

PARK SQUARE theatre

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Nine Productions, Five Area Premieres, Two Venues: Park Square Theatre Announces 2008-09 Line-up

Saint Paul, MN—Park Square Theatre’s 2008–09 season, announced today by Artistic Director Richard Cook, features five area premieres, the company’s first-ever holiday show, its first co-production with Ordway Center, and plays from leading playwrights Jeffrey Hatcher, Wendy Wasserstein and John Patrick Shanley.

“This ambitious season marks a number of firsts for Park Square,” says Cook. “Our first co-production with Ordway Center will be the largest-scale collaboration in our history. Our first holiday show ever will be simple, immediate and enchanting for all ages. And two full productions of literary classics will serve over 23,000 students from a three-state region. This line-up promises to ignite and show off our top talent, as well as energize audiences seeking entertainment that matters.”

MAINSTAGE SEASON

The season begins September 12 with *The Sisters Rosensweig*, an exuberant and captivating contemporary comedy by Wendy Wasserstein, one of America’s best playwrights. Nominated for a Tony Award™, this Broadway hit chronicles a gathering of three uncommon sisters from Brooklyn in its quest to prove that life after age 50 offers endless possibilities.

Defiance, by John Patrick Shanley, the Pulitzer Prize™ and Tony Award™ winning playwright of *Doubt*, is the first of five area premieres in the Park Square season, playing October 17–November 9. Two U.S. Marine officers, one black and one white, are on a collision course over race, women and the high cost of doing the right thing. The second play in Shanley’s planned trilogy, *Defiance* is a riveting and surprising work about power, love and responsibility: who has it, who wants it and who deserves it.

Park Square presents its first-ever holiday show November 26–December 21. The Ivey award-winning Jim Lichteidl takes the stage in the area premiere of *Jacob Marley’s Christmas Carol*, a witty and playful tale inspired by the Dickens’ classic. The show was written by actor Tom Mula, who played the Goodman Theater’s Scrooge for nearly two decades. Ebenezer Scrooge’s conversion from crabby skinflint to generous nice guy begins an impossible assignment for Jacob Marley in this flipside view told by Marley himself. Cook, who will direct, says, “This one-man script is instantly beguiling and compelling. It ushers the audience right to the heart of the story in an intimate, personal way that feels perfect for the holidays.”

Jeffrey Hatcher's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* has its Midwest premiere January 16–February 4. Theatrically intense and fiendishly clever, this adaptation uses six actors to tell Robert Louis Stevenson's tale of inner demons and unbridled evil amid London's pervasive fog. The esteemed Henry Jekyll may not be as good as first thought, and even a monster may be capable of love in Hatcher's version. One actor plays the esteemed Henry Jekyll, one Elizabeth Jelkes, while four (including one woman) play not only the other characters in the story but also the distinct sides of the evil Edward Hyde. "Park Square is past due to work with Jeffrey," says Cook. "His acute imagination and exquisite use of language is perfect for our stage and audiences."

Park Square Theatre and Ordway Center for the Performing Arts combine artistic forces for their first co-production, the musical *Grey Gardens*. The area premiere plays March 17–May 17 in the Ordway's McKnight Theatre. The show, by librettist Doug Wright, lyricist Michael Korie and composer Scott Frankel, earned widespread critical acclaim and three Tony Awards™ during its run on Broadway. Set in two contrasting eras, *Grey Gardens* tells the hilarious and heartbreaking story of Edith Bouvier Beale and her daughter "Little" Edie, Jacqueline Kennedy's eccentric relatives who became East Hampton's most infamous recluses. "Like Park Square's past full-scale musicals (*Side Show*, *Pacific Overtures*), the story and music of *Grey Gardens* beautifully reveals the heart of a surprising human journey and is simultaneously thought-provoking and entertaining," says Cook.

Director Warren C. Bowles, who has directed three critically acclaimed shows for Park Square in the past few years, including this season's *Trying*, returns to stage the area premiere of Sonja Linden's *I Have Before Me a Remarkable Document Given to Me by a Young Lady from Rwanda*. Winner of the *Time Out* London Critic Choice Award™, the play tells the inspiring story of Juliette, a survivor of the Rwanda genocide. Now living in London, she asks a well-educated but uninspired poet to help craft a manuscript of her story, an experience that leads both to life-changing discoveries about resilience, survival, and the power of the written word. The show plays April 24–May 17.

The season closes May 29 – June 21 with "a comedy, a mystery, or a comic-mystery to be announced" says Cook. "We are considering several scripts and will announce by June."

ADDITIONAL SHOWS

Park Square will also offer three public performances (November 19, December 3 and 10), of its 2006 hit, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the theatre's "Evening of Theater During the Day" offering for students throughout the region. Jef Hall-Flaven returns to remount the show, which will feature Brian Sostek as Puck and Terry Hempleman as Bottom from its original cast. The spring production of *The Diary of Anne Frank* returns for its tenth Park Square season, marking 125,000 students to have seen the show.

TICKET INFORMATION

All performances (except for *Grey Gardens*) in the 2008–09 season will be in the company's intimate theatre in the historic Hamm Building in downtown St. Paul. Season subscription packages are now on sale at (651) 291-7005. Single tickets go on sale in early July. Groups of 10 or more should call (651) 767-8487. Tickets also can be purchased online at www.parksquaretheatre.org.

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Park Square Theatre
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