



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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For 200 million years the Dinosaurs ruled the earth

**Now, they're back roaming the arenas of America
In an extraordinary new theatrical production**



Based on the award-winning BBC Television Series

**WALKING WITH DINOSAURS – The Live Experience
Comes to Xcel Energy Center for seven performances only June 11 – 15**

**Tickets go on sale Saturday, April 12, at 11 a.m.
At the Xcel Energy Center Box Office, all Ticketmaster locations, charge by
phone at (651) 989-5151 or www.ticketmaster.com
Groups (10+) call 651-312-3486**

April 8, 2008 --- Dinosaurs return to the earth in a live theatrical arena show, **WALKING WITH DINOSAURS – The Live Experience**, based on the award-winning BBC Television Series. **WALKING WITH DINOSAURS – The Live Experience** is now on tour in North America for two years and will perform seven shows at Xcel Energy Center in Saint Paul. More than 1,000,000 Americans have already seen the production since it opened in July 2007. The show originated in Australia where it played for 10 sold-out weeks in five cities.

Tickets go on sale on Saturday, April 12, at 11 a.m. at the Xcel Energy Center Box Office, all Ticketmaster locations, charge by phone at (651) 989-5151 or www.ticketmaster.com. Groups (10+), call 651-312-3486.

WALKING WITH DINOSAURS – The Live Experience is brought to North America by The Creature Production Company, headed by Gerry Ryan. Ryan said, "The BBC Series was a brilliant blend of special effects, escapism, excitement and information. Our show has that -- and it's live. In this show, 15 roaring, snarling "live" dinosaurs mesmerize the audience – and are as awe-inspiring as when they first walked on earth."

Ryan continued, "This is a show that could only fit in arenas – as the creatures are so absolutely immense in size. Audiences seated in the lower level are all but overwhelmed by the dinosaurs, while those seated in higher sections can view the entire spectacle and panorama of the production. It is the closest you'll ever get to experiencing what it was like when they walked and ruled the earth."

WALKING WITH DINOSAURS – The Live Experience has sold out performances and broken records in arenas all over America. It has been seen on *The Today Show*, *Regis and Kelly*, and has been written about in Newsweek, The New York Times, the Christian Science Monitor and the Wall St. Journal. It is the subject of a Discovery Channel *Really Big Things* episode and will be a category on upcoming *Jeopardy* episodes. The production has won the 2007 THEA Award for Outstanding Achievement in Touring Event.

For more information, please visit www.dinosaurlive.com.

Artistic Director William May developed the creative vision of the show after Bruce Mactaggart approached him with the original idea to create an arena version of the “Walking with Dinosaurs” television series.

The show is directed by Scott Faris, a Broadway veteran who has worked side by side with Harold Prince, Trevor Nunn, Michael Blakemore, Gene Saks, John Caird, Tommy Tune and Jerry Zaks.

The creatures are designed and built by Sonny Tilders. The set design and projected image design is by Peter England. The lighting is by John Rayment. The score is composed by James Brett. Warner Brown wrote the script for the show.

Tim Haines, creator and producer of the original BBC series, which was seen by a worldwide audience of 700 million, serves as Project Consultant to **WALKING WITH DINOSAURS – The Live Experience**. The series won six Emmy and three BAFTA Awards.

After years of planning, **WALKING WITH DINOSAURS** came to life at Sydney’s Acer Arena in January 2007. The show proved itself such a sensation, that this North American tour was fast-tracked. It began a scant three months after completing its engagements in Australia.

Ten species are represented from the entire 200 million year reign of the dinosaurs. The show includes the Tyrannosaurus Rex, the terror of the ancient terrain, as well as the Plateosaurus and Liliiensternus from the Triassic period, the Stegosaurus and Allosaurus from the Jurassic period and Torosaurus and Utahraptor from the awesome Cretaceous. The largest of them, the Brachiosaurus is **36 feet tall, and 56 feet from nose to tail**. It took a team of 50 – including engineers, fabricators, skin makers, artists and painters, and animatronics experts – a year to build the original production.

The show depicts the dinosaurs’ evolution, complete with the climatic and tectonic changes that took place, which led to the demise of many species. With almost cinematic realism, **WALKING WITH DINOSAURS** has scenes of the interactions between dinosaurs, and the audience sees how carnivorous dinosaurs evolved to walk on two legs, and how the herbivores fended off their more agile predators.

The history of the world is played out with the splitting of the earth’s continents, and the transition from the arid desert of the Triassic period is given over to the lush green prairies and forces of the later Jurassic. Oceans form, volcanoes erupt, a forest catches fire -- all leading to the impact of the massive comet, which struck the earth, and forced the extinction of the dinosaurs.

Variety said, “The dinosaurs are stunning, life-size and faultlessly nimble. In Act One, the beasts parade into the arena gnashing and cavorting as a safari-suited paleontologist describes their attributes ... in the second half, the action cranks up, culminating in a spectacular clash as a T-Rex mom defends her baby from predators. Sonny Tilders’ triumphant creature design ensures ‘Walking With Dinosaurs’ is a truly spectacular spectacle. It is everything a dino-phile could want.”

The New York Times said that in this show dinosaurs make "a thundering comeback after 65 million years."

Gloria Goodale of the Christian Science Monitor said, "When the dinosaurs start pouring out onto the stage, if you don't have to stifle the natural flight response of any living breathing being, then it's your pulse that needs checking."

Newsweek called the show, "that rare entertainment beast that parents and kids can enjoy together."

The 15 dinosaurs were originally "hatched" by Tilders, the head of creature design, in a Melbourne Docklands workshop big enough to park a 747. For the North American tour, the only building large enough to house rehearsals for the dinosaurs – some as large as 36-foot tall by 56-foot long, was the Greater Tacoma Convention and Trade Center!

Artistic Director William May is known around the globe for co-producing shows with Malcolm Cooke for the past 30 years, including *The Hobbit* and *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*. He produced *Marilyn An American Fable* on Broadway and co-composed and wrote the musical *Always* for the West End.

Director Scott Faris directed Michael Crawford in *EFX* at MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas, which at the time was the biggest stage production ever conceived, and was on the production team that created *Siegfried & Roy* at the Mirage Hotel. Faris directed the London production of *Chicago*, as well as productions of *Les Miserables*, *City of Angels*, *Cats*, *Grease* and the 2007 national tour of *Sweet Charity* starring Molly Ringwald.

Faris said, "We take the audience on a journey back in time and show them how the dinosaurs might have actually looked in their prime - huge, sometimes frightening, sometimes comical monsters - that fought for survival every day of their lives. Our dinosaurs move exactly like they are real -- with all the roars, snorts and excitement that go with it. The realism is mind-blowing!"

Sonny Tilders, who designed and built the creatures has been, for the past decade, one of the major creative forces of the high-tech world of animatronic puppetry for film and television. He was one of the lead animatronics engineers for Jim Henson's Creature workshop on the *Farscape* series, followed by work on *Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith*, *Peter Pan*, *Ghost Rider* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

Tilders said, "Many of the technologies we are using on **WALKING WITH DINOSAURS – The Live Experience** are borrowed from film. The computer software and hardware we have developed is based on the systems used to control animatronic creatures in feature films."

"To make it appear that these creatures are flesh and blood weighing six, eight or even 20 tons, we use a system called 'muscle bags,' made from stretch mesh fabric and filled with polystyrene balls, stretched across moving points on the body. These contract and stretch in the same manner that muscle, fat, and skin does on real creatures."

"The puppeteers use 'voodoo rigs' to make many of the dinosaurs move. They are miniature versions of the dinosaurs with the same joints and range of movement as their life-sized counterparts. The puppeteer manipulates the voodoo rig and these actions are interpreted by computer and transmitted by radio waves to make the hydraulic cylinders in the actual dinosaur replicate the action, with a driver hidden below the animal, helping to maneuver it around the arena." Suited puppeteer specialists, who are inside the creatures, operate five of the smaller dinosaurs.

Warner Brown wrote the script of "Walking with Dinosaurs – The Live Experience." He is an accomplished writer whose works include the book of the musical *Flickers* on Broadway,

the screenplay of *Nijinsky* for Regent Entertainment, the musical *The Black and White Ball*, which features music by Cole Porter and The Truth About Light, written with composer Jimmy Roberts. Other credits include a new version of *Half A Sixpence* for the West End in 2008, *Garbo – The Musical* with music by Jim Steinman and Michael Reed, playing in Europe, and the plays and musicals *Scandal*, *The Biograph Girl*, *Six for Gold*, *Cinderella*, *Talullah for a Day* and *Dance for Life*.

The score of **WALKING WITH DINOSAURS – The Live Experience** is by James Brett, additional writer, orchestrator and conductor of 20th Century Fox's *Alien vs. Predator* and Miramax's *Ella Enchanted*. Brett helped create the groundbreaking collaboration between Metallica and the San Francisco Symphony as assistant Musical Director alongside Michael Kamen; the album sold 5 million copies worldwide.

The sets and projections are by the internationally renowned designer Peter England, a frequent collaborator at Opera Australia and the Australian Ballet. He designed the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games Opening Ceremony, was a co-designer of the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games Closing Ceremony, designed three City of Sydney New Year's Eve Celebrations and was a finalist in the international design competition for the Pentagon Memorial in Washington DC.

Lighting Designer John Rayment lit the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games; Hong Kong's original *A Symphony of Light*, a massive cityscape permanent lighting display involving over 18 buildings; Singapore's *2002 National Day Parade* stadium event; and Singapore's Marina Bay annual New Year's Eve *Countdown* display. Rayment also works frequently at Opera Australia and has lit 30 productions for Sydney Dance Company.

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ON SALE: Saturday, April 12, 11 a.m.

TICKET PRICES: \$29.50 - \$74.50

GROUPS: 10+ call 651-312-3486

SHOW TIMES:

Wednesday-Friday, June 11-13, 7 p.m.

Saturday, June 14, 11 a.m. / 3 p.m. / 7 p.m.

Sunday, June 15, 1 p.m.

For more information about WALKING WITH DINOSAURS – The Live Experience, or to set up coverage about the show, please contact:

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