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GIANT PUPPETS COME TO MILLENNIUM PARK FOR "A RABBIT'S TALE" AT THE JAY PRITZKER PAVILION

**Presented by Fast Fish Puppet Theater
Wednesdays and Sundays in July and August**

Millennium Park will play host to giant puppets when **A Rabbit's Tale** comes to the stage of the Jay Pritzker Pavilion this summer. Presented by Fast Fish Puppet Theater, this original puppet play featuring enormous Bunraku (Japanese)-style puppets, can be seen Wednesdays at 3 p.m. on July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 and August 6 and 13; and on Sundays at 11 a.m. on July 13, 27, August 3, 10 and 24, 2008.

Created by Chicago's award-winning puppet artist, Blair Thomas and set to a live piano performance of Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, this delightful story tells the tale of a young boy's voyage through a magical forest and the many characters he meets along the way.

"The whimsical puppets of Blair Thomas are a unique addition to the Park this summer. Families will love his dynamic and expressive use of puppetry, masks and live music," said Lois Weisberg, Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs.

A Rabbit's Tale is sponsored by the Chicago Office of Tourism. The August 24 performance is presented in conjunction with the AGA Khan Foundation.

Blair Thomas & Company was founded in 2002 by renowned puppeteer Blair Thomas, a co-founder of Chicago's Redmoon Theater and "Chicago's premier visual-theater artist" (Chicago Tribune, February 2008). Since 2002, the company has created an award-winning repertoire of original puppet theater that tours locally, nationally and internationally. Blair Thomas & Company received Citations for Excellence in Puppetry from UNIMA, the international puppetry organization, in 2002 and 2004. The Jim Henson Legacy Project selected the Company to perform and conduct a weeklong puppetry workshop at the Clarice Smith Center for the Performing Arts at University of Maryland in 2005, where Artistic Director Blair Thomas was honored to be the first annual Jim Henson Artist-in-Residence. In 2006, *Pierrot Lunaire: a cabaret opera* completed a national tour with three sold out shows at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago.

A Rabbit's Tale was originally presented in a workshop version in the fall of 2005 and premiered at Symphony Center with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in April, 2007. **A Rabbit's Tale** is the premiere production of Fast Fish Puppet Theater, Blair Thomas & Company's branch for children and family audiences.

Millennium Park is located in the heart of downtown Chicago. It is bordered by Michigan Ave. to the west, Columbus Dr. to the east, Randolph St. to the north and Monroe St. to the south. Convenient parking is located in the Millennium Park Garage (entrance on Columbus at Monroe or Randolph) and at the Grant Park North and East Monroe Garages, all located within a short walking distance to Millennium Park.

Millennium Park is an award-winning center for art, music, architecture and landscape design. The result of a unique partnership between the City of Chicago and the philanthropic community, the 24.5-acre park features the work of world-renowned architects, planners, artists and designers. Among Millennium Park's prominent features are the Frank Gehry-designed Jay Pritzker Pavilion, the most sophisticated outdoor concert venue of its kind in the United States; the interactive Crown Fountain by Jaume Plensa; the contemporary Lurie Garden designed by the team of Gustafson Guthrie Nichol, Piet Oudolf and Robert Israel; and Anish Kapoor's hugely popular Cloud Gate sculpture. Since its opening in July 2004, Millennium Park has welcomed more than 12 million of people, making it one of the most popular destinations in Chicago.

The Chicago Office of Tourism, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, is the official City agency dedicated to promoting Chicago to domestic and international visitors and to providing innovative visitor programs and services.

For more information about **A Rabbit's Tale** and **Millennium Park**, call 312.742.1168 or visit www.millenniumpark.org.

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NOTE TO PRESS:

Electronic images available upon request