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"Bosom Buddies" alumni reunite after 24 years to star in Mame

Summary: Kevin Hansen '87 and Karen Wiese-Thompson '86 star in Minneapolis Musical Theatre's production of Mame through June 27.

(June 17, 2010)-Kevin Hansen, a 1987 graduate of the University of Minnesota, Morris (UMM), will star in the Minneapolis Musical Theatre (MMT) production of Mame, playing through June 27, 2010, at the Illusion Theater in downtown Minneapolis. Bringing a new twist to an old Broadway favorite, Hansen, assumes the title role of the eccentric Auntie Mame.

Karen Wiese-Thompson, a 1986 graduate of UMM, will play Mame's best friend Vera Charles, allowing Hansen and Wiese-Thompson to reprise their duet of the comic song "Bosom Buddies," first performed together on the UMM campus during a 1986 recital.

About the musical

Mame is one of the most enduring and popular shows in musical comedy history. The staying power of its story stretches from the original novel, Auntie Mame by Edward Everett Tanner III, to the movie and stage versions starring Rosalind Russell, to its final incarnation as the Broadway musical Mame, with music and lyrics by hit-maker Jerry Herman and originally starring Tony Award-winner Angela Lansbury.

The madcap life of eccentric Mame Dennis and her bohemian, arty clique is disrupted when her 10-year-old nephew Patrick is entrusted to her care. Rather than bow to convention, Mame introduces the boy to her free-wheeling lifestyle. Mame loses her fortune in the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and tries her hand at a number of jobs, with comically disastrous results, but perseveres with good humor and an irrepressible sense of style.

"When we decided to present Mame," says MMT Artistic Director Steven Meerdink, "we wanted to add an element that would be as unconventional today as when the outrageous character of Auntie Mame was first introduced in 1955. By placing Kevin Hansen in the title role, we've added our own fun twist while still being true to the original material."

"I'm absolutely thrilled to be taking on this iconic character," says Hansen, who is MMT's co-founder. "Jerry Herman writes music and lyrics for very strong, interesting characters, and Mame is a prime example. Given the complexity of our world today, it's wonderful to adopt Mame's philosophy of constant discovery and enjoyment of life to the fullest. I'm so pleased to be performing with my talented college friend Karen Wiese-Thompson, and together telling this classic story in a new, fun way."

About Kevin Hansen

Co-founder of the Minneapolis Musical Theatre, Hansen, a UMM theatre and music major, has musical director credits for more than 40 productions and has appeared onstage in numerous shows including, La Cage aux Folles, Pageant, A Class Act, The Mystery of Edwin Drood, Elegies for Angels, Punks and Raging Queens, Lucky Stiff, Weird Romance, When Pigs Fly, Candide, Violet and A New Brain. While a student at UMM, some of Hansen's roles included Jesus in

Godspell, Bob Cratchit in Scrooge, and Snoopy in Snoopy: The Musical. He also directed the 1987 mainstage production of Guys and Dolls. Hansen now resides in the Minneapolis area.

About Karen Wiese-Thompson

Wiese-Thompson, a UMM theatre major, has extensive stage credits in the Twin Cities and greater Minnesota, including productions of The Robber Bridegroom, Applause, The Front Page, Twelfth Night, Blithe Spirit, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Parallel Lives, Deathtrap, and Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean. Mame is her third appearance in a Minneapolis Musical Theatre production. Wiese-Thompson resides in St. Paul.

Directed by MMT artistic director and co-founder Steven Meerdink, tickets for Mame are on sale through the Illusion Theater box office at 612-339-4944 or online at www.aboutmmt.org.

Karen Wiese-Thompson '86

Kevin Hansen '87

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