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Chicago Humanities Festival Presents

Stages, Sights & Sounds

The 15th Annual International Children's Theater Festival

**Featuring Four International Theater Companies,
Readings with Authors Timothy Basil Ering and Jon Scieszka,
Hands-On Workshops, and the First Chicago Puppetolio**

More Than 48 Programs May 6–24 in Chicago

CHICAGO, IL—March 12, 2014— The Chicago Humanities Festival (CHF) presents the **2014 Stages, Sights & Sounds**, the 15th annual international children's theater festival, with **48 performances and programs May 6–24 in Chicago**. This year's festival will feature four international theater companies/artists from **Australia (The Last Great Hunt, Cre8ion)**, **Spain (El Retablo)**, and **Japan/Czech Republic (Nori Sawa)**, along with readings by children's book authors **Timothy Basil Ering** (*The Story of Frog Belly Rat Bone; Necks Out for Adventure*) and **Jon Scieszka** (*Battle Bunny; The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*), hands-on creative workshops for youth, and the first-ever **Chicago Puppetolio**. The newly created Chicago Puppetolio will highlight Chicago's best and brightest puppet and object theater companies, curated with **Julia Miller** and featuring local artists **Michael Montenegro, Blair Thomas & Company, Von Orthal Puppets, Sea Beast Puppet Co., and Karen Hoyer**. The 2014 Stages, Sights & Sounds venues include the **Chicago Cultural Center, Storefront Theater, and the Victory Gardens Biograph Theater**. **A complete schedule can be found below**. Tickets are \$14 for adults and \$7 for children (17 and under), and go on sale **Monday, March 17 at 10 a.m.** at chicagohumanities.org/stages and via phone at **312-494-9509**.

"We are thrilled to present another exciting installment of Stages, Sights & Sounds! Over the last 15 years, this festival has become a fixture in Chicago's cultural landscape, expanding the delights of humanities-driven programming to all ages," said **CHF Artistic Director Matti Bunzl**. "With companies from Australia, Japan/Czech Republic, and Spain, alongside some of Chicago's finest performers, it also models the diverse programming we consistently seek to champion at the Chicago Humanities Festival."

The 2014 Stages, Sights and Sounds festival marks the 15th year of presenting original performances from across the globe. Each year, CHF's international children's theater festival serves more than 7,000 people, including over 5,000 students and teachers in and around Chicago. This year's Stages, Sights & Sounds festival is the largest in CHF history, with more than 30 international and local artists offering 48 programs within a three-week period.

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“The Chicago Humanities Festival is committed to sharing the best in the arts and humanities with kids,” said **CHF Executive Director Phillip Bahar**. “During Stages, Sights & Sounds we introduce thousands of children—many for the first time—to international performers and their stories. For some attendees, these experiences become transformative moments that let a child see the world and what’s around them with new eyes.”

2014 Stages, Sights & Sounds Schedule:

Family Performances



[**The Adventures of Alvin Sputnik: Deep Sea Explorer**](#) | By Tim Watts

The Last Great Hunt | Australia

Saturday, May 10 | 11 a.m. & 5 p.m.

Storefront Theater | 60 min | Ages 12+

Blending puppetry, animation, and music, *Alvin Sputnik* tells the tale of love, loss, and heroism as a survivor of extreme climate change must use his wits to save the planet. *This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.*



[**Animales**](#) | El Retablo | Spain

Saturday, May 10 | 10 a.m.

Sunday, May 11 | 10 a.m.

Chicago Cultural Center Dance Studio | 60 minutes | Ages 3+

Animales stokes the imagination. Master puppeteer **Pablo Vergne** transforms everyday objects—knit gloves, hats, a ruler—into animals and magical beings.



[**Fairy Tales**](#) | Nori Sawa | Japan/Czech Republic

Saturday, May 17 | 11 a.m. & 3 p.m.

Sunday, May 18 | 11 a.m.

Storefront Theater | 60 min | Ages 5+

A master physical comedian and puppeteer, **Nori Sawa** presents beautiful, sometimes twisted versions of traditional tales, as well as enchanting stories of his own.



[**Fluff**](#) | Cre8ion | Australia

Saturday, May 17 | 11 a.m. & 3 p.m.

Sunday, May 18 | 3 p.m.

Victory Gardens Biograph Theater, Začek McVay Theater | 60 min | Ages 5+

Welcome to the mod, mad world of the Ginghams, a traveling trio who rescue long-lost misfit toys with a mix of sound, story, video, and even a vacuum.



[**Kaguya: The Bamboo Princess and Other Stories**](#) | Nori Sawa

Japan/Czech Republic | U.S. Premiere

Saturday, May 24 | 11 a.m. & 3 p.m.

Victory Gardens Biograph Theater, Začek McVay Theater | 60 min | Ages 10+

Nori Sawa uses puppets, masks, music, and physical theater to tell his unique version of a legendary Japanese folktale.

School Matinee Performances

In addition to the family performances listed above, the 2014 Stages, Sights & Sounds festival includes 30 school matinee performances. For more information, email groups@chicagohumanities.org or call the **CHF Box Office** at 312.494.9509.

Chicago Puppetolio



CHF presents the first-ever [**Chicago Puppetolio**](#)! Curated with **Julia Miller** (Manual Cinema; Nasty, Brutish and Short), two different programs bring together the works of **Michael Montenegro**, **Blair Thomas**, and **Cynthia Von Orthal**, who collectively have taught and influenced a generation of younger puppet artists. Joining them are **Sea Beast Puppet Co.** and **Karen Hoyer**.

Sunday, May 11 | 3 p.m. | Storefront Theater | 60 min | Ages 8+

Sea Beast Puppet Co.'s *Shadow Puppet Conspiracy* is a hilarious, wild adventure in the world of improvisation. Von Orthal Puppets' *A White Heron* tells the story of friendship and a rare bird. And Michael Montenegro presents two short pieces that illustrate the wide range of human feelings.

Sunday, May 18 | 3 p.m. | Storefront Theater | 60 min | Ages 8+

Sea Beast Puppet Co.'s *Shadow Puppet Conspiracy* is a hilarious, wild adventure in the world of improvisation. Blair Thomas & Company presents *Chopin's Scherzo & Montague's Tarantella*, two wordless narratives that play out like an old silent movie to live piano accompaniment. And, in Karen Hoyer's *The Ballerina*, a scrap of lace grabs the spotlight and begins to dance.

Author Events



[Reading with Timothy Basil Ering](#)

Saturday, May 10 | 2 p.m. | Storefront Theater | 60 min | All Ages

Timothy Basil Ering, the illustrator of the Newbery Medal winner *The Tale of Despereaux* by Kate DiCamillo and other books, is also the acclaimed author-illustrator of the popular children's books *The Story of Frog Belly Rat Bone* and *Necks Out for Adventure*, where he reveals his love of wordplay (hornly scratchers and scrintalberry leaves, anyone?) and a fresh, expressive illustration style. His newest book is *The Almost Fearless Hamilton Squidlegger*. At this exclusive author event, Ering reads from his work and creates original illustrations.



[Reading with Jon Scieszka](#)

**Sunday, May 18 | 11 a.m. | Victory Gardens Biograph Theater, Začek McVay Theater
60 min | All Ages**

In 2008, the Librarian of Congress named **Jon Scieszka** the National Ambassador for Young People's Literature. He is the bestselling author of more than 25 books for kids, including *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*, *Math Curse*, *Robot Zot!*, and the *Time Warp Trio* series. Scieszka founded "Guys Read" to encourage a passion for reading among young boys. His most recent book is *Battle Bunny*. Oh, and did we mention that he is hilarious?

Hands-On Workshops



[Lego Animation Workshop](#)

Saturday, May 10 | 1 p.m. | Chicago Cultural Center Garland Room | 90 min | Ages 8+

Have you ever wanted to bring your toys to life? This fun workshop offers hands-on experience with the basics of stop-motion animation so you can start making movies at home. Chicago-based animator **David Pickett** will provide all the equipment (and lots of Lego bricks). Participants are also encouraged to bring their favorite toy to animate. *Free, reservations required. Call 312.494.9509 to make a reservation. (LEGO® is a trademark of the LEGO Group of companies, which does not sponsor, authorize, or endorse this workshop.)*



[Shadow Puppet Workshop](#)

Saturday, May 17 | 1 p.m. | Chicago Cultural Center Dance Studio | 90 min | Ages 5+

Learn how to create your own shadow puppetry show with an artist from Manual Cinema. You'll make a silhouette puppet using paper cutouts and then learn how to play with your shadow (using an overhead projector) to bring your story to the screen. This workshop may be messy business: please wear clothing that can be stained with marker and ink without your parent(s) freaking out. *Free, reservations required. Call 312.494.9509 to make a reservation.*

Venues

Chicago Cultural Center | 77 E. Randolph St., Chicago, IL 60602

Storefront Theater | 66 E. Randolph St., Chicago, IL 60601

Victory Gardens Biograph Theater | 2433 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago, IL 60614

Tickets

On Sale Dates:

10 a.m. Monday, March 17–Saturday, May 24, 2014

Prices:

Adults: \$14

Children (17 and under): \$7

The Lego Animation and Shadow Puppet Workshops are free, but require reservations. A \$6 per order processing fee is applied to all pre-event sales.

How to Order Tickets:

Tickets can be purchased online at chicagohumanities.org/stages or by calling the **CHF Box Office** at **312-494-9509** from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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About the Chicago Humanities Festival

The Chicago Humanities Festival began in 1989 as a dream shared by a determined group of Chicago's cultural leaders eager to extend the riches of the humanities to everyone. Since that first year, some of the world's most exciting thinkers, artists, and performers have come to Chicago each fall for a festival that celebrates ideas in the context of civic life. Past Festival themes include Laughter, The Body, tech knowledge, America, and this past year's **Animal: What Makes Us Human**. Under the leadership of **Executive Director Phillip Bahar** and **Artistic Director Matti Bunzl**, CHF partners with Chicago's premier cultural institutions and the Festival has become an annual highlight for thousands of people from Chicago and beyond. In addition to the annual fall festival, CHF also presents the spring **Stages, Sights & Sounds**, an international children's theater festival, and programs throughout the year that encourage the study and enjoyment of the humanities. Visit chicagohumanities.org for more information.