



THE
ZOOT
 THEATRE COMPANY

It all started around a campfire... When young brothers shared their dreams, and different worlds seemed closer than the imagination. The Zoot Theatre Company creates worlds — some familiar, some not so familiar — with puppets, masks, and a desire to communicate in a way that is unique to Dayton, Ohio.

The spark of the company was lit during the artistic director's teenage years, while he and his brother sat by the fire to tell stories from their inner worlds. Stories of what could be, stories beyond what would be. Zoot is Dayton's only puppet and mask theatre company and is founded on the principles of creativity, craftsmanship, and collaboration. Zoot materializes the imagination with outlandish, sometimes starkly haunting sets, hand-puppets, richly detailed masks, elaborate costumes, large-scale puppetry, and innovative ways of telling a story.

The Zoot Theatre Company (ZTC) is a non-profit that relies on donations and grants as well as ticket sales to survive. Zoot began sharing its work in late 2007 at the Art Attak festival in Middletown, Ohio. Back then, artists and friends gave freely of their time to support the artistic vision of the company. Now, in the midst of its inaugural season, Zoot monetarily supports some of the artistic talent that makes Dayton so culturally rich. It is the intention of ZTC to be in a position to pay a fair and equitable wage to everyone involved with a production, regardless of whether that involvement is onstage, backstage, in the house, or in the office.

ZTC has collaborated with theatre groups, arts organizations, and artists from around the region. This year, ZTC and Cityfolk's Culture Builds Community (CBC) collaborate with local communities to present the Peoples' Puppet-Play, a series of performances that tell the personal stories of Dayton's residents. Community participants will be involved in every aspect of the project, from story-telling and play-writing to mask-making and acting. The project culminates when ZTC and members of the community present the plays at the Cityfolk Festival on July 3rd & 4th. In this,

the first collaboration of CBC and ZTC, the Peoples' Puppet-Play hopes to strengthen Dayton's communities through the process of creative collaboration.

While adding its voice to external projects, Zoot has also been working to present its inaugural season to the public. ZTC's 2009-2010 season has offered a little something for everyone — adults and children alike. *Hanzel & Gretel* explored the darker side of human nature in an eerie retelling of the classic Grimm Fairy Tale. *A Rescued Christmas*, based on a children's book by L. Frank Baum, commented joyfully on morality while leading us deeper into an imaginative universe. *Moby Dick*, Zoot's upcoming adaptation of Melville's dramatic American epic, will play at the Schuster Center April 23rd through 25th. The show schedule is available at www.zoottheatrecompany.org on the company website.

Zoot would like to set a blaze in your creative spirit, bring you back to a time when new realities were just inside the corners of the mind. Come and join The Zoot Theatre Company around the campfire. All it takes is one little spark.



Photo by Craig Roberts

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