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The Company Theatre presents

FESTEN

By David Eldridge

Based on the Dogme film and play by Thomas Vinterberg, Mogens Rukov & Bo hr. Hansen

“Electrifying, shocking and profoundly moving, this is a thrilling modern tragedy, playing on classical darkness without losing the light. FESTEN is something to celebrate.” Sunday Times

The Company Theatre presents the Canadian premiere of **FESTEN**, the critically acclaimed stage adaptation of the controversial award-winning Danish film, at the Berkeley Street Theatre, 26 Berkeley Street, Toronto. **FESTEN** previews from November 17, officially opens Thursday, November 20 and runs until December 13, 2008.

Directed by **Jason Byrne** (*A Whistle in the Dark*) **FESTEN** stars veteran stage and screen actor **Eric Peterson** (*Corner Gas*) as family patriarch and businessman Helge Klingenfeldt with a star-studded cast that includes **Nicholas Campbell, Rosemary Dunsmore, Philip Riccio, Allan Hawco, Tara Rosling, Caroline Cave, Richard Clarkin, Earl Pastko, Milton Barnes, Gary Reineke, Gray Powell, Isabella Lobo & Alex Paxton-Beesley.**

Helge (Eric Peterson) is celebrating his 60th birthday at their family-run hotel. Gathered together are his loyal wife Elsa, his daughter Helene (Tara Rosling), his sons Michael (Allan Hawco) and Christian (Philip Riccio), and their guests. A darkly comic journey into forbidden family territory, the time has come for the darkest family skeleton to be revealed and the celebration becomes a weekend that no one will ever forget.

FESTEN is the British stage adaptation of the Danish film of the same name (which was released in North America as *The Celebration*). The adaptation, by English playwright David Eldridge, was first staged by Canadian producer Marla Rubin at the Almeida Theatre in London, and has since been staged in many countries around the world.

Thomas Vinterberg's 1998 film *Festen* was critically acclaimed and won the Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festival that year and is best known for being the first Dogme 95 film (its full title in Denmark is *Dogme #1 - Festen*). Dogme films are governed by a manifesto that insists on specific production and narrative limitations (such as banning any post-production sound editing), in part as a protest against expensive Hollywood-style filmmaking.

The English language adaptation, which retains the Danish title **FESTEN**, premiered at the Almeida Theatre in 2004 in a production directed by Rufus Norris, before transferring to a successful West End run. It toured the UK before transferring to Broadway starring Ali MacGraw, Julianna Margulies & Jeremy Sisto.

Formed in 2004, **The Company Theatre** collaborates with Canadian and international artists to transcend geographical and artistic borders and bring impeccably performed, thought-provoking theatre to Canadian audiences

The Company Theatre's inaugural production was the Canadian premiere of Tom Murphy's *A Whistle in the Dark* directed by award-winning Irish director Jason Byrne. Hailed by the National Post as a "masterpiece production of a masterpiece play" *A Whistle in the Dark* was nominated for two Dora Mavor Moore Awards and was remounted in 2007 playing to capacity houses in both Toronto and St. John's, Newfoundland.

The Company Theatre's second production, the Toronto premiere of Daniel's Maclvor's *Marion Bridge*, directed by the playwright, won a Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding Lead Performance Female for Sarah Dodd.

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Starring Eric Peterson, Nicholas Campbell, Rosemary Dunsmore, Philip Riccio, Allan Hawco,
Tara Rosling, Caroline Cave, Richard Clarkin, Earl Pastko, Milton Barnes,
Gray Powell, Isabella Lobo & Alex Paxton-Beesley

Set & Costume design by John Thompson

Lighting design by Andrea Lundy • Sound design by Michael Laird

Berkeley Street Theatre (Downstairs), 26 Berkeley Street, Toronto

Previews Monday, November 17 and runs until Saturday, December 13, 2008

Official Opening Night: Thursday, November 20 @ 8pm

Monday – Saturday at 8pm, Saturday at 2pm

Tickets are \$20.00 - \$40.00 and can be purchased in person at the Berkeley Street Theatre, 26 Berkeley Street; The St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. East; by calling 416.368.3110 or online at www.canstage.com

Media Contact: FLIP Publicity & Promotions Inc., 416.533.7710, www.flip-publicity.com
Grant Ramsay X222, grant@flip-publicity.com or Carrie Sager X224, carrie@flip-publicity.com