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BTG PLAYS!
Berkshire Theatre Group's Year Round Education Program

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Berkshire Theatre Group's BTG PLAYS! 2013-2014 School Year

Pittsfield, MA – Berkshire Theatre Group is pleased to announce 2013-2014 programming and events for BTGPLAYS!, BTG's educational program. BTGPLAYS!, is a fundamental component of the BTG's mission to serve our community and serves area students from kindergarten through high school. At the heart of the program is a passionate commitment to bring live theatre and all its inherent excitement and creativity to children in our region and reaches over 17,000 student each year .

BTG's touring production, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, is adapted from the classic tale by Hans Christen Andersen by E. Gray Simons III and directed by Travis G. Daly who direct this past summer's community production of *Peter Pan* and co-directs this season's *A Christmas Carol*. The production will run until the end of May 2014 touring to schools in Berkshire County and other local venues including The Eric Carle Museum in Amherst and the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield. This production is appropriate for elementary and middle school and is designed to introduce students to the excitement of live theatre. A question and answer session with the actors follows each performance.

BTG PLAYS! Fall In-School Playwriting Residency engages students in the art of playwriting at local schools including: Kittredge Elementary School in Hinsdale, MA for 5th grade classes, Farmington River Elementary School in Otis, MA for 6th grade classes, and Richmond Consolidated School in Richmond, MA for 6th grade classes and will conclude with student performances in January 2014.

BTG PLAYS! After School Programs allows students with a variety of learning styles to discover the fundamentals of theatre production, acting, and storytelling while exploring a classic myth or fairy tale. The after school programs are held at area Pittsfield schools including: Egremont Elementary School, Conte Community School, Reid Middle School, and Herberg Middle School.

Both the after school programs and the playwriting residencies are led by new artist-in-residence, Maddie Calandrillo with returning artists, Jacob Gold, Corey Cavanaugh and artistic associate, Travis G. Daly. The programs are 14-weeks and intended to be a hands-on kinesthetic learning experience that celebrates each young person and the uniqueness of his/her artistic voice. The final weeks of BTG PLAYS! are filled with the excitement generated by the rehearsal and production of staged readings of selected student written plays at each school for parents and peers.

For the 2013-2014 school year, BTG will host five performing arts productions at the Colonial: *Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales*; *A Christmas Carol*; *Doktor Kaboom! It's Just Rocket Science*; *Leo Lionni's Swimmy*, *Fredrick*, & *Inch by Inch*; and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. School field trips to our theaters and in-school programs allow students to experience diverse, educational and entertaining, programs that reinforce

classroom curriculum, while fostering an understanding of and appreciation for the performing arts!

For the second year, BTG will work with teens from Pittsfield's Juvenile Resource Center on using theatre skills to build confidence, life skills and communication ability. Students will train to be assistant teachers/mentors for children in BTG playwriting residencies and after school programming in addition to working in various areas of theatre administration.

"We are so thrilled that the kids in the community have this opportunity to enjoy, learn, and create theatre in a fun, educational environment and are able experience the magic of the performing arts first hand," said Allison Rachele Bayles, Administrative Director of Education at BTG. "It excites me to see the kids learning about the fundamentals of theatre all while having a great time and exploring the arts."

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About Berkshire Theatre Group

The Colonial Theatre, founded in 1903, and Berkshire Theatre Festival, founded in 1928, are two of the oldest cultural organizations in the Berkshires. Having united in November of 2010 under the leadership of Artistic Director and CEO Kate Maguire, these two institutions are providing the Berkshires and beyond with the finest in live theatre, music, dance and the visual arts on five stages in Stockbridge, MA, Pittsfield, MA and Lenox, MA. The Fitzpatrick Main Stage (408 seats), cataloged by the National Register of Historic Places, was originally designed and built by Stanford White as the Stockbridge Casino in 1888. The intimate Unicorn Theatre (122 seats) is a home for emerging artists and new theatrical ideas. The Colonial in Pittsfield (780 seats) re-opened in August of 2006, following a \$21 million restoration, and boasts pristine acoustics, classic gilded age architecture and state-of-the-art technical systems. BTG also performs at the newly built outdoor Neil Ellenoff stage at the Mount and at The Garage, a music venue located in the lobby of The Colonial. Together they serve over 100,000 patrons per year and reach over 17,000 students through their educational and outreach programs. For more information on BTF call (413) 298-5536 and on The Colonial call (413) 448-8084. To purchase tickets, call (413) 997-4444 or (413) 298-5576 or go online to www.BerkshireTheatreGroup.org.