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SJTC Audiences Are Offered Best of Both Worlds Next Season

SJTC's 2011-2012 Season allows subscribers to choose what they want to see, offering an expanded Main Stage line-up and an intimate cutting edge in-house Studio Series

Saint John Theatre Company has had a busy 2010-2011 season. In addition to our ever-popular Main Stage line-up several new projects were launched including *Marco Polo: The Musical* which was staged at Harbour Station in October in front of 5,000 audience members; half of those being complimentary tickets issued to local students. The Master Class series which offered local talent professionally led weekend long classes in playwriting, acting, dancing, movement, comedy improv & voice free of charge due to funding from the SJ225 planning committee. Various student outreach projects were also offered including classroom visits, discounted student nights, complimentary tickets and post show question & answer sessions. Our in house Studio Series was new this year as well. Audiences were treated to an intimate evening of edgy theatre in our production space on Princess Street.

With the new season fast approaching, SJTC is still focused on providing Saint John and surrounding residents with top notch theatre performances, theatre education initiatives as well as increasing exposure for all to the performing arts, however there is a plan to switch things up a bit next season on the Main Stage. SJTC audiences will be given more variety & choice than ever with next season's line-up.

SJTC will offer an expanded Main Stage line-up next season. Four Main Stage productions will be offered rather than the traditional three in order to offer audiences a broader choice. This year's line-up has something for everyone and will allow its subscribers to choose their favourites as part of their own unique subscription package or see it all and still save on individual ticket prices. The popular in-house Studio series which offers more cutting edge, small scale productions will also return after a successful inaugural year.

Ramping up the 2011-2012 season is *The Rocky Horror Show* which will be staged at Imperial Theatre from September 29th to October 1st. This off-the wall cult classic will be directed by Stephen Tobias and will feature all the tried and true British horror comedy that audiences have grown to love from this musical over the last three decades.

Moving from the edgy to the traditional, *A Christmas Carol* will be staged in late November (Nov 17-19) as the second in the Main Stage line-up. Audience members will get into the spirit of the season with a classic story of redemption, hope and Christmas joy. "It is my hope that our team can create a Dicken's tale that will wow audiences", notes director Scott Thomas, "...laughter, suspense, mystery, parody, clowning, crying – whatever we can fill into our Santa sack of theatrical delights we will do." This production will be based on the stage version adapted by Bob Doherty.

Mid season marks the performance of *The 39 Steps*, which will be directed by Robert Moore. *The 39 Steps* is an Alfred Hitchcock spy thriller with a bit of comedy throughout. The story is centered on an innocent man who is on the run fleeing from a murder he did not commit, assisting a female counterespionage agent and finding himself landing in one extraordinary comical situation after another. This show offers suspense, thrills, romance and laughs; something for everyone!

This hit will also be staged by Theatre New Brunswick in October. SJTC and TNB have partnered to offer subscribers a \$5 discount off the regular ticket price for those who want to take in both productions. The two theatre groups also plan to share resources and cross promote each other's show so audiences can see two perspectives on the same hit. "It's important for companies to encourage and support each other's productions and encourage their audience's to do the same," notes TNB's Artistic Producer Caleb Marshall. "I think it's very exciting for audiences to get the chance to see two different versions of the same great play."

The final Main Stage production is the Shakespeare classic *Romeo and Juliet* which will run at Imperial Theatre from May 17-19. The modern day rendition of this timeless classic will be directed by Stephen Tobias. *"I am excited about this production, it will be highly physical in nature and marked by intense fight choreography, modern design concepts, and a driving musical score...there will be something for everyone to enjoy"*, Tobias adds.

Our Studio Series was a hit this year offering audiences non-traditional productions featured in our smaller scale production facility in the heart of downtown Saint John. Audiences enjoyed the ambiance of our rustic rehearsal hall and cabaret style setting complete with a bar and post show question & answer session with the cast. Over 400 people attended the two Studio productions. Our goal is to grow this base over the next year.

Next year's Studio line-up includes two award winning productions. The first is *Death and the Maiden* which will run in the SJTC Princess St location Feb 8-11. This Pulitzer Prize winning moral thriller, directed by long-term company member Dean Turner, is a story about a woman who believes that the stranger who has unexpectedly arrived at her home is the doctor who, under the previous military dictatorship, repeatedly tortured her.

The Drowning Girls is the second Studio production for next season. Directed by Kizzy Kaye, this production is a recollection of the events leading up to a murder as told by the victims, all wives of the same man. *"It was one of the first times that similarities in connected crimes were used to prove pre-meditation – a sort of early 20th Century "Criminal Minds"*, notes Kaye. *"It is the fact that the victims themselves are retelling the story of their seduction, marriage, and subsequent murder by George Joseph Smith that makes this play so gripping!"* *The Drowning Girls* will run from April 4-7 at our production facility.

Of course, Theatre on the Edge 2011, will return for its ninth summer this August (Aug 4-20). Audiences can expect to see shiny new theatre- new plays and new perspectives on old favourites. The festival will be a celebration of local talent-writers, directors, and actors. It is a wonderful opportunity to become involved in theatre, not only for the performers, but for the audience as well. *"We are always looking for a new audience, and this summertime festival is a chance to see a wide range of plays- from Shakespeare's notorious "Hamlet" to a twelve minute play about a first kiss"* adds Lindsay Bell, Tote organizing committee member. *"What excites me about this year's festival is the scope of it...new one act plays, Hamlet, various workshops, performances by other local theatre companies, dance, and music...all coming together. It is a unique event in the Saint John area and helps to keep theatre in people's lives"*

For more information on any upcoming SJTC events/productions please contact:

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