

April 17, 2006

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**THE JUILLIARD SCHOOL APPOINTS JAMES HOUGHTON HEAD OF JUILLIARD DRAMA,
NAMING HIM RICHARD RODGERS DIRECTOR OF DRAMA AT JUILLIARD
BEGINNING WITH THE 2006-2007 SEASON**

Mr. Houghton Remains Artistic Director of Signature Theatre Company

Joseph W. Polisi, President of The Juilliard School, today announced that noted producer, theater administrator, and award-winning director James Houghton will become the School's Richard Rodgers Director of Drama at Juilliard, starting with the 2006-2007 academic and performance season. Founding Artistic Director of New York's Signature Theatre Company that is celebrating its 15th season, Mr. Houghton will remain in his position there as he takes on the directorship of the Juilliard Drama Division, a program that encompasses one of this country's most respected four-year conservatory educations for actors, and highly successful pre-professional mentoring for playwrights.

Mr. Houghton succeeds Michael Kahn, who completes a 14-year tenure as Richard Rodgers Director of the Drama Division at the close of the current academic term. Mr. Kahn, who has been a drama faculty member at Juilliard since the division was created in 1968, will continue as a teacher at Juilliard.

In making the announcement, Dr. Polisi commented, "Jim Houghton's appointment as the Richard Rodgers Director of Drama at Juilliard heralds a new era in the distinguished history of actor education at the School. His vision, knowledge, creativity, and extraordinary success in the profession as a director, producer and supporter of young talent make him the perfect person to lead Juilliard's program into the future. We also look forward to working closely with Signature Theatre in developing programs that will benefit both institutions.

As we approach a new era I also wish to extend my deepest gratitude to Michael Kahn, who, from the very beginning of the division's history in 1968, has brought his artistry and dedicated teaching to every class of Juilliard actors. We are delighted that he will continue to teach his revered course in acting for our third year students."

As Artistic Director of the not-for-profit Signature Theatre, Mr. Houghton set the company's agenda of single-playwright seasons, with playwrights such as Edward Albee, Lee Blessing, Horton Foote, Maria Irene Fornes, John Guare, Bill Irwin, Adrienne Kennedy, Romulus Linney, Arthur Miller, Sam Shepard, Paula Vogel, and Lanford Wilson in residency at Signature during their season. In addition, Signature has produced 41 premiere works, including 17 world premieres, some of them created

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during two 'all premiere' seasons. In 2003 Signature received the National Theatre Conference Award for 'Outstanding Achievement in Theatre'. The company currently is celebrating its 15th anniversary by presenting a compendium of plays from several of its previous resident playwrights, along with three plays by August Wilson, and, committed to making theater available to all, is pricing all tickets at \$15. The company will open Signature Center, a Frank Gehry designed venue, at the new Performing Arts Center that is part of the revitalized World Trade Center Site.

According to Molly O'Neil, President of the Board, Signature Theatre Company, *"This is a wonderful opportunity for Jim. We have realized for many years how fortunate Signature is to have someone of Jim's caliber at the head of our organization. We know that his keen intellect, excellent taste, and sensitive leadership will serve him well there. It's fitting that he will head one of the best training programs in the world while he continues to forge the future at such a world class institution as Signature."*

Mr. Houghton also is an Artistic Advisor to the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, a position he's held since 1998. He's been Artistic Director of two prestigious playwrights conferences, the O'Neill Playwrights Conference from 1999 – 2003 and The New Harmony Project from 1997 – 1999, and was Acting Artistic Director of New Harmony for two years prior. At Signature Theatre, he directed the recent world premiere of Bill Irwin's *Mr. Fox: A Ruminantion*. Other world premieres include Horton Foote's *The Last of the Thorntons* and *Laura Dennis*, Romulus Linney's *Ambrosio* (co-directed with Mr. Linney), and Adrienne Kennedy's Obie Award-winning *June and Jean in Concert*. He directed the New York premieres of Edward Albee's *Fragments* and *Marriage Play*, and Lee Blessing's *Two Rooms*, and revivals of Lanford Wilson's *Burn This* (nominated for Lucille Lortel and Drama League awards) and Arthur Miller's *The American Clock*, (his direction nominated for a Drama Desk Award). In addition, Mr. Houghton directed the regional premiere of Miller's *Mr. Peters' Connections* at the Guthrie Theater.

A guest lecturer at numerous colleges and theater programs, including in the metropolitan area Yale, NYU, Columbia, and the Actors Studio, Mr. Houghton also has been judge and nominator for prestigious awards including the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, and the PEN/Laura Pels Foundation Award, among others, and has been a presenter and speaker at many panels and symposia. At the beginning of it all, Mr. Houghton was a stage actor performing with several companies including John Houseman's The Acting Company – founded by Mr. Houseman originally with actors who were the first to have studied at Juilliard.

According to Mr. Houghton, who's 15th Anniversary season at Signature is approaching the midway point, *"I am thrilled and honored to be part of the long tradition of excellence at The Juilliard School and I am grateful to President Polisi and the selection committee for my appointment. On the occasion of its centennial, The Juilliard School is celebrating its extraordinary past while looking bravely to a future filled with exciting potential. I'm looking forward to being part of that future and working together with the tremendous talents that fill the halls of this remarkable school."*

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Juilliard Drama Division

Although Juilliard's music division turned 100 years old as of this 2005-2006 season, the Juilliard Drama Division was established only 37 years ago, co-founded and co-directed by John Houseman and Michel St. Denis. 600 applicants vied for places in the first class numbering 35, and a program modeled on the four-year acting conservatories of Europe. Since that first class enrolled in 1968, the Juilliard Drama Division has developed the talents of actors who have become some of the most distinguished artists of the stage and screen, including Christine Baranski, Andre Braugher, Frances Conroy, Marcia Cross, Viola Davis, Lisa Gay Hamilton, Kelsey Grammer, Michael Hayden, Harriet Harris, William Hurt, Patti LuPone, Val Kilmer, Kevin Kline, Laura Linney, Elizabeth Marvel, Kelly McGillis, Mandy Patinkin, Christopher Reeve, Ving Rhames, Kevin Spacey, David Ogden Stiers, Lorraine Toussaint, Jeanne Tripplehorn, Robin Williams, and so many others.

In 1979 Michael Langham, who had been artistic director of the Guthrie Theater, became director of Juilliard's Drama Division, succeeding the late Alan Schneider, director from 1976-1979. Michael Kahn, artistic director of The Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, D.C., was appointed director in 1992 upon Mr. Langham's retirement. Now typically, 1,000 young actors audition for an annual 21 places in Juilliard Drama's first-year class, but its remarkable success ratio – more than 80% of the alumni are actively working in their chosen field – makes the high number of applicants understandable.

The Saint-Denis method, still in place, gives actors a disciplined guideline with which to explore their creativity. Improvisation is encouraged during early training, as necessary ability in movement, vocalization, and dramatic analysis is acquired. Fully-staged performance begins in the third year, and public performance is the goal only in the fourth and final year. Intensive class work in dramatic verse, mask technique, play analysis, speech, voice, movement, singing, comedy techniques, acrobatics, dance, stage combat, make up, Alexander Technique, and even music studies are integrated into the daily pursuit of learning and interpreting a wide range of dramatic repertoire.

Students perform a wide variety of master works from antiquity to contemporary playwrights. Juilliard actors are expected to take on the seminal works of dramatic literature from Sophocles to Shakespeare to Strindberg, and are exposed to less traditional and non-Western works. In addition to canonical works such as Shakespeare and Chekhov, recent seasons presented works by Bertolt Brecht, Václav Havel, Federico García Lorca, Peter Whelan, and a new adaptation of the Hindu epic, *Mahabharata*. The 2005-06 season included Thomas Gibbens' *Black Russian*, Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the world premiere of Craig Lucas' *The Listener* – a Juilliard Centennial Commission – and Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II*,

The Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwrights Program, created in 1993, has been directed by Christopher Durang and Marsha Norman since 1994. Other esteemed playwrights who have led Juilliard's up-and-coming writers include John Guare and Terrence McNally, who co-created the program with the Drama Division's director, Michael Kahn – as well as Jon Robin Baitz, the late Wendy Wasserstein, and Romulus Linney. Now in its 13th season, the program offers one-year, tuition-free, graduate-level fellowship. Among its award-winning alumni are writers for stage, film, and television such as David Auburn, Stephen Belber, Julia Cho, David Lindsay-Abaire, Kira Obolensky, and Adam Rapp.