

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW IDENTITY OF SEATTLE INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL UNVEILED "GIANT MAGNET - GLOBAL ATTRACTIONS PLAYING LOCALLY"

Seattle, WA – Today audience members, board, volunteers and staff of the Seattle International Children's Festival celebrated the beginning of the next chapter in the history of a beloved arts institution. "Giant Magnet" is the new name for the organization dedicated to celebrating world cultures through the performing arts for children and adventurous people of all ages. Along with the name change comes a new positioning statement, "Global Attractions Playing Locally," and a lively new logo.

"Simply put, the original name is limiting, long and wrong," said Executive Director Andrea Wagner. "No matter how the words are arranged, the name doesn't differentiate the organization from all the other "Seattles", the other "Children's" or other "Festivals". It doesn't exactly conjure images of world-class artistic programs, nor does it imply the rich educational resources and in-school residency programs, all of which are its hallmark. It neither resembles nor resonates with the audience it serves, and it doesn't portray its wide geographic reach."

Added Giant Magnet Board President Teresa Gallo, "Armed with a multi-year capacity building grant from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, two years ago the Board and staff set off on a quest to change it. Along the way we encountered many friends and had many advances and retreats. A few months ago, just when we thought we were at a dead end, naming and branding wizard Peter Stocker of Story Trading Company joined us. Peter waved his magic wand, pro bono, several times and the hard working, mission-driven, but dowdy-looking organization we all know and love has a new identity."

Seattle Center Director Robert Nellams said, "I am pleased and proud to officially usher in this new chapter. SICF occupies an important and respected place in the Seattle Center family as the first campus celebration of the festival season and an outstanding community resource year-round. The new name will support the organization's efforts to draw in the diverse audiences it serves."

The official unveiling featured handmade kites designed by the Drachen Foundation and a special theremin fanfare, composed by Seattle percussionist and multi-instrumentalist extraordinaire Paul Hansen, and played by a theremin ensemble of illustrious local artists.

Giant Magnet 2009 will take place May 12-16 at Seattle Center and May 17 & 18 at the Broadway Center for the Performing Arts in Tacoma. This year Giant Magnet will deliver the usual high quality professional and international artists that

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audiences have come to expect—and a few *unusual* happenings sure to delight and surprise. The annual performing arts festival for all ages presents a lineup of circus-theatre, music, puppetry, dance and multi-disciplinary shows designed to educate and entertain P-20 school groups, their teachers, families and adults alike. 2009 performers represent Belgium, Zimbabwe, India, Canada, Germany, Croatia, American First Nations, Japan, Mexico, and the USA.

The Line-Up. **Belgium:** Les Argonautes in *Pas Perdus*; **USA:** The Gentlemen of the Carolina Chocolate Drops and Friends; **India:** Sidi Goma-The Black Sufis of Gujarat; **Zimbabwe:** Thomas Mapfumo and The Blacks Unlimited; **Canada:** Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia in *The Very Hungry Caterpillar and Other Eric Carle Favourites*; **Japan:** Kuniko Yamamoto; **Germany:** Hacki and Company; **Belgium:** Ontroerend Goed in *The Smile Off Your Face*. **The Opening Night International Variety Show** will play Tuesday night, May 12 at the Bagley Wright Theatre.

World Samplers, featuring three companies in one show, include festival headliners and local companies including Apna Bhangra Crew, Vela Luka Croatian Dance Ensemble, salsa band Cambalache, Tulalip rapper Komplex Kai, Lelavision and classical Indian dancer Subhashini Santhanam.

Ten Years in Tacoma. The Festival will celebrate its tenth anniversary of serving South Sound audiences at the Broadway Center for the Performing Arts. Les Argonautes, Mermaid Theatre and Sidi Goma will play school performance in the Pantages Theatre and Theatre on the Square will house Hacki and Company, Kuniko Yamamoto and the Gentlemen of the Carolina Chocolate Drops and Friends for school performances. Those three companies will also be featured in a special **10th Anniversary variety show** on Sunday night, May 17.

School and Group Tickets. Tickets are now on sale for schools, homeschoolers and groups only. Tickets are \$9 per show/\$4.50 subsidized rate; World Samplers are \$7.00/\$3.50. There are deep discounts for multiple show packages. To reserve group tickets go to www.giantmagnet.org or call the Teacher's Hotline at 206-684-7336.

Public tickets. Tickets go on sale April 1, 2009 at www.giantmagnet.org or by phone, 1-800-838-3006. Giant Magnet is pleased to partner with Brown Paper Tickets this year for ticketing services.

More about Giant Magnet. Giant Magnet also offers a variety of free hands-on learning activities and opportunities for student groups to perform; special events and year-round professional development for educators; plus international arts education programs at John Stanford International School and Hamilton International Middle School. The international arts education program expanded this year to include Seattle Public School's newest international school, Beacon Hill Elementary; and next year will move to SPS's two newest designated magnet programs at Denny Middle and Concord Elementary both in West Seattle. For more information please contact Giant Magnet through the website:www.giantmagnet.org; by phone at 206-684-7338; or email education@giantmagnet.org.

Major sponsors of Giant Magnet include Seattle Center, The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, SAFECO Insurance Foundation, Washington State Arts Commission, ArtsFund and Boeing.

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Media Only.

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