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TABARD OPENS 8TH SEASON WITH TIMELY TRANSLATION

ANTIGONE
IN THE OVAL OFFICE

A World Premiere

October 10 through November 1, 2008

"...[*Antigone* is] the most powerful political play ever written."
- *Athol Fugard; New York Times*

SAN JOSE, Calif. (21 September, 2008) – Seizing the momentum of one of the most exciting presidential elections in recent American history, **The Tabard Theatre Company** is presenting a **world premiere** modern translation of *Antigone* **October 10 – November 1** as the inaugural production of its 8th season and first in its new home at **Theatre on San Pedro Square** in downtown San Jose. This timely present-day adaptation of the Greek classic is provocatively set in the Oval Office and appropriately renamed ***Antigone (in the Oval Office)***.

In this production, ancient Greece meets *The West Wing* as the Vice President is thrust into the Oval Office after the President's sudden fall from power and faces national crises that become personal very quickly when his goddaughter Antigone challenges his wartime martial law. Tabard managing artistic director Cathy Spielberger Cassetta anticipates that this adaptation may lead to discussions of parallels and pitfalls as Silicon Valley residents prepare to go to the polls in November.

"I have wanted to do a production of *Antigone* set in the Oval Office for ten years but have needed to wait for the right time and place – October 2008 and Theatre on San Pedro Square fit the bill. Finding the right director for this piece was also a crucial component. We have found that in Ana-Catrina Buchser."

"Although Sophocles' *Antigone* is a classic Greek tragedy," comments Buchser, "the message of the play is perennially contemporary: what makes a good political leader? When I first heard of the project, I knew that staging this play would have great impact in today's socio-political environment."

Buchser and Cassetta adapted this American version of *Antigone* from a modern translation by Professor Ian C. Johnston from Malaspina University-College in British Columbia, who translated the text from the original Greek into modern English. Buchser explains, "Although the

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themes and character names are recognizable to those familiar with the original Greek play, our *Antigone* is in a completely new context and very contemporary.”

In this interpretation, the palace in Thebes becomes the Oval Office, and the traditional Greek chorus the president’s cabinet, his staff, military personnel and the White House press corps. Cassetta adds, “The result is powerful and thought-provoking. It’s amazing how sentiments and situations written 5,000 years ago resonate and reflect current 21st century experiences. I am confident that this provocative spin on a classic tale will resonate deeply as Americans count down to Decision 2008.”

With *Antigone (in the Oval Office)*, Tabard begins its residency in downtown San Jose at Theatre on San Pedro Square, its new home after being a nomadic company since its start in 2001. To celebrate this, the company will host an **inaugural opening event at 7:30pm on Friday, October 10, prior to the 8pm opening night performance of *Antigone (in the Oval Office)***. The celebration will include a **ribbon-cutting sponsored by San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce** and a champagne and light hors d’oeuvres reception featuring desserts from Charlie’s Cheesecake Works. Scheduled to speak at the reception are **Councilmember Nancy Pyle**, Tabard’s home district representative, and **Councilmember Sam Liccardo**, who represents downtown San Jose, Theatre on San Pedro Square’s district.

As with each Tabard production, the cast and staff designate a non-profit that is in some way related to the theme of the show to receive a portion the production’s concession proceeds. Previous recipients have included Second Harvest, City Team Ministries, Child Advocates, Bill Wilson Center, USO San Jose, EHC LifeBuilders, and Career Closet, among many others. Because one of the themes of *Antigone (in the Oval Office)* is the effects of war on soldiers and their families, the **designated non-profit for *Antigone (in the Oval Office)* is Rebuild Hope**, www.rebuildhope.org, a Menlo Park-based charity committed to improving the lives of current and former members of the U.S. military who have suffered life-altering injuries since September 11, 2001.

Committed to making a difference in the community through the arts, Tabard will offer a **“hands-on” presentation for blind and visually impaired patrons at 1:30pm prior to the 3:00pm matinee on Saturday, October 11** as part of Tabard’s Perspective Series. Guide dogs are welcome and reservations are required for this free pre-show event.

Tabard will follow *Antigone (in the Oval Office)* with its second production of the season, *Hot ‘n’ Cole: A Cole Porter Celebration*, November 14 – December 6. *The Little Prince* (January 23 – February 14) and *Crowns* (March 4 – 28) complete The Tabard Theatre Company’s 8th season.

All performances will be presented at **Theatre on San Pedro Square**, 29 North San Pedro Street, in downtown San Jose. Information about the show and tickets are available by calling the box office at **408-679-2330**, e-mailing **tickets@tabardtheatre.org**, or visiting Tabard online at **www.tabardtheatre.org**.

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PHOTOS: Dirk Leatherman as the president and Fiona Lawson as Antigone star in The Tabard Theatre Company's production of *Antigone in the Oval Office*, October 10 – November 1 at Theatre on San Pedro Square, downtown San Jose.

Also included, in third photo, Andrew Ceglio as Haemon, Antigone's fiancé and the president's son.

Photo credit: Judy Bingman, Judy Bingman Photography