



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## SU Department of Drama Announces 2010/2011 Season

(Syracuse, NY)—Syracuse University's Department of Drama in the College of Visual and Performing Arts (VPA) is proud to announce its 2010/2011 season. The season's productions will include the groundbreaking Kander and Ebb musical *Cabaret*; *Jungalbook*, a modern take on Rudyard Kipling's classic story; *RENT*, a co-production with Syracuse Stage; the Ancient Greek comedy *Lysistrata*; Sam Shepard's starkly funny dysfunctional family play *Curse of the Starving Class*; and composer William Finn's autobiographical musical *A New Brain*.

"Through these vastly differently productions, we hope to further solidify the department's status as a leader in artistic training while providing our community with adventurous theatre," said Producing Artistic Director Timothy Bond.

Season packages are currently available at the Syracuse Stage Box Office at 820 East Genesee Street from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, or by calling the Box Office at 315-443-3275. Season subscriptions are \$95 (includes five plays plus *RENT*) - and \$85 for seniors. All shows will be performed in the Storch Theatre at Syracuse Stage (approximately 200 seats), except for *Cabaret* and *RENT* which will be performed in the Archbold Theatre, allowing students in the Department of Drama an opportunity to perform in a larger venue (approximately 500 seats).

### SEASON OVERVIEW

#### *Cabaret*

Music by John Kander

Lyrics by Fred Ebb

Book by Joe Masteroff

Directed and Choreographed by David Wanstreet

October 1 - 10

*\*Performed in the Archbold Theatre*

Energetically musical and deeply entertaining, *Cabaret* ranks among the greatest American musicals. A memorable score ("Come to the Cabaret," "Money," "Married") supports this daring and visionary play set amid the decadence of 1929 Weimar Germany's netherworld. Life is a cabaret for the habitués of the Kit Kat Club as long as they remain willfully blind to the growing menace of Nazism.

Originally directed on Broadway in 1966 by Harold Prince, *Cabaret* won eight Tony Awards, including Best Musical and Best Supporting Actor for Joel Grey as the Emcee. The musical inspired the 1972 film, directed by Bob Fosse, starring Liza Minelli as Sally Bowles, a role for which she won an Academy Award. The 1998 Broadway revival of *Cabaret* directed by Sam

Mendes and Rob Marshall ran for six years, the third longest running revival in history. Previously for SU Drama, David Wanstreet has directed *Anything Goes*, *Sweet Charity*, *Damn Yankees*, *Chicago*, and *Steel Pier*.

## ***Jungalbook***

By Edward Mast

Based on *The Jungle Books* by Rudyard Kipling

Directed by Felix Ivanov

November 12 - 21

Take an excursion into a playground full of imagination and physical dexterity. Adapted from Rudyard Kipling's books and poems, these intertwined tales of Mowgli, the "mancub," get a contemporary spin as Kipling's great characters spring to life. The familiar story of Mowgli—raised by Akela the wolf, tutored by Baloo the bear and protected by Bagheera the panther—climaxes in the final showdown with Sherakhan the tiger. Along the way, Mowgli learns the laws of the jungle and the price paid for breaking them. Unlike some popular film versions, this adaptation adheres closely to Kipling's stories and captures the poetic spirit of the original tales.

Mast is a Seattle-based playwright whose adaptations of *The Jungle Books* and *The Hobbit* allow contemporary audiences to access dated, but important stories. After *Jungalbook's* New York premiere in August 2006, it has been performed around the US for audiences of all ages. Previously for SU Drama, Felix Ivanov directed *Aesop's Fables* in the Black Box Theatre. He is a graduate of the prestigious Schukin Theatre School at the Vakhtangov Academy Theatre and the Stasov Musical School (violin) in Moscow, Russia.

## ***RENT***

*A Co-Production between Syracuse Stage and Syracuse University's Department of Drama*

January 18 - February 13

By Jonathan Larson

Directed and Choreographed by Anthony Salatino

Jonathan Larson's Broadway phenomenon ignites the stage with passion and energy. One year—525,600 minutes—in the lives of seven young friends from Alphabet City brings love, loss, tragedy and triumph in a whirl of non-stop music. Larson built the show on the artists and addicts he knew in his neighborhood as they battled poverty, drugs, AIDS and the looming gentrification of their *Vie Bohème*. Urban and gritty, this Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning musical brims with raw emotion and infectious enthusiasm.

Based on Puccini's *La Bohème*, *Rent* opened off-Broadway in January 1996 to wide critical acclaim. It quickly moved to its Broadway home, the Nederlander Theatre, where it ran for 12 years, becoming the eighth longest running Broadway musical in history. *Rent* won the 1996 Pulitzer Prize for drama and was nominated for ten Tony Awards, winning four, including Best Musical and Best Original Score. The rock musical was adapted into a 2005 feature film directed by Chris Columbus starring most of the original cast, including SU Drama alumnus Taye Diggs '93, Idina Menzel, and Adam Pascal. *Rent's* composer, lyricist and scribe Jonathan Larson died suddenly of an aortic aneurism just before previews began off-Broadway, a testament to Larson's message that there is "no day but today." Anthony Salatino previously directed *A Little Night Music*, *Der Tisch the Table*, *Clowns*, *Red Noses*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, and *Sweeney Todd*. For Syracuse Stage he choreographed *A Christmas Carol*; directed and

choreographed *Little Women*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Sound of Music*, *West Side Story*, *Peter Pan*, and choreographed *The Wizard of Oz*, *Big River* and *My Fair Lady*.

## ***Lysistrata***

By Aristophanes

Directed by Stephen Cross

February 18 - 27

Bawdy, provocative and hilarious, *Lysistrata* has been delighting audiences since Socrates was a baby, give or take a few decades. Aristophanes was the great comic writer of ancient Athens and in this wild play he captures the frustration of women weary of the suffering wrought by the long war waged by their glory-hungry men. The solution? Inflict a frustration of a more intimate sort on the men—deny them sex until they cease fighting. A classic in every sense of the word, *Lysistrata* proves that long before talk radio outrage and outrageousness lived side by side.

First performed in Athens in 411 B.C., the play has survived over two centuries due to its comical take on a serious subject. Aristophanes authored approximately 40 plays between 425 and 388 BC, 11 of which survive today. Previously Stephen Cross directed *Arabian Nights* for SU Drama.

## ***Curse of the Starving Class***

By Sam Shepard

Directed by Gerardine Clark

April 1 - 10

Pulitzer Prize winner Sam Shepard's 1978, excoriating comedy has never seemed timelier. "The whole thing is geared to invisible money," laments Weston, the chronically soused patriarch of a family in serious financial and psychological disarray. The refrigerator's empty, the house is crumbling, the creditors are baying, and that much longed-for American idyll is unattainable. Shepard's savage fantasy on America's voraciousness only gets better with age.

Premiering at the New York Shakespeare Festival in 1978, *Curse* won the Obie Award for Best New American Play. Academy Award winner Olympia Dukakis (cousin of presidential candidate Michael Dukakis) played the matriarch Ella in the premiere of *Curse*. In the 1994 film version, another Academy Award winner, Kathy Bates, took on the role. Shepard, who won a Pulitzer Prize for drama for his subsequent play *Buried Child*, is also an Academy Award nominated actor for his supporting role in *The Right Stuff* (1983). Previously for SU Drama, Gerardine Clark directed *The Rimers of Eldritch*, *Hurlyburly*, *Othello*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Hamlet*, and *Fifth of July*, among others.

## ***A New Brain***

Music and Lyrics by William Finn

Book by William Finn and James Lapine

Directed by Nathan Hurwitz

May 6 - 14

A talented young composer named Gordon Schwinn struggles with a creative block. For a brief diversion, he meets a friend for lunch and promptly passes out in his pasta. Rushed to the emergency room, he discovers he has a brain condition requiring surgery. Face to face with mortality, he worries he'll die before having the chance to write his best songs. And so—from his hospital bed, from his wheelchair, from the depths of an MRI, and even while comatose—Gordon writes them. They flow out of his imagination and his subconscious as snatches of reality magically intrude. Tony Award-winning writer/composer William Finn (*The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*) draws on his personal experience to create a beautiful musical celebrating life, love and the healing power of art.

*A New Brain*, Finn's autobiographical musical, opened off-Broadway at Lincoln Center's Mitzi E. Newhouse Theatre in 1998. It starred Malcolm Gets as Gordon and Tony Award-winner Kristin Chenoweth as his nurse, Nancy. The musical reunites Finn and James Lapine (*Into the Woods*, *Sunday in the Park with George*); together, they make up the Tony Award-winning writing team of *Falsettos* (1992). For SU's Department of Drama Nathan has musical directed *Urinetown*, *Little Women*, *My One and Only*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Steel Pier* and *Oklahoma!*, and has directed and musical directed *Lucky Stiff* and *The World Goes Round*. For Syracuse Stage Nathan has musical directed *A Christmas Carol* and *Menopause: The Musical* and appeared as the Rabbi in *Fiddler On The Roof*.

#### DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA

Syracuse University's Department of Drama offers conservatory-style BFA programs in acting, musical theatre, theatre design and technology, and stage management as well as training in community engagement, theatre education, and other aspects of the arts. Students benefit from the Department's collaboration with Syracuse Stage, a member of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT), through casting in productions, professional internships, administrative assistance, classroom instruction and other interaction with professional theatre artists. Drama students may also study abroad in London and Florence, Italy, at the Tepper Center in New York City, or attend a one-week intensive with writer/producer Aaron Sorkin at the Sorkin in LA Learning Practicum. <http://vpa.syr.edu/drama>

#### VPA AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

VPA is committed to the education of cultural leaders who will engage and inspire audiences through performance, visual art, design, scholarship and commentary. It provides the tools for self-discovery and risk-taking in an environment that thrives on critical thought and action.

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