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## **WEXNER CENTER PRESENTS SECOND ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL PERFORMING ARTS SERIES FOR FAMILIES**

**Featuring daring and diverse theatrical performances from Europe and Canada**

Now in its second year, the Wexner Center's **International Performing Arts Series for Families** brings live theatrical performances to Columbus that are creative, innovative, and stimulating—and especially for young people and families. With troupes this year from Canada, Belgium, and Denmark, this series—with shows in January, February and May, exposes kids to both contemporary theater and other cultures. Local young people and artists contribute to the spectacle this year: The Columbus Children's Choir and the Ohio State School of Music participate in *Luna of the Tree*. The Wexner Center's 2007 International Performing Arts Series for Families is presented with generous support from American Electric Power, AEP Ohio, and Cardinal Health.



*My Heart Is a Penguin*

"We are pleased to bring to Columbus international performing artists who create highly experimental work with a deep respect for children's complex inner lives," says Shelly Casto, the Wexner Center's Director of Education. "In addition, we have been able to expand the series to include more occasions for area families to take advantage of this extraordinary educational opportunity, offering multiple shows at various times."

### **TICKET and VISITOR INFORMATION**

**Tickets** for each performance are \$14 for the general public, \$10 for Wexner Center members, and \$8 for children under 12 (infants under 1 year old are admitted free). **Ticket packages are available for the Pantalone shows:** \$20 for general public, \$16 for Wexner Center members, and \$13 for children under 12 (package prices include tickets to both productions). Tickets are available at the Wexner Center box office (614) 292-3535 or through Ticketmaster at (614) 431-3600 or [ticketmaster.com](http://ticketmaster.com).

The Wexner Center is located at 1871 N. High St. at 15<sup>th</sup> Ave. at The Ohio State University ([wexarts.org](http://wexarts.org)). Parking is available in the Ohio Union Garage, entered from High Street, and at the South Campus Gateway parking garage, located one block east of North High Street between 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenues.

**The schedule follows.**

***me me me...***

**performed by DynamO Théâtre** (Montreal, Quebec)

Saturday, January 20 | 2:30 PM | Mershon Auditorium | **For young people ages 7-12 and their families**

"The acrobatics... give it the 'wow' factor that draws young audiences in for the ride."

–*The Gazette* (Montreal)

DynamO Théâtre combines its various performance techniques to create a whole new language: acrobatic movement. In an art form such as this, not only is the storyline important, but a strong physical vocabulary as well. The daily life of a sometimes studious, sometimes unruly class in which one student is gradually ignored and even rejected by her classmates is the focus of *me me me...*, which tells its story through movement and a bit of dialogue. The company, composed of actors trained in dance, acrobatics, and mime, unfurls a realistic production that tackles a hot issue: rejection. The story, written by playwright Lise Vaillancourt, was inspired by her own experience watching her brothers slowly drop out of school in the 1960s as a result of bullying. In *me me me...* she wanted to show how through a love of school or finding hope in the character of a book students can overcome their own fears of rejection. The performance is 56 minutes long (no late seating). More info: <http://www.dynamotheatre.gc.ca/en/moi-moi-moi.html>



***me me me...***

Photo: Robert Etcheverry

***Luna of the Tree and My Heart Is a Penguin***

**performed by Pantalone** (Belgium)

**For young people ages 6-12 and their families**

*Luna of the Tree* – Mershon Auditorium

Friday, February 23 / 7:30 pm

Saturday, February 24 / 1:30 pm

Sunday, February 25 / 2 pm

*My Heart Is a Penguin* – Wexner Center Performance Space

Friday, February 23 / 8:15 pm

Saturday, February 24 / 2:15 & 7:30 pm

Sunday, February 25 / 2:45 pm

***Luna of the Tree*** is an enchanting musical picture book with an original score performed live onstage, vivid animated images projected on movie screens and an actor/narrator to tell its captivating story. The Columbus Children's Choir joins with a chamber orchestra of strings, flute, harp, and other instruments played by musicians from Belgium and the Ohio State School of Music to create the soundscape. The story, based on a Slovakian folktale, tells of a brave young prince, a mysterious tree, and a magical sprite named Luna. Belgian

composer Filip Bral has the highest level of classical music training and has presented his work in cities all over the world. He has chosen to create work solely for children that is sophisticated and poetic, combining immaculate sets, zen-inspired poetry, musical water glasses, and delicate visual illustrations. The show has entranced young audiences throughout Europe and Off-Broadway.

For ***My Heart Is a Penguin***, the stage is transformed into a tranquil pool of water where a narrator and string quartet sit atop giant floating hearts. The musical picture book is based on a Japanese poem and follows the philosophical journey of a tiny penguin searching for the courage to dive into a sea of uncertainties.

These are the first U.S. performances of both of these pieces outside of New York City. Each performance is 35-45 minutes long; the combined running time for consecutive performances of *Luna* and *Penguin* is about 90 minutes with an intermission (no late seating).

More info: [www.pantalone.be](http://www.pantalone.be). For a podcast interview with Filip Bral, click to [www.wexarts.org/wexcasting](http://www.wexarts.org/wexcasting).

### ***Goodbye Mr. Muffin***

**performed by Teater Refleksión** (Denmark)

Sunday, May 6 | 2 PM and 4 PM | Black Box on Mershon Stage

**For young people ages 4-10 and their families**

In an atmosphere of warmth, humor and respect, *Goodbye Mr. Muffin* utilizes puppetry and music (provided by a cellist onstage) to tell the story of the last days in the life of a beloved guinea pig. He is not well and is about to die, but he has had a good life and maybe death is nothing to fear. *Goodbye Mr. Muffin* gently conveys the feelings and emotions experienced during the passing of a beloved pet.

Teater Refleksión was established in 1990 as a permanent workshop and production facility for the creation of puppet and animation theatre for adults as well as for children. Its work combines puppet and object theater, performance art, visual art, dance, mime, film and music. Over the years it has staged 11 shows, two of which were nominated for the Danish award for Best Children's Show. Every performance is created through continuous interaction among the puppeteers, director, stage designer, composer, lighting designer, and technician. This performance is 40 minutes long (no late seating).

More info: <http://www.kidsentertainment.net/muffin.html>.

### **SERIES SUPPORT**

The Wexner Center's 2007 **International Performing Arts Series for Families** is presented with generous support from **American Electric Power, AEP Ohio, and Cardinal Health**.

Additional contributions are provided by **12 1/4 Circle**, an active group of Wexner Center members, and the **Corporate Annual Fund of the Wexner Center Foundation**.

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