

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**American Repertory Theater
Announces Three Festivals for 2009/10 Season:**

Festival #1
SHAKESPEARE EXPLODED!
THE DONKEY SHOW • SLEEP NO MORE •
BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Festival #2
AMERICA: BOOM, BUST, AND BASEBALL
GATZ: PARTS 1&2 • PARADISE LOST • RED SOX NATION

Emerging America Festival

New Artistic Director • New Initiatives • New Pricing

“For me, the heart of the theater is what happens between the performer and spectator: the pulsating, vibrating flow of energy which can only happen live in the presence of both parties.” — Diane Paulus, A.R.T. Artistic Director

Cambridge, Mass — The American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.), under the Artistic Direction of Diane Paulus, is pleased to announce its 2009/10 Season, which is also the A.R.T.'s 30th year in Cambridge.

The season will be focused on three theatrical festivals:

Festival #1: Shakespeare Exploded! is a festival of theatrical events inspired by three classic plays by Shakespeare. *The Donkey Show*, a disco adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, unfolds around the audience as a nightclub fantasy filled with hits from the 70s. *Sleep No More* takes the audience on a sensory journey in this immersive “adventure theater” work inspired by *Macbeth* and Hitchcock's thrillers. Celebrate the holidays with *Best of Both Worlds*, an R&B and gospel musical that takes its story from *The Winter's Tale*.

Festival #2: America: Boom, Bust and Baseball explores the hopes, disappointments, and triumphs of the past American century from the roaring twenties to the Great Depression to the Boston Red Sox's stunning 2004 World Series victory. It begins with the boom - *Gatz* brings every word of Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* to life in this once-in-a-lifetime marathon theatrical experience. The bust is Clifford Odets' *Paradise Lost*, a powerful drama about an American family that loses everything in the throes of economic crisis. Spring is baseball season, with the world premiere of *Red Sox Nation*, an exhilarating new musical that explores the source of the infamous Curse and the secret to its end by blending fiction, fact, and the mystical power of the game. /over

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In addition to these productions, the A.R.T. joins forces with the Huntington Theatre Company and the Institute of Contemporary Art to create ***Emerging America***, an annual festival of performance and readings. Held from May 14-16, 2010, ***Emerging America*** is a landmark festival of theater devoted exclusively to supporting and launching the new American voices of tomorrow. Boston and Cambridge will become cultural destinations for the best and brightest new American work. The festival will provide many forums for dialogue and late-night parties, along with a competition for favorite new work based on votes by the audience. Experience the energy, imagination, and creativity of some of the country's hottest young performers, writers, companies, and directors during a weekend filled with excitement and drama.

Diane Paulus explains: "As a director, my driving source of inspiration is the audience. Theater is more than simply a play on the stage: it's a ritual, a social occasion for people to come together and experience community. Our new initiative, **Experience the A.R.T.**, seeks to revolutionize the theater experience by giving audiences a voice, a sense of ownership, and a feeling of importance in the theatrical event. This season there will be opportunities to gather, dine, socialize, and even dance with the performers and with each other. In 2009/2010, all of our productions are programmed as festivals, encouraging audiences to experience our work as part of larger cultural events. We are actively reaching outward — producing some of our shows off-site in unusual locations and partnering with other cultural institutions in Boston and New York City, while strengthening our connections to Harvard University. The entire season speaks directly to the A.R.T.'s core mission — 'to expand the boundaries of theater.' We can do this by expanding our idea of what makes up the theatrical event. Audience members will be the focus for the A.R.T. as we move forward in the twenty-first century. Together we will redefine and revitalize theater for our community. I want to make greater-Boston a thriving arts landmark for the most cutting-edge and important new work in the country."

Details about the 2009/10 Season follow:

Festival # 1: Shakespeare Exploded!

The Donkey Show

Directed by Diane Paulus and Randy Weiner

Conceived by Randy Weiner

Opens August 21, 2009 • Zero Arrow Theater

"Exuberant and witty...a bacchanal...the heyday of Studio 54!"— *New York Times*

From its six-year run in New York City to a world tour from London to Seoul, the celebrated smash hit *The Donkey Show* now takes Boston by storm, bringing the ultimate disco experience – a crazy circus of mirror balls and feathered divas, of roller skaters and hustle queens. Come party on the dance floor to all the 70s disco hits you know by heart as the show unfolds around you. *The Donkey Show* tells the story of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* through the great 70s anthems, including "We are Family," "I Love the Nightlife," "Car Wash," "Ring My Bell," and "Last Dance." The enchanted forest of Shakespeare's classic comedy becomes the glittered world of retro disco as the lovers escape from their real lives to experience a night of dream, abandon, and fantasy. /over

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Sleep No More

By Punchdrunk

Devised and directed by Felix Barrett, Maxine Doyle, and The Company

A co-creation with the A.R.T., produced in Association with Punchdrunk and Hammerstein WT

Opens October 8, 2009 • location TBA

“Methought I heard a voice cry ‘Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep’.”

— *Macbeth*, Act II Sc ii

The award-winning British theater company Punchdrunk makes its U.S. debut with *Sleep No More*, an immersive production inspired by Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, told through the lens of a Hitchcock thriller. An extraordinary, unexpected location will be exquisitely transformed into an installation of cinematic scenes that evoke the world of *Macbeth*. The audience will have the freedom to roam the environment and experience a sensory journey as they choose what to watch and where to go in this unique theatrical adventure.

Best of Both Worlds

Book & lyrics by Randy Weiner

Music by Diedre Murray

Co-written and directed by Diane Paulus

Opens November 21, 2009 • Loeb Stage

“This rousing musical has taken the plot from *The Winter’s Tale*, tossed out anything resembling Shakespearean language, and achieves a hypnotic effect with musical numbers that leave the audience whooping.” — *New York Times*

Bursting with the sounds of R&B and gospel, *Best of Both Worlds* is a soulful re-envisioning of *The Winter’s Tale*, Shakespeare’s timeless story of heartbreak and redemption. Clap your hands, jump out of your seat, and feel the power of love with this holiday treat for all ages. *Best of Both Worlds* takes us on a journey through the rich musical tapestry of R&B, rediscovering Shakespeare’s characters with smooth sounds and funky beats. When jealousy rips apart love and friendship, only the revelatory power of gospel can restore the enduring bonds of faith, family, and forgiveness. The production will feature a rotating roster of Greater Boston’s most celebrated gospel choirs, including community, university, and church choirs.

Festival # 2: Boom, Bust, and Baseball

Gatz: Parts 1 & 2

By Elevator Repair Service

Directed by John Collins

Opens January 8, 2010 • Loeb Stage

“ . . . a thrillingly theatrical and moving show.” — *New York Times*

One morning in the low-rent office of a mysterious small business, an employee finds a copy of *The Great Gatsby* in the clutter of his desk. /over

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He starts to read it out loud, and doesn't stop. At first his co-workers hardly notice. But after a series of strange coincidences, it's no longer clear whether he's reading the book or the book is doing something to him and his colleagues. An audacious theatrical tour de force performed in two parts, *Gatz* is not a stage adaptation of Fitzgerald's novel, but a reading of the entire book — brilliantly brought to life by one of New York's most exciting and acclaimed theater companies, Elevator Repair Service.

Paradise Lost

Written by Clifford Odets

Directed by Daniel Fish

Opens February 27, 2010 • Loeb Stage

"It is my hope that when people see *Paradise Lost* they're going to be glad they're alive. And I hope that after they've seen it, they'll turn to strangers sitting next to them and say 'hello'." — Clifford Odets

The American economy is on the edge of catastrophe and futures are at risk. The Gordon family, losing all they have worked for, strive to preserve their trust in each other and in the promise of their nation. Written by one of the greatest twentieth-century playwrights, *Paradise Lost* is a poetic, humane, and distinctly American drama that examines the impact of money and greed on family, business, and love. First produced by the Group Theatre in 1935, the play voices the suffering, hope, and shattered dreams of a country in the throes of financial crisis. Three-quarters of a century later, Americans are still wrestling the demons of nihilism and idealism, charity and greed, self-interest and compassion. Visionary director Daniel Fish creates a bold new production of this powerful play that grabs hold of the American dream and asks if our optimism is a force for good or merely a delusion, a means of survival or one of escape.

***Red Sox Nation* — World Premiere**

Book by Richard Dresser

Music by Robert Reale

Lyrics by Willie Reale

Directed by Diane Paulus

Opens May 8, 2010 • Loeb Stage

After the stunning Red Sox collapse in the 2003 playoffs, a baseball-obsessed team of musical theater writers (one long-suffering Sox fan and two smug yet oddly sympathetic Yankees fans) went in search of the reason for the Curse on the Red Sox. Their journey yielded surprising conclusions and a clever new musical. *Red Sox Nation* is an exhilarating blend of fact, fiction, and the mystical power of the game. It traces the origin of the Curse to a collision of three orphaned souls: Johnny O'Brien, a hard-luck right-hander on the 1919 Sox; his idol, the man-child Babe Ruth; and Daisy Wyatt, a dazzling African American blues singer and the love of Johnny's life. These three lives contain both the reason for the Curse and the secret to its end off the bat of Big Papi in 2004. *Red Sox Nation* packs a thoughtful commentary on American social history into a fun and spirited musical that will bring cheers and tears to baseball fans everywhere. /over

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New Lower Prices! More Accessible!

The A.R.T. has adopted a new pricing structure designed to make the theater experience more affordable to its audience. It has lowered its top-tier price from \$79 to \$75, and has introduced a new lower priced section at \$25 for all performances in the Loeb Drama Center and Zero Arrow Theater.

The A.R.T. is offering several new flexible packages, including **The Total Experience** package, which contains all seven productions — *The Donkey Show*, *Sleep No More*, *Best of Both Worlds*, *Gatz Part 1&2*, *Paradise Lost*, and *Red Sox Nation*; plus free tickets to the *Emerging America Festival*, starting at \$169 – **that's less than \$25 per ticket.**

Packages purchased before June 1 will offer the best discounts. They all come with a host of exclusive benefits, including free Zipcar membership, 10% discount on books at the Harvard Coop; as well as discounts on parking, fine dining, and tickets to other theaters.

The A.R.T. is also inaugurating its new website

www.americanrepertorytheater.org

a dynamic new tool created to engage and interact with our audience in new ways, including:

- video messages that will give audiences an inside perspective on the theater and our programs
- increased use of the blog, to engage audiences in discussions about the work

Over the next few months, the A.R.T. will be rolling out even more tools for audience discussion and interactivity - putting the audience at the center of the A.R.T. experience.

The American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.), is one of the country's most celebrated resident theaters and the winner of numerous awards — including the Tony Award, the Pulitzer Prize, and numerous local Elliot Norton and I.R.N.E. Awards; it was recently named one of the top three theaters in the country by Time magazine. Over its twenty-nine-year history the A.R.T. has welcomed major American and international theater artists whose singular visions generate and define the theater's work, presenting a varied repertoire that includes new plays, progressive productions of classical texts, and collaborations between artists from many disciplines. The Company has performed throughout the country, and worldwide in twenty-one cities in sixteen countries on four continents.

A.R.T. Artistic Director Diane Paulus is a director of opera and theater. She is the creator and director of *The Donkey Show*, which ran for six years Off-Broadway, and toured internationally to London, Edinburgh, Madrid, and Evian, France. Her recent theater work includes the Public Theater's revival of *HAIR* at the Delacorte in Central Park, now transferred to Broadway; /over

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Kiss Me Kate at Glimmerglass Opera; *Lost Highway*, based on the David Lynch film, an ENO co-production with the Young Vic in London, which received The South Bank Show Award for outstanding achievement during 2008; *Another Country* by James Baldwin at Riverside Church; *Turandot: Rumble for the Ring* at the Bay Street Theatre; *The Golden Mickeys* for Disney Creative Entertainment; *Best of Both Worlds*, a gospel/R&B adaptation of *A Winter's Tale* produced by Music-Theatre Group and The Women's Project; and *The Karaoke Show*, an adaptation of *Comedy of Errors* set in a karaoke bar. She directed the Obie award-winning and Pulitzer Prize finalist *Running Man* by jazz composer Diedre Murray and poet Cornelius Eady for Music-Theatre Group, and *Swimming with Watermelons*, created in association with Project 400, the theater company she co-founded with her husband Randy Weiner. Other work Off-Broadway: *Brutal Imagination*, and the Obie-award winning *Eli's Comin*, featuring the music and lyrics of Laura Nyro. As an opera director, her productions include *Don Giovanni*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Turn Of The Screw*, *Così fan tutte*, and all three Monteverdi operas, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, and *Orfeo* at the Chicago Opera Theater. She is a frequent collaborator with British conductor Jane Glover. In 2002, their critically acclaimed production of *Orfeo* was presented as part of The Monteverdi Cycle at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York City. She is currently working on *Death and the Powers*, a new opera by composer Tod Machover, librettist Robert Pinsky, with story by Randy Weiner, scheduled to premiere at the A.R.T. in 2010. Ms. Paulus taught at Barnard College/Columbia University, and the Yale School of Drama. She has been recently appointed Professor of the Practice in Harvard University's English Department; and is a 2009 recipient of the Harvard College Women's Leadership Award.

To learn more about the A.R.T. and its upcoming season log on to the A.R.T. website at www.americanrepertorytheater.org or call the A.R.T. InfoLine at (617) 547-8300. The InfoLine is also available 24 hours a day to provide directions to the theater; to order brochures, calendars, and newsletters, and to allow direct access to the A.R.T. Box Office (hours are noon to curtain time on performance days, noon to 5 pm on non-performance days, closed on Mondays).

The Loeb Drama Center, at 64 Brattle Street and Zero Arrow Theater, on the corner of Arrow Street and Massachusetts Avenue in Harvard Square, Cambridge are accessible to persons with special needs and to those requiring wheelchair seating or first-floor restrooms. Public transportation and discount parking are available nearby.

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