



For Immediate Release
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NATIONAL THEATRE OF THE DEAF RECEIVES INVITATION TO PERFORM IN TAIWAN

West Hartford, CT: The longest touring company in the United States, the National Theatre of the Deaf's Little Theatre of the Deaf has been issued an invitation by The American Institute in Taiwan to perform as an adjunct to the International Deaflympics from September 5 to 15, 2009.

The company will present two inter-active public performances of *Tree Wise* and a lecture-demonstration workshop with members of the **Seeing and Smiling Theatre** from Taiwan. The English and Chinese spoken word/signing events will incorporate a Taiwan sign language interpreter furnished by the Chinese Deaf Association and a SST company member who will translate the English spoken word into Chinese.

The forerunner of the Deaflympics was the Deaf World Games, which were the first international games for athletes with a disability. In light of the Deaf World Games' scale and the special characteristics of deaf people's culture, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) approved the name change in May 2001. The ROC won the bid to host the 21st Summer Deaflympics Taipei 2009 from September 5 to 15, 2009. Athletes from some 80 nations will participate. For more information about the Deaflympics log on to the following link: www.deaflympics.com

The **Little Theatre of the Deaf** company includes Ruthie Jordan, Karla Marrero, Tarah Blasi, Sara Guarnieri and director Aaron M. Kubey who will travel to Taiwan and perform their acclaimed production of *Tree Wise* by professional Deaf Actress Antoinette Abbamonte, and has been adapted by professional Deaf playwright Garrett Zuercher.

Tree Wise tells the story of a young person who has Deaf parents and has made a new friend at school. Through the help of a very special tree, they learn how to help their classmates understand more about Deaf culture. The tree teaches sign language to the children through games.

The American Institute in Taiwan is the organization that manages nonofficial relations in Taiwan. The U.S. State Department has a program called the Performing Arts Initiative, which provides some funding to send U.S. performing arts groups abroad. Scott A. Robinson, the Cultural Affairs Officer of the AIT said, “Since Taiwan will be hosting the International Deaflympics this fall, we would value the opportunity to bring this U.S.-based Deaf performing arts group to Taiwan for a series of performances and workshops to highlight the United States' diversity and excellence in the performing arts arena.”

The **Little Theatre of the Deaf** is the children's wing of the National Theatre of the Deaf. Formed in 1968 to reach out to young audiences and their families, LTD performs original works, classic stories, fables and poems. Each year, LTD gives live performances to thousands of children and adults in schools and theatres across the United States. In addition, LTD tours internationally and has performed in India, Mexico, Germany, Japan, China, Russia, New Zealand and will now add Taiwan to this impressive list of countries interested in the work of the National Theatre of the Deaf.

The **Seeing and Smiling Theater** was founded in 2008 by Artistic Director Wang Chi-Mei who modeled the company on the **National Theatre of the Deaf** after attending a NTD summer school program. Wang Chi-Mei holds a MA in Theatre Arts from the University of Oregon and has had a rich and varied career as an academic, director, playwright and actress. She retired in 2005 from the National Cheng Kung University in Tainan City, Taiwan, where she taught dramatic literature and playwriting.

For more information about the **National Theatre of the Deaf** and *Tree Wise* go to the web site at www.ntd.org or contact the National Theatre of the Deaf office at 860-236-4193 (Voice) or 860-607-1334 (Video Phone).

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