



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 10, 2008

VANCOUVER THEATRE COMPANY AWARDED INTERNATIONAL THEATRE PRIZE

Local intercultural theatre company **Pangaea Arts** has been presented with a prestigious international award by the **International Theatre Institute** (a sub-organisation of **UNESCO**). The **Uchimura Naoya Prize** is a cash prize presented yearly to an artist or group from nominees submitted from around the world, and is intended to promote the dissemination of Japanese theatre and culture around the world. Pangaea Arts is the recipient in recognition of their 2006 Jessie Award-nominated production of **The Gull: The Steveston Noh Project**, about the experience of Japanese Canadian fishermen returning to Steveston after the internment years. **Artistic Director Heidi Specht** recently travelled to the presentation ceremony at the **Canadian Embassy in Tokyo** to accept the award.

This esteemed award, administered by the International Theatre Institute in collaboration with its Japanese Centre, was established in 1992 in homage to renowned Japanese playwright Naoya Uchimura. The prize is endowed by the Uchimura family, and recognizes and encourages work from around the world that bears a relationship to Japanese theatre. In the 15 year history of the Uchimura Awards, this marks **the first time that a Canadian theatre company is the recipient.**

The Executive Council of the International Theatre Institute announces that "*The Gull is considered a masterpiece, and was unanimously selected winner of the 15th Uchimura Naoya Prize and commended for both its high artistic quality with successful unification of the form of expression and the context, and for its achievement in promoting Noh through international collaboration.*"

The script of *The Gull* was written by **acclaimed BC poet Daphne Marlatt**, and was a collaboration between Canadian theatre artists and Japanese Noh artists who travelled to Canada to mentor and perform with the local performers. The Noh-stage was constructed in a large tent on the plaza of Richmond City Hall.

Pangaea Arts wishes to thank all of their sponsors and partners, who made it possible to create this ambitious and culturally significant event.

Daphne Marlatt's text of *The Gull* will be published by Talonbooks in 2009.

For high-resolution photos, please see www.pangaea-arts.com/gullstills

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Pangaea Arts Society is an intercultural, interdisciplinary world arts organization serving the Lower Mainland and BC. Pangaea Arts was formed to promote cultural interaction and the exchange of ideas between diverse communities and artists, and to introduce Canadian audiences to performance traditions from around the world.