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**ACT II PLAYHOUSE PRESENTS THE WORLD PREMIERE
OF *BROTHERS-IN-LAW*, A NEW PLAY BY JEFF BARON,
DIRECTED BY BARRYMORE AWARD WINNER HARRIET POWER**

On Stage March 11 - April 6, 2008; Press Opening is March 14

AMBLER, PA – You see them at family events...How well do you know them?

Act II Playhouse presents the World Premiere of *Brothers-in-Law*, a new play by Jeff Baron, directed by Barrymore Award-winning director Harriet Power, on stage March 11 through April 6 (press opening is March 14).

"We are delighted to present the world premiere production of this wonderful new play by the award-winning author of the international hit *Visiting Mr. Green*," said Bud Martin, Executive Producer of Act II Playhouse. "I am also excited that Harriet Power is returning to Act II to direct." Ms. Power, who has devoted much of her professional career to new play development, previously directed Act II's production of *Syncopation* in the 2005-2006 season.

In *Brothers-in-Law*, sparks fly - both funny and painful – as these two men, near-strangers for 12 years, completely different in age and social class, face off on the afternoon of their mother-in-law's funeral. This suspenseful comedy stars two Barrymore Award winning actors: Craig Swartz as Richard, a bon vivant; and Tom McCarthy as Fred, a truck driver.

"I would call *Brothers-in-Law* a populist American comedy. I'm hoping you'll see yourself or someone you know in this play," says playwright Jeff Baron. "I'm very interested in the special place in-laws have in a family," adds Baron. "They're a part of things, but one step removed. Sometimes they can see the family more clearly than the blood relatives."

Director Harriet Power agrees. "The term itself - IN-LAW - suggests a relationship defined by legalities rather than free choice. In *Brothers-in-Law*, we witness two people—who couldn't be more different—come face to face, wrestle for power, for turf, for respect...and ultimately take those first tentative steps toward friendship. Jeff's play explores the universal (and often zany) dynamic of how we negotiate a place for ourselves in a family, particularly when we feel unseen or unknown. Every time I read this play, I laugh, nod my head in recognition, and feel a rush of uplift and surprise," says Power.

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The final dress rehearsal of *Brothers-in-Law* will be open to the public on Sunday, March 9 at 5 PM. Suggested donation is \$10, and all contributions will be donated to PLANT AMBLER, the group of volunteers that has been planting and maintaining flowers throughout the Borough since 1973.

Three preview performances will be held March 11-13, with tickets discounted at \$25. Opening night is March 14, followed by a reception at Agavé Grille in Ambler. All evening performances are at 8 p.m., and matinees begin at 2 p.m. on Wednesdays and Sundays. *Brothers-in-Law* is sponsored in part by the Philadelphia law offices of Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll, LLP.

Tickets are \$30 for all Wednesday and Thursday performances and \$40 for Friday through Sunday shows, with discounts available for groups of 10 or more. For tickets or more information, visit www.act2.org or call (215) 654-0200.

ABOUT ACT II PLAYHOUSE

Act II Playhouse is an intimate 130-seat professional theatre located in Ambler, Montgomery County, PA. Each September-June season, Act II presents a mix of entertaining comedies, musicals and dramas. Just three years after it opened, in 2002, Act II Playhouse was awarded "Best of Philly" Suburban Theatre Company by *Philadelphia Magazine*. Since Act II has become eligible for the Barrymore Awards (the Philadelphia equivalent of the Tony Awards), the Playhouse has received 24 Barrymore nominations and 4 Barrymore Awards, including Best Actor in a Musical to Tony Braithwaite in *The Big Bang* (2005), Best Leading Actor in a Play to Kraig Swartz in *Fully Committed* (2003, a co-production with Philadelphia Theatre Company) and the Charlotte Cushman Award for Outstanding Leading Actress in a Play to Susan Riley Stevens in *Bad Dates* (2006). Act II operates under a Small Professional Theatre (SPT) agreement with the Actors' Equity Association.

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ARTISTIC PROFILES

JEFF BARON (Playwright) - Jeff's first play, *Visiting Mr. Green*, starred Eli Wallach, and was nominated as Best Play by the Drama League. After its year-long run at the Union Square Theatre in New York, it has been translated into 22 languages and performed around the world in over 300 separate productions. It won the Best Play awards in Greece, Mexico, Germany, Uruguay, Israel and Turkey and was a Best Play nominee for the Moliere Award (France) and the ACE and Clarin Awards (Argentina). Jeff was awarded the KulturPreis Europa, the first American and the first playwright to receive this prestigious award. He was invited to speak at the United Nations and to present a reading of *Visiting Mr. Green*. His second play, *Mother's Day*, has been produced in Australia, Germany and Brazil and the U.S., with another foreign language production soon to be announced. Last year, Jeff was the recipient of a Theatre Communications Group/International Theatre Institute grant to work on his play *Mr. & Mrs. God* in Croatia. Its first production will take place overseas, soon to be announced. *Edna and Joe Forever*, which he wrote with Moe Angelos will receive its world premiere next season in Germany. His four-part series of plays, *What Goes Around...* premiered in New York last year. His newest play, just completed, is *When I Was Five*. His commissioned one-act opera *Song of Martina* premiered at Carnegie Hall. His commissioned one-act play *Bless Me, Father* was part of an evening of plays commemorating September 11, 2001. In addition to his work in theatre, Jeff has written and directed for film and TV, including *The Tracey Ullman Show*, *A Year in the Life*, *Sisters* and *Nickelodeon*. His film "The Bruce Diet" won the Golden Eagle Award and was featured at film festivals in England, France, Spain, India and the U.S. He is currently editing his new film, "Goodbye".

HARRIET POWER (Director) has devoted much of her professional directing and dramaturgy career to new play development. Nationally, she has worked extensively with new plays and playwrights at New Dramatists (New York), Bay Area Playwrights Festival, West Coast Playwrights, Iowa Playwrights Festival, and the International Women Playwrights Festival. Regionally, she has directed full productions of new work at InterAct, Act II Playhouse, the Walnut Studio, Philadelphia Festival Theatre for New Plays, Venture Theatre, and Cheltenham Center for the Arts, where she was resident dramaturg for four years; and staged readings of new plays at Philadelphia Theatre Company, the Wilma, Luna Stage, and the Walnut Street Theatre. Recent directing credits include two works by Michael Hollinger: *A Wonderful Noise* (co-authored with Vance Lemkuhl) in a workshop production at New Dramatists, and *Incorruptible* (Villanova). Overseas directing credits: Donald Margulies' *Dinner With Friends* in Rome, Italy at Teatro L'Arciliuto, coproduced by The English Theatre of Rome and the American Embassy; Dorothy Louise's *LoveKnot* in Galway, Ireland for the International Women Playwrights Festival; Wole Soyinka's *The Strong Breed* in Liege, Belgium. Recent regional directing credits: *Syncopation* (Act II Playhouse), two world premieres at InterAct Theatre, both by Seth Rozin - *Reinventing Eden* and *Missing Link* (Barrymore nomination, Outstanding New Play); Sebastian Barry's *Fred and Jane* (Villanova), *Measure for Measure* (Philadelphia Shakespeare Festival; Barrymore nomination, Outstanding Direction of a Play). She won the 1997 Barrymore award for Outstanding Direction of a Play with colleague James J. Christy for *Angels in America: Perestroika* (Villanova). After *Brothers-in-Law*, she will direct Tony Kushner's *The Illusion* and co-

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curate a festival of solo performance at Villanova, where she is an associate professor of theatre and the graduate advisor.

KRAIG SWARTZ (Richard) is very happy to be back at Act II, where he last appeared in *Fully Committed* (a co-production with Philadelphia Theatre Company) and won the 2003 Barrymore Best Actor Award. He is also very excited to be working again with Tom McCarthy, with whom he appeared as Mason Marzak in *Take Me Out* at PTC (2005 Barrymore Award) and in *Shear Madness* at the Kennedy Center. Other Philly credits include Betty/Edward in *Cloud 9* at the Wilma Theatre (2006 Barrymore Award nomination.) In New York, Kraig appeared Off-Broadway as Edward Voysey in *The Voysey Inheritance*, Mr. Windlesham in last season's *The Madras House* and in *Jungle Book* at BAM. Chicago credits include: Goodman Theatre, Victory Gardens, and Chicago Shakespeare Theatre. Regional credits include: *Angels In America* at Milwaukee Rep., *Major Barbara* at Rep. Theater of St. Louis, *A Christmas Carol* and *Macbeth* at the Guthrie Theatre, *Beauty & The Beast* at Pioneer Theatre, *Peter Pan* at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, *Syncopation* at Asolo Theatre, *Fully Committed* at Coconut Grove Playhouse, *Broadway Bound* (opposite Jayne Houdyshell) at MeadowBrook Theater (Detroit Free Press Theatre Excellence Award) and at the Caldwell Theatre in *Love! Valour! Compassion!* and *Bent* (Carbonell Award Nominations). Kraig has spent 12 summers in New Hampshire at the Peterborough Players, where he has appeared in *Our Town*, *Inherit The Wind* and *You Can't Take It With You* with James Whitmore, and *Six Degrees Of Separation* with MaryBeth Hurt. He has appeared on television in SNL and in the film "World And Time Enough".

TOM McCARTHY (Fred) is a native Philadelphian who has performed in most of the Equity theatres in Philadelphia. In 2003 he was awarded the Barrymore Lifetime Achievement Award from the Theatre Alliance of Greater Philadelphia. Productions have included Arden Theatre Company's *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Working*, and *All My Sons*; Act II's *Old Wicked Songs*; Walnut Street Theatre's *Orphans* and *Brighton Beach Memoirs*; People's Light & Theatre Company's *Glengarry Glen Ross*; Wilma Theater's *Escape from Happiness* and Philadelphia Theatre Company's *Minutes from the Blue Route*. In 1997 Tom McCarthy received the Barrymore Award for Best Actor for his portrayal of Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman* at the Arden Theatre Company. This season McCarthy appears on HBO's *The Wire*, as *Baltimore Sun* state editor Tim Phelps. TV credits include: the Majority Whip in *The West Wing*, *Law & Order*, *Homicide*, *New York Undercover*, *Ed and Hack*. Film credits include "Random Hearts", "Fallen", "Up Close and Personal" and "Blow Out". McCarthy has been president of Screen Actors Guild in Philadelphia for the last 27 years. Tom served on the board of Arden Theatre Company for three years. This year will mark 30 years being the quizmaster for Delaware County Hi Q, an academic program available in all the high schools in Delaware County. In 2005 he was inducted into the Wall of Fame for Delaware County. Also in 2005, Tom conceived, acted, and produced *The Philly Fan*, a one-man-show about a frustrated Philly sports fan. Having played to sold-out audiences at numerous theater venues, it continues to be produced throughout the Philadelphia Tri-State area.

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