



Annenberg Center
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

PRESS RELEASE

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The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts presents
26th Philadelphia International Children's Festival

Tuesday, April 27 – Saturday, May 1, 2010

Main stage performance highlights include trains, puppets,
hip-hop dance acrobatics and African American spirituals

Power of positive thinking the overarching theme of this year's festival

Outdoor FUN ZONE features crafts, dancers, musicians and more
plus a special appearance by the Phillie Phanatic

(Philadelphia, April 21, 2010) — Known for its perfect blend of hands-on performing arts experiences and outright fun, the **Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts presents the 26th Annual Philadelphia International Children's Festival, Tuesday, April 27 – Saturday, May 1, 2010.** This year, families can enjoy a variety of performances perfect for the young (and young at heart) including a live-action, musical version of *The Little Engine That Could*, a comical, puppet version of *The Man Who Planted Trees*, the explosive hip-hop and break-dance moves of **STREET BEAT** and a musical, sing-along journey through African American history with **Linda Tillery & The Cultural Heritage Choir**. In addition, families can participate in a variety of fun and interactive activities such as crafts, face painting, jugglers and more in the **Children's Festival FUN ZONE** on the Annenberg Center Outdoor Plaza. **Tickets are only \$10!** For more information about programming or ticket prices, please visit the event website at AnnenbergCenter.org/tickets/childfest.php.

Founded in 1985 by Catherine Marshall, the **Philadelphia International Children's Festival** was the first of its kind in the country, aiming to provide Philadelphia area families with an easy and

– more –

affordable way to experience the artistry of international performance and visual arts. Attracting more than 15,000 children and their families each year, the eagerly anticipated springtime tradition also aims to build the arts and culture audiences of the future.

This year's Children's Festival encompasses five days filled with inexpensive and creative indoor live performances and movies (no single performance exceeds **\$10**), as well as **FREE** interactive outdoor arts, crafts and activities for children (and parents!) of all ages. Families can save by purchasing a **Children's Festival Fun Pass** and enjoy three main stage shows, access to the Children's Festival Fun Zone and a lunch for only **\$25!**

2010 International Children's Festival Main Stage Performances

Omaha Theater Company presents *The Little Engine That Could*

Watty Piper's famous tale of the power of positive thinking has been adapted for children's theater by the Omaha Theater Company, one of the largest professional children theater companies in the nation. The company's interactive production features giant trains, life-sized toys including the Clown, the Teddy Bear, the Toy Monkey, the Red Dress Doll and the Blue Dress Doll, and many delightful songs. During the performance, the audience plays a major role in helping the Little Engine make it over the mountain as they chant the famous phrase, "I think I can, I think I can!" "Children will light up as they become a part of the optimistic magic unfolding on stage, while adults will reminisce about the days when they, too, were told the story of the Little Engine and be inspired all over again," said Omaha Theater Artistic Director James Larson. *Recommended for ages 4 and up.*

STREET BEAT

It's *STOMP* meets Blue Man Group when the LA-based ensemble STREET BEAT delivers an explosion of urban percussion that's accented by high-energy dance acrobatics and staged within a landscape of everyday-objects-turned-instruments, smattered graffiti, and bursts of theatrical lighting. This 10-member ensemble of drummers, musicians, and dancers led by Danish-born founder Ben Hansen perform what critics have called "... an urbanized journey through percussion," which brings the raw rhythmic originality of many popular street-style performances together in a dynamic and thrilling stage production." *Recommended for ages 8 and up.*

Puppet State Theatre Company of Scotland presents *The Man Who Planted Trees*

Jean Giono's environmental fable *The Man Who Planted Trees* has been transformed into a magical, comical and multi-sensory puppetry adaptation by the award-winning Puppet State Theatre Company of Scotland. *The Man Who Planted Trees* that tells the inspiring story of a French shepherd who sets out with his dog to plant a forest, acorn by acorn, transforming a barren landscape into a thriving oasis. Both a touching tale and a hilarious puppet show, *The Man Who Planted Trees*

reminds us that it only takes the determination of one person to make a positive change in the world.

Recommended for ages 7 and up.

Linda Tillery and the Cultural Heritage Choir

Join Linda Tillery & The Cultural Heritage Choir and embark on an illuminating journey of African American history, perfect for the whole family. Sing along to spirituals, work songs, and field shouts as this energetic group traces the music inspired by the difficult journey from slavery to freedom. Learn to dance the Ranky Tanky and try your hand at authentic African percussion instruments in this interactive foot-stomping, hand-clapping performance! *Recommend for ages 5 and up.*

Children's Festival FUN ZONE

Free for all ticket holders, the **Children's Festival FUN ZONE** located on the Annenberg Center's Outdoor Plaza features a host of engaging and hands-on activities for the whole family including crafts, face painting, jugglers, musicians and more. This year, the **Phillie Phanatic** makes a special appearance on **Saturday, May 1 at 12:00 PM**. Tickets are also available for the FUN ZONE for **\$10 per family. Highlights include:**

Joseph Tayoun, master percussionist, and special guests

Join Lebanese-American master percussionist Joseph Tayoun and friends as he shares the tradition and music of Middle Eastern rhythms and techniques.

Give and Take Jugglers

People of all ages will marvel at the skills of these jugglers as they get the audience involved with amazing tricks and comedy. Performers combine antique calliope, traditions from vaudeville, circus arts, theater, and live music to create a lively and wholesome show that feels fresh and contemporary

Hoop-La! (Funtown Productions)

This is hula hooping like you've never seen! Join the fun as impressive hula hoop performers show off their tricks and learn a few of your own.

CAPA Caravan Theater

This interactive company uses creative dramatics and multi-cultural storytelling to entertain and to encourage students to remember to cooperate and respect everyone in our school communities.

Alex and the Kaleidoscope Band

Alex Mitnick performs with a full band including drums, percussion, bass, singing and leading dances for the children. Concerts are lively and engaging and include musical influences from Africa and South America and fun sing-a-longs; great for all ages and parents.

Philadelphia School of Circus Arts

Ever dreamed of joining the circus? See if you have what it takes with demonstrations and workshops complete with juggling, plate-spinning, tumbling, unicycles and more, from the accomplished artists of the Philadelphia School of Circus Arts.

ASCAB Capoeira

Watch as performers appear to defy gravity as they jump, flip, spin and cartwheel through the air in a live performance of the unique Brazilian art form, Capoeira, which infuses dance, music, gymnastics, self-defense and the Portuguese language.

Children's Film Festival

New this year, the Festival will also feature a special **Children's Film Festival on Saturday, May 1**. The Film Festival is presented in partnership with the Québec Government Office in New York. An official selection of the Tribeca Film Festival, **The Blue Butterfly by Lea Pool and starring Academy Award® winner William Hurt**, tells the story of a 10-year-old boy whose dream is to catch the most beautiful butterfly on Earth, the mythic and elusive Blue Morpho. This is "no ordinary film" says the *Montreal Gazette*. **White Tuft: The Little Beaver** is an adventure film starring a mischievous young beaver with an odd little clump of white fur on his head. Canadian director Philippe Calderon cast real animals in this family-friendly saga that follows the little beaver as his life gets turned upside down when a flood rushes in and destroys his family's home. Screening of **The Blue Butterfly** will take place in Annenberg Center's **Bruce Montgomery Theatre at 1:00 PM**. **White Tuft** will be played in the Montgomery Theatre **at 3:00 PM**. **Admission is FREE for all Children's Festival ticket holders.**

The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

The University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts has been the region's leading multi-disciplinary performance venue for Theatre, Dance, Jazz, World Music, New Music and children's programming since its inception in 1971. The Annenberg Center's curatorial vision emphasizes four primary values: artistic integrity, cultural diversity, curatorial balance and a willingness to take risks. By presenting world renowned and cutting edge artists and companies who express adventuresome perspectives on contemporary issues, timeless ideas and diverse cultures, the

Annenberg Center promotes critical thinking and dialogue among its audiences, creating a uniquely rewarding arts experience.

The Annenberg Center has achieved national recognition for its outstanding Dance Celebration series (presented in partnership with Philadelphia's Dance Affiliates), touring theatre series, and for its superior offerings for children, including both its Student Discovery Series and the acclaimed 25-year-old Philadelphia International Children's Festival, the oldest festival of its kind in the United States. Through a generous grant from the Wallace Foundation, the Annenberg Center also showcases its commitment to local artists each year through its By Local series.

Throughout its history, the Annenberg Center has presented innovative and critically-acclaimed theatre productions with some of the biggest stars of stage and screen including Liv Ullmann and Sam Waterston in *A Doll's House*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* with Glenn Close, Jessica Tandy in Beckett's *Not I*, and Tennessee Williams' *Sweet Bird of Youth* with Irene Worth and Christopher Walken of which Ms. Worth won a Tony® for her performance when the show moved to Broadway. University of Pennsylvania alumnus and noteworthy Broadway producer and director Harold Prince and Joseph Papp staged many of their plays at the Annenberg Center before taking them to Broadway. As part of the Dance Celebration series, a broad range of world-class and emerging dancers and companies have appeared at the Annenberg Center each season including the Pilobolus Dance Theatre, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, MOMIX, Parsons Dance Company, Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham, Paul Taylor and Alvin Ailey.

THE LITTLE ENGINE THAT COULD
OMAHA THEATER COMPANY

Tuesday, April 27 at 10:00 AM
Wednesday, April 28 at 12:00 PM
Thursday, April 29 at 10:00 AM
Friday, April 30 at 12:00 PM
Saturday, May 1 at 11:00 AM
Saturday, May 1 at 1:00 PM

Zellerbach Theatre at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

Your favorite childhood story comes to life! Watty Piper's beloved tale of the power of positive thinking is now a live action interactive musical. Several trains refuse to pull a heavy load of toys over the mountain. Only the Little Engine is willing to try. To do it, he will need your help to overcome seemingly impossible odds! Colorful trains and life-sized toys come alive on stage in this inspirational and all-around entertaining production by one of the largest professional children's theater companies in the nation!

Tickets: \$10. For more information please call 215.898.3900 or visit www.AnnenbergCenter.org.

STREET BEAT

Tuesday, April 27 at 12:00 PM
Wednesday, April 28 at 10:00 AM
Thursday, April 29 at 12:00 PM
Friday, April 30 at 10:00 AM
Saturday, May 1 at 3:00 PM
Saturday, May 1 at 5:00 PM

Zellerbach Theatre at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

It's *STOMP* meets Blue Man Group when this L.A. based ensemble of drummers, musicians and dancers combine urban rhythms, hip-hop moves and break-dance acrobatics into an explosive high energy performance!

Tickets: \$10. For more information please call 215.898.3900 or visit www.AnnenbergCenter.org.

THE MAN WHO PLANTED TREES
PUPPET STATE THEATRE COMPANY OF SCOTLAND

Tuesday, April 27 at 10:00 AM
Wednesday, April 28 at 12:00 PM
Thursday, April 29 at 10:00 AM
Friday, April 30 at 12:00 PM
Saturday, May 1 at 12:30 PM
Saturday, May 1 at 2:30 PM

Harold Prince Theatre at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

This magical, comical and multi-sensory puppetry adaptation of Jean Giono's environmental fable tells the inspiring story of a French shepherd who sets out with his dog to plant a forest, acorn by acorn, transforming a barren landscape into a thriving oasis. Both a touching tale and a hilarious puppet show, *The Man Who Planted Trees* reminds us that it only takes the determination of one person to make a positive change in the world.

Tickets: \$10. For more information please call 215.898.3900 or visit www.AnnenbergCenter.org.

LINDA TILLERY & THE CULTURAL HERITAGE CHOIR

Tuesday, April 27 at 12:00 PM

Wednesday, April 28 at 10:00 AM

Thursday, April 29 at 12:00 PM

Friday, April 30 at 10:00 AM

Saturday, May 1 at 4:30 PM

Harold Prince Theatre at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

Join Linda Tillery & The Cultural Heritage Choir and embark on an illuminating journey of African American history, perfect for the whole family. Sing along to spirituals, work songs, and field shouts as this energetic group traces the music inspired by the difficult journey from slavery to freedom. Learn to dance the Ranky Tanky and try your hand at authentic African percussion instruments in this interactive foot-stomping, hand-clapping performance!

Tickets: \$10. For more information please call 215.898.3900 or visit www.AnnenbergCenter.org.

For further press information or to set up interviews, please contact:

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