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Media Contact:  
Gina Hyams, PR Consultant  
413.464.2851  
ginahyams@gmail.com

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<http://www.mahaiwe.org/press.html>

### **Mahaiwe Announces Education Program for 2014-15 School Year**

Great Barrington, Mass.— Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center Executive Director Beryl Jolly announced the theater’s 2014-15 education program today. The offerings include school-time field trip performances by Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia and Omaha Theater Company, which will bring favorite storybooks to life; spectacular Chinese acrobatics by Cirque Ziva; a concert by the classical music-hip hop fusion duo Black Violin; and an in-school hip hop residency by Baba Israel. Additional performances by Black Violin and Cirque Ziva are also available for the general public. The Mahaiwe provides study guides before each performance and Mahaiwe Education Coordinator Laura Fleury is available to outline the curriculum connections for individual teachers.

“The Mahaiwe Performing Arts Education Program is designed to enrich learning experiences for students from pre-school through high school with a wide array of live performances,” said Jolly. “Given the complexities in the world today, we know how important it is for the region’s young people to have a broad and deep understanding of other cultures, innovative ways of using their imaginations, and experiences that connect education with their personal passions.”

“We depend on the collaboration with the Mahaiwe to enrich our curriculum. Each year they bring music and performances that augment our curriculum and provide a live performance for students to enjoy,” said Monument Valley Regional Middle School Principal Ben Doren. “The support goes deeper, as they arrange workshops and student performances with the artists and musicians that bring the creative process to life for our

kids. The Mahaiwe is more than just a theater with good shows, it is a primary resource for our teachers and students.”

In six years of Mahaiwe field trip programming, the theater has welcomed over 8,500 students from dozens of schools from across Berkshire County, as well as from Connecticut, New York, and Vermont. Field trip tickets are \$6 per student, with one free chaperone ticket given per 10 students. “The \$6 per student charge to the schools covers only a fraction of the cost of bringing international talent to Great Barrington – our sponsors and supporters make a wonderful difference in bridging the gap, and subsidizing school bus costs, to make these shows possible,” said Jolly.

The Mahaiwe Performing Arts Education Program is sponsored by Berkshire Bank; Cain, Hibbard & Myers; and the Dr. Robert C. and Tina Sohn Foundation. Additional funding is provided by the Charles H. Hall Foundation, TD Banknorth Foundation, and Mahaiwe Members.

The Mahaiwe’s fall education programming will kick off with the world’s first and quite likely only classical music and hip hop fusion duo, Black Violin, on Friday, October 17 at 10:00am (school field trip concert) and at 7:00pm (public show). The group features classically trained string instrumentalists Kevin “Kev Marcus” Sylvester on violin and Wilner “Wil B” Baptiste on viola. By the very nature of these performances, the decade-old duo has succeeded at defying preconceptions and erasing boundaries both musical and societal. The south Florida duo also integrates elements of bluegrass, rock, and R&B into its musical mix, which features sampling, turntabling, cello, percussion, and vocals. Black Violin’s existence challenges audiences to reconsider notions of “classical” and “hip hop,” and what it means to be a creative artist, as well as a human being. After the morning concert, the duo will give an hour-long interactive lecture-demonstration for the Monument Valley Regional Middle School Orchestra. Recommended for 4<sup>th</sup> grade through high school. Tickets are \$6 per student for the school field trip and \$15 for the public performance.

From December 8 through 12, Open Thought Productions will lead a five-day joint-school hip hop performance residency for students from Monument Valley Regional Middle School, Mt. Everett Middle and High School, and Lee Middle and High School. The program is directed by Baba Israel, with musical direction by Yako 440 and choreography by Ken Fury. Israel developed as a young artist in New York City exploring spoken word, hip hop, and experimental performance. He has toured as an emcee, beatboxer, and theatre artist across North and South America, Europe, Africa, Australia, and Asia. The Berkshire students will study music, dance, freestyle, hip hop, and improvisational theater, and collectively develop a script drawing from the stories of their young lives, transforming them into the art of the theater. The residency will culminate with a public performance at the Mahaiwe on Friday, December 12 at 7:00pm. Tickets are free to parents of participants and \$5 to the public.

The Omaha Theater Company will present *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse* on Thursday, March 5 at 10:00am. Lilly, a mouse with a wild imagination, marches to the beat of her own drum in this adventurous, colorful story. Based on Kevin Henkes children's books, *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse* teaches that making mistakes is part of growing up, but it is what you learn from those mistakes that is most important. Founded in 1949, the Omaha Theater Company (known in Nebraska as The Rose) is one of the oldest, largest, and most well-respected children's theater companies in the country, serving more than 300,000 children and families each year at home and on national tour. Recommended for K through 3rd grade.

The Golden Dragon Acrobats will present *Cirque Ziva* on Sunday, March 15 at 7:00pm (public performance) and on Monday, March 16 at 10:00am (school field trip performance). This new, world-class cirque spectacular has thrilled audiences across the United States since its creation in 2011. The fast-paced, technically innovative performance showcases traditional Chinese acrobats, dance and costumes, ancient and contemporary music, and modern theatrical techniques. The renowned acrobats perform amazing feats of athleticism and daring heart-stopping stunts with the grace of their centuries-old art form. The large cast and dazzling production designs illustrate just how

breathhtaking Chinese acrobatics can be. Cirque Ziva will entertain, delight, and keep audiences of all ages in suspense. Tickets are \$6 per student for the school field trip and \$25 to \$47 for the public performance.

Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia makes a triumphant return to the Mahaiwe with *The Very Hungry Caterpillar and Other Eric Carle Favorites* on Wednesday, April 15 at 10:00am. Three beloved stories by Eric Carle, award-winning children's book illustrator and author, are retold on stage through the magic of black light and fanciful puppets. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* follows the wonderful adventures of a very tiny and very hungry caterpillar as he eats his way through an amazing variety of foods on his path to becoming a beautiful butterfly. High up in the sky, *Little Cloud* playfully transforms himself into various creatures, including a sheep, an airplane, a shark and more. *The Mixed-Up Chameleon* is bored with his life, sitting about predictably changing color all day. Following an adventurous trip to the zoo, he attempts to emulate the beautiful animals he sees before coming to the conclusion that there is value in his own unique self. Adapted, designed, and directed by Jim Morrow, with music by Steven Naylor and narration by Gordon Pinsent, the hour-long production features the imaginative approach to storytelling through theatre that has earned international recognition for Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia. Recommended for pre-school through 3rd grade.

In addition to the Mahaiwe's school education programming, the theater's youth and family programming includes spring vacation week circus camp, summer Free Fun Fridays, and winter holiday movies, such as *The Wizard of Oz* and *It's a Wonderful Life*.

The Mahaiwe is located at 14 Castle Street in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. For tickets to school field trip performances, contact Education Coordinator Laura Fleury at 413-644-9040 x105 or [education@mahaiwe.org](mailto:education@mahaiwe.org). For tickets to the public performances, contact the Mahaiwe box office at 413.528.0100 or [www.mahaiwe.org](http://www.mahaiwe.org). Box office hours are Wednesday through Saturday from noon to 6:00pm and three hours before show times.

**About the Mahaiwe**

Located in downtown Great Barrington, Massachusetts, the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center is the year-round presenter of world-class music, dance, theater, classic films, “Live in HD” broadcasts, and arts education programs for the southern Berkshires and neighboring regions. The intimate jewel box of a theater opened in 1905 and has been in continuous operation for over 100 years. In 2005, the theater experienced a renaissance as a beautifully restored 681-seat venue to offer a broad range of cultural and community events. Today’s “Mahaiwe Mix” of diverse, high quality programming strives to provide meaningful, memorable entertainment for all ages and interests.