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PRESS RELEASE

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Seán Cullen returns to Stratford to play Smee in *Peter Pan* *Casting continues for 2010 ensemble*

November 9, 2009...The Stratford Shakespeare Festival is pleased to announce that **Seán Cullen** will return for the 2010 season to play Smee in *Peter Pan*, directed by **Tim Carroll**, and Vinnie in George F. Walker's *King of Thieves*, directed by **Jennifer Tarver**.

“Last year, while we had the great misfortune of having the brilliant **Bruce Dow** step out of the season for health reasons, we had the great good fortune to have the richly talented Seán Cullen step in as Pseudolus,” says Artistic Director **Des McAnuff**. “I am pleased to announce that in 2010 we will have both of them.

“We have already announced Bruce's presence in the upcoming season, and now we can boast that Seán Cullen will be playing Smee in *Peter Pan* and Vinnie, the Master of Ceremonies, in George F. Walker's *King of Thieves* – our cup runneth over!”

Mr. Cullen was extremely well received in *Forum* in 2009. He has been performing for more than 20 years, originally with Corky and the Juice Pigs, a group that toured around the world, becoming fixtures at the Melbourne Comedy Festival, the Edinburgh Fringe and Montreal's Just for Laughs festival. He has appeared in numerous feature films and played Max Bialystock in the Canadian production of *The Producers*. He is also the author of the award-winning Hamish X trilogy for young adults. Mr. Cullen has won three Gemini Awards for his work on television and three Canadian Comedy Awards for film and live performance. He starred in his own CBC TV series, *The Seán Cullen Show*, and appeared on shows such as NBC's *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* and CBS's *The Ellen Degeneres Show* and *The Late Late Show*. Last year he was a finalist on NBC's *Last Comic Standing*.

Paul Nolan, Mike Shara to return

The Festival is pleased to announce that **Paul Nolan** will return to the Festival to play Orlando in *As You Like It*. **Mike Shara** will also return to play Oliver in the production, which will be directed by Mr. McAnuff.

Mr. Shara and Mr. Nolan were the dazzling romantic leads of the 2009 season. Mr. Shara played Christian in *Cyrano de Bergerac* and Algernon in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and received rave reviews for both performances. Mr. Nolan had an exceptional season, playing Tony in the hit *West Side Story*, as well as the Vicomte de Valvert in *Cyrano*.

“I’m thrilled to be directing Paul Nolan following his triumphant turn as Tony in *West Side Story*, and Mike Shara after his hilarious portrayal of Algernon in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. In fact I believe the 2010 company will be made up of many of the strongest actors I’ve ever had the pleasure of working with,” said Mr. McAnuff.

Mr. Shara has also been cast as the Young Shepherd in *The Winter’s Tale*. **Sean Arbuckle** will play Camillo in that production, directed by **Marti Maraden**. **Dan Chameroy** will play Polixenes. **Ian Lake** will play Florizel. Mr. Lake completed his final year in the Birmingham Conservatory in 2009. **Stacie Steadman**, who has also finished her Conservatory training, will return to the company to play Michael in *Peter Pan*.

Jewelle Blackman and **Nathalie Nadon** have been cast opposite **Brent Carver** and **Mike Nadajewski** in *Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well* and *Living in Paris*.

Sophia Walker will play Julia in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, directed by **Dean Gabourie**. Ms Walker is replacing **Nikki M. James**, who has had to withdraw from the season for personal reasons. Ms James was also cast as Ariel in *The Tempest*. That part has not yet been re-cast.

Mike Jackson will return to the company to play Bill Calhoun in *Kiss Me, Kate*.

Further casting announcements will be made as information becomes available.

The 2010 season, beginning on April 10, features *As You Like It*; *Kiss Me, Kate*; *The Tempest*; *Dangerous Liaisons*; *Evita*; *Peter Pan*; *The Winter’s Tale*; *Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well* and *Living in Paris*; *For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again*; *Do Not Go Gentle*; *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*; and *King of Thieves*.

Tickets go on sale to members on November 16 and will be available through American Express Front Of The Line beginning December 12. The box office opens to the public on January 9, 2010.

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PHOTOS

Headshots:

<http://www.stratfordfestival.ca/imagegallery/imagegallery.aspx?id=3335>

Artistic Team:

<http://www.stratfordfestival.ca/imagegallery/imagegallery.aspx?id=3334>

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