

# THE PEARL

THEATRE COMPANY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**THE PEARL THEATRE COMPANY PRESS CONTACT:**

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**THE PEARL THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS  
CHARLES DICKENS'  
HARD TIMES  
ADAPTED FOR THE STAGE BY STEPHEN JEFFREYS  
AT NEW YORK CITY CENTER STAGE II  
DIRECTED BY J.R. SULLIVAN**

**PREVIEW PERFORMANCES BEGIN: FEBRUARY 5, 2010 at 7:30 PM  
OPENING NIGHT: FEBRUARY 14, 2010 at 7:30 PM  
LIMITED ENGAGEMENT ENDS: MARCH 28, 2010**

**Press Previews**

**Thursday, February 11, 2010 at 7:30pm**

**Friday, February 12, 2010 at 7:30pm**

**Saturday, February 13, 2010 at 2:30pm and 7:30pm**

**Sunday, February 14, 2010 at 2:30pm**

NEW YORK, NY, January 14, 2010 – **THE PEARL THEATRE COMPANY** (**J.R. Sullivan, Artistic Director; Shira Beckerman, Managing Director**) will present Stephen Jeffreys' whirlwind theatrical adaptation of Charles Dickens' novel **HARD TIMES**, beginning February 5th at New York City Center Stage II. Jeffreys' adaptation preserves "the satiric vitality of Dickens' original" (*Time Out*), and captures the novel's expansive attack upon the stunting rigors of 19<sup>th</sup>-century industrialization in "a fluid adaptation...that is true to Dickens' language and spirit" (*New York Times*). **HARD TIMES** is directed by Pearl Theatre Artistic Director J.R. Sullivan and features members of The Pearl's Resident Acting Company. **HARD TIMES** opens Sunday, February 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm. Tickets are on sale now through the New York City Center box office.

This production features six members of The Pearl's Resident Acting Company portraying nearly two dozen characters. Written in 1854, Charles Dickens' **Hard Times** explores and exposes social and economic hardships through the tumultuous lives of the inhabitants of a fictionalized industrial city called Coketown. At the center of the story sits Thomas Gradgrind, head of the Coketown school, whose determination to live life by fact alone leads his children to unhappy lives, devoid of dreams and passion. Dickens' investigation of fact

versus fancy reaches beyond the Gradgrind family to ultimately present the case for fulfillment in a better and happier life.

“Dickens’ novel goes to the brim with his remarkable skills in storytelling, character and language,” according to director J. R. Sullivan, “and the Jeffreys’ adaptation does all of this full justice. But what makes for the enjoyable here is the highly compelling and theatrical manner of the telling itself. Six actors combine to play twenty roles and that by itself is a circus feat that allows for imagination to triumph.”

Charles Dickens, the most popular English novelist of the Victorian era was born in February 1812. Many of his novels began as serials in periodicals and magazines. Of his numerous novels and short stories some of the best known include *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*, and *Great Expectations*. Throughout his career Dickens was known for his humanitarianism and he proved an ardent social reformer in his work. Charles Dickens suffered a stroke while working on the unfinished novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, and died in June 1870. Mourned worldwide, he was laid to rest in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey.

**HARD TIMES** will be **J.R. Sullivan’s** second production as Artistic Director of The Pearl Theatre Company, having directed *The Playboy of the Western World* in October 2009. Prior to being named Artistic Director, Mr. Sullivan directed five productions for The Pearl, including *Widowers’ Houses*, *Biography* and *Twelfth Night*. He was the founder of the New American Theater in Rockford, Illinois, and served as an associate artistic director of the Utah Shakespearean Festival from 2002 until summer 2009. His work has been seen in regional theaters across the country, including productions seen at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, the Milwaukee Repertory Theater, The Studio Theatre in Washington DC, and the Arden Theatre Company in Philadelphia, among others.

### **The Cast**

The cast features six members of the 2009-2010 Resident Acting Company. **Jolly Abraham** (Sissy Jupe, Mrs. Pegler, Mary Stokes) is the newest company member of The Pearl, joining in 2008, and has been seen on Broadway in *Coram Boy* and *Bombay Dreams*. **Rachel Botchan** (Louisa, Emma, Mrs. Blackpool) has been a Resident Acting Company member since 2000 and was seen as Widow Quin in The Pearl’s *The Playboy Of The Western World* as well as Jane in last season’s *Vieux Carré*. **Robin Leslie Brown** (Mrs. Sparsit, Mrs. Gradgrind, Rachel) is an original member of the Resident Acting Company, last seen at The Pearl as Mrs. Tarleton in this season’s *Misalliance*. **Bradford Cover** (Mr. Bounderby, Bitzer, Harthouse) a Pearl company member since 1996 has performed regionally and on Broadway in the 2001 revival of *A Thousand Clowns*. **TJ Edwards** (Gradgrind, Blackpool) has been with the company since 2006 and appeared on Broadway in Lincoln Center’s production of *King Lear*. Obie Winner **Sean McNall** (Tom, Mr. Sleary) has been a Pearl company member since 2003 appearing most recently as Julius Baker in *Misalliance*.

### **Production Team**

The production team includes: **Jo Winiarski**, scenic design; **Devon Painter**, costume design; **Stephen Petrilli**, lighting design; **Lindsay Jones**, sound design; **Will Pickens**, assistant sound design; **Kali Quinn**, movement coach and assistant to the director; **Stephen Gabis**, dialect coach. The stage manager is **Lisa Ledwich** and the dramaturg is **Kate Farrington**.

### **About The Pearl Theatre Company**

The Pearl Theatre Company produces a full-range classical repertory with an established Resident Acting Company, dedicated to bringing timeless stories to new and vivid life. Moving this season out of its 15-year home in the East Village, the company now performs uptown at New York City Center Stage II. Thus far this season, the company has presented J.M. Synge's **THE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD** and Bernard Shaw's **MISALLIANCE**. The season will conclude with the Pulitzer Prize-winning **THE SUBJECT WAS ROSES** by Frank D. Gilroy, directed by Amy Wright.

The Resident Acting Company greets the challenges of classical repertory through season-specific training and craft-building workshops. The versatility and talents of this award-winning group of artists have been instrumental in The Pearl receiving an Obie grant for continued artistic excellence, two Drama League nominations for outstanding play, and an American Theatre Wing grant for consistent commitment to excellence in the professional theatre.

### **The 2009-2010 Resident Acting Company**

The 2009-2010 Resident Acting Company consists of veterans of the New York and regional stages including: **Jolly Abraham, Rachel Botchan, Robin Leslie Brown, Bradford Cover, Dominic Cuskern, Dan Daily, TJ Edwards, Robert Hock, Sean McNall, Carol Schultz, and Edward Seamon**. The 2009-2010 resident stage managers are **Lisa Ledwich** and **Dale Smallwood**.

### **2009-2010 Ticketing and Performance Information**

The Pearl Theatre Company provides a variety of ticketing options for their performance space at New York City Center, including season subscription packages.

For subscription tickets and information, please contact Audience Services at 212-598-9802 or visit [www.pearltheatre.org](http://www.pearltheatre.org). Single tickets can be purchased by calling CityTix® at **212-581-1212**, online at [www.nycitycenter.org](http://www.nycitycenter.org) or at the City Center Box Office (West 55<sup>th</sup> Street between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenues).

***Production Schedule:***

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 7:30PM; Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday at 2:30PM.

***Previews begin February 5, 2010*** at 7:30PM. ***Opening night is Sunday, February 14, 2010*** at 7:30PM.

***Regular Ticket Prices:***

\$30 for all preview performances; \$40 for performances on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday; \$50 for performances on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

***Youth and Senior Tickets:***

\$20 weekdays and \$25 weekends. Remaining tickets at each performance can be purchased at a reduced price by individuals 30 and younger or 65 and older on the day of performance, up to one hour prior to curtain, subject to availability. Valid for 1 ticket only per ID in person at the box office.

***Student Discount:***

Students with a valid student I.D. can purchase \$10 tickets to every performance. Tickets can only be purchased at the box office the day of the production. Good for 2 tickets per valid I.D. and subject to availability.

***Thursday Rush Tickets:***

Remaining tickets for Thursday evening performances are available for \$10 on the day of the performance only, up to one hour before curtain, subject to availability at the box office.

***Tuesday Talk Post-Performance Discussion:***

These in-depth discussions give audiences the opportunity to participate in intimate talk-backs led by published scholars and experts within their fields. Tuesday Talks during ***HARD TIMES will*** take place following the performances on February 16, 2010 and March 2, 2010.

***Directions:***

The company performs its 2009-2010 Season at New York City Center Stage II, located at 131 West 55th Street (between 6th and 7th Avenues) in midtown Manhattan.

The Box Office is located at 131 West 55th Street in the outer lobby of the theatre entrance.

New York City Center can be reached by taking the N/Q/R to 57<sup>th</sup> St/7<sup>th</sup> Ave, the F to 57<sup>th</sup> St/6<sup>th</sup> Ave, the D/E to 7<sup>th</sup> Ave/53<sup>rd</sup> St, the A/B/C/D/1 to 59<sup>th</sup> St at Columbus Circle, the C to 50<sup>th</sup> St/8<sup>th</sup> Ave, or the 1 to 50<sup>th</sup> St/7<sup>th</sup> Ave.

**By Bus** m1, m2, m3, m4, m5, m6, m7, m10, m20, m31, m57, m104

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