

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TIMELINE THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS THE CHICAGO PREMIERE OF JEFFREY STANLEY'S *TESLA'S LETTERS*, NOVEMBER 6 – DECEMBER 23

TimeLine Theatre Company continues its 2007-2008 season with the Chicago premiere of ***Tesla's Letters*** by Jeffrey Stanley. The play, directed by Nick Bowling, runs November 10 through December 23, 2007 (previews November 6 through November 9) at TimeLine Theatre, 615 W. Wellington Ave., Chicago. Press Opening performances are Saturday, November 10 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, November 11 at 2 p.m. **To purchase tickets, visit timelinetheatre.com or call 773.281.TIME (8463).**

Ideas about war and peace, the uses of science and the exercise of humanity reverberate in this witty, suspenseful, intellectual puzzle of a drama. An American student travels to the former Yugoslavia in 1997 to research the work of Nikola Tesla, the Croatian-born Serbian scientist who invented electricity as we use it today. But as she delves deeper into Tesla's life and homeland, she is soon forced to make a decision about whether to get involved with the unexpected world of turmoil and suffering around her.

"What first drew me to *Tesla's Letters* was the insight it gave into both the life of Nikola Tesla and the violent division of Yugoslavia in the mid '90s," said director Nick Bowling. "I remember never fully understanding the details of that conflict. It seemed like such a complicated and ugly battle and it was far away. *Tesla's Letters* challenges this kind of American complacency. It is a play about the search for heroes in a world where there are no heroes — just real people, trying to survive. It is this aspect of the play that ultimately captured me and what makes it so important for modern audiences."

The cast for *Tesla's Letters* features **Janet Ulrich Brooks** (Biljana), **Tien Doman** (Daisy), **Joel Huff** (Dragan) and **Jason Karasev** (Zoran).

Performance Schedule/Events

Preview performances are Tuesday, November 6 through Friday, November 9 at 8 p.m. *Tesla's Letters* opens on Saturday, November 10 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, November 11 at 2 p.m. and then runs Wednesdays (11/28, 12/5, 12/12, and 12/19 only) and Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 4 p.m. (except 11/10) and 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. through Sunday, December 23, 2007. NOTE: There will be no performance on Thanksgiving Day, November 22. NOTE: There will be an added performance on Friday, November 23 at 4 p.m.

Tesla's Letters will run approximately one hour and 45 minutes, including one intermission.

POST-SHOW DISCUSSIONS: Free post-show discussions led by a TimeLine Company Member and featuring the production dramaturg and members of the cast on Thursday, November 15; Sunday, November 25; Thursday, November 29; Sunday, December 2; and Thursday, December 6.

SUNDAY SCHOLARS SERIES: An hour-long panel discussion with experts on the themes and issues of the play after the performance on Sunday, November 18, moderated by TimeLine Board Member Peter Kuntz, managing director of programs and production for the Chicago Humanities Festival. Tickets to the Sunday Scholars Series are \$10; \$5 for TimeLine subscribers.

DISCUSSION WITH TIMELINE COMPANY MEMBERS: Free post-show discussion with TimeLine Company members on Sunday, December 9.

Buying Tickets

Tickets are \$25 (Wednesday – Friday) or \$30 (Saturday & Sunday). Preview tickets are \$15. Student tickets are \$15 with valid ID. Group rates for groups of 10 or more are available. Advance purchase is recommended as performances may sell out. To purchase tickets or for more information, **call 773.281.TIME (8463) or visit timelinetheatre.com.**

Audience Resources

Dramaturgical lobby displays, a production Study Guide and other information will be made available at timelinetheatre.com. A streaming video preview will be available at StageChannel.com.

Sponsors

Tesla's Letters is sponsored in part by the **Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts**, and by **TimeLine's Board of Directors and Company Members in honor of the company's new managing director, Elizabeth K. Auman**. TimeLine's 2007-08 season is sponsored in part by **Humana, Inc.**

Location/Transportation/Parking/Accessibility

TimeLine Theatre is located at 615 W. Wellington Ave., inside the Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ building, near the corner of Wellington and Broadway in Chicago's Lakeview East neighborhood. CTA El stops at Wellington (Brown/Purple lines) and Belmont (Red Line) are nearby. CTA busses #36-Broadway, #76-Diversey, #77-Belmont, #22-Clark and #8-Halsted stop nearby. There is limited street parking, but several paid parking facilities are located nearby. Visit timelinetheatre.com for complete directions and parking information. There are two flights of stairs totaling 18 steps between the street and the theater space, with no elevator.

Playwright/Director/Cast/Production Staff

Jeffrey Stanley (Playwright) is a writer, director, performer and teacher of both theater and film. *Tesla's Letters* received its world premiere at The Ensemble Studio Theatre in New York City, its United Kingdom premiere at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and numerous other productions around the world. The script was published by Samuel French, which named it one of 1999's best dramas. He was commissioned by the Mill Mountain Theatre to write the play *Medicine, Man* and by The Ensemble Studio Theatre to write *Fishing with Tony and Joe*. He wrote, directed and performed in his autobiographical comedy *The Golden Horseshoe: A Lecture on Tragedy*, which was filmed by award-winning documentary filmmaker David Gaynes. He has directed a revival of Sam Shepard's *The God of Hell* as well as the premiere of his short play *High Tea*, performed by the Eastcheap Repertory Theatre Company at the Samuel French-Love Creek Productions Short Play Festival. His stage work has also been performed at Naked Angels, the Cherry Lane Theatre and LaMaMa ETC. For his work in film, he won the AIVF-BVR Get It Made Award to direct his short movie *Lady in a Box* starring Sarita Choudhury. His screenplay *Brain on Fire*, which he will also direct, has been optioned to producer Matthew Myers. He has written screenplays for Cabin Creek Films, Andrew Lauren Productions and other independent producers. Screenwriting awards include the Laurel Entertainment Award for Screenwriting Excellence, the New York Picture Company Award for Best Dramatic Screenplay, the Tennessee National Screenwriting Competition, and a residency at Yaddo. Stanley has appeared as a guest writer in *The New York Times* and *Time Out New York*. He is on the dramatic writing faculty at New York University/Tisch School of the Arts, has taught in Croatia at The Imaginary Academy, sponsored by the Soros Foundation, and at Amherst College, where he was a Copeland Fellow. He also teaches screenwriting online at mediabistro.com. He was a senior advisor on the editorial board of Boston University's Center for Millennial Studies pop culture journal *The End That Does* (Equinox Books, 2006). He holds an M.F.A. from the Dramatic Writing Program at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and received his B.F.A. from Tisch in film and television production with a minor in cultural anthropology.

Tesla's Letters is directed by **Nick Bowling**, a co-founder and Company member of TimeLine Theatre. He is the recipient of four Joseph Jefferson Citations for Outstanding Direction (*Fiorello!*, *This Happy Breed* and *The Crucible* at TimeLine, *Another Part of the Forest* at Eclipse Theatre). He also was nominated for TimeLine's *Hauptmann* and *The Lion in Winter*, and for a Jeff Award for *Closer Than Ever* at Porchlight Music Theatre. At TimeLine, he directed *The Children's Hour*, *Fiorello!*, *Guantanamo: Honor Bound to Defend Freedom*, *Summit Conference*, *Gaslight*, the world premiere of *Streeterville* and concert readings of *The Cradle Will Rock* and *Thrill Me: The Leopold and Loeb Story*. Other credits include Writers' Theatre's *Bach at Leipzig*, Shattered Globe Theatre's *Time of the Cuckoo* and *Frozen Assets*, Shakespeare's Motley Crew's *Present Slaughter*, Rivendell Theatre's *Factory Girls*, Buffalo Theatre Ensemble's *Angels in America*, Impulse Theatre's *Blithe Spirit* and Carpe Noctem's *The Subject was Roses*.

The cast for *Tesla's Letters* features **Janet Ulrich Brooks** (Biljana), **Tien Doman** (Daisy), **Joel Huff** (Dragan) and **Jason Karasev** (Zoran).

The production staff for *Tesla's Letters* includes **Collette Pollard** (Scenic Design), **Lindsey Pate** (Costume Design), **Diane D. Fairchild** (Lighting Design), **Andrew Hansen** (Original Music and Sound Design), **Mike Tutaj** (Projections Design), **Julia Eberhardt** (Properties Design), **Jason Harrington** (Dramaturg), **John Kearns** (Stage Manager), **Seth Vermilyea** (Production Manager), **Bob Groth** (Technical Director), **Julie Wilms** (Master Electrician), **Eva Breneman** (Dialect Coach), **Bridget Dehl** (Assistant Director), **Robert Coleman** (Graphic Designer), **James Keister** (Lobby Display Designer), **Lara Goetsch** (Director of Marketing and Communications), **PJ Powers** (Artistic Director) and **Elizabeth K. Auman** (Managing Director).

About TimeLine Theatre Company

TimeLine was founded in April 1997 by six graduates of The Theatre School at DePaul University. Today its mission is to present stories inspired by history that connect with today's social and political issues. TimeLine's first 10 seasons have featured 30 productions, including five world premieres and seven Chicago premieres. Praised as "a must-see company" (*Chicago Sun-Times*) and a "fast-rising Chicago company" (*The New York Times*) and recipient of the 2006 Alford-Axelson Award for Nonprofit Managerial Excellence, TimeLine has received 36 Joseph Jefferson Citations, including a Citation for Outstanding Production six of the past seven years: *Not About Nightingales* (2001); *The Crucible* (2002), *Awake and Sing!* (2003), *Hannah and Martin* (2004), *This Happy Breed* (2005) and *Fiorello!* (2007).

The other productions in TimeLine's 2007-08 season are:

- The Chicago premiere of ***DOLLY WEST'S KITCHEN*** by Frank McGuinness, directed by Kimberly Senior, January 26 – March 22, 2008 (previews 1/22 – 1/25)
- A remount of TimeLine's 2006 production of ***FIORIELLO!***, book by Jerome Weidman and George Abbott, music by Jerry Bock, lyrics by Sheldon Harnick, directed by Nick Bowling, musical direction by Doug Peck, April 17 – June 15, 2008 (previews 4/13, 4/15 & 4/16)

Company members are Nick Bowling, Lara Goetsch, Juliet Hart, David Parkes, Maureen Powers, PJ Powers and Benjamin Thiem. TimeLine is a member of the League of Chicago Theatres, Theatre Communications Group and the Lakeview East Chamber of Commerce.