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9-25-2003

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University Relations, "Theatre Season Includes Award-winning Musical, Pulitzer Prize-winning Drama and Classic Children's Favorite" (2003). *Campus News Archive*. 1892.

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Theatre Season Includes Award-winning Musical, Pulitzer Prize-winning Drama and Classic Children's Favorite

Summary:

(September 25, 2003)-Charles Dickens and J.R.R. Tolkien have found a home in the 2003-04 theatrical season of the Division of Humanities theater discipline at the University of Minnesota, Morris. This year's lineup includes familiar characters, classic authors, exotic settings and prize-winning drama.

The audience is literally drawn into the action as the season opens with Charles Dickens' "The Mystery of Edwin Drood," adapted by Rupert Holmes. This Tony Award-winning musical has a choose-your-own ending twist in which audience members cast their votes to determine the outcome of the musical. The solution to "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" can be different for each performance, which means that the musical is full of surprises, even upon second or third viewings. This comedic murder mystery, produced in collaboration with the UMM music discipline, will be performed November 5 - 8 at 7:30 p.m. with a Saturday matinee on November 8 at 2 p.m. A large cast of characters and rousing song and dance numbers provide fun for the entire family. "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" is directed by Assistant Professor of Theatre Ray Schultz with set and lighting design by Professor of Theatre Tap R. Payne. Musical direction is provided by UMM Assistant Professors of Music Hope Koehler (vocal direction) and Clifford Panton, Jr. (orchestra).

The season's second offering, Michael Cristofer's "The Shadow Box," presents a life-affirming view of the lessons learned and unexpected pleasures experienced by the terminally ill and their families. Three separate tales of hospice patients are poetically intertwined in this Pulitzer Prize-winning drama, which brings together comedy and tragedy, laughter and tears. "The Shadow Box" will be performed February 5-7 at 7:30 p.m. with a 2:00 p.m. performance on February 7. This dramatic piece is presented by UMM's student group, the Meiningens, and will be directed by UMM student Chris Anderson as his senior project.

Theater buffs who may have seen Bilbo Baggins and Gandalf in the recent Oscar nominated films, "The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring" and "The Two Towers," can now see them live on stage! This year's children's show, J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Hobbit" will be presented April 16 at 7 p.m. and April 17 at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. Invited school matinees will be offered April 15-16 and 21-23. Adapted for the stage by Markland Taylor, this classic story provides a special view into Tolkien's fantastical world of elves, dwarfs, and magic. "The Hobbit" chronicles the adventures before the story of Frodo and his friends. This year's children's production will be directed by Assistant Professor of Theatre Siobhan Bremer and is sure to delight both adults and children.

Ticket prices for "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" are \$9 for general admission and \$6 for students and senior citizens. Special discounted rates are available for groups of 10 or more. Prices for "The Shadow Box" and "The Hobbit" will be announced later in the season. For more information and advanced ticket sales, call the theater box office at (320) 589-6249, or e-mail at threpub@mrs.umn.edu.

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