



STEPPINGSTONE THEATRE

For Youth Development

55 Victoria Street North, St. Paul 55104

For immediate release

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Images available.

World Premiere

Henry's Freedom Box *by Christina Ham, 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 young 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.

Adapted by award-winning local playwright Christina Ham from the Caldecott Award winning book, "Henry's Freedom Box" by Ellen Levine, this exciting and stirring production is based on a true story of a young man's quest for freedom. The play's director is SteppingStone Theatre's Artistic Director, Richard Hitchler, who says, "Henry's life-long persistence and resolve both amazed me and inspired me. It is a story that needs to be told and re-told. I am so very excited to bring his story to the stage in this thrilling adaptation. Christina and David have done a brilliant job of capturing the spirit of Henry "Box" Brown."

Playwright Christina Ham was thrilled to be commissioned to create this play. She says, "**Henry's Freedom Box** is an inspiring story for both kids and adults as it addresses the cost that one was willing to pay for freedom. In an age where we take freedom for granted it's a wonderful reminder.

"It's exciting to work once again with SteppingStone, this time on **Henry's Freedom Box**. It's a joy to watch the kids navigate the terrain of this play because it really pushes the kids in terms of topic, using their talents, and working together in a team atmosphere. Never willing to disappoint themselves or each other...they rise to the occasion.

"Working with Richard Hitchler as a director on this piece you're aware that your work is in good hands and he knows how to get the kids to bring to life the words you've put on the page—which is a gift. This level of collaboration pushes me as the writer to deliver something that is fresh and a joy for the kids to work on."

The production is punctuated by evocative spiritual music typical of the era, written and adapted by David Simmons. Christina Ham expressed it best when she said, "...the music by David Simmons allows the heart of this piece to pump and gives the kids something they can sink their teeth into!"

The music is enhanced by Music Director Patty Lacy, a long-time member of *Sounds of Blackness*, and by Choreography from Patricia Brown, who is a visiting instructor at Macalester College in St. Paul.

This action-filled tale which illustrates the life of slaves in the late 1800's, is historically serious enough to appeal to adults, while the young actors' performances bring the themes alive for children. The production touches on the life of slaves in United States, the Abolitionist Movement, and the Underground Railroad in a way that is appropriate for young and old alike.

SteppingStone's productions are professionally created and produced, with talents drawn from the best in the Twin Cities and throughout the U.S. The young actors are rigorously trained, but remain fresh and vibrant, bringing their joy and sense of fun to all SteppingStone's productions. Enjoyed by all ages, adults as well as children, SteppingStone's productions are affordable, high-quality entertainment.

Performance Information:

All performances are in Henry's Freedom Box in SteppingStone's new theatre, 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.

Henry's Freedom Box is appropriate for all ages. SteppingStone Theatre is fully-accessible to persons with disabilities, 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.

Ticket Prices:

Adults: \$11.00

Children & Seniors: \$9.00

Groups 20+: \$7.00 (scholarships available)

Purchase your tickets in advance online and pay just \$7.00 per ticket

(buy before 8:00pm Thursday evenings for weekend shows)

Performance times and tickets are available at (651) 225-9265 or www.steppingstonetheatre.org.

SteppingStone Theatre is Saint Paul's professional theatre for young audiences, serving tens of thousands of diverse youth, families and educators each year. The theatre has become a premier destination for affordable theatre education and entertainment, and has received numerous local and national awards including the Aurand C. Harris Children's Theatre Award, Sally Ordway Irvine Award for Education, and the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Award.

A theatre serving nearly 70,000 youth, families, and educators from diverse ethnic, social and economic backgrounds each year itself, SteppingStone has become a premier destination for interactive, youth-centered theatre.

Dates & Times

Friday, Feb. 5 – 7 pm

Saturday, Feb. 6 – 3 pm

Sunday, Feb. 7 – 3 pm
Tuesday, Feb. 9 – 10 am & noon
Wednesday, Feb. 10 – 10 am & noon
Thursday, Feb. 11 – 10 am & noon
Friday, Feb. 12 – 7 pm (Audio Described performance)
Saturday, Feb. 13 – 3 pm
Sunday, Feb. 14 – 3 pm (ASL Interpreted performance)
Tuesday, Feb. 16 – 10 am & noon
Wednesday, Feb. 17 – 10 am & noon
Thursday, Feb. 18 – 10 am & noon
Friday, Feb. 19 – 7 pm
Saturday, Feb. 20 – 3 pm
Sunday, Feb. 21 – 3 pm
Tuesday, Feb. 23 – 10 am & noon
Wednesday, Feb. 24 – 10 am & noon
Thursday, Feb. 25 – 10 am & noon
Friday, Feb. 26 – 7 pm
Saturday, Feb. 27 – 3 pm

*SteppingStone Theatre – Magic Happens Here!
Affordable, High-Quality Theatre for All Ages*