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AMERICAN PREMIERE OF POWERFUL NEW SIMON STEPHENS PLAY, *PUNK ROCK* CONTINUES GRIFFIN'S 23RD SEASON

Chicago, IL, December 27, 2012 – The Griffin Theatre Company is pleased to announce that it will produce the American Premiere of British playwright Simons Stephens' powerful and shattering new play that explores the volatility of adolescent life, **PUNK ROCK**. **Press opening is Sunday, January 22, 2012 at 7:00pm**. The play directed by ensemble member, Jonathan Berry continues the Griffin's exploration of Stephens' work having previously produced the American premieres of his plays, *ON THE SHORE OF THE WIDE WORLD* and *PORT*.

PUNK ROCK replaces the Griffin's previously announced play, *THE PACT* by William Massolia. *THE PACT* has been moved to the 2012/2013 season because of major commitments by Artistic Director William Massolia with the acquisition and ongoing fundraising work taking place by the Griffin for its recently purchased building which it will renovate and convert into the Griffin Arts Center.

PUNK ROCK is Simon Stephens most successful play to date and was a major hit for the Lyric Hammersmith in London. Based on the playwright's experience as a teacher, this play explores the underlying tensions and potential violence in a group of affluent, articulate seventeen year old students. Contemporary and unnerving the story explores the pressures of teenage life as as group of educated, intelligent young people begin to plan for college and the rest of their lives with the step-by-step, dislocated, latent violence simmering under the surface of success revealed.

The critics in London said the following about the Stephens, **PUNK ROCK**. A "cracking new play ... superbly acted" is Benedict Nightingale's opinion in the Times. A "superb new play ... a cracking young cast ... the new regime at Hammersmith has got off to a tremendous start," gushes Charles Spencer in the Telegraph. And it is "a remarkable new play" according to Michael Billington, who agrees that it "gets a new regime at the Lyric off to a cracking start".

And additionally the following.

"A stark, bracing and eventually brutal portrait of adolescent relationships."—Daily Express

"Confronts young people as they really are, and builds inexorably towards its tragic and violent climax."—The Guardian

"Evokes the twilight world of the teenager with scary vividness."—Daily Telegraph

"Powerful and compelling."—The Independent

"Riveting new work confirms Simon Stephens as one of the most important and exciting British playwrights working today...Compassion, insight and theatrical panache...The writer's perfectly calibrated setup leads audiences to some of the biggest, most complex questions of our time."—Variety

"Gripping, shocking and ferociously funny as anxieties jitter, hormones fizz and misery festers in the library of a Stockport private school."—Time Out London

PUNK ROCK (January 14 – March 4, 2012) continues Thursdays – Saturdays at 7:30pm and Sundays at 3:00pm, running through Sunday, March 4, 2012 at Theater Wit – 1229 West Belmont in Chicago. Tickets are \$24 - \$34 and can be purchased by calling the Theater Wit box office at (773) 975-8150 or online by visiting GriffinTheatre.com.

The Griffin is thrilled to bring this production to the US and continues its commitment to plays that focus on the experiences of young adults. And although the play is set in the UK the themes and experiences of the teens portrayed in the play are universal to any country. Its searing look at school violence may be even more relevant here in the US because of its long history of violence committed by young people on young people.

The cast includes: Jess Berry, Joey deBettencourt, Jeff Duhigg, Ryan Heindl, Leah Karpel, JJ Phillips, Leah Raidt, Brandon Ruitter, Leah Uteg & Haley Noll. The talented production and design team assembled for the production includes: Scenic: Joe Schermoly (NO MORE DEAD DOGS, PORT), Costumes: Melanie Berner (PORT), Lights: Nic Jones, (NO MORE DEAD DOGS), and Sound: Christian Gero (NO MORE DEAD DOGS).

PUNK ROCK will begin previews on January 14, 2012 and run thru March 4, 2012 at Theater Wit in Chicago at 1229 West Belmont Ave. **Press Opening is scheduled for Sunday, January 22, 2012 at 7:00pm.** **PUNK ROCK** begins preview performances Saturday, January 14, 2012 at 7:30pm. Previews continue January 15 at 3:00pm, January 19, 20, 21, at 7:30pm. Tickets to **PUNK ROCK** range from \$24 - \$34 and are on sale now. The regular run performances (January 26 – March 4, 2012) are Thursday through Saturday at 7:30 pm. and Sunday at 3:00pm. **Note there will be no matinee performance on Sunday, January 22, 2012.** Preview tickets are priced at \$24.00 each and regular run tickets are priced at \$34.00 each. Tickets are on sale now by calling the Theater Wit box office at **773-975-8150** or can be purchased online at **GriffinTheatre.com**. Senior and student discounts and group rates are available.

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