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THEATRE TUSCALOOSA ANNOUNCES 2011-2012: A WINNING SEASON!

TUSCALOOSA, AL – Theatre Tuscaloosa’s 2011-2012 season, themed “A Winning Season!,” features three musicals, a comedy, the story of Paul “Bear” Bryant, and a year-long commitment to providing much-needed entertainment, inspiration, and support to the Tuscaloosa community in the wake of the April 27th tornado.

“Paul ‘Bear’ Bryant once said, ‘Tough times don’t last, but tough people do.’ We believe these words perfectly define our community at this difficult time,” said Executive Producer Tina Turley. “We know that the arts play a major role in the healing process. Laughter, music, and entertainment experienced in the communal setting can be a salve for the soul. The mission for our entire 2011-12 season is to hang ‘tough’ in our commitment to motivate, inspire, entertain, and be a part of rebuilding Tuscaloosa.”

Bear Country by Michael Vigilant kicks off the season September 9-October 2. In this moving and inspiring play, Coach Paul “Bear” Bryant (played by Rodney Clark who originated the role at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival) recounts through flashbacks some of the most pivotal moments in his life. Audiences see him as the young boy who was driven to take care of his Momma and family, the Bama player that took down Tennessee while playing the whole game on a broken leg, and as the coach that won the most national college football championships in history. This amazing story of a man who chose to be a winner will remind audiences again why Tuscaloosa IS Bear Country.

Due to anticipated demand, Bear Country will run a total of four weeks rather than Theatre Tuscaloosa’s usual two-week run. Saturday performances of Bear Country will be scheduled around University of Alabama football games as they are announced.

The second show of the season, a new musical comedy about six young people vying for the spelling championship of a lifetime, runs November 11-20. The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (music & lyrics by William Finn and book by Rachel Sheinkin) is a Tony-winning Broadway hit from 2005, in which a charming cast of misfit contestants discover that a spelling bee is one place where they can both stand out and fit in at the same time, win or lose.

If laughter is the best medicine, then Noises Off by Michael Frayn is a double-dose! To be presented February 17-26, 2012, this side-splitting farce gives audiences a glimpse behind the curtain as a cast of eccentric actors attempts to put on a play called Nothing On – in which nothing goes right. Flubbed lines, missed cues, and wardrobe malfunctions are just the beginning as this winning comedy reveals what can happen onstage when things go wrong offstage.

By popular demand, Smoke on the Mountain (written by Connie Ray, conceived by Alan Bailey, and musical arrangements by Mike Craver and Mark Hardwick) returns April 13-22, 2012. The Sanders Family Singers are back in the original story first performed in Tuscaloosa in 2005. Audiences join Brother Mervin Oglethorpe as
he welcomes Burl, Vera, Uncle Stanley, the twins Dennis and Denise, and sister June (who doesn't sing – she signs) to the Mt. Pleasant Church revival. This show will win hearts with lots of good ole, down home gospel favorites.

The big summer musical, *Gypsy* (by Arthur Laurents with music by Jule Styne and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, based on the real-life memoirs of Gypsy Rose Lee) runs July 13-22, 2012. With an enormous cast, “Gypsy” features show-stopping hits such as “Everything’s Coming Up Roses” and “Let Me Entertain You.” Considered one of the greatest Broadway musicals ever written, *Gypsy* tells the story of the ultimate “stage mother” who is willing to go to any lengths to transform her daughters into winning stars. Mama Rose, played by Ava Buchanan, one of Tuscaloosa’s great leading ladies, creates a touring vaudeville show for her daughters. Growing up on stage, however, leads to unintended consequences as one daughter abandons show biz while the other finds fame in the world of burlesque.

As part of Theatre Tuscaloosa’s season-long commitment to keeping the focus on rebuilding Tuscaloosa, one dollar of every individual ticket sale for *Bear Country* will be contributed to Give + Tuscaloosa. Additionally, a group of tickets for every 2011-2012 production will be contributed to various groups of volunteers, relief workers, and survivors. Other special partnerships and promotions will be announced throughout the season.

The 2011-2012 season, presented in cooperation with Shelton State Community College, will be in the Bean-Brown Theatre on Shelton State Community College’s Martin Campus (9500 Old Greensboro Road). Season tickets are discounted 15 percent over individual ticket prices and can be purchased for $89 for adults; $74 for seniors (60+), Shelton State employees, and military personnel; and $58 for students and children. Season tickets may be purchased as either traditional subscriptions (same night and seat(s) for every show) or as Flex Passes that can be redeemed in any order to any 2011-2012 production. To order season tickets or learn more, visit [www.theatretusc.com](http://www.theatretusc.com) or call 205.391.2277.

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Theatre Tuscaloosa is a not-for-profit community theatre located on the Martin Campus of Shelton State Community College. Theatre Tuscaloosa has been enriching the greater Tuscaloosa community since 1972 through quality theatrical productions and educational outreach programs.