



American Repertory Theater

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**American Repertory Theater
Announces the 2011/12 Season:
THE GERSHWINS' PORGY AND BESS
THREE PIANOS • AS YOU LIKE IT • WILD SWANS • FUTURITY**

Cambridge, Mass — The American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.), under the artistic direction of Diane Paulus, is pleased to announce the productions that will be part of the A.R.T.'s 2011/12 Season.

A.R.T. Artistic Director Diane Paulus remarked: "Our 2011/12 Season features projects that combine music and storytelling to explore our collective heritage and unique histories. The year will include musical theater inspired by Americana, jazz, folk, and indie-rock, as well as plays with humor and grand expressions of humanity. This will be a season of extraordinary tales, glorious music, creative invention, and community created through shared experiences — a true A.R.T. season and one we promise should not be missed."

The 2011/12 Season will include:

THE GERSHWINS' PORGY AND BESS

by George Gershwin, Dubose and Dorothy Heyward, and Ira Gershwin
adapted by Suzan-Lori Parks and Diedre Murray; directed by Diane Paulus;
choreographed by Ron K. Brown

In 1935, *Porgy and Bess* premiered at the Colonial Theater in Boston. Now, 76 years later, the A.R.T. brings back *Porgy and Bess* in a new production featuring internationally renowned stars **Audra McDonald** as Bess, **Norm Lewis** as Porgy, and **David Alan Grier** as Sporting Life. A.R.T. Artistic Director and Tony Award nominee **Diane Paulus** directs this revival adapted by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright **Suzan-Lori Parks** (*Topdog/Underdog*, *The America Play*, *Venus*) and OBIE-winning composer **Diedre Murray** (*Running Man*, *Best of Both Worlds*). This classic American tale is set in the 1930s in Catfish Row, a neighborhood in Charleston, South Carolina. Bess, beautiful and troubled, turns to Porgy, the crippled beggar, in search of safety after her possessive lover Crown commits murder. As Porgy and Bess's love grows, their future is threatened by Crown and the conniving Sporting Life. This heartbreaking love story boasts some of the most famous and beloved works from the Great American Songbook, including: "Summertime," "Bess, You Is My Woman," "It Ain't Necessarily So" and "I Loves You, Porgy."

When the project was announced in November 2010, Suzan-Lori Parks remarked, "I am thrilled to be part of the wonderful team working on *Porgy and Bess*. Our approach is fresh and respectful; we're

working to retain all the best-loved elements of the original while crafting a piece that speaks to contemporary audiences."

Spokespersons from the Gershwin family added, "The fusion of musical styles in *Porgy and Bess* is distinctly American. It has had, and continues to have, a successful life in opera houses around the world yet it contains some of America's most beloved jazz and popular standards. The Gershwin family and the Heyward trustees are thrilled that the American Repertory Theater will be premiering a re-imagining of *Porgy and Bess* for a whole new generation of theatergoers. We cannot wait to see the results of Diane Paulus', Suzan-Lori Parks', and Diedre Murray's collaboration as they venture forth from the original. We believe audiences will fall in love with their vision of this masterwork for the 21st century."

Loeb Drama Center • August 17, 2011 – October 2, 2011

THREE PIANOS

by Rick Burkhardt, Alec Duffy and Dave Malloy
with music from Franz Schubert's *Winterreise*, Op. 89, D911 (1828)
directed by Rachel Chavkin

The OBIE-winning hit music-theater event – that wowed audiences and critics alike in its sold-out runs at the Ontological-Hysteric Theater and New York Theatre Workshop – is a theatrical explosion of Franz Schubert's song cycle *Winterreise*. Filled with fantastical touches and inventive arrangements, **Three Pianos** is a colorful and imaginative evening exploring Schubert's music, life, and times. Set on a blustery winter night, three friends, each manning a piano, lead the audience through fragments of Schubert's famous work while grappling with fundamental questions about the nature of music and drinking too much. The three pianists slip into a wild reenactment of a "Schubertiad," a musical salon party thrown by Schubert and his friends, connecting the two groups through the centuries. An evening of hilarity and heartbreak unfolds, in which the audience is invited to the party. Compositional mayhem, shifting rivalries, and some unfortunate butchery of the German language ensue.

"5 Stars.... The (creative) trio is a real-life music-theater supergroup... Full-blooded and full-bodied, Three Pianos lifts it's glass to music, to Schubert and to the type of friendship that can make you laugh off heartbreak. It's also a superb evening. Cheers." *TimeOut New York*

"The best antidote to winter's bitter dregs... Like being cozily tucked away with a clutch of nerdy music-loving friends, **Three Pianos** transforms *Winterreise*'s spectral solitudes into a parable of artistic community." *The Village Voice*

Loeb Drama Center • December 7, 2011 – January 8, 2012

AS YOU LIKE IT

by William Shakespeare
featuring members of The A.R.T. /MXAT Institute for Advanced Theater Training Class of 2012

"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players" in Shakespeare's beloved pastoral comedy **As You Like It**. This classic tale follows Rosalind and her friend Celia's escape from a deadly conspiracy into nature's wild, liberating arms. What follows is an unconventional romance with everything from wrestling matches to cross-dressing shepherds culminating in a finale so joyful that spring will seem just around the corner. Building on the success of the 2010 – 2011 Season's sold-out **Alice vs. Wonderland** on the Loeb Mainstage, **As You Like It** will feature members of the graduating Institute Class of 2012.

Loeb Drama Center • January 13, 2012 – January 28, 2012

WILD SWANS — World Premiere
by Jung Chang
adapted by Alexandra Wood

A world premiere adaptation of Jung Chang's international bestseller, **Wild Swans** chronicles a family's survival through a century of upheaval. Banned in China, this moving story follows three generations through Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution. As change sweeps over their country, the family endures their hardships through sacrifice, courage, and love. **Wild Swans** is an American Repertory Theater and Young Vic co-production.

"An extraordinary memoir and a harrowing narrative that rivals anything in *The Last Emperor*." *The Wall Street Journal*

"An unfailingly gripping tale" *Washington Post Book World*
Loeb Drama Center • February 11, 2012 – March 11, 2012

FUTURITY: A Musical by The Lisps — World Premiere
music and lyrics by César Alvarez with The Lisps; book by Molly Rice and César Alvarez;
directed by Sarah Benson

As the Civil War rages around him, the Union soldier Julian Munro dreams of bringing peace to the world and an end to human suffering. In a series of letters with Lord Byron's brilliant daughter Ada Lovelace, Julian attempts to invent an omnipotent steam-powered brain designed to save humanity before it destroys itself. Featuring the indie-rock band The Lisps, this quirky new musical melds science fiction, historical narrative, and the sounds of American folk music to explore Julian and Ada's epic fantasy of a utopian future.

Praise for The Lisps: "Like an old time variety show, The Lisps' songs tap dance between simple country guitar melodies to a cacophony of melodica, horns, even bag pipes. Tunis and Alvarez trade lyrics so sweet and silly they sound like the Moldy Peaches' campy, country cousin." *Spin Magazine*
Oberon • March 16, 2012 – April 15, 2012

Additional special events and Oberon offerings will be announced at a later date. Programming, artists, and dates are subject to change.

Subscriptions for the 2011-12 Season will be on sale **April 28**, along with select single tickets for **The Gershwin's Porgy and Bess**. Groups of 10 or more can order tickets by calling 617-496-2000 X8844.

For further information call 617-547-8300 or visit americanrepertorytheater.org