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## PRESS RELEASE: MING LEE AND THE MAGIC TREE AT THE KIDS FRINGE

Merlyn Productions Theatre Company will present "**MING LEE AND THE MAGIC TREE**", a play for young people by AURAND HARRIS, at the 2013 Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival, July 18 to 27.

This 45-minute play is geared for everyone ages 3 and up, with synopsis as follows:

*"From the producer of "Cinderella", "Snow White" and "The World of The Brothers Grimm" comes a delightful tale of the Far East!*

*"A prince who wishes to marry the Princess of the Stars must remain a tiger until he learns what makes a happy man. Ming Lee, a poor stone cutter, believes wealth and power will bring him joy. Together they discover the true meaning of happiness – and that "a fine hat does not make a fine head!"*

*"Staged in the classic Chinese style with a storyteller Chorus and comical Property Man, this will be a fun and unique theatrical experience for the whole family!"*

Directing the play is Merlyn Productions Artistic Director JOHN CHASE. Mr Chase is a veteran of theatre for young audiences, having served as both cast and staff at *Fantasy Theatre for Children* for 20 seasons, and produced a series of children's theatre best-sellers, including a multiple-sellout run of "*The World of The Brothers Grimm*" at the 2012 Winnipeg Fringe and "*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*" for Spring Break 2013.

Featured in the cast of thirteen local talents are RACHEL HIEBERT, DAVID KING, NATHANIEL HIEBERT, KAI JOLLEY, HOPE FIGUEROA, NICHOLAS CURRY, BRIAN DOUGHERTY, HEATHER FORGIE, JORDAN HRYNKIW, FAITH MARCIAL, ALICIA MOORE, KEN STONE, and ANNA WOODWARD. The diverse ensemble is composed of ages thirteen through senior, and includes several students and alumni of the **Winnipeg Theatre School (WTS)**. Stage managed by CRYSTAL HYDE; costume design by JENN HARDER and technical direction by KEVIN HAMILL.



**TITLE:** MING LEE AND THE MAGIC TREE  
**VENUE:** KIDS VENUE – 211 Bannatyne Avenue (in the Crocus Building).  
**SHOW TIMES:** Thu July 18, 2:15 PM    Fri July 19, 3:45 PM    Sat July 20, 2:15 PM  
Mon July 22, 5:30 PM    Tue July 23, 11:00 AM    Thu July 25, 3:45 PM  
Fri July 26, 12:30 PM    Sat July 27, 3:45 PM  
**TICKETS:** General Admission - \$10.00 / Kids 12 & under, Fringe Volunteers - \$5.00  
Pre-Booked Groups of 10 or More - \$5.00  
**ADVANCE TICKETS:** 204-942-6537 or WINNIPEGFRINGE.COM

For further information, please contact Merlyn Productions at 204-415-2714 or info@merlyn.biz.

*"Committed to staging quality theatrical entertainment at an affordable price."*



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### **MING LEE: Celebrating 20 and 100 Years!**

Although *Merlyn Productions* is known for classic fairy tales at the Kids Fringe, this year's departure for the Far East commemorates two special anniversaries!

"*Ming Lee and The Magic Tree*" was last staged locally by *Fantasy Theatre for Children* at the 1993 Winnipeg Fringe Festival, with *Merlyn Productions* director JOHN CHASE amongst its cast.

The classic format of Chinese theatre in which "*Ming Lee*" is presented – featuring Chorus, Property Man, Orchestra and Most Honourable Actors – first appeared on Western stages one hundred years ago in 1912/13, when it was adapted by GEORGE C. HAZELTON and BENRIMO for a play entitled "*The Yellow Jacket*" at the Fulton Theatre.

In this special 2013 presentation, we are immensely pleased to be staging both a 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary revival at the Winnipeg Fringe Festival, and a centennial celebration of classic Chinese theatre on the Western stage!



### **About The Company**

*Merlyn Productions* is a live theatre production company that also operates the *Winnipeg Theatre School* (WTS) in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The theatre company presents a full season of stage plays each year, while the theatre school offers acting classes for ages 10 to 55.

*Merlyn Productions* is the successor to *C.G. Productions*, which staged plays locally from 1997 until 1999. Founded by Artistic Director John Chase, the company is committed to the mission of staging "**quality theatrical entertainment at an affordable ticket price**".

Performers of many ages and skill levels from the greater community are welcomed into its cast and staff, who dedicate time for the love of their art form, and are committed to fostering local live theatre.

The company is now producing its fifth consecutive season of plays at the Ellice Theatre, which has been regarded as its mainstage since moving into its current Exchange District studio in late 2008.

Due to the pending sale of the Ellice Theatre, *Merlyn Productions* did not release a full calendar of plays in January, and is confirming 2013 production dates and titles as the season progresses.

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