



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Orange County Premiere of Joe Calarco's "Shakespeare's R & J" at The Chance Theater explores intellectual and sexual repression in our youth**

As its sixth production in its 9<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season, The Chance Theater is pleased to present the Orange County Premiere of Joe Calarco's "Shakespeare's R & J," a new adaptation of the tragic love story enacted by four school boys, from August 12 through September 16. The play is directed by Patricia Ansuini, who last directed the *Back Stage West* Critic's Pick production of "Coyote on a Fence" at The Chance Theater in 2006.

"Shakespeare's R & J" follows four Catholic school boys as they sneak out in the middle of the night to act out a forbidden play: Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet". What starts as a light-hearted experiment gradually becomes more dangerous as these young men are allowed to explore what has been boiling under the surface all along. In this adaptation, Joe Calarco skillfully uses only Shakespeare's words (from the play's original text, and some sonnets) to tell the story of these repressed teenagers.

In 1998, Joe Calarco directed the Off-Broadway premiere of "Shakespeare's R & J" at the John Houseman Theater where it earned a Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Special Achievement in Theatre. "Shakespeare's R & J" completed a celebrated run in London's West End in 2003, named #1 of the "Five Best Plays" in London by *The Independent*. The production received rave reviews on its subsequent tour of the U.K and its premiere in Tokyo.

Director Patricia Ansuini, an award-winning director of over 35 productions, was drawn to the play's relevancy, "Shakespeare's R&J' is of particular importance now because our society is engaged in a cultural struggle between religious and secular ways of raising and molding children. These high school teenagers have been isolated within the walls of a religious school. They are told how to think, what to think, and what it is to be a man. 'Romeo and Juliet' becomes the vehicle that releases their pent up energy and adolescent passion. This show is also a clarion reminder of the power of theater, art and Shakespeare to help us discover who we are as human and creative beings."

**(more)**

**Press Release: OC Premiere of “Shakespeare’s R & J” at The Chance Theater on August 12th! (pg. 2 of 2)**

The cast includes Chance Theater Resident Company Member Michael Irish, who just appeared in our production of “Biloxi Blues”. Joining him will be Chance newcomers Carlos Campos, Brett Mack and Gregory Spradlin. Performing on August 25<sup>th</sup> as an understudy is Mitchell Kohen.

If you would like to arrange an interview with the director, cast, would like more information, reservations or complimentary press passes, please call 714-777-3033.

**“SHAKESPEARE’S R & J” PERFORMANCE & TICKET INFORMATION**

Tickets: \$25 - \$22

Performances: August 12 – September 16, 2007; Sat. 4 p.m., Sun. 6 p.m.

*Preview - Saturday, August 11 at 4 p.m.; includes post-performance talkback*

*Opening Gala - Sunday, August 12 at 6 p.m.; includes catered reception*

For Information and to Purchase Tickets:

CALL: (714) 777-3033

WEBSITE: [www.chancetheater.com](http://www.chancetheater.com)

THE CHANCE THEATER: 5552 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807

**About The Chance Theater**

A recent recipient of the 2007 Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle (LADCC) Polly Warfield Award for Excellence, The Chance Theater is now in its Ninth Anniversary Season. A vital component of The Chance Theater’s mission has always been to intimately present personally meaningful, uniquely engaging stories that promote dialogue within our community and provide a visceral experience for theatergoers. As a constituent member of Theater Communications Group (TCG) and Network of Ensemble Theaters (NET), The Chance continues to bring national attention to Southern California theater through its recent achievement. In addition to the recent LADCC Award, The Chance has also received a 2006 GLAAD Media Award nomination for Outstanding Los Angeles Theater; recognition as the 2004 Arts Orange County Outstanding Arts Organization; and participated in the 365 Days/365 Plays National Theater Project.

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