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CHERRY LANE THEATRE'S DIRECTOR ANGELINA FIORDELLISI ANNOUNCES SHE WILL NOT SELL THEATRE

Cherry Lane to mark 10th anniversary of 9/11
with Tony-nominee WILL SWENSON in the U.S. premiere
of Israel Horovitz's 10 YEARS AFTER PARADISE
One performance only -- Sunday, September 11

With a significantly reduced deficit, a new managing agent and emboldened by an outpouring of support from neighbors in the West Village, Angelina Fiordellisi, director of Cherry Lane Theatre (38 Commerce St.), has decided not to sell the theatre as she announced she would do in December 2010.

"I was overwhelmed by the response from my neighbors and the artists who have worked with me at Cherry Lane over the past 15 years," Ms. Fiordellisi says about her decision. "I received hundreds of phone calls and emails and visits from people who were concerned to hear that I was leaving and that the theater was for sale. And when those people started referring rentals to us, I was able to look ahead and feel more secure about the theater's financial future. It made me feel like I was doing something essential in the community and that I belong here."

Also key to Ms. Fiordellisi's decision to hold on to Cherry Lane has been the theater's ability to reduce its \$250,000 deficit by two-thirds through reductions in staff and expenses, along with a streamlined budget and a steady succession of rentals on Cherry Lane's 179-seat mainstage and its 60-seat Studio Theatre throughout the year. Ms. Fiordellisi says that she anticipates the deficit will be paid off by January 2012.

In another significant change for Cherry Lane, starting on August 1, 2011, the theatre is being managed by an outside agent, the Lucille Lortel Theatre Foundation, which will oversee bookings, contracts and expenses for the theatre.

Ms. Fiordellisi, founder and artistic director of Cherry Lane Alternative -- the resident company at Cherry Lane that produces plays at the space and has been home to numerous programs for theatre artists and their work, most notably the Obie Award-winning Mentor Project for playwrights -- said she expects the non-profit will produce a play that

it commissioned, ONE NIGHT... by the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Charles Fuller (A SOLDIER'S STORY) in 2012.

On September 11, 2011 at 2 p.m., Cherry Lane will present the Tony-nominated actor Will Swenson (HAIR, PRISCILLA: QUEEN OF THE DESERT) in the U.S. premiere of Obie winning playwright Israel Horovitz's 10 YEARS AFTER PARADISE, a mono play about the effects of September 11 on the world at large and on what Mr. Horovitz describes as "my little family," whose son was a student in class at the Stuyvesant High School directly across from the Twin Towers at the time of the attacks. 10 YEARS AFTER PARADISE is directed by Damien Gray.

This new play is a companion piece to Mr. Horovitz's 2001 solo work 3 WEEKS AFTER PARADISE, which he wrote in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. 3 WEEKS AFTER PARADISE has been presented at Cherry Lane Theatre at various times over the past decade with performances featuring Boyd Gaines, Mark Linn-Baker and the playwright himself. Cherry Lane Theatre is presenting 10 WEEKS AFTER PARADISE as part of its Tongues Reading Series.

Earlier this year, Cherry Lane Alternative presented a series entitled "From Breast Cancer to Broadway," which showcased 14 short plays written by breast cancer survivors with over 50 participating actors and directors including Tony Award winners, director Ruben Santiago Hudson, choreographer George Faison, actor Chuck Cooper, as well as Obie winner Gretchen Cryer, Pulitzer Prize winner Lynn Nottage and Molly Smith. Grammy and Oscar-winning singer/songwriter Melissa Etheridge generously allowed use of her song "I Run for Life" for "From Breast Cancer to Broadway."

Cherry Lane Theatre is known as "the birthplace of Off-Broadway," having helped to define American drama by fostering theater that is daring and relevant for the past 86 years. The roster of iconoclastic writers whose work has been at home at Cherry Lane since the 1920s includes O'Neill, Saroyan, Auden, Albee, Odets, Orton, Mamet and Lanford Wilson. Such distinctive actors as Ruby Dee, James Earl Jones, Colleen Dewhurst, Cicely Tyson, Frank Langella, Tyne Daly, Estelle Parsons, Dennis Quaid and Judith Ivey have performed on its stage.

Ms. Fiordellisi purchased Cherry Lane Theatre in 1996 and established the resident theatre company there the following year, marking the first time in decades that "homegrown work" was being developed and produced at the theatre. She also undertook a major renovation of the building (once part of a farm in 19th century New York) and its stages, including the creation of the 60-seat Studio Theatre and the celebrated Cherry Lane Mentor Project in 1998.

Other programs created at Cherry Lane in the past 14 years include a Heritage Series, Master Class Series and Solo Fest.

www.cherrylanetheatre.org