



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Two River Theater Company
presents

a year with
frog and toad

Music by **Robert Reale**

Book and lyrics by **Willie Reale**

Based on the books by **Arnold Lobel**

Directed by **Jackson Gay**

December 9, 2008 – January 11, 2009

Red Bank, NJ – In its first foray into family theater, Two River Theater Company ushers in the holiday season with three-time Tony Award nominated musical ***A Year with Frog and Toad***. Bringing to life the whimsical stories created by **Arnold Lobel**, this musical romp celebrates life's simple wonders through the marvelous misadventures of Frog, and his best friend, Toad. Most enjoyed by those five years and older, ***A Year with Frog and Toad*** begins previews on **Tuesday, December 9**, opens **Saturday, December 13**, and runs through **Sunday, January 11, 2009**.

"I can't think of a better way to begin our family theater programming here than with this truly delightful musical this holiday season," says Artistic Director **Aaron Posner**. "There is no need to look any further than right here in Red Bank for outstanding family entertainment. *A Year with Frog and Toad* is high-energy, hilarious, and heartwarming."

Jackson Gay (TRTC's *The Underpants*, *Bad Dates*; *Len*, *Asleep in Vinyl*, Second Stage; *Scarcity*, Atlantic Theater Company) returns to Two River Theater Company to direct. "At its core **Frog and Toad** is a story of two good friends, whose friendship is defined and tested by small, seemingly unimportant obstacles," says Gay. "As a mother of a three year old, I can tell you that those small obstacles loom large in the child's imagination. However, I do not think that the challenges that Frog and Toad face and the lessons they learn

are relevant only to children. I have enjoyed reading the **Frog and Toad** books to my daughter and, given the narrative and graphic pyrotechnics of many of her books, am always relieved when she pulls one of the **Frog and Toad** books off the shelf for her nighttime reading.”

In the title roles are **TERENCE ARCHIE** as **Frog** (*Tamburlaine the Great*) and **RICHARD RUIZ** (*Two Gentlemen of Verona: The Musical*, Public Theatre’s Shakespeare in Central Park. National tours: *Man of La Mancha*, *Urinetown*, *Sweet Charity*. Regional: *Guys and Dolls*, *Life’s a Dream*, *The Mystery of Irma Vep*) as **Toad**. In the scene-stealing role of **Snail**, **JOSH LAMON** (*Little Shop of Horrors*, National tour: *Wicked*, Regional: *Batboy*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Godspell*) reprises his Barrymore Award-winning character. **TARA GIORDANO** (TRTC’s *The Underpants*. Arena Stage’s *Death of a Salesman*, *A View From the Bridge*, and *Christmas Carol 1941*. National tour: *Willy Wonka*) returns to Two River Theater Company to play **Mouse** and **Bird**. North Carolina native and recent Northwestern University graduate, **MEG STEEDLE** (*The Boys Are Coming Home*, *Asphalt Beach*, *Cabaret*), will portray **Turtle** and **Bird**.

Leading the design team is Poland native and New York City based **Scenic Designer ALEKSANDRA MASLIK**. **JESSICA FORD** (Humana Festival 2008: *Becky Shaw*, *The Break/s*, and *Neighborhood 3: Requisition of Doom*) is the **Costume Designer** and **THOM WEAVER** (TRTC’s *Macbeth*, *Bad Dates*) is the **Lighting Designer**. **Sound Design** is by **KARIN GRAYBASH** (TRTC’s *Macbeth*, *True West*, *You Can’t Take It With You*). **NICCO ANNAN** (*Jelly’s Last Jam*, *Expatriate*, *Dreamgirls*) is the **Choreographer**.

Musical Director and pianist J. OCONER NAVARRO (Broadway/NYC: *Adding Machine*, *The Apple Tree*, *Avenue Q*, *Billy Elliot*, *Curtains*, *Mary Poppins*) leads the 4-piece band. **Bassist JOSEPH M. PETERSON**, of West Long Branch, last performed for Two River Theater Company in *A Murder, A Mystery & A Marriage*. He has performed for NENA productions *Twelfth Night*, and NJCU production of *Les Miserables*. He has produced and co-hosted radio programs for Jazz 88.3FM WBGO, and Jersey Shore podcast. **Doug DeHays** will play **woodwind instruments**. **Percussionist MICHAEL HEADY**, of Long Branch, rounds out the ensemble.

Audience interaction with the cast is scheduled following every performance. Children are encouraged to bring a submission for the **Best Friends Wall**. Photos, drawings, poems – any description or illustration of a best friend are welcome and will be posted in the theater’s lobby.

Student matinee performances are scheduled at 10am on the following days: Tuesday, December 9; Wednesday, December 10; Wednesday, December 17; Thursday, December 18; Friday December 19; Wednesday, January 7; Thursday, January 8; and Friday, January 9.

A Year with Frog and Toad runs from **Tuesday, December 9, 2008** through **Sunday, January 11, 2009**.

Tickets are \$42 for matinees, \$48 for evening performances, and \$24 for all performances for patrons 21 years and under. For more information, call **732.345.1400**, visit www.trtc.org or visit the **Two River Theater Company Box Office**, located at 21 Bridge Avenue in Red Bank, NJ. **Discounted group rates** and **dinner / theater packages** are available by calling TRTC's Sales Line at 732.345.1400 ext 813.

Box Office Hours: Monday-Saturday: 10am-6pm; Sunday: Noon-5pm

TRTC is accessible to people with disabilities, including wheelchair accessibility, assisted listening devices and large print programs at every performance. Accessible seating is available by reservation. For more information call the Box Office at **732.345.1400**.

CALENDAR NOTICE

Events for *A Year with Frog and Toad*:

Two River Theater is a collection site for the Food Bank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties. Patrons are encouraged to bring nonperishable items to the theater to help stop hunger this holiday season.

Tuesday, December 9 – Saturday, December 13 (matinee) – preview performances.

Saturday, December 13, 7pm – Opening Night performance of *A Year with Frog and Toad* followed by a post-show celebration.

Sunday, December 14, 2pm – Dia de la Familia. Community celebration in the lobby with face-painting, tattoos, theater games with a Spanish-translated performance of *A Year with Frog and Toad* at 3pm, followed by meeting the cast and slurping hot chocolate. Reservation hotline for Dia de la Familia: 732.345.1400 ext. 851.

Tuesday, December 30, 1pm – Post-show Children's Book Club in the lobby led by TRTC's Volunteer Guild.

Friday, January 2, 7pm – An audio-described performance is scheduled. Tickets are \$14 for those needing audio-description. Call 732.345.1400.

Saturday, January 10, 1pm – Scout Day. Theater games, backstage tour, meet the cast and see the show. Scouts will receive a snack and special interest patch too. Tickets are \$30. Troop leaders may make reservations by calling 732.345.1400 ext. 813.

Members of the press are invited to the opening night performance of ***A Year with Frog and Toad*** on **Saturday, December 13 at 7pm. (Note 7pm curtain!)** Please schedule tickets through Jayme Powers, Director of Communications, by phone at **732.345.1400 ext. 830** or via email at jpowers@trtc.org. **Please bring the youngster(s) in your life with you to opening night.**

WHERE:

Two River Theater Company
21 Bridge Street
Red Bank, NJ 07701

WHO:

Music by **Robert Reale**
Book and lyrics by **Willie Reale**
Based on the books by **Arnold Lobel**
Directed by **Jackson Gay**
Scenic Design by **Aleksandra Maslik**
Costume Design by **Jessica Ford**
Lighting Design by **Thom Weaver**
Sound Design by **Karin Graybash**
Choreography by **Nicco Annan**
Musical Direction by **J. Oconor Navarro**
Production Stage Manager **Lisa McGinn**

WHEN:

December 9, 2008 – January 11, 2009

CAST:

Terence Archie*...Frog
Tara Giordano*... Mouse/Bird
Josh Lamon*...Snail
Richard Ruiz*...Toad
Meg Steedle*...Turtle/Bird

BAND:

Doug DeHays... woodwinds
Michael Heady...percussion
J. Oconor Navarro...musical director, piano
Joseph M. Peterson...bass

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TWO RIVER THEATER COMPANY is a professional not-for-profit regional theater company, providing outstanding plays and educational programs for audiences of central New Jersey and beyond. TRTC was founded in 1994 by Robert and Joan Rechnitz and over the past 14 seasons has grown into one of the most vital and dynamic arts organizations in the region. Since opening its new theater in May of 2005, TRTC has hosted a number of luminaries and award winners, including Bruce Springsteen, Olympia Dukakis, Jackson Browne, Jon Bon Jovi, Edward Albee, Sheldon Harnick, and the African Children's Choir. The company received "Theatre of the Year" awards from the New Jersey Theatre Alliance in 2006, and from *The Star-Ledger* in both 2006 and 2008. TRTC is supported in part by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Dept. of State, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, and contributions from hundreds of local and national corporations, foundations, businesses and individuals. Two River Theater Company is a member of Theatre Communications Group and the New Jersey Theatre Alliance.