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**CUTTING BALL THEATER ANNOUNCES  
STRINDBERG CYCLE: THE CHAMBER PLAYS IN REP**

*Company receives \$150,000 grant from Barbro Osher Pro Suecia to present August Strindberg's Chamber Plays in Repertory; festival to feature new translations by Paul Walsh*

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. (May 4, 2011) – San Francisco's cutting-edge **Cutting Ball Theater** announces that the company has been awarded a grant for \$150,000 from the **Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation** to produce all five of playwright August Strindberg's Chamber Plays, in new translations by **Paul Walsh**, in a festival entitled **Strindberg Cycle: The Chamber Plays in Rep**. Cutting Ball Theater's **Strindberg Cycle: The Chamber Plays in Rep** will debut in October of 2012 with full productions of all five plays running in repertory through November 2012; during the festival, audiences will have the opportunity to see the plays performed separately, as well as in a "Chamber Play Marathon" of all five shows in one day. The Chamber Plays are *Ghost Sonata*, *The Pelican*, *Storm*, *Burned House*, and *The Black Glove*; this will be the first time all five of Strindberg's Chamber Plays will be performed together in repertory in any language. Cutting Ball will also celebrate the centennial of Strindberg's death and the playwright's vast career throughout 2012 with additional readings of his works, symposiums, and lectures.

Since 2005, Cutting Ball Theater has featured one reading of Strindberg's Chamber Plays, in new translations by Paul Walsh, each year as part of its Hidden Classics Reading Series; two of the translations, *Burned House* and *Storm*, were commissioned by Cutting Ball. These readings have been preparing Cutting Ball's artists as well as audiences for the company's 2012 presentation of the **Strindberg Cycle: The Chamber Plays in Rep**.

"We are so grateful to the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation for making this dream a reality," says Cutting Ball Artistic Director Rob Melrose. "This will be an opportunity for Cutting Ball to do what will be by far our biggest project to date and will allow us to be an important part of the worldwide celebration of Strindberg's centennial. The Chamber Plays encapsulate the themes and techniques Strindberg mastered over his lifetime: ghosts, being haunted by one's past, the subjectivity of perception, and the

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thorny relations between men and women. The Chamber Plays' experimental bent coupled with their compact size make them perfect for Cutting Ball's space at the EXIT on Taylor theater."

A pioneer of naturalism, expressionism, and the theater of dreams, **August Strindberg** (1849–1912) was one of the world's most important playwrights and his influence can still be felt today. Tennessee Williams, Eugene O'Neill, Edward Albee, Ingmar Bergman, and Strindberg's contemporary Henrik Ibsen all cite him as an important influence on their work. Strindberg was a novelist, poet, painter, linguist, and scientist. Near the end of his life, he moved back to his native Sweden and became involved with a small theater in Stockholm called the Intiman (or "intimate") Theater, for which he wrote five plays, each under 90 minutes. He called them Chamber Plays, signaling that these works would be more compact than the "symphonic" plays he wrote earlier in his career, and noted an affinity he had with chamber music by composers like Beethoven and Chopin. Strindberg wrote more than 70 plays, novels, short stories, and studies of Swedish history, and is arguably one of Scandinavia's most influential authors. He is widely known as one of the fathers of modern theater.

Translator Paul Walsh, director and Cutting Ball Artistic Director Rob Melrose, and actor and Cutting Ball Associate Artistic Director Paige Rogers dreamt about bringing this project to fruition for years, as all three are Strindberg aficionados. Melrose did his thesis at the Yale School of Drama on Strindberg's last play *The Great Highway*, and directed the play, which, at the time, had only been produced once in the U.S. Walsh completed his doctoral dissertation on the early plays of Strindberg at the University of Toronto on "August Strindberg and Dramatic Realism, 1872-1886." Rogers did her Princeton University senior thesis on Strindberg's *Miss Julie*, performing the title role in a production that she also directed.

**Rob Melrose** is the Artistic Director and co-founder of the Cutting Ball Theater, where his directing credits include the Bay Area Premiere of Will Eno's *Lady Grey (in ever lower light)*; *The Tempest*; *The Bald Soprano*; *Victims of Duty*; *Bone to Pick* and *Diadem* (World Premiere); *Endgame*, *Krapp's Last Tape*; *The Taming of the Shrew*; *Macbeth*; *Hamletmachine*; *As You Like It*; *The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World*; *Mayakovsky: A Tragedy*; *My Head Was a Sledgehammer*; *Roberto Zucco*; *The Vomit Talk of Ghosts* (World Premiere); *The Sandalwood Box*; *Pickling*; *Ajax for Instance*; *Helen of Troy* (World Premiere); and *Drowning Room* (World Premiere). Translations include *No Exit*, *Woyzeck*, *Pelléas and Mélisande*, *The Bald Soprano*, and *Ubu Roi*. He has directed at The Guthrie Theater (*Happy Days*, *Pen*); Magic Theatre (*An Accident*, World Premiere); PlayMakers Rep (*Happy Days*); California Shakespeare Theater (*Villains, Fools, and Lovers*); Black Box Theater (*The Creature*, World Premiere, BATCC Award for direction), as well as Actors' Collective; Alias Stage; and Crowded Fire,

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among others. He is a recipient of the NEA / TCG Career Development Program award for directors. Last spring, he was the Public Theater's artist-in-residence at Stanford University, where he directed *Troilus and Cressida*; next season, Melrose will direct *Troilus and Cressida* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in association with the Public Theater, as well as the Acting Company's production of *Julius Caesar* at The Guthrie.

**Paul Walsh** is Associate Professor of Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism at the Yale School of Drama and Artistic Director of the New Harmony Project, a new play development residency program dedicated to serving writers who celebrate hope and the resiliency of the human spirit. For nine years (1996-2005), Walsh was resident Dramaturg and Director of Humanities at American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco, where he collaborated on dozens of productions, including his own translations of August Strindberg's *Creditors* (1992), Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (2004), and *Hedda Gabler* (2007). His translation of Ibsen's *The Master Builder* was produced to critical and popular acclaim in 2005 by the Aurora Theatre Company in Berkeley and in a revised version at Yale Repertory Theatre in 2009. Additionally, Walsh has worked at new play development venues including the O'Neill Playwrights Conference, the Playwrights Center in Minneapolis, and the Bay Area Playwrights Festival, among others; he serves on the Board of Directors of the Ibsen Society of America.

**Paige Rogers** is an actress and Associate Artistic Director and co-founder of the Cutting Ball Theater. She appeared earlier this season in Eugenie Chan's plays *Bone to Pick* and *Diadem*, and last season in the company's hit production of *The Bald Soprano*; she has appeared in Cutting Ball's productions of *My Head Was a Sledgehammer*, *As You Like It*, *The Vomit Talk of Ghosts*, *Macbeth*, *Accents in Alsace*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Rogers has been seen locally with Berkeley Opera, Lamplighters, Sonoma County Repertory Theater, and on tour with California Shakespeare Theater. Nationally, she has performed at The Kennedy Center, McCarter Theater, Trinity Repertory Company, and Oregon Shakespeare Festival. At Cutting Ball, her directing credits include The Hidden Classics Reading Series, Suzan-Lori Parks' *365 Plays/365 Days*, *Risk is This...The Cutting Ball New Experimental Plays Festival*, *Mud*, and next year's *Tontlawald*.

Headquartered in San Francisco, the **Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation** supports Swedish-related cultural and educational projects in North America and Sweden, and programs that advance understanding of Swedish culture and tradition both in Sweden and in America.

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Co-founded in 1999 by theater artists Rob Melrose and Paige Rogers, **Cutting Ball Theater** presents avant-garde works of the past, present, and future by re-envisioning classics, exploring seminal avant-garde texts, and developing new experimental plays. Cutting Ball Theater has partnered with Playwrights Foundation, the Magic Theatre, and Z Space New Plays Initiative to commission new experimental works. The company has produced a number of World Premieres, West Coast Premieres, and re-imagined various classics. Voted “Best Theater Company” in the 2010 *San Francisco Bay Guardian* Best of The Bay issue, Cutting Ball Theater also earned the Best of SF award in 2006 from *SF Weekly*, was selected by *San Francisco Magazine* as Best Classic Theater in 2007, and received the 2008 *San Francisco Bay Guardian* Goldie award for outstanding talent in the performing arts. Cutting Ball Theater was featured in the February 2010 issue of *American Theatre Magazine*.

For more information about Cutting Ball Theater, or for tickets to upcoming productions, the public can visit **cuttingball.com** or call **800-838-3006**

The Cutting Ball Theater’s 2010 - 11 season is made possible in part by The Compton Foundation, The W.A. Gerbode Foundation, Grants for the Arts / San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The Magic Theatre / Z Space New Works Initiative, Mental Insight Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, The San Francisco Arts Commission, The San Francisco Foundation, Theatre Bay Area New Works Fund, United Business Media LLC, The Zellerbach Family Foundation, and by individual donors.

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