



DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

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NEWS RELEASE

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THE THEATRE SCHOOL AT DEPAUL UNIVERSITY **ANNOUNCES 2005-2006, 80TH SEASON**

The Theatre School at DePaul University, now in its 80th year, announces its 2005-2006 season. **For information and to purchase subscriptions, call the Box Office at (312) 922-1999.**

Founded as the Goodman School of Drama in 1925, The Theatre School is the Midwest's leading theatre conservatory and is recognized around the nation for its professional training programs. Throughout its history, the school has provided Chicago audiences with affordable and meaningful theatrical experiences. Plays are directed by members of the school's professional faculty. Students are involved in all aspects of production — as actors, designers, dramaturgs, technicians and other crew. Acclaimed as “a legendary training ground” by the *Chicago Tribune*, the school has launched the careers of numerous influential artists from the stage of the Merle Reskin Theatre.

“Theatre School Showcase Artistic Director Dexter Bullard, Chicago Playworks Artistic Director Lisa Portes and I are pleased to announce our 80th season, featuring a variety of theatrical styles and perspectives representing diverse cultures,” said John Culbert, dean of The Theatre School. “The season features everything from classic Shakespeare to a modern musical, explores themes of ethnicity, religion and politics, and offers a range of performance, design, technical and dramaturgical opportunities for our students. We are also proud to announce the presentation of our first Cunningham Commission for Youth Theatre, the world premiere of ***THE KINGDOM OF GRIMM*** by Chicagoan Douglas Post. We look forward to a 2005-2006 season that challenges, inspires and entertains.”

THE THEATRE SCHOOL SHOWCASE

The Theatre School Showcase (Dexter Bullard, Artistic Director), offering a dynamic season of contemporary and classic plays, will feature the following productions during the 2005-2006 season at DePaul University's historic Merle Reskin Theatre, 60 E. Balbo Drive, Chicago:

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- ***OTHELLO*** by William Shakespeare, directed by Theatre School faculty member and Goodman Theatre Artistic Collective member Henry Godinez, opens October 7 and runs through October 16, 2005 (with previews on 10/5 & 10/6). William Shakespeare's masterful tragedy explores the timeless themes of love, war and toxic jealousy, set against the backdrop of the Vietnam War and racial and social issues of 1969. Manipulated by his villainous lieutenant Iago, Othello's descent into darkness and destruction is especially poignant and powerful.
- ***THE LAST NIGHT OF BALLYHOO*** by Alfred Uhry, directed by Trudie Kessler, opens February 10 and runs through February 19, 2006 (with previews on 2/8 & 2/9). After he wrote the Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Driving Miss Daisy*, Uhry won a Tony Award for his second play, *THE LAST NIGHT OF BALLYHOO*. The play highlights a Jewish family's anxiety over Ballyhoo, the cotillion for Southern Jewish society, as tensions rise in Europe and *Gone with the Wind* premieres in Atlanta in 1939. Populated with delightful characters and brimming with witty lines, *THE LAST NIGHT OF BALLYHOO* is a radiant mix of true-to-life comedy framed by the family's struggle with anti-Semitism and quest for assimilation and identity. *The San Francisco Chronicle* wrote, "*THE LAST NIGHT OF BALLYHOO* is like a piece of vintage furniture. It's well constructed, and its authentic details evoke the style, cultural assumptions and even, on closer inspection, the substance of a distant way of life." *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution* described the play as "a masterful mixture of mirth and maxim."
- ***PENTECOST*** by David Edgar, directed by Carlos Murillo, opens April 14 and runs through April 23, 2006 (with previews 4/12 & 4/13). Birmingham, England's David Edgar, best known as the Tony Award-winning adapter of Charles Dickens' *Nicholas Nickleby*, first presented *PENTECOST* in 1994. When an ancient fresco is discovered in an abandoned church, an art curator and a British art historian investigate whether it could be a Giotto painting. Disputes over cultural ownership and the value of art ignite amidst an environment of political intrigue in this provocative drama that challenges the origins of Western thought. *The Los Angeles Times* wrote that *PENTECOST* "is a play of politics and ideas. The politics are post-Cold War turbulent; the ideas are challenging and disturbing." *The Village Voice* added, "This is the meatiest new drama I have seen since Stoppard's *Arcadia*, which is, come to think of it, the only new play I have seen

in the past decade whose rigor and historical depth meaningfully compare with *PENTECOST's*." *The New York Times* raved, "*PENTECOST* cuts to the heart in a smashing ideological epic spilling over with feeling."

- ***TWO TRAINS RUNNING*** by August Wilson, directed by Phyllis E. Griffin, opens May 12 and runs through May 21, 2006 (with previews 5/10 & 5/11). Part of August Wilson's award-winning 10-play cycle about the African-American experience during the 20th century, *Two Trains Running* takes place inside a Pittsburgh diner at the end of the 1960s. The Civil Rights Movement is slowly fading. Urban Renewal has begun its destructive path through the once successful community. While the diner's owner fights to receive a fair price for his property, his neighborhood clientele weave a rich tapestry of experiences and survive the economic hardships of their time with ingenuity and wit. Wilson, recipient of two Pulitzer Prizes and numerous Tony Awards and other honors, has said, "There are always and only two trains running. There is life and there is death. Each of us rides them both. To live life with dignity, to celebrate and accept responsibility for your presence in the world is all that can be asked of anyone." About the play, *The Houston Chronicle* wrote, "This portrait of communal life in a Pittsburgh diner is so vital, so rich in color and detail, so full of the crazy laughter and dark pain of life that it becomes irresistible. It's a stunning achievement."

Subscriptions to The Theatre School Showcase are \$40 - \$48. Single tickets are \$6 - \$15. Showcase FlexPasses are available for \$48, entitling the purchaser to four tickets to use as they choose during the season. Group rates are available for 15 or more people. Post-show discussions and performances interpreted in American Sign Language are scheduled for each production. Subscribers are entitled to free ticket re-scheduling, \$6 parking coupons and other benefits. For complete details or to purchase a subscription, call the Merle Reskin Theatre Box Office at (312) 922-1999.

CHICAGO PLAYWORKS FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG AUDIENCES

Founded as the Goodman Children's Theatre in 1925, **Chicago Playworks for Families and Young Audiences** (Lisa Portes, Artistic Director) is the city's oldest continuously operating children's theatre and was one of the first major children's theatres in the United States. During the 2004-2005 season, Chicago Playworks presented its three unique productions to more than 37,000 parents, children and schoolchildren. The 2005-2006 season will include:

- **MANGO LEAF MAGIC** by James Ambrose Brown, directed by Ann Wakefield, opens November 1 and runs through December 3, 2005. In the lush and exotic world of South Africa, Moonsammy, a young fruit vendor, sells his wares in front of a Hindu temple. The Little Green God, impressed by his noble intentions, grants Moonsammy three magic mango leaves. Using the enchanted leaves, he embarks on a quest to rescue the beautiful Soni who has been locked away in a tower by her greedy uncle. Together they learn the value of faith, friendship and loyalty in this captivating tale. The play is recommended for age 6 and up.
- **THE BOXCAR CHILDREN** by Barbara Field, adapted from the novels by Gertrude Chandler Warner, directed by John Jenkins, opens January 14 and runs through March 11, 2006. Based on the beloved children's books, *The Boxcar Children* follows the story of the Alden orphans, who run away to live in an abandoned railroad boxcar when threatened with being sent to different foster homes. After one sibling grows ill, they learn the importance of family and the value of trust. The Alden's story of courage and survival has been cherished for generations. The play is recommended for age 8 and up.
- The world premiere of **THE KINGDOM OF GRIMM: A MUSICAL BASED ON THREE STORIES BY THE BROTHERS GRIMM**, book, music and lyrics by Douglas Post, directed by Barry Brunetti, musical direction by Mark Elliott, opens March 28 and runs through May 20, 2006. The first Cunningham Commission for Youth Theatre, *The Kingdom of Grimm* is an inspiring new musical for American children's theatre about the magic of storytelling. One winter's day, young Hans stumbles across a key in the woods. It unlocks an enchanted chest that holds the imprisoned Gerhardt the Great and his troupe of traveling players. To show their thanks, the players perform three fairy tales for Hans: *The Golden Goose*, *The Three Huntsmen* and *The Four Skillful Brothers*. Underscored by songs ranging in style from ballads to blues, Hans learns about generosity, loyalty and hard work. The play is recommended for age 5 and up.

Subscriptions to Saturday performances of Chicago Playworks productions are \$21. Single tickets are \$8. Group rates are available for 15 or more people. Free Teacher/Production Guides, performances

interpreted in American Sign Language and post-show Ice Cream Socials with the cast are available for each production. Subscribers are entitled to free ticket rescheduling, \$6 parking coupons and other benefits. For complete details and to purchase subscriptions, call the Box Office at (312) 922-1999.

MUSICAL PROJECT

The Theatre School's **Musical Project** production is presented at the Athenaeum Studio Three, 2936 N. Southport Ave., Chicago, with free admission:

- **A NEW BRAIN**, music and lyrics by William Finn, book by William Finn and James Lapine, directed by Betsy Hamilton, musical direction by Mark Elliott, opens November 11 and runs through November 20, 2005 (with previews 11/9 & 11/10). Tony-Award winning William Finn's own medical misdiagnosis was the basis for this quirky and uplifting musical. Gordan, under stress from his job, collapses and is soon diagnosed with a rare brain tumor. During his stay in the hospital he is visited by an odd assortment of characters, helping him discover the healing power of art. Hailed as "a tuneful and highly entertaining musical with a relentlessly optimistic spirit" (*Chicago Tribune*), *A New Brain* is soulful and transporting evening at the theatre.

NEW DIRECTORS SERIES

New Directors Series productions are directed in partial fulfillment of the Master of Fine Arts in Directing and are presented at the Athenaeum Studio Three, 2936 N. Southport, Chicago. Admission to New Directors Series productions is free.

- **HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE** by Paula Vogel, directed by Brandy Austin, opens February 24 and runs through March 5, 2006 (with previews 2/22 & 2/23). In this Pulitzer Prize-winning play, Vogel takes audiences on a journey down the bumpy roads of rural Maryland to deliver a story of survival and forgiveness. In a series of flashbacks and flash-forwards, *How I Learned to Drive* chronicles the troubling relationship between a young girl and her uncle. Described by *The New York Times* as "a lovely, harrowing guide to the crippling persistence of one woman's memories," this play is recommended for mature audiences.

NEW PLAYWRIGHTS SERIES

The Theatre School's **New Playwrights Series**, created to support the school's Playwriting Program, will present a play still to be announced, opening April 28 and running through May 7, 2006 (with previews 4/26 & 4/27). The New Playwrights Series, now in its third year, features a new play by a current Theatre School student or a recent graduate, selected by Theatre School faculty. By providing an opportunity to fully realize the work of a young artist, all involved have the opportunity to craft a new theatrical event and introduce new voices to the community. The production, directed by a Theatre School faculty member or guest artist, will provide the playwright with an opportunity to continue to develop the play throughout the process.

The Theatre School's Mission

The Theatre School at DePaul University educates, trains and inspires students of theatre in a conservatory setting that is rigorous, disciplined, culturally diverse and that strives for the highest level of professional skill and artistry. A commitment to diversity and equality in education is central to its mission. As an integral part of the training, The Theatre School produces public programs and performances from a wide repertoire of classic, contemporary and original plays that challenge, entertain and stimulate the imagination. The school seeks to enhance the intellectual and cultural life of the university community, the city and the profession.

More information about The Theatre School is available at <http://theatreschool.depaul.edu>.

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