

# 2011-2012 University of Memphis Theatre Season

## THE 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE

Music & Lyrics by William Finn

Book by Rachel Sheinkin; Conceived by Rebecca Feldman

October 6 – 8 and 13 – 15, 2011 (Mainstage)

Directed by Chris Carter

Brush off your dictionary and join us for a G-L-E-E-f-u-l Tony-Award winning musical romp. *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* is the sidesplitting tale of pubescent angst chronicling the experience of six adolescent overachievers each vying for the spelling championship of their lifetime. A quirky cast of misfits (overseen by grown-ups who barely managed to escape childhood themselves) learn that winning isn't everything and losing doesn't necessarily make you a loser. It's H-I-L-A-R-I-O-U-S!!

## ARCADIA

by Tom Stoppard

November 4, 6, 9 and 12, 2011 (Studio Rep)

Directed by Michael Bolinski

Romance and mystery meet in an award-winning comedy about landscape architecture, mathematics, and Lord Byron. Events from 1809 and today overlap as two modern-day scholars attempt to unravel history at an English manor home. Both worlds collide as the quests for knowledge and passion run their courses, and everyone is forced to confront the reality of the attraction Newton left out. "It's the best possible time to be alive, when everything you thought you knew is wrong," writes Tom Stoppard in what *The Independent* called the "greatest play of our age."

## WIT

by Margaret Edson

November 5, 6 (matinee), 10 and 11, 2011 (Studio Rep)

Directed by Brian Fruits

Pulitzer Prize winning *Wit* examines what makes life worth living through a renowned English professor's struggle with ovarian cancer. During the course of her hospital treatment, she comes to reassess her life and her work with a profundity and humor that are transformative for her and the people she meets along the way. What we take away from this remarkable drama is a keener sense that, while death is real and unavoidable, our lives are ours to cherish or throw away—a lesson that can be both uplifting and redemptive.

## THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

Music by Andrew Lloyd Webber

Lyrics by Charles Hart; Book by Richard Stilgoe and Andrew Lloyd Webber

Co-Produced with the Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music

February 16 – 18, 19 (matinee) and 22 – 25, 2012 (Mainstage)

Directed by Bob Hetherington

*Let your mind start a journey through a strange new world/Leave all thoughts of the world you knew before/Let your soul take you where you long to be...*

The most successful Broadway musical of all time comes to our stage **for only eight performances** to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday of The University of Memphis. *Phantom* is a fantastic extravaganza of soaring ballads and sensational stage effects. A masked figure lurks beneath the catacombs of the Paris Opera House, exercising a reign of terror while he pursues an innocent young soprano. A love story. A horror story. A spectacle like no other. An event not to be missed.

## THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

by Mary Zimmerman

April 12 – 14 and 19 – 21, 2012 (Mainstage)

Directed by Alice Berry

To save her life, the beautiful bride Scheherazade must spin hypnotic tales of genies, jesters, thieves, and kings – winning her freedom by eventually winning her husband's heart. As long as she can keep the king entertained with her magical stories he will spare her. Amidst a thousand tales of honor, revenge, and humor, only love emerges victorious in an exotic place we now know as Iraq. "If you want theatre at its most unpretentiously poetic, as humane as it is elegant, I commend to you *The Arabian Nights*," raved *New York* magazine.

## DANCE CONCERTS

Dec 1-4, 2011 & April 12-15, 2012

A Fall Student Dance Concert and a Spring Faculty/Guest Artist Concert