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Australian Artist Robyn Archer To Lecture, Conduct Workshops at Carnegie Mellon's School of Drama

PITTSBURGH — Noted Australian Festival artistic director Robyn Archer will lecture on "Setting Context for the Contemporary Arts in Australia" on Monday, Oct. 1 at 5 p.m. in the Philip Chosky Theatre on Carnegie Mellon's campus. The talk will provide valuable background to the wonderful array of Australian performing arts companies who will visit Pittsburgh this fall as part of the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust's Australia Festival. The lecture is free and open to the public.

In addition, Archer will offer master classes and conduct workshops with music theatre students at Carnegie Mellon's School of Drama during the first week in October.

Archer's classes and workshops coincide with the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust's Australia Festival, which will include six weeks of performances throughout the city in October and November.

"She is an artist who has moved beyond her discipline to become a remarkable intellectual and creative force. Any time I've seen Robyn's work — either in concert in her life as a performer of political cabaret, or giving a keynote speech at an international conference — I have never been less than thoroughly engaged and stimulated," said Elizabeth Bradley, head of the School of Drama.

Archer has a varied background as a performer and author. She is a singer and composer of many songs and works that have been staged around the world. Many of her original pieces are in the spirit of German Cabaret, a form that flourished in pre-World War II Germany. Her play, "Architektin," will be staged in 2008.

"For me, the definition of art is almost that it doesn't have any audience, because it's highly original and creative. You don't know what it is, and so, in a way, for real art, the measure of your audience is impossible. Let's just look at the clichéd example of Van Gogh. There was no audience, no buyer, and yet he is now recognized as one of the great artists, so the same applies today," Archer said in a 2002 interview on the Austrian television program "INSIGHT."

Archer is in demand as artistic director for festivals in Europe, Australia and North America. She served as director of both the Adelaide and Melbourne festivals in Australia and is the international artistic advisor to Toronto's Luminato Festival. She has also given many keynote speeches, including the 2006 Menzies Lecture in London. The University of Western Australia Press will publish her keynote speeches in 2008. Archer's biography is online at http://www.robynarcher.com.au/100_home.php.

NOTE TO EDITORS: A previous press release was distributed noting Archer as the artistic director for the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust's Australia Festival. That information is incorrect. The curator and director of the upcoming Pittsburgh Cultural Trust's Australia Festival is Paul Organisak, Vice President of Programming for the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust.

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About Carnegie Mellon: Carnegie Mellon is a private research university with a distinctive mix of programs in engineering, computer science, robotics, business, public policy, fine arts and the humanities. More than 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students receive an education characterized by its focus on creating and implementing solutions for real problems, interdisciplinary collaboration, and innovation. A small student-to-faculty ratio provides an opportunity for close interaction between students and professors. While technology is pervasive on its 144-acre Pittsburgh campus, Carnegie Mellon is also distinctive among leading research universities for the world-renowned programs in its College of Fine Arts. A global university, Carnegie Mellon has campuses in Silicon Valley, Calif., and Qatar, and programs in Asia, Australia and Europe. For more, see www.cmu.edu.