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Ground Breakers Celebrate Central Square Theater Day

CAMBRIDGE, May 01, 2007— This Tuesday evening the weather might have cooled down from the early spring day's warmth; however enthusiasm for Central Square Theater's Ground Breaking Celebration was heating things up at 450 Massachusetts Avenue, the future home of Central Square Theater and its two professional resident theater companies—The Nora Theatre Company and Underground Railway Theater.

The sidewalk in front of the construction site was overflowing with Cambridge and Boston residents, local business owners, and state and city officials. They all answered the Theater's invitation to become Ground Breakers and join in celebrating Central Square Theater Day, which was officially declared by both the Commonwealth and City of Cambridge.

The Ground Breaking Celebration began with a traditional shovel in the ground ceremony with an impressive line-up of keynote speakers: Senator Jarrett T. Barrios; State Representative Martha M. Walz; Mayor Kenneth E. Reeves; Steven C. Marsh of MIT; and Carl F. Barron of CARU Associates.

Senator Barrios and State Representative Walz both spoke about how they fought hard to secure a \$200,000 earmark from the legislature for the Central Square Theater and commented on the many social and economic benefits the Cambridge community will receive from this investment.

The Mayor of Cambridge, Ken Reeves, gave a heartfelt welcome to Central Square Theater and expressed his support and excitement over the Theater's presence. He stated, "Central Square Theater is the artistic jewel in the crown of Cambridge."

Immediately following the ceremony, a fun-fill parade with puppets and music lead the over 300 Ground Breakers to a community reception at the Cambridge Family YMCA, Durrell Hall. Upon arriving, Ground Breakers were greeted by The Second Line Social Aid and Pleasure Society Brass Band which beckoned them inside for free food, drink, and live theater entertainment.

At the reception, Mary C. Huntington, Artistic Director of The Nora Theatre Company, and Debra Wise, Artistic Director of Underground Railway Theater, raised their glasses in thanks and toasted the new theater. In their toast, they stated, "We create theater because the arts are an essential part of life, great theater can build bridges between communities, celebrate life and empower us all."

As the first permanent home for its professional resident theater companies, The Nora Theatre Company and Underground Railway Theater, Central Square Theater will feature a state-of-the-art 200 seat black box performance hall, a second stage intimate cabaret space (doubling as rehearsal space), a classroom, workshops, expansive theater lobby, and much more.

Central Square Theater will be a vibrant hub of theatrical, educational and social activity, where artists and audiences come together to create theater vital to the community. In addition, the theater will stimulate the local economy by attracting over 20,000 people annually to Cambridge to attend shows, take a child to a class, or participate in seminars and audience talk-back discussions.

With collaboration from MIT (owners and site developers) and technical help and support from the City of Cambridge, The Nora Theatre Company and Underground Railway Theater have successfully partnered to transform a long-vacant space into a new theater which will be a vital asset to the community. Central Square Theater anticipates the first production to be held in the winter of 2008.

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