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ZACH Theatre Announces 2010-2011 Season

Six New Award-Winning and Nationally-Acclaimed Hits Showcase Austin's Talent

AUSTIN, Texas (March 23, 2010) – ZACH Theatre, Austin's leading professional theatre, announces its 2010-11 season which promises to be one of its most entertaining, prestigious and dynamic lineups. The new season features regional premieres of three new plays and three extraordinary musicals tailored to showcase the excellence of ZACH's and Austin's finest professional playwrights, directors, musicians, designers and actors. Among these hit shows are three Pulitzer Prizes and three Tony Awards for Best Musical and Best Play.

Step into the imaginative playground of MacArthur and Pulitzer Prize-winner Suzan-Lori Parks for an extremely rare opportunity – the first production of her new play **THE BOOK OF GRACE** directed by Ms. Parks herself. This story, about a South Texas family reunited with a prodigal son, explores not only the borders we defend, but the fences we create within our hearts and within our homes. ZACH is honored to be the first theatre chosen by Parks to produce her latest play, following its NYC Public Theatre premiere.

One of America's most widely produced and published contemporary playwrights, local Austin playwright and University of Texas Head of Playwriting, Steven Dietz, surprises, captivates and entertains with his wonderfully intelligent play **FICTION** – a cat-and-mouse game in search of what is truth and what is fiction. Audiences will laugh out loud and then gasp watching the unfolding events in FICTION where two married writers make a pact after 20 years of marriage to read each other's private journals. Continuing ZACH's ongoing collaboration with this remarkable artist, Dietz will direct this comedic-drama with his trademark and irresistible blend of humor, heart and artistry.

Winner of the 2008 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and Tony Award for Best Play, **AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY** makes its regional premiere on ZACH's stage. ZACH Artistic Director Dave Steakley will direct this fiercely funny new play written by Tracy Letts, which follows an Oklahoma family fraught in a state of near-apocalyptic meltdown. Perfectly subversive, this entertaining turbo-charged saga shocks with each new diabolically funny bombshell. Steakley predicts that "Austin audiences will be quick to recognize in the characters a family member or two!"

It may be hard to do, but breaking up is uproarious in this brand-new runaway musical! ZACH Theatre is thrilled to produce the world premiere of **THE BREAK-UP**, following Helen Hill as she dives back into the dating pool and navigates the post-relationship world with wit, warmth and honesty. Whether partnered or single, the audience will cheer at the triumph of love with an original pop musical score paying homage to the Go-Go's, the Indigo Girls and Pat Benatar. Directed and produced by Peter Schneider, former head of Disney Studios who supervised the transition of Disney's hit films *Beauty and the Beast*, *Lion King* and *Aida* to the Broadway stage, this sensation is a must-see before it heads to Broadway!

ZACH's season ignites with the musical *The New York Times* calls "an exhilarating, landmark rock opera with a glittering, inventive score that shimmers with hope for the future of the American musical." **RENT**, with music and lyrics by Jonathan Larson and based on Puccini's *La Bohème*, tells the story of young bohemian artists and musicians struggling to survive while creating their art.

"It sounds a lot like Austin," says ZACH's Producing Artistic Director Dave Steakley who will direct RENT. "For decades this city has attracted artists of all types who are drawn to our unique oasis for its

celebration of creative individual expression. We are designing a dynamic, original staging for this production that will take over ZACH's entire theatre and literally wrap the theatrical experience around the audience."

Move over, Baltimore! Austin is the new home for **HAIRSPRAY**, the soulstastic, hair hoppin', dance-til-you-drop musical. John Waters' campy film inspiration and ZACH Artistic Director Dave Steakley are a match made in ozone-depleting, the higher-the-hair-the-closer-to-God, *Beehive* heaven! HAIRSPRAY's music is by Marc Shaiman, with lyrics by Scott Wittman and Shaiman and book by Mark O'Donnell and Thomas Meehan.

Just in time for the holidays, the annual editions of David Sedaris' **THE SANTALAND DIARIES**, a laugh till you cry evening of merrily subversive holiday satire and song; and **ROCKIN' CHRISTMAS PARTY** both promise musical delights for all ages at the holidays.

We invite Austin audiences to join ZACH Theatre for an imaginative new journey showcasing Austin's finest writers, directors, professional actors and most creative theatre artists. The season runs September 2010 through August 2011. Season tickets are on sale now. Six-show packages start at just \$100 – available at ZACH's box office at (512) 476-0541, ext: 1 and online at www.zachtheatre.org.

For real-time updates on ZACH Theatre news, events and happenings, visit <http://www.zachtheatre.org/blog/>. Add ZACH Theatre as a friend on Facebook, and follow us on Twitter @zachtheatre.

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About ZACH Theatre

Founded in 1933 and named for Austin reared actor Zachary Scott, ZACH Theatre is celebrated for producing innovative, dramatic, musical and comedic entertainment of the highest quality. As Texas' longest running theatre company and Austin's leading professional theatre, ZACH Theatre features the best and brightest talent from Austin and nationwide. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Dave Steakley and Managing Director Elisabeth Challener, ZACH's unique productions and intimate theatre experiences have been recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts, The Shubert Foundation, *The New York Times* as well as numerous theatrical awards. ZACH serves over 170,000 Central Texas adults and youth each year at its artistic two-theatre home in the heart of Austin.

ZACH Theatre is also a leader in the Austin community, fostering artistic education, expression and development in children, teens and adults through a variety of outreach opportunities. ZACH's *Project Discovery* allows Central Texas elementary, middle and high school students to experience Mainstage shows at discounted prices. ZACH's *Performing Arts School* offers theatre classes to over 7,500 students of all ages, and *Project Interact*, ZACH's professional theatre for youth, tours Central Texas schools to perform live, interactive and original plays.

ZACH Theatre is sponsored, in part, by Applied Materials, *Austin American-Statesman*, Time Warner Cable, Austin News TV 36, The Dell Foundation, Vollmer Public Relations, SOL Marketing Concepts, The Shubert Foundation, The City of Austin - under the auspices of the Austin Arts Commission, The Texas Commission on the Arts, The National Endowment for the Arts, Strong Events, OnRamp, Cole Apartments, The Mitchell Group Consulting and Kirk Tuck Photography. For more information, visit <http://www.zachtheatre.org>.