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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Anna Deveare Smith, Recipient of a MacArthur Genius Award for Her Unique Solo Performances, Coming to The Broad Stage, July 20-31 2011**

***Let Me Down Easy* Explores the Human Side of the Health Care Debate Through Smith's Spellbinding Portrayals of Real People, Some Famous, Some Not**

**Hailed By The New York Times as "The Ultimate Impressionist: She Does People's Souls," Smith Explores Resilience, Grace, and, Most Of All, Love**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, SANTA MONICA, Calif., June 10, 2011 –**

Anna Deveare Smith, who received a MacArthur Genius Award for her unique "blend of theatrical art, social commentary, journalism, and intimate reverie," is bringing her latest one-woman show *Let Me Down Easy* to The Broad Stage. There will be Previews on July 20 and Opening Night is July 22.

Also widely known for her roles in *The West Wing* and *Nurse Jackie*, Smith's virtuoso solo theatrical performances draw on interviews with hundreds of people and fill the stage with dozens of compellingly true voices and stories – *The New York Times* has called her "the ultimate impressionist: she does people's souls."

*Let Me Down Easy* tells the human side of the health care story now unwinding in politics, bringing to light questions about the human body, the resilience of the spirit and the price of care. Drawing on 320 interviews on three continents,

The Eli and Edythe Broad Stage  
The Edge Second Space

Santa Monica College Performing Arts Center  
Location Address: 1310 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Santa Monica, CA 90403  
Mailing Address: 1900 Pico Blvd, Santa Monica, CA 90405-1628  
Phone: 310. 434. 3412 [www.thebroadstage.com](http://www.thebroadstage.com)

Smith creates a spellbinding evening in which she channels twenty people, some you know, some you've never met – from Lance Armstrong to first supermodel Lauren Hutton, to Governor Ann Richards to a rodeo bull rider to distinguished doctors and holy men. Exploring physical power and vulnerability in her signature style of journalistic performance, the show is ultimately about resilience, grace and most of all, love.

*Let Me Down Easy* is the latest in Smith's On the Road series, in which she explores our national character by interviewing people from diverse backgrounds and then performing word for word excerpts, creating intimate portraits of people from across the country. Smith began the On the Road in the early 1980s and earlier works include *Twilight: Los Angeles*, which depicted the 1992 Los Angeles riots and was called "an American masterpiece" by Newsweek's Jack Kroll. *Twilight*, which Smith performed around the U.S., received two Tony nominations, an Obie Award, Drama Desk Award, Special Citation from the New York Drama Critics Circle, and numerous other honors. President and Mrs. Clinton and Vice President Al Gore attended her Washington, D.C. performance.

In addition to performing on stage, Ms. Smith has held roles in such notable films as *The American President*, *The Human Stain*, *Life Support*, and *Rachel Getting Married*. She is founder and director of Anna Deavere Smith Works, Inc., based at New York University – where she is also a Professor. ADS Works is a place for artistic excellence and social change, convening artists from around the world whose work focuses on the pressing social issues of our time.

Other works of Smith's include *Fires in the Mirror*, which examined a 1991 race riot in Crown Heights, Brooklyn when age-old racial tensions between black and Jewish neighbors exploded. The play received numerous awards, including an Obie Award, was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, and was also broadcast on PBS. Ms. Smith also created *House Arrest*, which deals with the American presidency; and

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Hymn, a collaboration with world-famous choreographer and dancer Judith Jamison, for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

Ms. Smith has served as an inaugural Artist-In-Residence at the Ford Foundation, MTV Networks, The Aspen Institute and currently at the Center for American Progress in Washington, D.C. She has also received several honorary degrees, among them: The Juilliard School, Barnard College, Bryn Mawr College, Bates College, Northwestern University, Wesleyan University, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Cooper Union, Holy Cross, John Jay College of Criminal Justice; and Spelman College in 2012. She serves on the boards of The Aspen Institute and the Museum of Modern Art; and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

*Let Me Down Easy* is directed by **Leonard Foglia**, an American theatre director, librettist, and novelist. Foglia has directed the world premiere of Jake Heggie's *End of the Affair* at Houston Grand Opera and performances of Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* at New York City Opera, Opera Pacific, Cincinnati Opera, and Michigan Opera Theater, as well as the world premiere musical *Laughing Matters* by Iris Rainer Dart at the Pasadena Playhouse in California. He has also collaborated many times with *Dead Man Walking* librettist Terrence McNally, directing McNally's Tony award-winning *Master Class* on Broadway as well as London's West End and directing the playwright's *By the Sea, By the Sea, By the Beautiful Sea* for the Manhattan Theatre Club, and *The Stendhal Syndrome* in New York. Foglia has directed theater productions for Pittsburgh Public Theater, Long Wharf Theater, Bay Street Theater Festival, Globe Theatre, Paper Mill Playhouse, Pasadena Playhouse, and Trinity Repertory Company. With David Richards, he has written two mystery novels, *Face Down in the Park* and *1 Ragged Ridge Road*.

### **About The Broad Stage:**

Under the leadership of Director Dale Franzen and Artistic Chair Dustin Hoffman, The Eli and Edythe Broad Stage at the Santa Monica College Performing Arts Center

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opened its doors in Santa Monica in October 2008. Inspired by Italian “horseshoe” theaters, yet conceived in an absolutely contemporary vernacular, The Broad Stage is an artist’s dream and an audience’s delight. Unlike any performance space in the country, it is sublimely intimate with 499-seats and strikingly grand at the same time – allowing eye contact with artists from the boxes to the back row –forging a new kind of artist and audience experience in Los Angeles. Theater, dance, film, operas, musicals, symphony and chamber orchestras will be presented on one of the city’s largest proscenium stages. Designed without compromise to embrace the artistic process from inspiration to opening night, and conceived as a global theater and community hub. In addition to The Broad Stage, The Edye Second Space, a smaller black box theater, presents new, developing and innovative work in theater, music and dance as part of the Under the Radar Series. Featuring younger, innovative artists and chamber pieces and plays, programming at The Edye is intentionally spontaneous, reflecting the dynamic nature of the space and allowing the latest, most exciting artists to be booked on short notice. The Under the Radar Series is only \$20. **Visit The Broad Stage online at [www.TheBroadStage.com](http://www.TheBroadStage.com).**

Tickets: Range from \$30 - \$75 available online at [www.theBroadStage.com](http://www.theBroadStage.com), 310.434.3200. Parking is free.

**EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:**

The Broad Stage is located at 1310 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401

Previews: \$30 - \$40

Tuesday – Thursday: \$32-\$55

Friday/Saturday Evening: \$45-\$75

Saturday/Sunday Matinee: \$39-\$65

**Performance Dates and Times:**

Wednesday	07-20-2011	7:30 PM (Preview)
Thursday	07-21-2011	7:30 PM (Preview)
Friday	07-22-2011	7:30 PM
Saturday	07-23-2011	2:00 PM
Saturday	07-23-2011	7:30 PM
Sunday	07-24-2011	2:00 PM
Tuesday	07-26-2011	7:30 PM
Wednesday	07-27-2011	7:30 PM
Thursday	07-28-2011	7:30 PM
Friday	07-29-2011	7:30 PM
Saturday	07-30-2011	2:00 PM
Saturday	07-30-2011	7:30 PM
Sunday	07-31-2011	2:00 PM

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