

Adrienne Arsht Center

FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

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ADRIENNE ARSHT CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY BRINGS THE MAGIC OF THE PERFORMING ARTS TO 25,000 LOCAL FIFTH-GRADERS WITH *ROCK ODYSSEY*

**Free performances will reach every Miami-Dade County
fifth grader, complement classroom education**

MIAMI, FL – February 18, 2010 – The Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County will open its doors to every public school fifth grader in the County this spring for *Rock Odyssey*, a rock opera version of Homer's *Odyssey*. A pilot program planned in conjunction with Miami-Dade County Public Schools, *Rock Odyssey* will expose 25,000 fifth graders to the arts at no cost to the students or schools, affording children the opportunity to experience live theater in Miami's world-class performing arts center. The show will run from April 26, 2010 to May 8, 2010.

The Adrienne Arsht Center will also provide an in-class curriculum created by Emmy and Parent's Choice Award winning entertainment pioneer Douglas Love, in partnership with World Book and correlating to Florida's Sunshine State Standards. The curriculum, which will be used before and after the show, will assist teachers in familiarizing their students with the *Odyssey's* story and characters.

"Welcoming 25,000 fifth-graders through our doors for *Rock Odyssey* is a huge step forward in the Adrienne Arsht Center's evolution as an institution that is world-class and community-based," said M. John Richard, president and CEO of the Adrienne Arsht Center. "This historic program will be unlike anything Miami-Dade students have ever experienced, exposing our community's youth to

the power of the performing arts first-hand. Looking ahead, we hope to expand *Rock Odyssey* and similar programs through increased private sector support as we prepare to embark on our fifth year serving South Florida.”

Rock Odyssey is the first program in The Adrienne Arsht Center’s Learning Through the Arts program, which provides the live music, theatre and dance components to the Miami Dade Public School system’s Passport to Culture initiative. The Adrienne Arsht Center hopes to grow the Learning Through the Arts program over the next five years, with the goal of ultimately reaching 100-percent of the County’s fifth, seventh and ninth graders, giving students countywide access to live performance experiences three times over the course of their education. Doing so will expand the number of students reached to 75,000 annually.

In addition to underwriting the costs to mount *Rock Odyssey*, the Adrienne Arsht Center has also committed to funding transportation between each school and the Performing Arts Center as well as financing the curriculum development and the subsequent teacher training necessary to actively deploy the lessons into the classroom.

“This partnership between the Adrienne Arsht Center and Miami-Dade County Public Schools will bridge the gap between a classroom education and a personal encounter with the performing arts,” said Alberto Carvalho, superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools. “For many of our students, *Rock Odyssey* will be a life-changing experience at a critical juncture in their education – immediately prior to entering middle school, where they will have their first opportunity to self-direct into arts-related classes and extracurricular activities. *Rock Odyssey* will be their first window into the world of theatre.”

Rock Odyssey was created by Emmy award-winning composer Billy Straus and Kleban award-winning playwright Stephen Cole. It will be directed and choreographed by Douglas Love. Casting for local actors took place the week of February 15.

About the Adrienne Arsht Center for Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County:

The Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County is one of the world’s leading performing arts organizations and venues. Made possible by Miami-Dade County’s largest ever public/private-sector partnership, the Center plays host to three resident companies

(Florida Grand Opera, Miami City Ballet and New World Symphony, America's Orchestral Academy) in addition to numerous South Florida arts organizations that perform in its theaters regularly. Since opening in 2006, the Center has emerged as a leader in offering and presenting world-class programming that mirrors South Florida's diversity, as a catalyst for development in Miami, and as a host of impactful community and educational programs.

Designed by world-renowned architect Cesar Pelli of Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects, the venue is comprised of the 2,400-seat Sanford and Dolores Ziff Ballet Opera House, the 2,200-seat John S. and James L. Knight Concert Hall, the black box Carnival Studio Theater, a restored Carnival Art Deco Tower, the Peacock Foundation, Inc. Studio, the Peacock Foundation, Inc. Education Center, and the outdoor Parker and Vann Thomson Plaza for the Arts. Events impresario and restaurateur Barton G. Weiss brought his signature style to the Center in 2009 with PRELUDE BY BARTON G, a full-service upscale restaurant open five days a week.

Visit www.arshtcenter.org for more information.

About Doug Love and Rock Odyssey

Educational entertainment pioneer, Douglas Love, wanted to make his favorite piece of literature that he read in school more accessible to students, so he commissioned Emmy award winning songwriter/composer, Billy Straus and Kleban award winning book writer, Stephen Cole, to create a new musical that Love could direct charting the 16 year journey of Odysseus who left his kingdom of Ithaca to fight the Trojan war. ROCK ODYSSEY, based on Homer's ODYSSEY features a rock inspired original score by Straus, whose production work on Springsteen's BORN IN THE USA album earned him platinum records and whose songs have appeared in films and in many children's television shows including Disney's LITTLE EINSTEINS and the PBS series WHERE IN THE WORLD IS CARMEN SAN DIEGO?

The fast-paced and funny production receives its comedic take on the original ancient Greek epic from Cole who has won numerous awards for his work in the theatre including, [THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER](#), [AFTER THE FAIR](#) produced at the York Theatre, [CASPER](#) starring Chita Rivera and [CONTINENTAL DIVIDE](#) starring Hal Linden and Dee Hoty.

Director Douglas Love's career has been spent innovating educational theater and television including his Emmy nominated and three time Parents' Choice award winning Disney series, OUT OF THE BOX and HBO's JAMMIN' ANIMALS. Love served as the VP of Live Entertainment and Television for Walden Media and has written more than 20 books for kids.

About World Book's Dramatic Learning program

Since 1917, World Book, Inc, has set the standard for providing accuracy, objectivity, and reliability in research materials for both children and adults. WORLD BOOK'S DRAMATIC LEARNING, created by Doug Love, features 40 classroom plays that build reading fluency, content comprehension and offer a new approach to standards-based lessons in Reading, Math, Science, History and Language Arts.

Miami Dade County Public Schools is a subscriber to WORLD BOOK'S DRAMATIC LEARNING – offering Miami educators lessons for this production that correlate to the Sunshine State Standards in curriculum to use in the classroom before and after the performance – so the learning continues even after the curtain comes down.

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