

## Fall Arts Preview: Theater

### THE CALL

Oct. 23-Nov. 15, *Dabama Theatre*, [dabama.org](http://dabama.org)

Addressing the racial issues that plague our society with humor and wit, *The Call* focuses on a white couple who decides to adopt a child from Africa. From hair care to global health concerns, the cross-cultural process is more difficult than either parent bargained for.

### GUYS ON ICE

Nov. 25-Dec. 20, *Actors' Summit Theater*, [actorsummit.org](http://actorsummit.org)

At its frozen core, this play is about guys ice fishing and talking about the Green Bay Packers, beer and ... ice fishing. On the slick surface, that may not sound profound, but it takes a dive into deep conversations. "It's a look at the everyday," says artistic director MaryJo Alexander.

### THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE

Dec. 3-19, *Weathervane Playhouse*, [weathervaneplayhouse.com](http://weathervaneplayhouse.com)

This one-act musical comedy turns up the inherent awkwardness of adolescence by using adult actors to play a cast of middle-schoolers. "As an adult looking back on middle school, you have a more humorous perspective," says artistic director Melanie Pepe. Come prepared to spell, as a few audience members will be asked to participate. // CHRIS MANNING

### ARTIST TO KNOW

# Sarah May

Guest director, Beck Center for the Arts

**STAGE PRESENCE** A director, performer and educator, May spent a decade in New York City before returning in 1984 as education director for what is now Great Lakes Theater. In 2012, she directed Larry Kramer's *The Normal Heart* at Ensemble Theatre, which won three Cleveland Critics Circle Awards. From Oct. 9 to Nov. 15, she brings Terrence McNally's *Mothers and Sons* to the Beck Center stage. **FEAR FACTORS**

May remembers the fear and misinformation in the early days of the AIDS epidemic. In *Mothers and Sons*, a woman who turned her back on a son dying of AIDS visits his former partner 20 years later to find closure and forgiveness. "How many parents turned their backs on dying sons during those confusing, terrible years?" says May. **THINK PIECES** May has built a reputation in town for staging socially relevant plays, including Rebecca Gilman's *Spinning into Butter*, which looks at structural racism and individual prejudice at the fictional



Belmont College. "People will feel something and talk about it for days, weeks, after they see a play that conceptualizes important social issues," she says. **STRONG ROOTS** May returned to Cleveland as a single mother in 1984. "I've always loved this city," she says. "Cleveland has so much to offer with prominent theaters and professional actors and crew." // RC