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Pittsburgh International  
**Children's  
Festival**  
**25  
years**



MAY 11-15, 2011

University of Pittsburgh Theaters  
and Schenley Plaza

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A DIVISION OF



**THE  
PITTSBURGH  
CULTURAL  
TRUST**

check this out

By Patricia Poshard, Editor

## Children's Festival celebrates 25 years



AMOCOCO, PHOTO BY DANIEL MUILENBURG

The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust and programming division Pittsburgh International Children's Theater will present the 25th anniversary celebration of Pittsburgh International Children's Festival from May 11-15, 2011. The five-day festival will showcase international artists from Canada, Mali, Ireland, United Kingdom and the United States and provides affordable opportunities for families and children to experience live theater. This community event is one of only four such children's international festivals in the nation. Lead sponsor of the Pittsburgh International Children's Festival is Giant Eagle. Featured outdoor installations include Amococo from the UK, and Silent Disco, collaborate installation with University of Pittsburgh's Department of Theatre Arts. The festival

also features various international performances at indoor venues near the University of Pittsburgh, as well as free outdoor performances at the K12 Community Stage and activities on the green spaces surrounding Schenley Plaza and the Cathedral of Learning, University of Pittsburgh. Festival hours are weekdays 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. and weekend until 6:00 p.m. For more information, visit [www.pghkids.org](http://www.pghkids.org) or call 412-456-6666.

*Pittsburgh Parent*



## For Good

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### A giant inflatable building! A Silent Disco! Bunnies! Theater and free fun at the Children's Fest

Wednesday, May 04, 2011



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#### RELATED TAGS

##### [ARTS AND CULTURE](#), [KIDSBURGH](#)

Come for the outdoor balloon animals and face painting, stay for the acclaimed theater, dance and participatory artwork: that's the hope of the [Pittsburgh International Children's Festival](#), celebrating its 25th year May 11-15 in Oakland.

While the roving storytellers and caricaturists around the Cathedral of Learning and Schenley Plaza are the festival's most public face, the real highlights are the performances and other unique pieces, says Pamela Lieberman, executive director.

That includes Amococo from England, a giant inflated building made of colored fabric on the lower Cathedral lawn, which is open for exploration. It's the only kids' fest thing not specifically designed for kids.

The structure presents different appearances throughout the day as sunlight passes through it at changing angles. "It looks very beautiful from the outside," says Lieberman, "but the real treat is to go inside. It feels otherworldly when you go inside."

Also otherworldly could be the [Silent Disco](#). Schenley Plaza will feature two DJs broadcasting simultaneously to wireless headsets available to both children and adults. Listeners can switch between the channels -- and dance to drummers only they can hear -- among decorations devised by Pitt theater arts students.

Among the other featured performances is See Saw, a dance piece from Ireland, with dancers imitating children at play -- who then invite kids in attendance to join in the dancing. Knuffle Bunny, from the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, is a stage adaptation of Mo Willems' book.

The festival runs weekdays 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Saturday 9:30 a.m.-6 p.m.; and Sunday 1-6 p.m.

Do Good:

- Get information and tickets to the performances [here](#) or by calling 412-456-6666.

Writer: [Marty Levine](#)

Source: Pamela Lieberman, Pittsburgh International Children's Festival  
*Image courtesy of Pittsburgh International Children's Festival*

<http://www.popcitymedia.com/forgood/internationalchildrensfest050411.aspx>

Children's Fest offers a cultural cornucopia  
Sunday, May 08, 2011  
By Andrew Druckenbrod, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette



[www.danielmuilenburg.com](http://www.danielmuilenburg.com)

Aerial view of Amococo (designed by Architects of Air, UK) that will be set up on the lawn near the Cathedral of Learning in Oakland as part of the Pittsburgh International Children's Festival.

The Pittsburgh International Children's Festival turns 25 this spring, but it should put 41 candles on its cake. It has presented events and productions from as many different countries since its first season in 1986.

"The International Children's Festival has provided Pittsburgh's young people with opportunities to understand different cultures through fun and interactive performing arts activities," said Mayor Luke Ravenstahl. Pittsburgh's CitiParks was a crucial player in getting the festival off the ground, collaborating with the Performing Arts for Children program.

But if anyone should be blowing out the candles on that birthday cake, it's founder Maranne Welch. She was the executive director of the Performing Arts for Children series in Pittsburgh when she visited the Vancouver International Children Festival in 1982 and was blown away.

"I came back and told my board about it and they said no," says Ms. Welch. "I came back a year later [with a proposal] and they said no again. Finally by 1984 they started to look for a site." The board hired her as the festival's executive director and they decided on the North Side, where the festival took place until it moved to Schenley Plaza in 2008.

With the backing of CitiParks, Ms. Welch had the means to bring the extensive format of the Vancouver Festival to Pittsburgh: "Like the Vancouver, we had individual performances inside theaters and outside activities." Theater performances were sponsored by foundations, individuals and ticket sales while the outdoor activities were supported by corporations, a framework that essentially exists today.



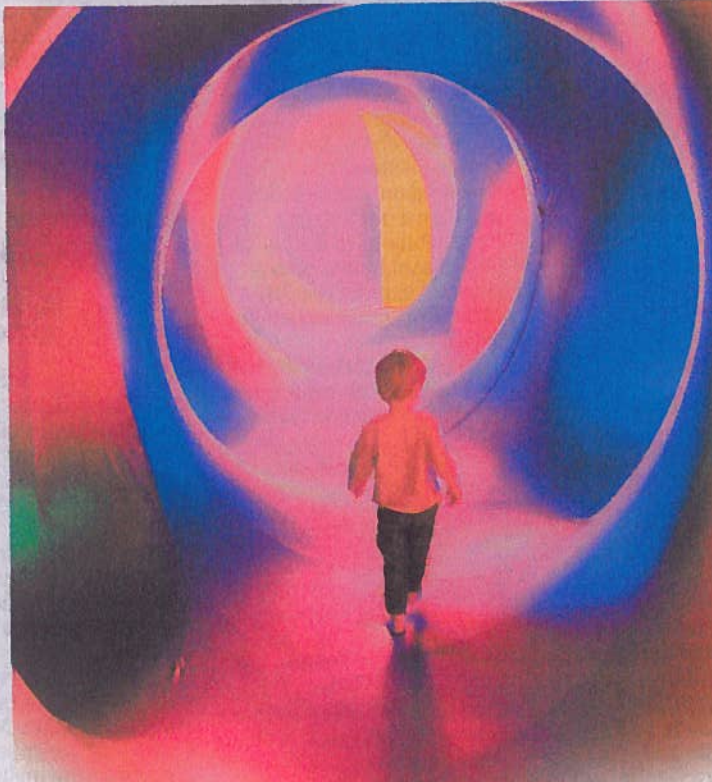
**PITTSBURGH INTERNATIONAL  
CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL**

**WHEN**

9 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Wednesday  
through Friday,  
9:30 a.m.-6 p.m.  
Saturday and  
1-6 p.m. Sunday

**WHERE**

Schenley Plaza  
and the lawns  
surrounding the  
Cathedral of  
Learning on  
Forbes Avenue at  
Bigelow Boulevard,  
Oakland, as well  
as inside nearby  
buildings.



**ADMISSION**

\$2 for Magical  
Forest Silent Disco

\$5 for "Amococo"

\$8 for the each  
of the four indoor  
seated events for  
ages 2 and older.

Children younger  
than 2 get free  
admission but  
require a lap pass.

Outdoor activities  
and performances  
are free.

• A child  
walks through  
"Amococo," a giant  
inflatable structure  
inspired by Islamic  
architecture.

PHOTO BY RICHARD OSBORN

CELEBRATING

CHILDREN

FOR 25 YEARS



On Wednesday, regardless of weather fair or foul, the Pittsburgh International Children's Festival will blossom in Oakland.

It would take more than grey skies or wet spots to keep the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust and the Pittsburgh International Children's Theatre from celebrating the festival's 25th anniversary.

First held in 1986 and presented every year thereafter (except 2004 for economic reasons), the festival presents award-winning international, national, and local performing artists in an affordable and festive setting. It is one of only four such festivals in the nation to offer a wide variety of high-caliber performances and art experiences chosen to engage not just children but the parents, teachers and caregivers who accompany them.

"This anniversary year advances the goal of providing educational opportuni-

ties in the performing and visual arts for children and families so they can experience first hand the impactful value of the arts," says Pamela K. Lieberman, executive director of the Pittsburgh International Children's Theater & Festival.

That's a fairly serious description for a festival that offers free rides on the Schenley Plaza Carousel, live steel-band music, story hours, magicians and hands-on crafts



"Room on the Broom" features puppets and original songs.

FESTIVAL · D3

## International Children's Festival set for Oakland

FESTIVAL · FROM D1

opportunities as well as a showcase of four international performance groups and two interactive installations.

The six ticketed events at this year's festival are:

■ "Amococo," created by Architects of Air, United Kingdom, all ages, 30 minutes. It's an opportunity to walk through a labyrinth inside a giant inflatable structure filled with visual and sound delights.

■ "Silent Disco," a collaboration between the University of Pittsburgh Department of Theatre Arts and the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, all ages, 45 minutes. Wireless technology headsets allow attendees to get down and groove with a choice of family-friendly tunes from two very different DJs on a dance floor that's located in a magical forest.

■ "Knuffle Bunny," produced by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, U.S., ages 2 to 8, 50 minutes.

This stage adaptation of Mo Willems' well-loved, award-winning children's book follows what happens when things go horribly, hilariously wrong while Daddy, Trixie and her beloved Knuffle Bunny

make a visit to the local Laundromat.

■ "Baobab," performed by Le The tre Motus and The Su Company, Canada and Mali, ages 5 and older, 50 minutes. Animal puppets, masks and African drums transform into trickster spirits, and shadows dance across the sky during a journey inspired by an African folk tale.

■ "Room on the Broom," performed by Tall Stories, United Kingdom, age 4 and older, 55 minutes. A light-hearted musical adaptation Julia Donaldson's award-winning book fea-

tures incredible puppets, original songs, comedy and a showcase of this group's distinctive physical and visual performance style.

■ "See Saw," performed by Ciotug, Ireland, ages 18 months to 5 years, 40 minutes. The dance piece "See Saw" was created to engage very young audience members as it rocks the balance between looking and being looked at and breaks the boundaries of how to look and who is doing the looking.

Alice T. Carter can be reached at [acarter@tribweb.com](mailto:acarter@tribweb.com) or 412-320-7808.



**Performance venues**  
 1. Bellefield Auditorium  
 2. Alumni Hall  
 3. Henry Heymann  
 4. Box Office  
 5. K-12 Community Stage  
 6. Story Corner and Petting Zoo

TRIBUNE-REVIEW



# In Tune

The Daily News

TUESDAY, MAY 10, 2011

## Children's festival marks 25 years

By BONNIJEAN COONEY ADAMS  
Daily News Editor  
bjcoadams@dailynews.com

In honor of its 25th anniversary, Pittsburgh International Children's Festival is extending traditional theater settings to the outdoor festival grounds with two interactive performances sure to please young and old alike.

The first, which will catch all eyes passing the Cathedral of Learning grounds in Oakland in the green spaces surrounding Schenley Plaza, is "Amococo," sponsored by Equitable Gas.

Presented by Architects of Air from Nottingham, U.K., it is described as a giant inflatable structure/sculpture where festival attendees can enter to see performances daily Wednesday through Sunday.

"Our special feature is 'Amococo,'" explained Marianne Welch, founding artistic director of the Pittsburgh International Children's Festival, who remains a consultant for the group. Welch, along with Pamela K. Lieberman, executive director of Pittsburgh International Children's Theater & Festival and manager of children's theater programming for the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, travel to around the world looking for performances to feature in the local festival each year.

"We're very excited about this year's lineup," Lieberman said. "We've been to a lot of festivals.

"The 'Amococo' piece we've been trying to get to work out since 2003. Visually, it's a giant, brightly-colored fabric and it's inflated. You enter through an airlock," she said. "It's very much a sculpture. The artist did not create it specifically with children in mind, but it just so happens to work with children. It's a rainbow of colors that react."

The second major interactive piece is "Silent Disco," presented in collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh Department of Theater Arts and the PCT. Offered for all ages in 45-minute segments, participants enter a magical forest where special wireless technology headsets allow them to choose between "family-friendly" tunes from two



This is an aerial view of "Amococo," which will be set up on the Cathedral of Learning lawn in Oakland as part of the Pittsburgh International Children's Festival.

different disc jockeys.

Lieberman and Welch said they traveled to Ireland for a children's festival and came across "See Saw" from Ciotog.

"It's a dance piece," the executive director said. Welch said they were surprised to see even very young children participating in "See Saw." It will be staged at the Henry Heymann Theatre for ages 18 months to 5 years in a 40-minute show.

Other main events include "Knuffle Bunny," presented through the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts at Alumni Hall Theatre for ages 2 to 8. It's a stage adaptation of the award-winning children's books by Mo Willems.

"Baobab," Lieberman said, is a collaborative effort between Le Theatre Motus in Canada and The So Company of Mali.

"It's African folklore where ancient drums become really

intricate puppets," she said, and will be staged in Alumni Hall Theatre for ages 5 and up.

The final major act is "Room on the Broom," by Tall Stories from the U.K. for ages 4 and up in the Bellefield Hall Auditorium.

"We're happy and excited there will be something for everyone," Lieberman said. "When we're traveling, everything we see is like a puzzle that we put together each year. It's not just for the kids."

"The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust is proud to carry on the legacy of presenting award-winning international, national and local performing artists in an affordable and festive setting," said J. Kevin McMahon, the group's president and CEO.

Giant Eagle is the lead sponsor for this year's festival. A complete schedule of activities and additional information is available at [www.pghkids.org](http://www.pghkids.org) and [www.pghtheatre.org](http://www.pghtheatre.org).

— Photo Courtesy of Daniel Mullenburg



Pittsburgh International Children's Festival hits 25-year mark with cultural goodies  
Thursday, May 12, 2011, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette



Larry Roberts/Post-Gazette

The labyrinthine Amococo, as seen from the 36th floor of the Cathedral of Learning, is at the Pittsburgh Children's Festival in Oakland. It was created by Architects of Air from Nottingham, Britain.

The most visible sign of the 25th [Pittsburgh International Children's Festival](#) being in town will be a gargantuan outdoor sculpture on the lawn of the Cathedral of Learning.

Amococo is an inflatable structure that patrons can walk through. It's a colorful creation of the British group Architects of Air, which has provided towering inflatable sculptures in the past to the festival.



"It is not created for kids," says festival director Pam Lieberman. "It is presented in festivals all over the world and is geared toward all ages."

In addition to that there will be a number of ticketed theater performances and free ones by the likes of folk singer Maddi Georgi, Debo the Clown and Na Gaels at the outdoor K-12 Community Stage in Schenley Plaza and outdoors storytelling at The Story Corner adjacent to the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. Those events are 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. weekdays; 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday; and 1 to 6 p.m. Sunday.

Here is the schedule for theater shows:

- **"Amococo"**: The Luminaria sculpture is for all ages. (\$5); Cathedral of Learning lawn, 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. today through Friday; 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Saturday; 1-5:30 p.m. Sunday; sessions every half hour.
- **"Baobab"**: Inspired by African folklore, a young child helps to restore water to a drought-stricken village. Presented by Le Theare Motus & So Company (Canada, Mali). Alumni Hall Theater. 12:45 p.m. today-Friday; 4 p.m, Saturday; 5:30 p.m. Sunday.
- **"Knuffle Bunny"**: Stage adaptation of Mo Willems' beloved children's book follows a trip to the Laundromat in which things go hilariously wrong. Presented by the Kennedy Theater for Young Audiences on Tour. Alumni Hall Theatre. 9:45 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. today and Friday. 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Saturday; 1 and 4 p.m. Sunday.
- **"Room on the Broom"**: Musical adaptation of Julia Donaldson's book with puppets and songs. (\$8). Presented by Tall Stories (United Kingdom) at Bellefield Hall Auditorium. 9:45 a.m. and 12:45 p.m. today-Friday; 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Saturday; 2:30 and 5:30 p.m. Sunday.
- **"See Saw"**: Contemporary dance production on the theme of looking and being looked at. Presented by Ciotog (Ireland) at Henry Heymann Theater. 11:15 a.m. and 12:45 p.m. today; 9:45 and 11:15 a.m. Friday; 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Saturday; 1 and 4 p.m. Sunday.
- **"Silent Disco"**: A dance party that's different for each kid wearing wireless headsets receiving tunes from DJs. (\$2). Presented by University of Pittsburgh Theatre Arts Department and The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust (USA) at Schenley Plaza. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday; 1-5 p.m. Sunday; sessions every hour.

Unless noted, all events are \$8 with discounts for multiple-event tickets; children younger than 2 are free but require a lap pass. For ticket information and for hours visit [www.pghkids.org](http://www.pghkids.org) or call 412-456-6666; go to [www.pghkids.org](http://www.pghkids.org).

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Read more: <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/11132/1145925-51-0.stm#ixzz1Mis8v1Oj>