



**STEPPINGSTONE
THEATRE**
For Youth Development

55 Victoria Street North, Saint Paul 55104

For immediate release

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SteppingStone Theatre 2009-2010 Season ***Magic Happens Here!***

Box Office: (651) 225-9265, www.steppingstonetheatre.org

Tickets: \$11 adults; \$9 children ages 2–17 and seniors
(\$12/\$10 for *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*)

St. Paul, MN — SteppingStone Theatre for Youth Development is pleased to announce its 2009-2010 Season. Collaborations with two nationally-renowned companies, four world premieres, and our 18th production of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever!* SteppingStone Theatre's 22nd season promises to be filled with magic and wonder for all ages!

The season opens in October with *Hanuman & The Girl Prince*, an enchanting new Bollywood-style musical by acclaimed local playwright Aditi Brennan Kapil. February brings a second world-premiere *Henry's Freedom Box*—a moving story from the Underground Railroad by Christina Ham, another award-winning writer.

There's magic in partnerships with nationally-recognized artists and organizations. In March there will be a very exciting collaboration with **Stuart Pimsler Dance & Theater** on *My Grandmother's Tsochkes: Tales of a Gambling Grandma*, a new show that uses dance and movement to tell a story of immigration and family. And in May, we've got our fourth world premiere of the season *The Magic Pot: Three Tales from China*, commissioned in partnership with New York City's **TADA! Youth Theater**. And don't forget the magic transformations in two perennial favorites back for return engagements—*The Best Christmas Pageant Ever!* and *The Stinky Cheese Man*. It's a season full of magic, music, excitement and great variety.

Richard Hitchler, SteppingStone Theatre's Artistic Director, says that the theatre is holding steady with presenting its new season despite the current economic situation. Hitchler states, "We believe so strongly in our mission that we are continuing to do what we do well—serve the youth of our community. It's even more important during these trying economic times—we want to serve our kids now. Kids need stability and creative learning environments now more than ever. We want to bring the charisma of live performances back into kids' lives, creating a place where magic happens every day."

SteppingStone Theatre remains committed to offering the best in theatre performances, with fun, affordable, fully-staged shows that are appropriate for the entire family – all ages, from the youngest children to seniors.

SteppingStone Theatre 2009-2010 Season

World Premiere

Hanuman & The Girl Prince

By Aditi Brennan Kapil, music by Gary Rue

Directed by Warren C. Bowles with choreography by Rita Mustaphi

October 23 - November 8, 2009

In this zany Bollywood-style comedy of mistaken identities, intrigue, and great heroism, an Indian princess—disguised as a prince—finds love at last with the help of Hanuman, the mischievous Monkey King. A fantastical new musical play in verse, loosely based on an episode in the Indian epic, *The Mahabharata*. The imaginative second play in SteppingStone Theatre's *Hanuman Trilogy*!

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever!

by Barbara Robinson

December 4-22, 2009

St. Paul's longest-running Christmas tradition! In this perennial favorite, The Herdmans, "...the worst kids in the whole history of the world," invade the Christmas pageant and everyone braces for complete disaster. When chaos erupts and the firemen arrive, even Reverend Hopkins is ready to cancel Christmas. But in this classic play, the Herdmans rise to the occasion, defy expectations, and make this year's show The Best Christmas Pageant Ever!

World Premiere

Henry's Freedom Box

By Christina Ham, with music by David Simmons

February 5-27, 2010

Celebrate Black History Month with this exciting show inspired by the life of Henry Box Brown. This world premiere play follows the story of a slave's courageous quest for freedom. Under the grueling conditions of a Richmond tobacco factory, everyone Henry cares about is taken away from him. Tired of being powerless, he devises an ingenious way to escape to Philadelphia, where he can live a life where everyone can be free. Inspired by actual events on the Underground Railroad, *Henry's Freedom Box* is a story of perseverance and courage.

World Premiere

My Grandmother's Tsootchkes: Tales of A Gambling Grandma

by Stuart Pimsler. Produced in collaboration with Stuart Pimsler Dance & Theater

March 12–28, 2010

In this warm and intimate story, a young girl learns all about her Russian Jewish grandmother through the trinkets Grandma had collected throughout her life. Each one of those tsootchkes—a bag of pennies, a box of chess pieces, an old black shoe, and a glass ring—magically transport the girl into adventurous stories of her grandma's flight from Russia to America. These stories of traditions that sustain families from generation to generation are told primarily through energetic dance and movement.

World Premiere

The Magic Pot: Three Tales from China

Script, music & lyrics by Dane Stauffer

Commissioned and produced in collaboration with New York City's TADA! Youth Theatre

May 14–29, 2010

May Ling, a young Chinese girl, finds herself in the middle of ancient fables about emperors, magicians and fabulous riches, that teach her about life, honesty, and true happiness, and pave the way for her own

extraordinary adventure. A brand-new play by the author of *Stone Soup Feeds the World* and *Tasty Baby Belly Buttons*, *The Magic Pot* uses dance, music, storytelling and theatrical magic to tell three Chinese tales with a new twist.

The Stinky Cheese Man

by Kent Stephens and music by Gary Rue. Based on the popular book by John Scieszka.

July 9–August 1, 2010

“Run, run, run, as fast as you can! You can’t catch me, I’m the Stinky Cheese Man!” A classic offbeat fairy tale full of frenzied fun. When a little old man and a little old woman want a child, they make one—Out of Cheese! Add olives for eyes and a strip of bacon for a mouth, and bake for an hour and you get a stinky friend for life. As fun for adults as it is for children, this perennial SteppingStone favorite is loaded with laughs.

Performance Information:

For complete dates and times, see www.steppingstonetheatre.org or contact SteppingStone Theatre. All performances are in SteppingStone Theatre’s new home, a beautifully renovated 100-year-old architectural gem located at 55 Victoria Street North, one block north of Summit Avenue in the Historic Hill District of St. Paul.

Performances are appropriate for all ages. SteppingStone Theatre is disability-accessible, and has regularly-scheduled ASL & Audio Described performances. Interpreters can be scheduled for other performances at no additional cost upon request. For more information, call 651-225-9265.

Tickets are \$11 for adults and \$9 for seniors and children 2–17, except for “*The Best Christmas Pageant Ever!*” Ticket prices for “Pageant” are \$12 for adults and \$10 for seniors and children 2-17. Performance times and tickets are available at (651) 225-9265 or www.steppingstonetheatre.org.

SteppingStone Theatre produces high quality, affordable family entertainment, created by professional artists and performed by and for youth. Serving nearly 70,000 youth, families, and educators from diverse ethnic, social and economic backgrounds each year, SteppingStone has become a premier destination for interactive, youth-centered theatre.