

**N E W S R E L E A S E**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CHICAGO PLAYWORKS CONTINUES 80<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SEASON WITH  
THE BOXCAR CHILDREN BY BARBARA FIELD, ADAPTED FROM THE NOVELS BY  
GERTRUDE CHANDLER WARNER, RUNNING JANUARY 14 – MARCH 11, 2006**

Chicago Playworks for Families and Young Audiences, the city's oldest continuously operating children's theatre, continues its 80<sup>th</sup> birthday season with ***THE BOXCAR CHILDREN*** by Barbara Field, adapted from the novels by Gertrude Chandler Warner, directed by John Jenkins. The play opens Saturday, January 14, 2006, at 2 PM and runs through Saturday, March 11, 2006, at DePaul's Merle Reskin Theatre, 60 E. Balbo Drive, Chicago. Performances are Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10 AM and Saturdays at 2 PM. There are no performances on 1/17, 1/28, 2/4 and 2/28. ***THE BOXCAR CHILDREN*** is sponsored by Northern Trust. **To purchase single and remaining season tickets, call the Box Office at (312) 922-1999.**

Based on the beloved children's books, ***THE BOXCAR CHILDREN*** follows the story of the Alden orphans, who run away to live in an abandoned railroad boxcar when threatened with being sent to different foster homes. After one sibling grows ill, they learn the importance of family and the value of trust. The Alden's story of courage and survival has been cherished for generations. The play is recommended for ages eight and up.

Tickets are \$8. Group rates are available for 15 or more people. Tickets for Saturday performances are available on-line at [www.ticketweb.com](http://www.ticketweb.com) and [www.hottix.org](http://www.hottix.org).

Performances are at DePaul's Merle Reskin Theatre, 60 E. Balbo Drive (at Michigan), Chicago. Discount parking is available with coupons from the Box Office, and the theatre is accessible via CTA busses (3-King Drive, 29-State Street, 146-Michigan/Museums and others), and CTA El stops (Red, Blue, Brown, Green, Orange and Purple lines).

**ASL INTERPRETED PERFORMANCES:** The performances on Thursday, February 9 (10 AM) and Saturday, February 11 (2 PM) will be interpreted in American Sign Language. For further information about interpreted performances, call the Box Office or TTY (773) 325-7975.

**THE BOXCAR CHILDREN**

ADD ONE

OPENING SATURDAY AUTOGRAPHS: After the performance on Saturday, January 14, join the cast for autographs and photo opportunities. Also on January 14:

CHICAGO CHILDREN'S MUSEUM DAY: be eligible to win family memberships and more from the Chicago Children's Museum on 1/14. ([www.chchildrensmuseum.org](http://www.chchildrensmuseum.org))

CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY DAY: From 11 AM – 12:30 PM on Saturday, January 21, visit the Thomas Hughes Children's Library at the Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State St., to see an excerpt from the play, read from related books and participate in discussion and activities with members of the cast. Admission for this event is FREE; advance reservations are not required. Also on January 21:

NOTEBAERT NATURE MUSEUM DAY: be eligible to win family memberships from the Notebaert Nature Museum on 1/21. ([www.chias.org](http://www.chias.org)).

EDUARDO'S PIZZA DAY: At the performance on Saturday, February 11, be eligible to win a pizza party for 20, plus other giveaways from Edwardo's Natural Pizza Restaurant. Also on February 11:

ICE CREAM SOCIAL: Enjoy an ice-cream treat, discussion, design exhibit and autograph session with the director, dramaturg and cast in a private event room at the Hilton Chicago and Towers following the performance on Saturday, February 11. Tickets for this event are \$5; call (312) 922-1999.

DINNER OFFERS: Receive a 15% discount at the Pavilion Restaurant, Buckingham's, or Kitty O'Sheas (all at the Hilton Chicago and Towers) with coupons from the Box Office. Other dining, from casual to four-star, is available within walking distance of the theatre – on Dearborn Street in the Printer's Row Historic District, and other options. Obtain complete dining information from the Box Office.

Production staff includes **John Jenkins** (Director), **Holly Windingstad** (Scenic Design), **Ariel Boroff** (Costume Design), **Julie J. Wilms** (Lighting Design), **Scotty Iseri** (Sound Design), **Caitlin Hansen** (Dramaturgy) and **Ryan Edberg** (Stage Management).

The cast includes **Kevin Forster** (Mr. Alden et al), **Keith Daniel Gallagher** (Dr. Truman et al), **Dan Hale** (Benny), **Susaan Jamshidi** (Sarah Calder et al), **Vergia Siovhan Norris** (Violet), **Amanda Powell** (Mrs. Alberts et al), **Austin Talley** (Henry) and **Teissia Treynet** (Jessie).

Several years ago, **Barbara Field** (*Playwright*) formed an organization called the Minnesota Playwriting Center that is now called The Playwright's Center which serves as a place for people trying to develop their writing for the stage. Field has also served as a playwright-in-residence at the Guthrie Theatre where she wrote a number of adaptations for the Guthrie, two of which toured nationally. She has also been a playwright-in-residence at the Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights' Conference, and has held Shubert, Bush, McKnight and Minnesota State Arts Board fellowships.

As a child in the 1890s, **Gertrude Chandler Warner** (*Author*) had a penchant for trains and spent many hours watching them make their courses upon the tracks near her family's home. She came to write The Boxcar Children Mysteries, a Great Depression-era series that began with its first publication over 60 years ago, while she was an elementary school teacher. Her simple prose of plainspoken English worked well with the needs of her students. Many of her students spoke other languages at home and were just learning English. She used the experience of reading her stories to her classes to help her students be motivated to learn to read. This experience also helped her to revise and edit her work; her students' feedback helped her to create a series that was understandable and engaging.

**John Jenkins** (*Director, Chair of The Theatre School's Performance Department, B.A. Pittsburgh State University*) has performed and directed professionally in England, Germany, Switzerland and Australia, as well as throughout the United States. As a member of the San Quentin Drama Workshop, he worked with Samuel Beckett as an actor in Beckett's direction of *WAITING FOR GODOT* and *ENDGAME*, and served as movement advisor for Beckett's production of *KRAPP'S LAST TAPE*. In Minneapolis, he worked for eight years as an actor, director and teacher for the Children's Theatre Company. His film credits include a starring role in the independent feature film, *PATTI ROCKS*, which he co-wrote. He is a qualified teacher of the Alexander Technique.

Founded as the Goodman Children's Theatre in 1925, Chicago Playworks is the city's oldest continuously operating children's theatre and was one of the first major children's theatres in the United States. Chicago Playworks is a vital aspect of the training at The Theatre School at DePaul University, providing an opportunity for students to gain pre-professional experience. Chicago Playworks presents three unique productions to more than 35,000 young people each season.

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