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The Hilberry Theatre Announces its 49th Season

Detroit, MI – Since 1963, the more than two million guests that have passed through the Hilberry Theatre have been inspired by the passion and portrayal of the human condition, which has made them laugh, cry, engage, question, applaud and cheer. The 2011-2012 lineup continues this tradition of exceptional storytelling through the classical works of William Shakespeare, Tennessee Williams and George Bernard Shaw. The season subscription also includes two musicals and a Tony Award-nominated playwright. Now, as the Hilberry enters its 49th year, it's time to draw back the curtain and reveal a season characterized by triumph, romance and inspiration.

The 49th season opens with the musical comedy *A Day in Hollywood/A Night in the Ukraine*, by Dick Vosburgh and Frank Lazarus. These two, one-act musicals constitute a double-feature presenting the hilarious heyday of Hollywood. The first act, *A Day in Hollywood*, takes us to the lobby of Grauman's Chinese Theatre in the 1930s, where the ushers sing a musical tribute to the screen stars and productions of that magical era. The second act, *A Night in the Ukraine*, is the funniest musical the Marx Brothers never wrote – sweeping us away to Russia for a madcap evening presenting all the usual Marx Brothers suspects, and featuring music by Cole Porter, Jerry Herman, Johnny Mercer, Harold Arlen, Hoagy Carmichael and Frank Loesser. *A Day in Hollywood/A Night in the Ukraine* will run **September 23 – October 15, 2011.**

Next, the Hilberry presents one of the most popular and charming of Shakespeare's comedies, *Much Ado About Nothing*. Young love blossoms as Hero and Claudio race to the altar, while Beatrice and Benedick hide their infatuation beneath sparring banter. Yet, not all is fair in love and war as the villainous Don John plots against the happy couple. Witty wordplay, passionate poetry and clever plot twists make this story a vibrant and comic celebration of life and romance. *Much Ado About Nothing* will feature student matinee performances and run **October 28 – November 19, 2011.**

The Cripple of Inishmaan by Martin McDonagh is third in the lineup. Tony Award-nominated playwright, Martin McDonagh, weaves a heartbreaking comedy about a rural 1934 Irish community's brush with Hollywood. Based on actual events, an American filmmaker captures the imagination and enthusiasm of the people who inhabit a remote Irish island, but no one is more excited than "cripple" Billy Claven, whose chief occupation has been gazing at cows and yearning for his inspiration – a girl who wants no part of him. *The Cripple of Inishmaan* runs in rotating repertory **December 2, 2011 – February 4, 2012.**

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The season continues with **Frank Langella's *Cyrano*** an adaptation of Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*. The gifted poet and swordsman (and incredibly large-nosed) Cyrano de Bergerac finds himself in love with the beautiful Roxane, but he's not the only one. Christian, a handsome soldier, is also in love with her. Cyrano devises a scheme for them to both express their feelings without Christian learning of Cyrano's feelings. However, the ruse crumbles when the plan goes awry and Cyrano's enemies begin plotting against him. *Cyrano* plays in rotating repertory **January 13 – March 10, 2012.**

The year 2011 marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of Tennessee Williams, and to celebrate, the Hilberry will present Williams' *Summer and Smoke*. In this sultry Southern tale, Alma cannot resist her attraction to the rakish and inspiring young doctor who lives next door. Though John is also drawn to her, their relationship becomes an emotional battle of wills when her spiritual devotion is pitted against his sensuous need for physical desire. Neither triumphs and in the end, roles reverse. *Summer and Smoke* plays in rotating repertory **February 24 – April 21, 2012.**

The Hilberry Theatre will close the 49th season with George Bernard Shaw's clever comedy, *Major Barbara*. In this witty tale, a millionaire armaments dealer loves money. However, his inspired daughter, Barbara, is a devout Major in the Salvation Army who sees her father as just another soul to save. Yet when the Salvation Army needs funds, the father triumphantly saves the day. *Major Barbara* plays in rotating repertory **April 6 – May 5, 2012.**

Included in the Hilberry subscription package is the heartwarming musical *Hairspray* by Mark O'Donnell, Thomas Meehan, Scott Wittman and Mark Shaiman. *Hairspray* will be performed at the historic Broadway-style Bonstelle Theatre and will feature 1960s dance music and rhythm and blues. Pleasantly plump teen Tracy Turnblad has only one desire – to dance on the popular *Corny Collins Show* – and she does! Triumphant Tracy is transformed from social outcast to sudden star, but she must use her newfound power to vanquish the reigning Teen Queen, win the affections of heartthrob Link Larkin and integrate a TV network – all without denting her 'do! *Hairspray* is performed at the Bonstelle Theatre **April 13 – April 22, 2012.**

In addition to the seven-play package, Michael Frayn's *Noises Off* may also be added onto the Hilberry subscription! *Noises Off* will be the season opener on the Bonstelle stage and is one of the most inspired farces ever written. This folly presents a manic menagerie of itinerant actors rehearsing a flop. Out-of-control egos, memory loss and passionate affairs turn every performance into a high-risk adventure. Progressing from flubbed lines and missed cues in rehearsal to mounting friction between cast members in the final performance, *Noises Off* is a comic triumph of slamming doors, falling trousers and flying sardines. *Noises Off* is performed at the Bonstelle Theatre **October 14 – 23, 2011.**

With an upcoming season that is sure to be one of its best yet, the Hilberry Theatre Subscription Package is looking better than ever. Subscribers will get the most out of this 49th season by taking advantage of the opportunity to **see all seven shows for as low as \$112, and adding an eighth show for only \$10 more.** Subscribers are an integral part of the Hilberry community, as they enjoy discounted prices, priority seating, exchange privileges, lost ticket insurance, a free subscription to our newsletter and an invitation to the annual Subscriber Party and Open House. **Season subscriptions are on sale now!**

To subscribe, call (313) 577-2972 or visit the Wayne State University Theatre Box Office at 4743 Cass Avenue on the corner of Hancock. For a convenient alternative, subscriptions may now be purchased online at www.hilberry.com.

About the Hilberry Theatre Company

The Hilberry Company is unique in that it is the nation's only true graduate theatre company staffed by up-and-coming professionals that runs on a rotating repertory schedule. There are about 40 graduate students selected in national competition who receive assistantships to work in this theatre and study for advanced degrees. The company normally performs an annual season of six plays, including high school matinees for nearly 6,000 students each year.

Hilberry Theatre 2011 - 2012 Season

A Day in Hollywood/A Night in the Ukraine

By Dick Vosburgh and Frank Lazarus

September 23 – October 15, 2011

Much Ado About Nothing

By William Shakespeare

October 28 – November 19, 2011

The Cripple of Inishmaan

By Martin McDonagh

December 2, 2011 – February 4, 2012

Frank Langella's Cyrano

An adaptation of Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*

January 30 – March 10, 2012

Summer and Smoke

By Tennessee Williams

February 24 – April 21, 2012

Major Barbara

By George Bernard Shaw

April 6 – May 5, 2012

***Hairspray* ***

By Mark O'Donnell, Thomas Meehan, Scott Wittman and Mark Shaiman

April 13 – April 22, 2012

*Performed at the Bonstelle Theatre

All play titles and dates are subject to change.

Season subscriptions on sale now!

The Hilberry Theatre * 4743 Cass Avenue * Detroit, MI 48202 * (313) 577-2972 *

www.hilberry.com

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