



# Lyric at the Birch

## Hit Musical Returns to San Diego

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**SAN DIEGO, CA — Lyric at the Birch opens its 33<sup>rd</sup> successful season at the Birch North Park Theatre with Jerry Herman's hit musical *Mame*.**

### Performance Dates and Times

September 23 (7:30 pm), 24 (7:30 pm), 25 (2:30 pm), 29 (7:30 pm), 30 (7:30 pm),  
October 1 (7:30 pm), 2 (2:30 pm), 2011

### About The Show and Cast

Lyric at the Birch opens its 33<sup>rd</sup> consecutive season with Jerry Herman's hit musical **Mame**, which has been absent from San Diego professional stages for more than twenty years. The 1960's hit about an eccentric aunt who raises her dead brother's son with the motto "Life is a banquet and most poor sons of bitches are starving to death" was based on a book by Patrick Dennis, the son in question. In the 1950's it became a Broadway and Hollywood hit as **Auntie Mame**, starring Rosalind Russell.

Lyric is producing this essential piece of American culture with its own stellar cast of veterans and debutantes. Leading the charge as Mame will be **Andrea Huber**, nominated for The Craig Noel Award for Best Actress for her portrayal of Desireé Armfeldt in Lyric's 2009 **A Little Night Music**. The role of Vera Charles, 'the first lady of the American musical theater,' will be played by **Leigh Scarritt**, Agnes Gooch will be played by **Eileen Bowman** and Beauregard Burnside will be played by company veteran **Scott Gregory**. Newcomers will include **Anthony Whitson-Martini** as Older Patrick and **Jonas McMullen** as younger Patrick.

Lyric Artistic Director J. Sherwood Montgomery said, "This is a story which takes place during the depression. We think it's an ideal story to be telling right now and we have a superlative cast to do it." **Montgomery** will direct the production. Hollywood designer **James Cuomo** will make his company debut as scenic designer. "We feel Jimmy's work will add a new depth to our productions" said company General Director **Leon Natker** who will conduct. **Shirley Johnstone** will serve as Choreographer, **Justin Smiley** as Lighting Designer and **Pam Stompoly-Ericson** will again design the costumes, hair and makeup

The tale of Patrick Dennis has a San Diego connection. After his success as a writer, Mr. Dennis spent his later years as a Gentleman's Gentleman. His last gig was serving Joan and Ray Kroc of San Diego.

**(MORE)**

## Lyric at the Birch presents *MAME* – 2

### Synopsis

#### Act I

Mame is a happy happening. She is well-to-do, lives in New York at the peak of the Twenties, and is surprised by a "wonderful present," an orphan nephew named Patrick. Now ten-year-old Patrick needs his aunt, and this is something new for Mame — to be needed. It changes her life. It brings her into sharp conflict with her best friend Vera Charles. She's a multi-martini grande dame of the legitimate theatre who can't stand children. The man Mame is about to marry is perfectly willing to take on the boy as a bonus, but Mame doesn't think she'll have time for marriage. "I'll be too busy being a mother!" The boy's nanny, Agnes Gooch, doesn't approve of those irrepressible things which go on in Mame's Beekman Place apartment, and yet she inevitably falls under her spell. Eye to eye, toe to toe, Mame battles Babcock, the Babbitt-ish banker who wants to make young Patrick the prisoner of the Establishment and put the chains of conformity around him. With the balloon burst of the Depression, it looks as if Babcock is going to have his way. Mame loses all her money, and she loses jobs as quickly as she finds them. (Mame's gift is giving, not working for hire!) In a brief adventure as a manicurist, she meets Beau, a wealthy scion of the South. He takes Mame to his plantation for the begrudging approval of his family. They are astounded at her exploits on horseback (so is she!). Beau proposes in the bouncing title song which sings the praises of Mame. There's only one problem as the curtain falls on the first act. Young Patrick, who has given her such joy and provided a purpose in her life, smiles bravely, but he's afraid he has lost his "*Best Girl*."

#### Act II

It's now the 30's and Vera stands by her "*Bosom Buddy*" when Mame returns to Beekman Place after Beau's sudden death. Patrick, now in college, and Mame's former suitor, Lindsay Woolsey, prompt Mame into writing her memoirs. Gooch has been primed in secretarial school to type up Mame's pearls of wisdom. However an experiment in a liberated life has a transforming influence on Patrick's nanny. The maturing Patrick seems to be slipping away from Mame's ideal of freedom. When he declares his engagement to a fatuous blonde "with the IQ of a dead flashlight battery," Mame is in despair. What did she do wrong? What would she do differently "*If He Walked into My Life Today?*" But the lady's resources are endless. Just as young Patrick rescued her from the shallow trap of the Twenties, she helps the boy to save himself from a life of Darien drabness and snobbery. Ingeniously, she foils the Establishment and life goes on, not with Auntie Mame, but with Grand Auntie Mame rescuing another youngster from the toils of conformity. (Synopsis courtesy of TAMS-WITMARK MUSICAL LIBRARY)

### Additional Production Information

Book by JEROME LAWRENCE and ROBERT E. LEE.

Music and Lyrics by JERRY HERMAN.

Based on the novel by Patrick Dennis and the play, AUNTIE MAME by Lawrence and Lee

### Purchasing Tickets

Single tickets are \$32, \$37, \$42, \$47, and \$52. Children 5-17 are half price. No children under 5 years old are admitted. Box Office: (619) 239-8836 or online at <http://tickets.lyricoperasandiego.org/>

For a performance photo and/or headshot of Ms. Huber visit  
[http://lyricoperasandiego.org/press\\_connection.htm](http://lyricoperasandiego.org/press_connection.htm)

(MORE)

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2891 University Ave. • San Diego, CA 92104 • Tel. (619) 231-5714 [www.lyricoperasandiego.org](http://www.lyricoperasandiego.org)

## Lyric at the Birch presents MAME – 3

### General Information

Disabled persons seating is available with at least 72 hours notice. Evening performances are at 7:30pm; matinees at 2:30pm. All programs and artists are subject to change without notice

### About Lyric at the Birch

Lyric celebrates 33 years of bringing accessible, affordable music theatre productions to San Diego. The company proudly performs musicals and operettas in English, presenting the finest musical talent available with full orchestra and chorus accompaniment at its home, the Birch North Park Theatre.

Lyric's Outreach Department presents invitational dress performances to students and social service organizations throughout San Diego.

For more information on the company, please call the Lyric office, (619) 231-5714. For tickets call the Box Office at (619) 239-8836.

### Additional Events in 2011-2012 Season

#### **[Good Bye, Good Luck and GET OUT!](#) • November 4 & 6, 2011**

A theatrical event of comic proportion honoring J. Sherwood Montgomery, who is retiring as Artistic Director at the end of the season.

#### **[Sinatra Forever](#) • November 11, 12, 13, 2011**

A tribute to the music of Frank Sinatra by Rick Michel and an orchestra of 12 (9 of which played with Frank Sinatra). Rick is one of Las Vegas' premier singers, a man of whom the show business bible *Variety* said: "He is the closest thing to Frank Sinatra we have ever heard."

#### **[The Klezmatics](#) • December 18, 2011**

2007 Grammy-Award winners, The Klezmatics are world-renowned superstars of the klezmer world. They have released six albums of wild, spiritual, provocative, reflective, and ecstatically danceable music.

#### **[Die Fledermaus](#) • February 10, 12, 16, 18, 19, 2012**

This is a delightful and effervescent operetta regarding mistaken identities, marital infidelities and fun abuses of power. Gift wrapped in a bow of wonderful melodies and lush orchestrations, this popular show is always a hit with both opera and musical theater buffs alike.

#### **[The Mikado](#) • March 30, April 1, 5, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 2012**

One of the most favorite works of Gilbert & Sullivan closes our season. The plot deals with confusing romances, identity cover-ups and local authorities who are less than qualified for their public office positions.

**[www.lyricoperasandiego.org](http://www.lyricoperasandiego.org)**

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