

For Immediate Release

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First U.S. Production of David Hare's *The Permanent Way* Set to Open January 31

Lincoln Park company continues 5th season with epic play about British Rail disaster

CHICAGO, IL – New Leaf Theatre has selected David Hare's 2003 play, *The Permanent Way*, as the second show of its fifth anniversary season. The company will present the first U.S. production of the show, about the British railroad disasters, January 31-March 3, 2007, at the Lincoln Park Cultural Center.

The play echoes current concerns of increased terror threats, privatized welfare, governmental response to disasters, disbursement of relief funds, and the government's overall role in keeping us safe and sound, explains New Leaf Artistic Director, Brandon Ray, who will direct *The Permanent Way*. "The first U.S. production of the play is sure to bring into sharp focus many of our current debates, and ignite new ones," Ray said.

About the production

The Permanent Way will open Wednesday, January 31 at 7:30 p.m., and run through March 3, 2007. Showtimes are Thursdays through Saturdays at 7:30 p.m., with added Saturday matinees at 3 p.m. on February 24 and March 3. Tickets are \$15 general, \$12 sr/student. Thursdays are \$5 Industry Nights. Call (773) 828-4387 for information. Online ticket reservations available at www.newleaftheatre.org

'Lessons from history' focus of fifth anniversary season

This year, the Lincoln Park company "is exploring the lessons we learn from history, and the dangers of ignoring those lessons," Ray said. "With *The Permanent Way*, we see a government and corporate enterprise reaping the consequences of failing to adapt and refusing to admit mistakes." The play follows the season opener, a new adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's *The Master Builder*, in which the company "explored the age-old struggle of an older generation to hang on to power and to suppress the younger

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generation at its heels,” Ray said. And in *Vox Pandora*, the spring show, “we find a rising political star attempting to harness an ancient eternal power for his own very temporal ends.”

“It is our hope that through these very diverse expressions of a similar theme, we can find connection with our audiences that will bring about a renewal of thought and purpose,” Ray said.

Next Up: *Vox Pandora*

The company will round out the season with Bilal Dardai’s comic rewrite of Greek mythology, *Vox Pandora*. The play concerns Hope, the sole remaining inhabitant of Pandora’s infamous box, and what ensues when she is convinced to leave the box and enter our world. Slated for April 25 - May 26.

About the company.

Before *The Master Builder*, the company ended last season with Lisa Loomer’s 1991 comedy *Accelerando*, which was “Recommended” by Hedy Weiss of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, who called the production “lighthearted and absurd ... rapid-fire romance ... creatively staged.” The *Tribune* said the show was “...*Frankie and Johnny* (meets) *Annie Hall*...clever...endearing.”

New Leaf’s spring 2005 show, *As It Is in Heaven*, directed by Ray, was heralded by local press as well as being JEFF Recommended, and subsequently nominated for Best Ensemble. In addition to being “Highly Recommended” by the *Chicago Reader*, the *Pioneer Press* called the play “engrossing,” the production “engaging” and the cast a “uniformly fine ensemble” and *ChicagoCritic.com* called Brandon Ray’s direction “stellar,” the cast “terrific” and the production “compelling (and) intoxicating.”

Other heralded past productions include *Brilliant Traces* (“Highly Recommended... enchanting... perceptive direction” – *Chicago Reader*) and a world premiere adaptation of *Girl in Hyacinth Blue* (“Recommended” – *Sun-Times*; “powerful” – *Chicago Reader*)

For more information on the company or show visit www.newleaftheatre.org.

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