

THE PHILADELPHIA SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

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MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 23, 2011

THE PHILADELPHIA SHAKESPEARE THEATRE ANNOUNCES ITS 15TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

Twelfth Night and Titus Andronicus to be performed in repertory. Exciting programming planned all year long!

The Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre is thrilled to announce the 2011/2012 Season. The Theatre will produce two full-length, mainstage productions in the Spring of 2012 in repertory. Beginning summer of 2011, The Classical Acting Academy will present *The Comedy of Errors*. In the fall, The Theatre will launch a series of special events featuring local scholars and artists that will provide an inside look at all things Shakespeare.

Opening August 3 and running through August 21, 2011, The Classical Acting Academy offers a FREE production of *The Comedy of Errors* directed by Rosemary Hay. One of Shakespeare's earliest and most vibrant comedies, *The Comedy of Errors* is a whirlwind adventure of mistaken identities that ends in the reconciliation of a family that has been torn apart by a shipwreck.

Take two pairs of identical twins, one jealous wife, her demure sister, a necklace, a dinner engagement, an exorcism, a kitchen wench and a courtesan, and put them all in the colorful and festive city of Ephesus, tourist resort on the Mediterranean. Add in Shakespeare's brilliant, sparkling language and the result is a concoction of delightful lunacy and farcical delirium. Set in the exuberant, exciting and vivid era of the 1960's, *The Comedy of Errors* explores and celebrates the timeless human experiences of the discovery of self and the nature of identity.

Rosemary Hay is the Artistic Director of New York-based REV Theatre Company. She has directed numerous Shakespeare plays including *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (all for Goodwill Theatre, NY). She is the director and co-creator of *The Witch of Edmonton*. She was also the Assistant Director for The Royal Shakespeare Company's *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Winter's Tale*. She has taught and directed at The Juilliard School, Graduate Acting Program at NYU, Stella Adler Conservatory, American Academy of Dramatic Arts, Central School of Speech & Drama, London, and most recently at Philadelphia's University of the Arts

Opening March 23 and running thorough May 13, 2012 is Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. In this irresistible romantic comedy, **Artistic Director Carmen Khan** will transport audiences to Illyria- a topsy-turvy place, where everything is turned upside down and nothing is what it seems. Viola loves Orsino, who thinks he loves Olivia. Olivia thinks she loves Cesario who is really Viola, dressed as a man. Malvolio thinks he is a gentleman but he is not. The foolish and foppish Sir Andrew thinks he is a fine match for the Lady Olivia, but he is far from it. There is disguise and impersonation at every turn; even the language is turned upside down. Nobody really knows who they are or what they want.

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Our production will be full of the music of love, with strains of the Mediterranean, Duke Ellington, and the blues, by award winning composer Fabian Obispo. Obispo previously brought us the exquisite music of *Pericles*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and most recently, *Hamlet* and *As You Like It*.

Carmen Khan is a critically acclaimed director and has an extensive acting resume along with K-12 and University level teaching experience both in the United States and the United Kingdom. She was the Artistic Director of the Red Heel Theatre for two years before founding and becoming the Artistic/Executive Director of The Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre in 1996.

Joining *Twelfth Night* in repertory on April 11, 2012 is Shakespeare's revenge tragedy, *Titus Andronicus*. The production runs through **May 12, 2010** and is directed by **Aaron Cromie**. *Titus Andronicus*, believed to be William Shakespeare's first tragedy, was likely created as a crowd-pleasing shocker, full of murder, intrigue, betrayal, revenge and depravity. The taboos so enthusiastically embraced in this play are thrilling yet frightening to witness live. In the intimate setting of The Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre, using light, shadow, blood, melodramatic organ music and specially designed puppets (in the style of master puppet maker Hansjürgen Fettig), the taboos of violence, rape and cannibalism, so seemingly depraved on the page, will offer our audience a unique experience – to lay witness to such terrible acts, yet survive them.

Aaron Cromie is a multidisciplinary theatre artist, performer, designer, director, and co-founding faculty member of Headlong Performance Institute. He recently directed acclaimed puppet and mask-inspired productions of *Scapin* at Lantern Theater Company, *The Long Christmas Ride Home* for Azuka Theatre, and the award-winning *The Fantasticks* at Mum Puppettheatre. Aaron has received Barrymore Awards for Choreography and Music Direction, grant support from the Jim Henson Foundation, and is a graduate of the Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theatre. He studied woodcarving and mask making with Antonio Fava in Reggio Emilia, Italy.

The Theatre will continue to grow its arts-in-education program, The Open Door Project. The Open Door Project is the arts-in-education programming of The Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre. The Open Door Project provides students with professional performances, exciting in-class residencies, a professional touring production and engaging interactions with artists.

Tickets and season Bard Cards go on sale on July 1, 2011. All performances will be held in the intimate 122-seat theatre at 2111 Sansom Street. For ticket sales and information please call the box office at 215-496-8001 or purchase and print your tickets on the web at www.phillyshakespeare.org.

Reviewing Press is invited to attend Press Night of *Twelfth Night* on Wednesday, March 28th, 2012 at 7pm and *Titus Andronicus* on Wednesday April 18th, 2012. Please call Rebecca Gissel at 215-496-9722 ext. 105 for reservations. All other media may arrange for tickets by calling 215-496-8001.

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