

For immediate release:

**RESONANCE ENSEMBLE
ANNOUNCES 2008-09 SEASON**

**Two Plays Inspired By Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*:
the World Premiere of Christopher Boal's *23 KNIVES*
And Bernard Shaw's *CAESAR AND CLEOPATRA***

**Beginning January 11, opening January 18, 2009
At Theatre Row's CLURMAN THEATRE**

**Followed by Austin Pendleton's *BOOTH*
Beginning May 16, opening May 21, 2009
At Theatre Row's LION THEATRE**

New York: Now in its seventh season, **Resonance Ensemble** (Eric Parness, *Artistic Director*, Rachel Reiner, *Managing Director*) is proud to announce their 2008-09 season. This year's rep productions take their inspiration from an appropriate source during this politically charged season. *Julius Caesar* is at the heart of Resonance Ensemble's kick-off which includes the **World Premiere of *23 Knives***, a commissioned piece by **Christopher Boal** (*Crazy for the Dog*), **directed by Eric Parness**, as well as **Bernard Shaw's** rarely produced *Caesar and Cleopatra*, **directed by Kent Paul**. These productions will be followed by a newly revised version of **Austin Pendleton's** play *Booth*. **Resonance Ensemble is a Theatre-in-Residence at Theatre Row (410 West 42 Street)**. Cast to be announced shortly.

***23 KNIVES* by Christopher Boal, directed by Eric Parness
In rep: January 11–February 7, 2009**

In 44 B.C., the fate of the Roman Republic hangs in the balance. The most powerful man in the world, Julius Caesar, lies dead in the Theatre of Pompey, as politicians and military men ambitiously move to fill the void of power. Marcus Antonius summons the physician Antistius to uncover the truth about the assassination through a Greek technique called "autopsy". But as Antistius discovers more about the crime, the real truth becomes harder to find. Inspired by history's only mention of Antistius in Seutonius's *The Twelve Caesars*, *23 Knives* utilizes contemporary language to weave a darkly comic mystery about politics, patriotism, and the nature of truth.

***CAESAR AND CLEOPATRA* by Bernard Shaw, directed by Kent Paul
In rep: January 11–February 7, 2009**

Four years before Julius Caesar sailed to Rome to meet his untimely end, the great leader sought to conquer the outer reaches of the land, always questing for a kindred spirit to rival his own. What he finds, sitting on top of an ancient Egyptian Sphinx, is a young Queen Cleopatra, who beguiles him not only with her beauty, but because she may be the very match he's been seeking. Shaw's witty, satirical masterpiece personalizes the political relationship between an occupying force and a foreign power, and demonstrates that modern civilization has done little to advance the basic nature of the human soul.

***BOOTH* by Austin Pendleton, directed by Eric Parness
May 16 – June 6, 2009**

Generations collide as two of the greatest Shakespearean actors of all time take on their most challenging roles as father and son. Junius Booth, a gifted but tortured actor of the 19th century acclaimed throughout America for his vigorous performances of Shakespeare, discovers that his young son Edwin shares his passion for acting. Worried that Edwin will also inherit the emotional struggles that plague him, Junius takes Edwin under his wing to guide his career. This newly revised version of Austin Pendleton's family drama tracks the relationship between the father and son as they grapple with each other's passions and fears.

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23 KNIVES by Christopher Boal, directed by Eric Parness
CAESAR AND CLEOPATRA by Bernard Shaw, directed by Kent Paul
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Clurman Theatre, Theatre Row is located at 410 West 42 Street.

BOOTH by Austin Pendleton, directed by Eric Parness
May 16 – June 6, 2009

Lion Theatre, Theatre Row is located at 410 West 42 Street.

Tickets are \$18 and can be purchased at Ticket Central by phone 212/279 4200 or visit
www.ticketcentral.com

For more information about Resonance Ensemble please visit www.ResonanceEnsemble.org

Mr. Parness, Ms. Reiner, Mr. Boal and Mr. Paul are available for interviews.
To arrange please contact Springer Associates PR at 212 354 4660.

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Bios

Resonance Ensemble (Producer) is dedicated to developing new theatrical work inspired by the timelessness and universalism of the classics, and to producing resonating groups of theatrical presentations that echo across countless cultures and eras to confront themes and ideas significant to audiences of today. Resonance Ensemble has produced 13 full length productions including world premieres of plays by Charles L. Mee, Arthur Giron, Victor L. Cahn and Larry Loebell, and classics by Anton Chekhov, Sophocles, Oscar Wilde and Molière,

Bernard Shaw (playwright *Caesar and Cleopatra*) (1856-1950) was born in Dublin, the son of a civil servant. He established himself in London as a leading music and theatre critic in the 1880s and 1890s and became a prominent member of the Fabian Society, for which he composed many pamphlets. He began his literary career as a novelist; as a fervent advocate of the new theatre of Ibsen, he decided to write plays in order to illustrate his criticism of the English stage. *Widower's Houses* (1892) and *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1893) savagely attack social hypocrisy, while in plays such as *Arms and the Man* (1894) the criticism is less fierce. Shaw's radical rationalism, his utter disregard of conventions, his keen dialectic interest and verbal wit often turn the stage into a forum of ideas, most notable in *Man and Superman* (1903). Other important plays are *Candida* (1898), *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1901), *Major Barbara* (1905), *The Doctor's Dilemma* (1906), *Androcles and the Lion* (1912), *Pygmalion* (1912), *Heartbreak House* (1919), *Back to Methuselah* (1921) and *Saint Joan* (1923). Shaw wrote 63 plays and his complete works appeared in thirty-six volumes between 1930 and 1950. Shaw won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1925 and a 1938 Academy Award for his screenplay of *Pygmalion*.

Christopher Boal (playwright *23 Knives*) wrote the critically acclaimed play *Crazy for the Dog*, originally produced by the Jean Cocteau Rep at the Bouwerie Lane Theatre in the summer of 2006 and extended for a commercial off-Broadway run by Rachel Reiner Productions. Last year, *Crazy for the Dog* received its first regional production in Atlanta, GA. Boal is also the creator and author of *The Continuing Adventures of Dick Danger*, a late-night comedy/adventure serial that spanned 50 episodes over two and a half years in New York. A successful limited revival of the show recently bowed at the Cocteau, produced by Moonwork. Christopher's short film *Walking Charley* is the winner of two Aurora Awards and has been featured in a number of prominent film festivals. His play *A Hope for the World* won an audience award at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Christopher is a member of the BMI Musical Theatre Workshop, and is currently working on the musical *Low Life* with composer Andrew Sherman (*Debbie Does Dallas*) Boal is a former member of Curt Dempster's playwrights lab at Ensemble Studio Theatre.

Austin Pendleton (playwright *Booth*) is an American film, television, and stage actor, a playwright, and a theatre director and instructor. Pendleton is a graduate of Yale University, where he was a member of Scroll and Key Society. As a stage actor, he has appeared in *The Last Sweet Days of Isaac* (for which he won the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Performance), *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Grand Hotel*, *Goodtime Charley*, *The Little Foxes*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and *Up from Paradise*. Pendleton penned the plays *Uncle Bob*, *Booth*, and *Orson's Shadow*, all of which were staged off-Broadway. His direction of Elizabeth Taylor and Maureen Stapleton in Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes* garnered him a Tony Award nomination. Additional directing credits include *Spoils of War* by Michael Weller, *The Runner Stumbles* by Milan Stitt, and *The Size of the World* by Charles Evered. Pendleton served as Artistic Director for Circle Repertory Company with associate artistic director Lynne Thigpen. Pendleton is an ensemble member of the Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago. He began his artistic relationship there by directing Ralph Pape's *Say Goodnight, Gracie* for the 1979-80 season. In addition to directing at Steppenwolf, Mr. Pendleton has appeared as an actor in such Steppenwolf productions as *Uncle Vanya*, *Valparaiso* and *Educating Rita*. Notable film and tv roles include *Finding Nemo*, *A Beautiful Mind*, *What's Up Doc?*, *Catch-22*, *My Cousin Vinny* and *The Muppet Movie*.

Kent Paul (director *Caesar and Cleopatra*) helped launch Contemporary Stage Company in Wilmington, Delaware, where he directed productions of Donald Margulies' *Collected Stories* starring Lynn Redgrave, Joe Sutton's *Restoring the Sun*, and two plays in the 2006 Athol Fugard Festival: *The Island* with Keith Powell and Sean Patrick Thomas, and *Exits and Entrances*. Other productions include *The Bird Sanctuary* by Frank McGuinness with Elizabeth Franz and Hayley Mills (U.S. premiere, Pittsburgh Public Theater, Alabama Shakespeare Festival); *Long Day's Journey into Night* with Sam Waterston, Elizabeth Franz, John Slattery and James Waterston (Syracuse Stage); *The Glass Menagerie* and *Look Homeward, Angel* (PlayMakers Repertory Company); and *Lanford Wilson's The Mound Builders* (Burning Coal Theatre Company). Musicals include: *She Loves Me* (choreographed by Marge Champion) and *Kiss Me, Kate* at the Berkshire Theatre Festival. New scripts he has directed include *The Double Bass* with Boyd Gaines (an adaptation by Eric Overmyer of the German play by Patrick Süskind), *Peking Man* by Cao Yu (the foremost Chinese playwright of our time), *Journey to Gdansk*, which introduced Polish playwright Janusz Glowacki in this country, and the 2008 Fringe Festival production of *Lecture, with Cello* by Robert Moulthrop. His documentary film *Sanford Meisner — The Theater's Best Kept Secret* was broadcast on PBS, had an extended run at the Public Theater, and was seen at film festivals around the world. A native of Nebraska, he is a graduate of Harvard College and the Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre.

Eric Parness (director *23 Knives* and *Booth*) is the Artistic Director of Resonance Ensemble where he has directed productions of Sophocles' *Antigone*, Gorky's *The Lower Depths*, Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* and world premiere productions of *Strange Bedfellows* by Bruce Cohen, *La Tempestad* by Larry Loebell, *The Mail Order Bride* by Charles L. Mee, and *Sherlock Solo* by Victor L. Cahn. Other directing credits include world premieres of *Fit to Kill* (Theatre Row), *Kryptonite City* (Hypothetical Theatre Company), and *Finding Louise* (Oberon Theatre Ensemble), as well as revivals of *Measure for Measure*, *Blood Wedding*, *Of Mice and Men* and Michael Weller's *Ghosts on Fire*. and other new work with adobe theatre company, Ensemble Studio Theatre and Vital Theater Company. He has also directed educational theatre for Stern College and Brandeis University. Eric served as Assistant to Artistic Director Curt Dempster of Ensemble Studio Theatre and four seasons as Associate to Artistic Director Jeff Horowitz of Theatre for a New Audience. Eric is an alumnus of Brandeis University and the Lincoln Center Theater's Directors Lab, and is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers.