

NEWS RELEASE

September 15, 2010

Contacts:

Company One: Mason Sand
msand@companyone.org, 617 230-6753

Huntington Theatre Company: Rebecca Curtiss
rcurtiss@huntingtontheatre.bu.edu, 617 273-1537

SpeakEasy Stage Company: Jim Torres
jimtorres@speakeasystage.com, 617 529-1670

UPDATED DATE AND VENUE INFORMATION: “THE SHIRLEY, VT PLAYS” FESTIVAL MARATHON DAY ADDED; “THE ALIENS” MOVES AND WILL OPEN OCTOBER 22

(Boston) – As previously announced, three Boston theatre companies will engage in a landmark local collaboration this fall to produce breakout writer Annie Baker’s first three plays – *Circle Mirror Transformation*, produced by the **Huntington Theatre Company** (October 15 – November 14), *Body Awareness*, produced by **SpeakEasy Stage Company** (October 22 – November 20), and *The Aliens*, produced by **Company One** (October 22 – November 20). All set in the fictional town of Shirley, VT, the plays will run together in the first-ever festival dedicated to the work of this wryly observant young writer, which will be curated by the Huntington Theatre Company.

***The Aliens* will now perform in Hall A, Calderwood Pavilion at the BCA. Performances will begin Friday, October 22, rather than the previously announced October 29.**

Audience can attend all three plays in a single “marathon” day on Saturdays, October 23, 30, November 6, and 13, and Sundays, November 7 and 13. Subscribers to each of the three participating companies will receive discount offers on the other two festival productions; tickets are now on sale and are available through BostonTheatreScene.com and at 617 933-8600.

“I fell in love with the characters in these plays and with the idea of creating a fictional New England town at the Calderwood Pavilion at the BCA,” says Huntington Artistic Director Peter DuBois. “Each of Annie’s plays stands on their own with their imagination and subtle humor, and seen together they form a striking portrait of Shirley, Vermont. The same is true for this festival; each company has their own identity and audience, but together they bring out the richness of the work being presented at the Calderwood. Annie’s writing makes you happy to be in the theatre, makes you want to celebrate our art form – I am thrilled we are embarking on this journey.”

This festival presents a special opportunity to examine the rich and varied lives of a small town filled with humor, good intentions, unintended consequences, and accidental beauty. Audiences will experience three miniature portraits of Shirley, VT, a town not found on any map. The plays will have staggered openings beginning October 15 but run concurrently, providing audience members the opportunity see all three between October 22 and November 14.

“We are thrilled to team up with up the Huntington and Company One to introduce Boston theatregoers to the delightful denizens of Shirley, Vermont,” says SpeakEasy Stage Company Producing Artistic Director Paul Daigneault. “Both the partnership and the plays celebrate the importance and spirit of community.”

“Annie Baker’s voice is one of the freshest and most exciting on the American stage today,” says Company One Artistic Director Shawn LaCount. “Company One shares her commitment to establishing community and exploring the fragility of the simple moments that is everyday life.”

For more information about the festival, visit ShirleyVTPlays.com.

CIRCLE MIRROR TRANSFORMATION

Directed by Melia Bensussen

October 15 – November 14, 2010

at the Calderwood Pavilion at the BCA (Wimberly Theatre)

Produced by the Huntington Theatre Company

When the four students in Marty’s creative drama class experiment with harmless theatre games, hearts are quietly torn apart and tiny wars of epic proportions are waged and won. Set in the Shirley, Vermont community center, this beautifully crafted new comedy mixes antic sadness and hilarious detail, and became a runaway hit Off Broadway. *The New York Times* called *Circle Mirror Transformation*, “Absorbing, unblinking, and sharply funny!” It was twice extended and played to sold-out houses at Playwrights Horizons in September – November 2009 and then remounted and extended once again in December 2009 – January 2010.

BODY AWARENESS

Directed by Paul Daigneault

October 22 – November 20, 2010

at the Calderwood Pavilion at the BCA (Roberts Studio Theatre)

Produced by SpeakEasy Stage Company

"Body Awareness Week" on a Vermont college campus is the setting for this smart and touching comedy about ordinary people grasping for connection. Phyllis, the organizer, her partner Joyce and Joyce’s grown son Jared are hosting one of the guest artists in their home, Frank, a photographer famous for his female nude portraits. While Phyllis is outraged by Frank’s photos, Joyce is intrigued enough to consider posing for Frank, sparking a firestorm that could break apart their unconventional family. *The New York Times* called *Body Awareness* “an engaging new comedy by a young playwright with a probing understated voice,” and *The New Yorker* called the play “an impressive and occasionally beautiful meditation on the mysteries of being moved.” *Body Awareness* was first produced Off-Broadway by the Atlantic Theater Company in May 2008.

THE ALIENS

Directed by Shawn LaCount

October 22 – November 20, 2010

at the Calderwood Pavilion at the BCA (Hall A)

Produced by Company One

In the town of Shirley, two 30-something dropouts hang out by the dumpster behind the coffee shop where they meditate on music, philosophy, shrooms, and Bukowski. When a teenage employee asks them to relocate, these disillusioned young men find the disciple they’ve been waiting for. A beat-tinged, psychotropic journey, Annie Baker’s *The Aliens* is a funny and heartening look at friendship, ritual, and

small town New England. Company One is proud to join the Huntington Theatre Company and SpeakEasy Stage Company in exploring the tiny spaces of our small towns.

Annie Baker's other full-length plays include *The End of the Middle Ages* and *Nocturama*. Her work has been developed and produced at New York Theatre Workshop, Playwrights Horizons, MCC, Atlantic Theater Company, Soho Rep, the Orchard Project, the Ontological-Hysteric, Ars Nova, the Wilma Theatre, the Lark, the Magic Theatre, the Cape Cod Theatre Project, the Bay Area Playwrights Festival, and the Sundance Institute Theatre Lab in Utah and Ucross, Wyoming. She is a member of MCC's Playwrights Coalition, Ars Nova's Play Group, and EST, and is an alumna of Youngblood and the Soho Rep Writer/Director Lab. Recent honors include a Time Warner Storytelling Fellowship, a MacDowell Fellowship, and commissions from Center Theatre Group and Playwrights Horizons. She received her M.F.A. from Mac Wellman's playwriting program at Brooklyn College.

About Company One

Company One's mission is to redefine the typical theatrical experience by developing, producing, and promoting socially relevant plays and innovative educational programming that appeal to, represent, and include Boston's diverse urban communities. Since its inception in 1998, Company One has become known in the media and in the community for providing the most progressive, racially, and socially relevant programming in Boston. For the past 11 years, Company One has been instrumental in diversifying Boston's theatre community of artists and audiences through producing innovative, award-winning theatre and theatrical training programs. Company One is a Resident Theatre Company at the Boston Center for the Arts. For more information, visit companyone.org

About the Huntington Theatre Company

The Huntington Theatre Company, in residence at Boston University, is Boston's largest professional theatre company. Under the direction of Artistic Director Peter DuBois and Managing Director Michael Maso, the Huntington creates seven new productions each season featuring world-class theatre artists from Boston and Broadway and the most promising new talent. The Huntington has transferred over a dozen of these productions to Broadway, including recent favorites Noel Coward's *Present Laughter* and *Alfred Hitchcock's The 39 Steps*. The Huntington also runs nationally renowned programs in education and new play development, and serves the local theatre community through its operation of the Stanford Calderwood Pavilion at the Boston Center for the Arts, which the Huntington built in 2004.

The Calderwood Pavilion, which includes the 370-seat Wimberly Theatre and the 200-seat Roberts Studio Theatre, houses most of the Huntington's new works activities and complements its 890-seat, Broadway-style main stage, the Boston University Theatre. The Huntington provides the first-class facilities and audience services of the Calderwood Pavilion to dozens of organizations each year, including some of Boston's most exciting small and mid-sized theatre companies, at significantly subsidized rates. For more information, visit huntingtontheatre.org.

About SpeakEasy Stage Company

Since 1992, SpeakEasy Stage Company has distinguished itself as Boston's premiere theatre staging Boston premiers, consistently winning acclaim for presenting top-quality productions of vital, cutting-edge plays and musicals that might not otherwise play the Hub. Our mission is to connect, inspire, and challenge our audience with the most socially relevant theatrical premieres featuring the most talented artists in Boston. We are also committed to supporting local actors, directors, and designers by providing a nurturing environment in which they can practice and develop their craft. In 2007, SpeakEasy was named the Calderwood Pavilion Resident Theatre for the Boston Center for the Arts. For more information, visit speakeasystage.com.

#

#

#