



## News Release

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **KC REP'S 2011-12 SEASON CONTINUES BOLD VISION, DARING REINTERPRETATIONS OF CLASSICS, POPULAR MUSICALS, ROMANTIC COMEDIES AND MORE – WITH THE REP'S TRADEMARK SENSE OF ADVENTURE AND THEATRICALITY**

#### ***New musical receives major grant for public engagement from the National Science Foundation***

Kansas City, MO – Eric Rosen has announced his selections for Kansas City Repertory Theatre's 2011-12 season, his fourth as the theatre's artistic director.

"As I celebrate my third anniversary as Artistic Director of the Rep, I look back on our artistic accomplishments," said Rosen. "Rep productions have been seen in New York, Los Angeles, Seattle, Chicago, Washington, DC and San Francisco. Our dream of becoming a theatre that creates and exports its best original work is balanced by a deepening commitment to Kansas City audiences and artists, and this balance is the guide for an upcoming season of uncommon intellect, passion and beauty."

"From the Kansas City premiere of one of the most explosive plays of the decade, featuring a cast of Kansas City's most extraordinary actors – to two premieres of new work by major artists that will astonish the city and take the world by storm – to a startling new adaptation of a Missouri classic – to a major revival of one of the best musical comedies ever – it's going to be one remarkable ride," Rosen continued.

The Rep's 2011-12 season runs from September 16, 2011 through May 20, 2012, and is subject to change.

## **August: Osage County—2008 Pulitzer and Tony Awards for Best Play**

September 16 – October 9, 2011 at Spencer Theatre

Press Night: Friday, September 23, 8 p.m.

Written by Tracy Letts

Directed by Eric Rosen

Associate Director Kyle Hatley

Called “the most exciting new American play Broadway has seen in years” by *The New York Times*, **August: Osage County** will have you sitting on the edge of your seat. Set on the plains of modern-day Oklahoma, the story examines multiple generations of the Weston family who are reunited after the household patriarch mysteriously goes missing. What follows is a wildly entertaining roller-coaster ride through the family’s dysfunction, as they simultaneously support and square off against one another.

“Bold undertaking with dramatic momentum and acid-drenched wit.” – *Variety*

**August: Osage County** had celebrated runs on Broadway and at London’s National Theatre; in 2008 it won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama and the Tony Award for Best Play.

Tracy Letts has been an ensemble member of Steppenwolf Theatre since 2002 and has performed there in many productions. In addition to the award-winning **August: Osage County**, his writing credits include *Man from Nebraska*, which was a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize, *Killer Joe* and *Bug*.

Kansas City Rep Artistic Director Eric Rosen will direct **August: Osage County**, which will feature some of Kansas City’s most outstanding actors. Rosen also directed the Rep’s celebrated productions of *Cabaret*; *Venice* (“Year’s Best Musical” – TIME); *Clay*; *Winesburg, Ohio*; *A Christmas Story*, *The Musical!*; *Metamorphoses* and *The Trip to Bountiful*.

Contains strong language and adult situations.

## **The History of Kisses – David Cale Returns**

October 21 – November 27, 2011 at Copaken Stage

Press Night: Friday, October 28, 8 p.m.

Written, directed and performed by David Cale

Songs by David Cale

Kansas City Rep continues its commitment to the development and exportation of new work by welcoming the return of award-winning playwright/performer David Cale, a transcendent raconteur who debuted the world premiere of his one-man play *Palomino* at the Rep’s Copaken Stage in 2009.

In **The History of Kisses**, a writer sequesters himself in an oceanfront motel to finish a collection of seaside erotic stories, and soon finds that he has been drawn into the romantic and sexual goings-on around him. From the tender confessions of lost lovers, to an obsessed sea-shanty

singer, to the surprising encounters that define modern love, ***The History of Kisses*** is a passionate, hilarious and moving exploration of what it means to fall in love by the sea.

The multi-talented Cale is best known for his solo works *Palomino*, *Somebody Else's House*, *Deep in a Dream of You*, *Smooch Music*, *The Redthroats*, and the Obie Award-winning *Lillian*, which have been performed in New York and Chicago. His monologues have been featured on the public radio programs "This American Life" and "The Next Big Thing", and on BBC Radio's "Afternoon Play". As a lyricist, his words have been performed by Elvis Costello, Deborah Harry, and the Jazz Passengers.

Following its run here, Cale took the Rep's production of *Palomino* to Center Theatre Group in Los Angeles and Aurora Theatre in Berkeley, where he was honored with the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award for Best Solo Performance and also received their nomination for Best Original Script.

Contains strong language and adult situations.

## **A Christmas Carol**

November 19 – December 26, 2011 at Spencer Theatre

Press Night: Friday, November 25, 8 p.m.

Written by Charles Dickens

Adapted for the stage by Barbara Field

Directed by Kyle Hatley

Last season, for the Rep's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary production of ***A Christmas Carol***, Kyle Hatley gave the venerable holiday show a new look and feel, while staying true to Dickens' Victorian London sensibilities about hope, redemption and the meaning of Christmas. The new turntable set, special effects and audience interaction all return this year, along with a cast of Kansas City's favorite veteran and up-and-coming actors, led by everyone's favorite Scrooge, Gary Neal Johnson. Hatley is also planning additional surprises for his 2011 production.

***A Christmas Carol*** will be directed by the Rep's Associate Artistic Director Kyle Hatley, who has also directed the theatre's productions of *A Christmas Carol* in 2010, *Circle Mirror Transformation*, *Broke-ology* and *The Borderland*. Hatley is a recent recipient of a Charlotte Street Award for generative performing artists.

Appropriate for all ages.

## **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer**

January 20 – February 12, 2012 at Spencer Theatre

Press Night: Friday, January 27, 8 p.m.

Adapted from the novel by Mark Twain

Written by Laura Eason

Directed by Jeremy B. Cohen

In a new adaptation of Mark Twain's American novel *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, acclaimed playwright Laura Eason and veteran director Jeremy Cohen have created a finely balanced work that is full of imagination and fresh theatrical style. Growing up in a small Missouri town on the banks of the Mississippi River, young Tom spends his days making mischief, avoiding school and famously tricking others into doing his chores. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is a classic coming-of-age story that will fire the imaginations of young and old alike.

"Sassy, ingeniously staged and deeply affecting." – *The New York Times*

Eason is the writer/director of the Rep's critically acclaimed 2009 hit *Around the World in 80 Days*, which *The Kansas City Star* theatre critic Robert Trussell called "virtually flawless." Cohen is a veteran director and artistic leader who is Producing Artistic Director of Minneapolis'

Playwrights' Center. He also served as Associate Artistic Director and Director of New Play Development at Hartford Stage, where he directed the world premiere of *Tom Sawyer*. This production of *Tom Sawyer* is produced through special arrangement with Hartford Stage and in collaboration with Actors Theatre of Louisville and the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis.

*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is a co-production with Actors Theatre of Louisville and St. Louis Repertory Theatre. A special engagement at the acclaimed New Victory Theatre, New York's Theatre for Kids and Families, will be presented in March 2012.

Appropriate for all ages.

### **The Great Immensity—World Premiere of a New Musical; Supported with National Science Foundation Grant and in collaboration with The Civilians**

February 17 – March 18, 2012 at Copaken Stage

Press Night: Friday, February 24, 8 p.m.

Written and directed by Steven Cosson

Original score by Michael Friedman

Obie Award-winning theatre innovators The Civilians are celebrated for their endlessly inventive and entertaining spin on the most pressing issues of our time. They now bring their provocative and ground-breaking approach to storytelling to the Rep for the world premiere of *The Great Immensity*, an original musical that is part mystery and part morality tale.

While searching for her missing sister, a young woman embarks on a harrowing international search that takes her from the tropics of Panama to the Canadian Arctic. Throughout the story, we meet an assortment of people – both fictional and real – whose lives have been deeply affected by the realities of climate change, the unlikely topic for this unconventional new musical. Woven into the story are authentic interviews with top scientists, indigenous community leaders, tour guides and others who have been touched by the reality of global climate change, deforestation and endangered ecosystems.

Following Kansas City Rep's world premiere production, ***The Great Immensity*** will have a New York premiere and a national tour. Through a grant from the National Science Foundation, future productions of ***The Great Immensity*** will be paired with extensive public educational programming that will serve as a model for how theatre can increase public awareness and knowledge of and engagement in vital science-related societal issues.

The director of ***The Great Immensity*** is Steven Cosson, Founding Artistic Director of The Civilians, a center for investigative theatre that draws on public engagement to tackle complex and under-explored subjects. Cosson previously directed the Rep's production of William Inge's *Bus Stop*. Michael Friedman, whose work was previously seen at the Rep in *Saved*, wrote the original score. Friedman also wrote the music for the Off-Broadway and Broadway productions of *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*.

*The Great Immensity* is a recipient of an Edgerton Foundation New American Plays Award.

Appropriate for middle school and up.

### **The Whipping Man**

March 16 – April 8, 2012 at Spencer Theatre

Press Night: Friday, March 23, 8 p.m.

Written by Matthew Lopez

Directed by Eric Rosen

Rooted in the largely unknown but true history of Jewish slaveholders in the South, this extraordinary new play is a powerful exploration of lives that come unraveled as the ravages of slavery are revealed in the wake of the Emancipation Proclamation. ***The Whipping Man*** is one of the most original and thrilling new plays on the history of race, religious identity and what it means to be free.

Lopez's work has been developed and heard at Manhattan Theatre Club, McCarter Theatre, The New Group, Ars Nova and Lark Play Development Center. His other plays include *Tio Pepe* (Summer Play Festival 2008), *Reverberation* and *Zoey's Perfect Wedding*. He is a current member of the Ars Nova Writers' Group and an artist-in-residence at the Old Globe Theatre.

The Rep's Artistic Director Eric Rosen will direct.

Appropriate for high school and up.

### **Little Shop of Horrors**

April 20 – May 20, 2012 at Copaken Stage

Press Night: Friday, April 27, 8 p.m.

Book and Lyrics by Howard Ashman

Music by Alan Menken

Based on the film by Roger Corman, screenplay by Charles Griffith

Directed by Kyle Hatley

Long before Bill Gates made nerds trendy, there was Seymour Krelborn, a hapless florist searching for love, aided by a gigantic plant with an insatiable appetite for human blood. With music reminiscent of 1960s Motown and true to its original roots – Roger Corman’s 1960s black comedy film and the subsequent Off-Broadway show – ***Little Shop of Horrors*** is a love story about what happens when botany goes horribly wrong. Set in the intimate Copaken Stage in downtown Kansas City’s Power & Light District, ***Little Shop of Horrors*** promises to become a Kansas City cult favorite.

***Little Shop of Horrors*** will be directed by the Rep’s Associate Artistic Director Kyle Hatley.

Appropriate for middle school and up.

Subscription renewals for Kansas City Repertory Theatre’s 2011-12 season are now available and will go on sale to the general public in late summer. For subscription and ticket information, please contact the Rep Box Office at 816-235-2700 or visit [www.KCRep.org](http://www.KCRep.org).

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#### ABOUT KANSAS CITY REPERTORY THEATRE

Now in its 47<sup>th</sup> season, Kansas City Repertory Theatre is its region’s only member of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) and serves as the professional theatre in residence at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC). The Rep produces mainstage plays and special events at Spencer Theatre on the UMKC campus and Copaken Stage located in downtown Kansas City. Kansas City Rep employs more than 250 professional artists, technicians and administrators, and serves more than 100,000 patrons annually. Kansas City Repertory Theatre is led by Artistic Director Eric Rosen, Managing Director Cynthia Rider and Producing Director Jerry Genochio.

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