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# *The Theatre in the Park Plans Season of All-New Shows for 2012*

A five-show season of musicals which have never been produced on The Theatre in the Park stage before is planned for 2012.

"We have a reputation in the artistic community and in the patron community as well as being a recycle theater," said Producing Artistic Director Tim Bair. "People say 'what are you going to do *again* next year? What are we going to see *again* next year?' I don't like the idea of that. I think there's plenty of other shows that we could do and should do and so we are."

Even though next year's lineup has never been seen here before, Tim notes that the shows selected still follow familiar Theatre in the Park patterns.

"We still have a great variety of shows which are absolutely family friendly: *Sleeping Beauty*, *Jungle Book*, and *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*, are all rated G.

He notes that another 2012 show, *Legally Blonde*, misses this designation only because of a few instances of language.

"I just want to say 'there are a few words in it that may or may not be appropriate and I just want you to know about it,' " he said. "So is *Urinetown*, but frankly, the only word in *Urinetown* that is remotely offensive is 'pee.' Anyone who is offended

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## **TTIP 2012 Season**

*Sweeney Todd*

June 8-10 and 14-17

*Legally Blonde*

June 22-24 and June 28-July 1

Disney Double Feature:  
*Disney's The Jungle Book*  
and *Disney's Sleeping Beauty*

July 6-8 and 12-15

*Urinetown*

July 20-22 and 26-29

*You're Good Man Charlie Brown*

Aug. 3-5 and 9-12

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# Theater

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by the show *Urinetown*, probably doesn't know the show *Urinetown* because it is hilarious."

Like *Aida* and *Les Miserables - School Edition* in the 2011 lineup, there's also a darker show planned for 2012, *Sweeney Todd*.

"It's an old show...it's been around for years. It's Sondheim, the true genius of American musical theatre, and while it does contain murder and mahem... to me it's more tongue-in-cheek than it is edgy," Tim said.

The announcement of The Theatre in the Park's all-new season has been very positive in the local theater community, Tim said.

"Across the board, from a director-production team standpoint, people are thrilled and so excited," he said. "From a performer standpoint, I can't tell you how the community is besides themselves. We're doing shows that they've not gotten an opportunity to do before, so it's very appealing."

In announcing a fifth show in the lineup for 2012, Tim said he sees a need to expand the theater's season.

"I think our season is too short," he said. "We have a much larger window of time in which we should be presenting stuff, and we have those weeks in the beginning of August before school starts."

When the 2012 season was first announced in late July, it initially included *Sweet Charity*, a show which had been produced here once before in 1979. In mid-September, this show was traded out with *Legally Blonde*. Tim said that although he wants to produce *Sweet Charity* here at a later date, this was a change he anticipated and pursued.

"I said to my (theatre advisory) board 'here's the season that I propose,' and it included *Sweet Charity*, and they approved it," he said. "But I said 'if

*Legally Blonde* comes along, I would like to replace *Sweet Charity* with *Legally Blonde*. That was a change I had hoped for."

Attendance of the theater's 2011 season totaled 33,080, down from 2010 attendance of 42,710.

"It was ungodly hot for six of the eight weeks of our season," Tim said. "It's too easy to say 'it was all because of the weather,' but I do think the weather had a huge amount to do with it. "I think the rest of the crowds would have been much larger if it hadn't been so hot," Tim said. "I fully expected *Aida* and *Les Mis* to have larger numbers."

The most highly-attended show of the season was *Seussical*, which despite two rainouts, had audiences totaling 9,913. A close second was *The Sound of Music*, which had a rainout on its first night, which was also the first night of the season. Other shows and their totals include: *Les Miserables - School Edition*, 7,950; and *Aida*, 5,962.

"From a production standpoint, I think it went very well," Tim said of the season. "I was pleased with all of our production staff and the casts. I think the shows that we offered were appealing enough. From an audience participant standpoint, I got great feedback, literally across the board."

Major successful changes made this season included what Tim calls "a gigantic leap forward" in technology in the box office, the successful introduction of "anytime tickets" good for any performance, and covering the orchestra pit and moving the stage 30 feet closer to the audience.

"There really was not a blade of grass that you could sit on in the theatre and not see what was happening onstage," Tim said. "It was so much more engaging from an audience standpoint. "We're going to look at our next season and as we design those shows with directors and designers, if it seems appropriate for a show that the pit is covered, then we will. I think it was a very good experiment for us in looking at the way we produce theater."