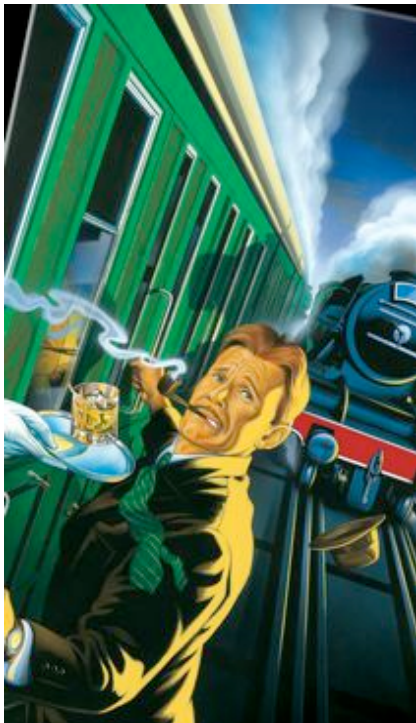




Theatre Aquarius 2010/11 Season Announcement

Hamilton, March 8, 2010 – Theatre Aquarius announced its 2010/11 production line-up this morning at their Season Launch Party, which included a presentation of the season by Ron Ulrich, Artistic Director, musical numbers from the upcoming productions, back stage tours, contests and door prizes, on-location remote broadcast and interviews with K-lite FM, and a lunch-time reception in the Norman and Louise Haac Studio Theatre at Theatre Aquarius, Dofasco Centre for the Arts. Theatre Aquarius' 2010/11 Season will be performed from September 2010 until May 2011, and includes an array of spectacular shows in the second season selected by Artistic Director Ron Ulrich.



The season will open with the first play of the Mainstage Series: Alfred Hitchcock's **The 39 Steps** (adapted by Patrick Barlow, from the Novel by John Buchan, from the movie of Alfred Hitchcock, *September 22 – October 10, 2010*). Mix a Hitchcock masterpiece with a juicy spy novel, add a dash of Monty Python and you have a fast-paced whodunit for anyone who loves the magic of theatre! This 2-time Tony and Drama Desk Award-winning treat is packed with nonstop laughs, over 150 characters (played by a ridiculously talented cast of four), an on-stage plane crash, handcuffs, missing fingers and some good old-fashioned romance! A man with a boring life meets a woman with a thick accent who says she's a spy. When he takes her home, she is murdered. Soon, a mysterious organization called *The 39 Steps* is hot on the man's trail in a nationwide manhunt that climaxes in a death-defying finale! A riotous blend of virtuoso performances and wildly

inventive stagecraft, *The 39 Steps* amounts to an unforgettable evening of pure

pleasure! Winner of the Olivier Award for best comedy!

Following this spectacular season opening is **Educating Rita** (by Willy Russell, *October 27 – November 14, 2010*). British playwright Willy Russell's hit, *Educating Rita*, like his blockbuster, *Shirley Valentine*, is a perennial theatrical gem that refuses to wane in popularity. Winner of the Best Comedy Award in London's West End, and made into a mega hit movie starring Julie Walters and Michael Caine, *Educating Rita* is a winner. Rita crashes into Dr. Frank Bryant's life wanting an education, although she has no idea what it is that she's asking. Her brash sincerity earns the respect of the doctor who has previously resigned himself to a life of empty lectures and booze. Rita's character is a breath of fresh air for Bryant and he begins to care about someone, or something for that matter, for the first time since his wife left him. As each begins to wake up to life in their own way, the story comes to a close as an inspiring tale of self discovery and of the power choice that comes through education.



Next up is **Dinner with Friends** (Donald Margulies, *February 6 – March 6, 2011*), a remarkable play for which Margulies won the Pulitzer Prize. His work mixes humor with the pain of human existence and creates an evening of theatre that makes one laugh while one weeps at the human condition. It is a vital and vivid piece about communication and relationships. *Dinner With Friends* examines and illuminates the relationships between husbands and wives, men and women, friends and couples. It questions the validity of the family as we in North America know it, and in a beautifully understated final scene, makes us wonder if the bonds we use to form family and friendships are simply desperate attempts to cover the gaping void of isolation. It is a powerful play, both charged and humorous. It is also the winner of the Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Off-Broadway Play, the Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Off-Broadway Play,

the Dramatists Guild/Hull-Warriner Award, and the American Theatre Critics Association New Play Award. To make this production even more special, Theatre Aquarius is proud to announce that **Joyce DeWitt** (from television's *Three's Company*) will be starring in this contemporary masterpiece!

For This Moment Alone (by Marcia Kash, *March 23 – April 10, 2011*) is a new Canadian play making it's World Premiere at Theatre Aquarius! Based on a true story, it asks, how far would you go to save a life? What do you consider the boundaries of family? Do we have the right to judge a person who has survived through hell? When Freddy arrives in Toronto from post-war Europe to reunite with his sister Ruth and other members of the Goldfarb family, it sets off a family crisis. As they each struggle to let go of the past and embrace life, they have to determine how much they are willing to

forgive, where the truth lies and how to survive as a family. The title is a Talmudic reference to the hope that exists for humanity. When a person does a good deed that (s)he doesn't need to do, God looks down and says, "for this moment alone it was worth creating the world".



Theatre Aquarius closes its Mainstage Series with **Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story** (written by Alan Janes, April 27 – May 29, 2011). On February 3rd, 1959, at age 22, the man who changed the face of popular music tragically died in a plane crash. Now, Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story shows us he became the world's top recording artist in a production that features over 20 of Buddy Holly's greatest hits including *Peggy Sue*, *That'll Be The Day*, *Oh Boy*, *Not Fade Away*, *Everyday*, *Rave On*, *Maybe Baby*, *Raining In My Heart*, Ritchie Valens' *La Bamba*, and the Big Bopper's *Chantilly Lace*. Over 20 million people around the world have come to see Buddy...and now, at last it is here in Hamilton! The young man with glasses whose musical career spanned an all-too-brief period has enjoyed a longevity that was denied him in 1959.

In addition to the Mainstage Series, Theatre Aquarius will bring magic to the stage once again with their Holiday Family Musical – **A Christmas Carol: The Musical** (music by Alan Menken and Lynn Ahrens, book by Mike Ockrent and Lynn Ahrens, based on the story by Charles Dickens, December 1, 2010 – January 2, 2011). Called by The New York Times "a tonic for adults, and for children a transfixing journey," this spectacular musical extravaganza ran for ten years at Madison Square Garden, complete with falling snow, exuberant dances, flying ghosts and the streets, graveyards, homes and buildings of Dickensian London. This "A Christmas Carol" retains its emotional power and pure joy, thanks to the marvelously-told story by Ockrent and Ahrens, and the Menken/Ahrens score filled with beautiful melodies and emotional lyrics. In fact, their song *A Place Called Home* has become a holiday standard.

This year, Theatre Aquarius will present three strikingly diverse pieces in the Norman and Louise Haac Studio Theatre as a part of its StageWrite Series. First up is the returning fan favorite, **The Best of Fringe**. Following on the success of this past year's collaboration with the Hamilton Fringe, two new shows from the Fringe mix will open the Studio season. We won't know what they are until the Fringe closes, but we do know they will be top notch and entertaining!

Next on the studio marquee will be **Sharron's Big Broadway Show**, in which musical theatre diva and comedienne Sharron Matthews shares a hilarious and often heart

breaking look at her journey from small town Ontario to the beckoning lights of Broadway. Sharron combines her powerful voice and comedic wit to weave together stories and songs that are both poignant and uproarious. Sharron takes you from her first job in the chorus of *Les Miserables* to starring roles in *Beauty and the Beast* and *Mean Girls*; from the daunting audition rooms of New York City to dancing in the streets with John Travolta in *Hairspray* and her star-struck moment meeting Bette Midler. Featuring music from *West Side Story*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Grease* and other Broadway favourites, this is a high-energy evening of music and comedy that is guaranteed to entertain and enchant any audience. This is your exclusive 'backstage pass' into the world of professional theatre! The critics love her! Richard Ouzounian of the Toronto Star says "Sharron Matthews is perfection." Gary Smith of the Hamilton Spectator remarks that "Matthews is a stunning performer," and David Bateman of XTRA calls her "vocally exquisite."

To conclude the StageWrite Series Theatre Aquarius will present **Bittergirl** – its *Sex and the City* meets Dr. Phil! Howlingly funny, emotionally cathartic and universally recognizable, *Bittergirl* follows three women in their plunge from what they think is impending bliss to total breakup devastation and through every step of the journey back to happiness. From the public humiliation of being dumped in your favorite restaurant on a Saturday night through rage, blame, disbelief, stalking your ex, and even having reunion sex with him to eventual healing and dealing, *Bittergirl's* audiences have their mascara running as they laugh and cry with recognition at every performance.

Season Subscriptions are on sale now, and may be ordered by calling the box office at 905.522.7529 (toll free 1.800.465.7529), or in person at the Dofasco Centre for the Arts, 190 King William Street, Hamilton. Subscribers can avoid paying Ontario's new HST, which combines the present Federal and Provincial sales taxes by subscribing on or before April 30, 2010.

For group sales, please contact Carolyn Drost at 905.522.7815 x.238 or cdrost@theatreaquarius.org.

Theatre Aquarius is in its 38th season as South Western Ontario's professional regional theatre with 8,000 annual subscribers and over 100,000 patrons for its 200 performances, drawing audiences from London, Mississauga, Guelph and Niagara. Theatre Aquarius is one of only 12 'A' category professional producing not-for-profit regional theatres in Canada, and 3rd largest in Ontario.

For further information, please visit our website at www.theatreaquarius.org or contact:

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