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Eastenders Repertory Company presents
in association with the Eureka Theatre Company

FROZEN

By Bryony Lavery

Directed by Artistic Director Susan E. Evans

Cast: Craig Dickerson (Ralph), Suzan A Kendall (Nancy), Sandra Weingart (Agnetha)

August 27-Sept. 14, 2008, Wednesdays – Sundays
Eureka Theatre (215 Jackson Street, San Francisco)

Full calendar listing on page 4

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bryony Lavery's *FROZEN*

Opens August 27, 2008

(San Francisco, CA – July 9, 2008) **Eastenders Repertory Company** opens Season 2008-2009 with the Tony Award nominee ***FROZEN*** by Bryony Lavery, a drama about the nature of evil and forgiveness. Directed by Eastenders Artistic Director Susan E. Evans, the production features company member Suzan A Kendall with Craig Dickerson and Sandra Weingart. ***FROZEN*** opens in previews on August 27, 2008, and runs through September 14 at the Eureka Theatre, 215 Jackson Street in San Francisco.

The story of a mother, the serial killer who abducted her 10-year old daughter and a psychiatrist studying serial killing and the sociopathic mind, ***FROZEN*** is an uncompromising, troubling and affecting exploration of the nature of forgiveness. Michael Billington wrote in the Guardian: " ... the force of Lavery's play ... lies in its ability to change hearts and minds ... " Charles Spencer of The Daily Telegraph wrote, "I mean it as a compliment when I say ... there were several moments when I feared I would have to walk out of the theatre."

Driven to write ***FROZEN*** after the death of both of her parents within the space of one year, Ms. Lavery describes ***FROZEN*** as her first "grown-up" play. When Lavery's mother died suddenly after a routine operation went horribly wrong, her father was consumed with a need for some kind of retribution. The playwright became fascinated by what happens to people when confronted with a horrific loss. In ***FROZEN***, she seeks to uncover what she calls "the notion of forgiveness." "There always

must be hope at the end of the play ... Hopelessness is a much safer place. You don't have to work quite as hard if everything is hopeless. You can just despair."

The play has been involved in a controversy of its own. As source material for **FROZEN**, Lavery credited the work of Marian Partington, the sister of a victim of serial killers and founder of England's Forgiveness Project. She failed to credit another major source and was subsequently accused of plagiarizing a New Yorker article by Malcolm Gladwell, as well as that article's subject (an autobiography entitled "Guilty by Reason of Insanity" by Dr. Dorothy Otnow Lewis about her experiences treating serial killers). The controversy was resolved without litigation and the playwright has since confessed that she naively thought Gladwell's article was just *news*.

First produced in 1998 at Birmingham Rep and revised for the Royal National Theatre in 2002, **FROZEN** had its American debut in March 2004 at New York's MCC, and its Bay Area premiere at Marin Theatre Company in January 2007. A finalist for the 2004 Pulitzer Prize and nominated for four Tony Awards including Best Play, **FROZEN** was the fourth most-produced play in the United States in 2005-2006.

SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY: On a trip to visit her grandmother, a 10 year old girl vanishes. Her mother, Nancy, subsumes her own life and family in her search for her kidnapped child. 20 years later a body is found, and the pedophile serial killer, Ralph, is finally caught and jailed. Agnetha, an American psychiatrist overwhelmed with her own personal grief, travels to Britain to lecture on the criminal mind using Ralph as her case study. The core of her thesis is that serial killers' brains are developmentally stunted -- without a moral compass, they are unable to distinguish between right and wrong, or to connect with other people. In a series of interwoven monologues and duologues, **FROZEN** depicts the emotional thawing-out of three psychically damaged characters.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT: Prolific Yorkshire-raised playwright Bryony Lavery (b. 1947) has more than 30 plays, pantomimes and cabarets for adults and children to her credit. A performer and past teacher of playwriting at Birmingham University, Ms. Lavery served as the Artistic Director of Gay Sweatshop, Female Trouble and of her own company, Les Oeufs Malades. She has also written for television and radio, and is the author of a biography of Tallulah Bankhead and *The Woman Writer's Handbook*. Her antiwar play was performed at Ludlow Castle and featured 2 professional actors and almost 100 children. An openly lesbian writer, her 2000 work, "A Wedding Story" dealt with a female doctor with Alzheimer's and her gay daughter.

ABOUT THE COMPANY: The mission of **Eastenders Repertory Company** is to provide a collaborative, mentoring environment for theatre artists to produce both original and established works in repertory and to develop educational programs in theatre arts. ERC is dedicated to providing a stimulating environment for theatre artists and high-quality, affordable and accessible theatre for the

Bay Area community. Past Eastenders productions include 3 *VANĚK PLAYS: Audience, Unveiling, and Protest* by Václav Havel, *FEAR AND MISERY OF THE THIRD REICH* by Bertolt Brecht, *PINTERESQUE* (Harold Pinter's *The Lover* and original short pieces inspired by that one-act), our prior six annual one-act festivals (*100 YEARS OF SEX-ACTS, ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF POLITICAL THEATRE, EIGHT X TENN, 106 YEARS OF COMEDY, ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF EURO-ONE-ACTS* and *ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF ONE-ACTS*), the spring 2005 world premieres of Charles E. Polly's *A Knight's Escape* and Scott Munson's *WWJD?, Three Hotels* by Jon Robin Baitz, the local premieres of *Wonder of the World* by David Lindsay-Abaire and *[sic]* by Melissa James Gibson, and *TENN in 2002!* (Williams' *The Long Goodbye* and new short works inspired by that one-act); the world premiere of Founding Artistic Director Charles E. Polly's *THE TWYLA TRILOGY* (*Twyla's Boy, Twyla's Story* and *June Bug Music*); Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days*; and the Bay Area premiere of Tennessee Williams' *Something Cloudy, Something Clear*.

CALENDAR LISTINGS

WHO: Eastenders Repertory Company

WHAT: "FROZEN"

by Bryony Lavery

An uncompromising exploration of the nature of evil and forgiveness.

Directed by Artistic Director Susan E. Evans

Cast: Craig Dickerson, Suzan A Kendall, and Sandra Weingart

DATES: Wednesday, August 27 & Thursday, August 28 Previews @ 8pm

Friday August 29: OPENING GALA

THROUGH September 14

SHOWTIMES: Plays Wed-Sat evenings @ 8pm

Sundays @ 2pm

CLOSES: September 14

*****POST-SHOW DISCUSSIONS ON WED. Sept. 3; SUN. Sept. 6; & THURS. Sept. 11*****

VENUE: Eureka Theatre Company (215 Jackson Street, San Francisco, CA)

TICKETS: \$20 general admission; \$25 Opening Night Gala; \$15 tickets available for students/seniors and members of KQED, KTEH, and TBA. Group rates available

BOX OFFICE: (510) 568-4118 and ticketweb.com

Eastenders Repertory Company

Artist Biographies for *FROZEN*

Craig Dickerson (Ralph) last appeared in Eastenders' production of *Protest* in Václav Havel's 3 *VANĚK PLAYS*, in Bertolt Brecht's *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* and as Richard in Harold Pinter's *The Lover*. He hails from Fort Worth, Texas, and has worked with The Magic and Eureka Theatres. Mr. Dickerson is also a founding member of ERC and directed their productions of *Happy Days*, *Cowboy Mouth* and *Rockaby*. Favorite productions include *WWJD?* and *Hughie* (ERC), *XXX Love Act* (Magic Theatre), *It Can't Happen Here* (Z Collective), *Blood on a Cat's Neck*, *Sexual Revolt*, and *Girls With Attitude* (directed by David Ford). Other credits include: Edward Albee's *Marriage Play*, *Three More Sleepless Nights*, *No Exit*, *Chee-Chee*, *A Knight's Escape*, *Mixed Doubles* (ERC), *The Gong Show: Live!*, and *Much Ado About Nothing* (Shakespeare at Stinson).

Suzan A Kendall (Nancy) last appeared in Eastenders' production of Bertolt Brecht's *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*. She is a founding member of ERC and has worked on every production since the company's inception. She has acted in productions of *The Informer*, *Far Away*, *A Slight Ache*, *Blue Kettle*, *Wonder of the World*, and *[sic]*, to name a few. She played Twyla in Charles E. Polly's *THE TWYLA TRILOGY* and Jenson Block in ERC's 2005 premiere of Polly's *A Knight's Escape*. She also serves as ERC's Finance Director and (semi-official) caterer.

Sandra Weingart (Agnetha) is delighted to work with Eastenders and Susan Evans again, having appeared previously in *Playing With Fire* and *Dialogue Between a Prostitute and Her Client*. Sandra last

performed at the Eureka Theatre in Cassandra Call's production of *Vagina Dentata*. Other favorite roles include: Joan in *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* (Act Now! at Dean Lesher Center for the Arts), Olivia in *Twelfth Night* and Queen Elizabeth in *Richard III* (both with Los Gatos Shakespeare Festival), Adrianna in *Comedy of Errors* (Role Players), and Kate in *Wild Oats* (Shakespeare Sonoma).

Susan E. Evans (Director) currently serves as ERC's Artistic Director. For ERC she has directed : *Audience and Unveiling* in Václav Havel's 3 *VANĚK PLAYS*, Brecht's *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*; Pinter's *The Lover*; *Playing with Fire*, *The Love of Don Perlimplin for Belisa in His Garden* and *Three More Sleepless Nights* for 100 YEARS OF SEX ACTS; Scott Munson's *WWJD?* in spring 2005; *The Bedbug* and *Far Away* in 2004's 100 YEARS OF POLITICAL THEATRE; *[sic]* in 2003; *Moony's Kid Don't Cry* and *In the Bar of a Tokyo Hotel* in 2002's EIGHT x TENN; *The Long Goodbye*; *Mixed Doubles*, *Frenzy for Two, or More*, *Reverse Transcription* and *Early Mourning* in 106 YEARS OF COMEDY; *In the Shadow of the Glen*, *The Virtuous Burglar* and *Blue Kettle* in EURO-ONE-ACTS; *Waiting for Lefty* and *Hughie* in ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF ONE-ACTS; the world premieres of Charles E. Polly's *Twyla's Story* and *June Bug Music*; and Tennessee Williams' *Something Cloudy, Something Clear*.

DESIGN

The design team for *Frozen* includes Kim Tolman (Set Design), Isaiah Dufort (Lighting Design), Susan E. Evans and Reg Clay (Sound Design) and Jennifer Daly (Projection Design).

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