

~ COUNTDOWN TO 100 ~

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 29, 2009

*“Have you ever told yourself an unforgivable lie?”***PALACE OF THE END**

BY JUDITH THOMPSON

Directed by Jason Maghanoy

Palace of the End is a searing triptych of monologues that present different perspectives on the war in Iraq. A young and pregnant American soldier – in disgrace for her treatment of Iraqi prisoners – tells us about “My Pyramids”; a disillusioned British weapons inspector invites us to witness his suicide at “Harrowdown Hill”; and an Iraqi woman shares the heartbreaking story of her family’s torture in “Instruments of Yearning”. The characters are all based on real people and events.

Using the key words magic, fear and hope as references, director **Jason Maghanoy** (the current playwright-in-residence at Cahoots Theatre Projects) has developed “a very magical theatrical language for the piece, to link the characters more completely.”

This is an ensemble production, focusing on the voices of the characters. The actors work as a group, bleeding in and out of each other’s monologues like memories, like ghosts, like dreams, creating surprising moments of lightness.

“We tried to capture the fear in the piece, the cruelty, but balance it with this idea of a startling and powerful hope,” continues Maghanoy. “People live. Fight. Survive. They endure. And these characters endure in beautiful and surprising ways.”

Lynda Yearwood’s set and costume design is simple and elegant, and **Alaina Perttula’s** lighting strikes a perfect balance, isolating each speaking character, while keeping the other two actors ghostly, yet visible - “there, and yet not there”.

Montreal-born **Judith Thompson** is a two-time winner of both the Governor General’s Award and the Floyd S. Chalmers Canadian Play Award, and was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2005. *Palace of the End* earned a Dora Mavor Moore Award as Outstanding New Play, as well as the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize in 2008 - Thompson is the first Canadian playwright to be honoured with the Blackburn award. In August 2009, *Palace of the End* won the 2009 Amnesty International Freedom of Expression Award.

Alumnae Theatre Company’s production features **Laura Vincent** (seen here last season as Alice the stripper in *Closer*) as the pregnant and disgraced American soldier, **Christopher Kelk** (Driftwood Theatre’s *King Lear*) as weapons inspector Dr. David Kelly, and **Sochi Fried** (*36 Little Plays About Hopeless Girls* - Toronto Fringe) as the Iraqi mother, Nehrjas al Saffarh.

The Details - *Palace of the End*

Running Time: approx. 90 mins, no intermission

Opening Night: Friday November 13, 2009

Performances: Friday November 13 - Saturday November 28, 2009

Schedule: Wednesday - Saturday 8:00pm; Sunday matinée at 2:00pm

There will be a Talkback with cast & director after the matinée on November 22.

Tickets: Wednesday 2-for-1; Thursday, Friday & Saturday \$20; Sunday PWYC

Location: Alumnae Theatre, 70 Berkeley Street, 3rd Floor Studio, Toronto

Box Office: 416-364-4170, box 1 email reservations@alumnaetheatre.com
Box Office opens one hour prior to each performance

Please note: Box Office does not accept credit or debit cards

Production photos for *Palace of the End* will be available for download on Alumnae Theatre's Media page at www.alumnaetheatre.com/media.html by November 3.

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For more information or to set up an interview please contact:
Tina McCulloch at 416-967-4416 or contactus@alumnaetheatre.com

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Check our website at www.alumnaetheatre.com for press releases, production photographs, and a retrospective on how Alumnae Theatre shaped Toronto's theatre scene.

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