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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**HB Studio & HB Playwrights Foundation Celebrate Horton Foote
on the 100th Anniversary of the Birth of Herbert Berghof**

HB Studio & HB Playwrights Foundation's annual fundraising gala celebrates the 100th anniversary of the birth of founder **Herbert Berghof** by paying tribute to Berghof's longtime collaboration with beloved American playwright **Horton Foote**. The annual event will be held on **Monday, November 9** at **The Players Club, 16 Gramercy Park South, New York, NY 10003**. A reception at **6:00 PM** will be followed by a seated dinner and presentation at **7:00 PM**.

Renowned actor **Fritz Weaver** will present the **2009 Herbert Berghof & Uta Hagen Achievement Award** to Foote, with the award being accepted by his daughters and sons **Daisy, Hallie, Horton Jr., and Walter Foote**. The award commemorates the many fruitful years of professional support and friendship between Herbert Berghof and Horton Foote.

From the late 1960s through the early 1980s, at a fallow time in Foote's career, he and Berghof directed 10 of Foote's plays at the HB Playwrights Foundation. **Robert Duvall** appeared in Foote's adaptation of the Faulkner Short Story, *Tomorrow*. Several of the other projects featured Foote's daughter, Hallie, who has become well known as an interpreter of his work. **Matthew Broderick** made his stage debut, with his father **James Broderick**, in *Valentine's Day*. Several of these plays evolved into Foote's **Orphan's Home Cycle**, which will be presented in its entirety in New York this season by the **Signature Theatre** and **Hartford Stage**. Speaking at Berghof's memorial service at the Helen Hayes Theatre on Dec. 2, 1990, Foote praised Berghof's commitment: "He gave me a theatre home and rekindled my faith in theatre... he was a wonderful, loyal, supportive friend. I loved and admired Herbert and was indebted to him like to many others, in many ways and for a great, great many things."

HB Studio Executive Director **Edith Meeks**, a student of Berghof and performer in HB productions of Foote plays, remembers their unique, cross-cultural bond. "[They] were worlds apart in their origins – Horton with his small-town Texas roots, Herbert a Viennese expatriate and refugee from Hitler's Europe. They shared an absolute insistence on truth in acting and in storytelling. Horton opened up this American landscape for Herbert... Herbert treasured Horton's awareness and sense of detail; his ability to let the characters reveal themselves without self-consciousness. I think Horton's greatest gift to Herbert was his own continued flourishing as an artist on his own terms. It was Herbert's passionate certainty that given time, space, the support and interest of one's artistic peers, and a shelter from the vicissitudes of the marketplace, the work would find its own integrity and meaning, and accordingly must, through its own authenticity, then become known and wanted."

MORE MORE MORE

The Honorary Committee for this year's gala includes a number of artists who performed HB produced plays by Foote. The committee is co-chaired by **Robert Duvall** and **Cecilia Peck Voll**, and

includes **Devon Abner, Alexander Bernstein, André Bishop, Matthew Broderick, Diane Buglewicz Foote, Arthur French, Bernard Gersten, the Honorable Deborah Glick, Carol Goodheart and Howard Aaron, Tim Guinee, Judd Hirsch, Signature Theatre's Founding Director James Houghton, Ann Jackson and Eli Wallach, Rochelle Oliver and Fritz Weaver, Lois Smith, Jerry Stiller and Anne Meara, Hartford Stage Artistic Director Michael Wilson, and Harris Yulin.**

HB Studio & HB Playwrights Foundation's Benefit Committee is co-chaired by **Duncan Hazard** of the Polshak Partnership and **Richard Pergolis** of Pergolis Swartz Associates, Inc., and includes **Alec Baldwin, Matthew Conlon and Dr. Julie Barnes, Elizabeth Defeis and William Whitlock, Al and Donna de Matteo, Letty Ferrer and Teresa Teuscher, Henry Holden, Wallace Johnson and Karen Duguid, Marlene Mancini, Richard Mawe, Edith Meeks and Peter Coston, Dina Merrill, Edward Morehouse, Patricia O'Grady, Jody Prusan, Nick Sedelnik, and Barbara Tabor.**

The 2009 Herbert Berghof & Uta Hagen Achievement Award to Horton Foote will be presented at the annual gala of **HB Studio & HB Playwrights Foundation** on **Monday, November 9** at **The Players Club, 16 Gramercy Park South, New York, NY 10003.** Festivities begin at **6:00 PM.** A variety of seating and sponsorship packages are available for the event, starting at \$300. For more information, go to www.hbstudio.org/gala/, call **212.989.6540**, or e-mail gala@hbstudio.org

ABOUT HORTON FOOTE

Born in Wharton, Texas, Horton Foote left his hometown to study acting at the Pasadena Playhouse in California. He eventually moved to New York, and began writing plays at the suggestion of choreographer Agnes de Mille. His early play, *Texas Town*, was produced Off-Broadway in 1941. Since then his plays have been produced on Broadway, Off-Broadway, Off-Off-Broadway and at many theaters around the country. In 1995 Foote won a Pulitzer Prize for his play *The Young Man From Atlanta*. In 2008, Foote's *Dividing the Estate* appeared on Broadway and earned a Tony nomination for Best Play. That production moved to Hartford Stage in May 2009. Hartford audiences have also seen *The Death of Papa* (1998), *The Carpetbagger's Children* (2001) and *The Trip to Bountiful* (2003). Other plays include *Getting Frankie Married...and Afterwards*, *The Day Emily Married*, *The Last of the Thorntons*, *The Chase*, *The Traveling Lady*, *Night Seasons*, *Tomorrow*, *The Habitation of Dragons*, *Laura Dennis*, *Vernon Early*, and *The Roads to Home*.

In the 1940s, Foote was a leading writer of television dramas, working for Kraft Playhouse, the Philco-Goodyear Hour, Playhouse 90 and other prestigious series. His recent work for television included *Alone* (1997) and *The Old Man* (1997) for which he won an Emmy Award. His work in film includes *Storm Fear* (1956), *Baby the Rain Must Fall* (1964), *The Trip to Bountiful* (1985) and *Of Mice and Men* (1992). He received Academy Awards for his screenplay adaptation of *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1961) and his original screenplay *Tender Mercies* (1983).

Foote's many awards include Obie and Outer Critics Circle Awards for *Dividing the Estate*, Lortel Award for Outstanding Achievement Off-Broadway and the Outer Critics Circle Special Achievement Award for the Signature Theatre series of his plays, Drama Desk Lifetime Achievement Award, American Academy of Arts and Letters Gold Medal of Drama for the body of his work, PEN/LauraPels Foundation Award for Drama, New York State Governor's Award and the 2000 National Medal of Arts Award from President Bill Clinton. He was inducted into the Theatre Hall of Fame in 1996 and

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elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1998. His memoirs, *Farewell* and *Beginnings*, were published by Scribners.

ABOUT HB STUDIO

Established in 1945 by the renowned Viennese actor/director Herbert Berghof, the Herbert Berghof (HB) Studio was created to provide professional theatre training and practice for aspiring and accomplished actors of all ages.

The legendary actress Uta Hagen joined the Studio in 1948 as Berghof's artistic partner. The two were married ten years later. Miss Hagen and Mr. Berghof trained many of the outstanding actors of the American stage and screen. Hagen's master classes became the basis for her two classic acting texts, *Respect for Acting* and *A Challenge for the Actor*.

With course offerings in a full range of essential subjects, including acting, voice, musical theatre, dance, movement, improv, fencing, writing, and stage combat, the HB Studio is a fixture in New York's cultural realm that continues to thrive and evolve.

ABOUT THE HB PLAYWRIGHTS FOUNDATION & THEATRE

The HB Playwrights Foundation furthers the work of new American playwrights, providing them with a creatively free working atmosphere and a responsible theatre program. The Foundation's program makes a permanent artistic home available to promising new writers who need the experience of seeing their work performed and to writers who are confined by conditions inherent in a commercial theatre.

ABOUT THE HERBERT BERGHOF-UTA HAGEN ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

The Herbert Berghof-Uta Hagen award recognizes a theatre artist of extraordinary talent, achievement, and humanity who, in the conduct of his or her professional and artistic practice, has demonstrated an exemplary commitment to the vitality, integrity, and mission of the theatre and its community.

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