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Gamm Theatre Announces New "Season of Transformation"

PAWTUCKET, RI (February 16, 2011) — Tony Estrella, artistic director of **The Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre** (The Gamm), today announced the theater's **27th Season (2011-2012)** — an exciting and powerful lineup delivering The Gamm's trademark one-two punch of **reinvigorated classics** and **powerful, provocative, up-to-the-moment contemporary dramas**.

"It's a season of transformation. Five plays about transforming the individual, society, the family, even the earth itself," Estrella explained.

The season opens with the **Rhode Island premiere** of *Circle Mirror Transformation*, a poignant comedy about a 'creative drama' class for adults in a small Vermont community. Estrella called **Annie Baker's Obie Award-winning play** "a revelatory, surprising, mini-masterpiece about how empathy keeps us human."

Starting in November, **there's something rotten in Denmark...twice: Shakespeare's *Hamlet*** followed by *Festen*, a contemporary family tragedy also set in Denmark. Based on "**The Celebration**", **Thomas Vinterberg's** riveting, award-winning Dogme film, *Festen* was the **most-heralded play in London's 2009 West End season**.

"Like our 2009 production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, ***Hamlet*** is a reinvention of a Gamm classic," Estrella said. "Fourteen years ago, Fred Sullivan, Jr. directed me and the inimitable Sam Babbitt in this play. **In honor of Sam's impending farewell season with The Gamm, we decided to revisit the collaboration that helped define this theater in the second half of its life.** I think it's safe to say that without that production, The Gamm wouldn't be what it is today."

Spring of 2012 explodes with the wildly hilarious *Boom* by **Peter Sinn Nachtrieb**. Developed in Rhode Island at Brown/Trinity Playwright's Repertory Theatre, this apocalyptic comedy was last year's **most-produced play in the country**.

Season 27 concludes with a premiere of British playwright **Nick Lane's brand-new, spare and thrilling** retelling of **1984, George Orwell's ever-relevant, haunting, political satire** about a totalitarian world at war.

"Hamlet famously said 'Denmark's a prison'," Estrella said. "In ***George Orwell's 1984***, the whole *world* is a prison. And, like Hamlet himself, Winston Smith is trying to break free of it."

Subscriptions to The Gamm's 2010-11 Season are \$115-\$190 . Call 401-723-4266 . Information at gammtheatre.org .
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Season 27/2011-2012 Plays

Circle Mirror Transformation by **Annie Baker**, directed by **Rachel Walshe** (Sep 8-Oct 9, 2011)

Creative drama class is in session throughout **Annie Baker's poignantly funny, Obie Award-winning "best new American play"** (2010). Marty, the indefatigably upbeat teacher at a community center in small-town Vermont, leads four motley students through a series of seemingly banal acting exercises. But the real drama lies beneath the games, where **relationships form and fracture, and secrets unfold in comically insightful ways**.

"**One of the most promising new stage talents** to emerge in the past decade." - *New York Times* on Annie Baker

There's something rotten in Denmark...In their prison-like estates, families gather and terrible secrets are exposed, as sons seek revenge for the "most foul" of crimes. The Gamm presents a **pair of powerful and exquisite tragedies**, speaking to each other across four centuries.

Hamlet by William Shakespeare, directed by Fred Sullivan, Jr. (Nov 3-Dec 11, 2011)

Shakespeare's greatest and most famous tragedy about the melancholy prince Hamlet of Denmark, caught in a quandary about whether to seek revenge against his father's presumed murderer—the man who now sits on the throne and shares his mother's bed! The Gamm revisits and reinvigorates its **critically acclaimed** 1997 production, reuniting Resident Director **Fred Sullivan, Jr.** with Artistic Director **Tony Estrella** in the title role and **Sam Babbitt** as Polonius for another "**unforgettable**" *Hamlet*.

"A Hotspur Hamlet, one that is **fierce** and **funny** and **pointed**." -*Providence Journal*, 1997

"Hamlet gets an **unforgettable** production: lean, precise and not a bit self-indulgent in plumbing the depths of the brooding Dane's soul. ...**Brilliant, compelling** theater." -*Providence Phoenix*, 1997

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Festen by David Eldridge, directed by TBA (Jan 12-Feb 12, 2012)

Based on the *Dogme* film and play by Thomas Vinterberg, Mogens Rukov and Bo hr. Hansen

Helge is turning sixty, and everyone is coming home for the party. His eldest son, Christian, whose twin sister, Linda, recently committed suicide, will raise the first toast... and **reveal a shocking family secret**. Trapped for 24 hours within the walls of the lavish country estate—**rocked by revelations that shatter the veneer of respectability**—even the disbelieving guests are choosing sides as the truth painfully unfolds. Adapted from the award-winning 1998 Danish film by the same title (released in the U.S. as "The Celebration"), *Festen* redefines tragedy for a modern age. *For mature audiences only.*

"Festen is a **landmark play**: one that **gives new life to tragedy**." -*The Guardian* (London)

"An embodiment of **what theatre should be**... takes the breath away." -*Independent*(UK)

"**Electrifying, shocking** and **profoundly moving**, this is a **thrilling** modern tragedy. ... *Festen* is something to celebrate." - *Sunday Times* (London)

Boom by Peter Sinn Nachtrieb, directed by Fred Sullivan, Jr. (Mar 8-Apr 8, 2012)

"**Sex to change the course of the world...**" With this line from a personal ad, marine biology grad student Jules lures journalism student Jo to his subterranean lab-turned-apartment, where he studies fish sleep cycles for signs of the apocalypse. And so begins one hell of a blind date, and a **hilarious** play. Will the "intensely significant coupling" of this unlikely pair result in another big bang, or is mankind's fate in the hands of someone watching outside the fishbowl?

Rising American playwright Peter Sinn Nachtrieb tackles our fascination with myths about the origins (and end!) of life with this **clever, sharp-witted** doomsday comedy developed in Rhode Island at Brown/Trinity's Playwrights Repertory Theatre.

"Flips from pants-around-the-ankles comedy to hipster "Twilight Zone" takeoff...*Boom* is **imaginative** and **easy to like**." -*The New Yorker*

"Sex! Planet-ruining cataclysms! Loads of booze! **Boom has all of these things**." -*Variety*

"**Grandly wacked-out** apocalypse fantasy." -*Washington Post*

1984 by George Orwell, adapted by Nick Lane, directed by Tony Estrella (May 3- Jun 3, 2012)

War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength.

The Gamm breathes **fresh life** into **George Orwell's landmark novel** with a **bold retelling** of the political satirist's **hauntingly prophetic** story. In a totalitarian world at war, with Big Brother watching and the Thought Police on his heels, Winston Smith clings stubbornly to his vision of a different future. What starts as an act of rebellion and hope rapidly unravels in a nightmare of doomed love, personal betrayal and the terrors of Room 101. British playwright Nick Lane's **spare script**, punctuated by **chilling** multi-media effects, **resonates now more than ever**.

About The Gamm Theatre

Founded in 1984 as Alias Stage, the non-profit **Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre** creates the finest of live theater, engaging the audience intensely in current and recurrent issues of consequence. The Gamm further serves the public with educational outreach programming designed to support the theatrical experience, and help sustain and enhance the intellectual and cultural life of its community. The Gamm is a member of **New England Area Theatre** (NEAT), a bargaining unit of the Actors Equity Association.

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