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Philip Akin

2010 SILVER TICKET AWARD WINNER FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CANADIAN THEATRE

Toronto, June 28, 2010 – One of the country's major contributors to Canadian theatre, Obsidian Theatre Artistic Director **Philip Akin** was presented with the **Silver Ticket Award** at the **31st Annual Dora Mavor Moore Awards**, held Monday evening, June 28, 2010 at Toronto's St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts in the Bluma Appel Theatre.

Since 1980, the Silver Ticket Award has been bestowed upon an individual who has excelled in their own career while also nurturing the development of Canadian theatre. Presented by the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA), the Silver Ticket Award winner is selected by a committee of previous winners and entitles the recipient to a lifetime of theatre tickets to any TAPA member company production.

Philip Akin has been acting and directing in Toronto theatre for over 30 years. A founding member since 2000 of Obsidian Theatre, Canada's leading black theatre company, he has served as its Artistic Director since 2006.

In his role as Obsidian Theatre's Artistic Director, he has worked tirelessly to provide opportunities and guidance for emerging artists. In 2002, he launched the Obsidian **Mentor/Apprentice Program**, a one-of-a-kind program that has so far helped 26 black artists embark on exciting careers as directors, dramaturges, producers and production managers as well as lighting, set and costume designers with some of the most established performing arts companies nationwide. The program gives apprentices the chance to learn from some of the most sought-after experts in the industry, and to work on two professional productions.

Philip Akin has also personally mentored a dozen emerging playwrights through Obsidian's **Playwrights Unit**, which he created in 2006. As leader of the unit, Philip focuses on the development of the playwrights rather than on play creation, and encourages open discussions about moving stories beyond the stereotypical 'Black History' play. Every one of the unit's original participants has gone on to have a work produced and/or is workshopping new works to be produced in the near future.

In addition to the programs he has founded at Obsidian, Akin works with and mentors the next generation of Toronto theatre artists, teaching writers about self-producing and budgeting, coaching young actors for auditions and providing Obsidian fundraising resources to smaller companies. He has earned a reputation for being a source of support and guidance for young artists in Toronto's theatre community.

Philip Akin was most recently seen on stage in the 2009 remount production of *The Last days of Judas Iscariot* (Birdland Theatre), and the 2007 productions of *Othello* and *Of Mice and Men* at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival. His directing credits include *Toronto the Good* and *El Paso* (Factory Theatre), *Intimate Apparel* (for Canadian Stage, Obsidian Theatre), and *Black Medea*, *Born Ready* and *Pusha Man* (all for Obsidian Theatre). His film and television credits include *Shake Hands With the Devil* (2007), *The Sum of All Fears* (2002) and "Flashpoint" (2008-2009).

Akin serves as a TAPA board member, as well as a jury member for several granting bodies at both provincial and federal levels and is a member of the Metcalf Foundation Strategic Initiative Committee. He has participated in panels for Magnetic North, PACT, Playwrights Guild of Canada and speaks regularly to theatre classes at George Brown, Ryerson, Brock and Humber College.

TAPA is an arts service organization that represents nearly 200 professional theatre, dance and opera companies in the City of Toronto, and works to create an environment in which the performing arts may flourish. In addition to the Dora Mavor Moore Awards, programs and services offered by TAPA include: T.O. TIX - Toronto's One-Stop Ticket Shop at Yonge-Dundas Square and online at www.tofix.ca; The 5 Star Experience Theatre & Dining Packages, Toronto's Official Theatre Guide; and hipTIX. For more information visit www.tapa.ca.