

HARTFORD *Children's* THEATRE

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HARTFORD CHILDREN'S THEATRE CELEBRATES ITS 20th ANNIVERSARY SEASON WITH "THE YEAR OF ENCHANTMENT" AND THE APPOINTMENT OF NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR RYAN RATELLE

HARTFORD, CT (July 9, 2009) - **Hartford Children's Theatre's Executive Director Dulcie Giadone** is delighted to announce the lineup for the company's 20th Anniversary season "**The Year of Enchantment**" and to announce the appointment of **Ryan Ratelle** as HCT's new Artistic Director.

Mr. Ratelle's first season for **Hartford Children's Theatre's 2009-2010 Family Mainstage Series** is sure to delight with three spectacular productions. HCT's 20th Anniversary Season, or "**The Year of Enchantment**," will begin with the beloved musical classic **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast***, followed by a much-loved fairy tale with a new Latin twist entitled ***Cinderella Eats Rice and Beans: A Salsa Fairy Tale***, and ***The Prince and the Pauper*** in a world premiere adaptation of an old favorite commissioned by the Hartford Children's Theatre.

Originally from Danielson, Connecticut, Mr. Ratelle served as the Manager and Marketing Director of TNECT at the Bradley Playhouse in Putnam, CT where he directed productions of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, Neil Simon's *Jake's Women*, Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* and *The Wizard of Oz*, among others. His work as also been seen at the Majestic Rose Dinner Theatre, Killingly Repertory Theatre and NYC's Milk Can Theatre Company. Not entirely new to the HCT family, Mr. Ratelle has served as scenic designer for the main-stage productions of *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*; *Bunnica* and *Ramona Quimby*.

"With a long-standing passion for children's theatre, I was attracted to the mission and quality work at Hartford Children's Theatre and am thrilled to work alongside HCT's talented staff of professionals, including Executive Director Dulcie Giadone and Education Director **Lisa Foss**" said Mr. Ratelle. "My aesthetic aligns closely with HCT's and I look forward to starting in my new position in Connecticut's beautiful capital city this August."

Mr. Ratelle comes to HCT directly from Broadway where he has worked as an ATPAM Press Agent for the past six years. In NYC, Mr. Ratelle currently represents the Broadway Dreams Foundation, producer and performer Kurt Peterson, Broadway marketing and advertising firm Art Meets Commerce, and serves as the National Press Representative for the 1st National Tour of *Grease* starring "American Idol" winner Taylor Hicks. Previously, Mr. Ratelle worked at the publicity firm Barlow - Hartman, representing the Tony Award - nominated productions of *Grease* (starring NBC reality show winners Max Crumm and Laura Osnes along with "American Idols" Taylor Hicks and Ace Young), *Gypsy* (starring Tony Award winners Patti LuPone, Boyd Gaines and Laura Benanti), and many others.

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Hartford Children's Theatre is celebrating Mr. Ratelle's first season and the company's 20th with delightful takes on three classic favorites that are certain to please family audiences.

October 30, 2009 - November 7, 2009

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Book By Linda Woolverton with Music by Alan Menken
and Lyrics by Howard Ashman and Tim Rice

Performed at the The Bruyette Athenaeum's Hoffman Auditorium on the campus of Saint Joseph College, 1678 Asylum Avenue in West Hartford

More than 27 million people all over the world have seen Disney's **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST**, proving it to be one of the most successful and enduring musicals ever. Now, this fall, the "tale as old as time" is set to beguile children and adults alike at Hartford Children's Theatre. Disney's **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST** is the classic love story of Belle, a young woman in a "small, provincial town," and the Beast, who is really a prince trapped in a spell. If the Beast can learn to love and to be loved, the spell will be broken and he will be transformed back to his former self. However, time is running out, and if the Beast does not learn his lesson soon, he will be doomed for all eternity.

January 15, 2010 - January 31, 2010

CINDERELLA EATS RICE AND BEANS: A SALSA FAIRY TALE

Book by Karen Zacarias with Music and Lyrics by Deborah Wicks LaPuma

Performed at HCT's Carriage House Theatre, 360 Farmington Avenue in Hartford

What will happen to Cinderella at the ball...game is the surprising climatic question raised in **CINDERELLA EATS RICE AND BEANS**, a contemporary, Latin-American Cinderellamusical which delightfully turns the classic fairy tale on its head, telling the story from both Cinderella and her stepsisters' perspectives. Cinderella, a newcomer from Puerto Rico, comes to the United States to visit her stepsister Rosa. The catch is that Cinderella only speaks Spanish and Rosa only speaks English. Will the two girls be able to reach an understanding at the basket (ball) game? With a fairy godfather and other delightful twists to the original story, **CINDERELLA EATS RICE AND BEANS: A SALSA FAIRY TALE** crosses language and gender barriers, weaving a subtle lesson on empathy, sportsmanship and respect.

April 30 through May 9, 2010

THE PRINCE & THE PAUPER

by Jacques Lamarre, Adapted from the Book by Mark Twain

Performed at the The Bruyette Athenaeum's fman Auditorium on the campus of Saint. Joseph College, 1678 Asylum Avenue in West Hartford

THE PRINCE & THE PAUPER is a world premiere adaptation of the classic children's tale and HCT's first-ever new play commission. Local playwright Jacques Lamarre puts a contemporary twist on Mark Twain's timeless story of mistaken identities by transplanting the action from Merry Old England to Hartford here and now. The story centers around the son of a wealthy mega-corporation CEO and a "pauper," a kid who lives in one of Hartford's poorest neighborhoods. When the boys meet on a field trip to The Mark Twain House, they

switch clothes and find out what life is like in someone else's shoes. **THE PRINCE & THE PAUPER** is a heart-warming tale full of fun, laughs and clever winks to the Hartford community. This comedy is presented in collaboration with **The Mark Twain House & Museum** as part of their 2010 Centennial Celebration.

Subscription tickets for all three shows are now available at a discounted rate: Adults \$50 each, Seniors & Children 17 and under \$36 each, and Students currently enrolled in HCT programs \$30 each. Individual tickets are also available for each show: Adults: \$18 each, Seniors & Children 17 and under \$13 each and HCT Students \$10 each.

Reserve your tickets today by calling the box office at 860-249-7970, ext. 12 or visit www.hartfordchildrenstheatre.org to download a series subscription brochure. Weekday matinee performances are also available for school groups at discounted rates during each show run.

Hartford Children's Theatre receives support from the **Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism** and the **Greater Hartford Arts Council**.

The mission of Hartford Children's Theatre is to enrich the lives of the children of Greater Hartford by providing access and exposure to high quality theatre for young audiences and related educational opportunities.

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