



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Run thru 8/23/08

WHAT: Central Square Theater & HipHarp.com present
The World Premiere of **"What the Hell are You Doing
in the Waiting Room for Heaven??"**

An One-Woman Musical-Theatre Experience
With the Harp & Soul of Performer/Songwriter
Deborah Henson-Conant – Directed by Wesley Savick

WHEN: Wed – Sat • Aug. 13 –23 • 8pm

WHERE: Central Square Theater
450 Mass Ave, Cambridge, MA 02139

TIX: \$30; \$16 (Students/Seniors)
1-866-811-4111 / HipHarp.com / CentralSquareTheater.org

HI-RES PHOTOS, ETC.: HipHarp.com "Publicity" Page

PRESS PREVIEW: Wed. Aug. 13 • 8PM

PRESS CONTACTS:

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*Photo (left) by Norman Blake – Additional artwork by Deborah Henson-Conant
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"What the Hell are You Doing in the Waiting Room for Heaven??"

**A New Transformational Music-Theatre Experience with the Harp & Soul of
Grammy-Nominated Performer Deborah Henson-Conant, Directed by Wesley Savick**

MA -- Deborah Henson-Conant stars in the World Premiere of her new one-
woman cabaret-style show, "What the Hell are You Doing in the Waiting Room for
Heaven??", at the new Central Square Theater in Cambridge, MA. The show runs
Wednesdays thru Saturdays, August 13-23, at 8 PM. Tickets available at
CentralSquareTheater.org or by phone at 1-866-811-4111.

After life comes...TRYOUTS?? "What the Hell...??" is an audience-
interactive one-woman musical that takes us to the waiting room for Heaven
where they're looking for a few new members of the Celestial Choir -- but
getting in won't be easy. Auditions are more like "American Idol," with a
casting coach who has her own set of inner demons, including the belief that
life itself is the ultimate reality game show, with Elvis on the judges' panel.

It's Music. It's Theater. It's Funny. It's Moving. "What the Hell...??" is
creator/star Deborah Henson-Conant's unique brand of cabaret-style music-
theatre. A funny, moving, sing-along, dance-along one-woman show with a
cast as big as the audience, a message of transformation and room for those
who just want to sit and watch.

"Whatever it is that transfixes an audience, she has it." Boston Globe

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"What The Hell are You Doing in the Waiting Room for Heaven??"

A Dramatic Convergence: In "What the Hell...??" Henson-Conant merges her parallel careers of music-theater composing and solo performing in a piece that combines Musical-Theater, Cabaret and One-Woman show -- a fusion which moves her fully into the world of theater and goes one step further by bringing the audience into the story.

In this world premiere, Henson-Conant plays Heaven-bound casting coach Aubrey Giles, determined to get her group of Heavenly wannabes (the audience) into the choir. But to really win this coveted celestial prize, Aubrey has to face her own inner demons, including the belief that Life is the Ultimate Reality Gameshow with celebrity judges like Elvis and Jimi Hendrix. This show deals with issues of empowerment that are universal: questions about success, self-worth, judgment, belief and listening for your own voice.

"Musical theater is my greatest passion," says Henson-Conant. "I've written musicals since I was a kid, but then my career as a performer took off and the more successful that became, the deeper it hurt that I was leaving my one true love.

"Finally, last year I realized I needed to write something that could merge my career as a performer with that passion for music-theater. But I had to find a scenario where it would seem perfectly natural for the main character to walk around with an electric harp strapped onto her, since that's how I perform. So this show takes place in the Waiting Room for Heaven.

"Then I realized I needed a chorus and dancers, but I'd committed to doing a One-Woman show. I started working with a producer in New York, Linda Goldstein – who manages Bobby McFerrin and co-creates many of his voice-interactive events. Linda encouraged me to open the show in some unusual ways to the audience. So this show is very interactive, but not in an imperative sense. For some people, the ultimate interaction is to simply be there, to watch, to be the audience – and it's important to me that both the audience members that sing along and those who listen are equally valued."

"What the Hell are You Doing in the Waiting Room for Heaven??" was **developed in the Advanced Writer's Lab of the New Opera and Musical Theater Initiative** (www.NOMTI.org) and is the first musical to come out of it's "Advanced Writer's Lab" sessions.

This is genre-free musical-theater, with music that borrows from Flamenco, Blues, Singer-Songwriter and classic Musical Theater styles – with a revolutionary approach to an instrument you never expected could rock – the electric harp.

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BIOS:

DEBORAH HENSON-CONANT is a Grammy-Nominated performer best-known as the world's preeminent electric harpist. Her recent PBS music special, "Invention & Alchemy," was also nominated for a 2007 Grammy. Henson-Conant creates shows that fuse music, theater, stories, humor, virtuosity and entertainment – then gets on stage with her electric harp and her voice to perform them.

Henson-Conant's early career was primarily as a playwright/composer whose musical-theater works won grants and awards from "Meet the Composer" to the prestigious Massachusetts Artists Fellowship. She shifted focus to performing in the 90's when she landed a major recording contract with the GRP jazz label and started touring internationally – including a stint as soloist for the Boston Pops, opening for Ray Charles at Tanglewood and jamming on- and off-stage with artists from Bobby McFerrin to Aerosmith's Steven Tyler. She's been featured on CBS "Sunday Morning," NBC "Today," NPR "Weekend Edition" and in the NY Times, and been interviewed by journalists from Joan Rivers to Charlie Rose.

FOR MORE on Deborah Henson-Conant: www.HipHarp.com

Hi-res photos, press materials, audio & video: click "Publicity" button at HipHarp.com

WESLEY SAVICK served as Artistic Director of the internationally acclaimed experimental company "Theatre X" in Milwaukee, as Interim Artistic Director of the Drama League of New York's Director's Project, as Artistic Associate of Chicago's Organic Theatre and as Resident Guest Director of the DARTS/Subaru Theatre in Tokyo, Japan. Savick has directed or acted in over seventy professional productions, almost all new works, including world premieres by Christopher Durang, Shel Silverstein, Derek Walcott, Howard Zinn and Robert Brustein – and now Deborah Henson-Conant. He's also written, co-written or adapted seventeen produced plays, including an opera libretto based on the life of Liberace. Two of his plays have been nominated for Best New Play Awards from the National Theatre Critics' Association. Savick is also the Founding Director of The National Theatre of Allston (www.ntallston.org), a new company devoted to original, avant-garde political work. Savick is a tenured Associate Professor of Theatre at Suffolk University.

CENTRAL SQUARE THEATER is a brand new, state-of-the-art, community-based theatrical arts facility opening Summer 2008. "What the Hell...??" is part of the trio of one-person shows opening the first "Summer in Central" season. Central Square Theater provides audiences, under one roof, the distinctive repertoires of two award-winning non-profit professional companies (Underground Railway Theater and The Nora Theatre Company), as well as collaborative projects, such as this show, that draw on the companies' creative synergy.

As the first permanent home for both professional theater companies, Central Square Theater is a vibrant hub of theatrical, educational and social activity, where artists and audiences meet to create theater vital to the community, and where schools, families and community groups engage in outreach and educational programs.

FOR MORE on Central Square Theater: www.CentralSquareTheater.org

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