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**American Repertory Theater Announces
the World Premiere Musical
WITNESS UGANDA
Written by Matt Gould and Griffin Matthews
Directed by Diane Paulus
Will Be Part of the 2013/14 Season
Loeb Drama Center**

Cambridge, MA — The American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University is pleased to announce that it will present the world premiere of the musical **Witness Uganda**, created by **Matt Gould** and **Griffin Matthews**, and directed by A.R.T. Artistic Director **Diane Paulus**. The production will begin performances at the Loeb Drama Center, 64 Brattle Street, Cambridge in February of 2014.

Griffin, a black American volunteer, escapes New York City from his church's probing into his sexuality and travels to Uganda on a whim to help build a village school. But when he falls into a complicated relationship with a group of destitute, orphaned teenagers, he becomes obsessed with a mission that will change his and their lives forever. This journey, inspired by a true story, with original music by Matt Gould and Griffin Matthews, takes you from the beautiful rolling hills of the Ugandan countryside to a stifling apartment in New York City, from a joyous celebration of African youth to a terrifying abduction 8000 miles away. **Witness Uganda** documents the story of a young man battling to find his place in a world full of injustice and inhumanity and explores the question "is changing the world even possible?"

Witness Uganda is the recipient of the 2012 Richard Rodgers Award for Musical Theater, ASCAP's Dean Kay Award, ASCAP's Harold Adamson Award, and a grant from Conde Nast c/o Summit Series. It was workshopped at Disney/ASCAP (hosted by composer **Stephen Schwartz**) and at the Vineyard Arts Project/Art Farm. It has been performed in concert around the world and at events including Summit Series in Lake Tahoe, The Lido Investment Symposium in Beverly

Hills, The Rattlestick Theatre New Play Festival in New York City, and Patrick's Orphanage in Ndejje, Uganda.

Matt Gould is the co-creator of *Witness Uganda* (with Griffin Matthews). He is currently working on a commission for Yale Rep with playwright Carson Kreitzer on the new musical *Lempicka*. He wrote and directed *Free Style* for LA's REPRISE Theatre Company, wrote *Twilight in Manhego* (Jonathan Larson Foundation Award) for the NYMF, was commissioned by Playwrights Horizons to write music for Lucy Thurber's *Dillingham City*, composed music for *Dreyfus In Rehearsal* (Theatre Row) and translated, adapted and directed *Romeo and Juliet in Pulaar* (Mauritania, West Africa.) He was a composing fellow in New Dramatist's Composer/Librettist studio and has composed and arranged music for Grammy Winner Desmond Child, Terrence McNally, Vanessa Williams, and more. His music has been performed at Jazz at Lincoln Center, The Saban Theatre (LA), Symphony Space (NYC), Joe's Pub, New World Stages, Huntington Theatre Company, Rattlestick (NYC), Summit Series, and TEDx Wall Street.

Griffin Matthews graduated with a BFA in musical theater from Carnegie Mellon University, in his hometown of Pittsburgh, PA. He is a writer, director, actor, and philanthropist who splits his time between New York and Los Angeles. He co-wrote (*book, music, and lyrics*) and directed numerous staged readings of ***Witness Uganda*** including Vineyard Arts Project/Art Farm (*New Writers. New Plays*), Rattlestick Theater (*F*!@cking Good Plays Festival*), and *The ASCAP Foundation/Disney Musical Theatre Workshop*. He directed a reading of *Lempicka* for Yale Rep and New Dramatists. He and Matt Gould performed selections from *Witness Uganda* at this year's TEDx conference in New York City. As an actor, he has appeared on *The Mentalist*, *Suburgatory*, *Weeds*, *Torchwood*, *90210*, *Law & Order LA*, *Cashmere Mafia*, numerous commercials, hosted several web series, and has appeared Off-Broadway and regionally.

Director **Diane Paulus** is the Artistic Director of the American Repertory Theater at Harvard University in Cambridge, MA. Directing credits at the A.R.T. are ***Pippin***, ***The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess*** (winner of Tony Award for Best Revival of a Musical, nominated for 10 Tony Awards including Best Director), ***Prometheus Bound***, ***Death and The Powers: The Robots 'Opera***, ***The Donkey Show***, ***Johnny Baseball***, and ***Best of Both Worlds***. Her other recent work includes *Amaluna*, Cirque du Soleil's newest creation which had its world premiere in Montreal in April 2012; The Public Theater's Tony-Award winning revival of *HAIR* on Broadway (2009 Tony Award winner for Best Revival of a Musical, nominated for 8 Tony Awards including Best Director, Drama Desk Award, Outer Critics Circle Award and Drama League Award for Best Revival of a Musical), and London's West End; *Kiss Me, Kate* (Glimmerglass Opera) and *Lost Highway* (ENO co-production with the Young Vic.) Her opera credits include *The Magic Flute* (Canadian Opera Company), *Il mondo della luna* (Hayden Planetarium in New York); *Don Giovanni*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Turn Of The Screw*, *Così fan tutte*, and the *Monteverdi trilogy Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, and *Orfeo* (Chicago Opera Theater). She is a Professor of the Practice of Theater in Harvard University's English Department, and recipient of an Honorary Doctorate

from Boston Conservatory. Paulus received The Drama League's 2012 Founders Award for Excellence in Directing.

Tickets to **Witness Uganda** will be available with subscription purchases in May. Single tickets will be available in December 2013.

The American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University is dedicated to expanding the boundaries of theater. Winner of the 2012 Tony Award for Best Musical Revival for its production of **The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess**, the A.R.T. is a leading force in the American theater, producing groundbreaking work in Cambridge and beyond. The A.R.T. was founded in 1980 by Robert Brustein, who served as Artistic Director until 2002, when he was succeeded by Robert Woodruff. In 2008, Diane Paulus became the A.R.T.'s Artistic Director. The A.R.T. is the recipient of numerous other awards including the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theater, the Pulitzer Prize, and many Elliot Norton and I.R.N.E. Awards. Its recent premiere production of **Death and The Powers: The Robots' Opera** was a 2012 Pulitzer Prize finalist.

During its 32-year history, the A.R.T. has welcomed many major American and international theater artists, presenting a diverse repertoire that includes premieres of American plays, bold reinterpretations of classical texts and provocative new music theater productions. The A.R.T. has performed throughout the U.S. and worldwide in 21 cities in 16 countries on four continents. The A.R.T. is also a training ground for young artists. The Theater's artistic staff teaches undergraduate classes in acting, directing, dramatic literature, dramaturgy, voice, and design at Harvard University. In 1987, the A.R.T. founded the Institute for Advanced Theater Training at Harvard University. A two-year, five-semester M.F.A. graduate program that operates in conjunction with the Moscow Art Theater School, the Institute provides world-class professional training in acting, dramaturgy and voice.

Since becoming Artistic Director, Diane Paulus has enhanced the A.R.T.'s core mission to expand the boundaries of theater by continuing to transform the ways in which work is developed, programmed, produced and contextualized, always including the audience as a partner. Productions such as **Sleep No More, The Donkey Show, Gatz, The Blue Flower, Prometheus Bound, The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess**, and **Pippin** have engaged audiences in unique theatrical experiences. The A.R.T.'s club theater, OBERON, which Paulus calls a second stage for the 21st century, has become an incubator for local and emerging artists, and has also attracted national attention for its innovative programming model.

The Loeb Drama Center, located at 64 Brattle Street, Harvard Square, Cambridge, is fully accessible. ASL interpreted and audio described performances are available at select productions. Visit americanrepertorytheater.org/access for more information.

For further information call 617-547-8300 or visit **AmericanRepertoryTheater.org**

