



ANNENBERG CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts Presents Philadelphia International Children's Festival, April 30 – May 4

30th birthday celebration of acclaimed international children's theatre, music, puppetry and hands-on fun offers affordable cultural experiences for young and young at heart; tickets on sale now

PHILADELPHIA — Showcasing outstanding children's theatre, puppetry and live music from around the world, the **Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts** celebrates the 30th birthday of its **Philadelphia International Children's Festival** this spring. **From April 30 through May 4**, children and families are invited to take part in one of the region's most magical festivals — from lively marionettes and electroluminescent ducklings to face-painting and juggling in the FUN ZONE, the Children's Festival is perfect for young kids and the young at heart.

In an exciting collaboration with Philadelphia-based nonprofit **PAPAYA** (PA Performing Arts for Young Audiences), Australia's Patch Theatre Company brings the quirky, fanciful ***Me and My Shadow***, a visual poem about a girl who finds a way to be friends with her shadow. Using paper, light, water, sound and words, *Me and My Shadow* seeks to explore the frustrations and joys of true friendship. Another story of companionship, ***The Snail and the Whale*** follows a tiny snail who hitches a ride on the tail of a humpback whale. Performed by London's Tall Stories children's theatre company, *The Snail and the Whale* was a hit at the Edinburgh Fringe and *The Independent* called the production "delightful, funny and imaginative."

Other performances include Lightwire Theater's electroluminescent puppetry in ***The Ugly Duckling and The Tortoise & the Hare***; marionettes capturing the beauty of everyday life in The Cashore Marionettes' ***Simple Gifts***; the one-man silent comedy ***Snowflake*** by Gale LaJoy; and an exploration of hip-hop and classical music in ***We Shall Not Be Moved: the Hip H'opera Project***, locally produced by Opera Philadelphia and Art Sanctuary. (*Full schedule of events follows below.*)

Featuring a host of engaging, hands-on activities for the whole family, all ticket holders are invited to visit the **Children's Festival FUN ZONE**, open at 9 AM on weekdays and 10 AM on weekends. Located on the Annenberg Center's Outdoor Plaza, the FUN ZONE will offer arts and crafts, face painting and a variety of performances, from juggling to live music and more. The FUN ZONE is free to all ticket holders.

Founded by University of Pennsylvania alumna Catherine Marshall, the Philadelphia International Children's Festival was the first of its kind in the country, providing Philadelphia-area families with an easy and 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 aims to build the arts and culture audiences of the future.

Individual performance tickets cost \$10 for weekdays and \$12 for weekends and include admission to the FUN ZONE; an Opening Night Special (\$5) is available for April 30 and includes a pre-show party with light fare (5:30 PM) and performance of *Me and My Shadow* (6:30 PM).

Also available: special group rates; a \$30 Weekend Fun Pass good for three separate performances on Saturday, May 3 and Sunday, May 4; and \$5 PNC rush tickets available to West Philadelphia residents for weekend shows. For more information, call 215.898.3900 or visit annenbergcenter.org. (***Ticketing details follow below.***)

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FUN ZONE (recommended for all ages)

April 30–May 4, Opening at 9 AM on weekdays and 10 AM weekends

Visit the Children's Festival FUN ZONE on the Annenberg Center's Outdoor Plaza and enjoy a host of engaging and hands-on activities for the whole family. Perfect for families and school groups, the FUN ZONE offers face painting and crafts as well as a full schedule of performances. The FUN ZONE is free for all ticket holders.

Simple Gifts (recommended for ages 8+)

Wednesday, April 30, 9:45 AM

Thursday, May 1, 9:45 AM

Friday, May 2, 9:45 AM

Saturday, May 3, 12 PM and 2 PM

Sunday, May 4, 1 PM and 3 PM

With virtuoso manipulation, beautiful music and theatrical magic, the original vignettes presented in *Simple Gifts* provide an entertaining and humorous vision of humanity. The internationally acclaimed **Cashore Marionettes** of Colmar, PA, redefine the art of puppetry through this series of touching portrayals and

poignant scenes from everyday life set to classical music by Vivaldi, Strauss, Beethoven, Copland and more. Exploring a range of emotions with characters and actions that are amazingly convincing, the marionettes create a compelling illusion that captures the beauty of day-to-day life.

Snowflake (recommended for all ages)

Wednesday, April 30, 9:45 AM

Friday, May 2, 9:45 AM

Saturday, May 3, 2 PM and 4 PM

Sunday, May 4, 1 PM and 3 PM

With a hilarious blend of comic genius, slapstick, feats of balance and kind moments, **Gale LaJoye's** *Snowflake* spins a tale of a simple soul who gains pleasure from the simplest of objects. This one-man silent comedy out of Marquette, MI, follows a street character who lives alone in a vacant lot and entertains himself by recycling found objects into comic treasures: a crate becomes a ski hill, discarded skis become toe shoes for a farcical ballet and packing bubbles, a bed frame and a saw become unlikely musical instruments. Without a single word, LaJoye's mastery of timing, nuance and subtle style speaks volumes about humanity, innocence and the need for others.

Me and My Shadow (recommended for all ages)

Wednesday, April 30, 10 AM and 6:30 PM

Thursday, May 1, 10 AM

Friday, May 2, 12 PM

Saturday, May 3, 10 AM and 4 PM

Sunday, May 4, 12 PM and 3 PM

Children love to play with shadows; they are mysterious and magical and can do amazing things. But making friends with your shadow can be a tricky business. There are things to sort out, negotiations to be made, frustrations to overcome, problems to solve, adventures to be had and laughter to be shared. From Adelaide, Australia-based **Patch Theatre Company**, *Me and My Shadow* depicts the fanciful escapades of a girl who finds a way to be friends with her shadow. Presented in the form of a visual poem, the show uses the languages of paper, light, shadow, color, water, music, sound and words. With fantastical imagery, quirky physical feats and an intriguing score, *Me and My Shadow* seeks to ignite the imagination in a poetic experience that explores the frustrations and joys of friendship. *Me and My Shadow* is co-presented by the Philadelphia-based nonprofit **PAPAYA** (PA Performing Arts for Young Audiences).

The Ugly Duckling and The Tortoise & the Hare (recommended for ages 5-8)

Wednesday, April 30, 12 PM

Thursday, May 1, 12 PM

Saturday, May 3, 12 PM and 2 PM

Technology, sculpture, dance and theatre converge in the New Orleans-based **Lightwire Theater's** signature electroluminescent puppetry to present two classic stories. Hans Christian Andersen's "The Ugly Duckling" has helped generations understand one of humanity's universal struggles. Aesop's fable "The Tortoise and the Hare," now more than 2,500 years old, drives home the time-tested adage that slow and steady wins the race. As seen on *American's Got Talent*, Lightwire Theater, with its dazzling visuals, poignant choreography and creative use of music ranging from classical to jazz to pop, literally brings these beloved tales into a new and brilliant light.

The Snail and the Whale (recommended for ages 4-9)

Thursday, May 1, 9:45 AM

Friday, May 2, 11:45 AM

Saturday, May 3, 10 AM and 12 PM

A tiny snail longs to see the world, so she hitches a ride on the tail of a humpback whale. But, when the whale gets beached, how will the snail save him? Join the tiny snail for an amazing journey, as seen through the eyes of an adventurous young girl and her seafaring father. Performed by London-based children's theatre company **Tall Stories** and previously seen at Edinburgh Fringe, this "delightful, funny and imaginative" (*The Independent*) adaptation of *The Snail and the Whale* promises captivating storytelling, live music and lots of laughs.

We Shall Not Be Moved: the Hip H'Opera Project (recommended for ages 12+)

Friday, May 2, 10 AM

Join spoken-word artist **Marc Bamuthi Joseph** and composer **Daniel Bernard Roumain** for an exploration of the marriage of hip-hop and classical music. Together with Philadelphia high school students, these artists explore the complexity of living in an urban setting and celebrating it through the power of the arts. This presentation by **Opera Philadelphia** and **Art Sanctuary** will include a look at Roumain and Joseph's new opera, *We Shall Not Be Moved*.

TICKETS

To order tickets, please visit annenbergceneter.org or call the Box Office at 215.898.3900.

INDIVIDUAL TICKETS

Weekday performance tickets are \$10 and weekend performance tickets are \$12. All tickets include access to the Children's Festival FUN ZONE.

OPENING NIGHT SPECIAL

An Opening Night Special (\$5) is available for April 30 and includes a pre-show party with light fare (5:30 PM) and performance of *Me and My Shadow* (6:30 PM).

PNC WEST PHILLY RUSH TICKETS

West Philly residents can purchase \$5 PNC rush tickets for weekend performances. Valid for up to two tickets per resident and available starting two hours before each performance begins. Proof of residency in one of the following zip codes must be presented: 19104, 19131, 19139, 19142, 19143, 19145, 19151 or 19153.

SCHOOL GROUPS

For more information and special ticket rates for school groups, please contact Edward M. Epstein at 215.746.7997 or edwardme@ac.upenn.edu. Study guide materials available upon request.

\$30 WEEKEND FUN PASS

The more you buy, the more you save! Join the fun with the Children's Festival Fun Pass and make a whole day of it on Saturday, May 3 or Sunday, May 4! Enjoy three shows, access to the Children's Festival FUN ZONE and a free lunch for only \$30. (Offer valid for three different performances, not three tickets to the same performance. Valid on weekends only. Not retroactive; other restrictions may apply.)

ABOUT 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 that 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 30-year Philadelphia International Children's Festival, the oldest festival of its kind in the United States.

The 2014 Philadelphia International Children's Festival is made possible in part by the support of the following: the Philadelphia Phillies, the Lomax Foundation, the Connelly Foundations, Aramark and the William Penn Foundation.

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To request interviews, photos and more information, please contact:
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