

For immediate release: September 13, 2010

Media contacts: Tim Fulton, tfulton@wexarts.org/614 688-3261; Lori Kingston, lkingston@fpconservatory.org/614 645-5892

WEXNER CENTER AND FRANKLIN PARK CONSERVATORY COLLABORATE FOR UNIQUE AUDIO PLAY

Columbus, OH—With a special theatrical experience that is also a stroll in the park, the **Wexner Center for the Arts and Franklin Park Conservatory will co-present *Susurrus***, an audio play designed for botanical gardens by Glasgow playwright and director David Leddy. The show will run **October 14–October 24, 2010 in and around Franklin Park Conservatory.**

First presented to great acclaim and sell-out audiences in Glasgow, *Susurrus* (pronounced "sus-yoo-rus") was a "Pick of the Fringe" at the Edinburgh Festival in 2009. A play without actors and without a stage, the subtly woven narrative intimately engages the audience members, who **listen to it on iPods** while following a mapped route specifically designed by the playwright through the lush greenhouses inside Franklin Park Conservatory and the outdoor grounds of Franklin Park, one of **only five U.S. locations for the show**. Due to the limited capacity of this show where only two patrons are admitted every 15 minutes during Franklin Park Conservatory's hours, **audiences are encouraged to book their time slots well in advance (see inset box for details).**

Susurrus is part radio play, part recital, part lesson in bird dissection, and part stroll in the park. The listener hears snippets about opera, memorial benches, and botany, which fit together into a mournful and poignant story of a family's love and loss. As the *Guardian* (UK) writes, "it's a sensual reinterpretation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with a contemporary edge. There are moments when location and content come together so powerfully that your eyes moisten and your heart lurches." **The work contains adult themes and is recommended for mature audiences.**

Notes Wexner Center Director Sherri Geldin, "We're thrilled to work with our colleagues at Franklin Park Conservatory on this 10-day event, which exemplifies the spirit of cultural collaboration that is prevalent among institutions in Columbus right now. *Susurrus* reflects the excellence we can achieve together and highlights the best of each organization's offerings."

Bruce A. Harkey, Franklin Park Conservatory's executive director, says, "We are always looking for fresh ways to bring new audiences to Franklin Park Conservatory. Working with a talented theater artist like David Leddy in collaboration with the Wexner Center is an exciting prospect and opens up the potential for future joint efforts."



***Susurrus* is "beautiful...a magical blend of sorrow, anger, compassion, excellent writing, and magnificent music."—The Scotsman**

David Leddy/Fire Exit: *Susurrus* October 14–24, 2010

Location: Franklin Park Conservatory, 1777 E. Broad St., Columbus

Hours: 10 AM–3 PM (Wednesdays 10 AM to 4:45 PM). Run time about 90 min. Visitors can reserve a time slots, every 15 minutes starting at 10 AM.

Ticket prices and reservation information: \$11 (includes admission to Franklin Park). Two patrons will be admitted every 15 minutes. Advanced reservations are encouraged. Tickets can be reserved in advance by calling Franklin Park Conservatory at (614) 645-5923 (weekdays, 8:30 AM to 5 PM) or (614) 645-5926 (weekends, 10 AM to 5 PM). Attendees should arrive 15 minutes before their timeslot at the Franklin Park Visitor's Desk to check in.

Patrons will be required to make a refundable \$100 credit card deposit at Franklin Park for use of the iPod and headphones.

Charles Helm, Director of Performing Arts at the Wexner Center, notes, "*Susurrus* was one of the most impressive shows I saw at the Edinburgh Festival last year. Not only is it beautifully written and designed, but it is a great example of how contemporary theater is evolving towards unique experiences in special settings on an intimate scale."

ABOUT DAVID LEDDY

David Leddy is an award-winning playwright and director based in Glasgow, Scotland. He specializes in work that combines dramatic new writing with elements of performance art and unusual locations, ranging from a graveyard to a greenhouse, from a pitch-black cupboard to his own bedroom. He has been described as "Scotland's hottest, edgiest young playwright" by *The Sunday Times*, a "theatrical maverick" with a "propensity for fearless experiment" by the *Financial Times*, and a "brilliant site-specific theater-maker" who is "one of the most interesting dramatic writers on the Scottish scene" by Joyce McMillan in *The Scotsman*. (davidleddy.com)



David Leddy

WEXNER CENTER

The Wexner Center for the Arts is The Ohio State University's multidisciplinary, international laboratory for the exploration and advancement of contemporary art. Through exhibitions, screenings, performances, artist residencies, and educational programs, the Wexner Center acts as a forum where established and emerging artists can test ideas and where diverse audiences can participate in cultural experiences that enhance understanding of the art of our time. In its programs, the Wexner Center balances a commitment to experimentation with a commitment to traditions of innovation and affirms the university's mission of education, research, and community service. (wexarts.org)

NOTE: As the Royal Shakespeare Company's partnership with Ohio State progresses, the Wex will continue to offer contemporary theater works, such as *Susurrus*, that reference the Bard's timeless plays as points of departure. (artsinitiative.osu.edu)

FRANKLIN PARK CONSERVATORY

Franklin Park Conservatory offers botanical collections, art and nature based exhibitions, plant shows, and educational programs for all ages. Situated in an 88-acre urban park, the Conservatory features the historic 1895 John F. Wolfe Palm House and 83,000 square feet of glasshouses, classrooms, and meeting and event spaces. Franklin Park Conservatory owns a signature collection of glass artwork by Dale Chihuly. *Light Raiment II*, permanent installation, by internationally recognized light artist James Turrell illuminates The John F. Wolfe Palm House every evening from dusk until dawn. The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company Community Garden Campus at Franklin Park Conservatory serves as a living classroom for programs and activities that promote community, environmental awareness, nutrition, and offers certification through its Chase Community Gardener Training Program. (fpconservatory.org)

EVENT AND SEASON SUPPORT

U.S. tour made possible with support from the **British Council** and **Made in Scotland**. Made in Scotland is a joint initiative between the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, the Federation of Scottish Theatre, and the Scottish Arts Council, supported by the Scottish Government's Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund. The Columbus presentation is made possible by the generous support of **Barbara Fergus**. Major support for Wexner Center's 2010–11 performing arts season is generously provided by the **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation**.

All Wexner Center performing arts programs and events also receive support from the **Corporate Annual Fund of the Wexner Center Foundation** and **Wexner Center members**, as well as from the **Greater Columbus Arts Council**, **The Columbus Foundation**, **Nationwide Foundation**, and the **Ohio Arts Council**.

Accommodations provided by **The Blackwell Inn**.