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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Spoletto Festival USA To Establish Artistic Relationship With Newly Restructured Festival Of Two Worlds Beginning 2009

****Spoletto Festival USA Music Director for Opera & Orchestra,
Emmanuel Villaume, conducts at the 2008 Italian festival****

Charleston, SC -- Nigel Redden, General Director of Spoletto Festival USA in Charleston, SC and Giorgio Ferrara, Artistic Director of the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy today announced plans for the structure of a partnership between the two festivals that would establish similar ties to those discontinued in 1993. Nigel Redden, Giorgio Ferrara, Emmanuel Villaume, Music Director for Opera & Orchestra for Spoletto Festival USA, and Alessio Vlad, Music Advisor to the Festival of Two Worlds, have agreed to explore opera and theater productions that can be shared by the two festivals beginning with the 2009 season. Emmanuel Villaume will conduct the Italian premiere of Albert Roussel's rarely performed opera *Padmâvatî*; directed by Bollywood's Sanjay Leela Bhansalii, which opens the 2008 Festival of Two Worlds with performances on June 27 and 29. Mr. Villaume will also conduct seven performances, beginning May 22, of Anthony Davis's newly revised opera *Amistad*, directed by Sam Helfrich, as well as two concerts with the Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra, at the 2008 Spoletto Festival USA in Charleston, SC.

"Spoletto Festival USA owes its name to its relationship with the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy and so all of us at Spoletto Festival USA are very pleased that our partnership is being revived," said Redden. "We have deeply regretted that the connection between the two festivals has not continued in recent years. Giorgio, Emmanuel, Alessio Vlad and I have been

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in conversation since Giorgio was appointed in December to determine how we can work together,”

“We expect this to be the first of many collaborations between the two sister festivals which may involve shared artists, shared productions and/or shared presentations,” said Ferrara at the press conference announcing his first season as artistic director of the Festival of Two Worlds.

“The cities of Charleston and Spoleto will soon renew our existing sister city agreement which formalizes the connection between our two cities. Founded in 1977, Spoleto Festival USA was inspired by the model of the Festival of Two Worlds. These two festivals have transformed our two cities,” said Mayor Massimo Brunini of Spoleto, Italy. “This partnership will enhance the vitality of both of our events.” Joseph P. Riley, Jr., Mayor of Charleston, added, saying, “All of us in Charleston are indebted to the town of Spoleto and the festival that is so much a part of that town. It will be very fitting to bring the two festivals closer together.”

Chuck Volpe, Chair of the Italian Festival Committee of the Spoleto Festival USA Board of Directors, commented, “We have had discussions within the board of Spoleto Festival USA for a number of years about how a relationship between the two festivals might develop. The two festivals share a common history and it is logical to explore how we can enhance each other.”

Highlights of the 2008 Spoleto Festival USA scheduled to run from May 23 to June 8 in Charleston, SC include: the U.S. premiere of the music theater spectacle *Monkey: Journey to the West* by Chinese director Chen Shi-Zheng and Damon Albarn and Jamie Hewlett, the British team behind the award-winning virtual band, Gorillaz; the premiere of a newly revised version of Anthony Davis’s landmark opera *Amistad*; Gioachino Rossini’s sparkling *La Cenerentola* directed by Charles Roubaud and conducted by Matteo Beltrami; Nottingham Playhouse Theatre Company’s acclaimed *The Burial at Thebes*; the rare U.S. appearance of Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève; and American performance artist Laurie Anderson’s newest work, *Homeland*.

Highlights of the 2008 Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy scheduled to run June 27 to July 13, include: *Padmâvatî* conducted by Emmanuel Villaume; American dance sensation Savion Glover; the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Daniel Harding; Berliner Ensemble’s *A Threepenny Opera*; and a concert dedicated to the festival’s founding artistic director, Gian Carlo Menotti.

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About Spoleto Festival USA

Spoleto Festival USA has firmly established itself as one of the world's major arts festivals since its inception in 1977. For 17 days and nights each spring, Spoleto Festival USA fills Charleston, South Carolina's historic theatres, churches and outdoor spaces with over 100 performances by renowned artists and emerging performers in disciplines ranging from opera, theater, music theater, dance, and chamber, symphonic, choral and jazz music, as well as the visual arts. Tickets are on sale for all festival events. To purchase tickets or for more information, please visit www.spoletousa.org.

About Nigel Redden, General Director, Spoleto Festival USA

General director Nigel Redden rejoined Spoleto Festival USA in October 1995. He had previously been general manager from 1986 to 1991. After leaving the festival in 1991, Mr. Redden served as executive director of the Santa Fe Opera and executive producer of the Lincoln Center Festival.

As general director of Spoleto Festival USA, Nigel Redden is responsible for all aspects of the festival including fund-raising, financial administration, marketing, union negotiations, artists' contracts, board development and programming. Nigel Redden also leads the Lincoln Center Festival as director.

About Giorgio Ferrara, Artistic Director of the Festival of Two Worlds, Spoleto Italy

Theater and film director Giorgio Ferrara was born in Rome in 1947. Notable collaborations include intense work with Italian film directors Luca Ronconi and Luchino Visconti. He assisted Visconti with *Ludwig* and Harold Pinter's *Old Times*.

For theater he has directed the work of numerous classical and contemporary playwrights such as Pirandello, Strindberg, Goldoni Carlo Bernari, Francesca Sanvitale, Enzo Sicillano, Franca Valeri, Cesare Musatti, Natalia Ginzburg and Carrado Augias. For the cinema, he directed the award-winning *Un cuore semplice (A Simple Heart)* based on a work by Gustav Flaubert with a script by Cesare Zavattini.

Ferrara served as director of the Italian Cultural Institute in Paris from 2003 to 2007 and president of the Forum of Foreign Culture in Paris from 2005 to 2007. He splits his time between Rome and Paris with his wife, actress Adriana Asti.

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