

PRESS RELEASE

The Studio Theatre

THE STUDIO THEATRE, THE STUDIO 2NDSTAGE, THE STUDIO THEATRE ACTING CONSERVATORY, 1501 FOURTEENTH STREET, NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20005. WASHINGTON DC

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DAVID MUSE NAMED NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF THE STUDIO THEATRE, HOME TO THE BEST IN CONTEMPORARY THEATRE IN WASHINGTON, DC

EXCEPTIONAL YOUNG DIRECTOR TO LEAD 35-YEAR OLD INSTITUTION INTO THE FUTURE

MUSE WILL DIRECT STUDIO THEATRE 2010-2011 SEASON OPENER *CIRCLE MIRROR TRANSFORMATION* AND THE FINAL PRODUCTION OF THE 2010-2011 SEASON.

“David Muse has been named the new Artistic Director of The Studio Theatre,” announced Susan L. Butler, Chair of The Studio Theatre’s Board of Trustees. “Few young directors have impressed audiences and critics as much as David,” said Butler. “He has had unparalleled success in all his dramatic endeavors at The Studio Theatre—a remarkable accomplishment.” With a deep passion for contemporary theatre while also steeped in the classical tradition, Muse’s acute artistic sensibilities make him an exceptional director. He will assume his responsibilities as Artistic Director of The Studio Theatre on September 1, 2010 succeeding Joy Zinoman, its visionary, trailblazing Founding Artistic Director.

“It’s the thrill of a lifetime to get to do this,” said Muse. “At Studio, I’ve been wowed by the indelible performances in intimate spaces, exposed to contemporary plays written with sophistication and style, impressed with the artistry of the designers and emboldened by its restless artistic spirit.” As the organization’s new artistic director, he aims to build on the Studio’s proven record for sustained excellence while taking the Theatre in innovative new directions.

“David’s story,” said Zinoman, “is the classic, American story of a smart, talented kid from a small town who finds his passion, pursues it with dedication and intensity, and manages to win friends and admirers by virtue of his charm, sensitivity and intelligence.” Zinoman expressed her delight in Muse’s appointment, saying that she believes him to be extremely well-equipped to lead The Studio Theatre into its post-founder era.

An Outstanding Artist-Manager

Muse’s artistic successes have ranged from the acclaimed Studio Theatre production of David Harrower’s *Blackbird* (2008), which received the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Production and a nomination for Outstanding Director; to the original-practices-inspired all-male *Romeo & Juliet* at The Shakespeare Theatre Company (2008), which received a Helen Hayes Award nomination for Outstanding Director; to his current production, Neil LaBute’s *Reasons to Be Pretty* at The Studio Theatre, recently extended. Muse’s talents go far beyond directing; he also has a deep aptitude for theatre management and leadership. His achievements at The Shakespeare Theatre Company as Associate Artistic Director have showcased these talents, where he led numerous initiatives and helped to run the day-to-day operations of this major regional theatre.

Muse began his Washington directing career at The Studio 2ndStage with Rolin Jones’s *The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow* (2005), an immediate success that received four Helen Hayes Award nominations, including Outstanding Production and Outstanding Director. The show was called “delightfully inventive” by *The Washington Post*, with Muse commended for his “zesty

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affinity for the writer's eccentric sensibility." His production of Bryony Lavery's *Frozen* (2006) with The Studio 2ndStage was cited by *The Washington Post* as one of the "Ten Best Productions of the Decade." Muse will direct The Studio Theatre's 2010-2011 season opener, Annie Baker's Off Broadway hit *Circle Mirror Transformation*, and will choose and direct the final, to-be-announced production of The Studio Theatre season.

Muse has been Associate Artistic Director of Washington, DC's Shakespeare Theatre Company since 2005, where, in addition to directing, he facilitated the Company's growth from a five to an eight-show season; helped expand the Company from its single-theatre at the Lansburgh with the addition of the new Harman Hall; helped manage the Company's budget of over \$19 million; created and oversaw an annual actor/artistic budget of over \$2.5 million; and acted as the primary liaison for artistic talent, including actors, directors and designers. "David's strengths as a manager—not only as an artist—made him an exceptional candidate," said Studio Theatre Managing Director/Artistic Director 2ndStage **Keith Alan Baker**; "The Studio has long endorsed the artist-manager model, and David is an outstanding paradigm of this model."

Biographical Information

Born in Appleton, Wisconsin, Muse spent most of his childhood in Fulton, Missouri (population: 11,000), a town that provided limited opportunities for an ambitious young person. Encouraged by a talented and dedicated teacher, he threw himself into theatre in high school. Graduating as valedictorian, Muse left Fulton in 1992 to attend Yale University, the first student from his high school to attend an Ivy League school. At Yale he studied Ethics, Politics and Economics, and upon graduation, joined Teach for America, teaching calculus to inner-city students in Washington, DC, and leading Outward Bound wilderness programs for troubled youth during the summer.

Deeply committed to education, equal opportunity and the desire to improve the world around him, Muse still found time to exercise his artistic interests, taking classes at The Studio Theatre Acting Conservatory and eventually performing in local productions, including one at The Studio Theatre that required him to dress as an ostrich in size-13 high heels. Muse, as he puts it, "grew up" at The Studio Theatre, which provided an environment, first as a student, then as an actor, and then as a director, that nurtured his amateur passion into a profound professional commitment. In 2000, he returned to the Yale School of Drama to earn his MFA in directing, and after graduation moved to New York City. Muse subsequently came back to Washington in 2004 when **Michael Kahn** offered him a job at The Shakespeare Theatre Company.

In Washington, Muse began directing at The Studio 2ndStage, The Studio Theatre's producing wing dedicated to the nurturing of rising talent with *The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow* and *Frozen*. Other productions include Terrence McNally's *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune* (Arena Stage, 2007), *Julius Caesar* (The Shakespeare Theatre Company, 2008), and most recently, *Henry V* (The Shakespeare Theatre Company, 2010) have demonstrated the breadth of his knowledge and adaptability of his skills. Muse has also directed at the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival, the New York City Summer Play Festival, Source Theatre Festival and Theatre Alliance.

A Successful Leadership Transition and Selection

Muse's appointment comes at the conclusion of a five-year process that began at The Studio Theatre's annual retreat in 2005, when Zinoman privately announced to the Board and staff of The Studio Theatre her intention to step down as Artistic Director in 2010. In the intervening years, the Studio Theatre Selection Committee—composed of Board and Committee Chair **Susan L. Butler**, Board Members **Keith Alan Baker**, **Michael Higgins**, **Jaylee Mead** and **Gerry Rosberg**—was tasked with the responsibility for preparing the Theatre for the leadership transition. Following the public announcement of Joy's retirement from the Theatre in September 2009, the Committee led a wide-scale search, assisted by Becky Klein and Mark Tarnacki from the national executive search firm of Phillips Oppenheim.

As The Studio Theatre's Artistic Director, Muse will join an experienced senior leadership team, unique in its longevity, each with more than twenty years of experience at The Studio Theatre, including: **Keith Alan Baker**, Managing Director/Artistic Director 2ndStage; **Serge Seiden**, Associate Producing Artistic Director and **Morey B. Epstein**, Executive Director of Institutional Development. Alongside these veterans, Muse will take a central position in leading the region's preeminent home for contemporary theatre.

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The eleven-production lineup of The Studio Theatre's 2010-2011 season continues the Theatre's ongoing commitment to the highest quality, cutting-edge writing and thrilling performances, showcasing an idiosyncratic and eclectic mix: Annie Baker's *Circle Mirror Transformation*, Tracy Letts's *Superior Donuts*, Tarell Alvin McCraney's *Marcus; or the Secret of Sweet*, and an Enda Walsh repertory including *The Walworth Farce*, starring Ted van Griethuysen, and *The New Electric Ballroom*. In its Special Events Series, the Studio will produce *Tynan* starring Philip Goodwin, based on *The Diaries of Kenneth Tynan*, edited by John Lahr and adapted for the stage by Richard Nelson and Colin Chambers; and present *Palomino*, written by, directed by and starring David Cale. The Studio 2ndStage will produce Young Jean Lee's *Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven*, Jez Butterworth's *Mojo* and Maggie-Kate Coleman and Anna K. Jacob's *Pop!*, the new Andy Warhol musical.

For the past 35 years, the nationally-recognized Studio Theatre has been one of the driving forces behind the seismic shifts that have transformed theatre in Washington, DC and the city in general. When Zinoman began The Studio Theatre, there were less than a handful of professional theatres, greatly limiting cultural offerings and opportunities for professional theatre artists. Today, there are 76 theatres included in the Helen Hayes Awards for excellence in Washington theatre. Over the past three decades, the critically-acclaimed Studio Theatre has been recognized for artistic work at the highest level, receiving 11 Helen Hayes Awards for Outstanding Production of a Play or Musical in the 25-year history of the Awards. The Studio Theatre has anchored the striking revitalization of the Logan Circle area, and today, owns three historic "Automobile Row" showroom buildings, in an architectural-award winning design by Resident Designer **Russell Metheny**—totaling 60,000 square feet—located at the epicenter of this neighborhood.

THE STUDIO THEATRE: AT A GLANCE

ARTISTIC STRENGTHS

- Over the past three decades, The Studio Theatre has produced ten-plus annual productions in its three distinct producing wings:
 - The Studio Theatre Season
 - The Studio Special Events
 - The Studio 2ndStage.
- The Studio Theatre consistently fills its four-theatre, 900-seat complex, with approximately 70,000 people attending annually. Additionally, The Studio Theatre has 7,000 season subscribers.
- Long an artistic home for a community of theatre artists, The Studio Theatre regularly employs hundreds of actors, directors, designers and support staff. In the 2008-2009 season alone, The Studio Theatre employed 45 directors and designers, 111 actors and 72 production/technical personnel.
- The Studio Theatre has received 269 Helen Hayes Award nominations for Artistic Excellence in the 25-year history of the Awards.
- The Studio Theatre Acting Conservatory, the "area's premiere professional training facility for actors and directors," has trained over 8,000 actors and directors now working in theatre and film in the Washington, DC area and across the country. Its faculty of 20 teachers, led by master teacher Joy Zinoman, are dedicated to the rigorous training of actors to their fullest artistic potential.
- The Studio Theatre Acting Conservatory offers a Young Actors Program, as well as scholarship program (Arts Motivating Youth) for young people who have an interest in the performing arts but lack the financial resources.

FINANCIAL STRENGTHS

- The Studio Theatre has a general operating budget of over \$5 million, assets of \$25 million, dedicated management funds of \$5 million and is completing its current capital campaign, adding \$2.5 million in technology upgrades and architectural improvements.
- The Theatre maintains a 66:33 earned/unearned income ratio. The 2008-2009 fiscal year ended with a surplus of over \$500,000.
- The Studio Theatre has a 36-member Board of Trustees, 32 full-time staff members and 10 year-long apprentices, as well as 31 part-time employees and 2,000+ volunteers.
- In addition to its three -building, four-theatre complex in Logan Circle, The Studio Theatre owns two historic rowhouses and 16 condo apartments for visiting artists and apprentices, all located in Dupont Circle within walking distance of the Theatre.

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THE STUDIO THEATRE INFORMATION:

The Studio Theatre is Washington's premiere venue for contemporary theatre, and is **“where local audiences will find today's edgiest playwrights...a place for innovation,”** according to *Variety*. The Studio Theatre's mission is to produce the best in contemporary theatre. Its restless, innovative spirit makes it a leader both in Washington, DC and in the nation.

Artist-founded and artist-driven, The Studio Theatre demands the highest quality production values, bringing audiences provocative writing along with unparalleled artistry in performance, directing and design. Founded in 1978, The Studio Theatre is led by the driving force of Joy Zinoman, Founding Artistic Director, whose recent work has been called **“riveting,” “beautifully orchestrated”** and **“inspired”** by *The Washington Post*; along with Keith Alan Baker, Managing Director/Artistic Director, 2ndStage; Serge Seiden, Associate Producing Artistic Director; and Morey B. Epstein, Executive Director of Institutional Development. The Studio 2ndStage creates edgy, explosive and electrifying productions that complement The Studio Theatre's season. *The Washington Post* proclaimed that 2ndStage **“has long been a playground for... directors and actors (and naturally, some of its riskier experiments)”** and that a **“convention-defying approach informs many 2ndStage offerings.”** The Studio Theatre provides opportunities for developing theatre artists as year-long apprentices. The Studio Theatre Acting Conservatory offers rigorous professional theatre training in close partnership with the working artists at The Studio Theatre. Now in its 35th year, it has been called **“the area's premiere professional training facility for actors and directors”** by *Variety*. The Conservatory has trained over 8,000 actors and directors, now performing on Broadway, Off Broadway and in theatre and film across the country. The Studio Theatre is deeply invested in the community and in the eclectic vitality of its neighborhood.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Accessibility: All performances are fully accessible to accommodate patrons with special needs. FM listening assistive system available. Call for schedule of sign-interpreted performances. Accessible seats available by reservation. Call the Box Office at 202-332-3300 or V/TTY 202-667-8436.

Location: 1501 14th Street, NW (Northeast corner of 14th and P Streets).

Parking: Please call the Box Office for parking information.

Metro Stops: Red Line: Dupont Circle, Orange/Blue Lines: McPherson Square and Green Line: U Street/Cardozo.

Contact Information: Tickets: 202-332-3300 V/TTY: 202-667-8436 Fax: 202-332-1187
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