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**Congo Square Theatre Company Announces the
Second Annual Summer Reading Series
Featuring works by Brian Tucker, Alice Childress,
David Barr III, and Illesa Duncan**

Series includes Suzan-Lori Parks's *365 Days/365 Plays*

Chicago—**Congo Square Theatre Company** will be hosting a series of events and readings this summer. All Summer Reading Series events are free and will be performed at The West Town Studio located at the Chicago Center for the Performing Arts, 777 N Green Street.

Reservations are not required. For information, contact Congo Square at 773-296-1108.

June 19, 2007, 6:00 p.m.

365 Days/ 365 Plays

by Suzan-Lori Parks

directed by ensemble members Daniel Bryant and Anthony Irons

Kicking off the Midway Celebration, Congo Square Theatre Company is excited to present its week of world premieres as part of the year-long, city-wide performances of work by Suzan-Lori Parks. A perfect pairing—Chicago's leading African-American acting ensemble and Suzan-Lori Parks.

July 7, 2007, 1:00 p.m.

Trouble in Mind

by Alice Childress

directed by Anthony Irons

Trouble in Mind by Alice Childress is a play within a play story bringing together a group of black and white actors and a director on a Broadway stage in the 1950s to begin rehearsals of a play about a falsely accused young black man in North Carolina who is the target of a lynch mob.

This humorous and eloquent behind-the-scenes look at the theatrical process becomes a harsh reminder of the racial stereotypes present in the country at mid century. The well meaning theater professionals are forced to deal with their own prejudices, practices, and compromises.

Alice Childress was the longtime director of The American Negro Theatre, an actress, director, playwright, and novelist. Before Lorraine Hansberry and her masterpiece *Raisin In The Sun* made its indelible mark in theater history: *Trouble in Mind* (1955) made Alice Childress the first female winner of an OBIE award for the best Off Broadway play of the year.

July 21, 2007, 1:00 p.m.

The St. James Infirmary

by Brian Tucker

directed by Founding Artistic Director Derrick Sanders

Brian Tucker's *The St. James Infirmary* is a bluesy noir examination of the soulless inhabitants of a world dominated by gamblers, thieves and women of the night. Borrowing from the mythic tales of crossroad dealings with the devil, the play follows what happens when the purchaser of souls comes to collect. A haunting and poetic story, *The St. James Infirmary* is aggressively written with passion and humor.

The St. James Infirmary is the grand prize winner of Chicago Dramatist's 2006 Many Voices Project.

Brian Tucker is a native of the South Side of Chicago and currently lives and writes in Brooklyn, New York. He is the youngest ever recipient of the Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwrights Fellowship, administered through The Juilliard School, where he recently finished his fellowship tenure. Other plays include *Bathing Van Gough*, and *Sins of the Father*. He served as assistant director for The Signature Theatre Company's production of *King Hedley II* under the direction of Derrick Sanders.

August 4, 2007, 1:00 p.m.

Rutherford's Travels

by David Barr III & Ilesa Duncan

adapted from Charles Johnson's novel *Middle Passage*

directed by Ilesa Duncan

Rutherford Calhoun is a charming rogue and recently freed slave in 1830 New Orleans. Deeply in debt to a local gangster, he is about to be forced into marriage with his prissy schoolteacher girlfriend, so he sneaks aboard an outbound ship, *The Republic*.

This clever escape appears less so when he discovers that the ship is a slaver headed to Africa, the captain of the ship is a vicious taskmaster, the crew teeters on the brink of mutiny, and along with the cargo of slaves who begin to plan an insurrection the ship has taken an African tribal god aboard. Calhoun is trapped in the middle.

This savage parable of the African American experience blends action and adventure on the high seas, slavery, poverty, race relations and an African worldview at odds with Western materialism.

Rutherford's Travels is adapted from Charles Johnson's 1990 National Book Award Winner *Middle Passage*.

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