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CONTACTS: Nick Harkin/Madeline Long
Carol Fox & Associates
773.327.3830 ext. 103/ ext. 118
madelinel@carolfoxassociates.com
nickh@carolfoxassociates.com

ACADEMY AWARD-WINNER OLYMPIA DUKAKIS TO DIRECT THE WORLD PREMIERE OF *BOTANIC GARDEN*, A NEW PLAY BY TODD LOGAN AT VICTORY GARDENS GREENHOUSE

Jeff Award-Winning Actress Carmen Roman and Jim Leaming to Star

Previews Begin Jan. 30; Press Performance Set for Feb. 8

CHICAGO – Legendary actress and director Olympia Dukakis will direct the world premiere of Todd Logan’s *Botanic Garden*, a touching, funny and insightful love story. Starring two of Chicago’s most acclaimed actors (and real-life husband and wife) Carmen Roman and Jim Leaming, the two-character play will begin preview performances on Jan. 30 at The Victory Gardens Greenhouse Theatre, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave. The press performance is Friday, Feb. 8 at 7:30 p.m. Performances continue through Sunday, March 9, 2008. Tickets go on sale Wednesday, Dec. 12.

In *Botanic Gardens*, Kate and Jake were married for more than 20 years. Now, recently widowed and faced with the daunting prospect of dating for the first time in decades, the memories of her marriage, some laughter and passion-filled, others frustration-ridden, surround Kate as she reevaluates her choices in this new chapter in her life.

“Mr. Logan’s play expertly captures a woman who has come to a crossroads in her life,” said Dukakis, who agreed to direct the production immediately upon reading it. “It is very exciting for me to work with two such fine actors on this play, not only because they are so accomplished individually, but also because I feel that their personal relationship will allow us to delve even more deeply into the ideas explored in the piece. I can’t wait for rehearsals to begin.”

Olympia Dukakis’ acclaimed career encompasses film, theater and television, and has won her an Academy Award, Obie Award, a Drama Desk Award, a Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award and a Golden Globe. Her credits include the New York productions of Martin Sherman’s *Rose* (Outer Critics Circle Award), *Social Security*, *A Man’s A Man* (Obie Award), *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*, *Curse of the Starving Class*, *Agamemnon*, *Electra*, *Peer Gynt*, *Titus Andronicus*, *The Memorandum*, *Nourish the Beast*, and *The New Tenant*. In London, she performed in *Rose* at the National Theatre and in Timberlake Wertenbaker’s *Credible Witness* at the Royal Court. She has been involved with more than 130 regional theater productions including *Hecuba* (ACT), *The Cherry*

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Orchard, Glass Menagerie and *Mother Courage*. She worked for 17 seasons at the Williamstown Theatre Festival and also served as Artistic Director of the Whole Theatre in New Jersey. Her film work includes winning the Academy Award (Best Supporting Actress), New York Film Critics Award, Los Angeles Film Critics Award and Golden Globe Award for Norman Jewison's *Moonstruck*. Other films include *Mr. Holland's Opus, Dad, Look Who's Talking I, II, III, Steel Magnolias, In the Land of Women, Away from Her* and Thom Fitzgerald's *3 Needles*. Her television work includes "Tales of the City," "More Tales of the City" (Emmy Nomination) and "Further Tales of the City," "A Life for a Life," "Lucky Day" (Emmy nomination), "Sinatra" (Emmy nomination) and "The Last Act is a Solo" (Cable ACE Award). Dukakis has been married to actor Louis Zorich since 1962, with whom she has three children.

After moving to Chicago in 1986, Carmen Roman performed opposite her future husband, American Theatre Company (ATC) founding member Jim Leaming, in *Summer Brave*. It was the first and last time the two played love interests on stage, until now. *Botanic Gardens* marks the real-life couples' return to performing together. Roman has starred in several productions national, off-Broadway and regional, as well in film and TV. Her theater credits include the national tour of *Angels in America*; the Off-Broadway production of *The Iphigenia Cycle* (Theater for a New Audience from The Court Theatre, Chicago), *The Mysteries* (Classic Stage Company), *Paradise* (Gary Allen Productions); *Orpheus Descending, The Homage that Follows, Toys in the Attic, Medea* (all at American Theater Company), *Lost in Yonkers* (Coconut Grove, Walnut Street Theater, Philadelphia), *Sonia Flew* (The Huntington Theatre, Boston), *According to Goldman* (Philadelphia Theater Company) *Electra* (Hartford Stage Company), *Big Love* (The Wilma), *Side Man* (Steppenwolf, The Galway Festival, Galway, Ireland and The Melbourne Arts Festival, Australia) *Wit, Black Snow, Brutality of Fate, Christams Carol* (The Goodman Theatre), *Master Class* (Northlight Theater and Columbia Artists Tour), *Shadowlands* (The Alliance Theater), *Fen* (Empty Space Theater), *The Falcon* (ACT, Seattle), 7 seasons at Peninsula Players in Fish Creek, Wis. Her film and television credits include *The Falcon*, (a co-production shot in Soviet Georgia), *Marilyn* (Short feature, Kevin Spacey Productions) "Damages," "All My Children," "Early Edition," "Law and Order" (Judge Einhorn, recurring), "Law and Order SVU" and "Criminal Intent" and up-coming feature, *Savages*, with Phillip Seymore Hoffman and Laura Linney. She is a Company Member of the American Theater Company in Chicago; The Actors' Center and Circling the Drain, New York. Her awards and honors include a 2002 Fox Fellow, Sarah Siddons Award, Florence Herscher Award, and Joseph Jefferson Awards for *Master Class* and *Wit*.

In 1985, Jim Leaming founded the American Blues Theatre, now the American Theatre Company (ATC) in Chicago. He has had a successful career in theater and TV with the following credits, *The Foreigner, Caught in the Net* and *Red Herring* with the Peninsula Players. Chicago credits include: *Last of the Boys* and *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Steppenwolf), *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me* (Victory Gardens), *Seagull* (Writers' Theatre), *Spinning into Butter* (The Goodman Theatre), *The Man Who Fell in Love with the Moon* with the Running With Scissors Theater Company, for which he received an

After Dark Award. With ATC, Jim's favorite acting credits include George Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life*, *A Live Radio Play*, Lewie in *American Dead*, Yank in *The Hairy Ape*, Cathcart, Major Major and seven other roles in *Catch 22*. He has acted in corporate theater internationally and the USA; he also performs voice-over and on-camera credits include "Early Edition" and "Prison Break." He trained at the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco, Second City and continues with Maryann Thebus today. (Has Jim won any awards?)

Chicago-area based playwright Todd Logan's plays include *Tops or Bottoms*, *Persistence of Vission*, *Fallout* and *The Playwright and All That Crap*, all of which have been presented in Chicago at various theaters during the past few years. He wrote the independent film *With a Family Like Mine*. His humorous essays have been published in *The New York Times*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Boston Globe* and *Writer's Digest*.

The design team for *Botanic Garden* includes Keith Pitts (sets); Rita Pietraszek (lights); Rachel Healey (costumes) and Lindsay Jones (sound).

Botanic Gardens will be presented by Canamac Production and David Fettner at The Victory Gardens Greenhouse Theatre, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave. Preview performances for *Botanic Garden* will be as follows: Jan. 30 – Feb. 3 at 7:30 p.m. and Feb. 5- 7 at 7:30 p.m. The press performance will be Friday, Feb. 8 at 7:30 p.m. Performances continue through March 9. The regular performance schedule is Thursdays and Fridays at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays at 4 and 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 2:30 p.m.

Tickets for previews are priced at \$25. Tickets to regular performances are priced at \$35. Tickets go on sale Dec. 12 at the Victory Gardens Theatre Box Office at 773-871-3000 or www.victorygardens.org. Groups of 10 or more may obtain a discount by calling GroupTix at 877-4-GRP-TIX (877-447-7849).

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