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CONTACT: Ann Fink
Carol Fox & Associates
773-327-3830, Ext. 112
annf@carolfoxassociates.com

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THE CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS AT GOVERNORS STATE UNIVERSITY ANNOUNCES 2005-2006 SEASON PERFORMANCES

Season Highlights Include Exclusive Chicago Area Engagements of The National Broadway Touring Production of Miss Saigon and Comedian David Alan Grier, plus TV Legend Bea Arthur, the Grammy-Award-winning Neville Brothers and the Sizzling Ballet Hispanico

University Park, Ill. – The Center for Performing Arts at Governors State University announces its 2005-2006 season programming. The exclusive Chicago area engagements of The National Broadway Touring Production of Miss Saigon and sketch comedy genius David Alan Grier, plus TV legend Bea Arthur, the Grammy Award-winning Neville Brothers and the sizzling Ballet Hispanico are but a few of the highlights of The Center's 11th season comprising an exciting mix of theater, concerts, comedy and dance. The Center will also continue to offer its Saturday morning "Especially for Kids" series with shows including *A Christmas Carol*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and other Eric Carle Favorites, Laura Ingalls Wilder – *Little House on the Prairie* and *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*. Season ticket information for The Center is available at centertickets.net or by calling 708.235.2222.

Theater:

The National Broadway Touring Production of the epic musical *Miss Saigon* opens The Center's 2005-2006 Season on Oct. 1 with two spectacular shows. The *Chicago Tribune* calls this work from the award-winning creators of *Les Misérables*, "a triumphantly vibrant, courageous work of musical theater." Patrons will also have the opportunity to purchase a ticket to the opening night reception immediately following the show. For the third consecutive year The Center partners with Tony Award recipient Victory Gardens Theater to bring a new dramatic work to the South Suburbs. This year's play, *Wheatley*, by Victory Gardens Playwrights' Ensemble member Lonnie Carter, tells the true story of a young American slave girl of the mid-18th Century whose poetic genius brought her to the great salons of Europe and beyond.

Comedy:

In October, it's Bea Arthur in Concert – Just Between Friends (Oct. 15). TV legend Arthur, best known for her starring roles on *Maude* and *The Golden Girls*, will share candid and amusing personal reflections and favorite songs accompanied by long time friend Billy Goldenburg. January brings an exclusive Chicago area appearance by comedian and actor David Alan Grier. Grier, best known for his roles on TV's *In Living Color* and *Life With Bonnie*, will perform an evening of stand-up Jan. 21. Noble Fool Theatre Company makes its debut at The Center in two shows with the hilarious interactive audience favorite, *Flanagan's Wake* (Feb. 3 – 4). The final performance of the Season will be Gregory Popovich's *Comedy and Pet Theatre* (May 13). Popovich, former member of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus and the Moscow Circus, rescues animals from shelters and turns them into stars for this delightful comedy act for the entire family.

Concerts:

Classical music offerings this season will include guitar virtuosos and Brazilian-born siblings Sergio and Odair Assad (Oct. 2) and the return of Teatro Lirico D'Europa with their full scale presentation of Rossini's comic masterpiece, *Barber of Seville* (Nov. 13). Come November, blues lovers are in for a special treat when Chicago's own blues legend Koko Taylor, shares the stage with Corky Siegel and the Siegel – Schwall Band (Nov. 19). Just in time for Valentines Day, Grammy Award-winner David Sanborn performs an evening of smooth jazz (Feb. 11), and in March the Glenn Miller Orchestra performs a mix of Big Band and jazz in a special Matinee performance (Mar 12). On Apr. 1, The Neville Brothers, featuring Aaron Neville, perform a mix audience favorites including "Everybody Plays the Fool" and "Tell It Like It Is" as well as songs from their newest album *Walkin' in the Shadow of Life*. Audience members will also have the chance to purchase a ticket for a special post show reception with the Nevilles. Also in April, the legendary Patti Page, famous for her hits "How Much is That Doggie in the Window" and "Tennessee Waltz" delights audiences with the silky-smooth tones that have endeared her to all generations (Apr. 23).

Dance:

Season dance and movement performances will include Salt Creek Ballet's *The Nutcracker* (Dec.10), featuring Tchaikovsky's famous score performed live by the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra. On Jan. 15 the popular Russian National Ballet returns to The Center with an exquisite rendition of the classic tale of *Sleeping Beauty*.

Fantasy and reality collide in a whirl of astounding circus artistry, dance, and evocative décor, costumes and lighting with Circus Nexus (Feb. 25). The sexy and sizzling Ballet Hispanico in NightClub provides the final dance performance of the season (Apr. 29) with a passionate, powerful style that fuses ballet, modern and Latin dance forms into an unforgettable experience.

Revue and Special Benefit Events:

Musical revues this year include the ABBA Celebration, a tribute to one of the most successful groups in pop music history, featuring chart-topping hits such as "SOS," "Dancing Queen," "Take a Chance on Me" and "Mamma Mia!" (Jan. 28); and Tony Kenny's Ireland, featuring Ireland's 1998 Entertainer of the Year, and his famous talent showcase in an early St. Patrick's Day Celebration (Mar 11). This year The Center will also serve as host for two special benefit performances. Jeanie Linders' *Menopause The Musical* is the hilarious celebration of women and *The Change* and it comes to The Center Oct. 16 as part of the Laugh Out Loud Tour to benefit Ovarian Cancer Research. And, Rock & Roll Hall of Famer Jerry "The Ice Man" Butler takes the stage with special guest Terisa Griffin in a benefit concert for Habitat for Humanity® of the Chicago South Suburbs (Nov. 12),

"Especially for Kids":

The Center's Saturday morning "Especially for Kids" series, sponsored by Charter One, designed for families with young children, kicks off Dec. 3 with two performances of Theatreworks/USA's delightful, fresh version of the Charles Dickens' Holiday classic, *A Christmas Carol*. On Jan. 21 Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia returns to The Center with their black light puppetry interpretations of a new collection Eric Carle stories, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and other Eric Carle Favorites. The second half of the series includes ArtsPower's popular musical *Laura Ingalls Wilder – Little House on the Prairie* based on the book of the same name is next (Feb. 4), and Theatreworks USA's *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie and Other Story Books* completes the series Mar. 11.

The 2005-2006 Season is sponsored in part by Charter One, Comcast, *The Star*, *The Daily Southtown*, Arts Midwest, The Illinois Arts Council, Seehausen's Fresh, the Pasquinelli Family Foundation, Sage Foundation and the Ralph C. Medhurst Children's Fund.

Tickets for the 2005-2006 Season are available beginning June 20. For subscription and single ticket information call the box office at 708.235.2222 or visit centertickets.net. Group rates are available for parties of 20 or more. For group information, call 800.386.6321. The Center is located at Governors Highway and University Parkway 45 minutes south of the Loop, off I-57 at Sauk Trail. Parking is free. For more information on The Center for Performing Arts at Governors State University, go to centertickets.net.