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EXPECT 7 NEW WONDERS WITH ZACH THEATRE'S UPCOMING SEASON

2011-2012 Season Offers Eclectic Mix of Premieres and Returning Favorites

AUSTIN, Texas — Loyal fans and newcomers to ZACH Theatre, Austin's leading professional theatre, can expect wonders with its 2011-2012 season – ZACH's last season before moving to its intimate new Topfer Theatre. Next season will transport audiences with Tony Award-winning productions, regional premieres, popular returning hits and the finest professional playwrights, directors, musicians, designers and actors – all under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Dave Steakley, who celebrates his 20th season with ZACH this year.

"The upcoming season at ZACH is all about surprise and anticipation," said Steakley. "Our audiences can expect great wonders from every aspect of each production; our team of writers, actors and designers are continually honing their crafts and reinventing productions to offer unique and unexpected experiences for our audience and create a world-class theatre experience without ever having to step foot out of Austin."

The new season includes dynamic new productions of *Spring Awakening*, *God of Carnage*, *Next to Normal*, *The Laramie Project* and *The Laramie Project 10 Years Later*, *Dividing the Estate* and *Xanadu the Musical* — plus two popular season extras starring Austin's own Martin Burke: *Fully Committed* and ZACH's irreverent holiday tradition *The Santaland Diaries*.

ZACH THEATRE'S 2011-12 MAINSTAGE SEASON

SPRING AWAKENING

Written by Frank Wedekind with music by Duncan Sheik. Based on the play by Frank Wedekind. Directed by Michael Baron. Winner of eight Tony Awards. A daring and passionate musical blooms in this electrifying, folk-infused rock musical explores the intimate journey from adolescence to adulthood with unforgettable poignancy and passion. September 20 – November 13, 2011. (contains mature themes and nudity.)

GOD OF CARNAGE

By Yasmina Reza (playwright of ZACH's hit production of *Art*). Directed by Matt Lenz. The Broadway comedy that took New York by storm!

A play date between two boys goes hysterically awry in this Tony Award-winning Best Play comedy. When their parents meet for coffee to discuss the squabble, the rum begins to flow and the gloves come off in a side-splitting, free-for-all where parents behave badly in this quick-witted, piercingly uproarious play. ZACH's production stars Lauren Lane, Best Actress Austin Critics' Table Award-winner for ZACH's recent hits *August: Osage County* and *Becky's New Car*. November 29, 2011 – January 8, 2012.

NEXT TO NORMAL

Music by Tom Kitt. Book and Lyrics by Brian Yorkey. Music Direction by Allen Robertson. Directed by Dave Steakley.

Next to Normal is an inventive, emotional powerhouse production about one family who is about to face the music. This multiple Tony Award-winning, groundbreaking work features a thrilling contemporary score and stars Meredith McCall and Jamie Goodwin from ZACH's *The Drowsy Chaperone* and Andrew Cannata from *Rent*. January 24 – March 4, 2012

THE LARAMIE PROJECT

Written by Moisés Kaufman, Leigh Fondakowski, Greg Pierotti, Andy Paris and Stephen Belber. Directed by Dave Steakley. Starring the Original ZACH cast: Jaston Williams, Janelle Buchanan, Martin Burke, Meredith McCall, Robert Newell, Sarah Richardson and Jenny Larson, with Harvey Guion.

Two plays. One inspiring theatrical experience staged for the first time together at a regional theatre:

Play I: THE LARAMIE PROJECT – An inspiring theatrical experience based on the

events surrounding the Matthew Shepard story as seen through the eyes of the Wyoming townspeople who were both witnesses and participants.

Play II: THE LARAMIE PROJECT 10 Years Later – A decade passed and we return to Laramie to see what has changed — and what hasn't. The results are surprising, life-altering and unforgettable! March 20 – May 13, 2012

DIVIDING THE ESTATE

Written by Horton Foote, Pulitzer Prize & Academy Award-winning Texas Playwright

Directed by Steven Dietz (*Doubt*, *Shooting Star* and *Becky's New Car*)

A Texas-sized family throw down! The Gordons of Harrison, Texas, have always been a greedy, gossipy clan. Now the malcontents from the Houston branch of the family come to the homestead and make pettiness an art form as they tangle over their inheritances. This is a play with echoes of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and rich humor reflecting Foote's generous spirit and Texas roots. May 29 – July 1, 2012

XANADU THE MUSICAL

Book by Douglas Carter Beane. Music and Lyrics by Jeff Lynne and John Farrar

Based on the Universal Pictures film. Screenplay by Richard Danus and Marc Rubel

Directed and Choreographed by Nick Demos (*The Drowsy Chaperone*). Music Direction by Allen Robertson. Starring Jill Blackwood (*The Drowsy Chaperone*)

A hysterical roller coaster ride to bliss! An over-the-top, roller-skating musical that spoofs the outrageously campy 1980's film starring Olivia Newton-John and Gene Kelly. A beautiful muse descends from the heavens of Mt. Olympus to Venice Beach and inspires a struggling artist to create his biggest dream ... the first ROLLER DISCO! July 17 – September 2, 2012

SEASON EXTRAS

TWO hit comedies return to ZACH's intimate Whisenhunt stage ...

THE SANTALAND DIARIES

Written by David Sedaris. Adapted for the stage by Joe Mantello. Directed by Dave Steakley.

Austin's merrily subversive holiday tradition tells the real-life story of David Sedaris' tour of duty as Macy's Crumpet the Elf. This sardonic tale of elfin' woe stars Martin Burke and Meredith McCall with Jason Connor on piano. November 25 through January 8, 2011

FULLY COMMITTED

By Becky Mode. Directed by Dave Steakley

By popular request, one of ZACH's biggest hits returns! In this delicious comedy, desperate diners resort to threats, bribes, name-dropping, name-calling and begging for the all-important reservation at a posh new restaurant. Martin Burke gives a head-spinning performance playing the high-strung maître d' plus 39 other characters. Opens June 14, 2012.

ZACH Theatre season tickets are now on sale and start at \$125. Call ZACH's box office at (512) 476-0541, x 1 or purchase online at www.zachtheatre.org. Video features, photos and additional information on each production are also available at www.zachtheatre.org.

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About ZACH Theatre

ZACH Theatre is Austin's leading professional producing theatre. Founded in 1933, ZACH is the longest running theatre company in Texas, serving more than 170,000 adults and youth annually. ZACH creates its own nationally recognized dramatic, musical and comedic productions that elevate, motivate and stimulate the human spirit under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Dave Steakley and Managing Director Elisabeth Challener. Now in its 78th season, ZACH continues to expand and engage with Austin, adding a third theatre to its Central Austin performance campus. The 420-seat, 26,000-square-foot Topfer Theatre will nearly double ZACH's capacity while retaining its hallmark intimate theatre-going experience upon its completion in the fall of 2012 following a \$22 million campaign. Visit www.zachtheatre.org for more information.