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PRESS CONTACT: Brett Singer (212)307-7181

Classical Theatre of Harlem **Alfred Preisser & Christopher McElroen, Founders** **Announces Their 2007-2008 Season** **"Changing The Face Of American Theatre"**

July 1, 2007

The Classical Theatre of Harlem (CTH) is pleased to announce its ninth season, beginning with a new production of *ROMEO AND JULIET*, presented for free in association with the City Parks Foundation. The season continues with Langston Hughes' *BLACK NATIVITY* presented by The New 42nd Street at The Duke on 42nd Street, the return of their Drama Desk Award-winning adaptation of *TROJAN WOMEN* in a co-production with Harlem Stage, and concluding with *EMANCIPATION*, a new play by Ty Jones.

The Company

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. After eight years of highly acclaimed productions at the Harlem School of the Arts, CTH is branching out this season with performances in Brooklyn, Times Square, Pittsburgh, Miami, and at Duke University, SUNY Purchase and the new Harlem Stage Gatehouse Theatre on 135th Street and Convent Avenue.

William Shakespeare's ROMEO & JULIET; July 27 - August 10, 2007; Free in NYC Parks

CTH will continue its successful partnership with the City Parks Foundation and once again kick off its season with *FREE* performances of Shakespeare in Von King Park in Brooklyn (July 27th and 28th), Marcus Garvey Park in Harlem (August 4th and 5th), and Thompson Square Park in lower Manhattan (August 9th and 10th). The company expects to play to over 5,000 audience members over the course of the six free performances. *ROMEO & JULIET* will be directed by Alfred Preisser and choreographed by Tracy Jack.

Following its engagement in New York, *ROMEO & JULIET* will tour in repertory with CTH's 2006 production of Melvin Van Peebles' *AIN'T SUPPOSED TO DIE A NATURAL DEATH*, with stops in Florida, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Westchester. At each stop on the tour, CTH will conduct Shakespeare performance and stage combat workshops with local high school students.

Langston Hughes' BLACK NATIVITY; November 30 - December 30, 2007; The Duke on 42nd Street

The New 42nd Street presents the Classical Theatre of Harlem's production of Langston Hughes' *BLACK NATIVITY* at The Duke on 42nd Street theater. Performing on 42nd Street is a milestone achievement for the Classical Theatre of Harlem as it provides the organization with the unique opportunity to perform in the heart of the theatre district while at the same time expanding the company's reach to New York audiences that have not yet traveled to Harlem to experience their work.

CTH will set down Hughes' famous gospel pageant on the 42nd Street of 1973 New York. It's a Dickensian backdrop of seekers, lost souls, and hustlers, providing a colorful and extreme jump off for the exuberant African American music and dance which heightens the soulful story about the universal search for "Peace on Earth". *BLACK NATIVITY* will be directed by Alfred Preisser and choreographed by Tracy Jack.

Euripides' TROJAN WOMEN; January 10 - February 10, 2008; Harlem Stage Gatehouse theater in Harlem

The Classical Theatre of Harlem, in a co-production with Harlem Stage, presents *TROJAN WOMEN* at the new Gatehouse theater on 135th Street and Convent Avenue in Harlem.

Winner of a 2005 Drama Desk Award, CTH's *TROJAN WOMEN* is a radically re-imagined version of the Greek classic, featuring first-person testimony from the survivors of the recent civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Set in "the ruins of a great civilization" and spoken in the rhythms and idiom of modern day New York, the *TROJAN WOMEN* has been adapted by CTH Artistic Director, Alfred Preisser with an original score by CTH's Resident Musical Director, Kelvyn Bell.

As CTH plans to nationally and internationally tour *TROJAN WOMEN* in the 2008/2009 Season, the production has been selected to participate in the 2008 Under the Radar Festival (UTRF). UTRF is a five-day festival that presents contemporary theatre artists from around the world who develop and support their work by touring.

Ty Jones' EMANCIPATION, April 10 - May 10, 2008

Developed in the Classical Theatre of Harlem's 2007 Future Classics program, CTH will conclude its 2007/2008 season with the world premiere of Ty Jones' *EMANCIPATION*, directed by Christopher McElroen.

On August 21, 1831, Nat Turner led a slave rebellion that became a watershed event in America's long and troubled history of slavery and racial conflict. *EMANCIPATION* is a thoughtful, powerful, and visceral examination of this pivotal moment in American society. The foundation of the play is based on Nat Turner's confession given in 1831 to Thomas R. Gray; however, *EMANCIPATION* transcends being a story about a historical figure to one about a period of time, which altered the course of US history.

CTH's Future Classics Program is a collaborative partnership with the Fredrick Douglass Creative Arts Center (FDCAC) and The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. *EMANCIPATION* is the first play to be produced after receiving support from this program.

Ticket information for CTH's 2007-2008 season will be available on the company's web site at www.classicaltheatreofharlem.org.

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