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October 16, 2007

Writers' Theatre presents
The Turn of the Screw
directed by Jessica Thebus

Glencoe, IL— Writers' Theatre Artistic Director **Michael Halberstam** and Executive Director **Kathryn M. Lipuma** announce ***The Turn of the Screw*** adapted by Jeffery Hatcher from the classic story by Henry James. The production, directed by **Jessica Thebus**, runs **November 13, 2007–March 30, 2008**, at Writers' Theatre, 664 Vernon Avenue in Glencoe. **The official press opening is Wednesday, November 28, 2007, at 7:30 p.m.**

Part ghost story and part psychological thriller, this classic tale concerns a governess hired by a wealthy recluse to look after his orphaned niece and nephew. The seemingly innocent children gradually reveal a series of terrifying secrets. Henry James's novel has been adapted by Hatcher with minimal setting and relies instead upon the word and the artist. Ideally suited for the intimacy of the bookstore, this spine-tingling script places the weight of its dramatic success upon the perfect fusion of stagecraft and the far reaches of the imagination.

"Writers' Theatre has a long standing tradition of presenting literary adaptations. It is particularly pleasurable to be presenting this taught and vital two actor adaptation of *The Turn of the Screw* at exactly the same time that we are opening our three-actor adaptation of *Crime and Punishment* in New York," comments **Artistic Director Michael Halberstam**. "I have admired Jessica's virtuosity as a director and we are pleased to welcome her to Writers' Theatre for the first time. She is matched in depth and skill by her cast, design team and by Jeffrey Hatcher's imaginative adaptation. I am eagerly anticipating their vision as we bring to life this intriguing and terrifying classic ghost story!"

The cast includes **LaShawn Banks** (*The Man*) and **Kymberly Mellen** (*The Woman*).

The designers are **Jack Magaw** (scenic), **Andre Pluess** (sound), **J.R. Lederle** (lighting), **Rachel Anne Healy** (costume) and **Meredith Miller** (properties). **Peter Davis** is the dramaturg. **Rose Marie Parker** is the stage manager.

Jessica Thebus (*Director*) is an Associate Artist with Steppenwolf Theatre Company and an Artistic Associate at About Face Theatre and The Corn Exchange in Dublin, Ireland. Recent directing projects include *Sonia Flew*, *Intimate Apparel*, *Lady Madeline* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company), *Citizens of the World* (Millennium Park) *Inherit the Wind*, *Red Herring* (Northlight Theatre), *The Clean House* (Goodman Theatre, Jeff nomination - Best Production), *Aren't We All* (Remy Bumppo Theatre Company), *They All Fall Down: The Richard Nickel Story* (Lookingglass Theatre Company), *Salao: The Worst Kind of Unlucky* (Redmoon Theatre), *Melancholy Play*, *Abingdon Square* (Piven Theatre Workshop), *Whispering City*, *The Water Engine* and *A Tale of Two Cities* (Steppenwolf for

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The Turn of the Screw
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Young Adults). She has also worked with About Face Theatre directing *Pulp* (Joseph Jefferson Nomination - Best Director and an After Dark Award - Best Production) and *Winesburg, Ohio* (Jeff Nomination - Best Director and an After Dark Award - Best Director). She has directed at Center Theater, Lifeline Theatre, Collaboration and Caravan Productions, as well as touring internationally with Bread and Puppet Theater. She holds a doctorate in Performance Studies from Northwestern University. Jessica has designed courses and taught at The University of Chicago, DePaul University, Columbia College, The University of Illinois and Roosevelt University. She is currently a faculty member in the Directing Program at Northwestern University.

LaShawn Banks (*The Man*) returns to Writers' Theatre after appearing as understudy for the title role in *Othello*; he also performed at Writers' in *The Duchess of Malfi* and *To the Green Fields Beyond*. Other Chicago credits include *Execution of Justice* (About Face Theatre), *A Year with Frog and Toad* (Chicago Children's Theatre) and five seasons of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* (Goodman Theatre). He has worked regionally with Summer Shakespeare at Notre Dame, Milwaukee Shakespeare Theatre, American Players Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre and The Cleveland Playhouse.

Kymerly Mellen (*The Woman*) returns to Writers' Theatre after appearing in *Another Part of the Forest*, *Arms and the Man*, *My Own Stranger*, *Our Town*, *Rocket to the Moon* (Joseph Jefferson Award and After Dark Award) and *Butley*. Chicago credits include *She Stoops to Conquer* (Northlight Theatre), *Intimate Apparel* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company), *Passion, Doll* (Ravinia Festival), *The Romance Cycle: Cymbeline and Pericles*, *My Fair Lady* (Court Theatre), *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Short Shakespeare! A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater). Regional credits include *Angel Street*, *Unnecessary Farce* (Peninsula Players) and *A Flea in Her Ear* (Milwaukee Repertory Theater). Film credits include the upcoming *Poker House*, *The Quiet*, *Joseph: Prophet of the Restoration* and *Screechers*. She can be seen and heard in numerous commercials and voice-overs.

Previews are **November 13-27, 2007**. **The opening press performance is on Wednesday, November 28, 2007, at 7:30 p.m.** The production runs through **March 30, 2008**. Curtain times are Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.; Thursdays and Fridays at 8 p.m.; Saturdays at 4:00 p.m. and 8 p.m.; Sundays at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. Wednesday matinees will be available on December 12, 2007, January 2 and 23, February 13, March 5 and 26, 2008, at 2 p.m. There are no performances scheduled for on November 22, December 25, 26, 2007 or January 1, 2008.

Ticket prices are \$40 for all preview performances; \$45 for Tuesdays through Thursdays; \$50 for Sunday evenings; \$55 for Fridays and Sunday matinees, and \$58 for both Saturday performances. Weekday Matinees are \$45. Tickets are available at the Box Office, 376 Park Avenue, Glencoe; 847-242-6000 or online at www.writerstheatre.org.

Discussions with artistic staff and cast members will follow the performances on: December 4, 5, 2007, January 15, 16, February 26, 27, March 19 and 25, 2008. **A pre-show lecture**, designed to make the Writers' Theatre experience even more enjoyable, will be given by Michael Halberstam or other members of the artistic staff on December 9, 2007, February 10 and March 16, 2008 at Gallery 659, 659 Vernon Avenue, Glencoe. The pre-show lecture will begin at 5:00 p.m.

Writers' Theatre presents the third annual "**From Page to Stage**," a partnership between Writers' Theatre and ten North Shore Public Libraries, which will present a variety of formats for experiencing *The Turn of the Screw* and its many elements. Events will be held each Thursday beginning January 10, 2008. For more information, please visit www.writerstheatre.org or www.frompagetostage.org.

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Lincolnshire Gourmet in Highland Park is the Writers' Theatre restaurant partner for *The Turn of the Screw*. Patrons can enjoy a meal at this new Lincolnshire Gourmet location (featured on *Oprah*), consisting of a salad, entrée, dessert and a glass of wine for only \$35, including tax! For more details or to purchase the package, patrons may call the Writers' Theatre Box Office at 847-242-6000.

The Writers' Theatre season is underwritten, in part, by a grant from The Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

Writers' Theatre is a professional company focusing on the word and the artist, with the playwright at the center of its mission. The 16-year-old company produces classic scripts and cultivates new works, including literary adaptations, second productions and rarely or infrequently produced works of classic writers, invigorating them with new energy and a new approach. For its first 12 years, Writers' Theatre performed in the anteroom of "Books on Vernon" at 664 Vernon Avenue in Glencoe. In the fall of 2003, the company opened its new 108-seat thrust stage performance venue at 325 Tudor Court, continuing its tradition of bringing audiences face to face with literature's greatest creators and creations in an intimate environment.

The company continues to produce works in both spaces, maintaining an intimate theatrical experience for audiences while growing annual attendance to more than 30,000. In the past seven years, the subscriber base has grown almost 250%, from 1,500 in 2000 to more than 5,200 in 2007. With an operating budget of more than \$3.2 million, Writers' Theatre is supported by a staff of 16 full-time employees and a 29-member Board of Trustees.

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Fact Sheet / *The Turn of the Screw*

Adapted By: **Jeffery Hatcher** from the story by Henry James
Directed by: **Jessica Thebus**
Featuring: **LaShawn Banks, Kymberly Mellen**

Dates: **Previews:** November 13-27, 2007
Press opening: November 28, 2007, at 7:30 p.m.
Regular run: November 28, 2007-March 30, 2008

Schedule: **Tuesdays & Wednesdays:** 7:30 p.m.
Thursdays & Fridays: 8:00 p.m.
Saturdays: 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.
Sundays: 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.
Weekday Matinees: December 12, January 2, 23, February 13,
March 5 and March 26 at 2:00 p.m.
**There are no performances scheduled on November 22,
December 25, 26 or January 1.**

Special events: **Pre-show lectures:** December 9, February 10 and March 16 at
5:00 p.m. at Gallery 659, 659 Vernon Avenue, Glencoe
Post-show discussions: December 4, 5, January 15, 16, February 26, 27,
March 19 and 25 at 664 Vernon Avenue, Glencoe

Location: **Writers' Theatre, 664 Vernon Avenue, Glencoe**

Tickets: Previews: \$40 for all preview performances.
Regular run: \$45 for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evening performances;
\$50 for Sunday evenings; \$55 for Fridays and Sunday matinees; and \$58 for
Saturdays (both performances). Weekday matinees are \$45.
Group rates are available for groups of 10 or more. Please contact GroupTix at
877-4-GRP-TIX (877-447-7849) or www.grouptix.net.

Box Office: The Box Office is located at **376 Park Avenue, Glencoe;**
847-242-6000; www.writerstheatre.org

NOTES OF INTEREST:

- *The Turn of the Screw* was originally published in 1898 as a novella written by Henry James and has since been adapted for the stage, film, television, opera and ballet.
- Jessica Thebus recently directing *When The Messenger Is Hot* at 59E59 Theaters, where Writers' production of *Crime & Punishment*, directed by Michael Halberstam, is currently running.
- Costume designer Rachel Anne Healey designed costumes for the world premiere of this adaptation with City Lit Theatre.
- Jeffrey Hatcher also co-wrote the stage adaptation of *Tuesdays with Morrie* with author Mitch Albom and *Three Viewings*, a comedy consisting of three monologues, each of which takes place in a funeral home.
- Jessica and Kymberly previously worked together at Steppenwolf with *Intimate Apparel*. This is Jessica's first time directing at Writers' Theatre.
- **Writers' Theatre presents the third annual "From Page to Stage,"** a partnership between Writers' Theatre and ten North Shore Public Libraries, which will present a variety of formats for experiencing *The Turn of the Screw* and its many elements. Events will be held each Thursday beginning January 10, 2008. For more information, please visit www.writerstheatre.org.

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