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Classical Theatre of Harlem Presents

MARAT/SADE

Written by Peter Weiss

Directed by Christopher McElroen

Performances Begin on February 2nd

At The Harlem School of the Arts Theatre, 645 St. Nicholas Avenue

January 8, 2007

The OBIE and Drama Desk Award-winning Classical Theatre of Harlem (CTH) presents Peter Weiss' Tony Winning play *MARAT/SADE*, directed by Christopher McElroen. Performances will be at the HSA Theatre, 645 St. Nicholas Avenue, and will begin on Friday, February 2nd. Opening night is scheduled for Thursday, February 15th and the show will run through Sunday, March 11th.

Winner of the Tony Award for Best Play in 1966, Peter Weiss' *MARAT/SADE* is a theatrical tour de force that explores the concept of democracy and if it is possible given the realities and limitations of human nature. This seminal work of 20th century drama has not been given a major New York production in forty years, and is a perfect fit for the visually and intellectually ambitious production style of the Classical Theatre of Harlem.

Set in the historical Charenton Asylum (since renamed as "Esquirol hospital"), *MARAT/SADE* is almost entirely a play within a play. The main story takes place on July 13th, 1808 after the French Revolution; however, the play directed by Sade within the story takes place during the revolution, in the middle of 1793, culminating with the assassination of Jean-Paul Marat (which took place on July 13th, 1793). The actors are the inmates of the asylum, and the nurses and supervisors occasionally step in to restore order. The bourgeois director of the hospital, Coulmier, supervises the performance, accompanied by his wife and daughter. He is a supporter of the post-revolutionary government (led by Napoleon) in place at the time of the production, and believes the play he has organized to be an endorsement of his patriotic views. His patients, however, have other ideas, and they make a habit of speaking lines he had attempted to suppress, or deviating entirely into personal opinion.

Director Christopher McElroen is the Co-Founder of The Classical Theatre of Harlem. Most recently, Christopher directed *51st (dream) State* at BAM and *Waiting for Godot*, which starred Wendell Pierce of HBO's "The Wire" and *The Cherry Orchard*, which featured Earle Hyman, both at CTH. Additional directing credits include *The Blacks: A Clown Show* (four 2003 OBIE Awards) and the AUDELCO nominated productions of *Mother Courage*, *Native Son*, *The Crazy Locomotive* and *Rhinoceros*. The design team for *MARAT/SADE* includes Troy Hourie (Set Designer), Kimberly Glennon (Costume Designer) and Aaron Black (Lighting Designer). The rest of the creative team includes Kelvyn Bell (Musical Director), Denise Hurd (Fight Choreographer) and Rajendra Ramoon Maharaj (Choreographer).

MARAT/SADE features a cast of more than forty performers including Danny Camiel (*Funnyhouse of a Negro*), Andrew Guilarte, Nathan Hinton (*Living in the Wind*), Thomas Layman, John Andrew Morrison (*Ain't Supposed to Die a Natural Death*), Jonathan Payne, Ron Simons (*The Blacks*), David Ryan Smith, T. Ryder Smith (*Thom Pain ...*), Daniel Talbot, Eric Walton (*Esoterica*) and Dana Watkins. The rest of the cast will play patients, attendants and other roles.

The Classical Theatre of Harlem is a dynamic and unique theatre company dedicated to producing the classics for a new, young, and culturally diverse audience. Their numerous awards and honors include a 2004 Drama Desk Award (as well as several nominations), 12 AUDELCO Awards (along with 77 nominations) for Excellence in Black Theatre, and five OBIE Awards, off-Broadway's most prestigious honor. Their production of *Funnyhouse of a Negro* was nominated for three 2006 Lucille Lortel Awards, the first year they were eligible. CTH's production of *Ain't Supposed To Die A Natural Death* was picked up by an outside producer and enjoyed a successful run at the nightclub T New York.

MARAT/SADE will begin performances on Friday, February 2nd with the opening scheduled for Thursday, February 15th and will run through Sunday, March 11th. The schedule will be Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8PM and Sundays at 3PM. Tickets are \$35 and can be purchased by calling smarttix at (212) 868-4444 or by visiting their web site at www.smarttix.com. For more information about The Classical Theatre of Harlem, visit their web site at www.classicaltheatreofharlem.org.

MARAT/SADE

Written by Peter Weiss

Directed by Christopher McElroen

At The HSA Theatre, 645 St. Nicholas Ave. (near 141st Street) in Upper Manhattan

SCHEDULE:

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