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Contact: Cathy Taylor  
Cathy Taylor Public Relations, Inc.  
(773) 564-9564, cathy@cathytaylorpr.com

**Embargoed for release until March 28, 2007**

**Northlight Theatre announces 2007-08 Season**

**Season highlights include a world premiere by Larry Gelbart and Craig Wright featuring John Mahoney and Michael Nussbaum, Moliere's classic *The Miser*, two Chicago premieres with live music and a one-woman Midwest premiere about the life of Ann Landers**

**Chicago**—Artistic Director **BJ Jones** and Executive Director **Timothy J. Evans** proudly announce the 2007-2008 Northlight season, including: a fresh translation of Moliere's classic *The Miser; Ella*, a new musical about the life and music of Ella Fitzgerald; a new epic play, *Gee's Bend*, about the real women of Gee's Bend, Alabama; *Better Late*, a world-premiere comedy by Larry Gelbart and Craig Wright featuring John Mahoney and Mike Nussbaum; and *The Lady with All the Answers*, a tribute to Chicago icon Ann Landers.

Currently celebrating its 32<sup>nd</sup> Season, Northlight Theatre is a strong and vibrant presence in the Chicago theater community. For the past three decades the theatre has treated its audiences to a blend of world premiere plays, new musicals, rediscovered classics of the stage, and recent hits from New York and regional theatres, while showcasing some of the country's most talented actors, designers, and directors. Northlight Theatre has created a 33<sup>rd</sup> season—and **Artistic Director BJ Jones' 10<sup>th</sup>**—that continues this tradition.

“To celebrate my 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary here at Northlight, I have invited some of America's finest artists whose relationship with the theater has made us a nationally recognized institution. Northlight has grown to become one of America's most adventurous and eclectic theaters, and this season will be the essence of what has brought us here. By joining John Mahoney and Mike Nussbaum with playwrights Larry Gelbart and Craig Wright, we are developing the future while resonating with our past,” says **Jones**. “Our commitment to theatrical diversity continues as we present *Gee's Bend*, the story of the women of Gee's Bend, Alabama, whose artistry in quilt making is world renowned. In keeping with our tradition of new musicals we present *Ella*, the story of Ella Fitzgerald's life through music. We also bring you another of our refreshed classics, Moliere's *The Miser*, bringing the new and old together in a hilarious romp. We close the season by celebrating Chicago newspaper legend Ann Landers in *The Lady with All the Answers*—a joyous celebration of her life and times.”

Executive Director **Timothy J. Evans** adds, “This season's line-up is a shining example of what Northlight does best—and one of the many reasons I am proud and honored to have joined Northlight Theatre. This is a season of intelligent and entertaining new plays and new musicals, mixed with a fresh take on a beloved classic. It expresses a bold and diverse vision of our world. By combining the highest level of artistry with this unique collection of work we'll create a unique theatrical experience for Northlight patrons.”

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**THE 2006-2007 NORTHLIGHT SEASON INCLUDES:**

***The Miser***

by Molière, translation by James Magruder

director TBA

October 3, 2007-November 11, 2007

Opening: Wednesday, October 10, 2007, at 7:30 p.m.

A classic French farce with a fresh contemporary twist. An old widower decides to marry off his children, even as the family is scheming to steal his fortune. With forbidden romance in the air and the family treasure buried in the backyard, it's a hilarious race to see who will come out on top. Featuring an astonishing final scene of revelations that must be seen to be believed!

The Chicago premiere of

***Ella***

Book by Jeffrey Hatcher

Conceived by Rob Ruggiero and Dyke Garrison

Musical arrangements by Danny Holgate

Directed by Rob Ruggiero

November 28, 2007-Januray 6, 2008

Opening: Wednesday, December 5, 2007, at 7:30 p.m

Northlight has a tradition of producing musicals about the American experience, most recently *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues* and *Dinah Was*. In this Midwest premiere, the time is July, 1966, and the place is a concert stage in Nice on the French Riviera. Ella Fitzgerald, "The First Lady of Song", rehearses for an upcoming concert to be taped for posterity. Her producer requests that she add more "patter" about her life to the show. With this daunting task before her she begins to reminisce, uncovering a past the public never new. A theatrical event that weaves myth and memory, mystery and music, including 14 of her hits, including *That Old Black Magic* and *They Can't Take That Away From Me*, *Ella* will take you inside the heart and soul of one of the world's greatest jazz singers.

The Midwest premiere of

***Gee's Bend***

by Elyzabeth Gregory Wilder

January 30, 2008-March 9, 2008

Opening: February 6, 2008, at 7:30 p.m.

This epic yet intimate play spans more than fifty years, following the lives of Sadie Pettway and the women of Gee's Bend, Alabama, who sing hauntingly beautiful gospel melodies as they create magnificent—and now, world-famous—hand-made quilts. Sadie emerges as both a great artist and greatly admired human being after a lifetime of abuse, racial indignities and hardships that face the working poor. This true story has already touched millions who witnessed the stunning quilt work and riveting life story of the women of Gee's Bend through a national exhibition tour, featured on PBS's *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*, and in *Newsweek*, *House and Garden*, and Oprah Winfrey's *O Magazine*.

The world premiere, commissioned by Northlight Theatre

***Better Late***

by Larry Gelbart and Craig Wright

directed by Artistic Director BJ Jones

featuring John Mahoney and Michael Nussbaum

April 2, 2008-May 11, 2008

Opening: Wednesday, April 8, 2008, at 7:30 p.m.

This world premiere production, commissioned by Northlight, brings back playwright **Craig Wright** (*Grace, Lady*) and actor **Michael Nussbaum** (*Grace*, among many others) and welcomes **John Mahoney** and playwright **Larry Gelbart** (Emmy and Tony Award-winning author of *M.A.S.H.* and *City of Angels*), to Northlight. When Julian is forced to move in with his ex-wife and her new husband, the situation quickly spirals out of control. As the laughter builds, the question becomes: how long will Julian have to stay? This biting funny December-December-December romance is a not-to-be-missed new comedy.

(more)

**Northlight Announces 2007/08 Season  
add two**

The Midwest premiere of  
**The Lady with All the Answers**  
**by David Rambo**  
**directed by Artistic Director BJ Jones**  
**May 21, 2008-June 29, 2008**  
**Opening: Wednesday, May 28, 2008, 7:30 p.m.**

For decades, renowned advice columnist and Chicago icon Ann Landers answered countless letters from lovelorn teens, confused couples, and others in need of advice. In an ironic twist, she finds herself with a deadline looming for a column on a new kind of heartbreak—her own. Drawn from her life and letters, *The Lady with All the Answers* is an entertaining visit with the wise, funny, no-nonsense woman who helped shape the social landscapes of the last half-century.

**Subscriptions to the 2007-08 Northlight Season are currently available through the box office, 9501 Skokie Boulevard in Skokie, or by phone, (847) 673-6300.** More information is available at [www.northlight.org](http://www.northlight.org). Subscriptions range in price from \$99-\$210. A limited number of season subscriptions for the Opening Night performances (which also includes a reception with the cast) are available for \$240, subject to availability.

Single tickets will go on sale in the fall and range \$35-\$55. Opening nights are \$60, which includes a post-show reception with the cast.

**Curtain times are:** Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.; select Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.; Fridays at 8:00 p.m.; Saturdays at **2:30 p.m. (new time)** and 8:00 p.m.; Sundays at 2:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Northlight Theatre is supported in part by generous contributions from: The Allyn Foundation; The Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation; The Chicago Tribune Foundation; ComEd; Patrick and Anna M. Cudahy Fund; Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; LaSalle Bank; The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; The Margolis Firm, PC; National Endowment for the Arts; Daniel F. and Ada L. Rice Young People's Programming Endowment; Northern Trust Charitable Trust; Polk Bros. Foundation; Dr. Scholl Foundation; The Shubert Foundation; Skokie Fine Arts Commission; Target Corporation; and The Chicago Community Trust.

Northlight embarks upon its 33<sup>rd</sup> season in 2007-08 as the fourth largest non-profit theatre in Chicago. Dedicated to enhancing the cultural life of the North Shore and Chicago, Northlight presents theatrical works which reflect and challenge the values and beliefs of the community it serves while continuing to grow its reputation for launching world premieres, new musicals, heartwarming plays and intelligent dramas.

In its 33-year history, the organization has mounted over 150 productions, including over 32 world premieres, and garnered 132 Joseph Jefferson Award nominations and 22 Awards. As one of the area's premier theatre companies, Northlight is a regional magnet for critical and professional acclaim, as well as talent of the highest quality. For more information on Northlight Theatre, visit [www.northlight.org](http://www.northlight.org).

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