



VANCOUVER PLAYHOUSE INTERNATIONAL WINE FESTIVAL BACCHANALIA GALA DINNER + AUCTION RAISES \$559,500 FOR PLAYHOUSE THEATRE COMPANY

February 28, 2008 – Vancouver, BC. (For immediate release) – The wine was flowing and the bids were rising as the 2008 Vancouver Playhouse International Bacchanalia Gala Dinner + Auction raised a record \$559,500 for the Playhouse Theatre Company on Wednesday, February 27 at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver. The Bacchanalia Gala is the crown jewel of the weeklong Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival, which continues through March 2, and is the premier annual fundraising event for the Playhouse Theatre Company.

The auction portion of the evening raised \$437,000 (compared to \$334,000 last year). Additional activities such as sponsorships, cash donations, and a raffle for a trip for two to Italy accounted for the rest of the evening's grand total.

The Bacchanalia Gala featured a spectacular five-course meal created by Fairmont Hotel Vancouver Executive Chef Robert LeCrom, a dozen wines paired to each course – including two reception Champagnes, stirring performances by Spirit of the West lead singer John Mann and the Boys Chorus from the Playhouse production of *Oliver!*, and a spirited live auction that accounted for nearly \$300,000 of the evening's total.

Academy Award-winning actor and Old Vic Artistic Director Kevin Spacey encouraged guests to bid on the exceptional items available by satellite feed, regretting that he wasn't there in person to have a shot at the 1982 Château Pétrus or case of 1982 Château Mouton Rothschild, both of which went for record amounts – \$46,000 and \$37,500 respectively. A Champagne Dinner for 10 at the Bearfoot Bistro also sparked fierce bidding, with owner André St. Jacques and Executive Chef Melissa Craig – recent winner of the Canadian Culinary Championship – in attendance to encourage guests to compete for their package, resulting in another record bid of \$37,000.

"This is an extraordinary result from an event that continues to surpass expectations each and every year," said Playhouse Artistic Director Glynis Leyshon. "My heartfelt thanks go out to our sponsors, donors, staff, volunteers, the many wineries participating in this year's Wine Festival and the enthusiastic bidders at Wednesday night's event," said Leyshon. "Their support makes it possible for the Playhouse to continue its work on and off the stage, providing world-class theatre to Greater Vancouver audiences, and outreach and education programmes that ensure our productions are relevant and accessible to all."

The Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival is celebrating its 30th Anniversary in 2008 and is chaired by Sue Adams. The Bacchanalia Gala is sponsored by Goldcorp and chaired by Nancy Burke.

The Playhouse Theatre Company, Western Canada's largest theatre company dedicated exclusively to producing works of the contemporary repertoire, was founded in 1962 with a mandate to provide the finest possible drama to audiences in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.

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Media Contact:
Maureen Verkaar
604-731-2428
mvalstar@telus.net