

## EMBASSY OF FRANCE – PRESS RELEASE

# France to Honor Elizabeth LeCompte, Ron Simon, John Yau and Francesca Zambello

## ALL WILL BE NAMED CHEVALIERS OF THE ORDRE DES ARTS ET DES LETTRES

**New York, March 5, 2008**—On Monday **March 10**, Kareen Rispal, Cultural Counselor of the Embassy of France, will confer upon **Elizabeth LeCompte, Ron Simon, John Yau, and Francesca Zambello** the insignia of Chevalier of the **Order of Arts and Letters**.

**Elizabeth LeCompte** is a **founding member of the Wooster Group**, an audacious *avant-garde* innovator who has **developed new forms and techniques** of theatrical expression. Her evocative association of texts and movement, masterfully combined with new technologies, results in the Group's highly influential trademark pieces. The Wooster group has traveled abroad regularly to perform, including several trips to France and other European countries, where its work was well-received from the start.

**Ron Simon** has been the **curator of television and radio at the Paley Center for Media** (formerly the Museum of TV & Radio) since 1983. Under his leadership, the Center's permanent collection of radio and TV programs has risen from 800 to more than 150,000. An admirer of French television, he has built up the Center's **collection of French programs**, which range from Cocteau to advertisements for Peugeot, and played a key role in **bringing French TV archives to the American public**.

**John Yau**, is an esteemed **poet, teacher, art critic** and **curator**; early on, Mr. Yau's work was influenced by John Ashbery as well as by the poetry of Pierre Reverdy, Max Jacob, Henri Michaux and many others associated with surrealism and experimental writing. He has tirelessly worked to **publish French poets**—such as Jacques Dupin, Franck André Jamme and Pierre Reverdy—in the U.S., through Black Square Editions / Brooklyn Rail Books.

**Francesca Zambello** is an internationally **renowned director of opera and theater productions** whose passion for French culture, kindled by six years spent in Paris as a teenager, has permeated her entire career. She has done **groundbreaking work** with operas by French composers (*Salammbô* by Philippe Fénélon, *Le Dialogues des Carmélites* by Francis Poulenc) and **attracted new audiences to the French repertoire**. Francesca Zambello is best known for her promotion of new and innovative works throughout the world.

The **Ordre des Arts et des Lettres** (Order of the Arts and Letters) was created in **1957** to recognize eminent artists and writers, as well as individuals who have contributed to the **recognition of French culture in the world**. The Order is given out twice annually to only a few hundred people worldwide. Several Americans have received the award, including Paul Auster, Ornette Coleman, Agnes Gund, Marilyn Horne, Jim Jarmusch, Richard Meier, Robert Paxton, Robert Redford, Meryl Streep and Uma Thurman.

### **For more information:**

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