

Northwest Children's Theater and School Presents

ROALD DAHL'S **WILLY WONKA**

Dec. 9, 2011 - Jan. 1, 2012

**NORTHWEST
CHILDRENS
THEATER and
SCHOOL**

NW Neighborhood
Cultural Center
1819 NW Everett Street
Suite 216
Portland, OR 97209-2189

phone: 503-222-4480
fax: 503-222-4130
www.nwcts.org

*Our mission—to educate,
entertain and enrich the lives
of young audiences*

Managing Director
Judy Kafoury

Artistic Director
Sarah Jane Hardy

Education Director
Carolyn Newsom

Volunteer Director
Diane Carlsen

**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

Release Date
October 15, 2011
Kill Date
January 2, 2012

Media Contact
To set up interviews
or discuss other
possibilities for feature
stories, please contact:
Marri-Beth Serritella
Sucha Production, Inc.
503-528-1370
mb@suchaproduction.com

It's a sticky-sweet confection of 'Pure Imagination'! Roald Dahl's timeless story of the world-famous candy man and his quest to find an heir comes to life in this musical adaptation, with classic songs from the Oscar-nominated family film.

Based on Gene Wilder's *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* (1971), the play, *Willy Wonka* brings the story to the stage, including favorites such as "Pure Imagination" and "Candy Man", as well as new songs from Leslie Bricusse (who composed the film). Originally intended to help promote the newly formed *Willy Wonka's Candy Company* the movie, adapted from Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, became a cult classic and has gone on to become one of the most beloved titles in the history of children's cinema. When given the opportunity to produce the stage version of *Wonka* NWCT leapt at the chance.

Playing the title role of Wonka has been Resident Artist John Ellingson's dream since he was a child. "I have been watching the Wilder film since I was three," says PAMTA award-winner Ellingson. "Wonka is a very comedic character, but he is complex as well," an exciting opportunity for a performer who has played characters ranging from Winnie the Pooh to the Tin Man to Shinigami (the spirit of death). What does it take to prepare for the role of a lifetime? "While I want to honor all the Wonkas who have come before me I hope to make my Wonka unique," states Ellingson, before adding, "I am also working hard on developing a taste for chocolate."

Sharing the spotlight with Ellingson are five youth performers, including Connor Johnson, who makes his NWCT mainstage debut as protagonist Charlie Bucket. Over 350 children auditioned, with 185 of them being called back specifically for *Willy Wonka*. Throughout the audition process, Connor stood out as having the honest, sincere disposition needed for the role of Charlie. "Charlie is the eternal optimist," says Artistic Director Sarah Jane Hardy. "While the other children arrive at the factory driven by greed and a sense of entitlement, Charlie is excited just to be part of the adventure."

Charlie's overstuffed household (two parents, four grandparents, and one bed) is played by a cadre of NWCT veterans. Local comedian and PAMTA award-winner Kevin-Michael Moore is Grandpa Joe, who leaves his bed to accompany Charlie through the factory. Charlie's other three live-in grandparents are portrayed by Erik James, Sue Ellen Christensen and Phyllis Lang. His hard-working parents, Mr. and Mrs. Bucket, are played by Audrey Voon and Drammy Award-winner Lucas Welsh.

Joining Charlie in his quest through Wonka's factory is a quartet of children who personify excess at its worst. Matt Garcia stars as the aptly named Augustus Gloop, Madison Thompson as the materialistic Veruca Salt, Kate Schifferdecker is Violet Beauregard and Conner Reed as technology obsessed Mike Teavee.

continued on page 2

WHEN

Dec. 9, 2011 - Jan. 1, 2012
All Fri. & Sat. 7 pm, Sat & Sun at 2 pm
Except no 7 pm on Dec. 24 and no shows on Dec. 25.
Special holiday matinee show times
Dec. 20-23, 27-30

WHERE

NW Neighborhood Cultural Center
1819 NW Everett Street, Portland

TICKETS

503-222-4480 or NWCTS.ORG

AGE RANGE

Most enjoyed by ages 6 and up

PRICES

\$18-22 adults
\$13-18 youth (14 & under)

INFO

503-222-4480 or NWCTS.ORG

WAVE WAVE

PRESS RELEASE

WAVE WAVE

Northwest Children's Theater and School Presents

ROALD DAHL'S **WILLY WONKA**

Dec. 9, 2011 - Jan. 1, 2012

NORTHWEST
CHILDRENS
THEATER and
SCHOOL

NW Neighborhood
Cultural Center
1819 NW Everett Street
Suite 216
Portland, OR 97209-2189

phone: 503-222-4480
fax: 503-222-4130
www.nwcts.org

*Our mission—to educate,
entertain and enrich the lives
of young audiences*

Managing Director
Judy Kafoury

Artistic Director
Sarah Jane Hardy

Education Director
Carolyn Newsom

Volunteer Director
Diane Carlsen

continued from page 2

Appearing as their woefully inept parents are Jonah Weston as Mr. Salt, Victoria Blake as Mrs. Gloop, Olivia Shimkus as Mrs. Beauregard and NWCT alum Elizabeth Gibbs as Ms. Teavee. Rounding out the cast is an ensemble of talented young actors fresh from NWCT's theater school. Annie Willis, Cameron Guess, Francisco Covarrubias, Isaac Ufer, Jadyne LaRiviere, Kate Thresher, Martin Tebo, and Miriam Jaffe portray the iconic Oompa-Loompas as well as a host of schoolchildren, and various townspeople. Joseph Klei makes an appearance as reporter Phineas Trout.

Bringing the chocolate factory and its inhabitants to life are a set by Mina Kinukawa, costumes by Shana Targosz, lights by Kristeen Willis Crosser, sound design by Rody Ortega, props by Sarah Lydecker, scenic painting by John Ellingson (Wonka) and Ryan Nicolai, and music direction by Lucas Welsh.

Willy Wonka is produced in part through the support of a presenting sponsorship from Saint Cupcake, who will be offering a special *Wonka* themed cupcake for sale during the holiday season. In addition, five lucky winners will draw cupcakes containing a "Golden Ticket" earning them tickets to the show and other prizes.

Additional support comes from the Oregonian (through a presenting media sponsorship), the Collins Foundation, Regional Arts and Culture Council and Work for Art, the Oregon Arts Commission, the Oregon Cultural Trust, SERA Architects, Schwabe Williamson and Wyatt, Kink FM, the NWCT Producer's Guild and NWCT Donor Circle Members. Over 4,000 students will be invited to share in Charlie's adventure through NWCT's school matinee performances.

PHOTO CREDIT:
©2011 Lucas Welsh

high resolution photos online at:
<http://nwcts.org/content/press-photos>

467, 680, 690, 713, 804,
(Willy Wonka) John Ellingson in NWCT's
Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka.

590, 609,
(Charlie Bucket) Connor Johnson in NWCT's
Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka.

856
(Willy Wonka) John Ellingson and (Charlie
Bucket) Connor Johnson in NWCT's *Roald Dahl's
Willy Wonka*.

1162, 1187
(Willy Wonka) John Ellingson, (Charlie Bucket)
Connor Johnson and (Grandpa Joe) Kevin-Michael
Moore in NWCT's *Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka*.

**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

Release Date
October 15, 2011
Kill Date
January 2, 2012

Media Contact

To set up interviews
or discuss other
possibilities for feature
stories, please contact:

Marri-Beth Serritella
Sucha Production, Inc.

503-528-1370

mb@suchaproduction.com