

News Release

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Rep Announces Exciting Lineup of Dramas, Music and Works Celebrating America for 2005-06 Season

Kansas City, MO (June 8, 2005) – Peter Altman, producing artistic director of Kansas City Repertory Theatre, has announced a captivating selection of plays for the theatre's 2005-06 season, Altman's sixth year as the Rep's leader.

"Kansas City Rep is one of the few companies in the country to have experienced a major increase in sales in the current year, reaching more than 10,000 subscriptions at a time when many companies are seeing their subscription numbers fall," commented Altman. "We believe this success is due in part to the diversity of plays we create at the Rep as we continue to pursue our mission to satisfy and challenge our audience by offering a wide range of exciting new works balanced with a mix of classics and great musicals."

The Rep's 42nd season will begin with a Shaw classic about courtship and romantic sparring, and will continue with a show based on the life of one of the most famous citizens in Kansas City history, a cornerstone American masterpiece that has never been seen at the Rep, a musical biography written and directed by one of the creators of the Rep's triumphant production *It Ain't Nothin' But The Blues*, a touchingly humorous portrayal of family life in the 1950s, and finally, a rousing American vintage comedy. Kansas City Rep also will present the 25th anniversary production of its holiday classic *A Christmas Carol*. In its 2005-06 season, the Rep will continue to present most of the season at Spencer Theatre, its long-time main venue, plus one production at Union Station.

Man and Superman

by George Bernard Shaw

directed by Sharon Ott

September 23-October 16, 2005

In recent seasons, the Rep has won much praise by showing Shaw as the master of political/social drama in *Major Barbara* and as the maverick portraitist of history in *Saint Joan*. Now the company will show Shaw as the genius of romantic comedy with his sparkling battle of the sexes and brilliant mating game, *Man and Superman*. John Tanner, an idealistic and strong-willed young writer, flees when he discovers that the beautiful and wealthy Ann Whitefield has been made his ward, and he deduces that she is in love with him and planning marriage. In his effort to escape he tries all the strategies he can invent, but the resourceful Ann is not so easily shaken off and follows in hot and clever pursuit.

Man and Superman will be directed by Sharon Ott, director of the Rep's productions of *Sisters Matsumoto* and *Living Out*. This will be Ott's first independent directing assignment after retiring as artistic director of Seattle Repertory Theatre.

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Give 'Em Hell, Harry

by Samuel Gallu

directed by Larry Carpenter

October 7-November 8, 2005

The Rep is proud to bring to life one of the most important figures in Kansas City history—Harry S. Truman. *Give 'Em Hell, Harry* considers the unpretentious man who coped with the day-to-day challenges of leading America from the White House, was a doting father and devoted husband, and preferred his neighbors in Independence to most heads of state. Artistic Associate Gary Neal Johnson will portray Truman in this one-man show to be produced in the intimate H&R Block City Stage Theatre in Union Station.

Larry Carpenter will direct *Give 'Em Hell, Harry*. He has previously directed the Rep's smash hit *Company*, *Saint Joan* and *The Front Page*.

A Christmas Carol

by Charles Dickens

directed by Linda Ade Brand

November 19-December 26

25th Anniversary Production

Charles Dicken's most beloved characters once again will come alive in the Rep's 25th anniversary presentation of *A Christmas Carol*. Linda Ade Brand will direct *Carol* for the sixth year and Gary Neal Johnson will continue in his role as Ebenezer Scrooge.

A Raisin in the Sun

by Lorraine Hansberry

directed by Lou Bellamy

January 20-February 12, 2006

The Rep will produce for its first time the most influential of all African-American plays. *A Raisin in the Sun* is affectionately human, funny and touching. For many of playwright Lorraine Hansberry's forebears who had come north for a better life only to find exploitation and frustration, the great American dream had become a perpetual disappointment filled with false hope and despair. *A Raisin in the Sun* not only reveals the anguish of all—of any color—who have failed dreams, but also is a moving family story about pursuing success and seeking dignity. An inspiring American classic.

Lou Bellamy, artistic director of Penumbra Theatre in Minnesota who directed KC Rep's acclaimed production of *Two Trains Running*, returns to the company to direct *A Raisin in the Sun*. The set will be designed by Vicki M. Smith, who created the amazingly detailed set for *Two Trains*.

Hank Williams: Lost Highway

by Randal Myler and Mark Harelik

directed by Randal Myler

February 25-March 19, 2006

*A co-production with Arizona Theatre Company
and Dallas Theater Center*

From the director of *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues* comes this irresistible musical biography of the legendary singer-songwriter. Hank Williams is frequently mentioned alongside Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Elvis Presley, and Bob Dylan as one of the great innovators of American popular music. This musical tribute follows Williams' rise from his beginnings on the Louisiana Hayride to his triumphs at the Grand Ole Opry and his self-destruction by the age of twenty-nine. Williams' indelible songs like, "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry," "Your Cheating Heart" and "Hey, Good Lookin'" are given fresh and profound resonance when set in the context of his life.

Lost Highway's co-author Randal Myler, also a co-author of *It Ain't Nothin' But The Blues*, will direct.

The Trip to Bountiful

by Horton Foote

directed by Eric Rosen

April 28-May 21, 2006

Author of the Oscar-winning screenplay for *To Kill a Mockingbird* and over 30 plays, Horton Foote has quietly become one of America's greatest playwrights. *The Trip to Bountiful* is perhaps his most affecting play, later transformed into an award-winning movie. It's a poignant and funny portrayal of a 1950s middle-class family in Houston, coping with an aging parent who wants to return to the home of her youth in Bountiful, Texas one last time. This is a deeply humane story about identity, dealing with inevitable change, and the need for and satisfaction of knowing where one truly belongs.

Bountiful will be directed by Eric Rosen, who staged the Rep's highly praised production of Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses*.

Room Service

by John Murray and Allen Boretz

directed by Jeff Steitzer

June 2-25, 2006

A co-production with Cleveland Play House

The final production of the season will be a classic American comedy from 1937 that was turned into a hit movie by the Marx Brothers. Gordon Miller, a Broadway theatrical producer, thinks he has a new play that can be a hit, but he doesn't have the money to produce it and he's on the brink of eviction from the White Way Hotel. What develops is nonstop enjoyment as he tries to dodge, hoodwink and finagle his way through one situation after another to save his show and feed his starving cast. Widely considered one of the funniest entertainments in the annals of American comedy, this fast-paced, sardonic, yet warm-spirited show is filled with bright dialogue and a full house of eccentric characters.

Jeff Steitzer, former artistic director of A Contemporary Theatre of Seattle and a specialist in comedy who has been lauded for productions throughout the nation, will direct. *Room Service* will establish a new co-production partnership for Kansas City Rep with the Cleveland Play House, whose new artistic director Michael Bloom has directed three productions for the Rep including this year's outstanding *A Young Lady From Rwanda*.

Ticket renewals for the 2005-06 season are now available. Tickets go on sale to the general public in late summer. For subscription information, contact Rep Ticketing Services at 816-235-2700 or kcrep.org.

Now in its 42nd season, Kansas City Repertory Theatre is one of the nation's leading resident professional theatres and is the professional theatre in residence at UMKC. Kansas City Rep produces up to seven mainstage plays each season, employs more than 250 professional artists, technicians and administrators, and serves approximately 100,000 patrons annually. Kansas City Repertory Theatre is a constituent of the League of Resident Theatres, and operates under agreements with Actors' Equity Association (the national union of professional actors and stage managers), the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., and United Scenic Artists Local USA-829 IATSE.

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