

## National Aviary News

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NATIONAL AVIARY

### *WINGS!* Opens October 9 in New Helen M. Schmidt FliteZone Theater

(PITTSBURGH – October 5, 2010) -- Beginning Saturday, October 9, wild encounters at the National Aviary take on a thrilling new approach.

***WINGS!***, the first bird show to be presented in the National Aviary's new Helen M. Schmidt FliteZone Theater, features birds flying freely above and landing close to audiences seated in the theater's intimate space. Music, lighting, video and narration add drama and context, creating a complete theatrical experience that takes viewers to distant lands and habitats.

The National Aviary is the only zoo in the world to offer an indoor theater experience that includes live birds in flight.

Traveling from the rainforests of South America, to the plains of Africa, the continent of Europe and the wild spaces of North America, audiences will learn about the behaviors of rare macaws, hooded vultures, Eurasian eagle owls, hawks, silver gulls and eagles, and the threats these birds face in the wild as habitats disappear and resources dwindle.

The show will include opportunities for guests to interact directly with the birds.

"*WINGS!* is unlike anything the National Aviary has ever presented, and is the first show of its kind, anywhere," says Patrick Mangus, executive director, National Aviary. "Audiences will be completely immersed in the experience. No matter where you sit, you will be no more than a few feet away from some of our most remarkable birds. Imagine a flock of vultures landing at your feet to feed from a carcass, or seeing colorful hyacinth macaws – some of the world's most endangered species – brushing by to land on stage, all against a video environment of the African plains or the Amazon rainforest. It will be an incredibly moving experience."

In addition to drawing on the skills of the Aviary's trainers, the creation and design of the show required the talents and experience of a number of Pittsburgh theater professionals.

*WINGS!* is produced by Dan Fallon, who also developed the show's script, music and video. Fallon currently serves on the faculty of Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz College where he specializes in the field of Arts Management. Lighting was designed by Andy Ostrowski, whose work includes Pittsburgh CLO, City Theater, Playhouse Repertory and Playhouse Conservatory Company.

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Scenic design, including naturalistic rock formations and trees, is by Michael Essad, currently technical director and scenic designer for The Pittsburgh Playhouse and Point Park University.

Video design is by Jessi Sedon-Essad, a projection designer whose work includes The Pittsburgh Playhouse, Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theatre, Pittsburgh CLO, Bricolage Production Company, Attack Theater, The August Wilson Center, and The Pillow Project

**WINGS! opens Saturday, October 9 and will be presented daily at 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Admission to WINGS! is included in Aviary admission: \$13 adults; \$12 seniors: \$10.50 children ages 2-12; under 2 admitted free. Seating is limited to 125 guests. Reserved VIP seats can be purchased for an additional \$3.**

For more information call 412.323.7235 or click [www.aviary.org](http://www.aviary.org).

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