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For Immediate Release Please

THEATRE FOR A NEW AUDIENCE PRESENTS THE NEW YORK PREMIERE OF

## ***ORPHEUS X***

MUSIC-THEATRE

WRITTEN AND COMPOSED BY **RINDE ECKERT**

VIDEO BY **DENISE MARIKA**

DIRECTED BY **ROBERT WOODRUFF**

PREVIEWS WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, AT 8:00PM; OPENS THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, AT 9:00PM  
AT THE DUKE ON 42ND STREET<sup>SM</sup>

NEW YORK – The New York premiere of *Orpheus X*, with original music and text by 2007 Pulitzer Finalist Rinde Eckert, video by Denise Marika and directed by Robert Woodruff, draws from several literary and poetic sources, including the Sixth Century Greek poet Ibyous and the Roman poets Virgil and Ovid. Messrs. Eckert and Woodruff take this ancient myth and reinvent it for our time with acting and singing by three artists - Mr. Eckert - Orpheus, Suzan Hanson - Eurydice, John Kelly - John/Persephone; and a live band, Timothy Feeney - percussion, Virginia Leishman - piano, Blake Newman - bass and Wendy Richman - viola.

*Orpheus X* begins previews Wednesday, December 2, at 8:00pm and opens Wednesday, December 3, at 9:00pm for a run through December 20 at The Duke on 42nd Street<sup>SM</sup>, a New 42nd Street<sup>®</sup> project, 229 West 42nd Street.

As described by *Variety*, "In Mr. Eckert's version Orpheus is a rock star, an idol who amazes all not with a legendary lyre but with an electric guitar. Unlike the hero of the source material, he's mourning not the death of his wife but that of a total stranger -- a poet named Eurydice -- who dies in his arms after being struck by a cab in which Orpheus was riding. This fluke of fate shatters his splendid life. Suddenly burdened by this strange loss, he becomes obsessed with Eurydice's memory. Unable to comprehend or cope, he shuts himself off from a life that once gave him glory, riches and a semblance of meaning."

*Orpheus X* was originally produced in 2006 by American Repertory Theatre, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Robert Woodruff, Artistic Director; Robert J. Orchard, Executive Director. This will be a Theatre for a New Audience production.

*Orpheus X* will have video by Denise Marika, scenic design by David Zinn and Denise Marika, costumes by David Zinn, lighting by Christopher Akerlind and sound by David Remedios.

Rinde Eckert, the 2009 recipient of The Alpert Award in the Arts for his contributions to theatre and finalist for the 2007 Pulitzer Prize in Drama for *Orpheus X*, is a writer, composer, performer and director. His Opera / New Music Theatre productions have toured throughout America, and to major festivals in Europe and Asia.

Mr. Eckert's career began as a writer/performer in the 1980's, writing librettos for Paul Dresher (*Pioneer, Power Failure, Slow Fire, and Ravenshead*). Working subsequently with choreographers Margaret Jenkins and Sarah Shelton Mann, he began composing dance scores, including the evening-length *Woman, Window, Square* for The Margaret Jenkins Dance Company. Mr. Eckert began composing and performing his own music/theater pieces with *The Gardening of Thomas D*, his 1992 homage to Dante which was performed on tour in the United States and France. His stage works as solo performer include *An Idiot Divine, Romeo Sierra Tango* and *Quit This House*. He wrote *Shoot the Movompa*

His current writing and directing projects include *The Schick Machine* with virtuoso percussionist Steven Schick in a solo-theater work composed/produced by Paul Dresner; *Slide* with composer/guitarist Steven Mackey (the work debuted, performed by eighth blackbird, at the 2009 Ojai Festival and will tour nationally in 2010); and *Imaginary City* with So Percussion which will debut in the Fall of 2009 at the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

Mr. Woodruff directed Theatre for a New Audience's production of Edward Bond's *Chair* last season and before that, Edward Bond's *Saved* in 2001 and *The Changeling* in 1997. He is the former artistic director of the American Repertory Theatre. In the 1970s, Mr. Woodruff was virtually the sole director of Sam Shepard's work, starting with *The Sad Lament of Pecos Bill on the Eve of Killing His Wife* in 1976 which was followed by the American premiere of *Curse of the Starving Class* at the New York Shakespeare Festival in 1978, the world premieres of *Buried Child* (1978) and *True West* (1980) at the Magic Theatre in San Francisco and then in New York, and the touring productions of *Tongues* and *Savage/Love*, which Mr. Shepard coauthored with the performer Joseph Chaikin. In the last three decades, he has directed plays at Lincoln Center Theatre, the New York Shakespeare Festival, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco and The Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. In 2002, Mr. Woodruff succeeded Robert Brustein as the second Artistic Director in the history of the American Repertory Theatre, a post he held until 2007. He serves on the faculty of Yale University.

Video installation and performance artist Denise Marika has an MFA from UCLA and is an assistant professor in the Studio for Interrelated Media at the Massachusetts College of Art. She has received numerous grants in support of her work from the NEA, Rockefeller and Andy Warhol Foundation, Massachusetts Cultural Counsel, LEF, MassArt Foundation, Fulbright Specialists Program Award and residencies at the MacDowell Colony. Solo exhibitions include the Museum of Modern Art, MASS MoCA, Worcester Art Museum, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, a retrospective at the Pomona College Museum of Art as well as numerous exhibitions abroad. Theater credits include set design and videos for *Puzzle Master*, Brandeis Laurie Theater and *Orpheus X*.

A three-play subscription is \$142 and may be ordered from Theatre for a New Audience via phone at 212-229-2819, ext 10, or online at [www.tfana.org](http://www.tfana.org).

Single tickets will be available in November for \$75 and may be purchased via phone at 646-223-3010 or via the web at [www.dukeon42.org](http://www.dukeon42.org).

For ages 25 and under, \$10.00 New Deal tickets may be purchased in November, in person during box office hours at The Duke on 42nd Street or via the phone at (646)223-3010. New Deal tickets are available for any performance, any time, one ticket per valid I.D. I.D. is required to pick up tickets at the box office.

Previews are Wednesday, December 2, at 8:00pm and Thursday, December 3, at 6:00pm. Opening is Thursday, December 3, at 9:00pm. Regular evening performances are Tuesday through Saturday at 8:00pm with an added evening performance Sunday, December 6, at 7:00pm and matinees Wednesdays, December 9 and 16, and Saturdays, December 12 and 19, at 2:00pm. Sunday matinees are December 6, 13 and 20 at 3:00pm.

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**About the organization: The New 42<sup>nd</sup> Street<sup>®</sup>**

Founded in 1990, **The New 42<sup>nd</sup> Street** is an independent, nonprofit organization charged with long-term responsibility for seven historic theaters on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues. In addition to running **The New Victory<sup>®</sup>**, **The New 42<sup>nd</sup> Street** built and operates the **New 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Studios** - a ten-story building of rehearsal studios, offices and a 199-seat theater named **The Duke on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street<sup>SM</sup>** - for national and international performing arts companies. Since its opening on June 21, 2000, the **New 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Studios** has been fully occupied by both nonprofit and commercial theater, dance and opera companies. With these institutions and the other properties under its guardianship, **The New 42<sup>nd</sup> Street** plays a pivotal role in fostering the continued revival of this famous street at the Crossroads of the World.

**About the theater: The Duke on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street<sup>SM</sup>**

The Duke on 42nd Street is an intimate 200-seat black box theater built and operated by The New 42nd Street. Since opening in 2000, the theater has been available to international and domestic nonprofit organizations to present their work. Companies that have presented at The Duke on 42nd Street include: Harkness Dance Project; The NYC Tap Festival; Rosie's Broadway Kids; Playwrights Horizons; London's National Theatre; Theatre for a New Audience, which continues to present work on a regular basis; Lincoln Center Theater's LCT3, which is in its second season, and The New 42nd Street's "New Victory at The Duke" series. Companies presented by The New 42nd Street have included: Karole Armitage; Chicago Shakespeare Theater; Naked Angels, The Classical Theatre of Harlem, and Steppenwolf Theater Company.