

John Labatt CENTRE

BROADWAY IN LONDON 2009/2010
SEASON

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AFTER 65 MILLION YEARS...



WALKING WITH DINOSAURS – The Arena Spectacular
comes to the John Labatt Centre for 8 performances only
August 12th to August 16th, 2009

Tickets are on sale Friday May 29th on-line at www.johnlabattcentre.com,
1-866-455-2849, or in person at the John Labatt Centre Box Office

For groups of 15 or more please call (519) 667-5744

Prices are \$51.25 and \$71.25 including facility fee and tax.

Dinosaurs return to the earth in a live theatrical arena show, **WALKING WITH DINOSAURS – The Arena Spectacular**, based on the award-winning BBC Television Series. In **WALKING WITH DINOSAURS**, fifteen roaring, snarling “live” dinosaurs mesmerize the audience – and are as awe-inspiring as when they first walked on earth.

The show is now on an ongoing North American arena tour and will perform 8 performances at the John Labatt Centre in London, Ontario. More than 2.4 million Americans have already seen the production since it opened in July 2007. Tickets go on sale on May 29th by calling 1-866-455-2849 on-line at johnlabattcentre.com or in person at the John Labatt Centre box office. The performance schedule is;

**Wednesday August 12th – 7pm, Thursday August 13th – 7pm,
Friday August 14th – 7pm, Saturday August 15th – 11am, 3pm, 7pm,
Sunday August 16th – 1pm, 5pm**

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

The show originated in Australia, where 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 short three months after completing its sold out engagements in Australia.

WALKING WITH DINOSAURS – The Arena Spectacular is brought to North America by The Creature Production Company, headed by CEO Carmen Pavlovic. Pavlovic said, "The BBC Series was a brilliant blend of special effects, escapism, excitement and information. Our show brings together all of that, plus something extra - it's live! In this production, fifteen roaring, snarling "live" dinosaurs mesmerize the audience – and are as awe-inspiring as when they first walked on earth."

Pavlovic continued, "The dinosaurs are life-size, making the show so immense, it could only fit in arenas. It's a \$20 million arena spectacle of unprecedented size and quality, which captivates young and old alike. With Walking with Dinosaurs, we really believe we have created a new genre in entertainment and we hope to continue to bring new product to arenas for years to come"

WALKING WITH DINOSAURS – The Arena Spectacular has sold out performances and broken records in arenas all over the America – generating \$100 million in ticket sales to date. It has been seen on "The Today Show," Good Morning America," "Live with Regis and Kelly," and has been written about in Newsweek, The New York Times, the Christian Science Monitor and the Wall Street Journal. It was the subject of a Discovery Channel *Really Big Things* episode and a video clue category on *Jeopardy*.

The production has won the THEA Award for Outstanding Achievement in Touring Event (2007) and the Billboard Touring Award for Creative Content (2008) as well as the Pollstar Concert Industry Award for Most Creative Stage Production (2009). The THEAs recognize excellence in the creation of compelling educational, historical, and entertainment projects; and both the Billboard Touring Award and the Pollstar Concert Industry Award recognize a show or tour that creatively expands what is offered on the road.

Artistic Director William May developed the creative vision of the show based on an original idea by entrepreneur Bruce Mactaggart to create an arena version of the Walking with Dinosaurs television series.

A talented and experienced team of creative artists came together to produce **WALKING WITH DINOSAURS – The Arena Spectacular**. 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 and projected image design are by Peter England; the show's lighting is by John Rayment, our score was composed by James Brett; and Warner Brown wrote the script.

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 Arena Spectacular**. The series won six Emmy and three BAFTA Awards.

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 animatronic 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. 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."

It took artists and technicians one year to build the show. 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 ft tall by 56 ft 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 has directed *Chicago* the Musical in 16 countries around the world in over a dozen languages. Most recently he directed Bette Midler in her new Las Vegas show, *The Showgirl Must Go On* at Caesars Palace.

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 animatronic 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 Arena Spectacular** 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 Arena Spectacular**. 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 Arena Spectacular** is by James Brett whose work can be heard on soundtracks including 10,000 BC, Alien vs. Predator, Miramax's *Ella Enchanted* and the forthcoming UK feature *Outpost*. He also helped create the groundbreaking collaboration between Metallica and the San Francisco Symphony. The album S&M has sold over 5 million copies worldwide.

The sets and projections are by the multi-award winning designer Peter England whose work has toured the world extensively. A frequent collaborator at Opera Australia, the Australian Ballet and Bangarra Dance Theatre, he also designed sections of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games Opening and Closing Ceremonies, three City of Sydney New Year's Eve Celebrations and in 2002 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.

WALKING WITH DINOSAURS – The Arena Spectacular was originally produced in Australia by Gerry Ryan, Malcolm Cooke and Jill Bryant and is brought to North America by The Creature Production Company.

For more information, please visit www.dinosaurlive.com. Video of the show is available on our site under “The Dinosaurs” tab in the middle of the front page.

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

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