

CONSTELLATION

THEATRE COMPANY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Misty Demory

202-204-7741
constellationtheatre@gmail.com

Temptation

A Political Satire by Former Czech Republic President **Václav Havel**

A Provocative Retelling of the Faust Story

With Original Music by Tom Teasley

Directed by Allison Arkell Stockman

Press Opening: Saturday, October 11, 2008 at 8 pm.

Pay-What-You-Can Previews October 9 & 10 at 8 pm.

Temptation runs through November 9.

Science & Magic. Ambition & Desire. A Secret Messenger & A Double Agent.

Black magic seeps into a conservative science institute in this provocative retelling of the Faust story by revolutionary and first Czech Republic President Václav Havel. This dark comedy exposes ambition, desire and political deception in a world populated by a demon, a dancer, a secret messenger and a team of seductive scientists. Constellation Theatre Company's production of *Temptation* is the Washington, DC premiere of this absurdist political satire, which will feel especially relevant in an election year.

Few men have had the combination of international political and cultural influence as **Václav Havel**. He came to age in Prague, in a Czechoslovakia suffering under Communist Rule. Havel exercised his outspoken, rebellious voice first in 1956 when he wrote a letter in the magazine *Kveten* challenging the idea that art had to conform to Socialist Realism. In 1963 Havel's first play *The Garden Party* received its debut production as part of a season of Theater of the Absurd at the Balustrade and it immediately garnered him international acclaim. After the Prague Spring in 1968, Havel's plays were banned; he became the political leader of the opposition and penned the human rights manifesto Charter 77. The same year The Public Theater in New York produced *The Memorandum*, which established Havel's reputation in the United States; that play had a successful DC production by Forum Theatre and Dance in 2006. After a four year stay in prison, Havel wrote *Temptation* in 1985. A leader of the peaceful Velvet Revolution that put an end to communism in Czechoslovakia in 1989, Havel was the first democratically elected President of the country and he served as President of the Czech Republic from after the secession of Slovakia in 1993 until 2003.

The classical **Faust** story began as a German legend in the 16th century and centers on the tale of a man who sells his soul to the devil in exchange for knowledge and power. Christopher Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* premiered in London in 1592 and the story has inspired

many artists, writers and composes for years since. The most famous adaptation is the epic closet drama written by Goethe in the 19th century. **Havel's interpretation of the Faust legend** features a curious scientist at a rigid Science Institute with a mission of limiting all thought and study to pre-approved scientific theories. Tempted by ambition, seduced by the promise of romantic passion and plagued with jealousy, Havel's Doctor Foustka experiments with the dark arts under the direction of a strange Mephistopheles character. In addition to the traditional Faustian themes, Havel satirizes the doublespeak and purposefully ambiguous language of an authoritarian bureaucracy. Director Allison Arkell Stockman says, "Doctor Foustka deftly plays both sides against the middle, and claims to hold different points of view depending on his audience. The dark comedy of his manipulation feels especially relevant during an election year in DC."

Constellation Theatre Company is presenting *Temptation* at **Source** where it is now a resident company. Their 2007 production of Caryl Churchill's new adaptation of Strindberg's *A Dream Play* at Source was "a promising debut for a company that seems determined to dream big," according to Celia Wren of The Washington Post. Nelson Pressley confirmed that "Constellation Theatre Company undulates into view as a young troupe to watch," with its second show, Mary Zimmerman's *The Arabian Nights*. While Source was under renovation, Constellation found a temporary home at the Clark Street Playhouse where it performed Brecht's *The Good Woman of Setzuan* and an original adaptation of Aeschylus' Greek trilogy *The Oresteia* this past spring. Constellation is thrilled to be back at home on 14th St. for its second season.

The creative team for *Temptation* includes Associate Artists, Scenic and Lighting Designer, A.J. Guban and Costume Designer Yvette M. Ryan, as well as Sound Designer Brendon Vierra. **Tom Teasley**, who performed live for *The Arabian Nights* and *The Oresteia*, has composed and recorded original music for this production. Havel was a great admirer of Frank Zappa and Teasley is using Havel's favorite music as inspiration for an original soundscape of electronic jazz/ rock, a strong departure from the world music he has created for Constellation shows in the past. Constellation is proud to welcome choreographer and CityDance company member Giselle Alvarez to the creative team, as well as past collaborator and fight choreographer Cliff Williams III.

The **cast** includes Constellation favorites: Katie Atkinson, Jennifer Crooks, Nick DePinto, Gwen Grastorf, Ashley Ivey, Lisa Lias, John Tweel and Ron Ward. Talented local actors Frank Britton, Heather Haney, Jesse Terrill and Scott Zeigler round out the excellent cast.

The Constellation 2008-2009 Season also includes the classic farce *The Marriage of Figaro* by Beaumarchais playing from January 22 – February 22 and the epic adventure *Crazyface* by horror novelist Clive Barker showing from May 21 – June 14. Constellation's Subscription Series is on sale now.

WHO: Constellation Theatre Company

WHAT: *Temptation* by Václav Havel

WHERE: Source Theatre 1835 14th St. NW

WHEN: Oct. 9 – Nov. 9, 2008. Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays at 8 pm and Sundays at 3 pm.

PRESS OPENING: October 11 at 8 pm.

CONTACT: 202-204-7741 or constellationtheatre@gmail.com

WEBSITE: www.constellationtheatre.org

-- continued--

TEMPTATION: FACT SHEET

Press Contact: Misty Demory

Play: Temptation

202-204-7741
constellationtheatre@gmail.com

Playwright: Václav Havel

Director: Allison Arkell Stockman

Blurb: Black magic seeps into a conservative science institute in this provocative retelling of the Faust story by revolutionary and first Czech Republic President Václav Havel. This dark comedy exposes ambition, desire and political deception in a world populated by a demon, a dancer, a secret messenger and a team of seductive scientists.

Cast: Katie Atkinson, Frank Britton, Jennifer Crooks, Nick DePinto, Gwen Grastorf, Heather Haney, Ashley Ivey, Lisa Lias, Jesse Terrill, John Tweel, Ron Ward and Scott Zeigler.

Design and Production: A.J. Guban (Set and Lights), Tom Teasley (Composer), Yvette M. Ryan (Costumes), Brendon Vierra (Sound Design), Giselle Alvarez (Choreography), Cliff Williams III (Fight Choreography), Françoise Nelson (Stage Manager), Christy Denny (Assistant Director), Kate Loverick (Props Design), Michael Roike (Technical Director), Jeny Hall (Master Electrician), Jose Abraham (Assistant Stage Manager), and Lynette Winslow (Sound Board Operator).

Pay-What-You-Can Previews (2): Thursday, Oct. 9 & Friday, Oct. 10 at 8 pm

Press Night: Saturday, October 11 at 8pm

Performance Schedule: October 9 – November 9 with shows on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm and Sundays at 3 pm. Special Performance on Monday, November 3 at 8 pm.

Constellation Theatre Company Mission:

Visionary Design. Heightened Physicality. Epic, Ensemble Theatre.

For Tickets: 1-800-494-8497, www.constellationtheatre.org

For Information: 202-204-7741, www.constellationtheatre.org

Ticket Prices: \$15-20 \$20 Adult General Admission
Students and Seniors \$15. Groups of 8 and up \$17 each.

Location: Source Theatre at 1835 14th St. NW on the corner of T St.
Two blocks from the U St./ Cardozo Metro. On-street parking.

Post-Show Discussions with the Artists: Sunday, Oct. 19, Saturday, Oct. 25 and Sunday, Nov. 2.

###