

For Immediate Release

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New Leaf Theatre selects two world, one U.S. premiere for 5th anniversary season

Lincoln Park Company lands U.S. premiere of David Hare's *Permanent Way*, brisk new version of *Master Builder* and local playwright's comic update of Pandora, *Vox Pandora*

CHICAGO, IL – In addition to the U.S. premiere of David Hare's 2003 play, *The Permanent Way*, about the British railroad disasters, New Leaf Theatre has selected the world premiere of a new adaptation of Ibsen's *The Master Builder*, directed by Adam Webster, and the world premiere of Chicago playwright (and NeoFuturists ensemble member) Bilal Dardai's *Vox Pandora*. All three plays will comprise the company's fifth season at the Lincoln Park Cultural Center.

“This season, New Leaf is exploring the lessons we learn from history, and the dangers of ignoring those lessons,” Artistic Director Brandon Ray, who will be directing *The Permanent Way*, said. “With *The Permanent Way*, we see a government and corporate enterprise reaping the consequences of failing to adapt and refusing to admit mistakes. In *The Master Builder*, we explore the age-old struggle of an older generation to hang on to power and to suppress the younger generation at its heels. And in *Vox Pandora*, we find a rising political star attempting to harness an ancient eternal power for his own very temporal ends. It is our hope that through these very diverse expressions of a similar theme, we can find connection with our audiences that will bring about a renewal of thought and purpose.”

About the season

The season will open with Matthew Ira Swaye's brisk, 65-minute version of Henrik Ibsen's classic *The Master Builder*. Directed by *the side project* Artistic Director Adam Webster, *The Master Builder* will open Wednesday, September 13 and run through October 21, 2006, at 7:30 p.m.

The Permanent Way, directed by New Leaf Artistic Director Brandon Ray, will run January 17 through February 17. Echoing current concerns of increased terror threats, privatized welfare, response to natural

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disasters, disbursement of relief funds, and the government's overall role in keeping us safe and sound, this U.S. premiere is sure to bring into sharp focus many of our current debates, and ignite new ones.

The company will round out the season with Bilal Dardai's comic rewrite of Greek mythology, *Vox Pandora*. The play concerns Hope, the sole remaining inhabitant of Pandora's infamous box, and what ensues when she is convinced to leave the box and enter our world. Slated for April 18-May 19.

"New Leaf Theatre is thrilled to be presenting these exciting new works," Ray added. "I, personally, am grateful for the privilege to bring such a powerful piece by such a respected artist as David Hare to audiences in the U.S., and we are all very proud to be staging the world premieres of gifted playwrights Matthew Swaye and Bilal Dardai."

About the company.

The company ended last season with Lisa Loomer's 1991 comedy *Accelerando*, which was "Recommended" by Hedy Weiss of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, who called the production "lighthearted and absurd ... rapid-fire romance ... creatively staged." The *Tribune* said the show was "...*Frankie and Johnny* (meets) *Annie Hall*...clever...endearing."

New Leaf's spring 2005 show, *As It Is in Heaven*, directed by Ray, was heralded by local press as well as being JEFF Recommended, and subsequently nominated for Best Ensemble. In addition to being "Highly Recommended" by the *Chicago Reader*, the *Pioneer Press* called the play "engrossing," the production "engaging" and the cast a "uniformly fine ensemble" and *ChicagoCritic.com* called Brandon Ray's direction "stellar," the cast "terrific" and the production "compelling (and) intoxicating."

Other heralded past productions also include *Brilliant Traces* ("Highly Recommended... enchanting... perceptive direction" – *Chicago Reader*) and a world premiere adaptation of *Girl in Hyacinth Blue* ("Recommended" – *Sun-Times*; "powerful" – *Chicago Reader*)

For more information on the company or show visit www.newleaftheatre.org.

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