous Cal Shakes' outing, *Uncle Vanya*, received widespread critical acclaim; the *San Francisco Chronicle* called it "a masterpiece" and included it in the year-end "Top Ten" list for 2008. Cal Shakes' previous Shaw offerings, *Arms and the Man* (2003) and *Man and Superman* (2007), received similar kudos, and are among the most memorable and well-received productions in the company's history.

The season's third production reunites Shakespeare and Sass – **Joel Sass** that is, noted director, designer, and adapter, whose rollicking *Pericles* delighted audiences and critics alike in 2008. Sass will transform the hills of Orinda into the Scottish heath with a highly charged and thoroughly unique eight-person adaptation of Shakespeare's ***Macbeth***; the quintessential cautionary tale of havoc wrought by one man's unbridled ambition and his wife's lust for power. *Macbeth* takes the stage **August 21-September 12**.

Cal Shakes then takes us from Scotland to Italy, culminating the 2010 season with Artistic Director Moscone's take on Shakespeare's double-edged romantic comedy, ***Much Ado About Nothing***. The men return from war only to find new battles on the field of love amidst Italy's countryside in Shakespeare's hilarious romantic comedy, filled with villainy, betrayal, and a glorious ending celebrating the joy of love and the power of redemption. *Much Ado* runs from **September 22-October 17**.

The celebration of Jonathan Moscone's decade with Cal Shakes coincides with another significant milestone for the Theater: Its twentieth season at the magnificent Bruns Amphitheater, located in the Siesta Valley between Orinda and Berkeley. Designed by legendary Bay Area architect Gene Angell and named in memory of Lt. G.H. Bruns III, late son of George and Sue Bruns of Lafayette, the Bruns Amphitheater has played host to more than three-quarters of a million audience members during the past twenty seasons, many of whom have made their trips to the theater part of a family tradition now in its second or third generation.

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Jonathan Moscone** (Artistic Director; Director, *John Steinbeck's The Pastures of Heaven* and *Much Ado About Nothing*) celebrates his tenth anniversary as Artistic Director of California Shakespeare Theater where his work has earned him Bay Area Critics Circle and Dean Goodman Choice Awards for Best Direction and Production, with his productions of *Man and Superman*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Ghosts* (Berkeley Rep), *Twelfth Night*, and *The Seagull* all named among the ten best productions by *The San Francisco Chronicle* and other area newspapers. He recently directed *Eurydice* at Milwaukee Rep and the world premiere of Richard Nelson's *How Shakespeare Won the West* for Huntington Theatre; other regional credits include Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Intiman Theatre, San Jose Repertory Theater, Dallas Theatre Center, Goodspeed Musicals, Triangle Opera, Portland Stage Company, and Magic Theatre. He is the recipient of a Stanford Graduate School of Business Center for Social Innovation Fellowship and currently serves on the board of LoveLife Foundation and on the advisory boards of Redwood High School, both in Oakland. He has also served as a grant review panelist for the Massachusetts Cultural Council, Theater Communications Group, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

**Timothy Near** (Director. *Mrs. Warren's Profession*) recently concluded 22 years as Artistic Director of San Jose Repertory Theatre during which time she developed and/or produced over 26 new plays, contributed significant leadership to the design and building of a new theatre facility and lead the company to be among the most artistically adventurous resident theatres in the country. In the spring of 2009 she left her SJ Rep Artistic Director position to resume her career as a free lance director and now holds the title of Emeritus Artistic Director at SJ Rep. Near recently directed the award winning production of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* at California Shakespeare Theatre. Near has directed at numerous theatres throughout the U.S., including Arizona Theatre Co., The Guthrie, Berkeley Rep, Alliance Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, L.A.'s Tiffany Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Center Rep in Walnut Creek, Ford's Theatre in DC, The New York Shakespeare Festival, Union Square Theatre in NYC, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Cincinnati Playhouse, The Intiman, A Contemporary Theatre, and Portland Center Stage. She has directed *The Crucible* and *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Opera San Jose. Near is also an actress and the recipient of an Obie Award for her performance in *Still Life* by Emily Mann. She is the recipient of the Woman of Achievement Award in the Arts given by the SJ Mercury News/Women's Fund and The Janet Gray Hayes Award for Women in Leadership.

**Octavio Solis** (Playwright, *John Steinbeck's The Pastures of Heaven*) is a playwright and director living in San Francisco, His plays include *Don Quixote*, *Lydia*, *Man of the Flesh*, *Prospect*, *El Paso Blue*, *Santos & Santos*, *La Posada Mágica*, *El Otro*, *Dreamlandia*, *The 7 Visions of Encarnacion*, *Bethlehem*, *The Ballad of Pancho and Lucy*, *Gibraltar*, *Lethe*, and *Marfa Lights*. They have been mounted at a variety of theaters including Oregon

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Shakespeare Festival, Dallas Theater Center, Magic Theatre, Intersection for the Arts, South Coast Repertory Theatre, San Diego Repertory Theatre, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Latino Chicago Theatre Company, La Compañia de Albuquerque, Teatro Vista in Chicago, El Teatro Campesino, Undermain Theatre in Dallas, Thick Description, Campo Santo, Imua Theatre Company in New York, and Cornerstone Theatre. His has collaborated on several pieces such as *Burning Dreams*, co-written with Julie Hebert and Gina Leishman; *Shiner*, written with Erik Ehn, and *Great Highway*, written with Wendy Weiner. Mr. Solis has received numerous awards for his work including 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. His new anthology, *Plays by Octavio Solis* has just been released by Broadway Play Publishing. He has also completed *Prospect*, an independent feature film which he wrote and directed. Mr. Solis is a member of the Dramatists Guild and a New Dramatists alum.

**Joel Sass** (Director, *Macbeth*) is a stage director, designer and adapter based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he has worked since 1990, specializing in the creation of new work for the stage and devising imaginative reinterpretations of classic plays. In addition to being a busy freelance artist, Joel is also the Associate Artistic Director of Minneapolis' acclaimed Jungle Theatre, and has also directed and designed at the Guthrie Theatre, Theatre de la Juene Lune, California Shakespeare Theater, Park Square Theatre, the University of Minnesota, Ordway Center for Performing Arts, Mixed Blood Theatre, Macalester College, Ananya Dance Theatre, Theatre-In-The-Round, Starting Gate, Gremlin Theatre, and many others. Joel was awarded a 2006 McKnight Theatre Artist Fellowship in recognition of sustained artistic excellence, and is the recipient of a 2006 Ameriprise IVEY award for his scenic design for the Jungle Theatre's production of Steven Deitz's *THE LAST OF THE BOYS*. Recently, Joel was honored with the 2007 Alan Schneider Directing Award - a national award recognizing the work of freelance directors - administered by Theater Communications Group (TCG).

**Word for Word Performing Arts Company** (collaborators, *John Steinbeck's The Pastures of Heaven*) is an ensemble 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. In its fifteen year history, Word for Word has performed dozens of stories by master story-tellers. From Tobias Wolff to Zora Neale Hurston,

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from Barbara Kingsolver to Italo Calvino, from Daniel Handler to Langston Hughes, Word for Word is a company that relishes the written word and revels in bringing it to life on stage.

For a limited time only, Cal Shakes is offering 2010 subscriptions at 2009 prices. Single tickets will go on sale in spring 2010. For more information, visit [www.calshakes.org](http://www.calshakes.org) or call the box office at 510.548.9666.

**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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**FOR CALENDAR EDITORS**

**CALIFORNIA SHAKESPEARE THEATER'S 2010 SEASON**

World premiere

*John Steinbeck's The Pastures of Heaven*

Adapted by Octavio Solis

Developed in collaboration with Word for Word Performing Arts Company

Directed by Jonathan Moscone

June 5-27

*Mrs. Warren's Profession*

By George Bernard Shaw

Directed by Timothy Near

July 10-August 1

*Macbeth*

By William Shakespeare

Directed by Joel Sass

August 21-September 12

*Much Ado About Nothing*

By William Shakespeare

Directed by Jonathan Moscone

September 22-October 17

For season subscription information, call 510.548.9666 or visit [www.calshakes.org](http://www.calshakes.org)

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