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WHYY CONTINUES SECOND SEASON OF *ON CANVAS* PERFORMING-ARTS SERIES WITH FIVE NEW EPISODES JANUARY 7 TO FEBRUARY 4

*Episodes to Feature Stanley Jordan, Pistolera, The Baird Sisters,
Andrew Bird and Lightspeed Champion*

PHILADELPHIA, December 31, 2008 — WHYY continues its second season of *On Canvas*, a weekly performing-arts series that explores Greater Philadelphia's rich, diverse cultural arts scene. *On Canvas* will feature legendary guitarist **Stanley Jordan** on January 7 at Wiggins Waterfront Park. Following episodes will feature **Pistolera** on January 14 at the Kimmel Center's Perelman Theater, **The Baird Sisters** on January 21 at the 47th Annual Philadelphia Folk Festival, **Andrew Bird** on January 28 at Lehigh University's Zoellner Arts Center and **Lightspeed Champion** on February 4 at First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia.

On Canvas episodes premiere on WHYY TV at 8:00 p.m. Wednesdays and are rebroadcast at 2:00 p.m. Sundays. Episodes are also broadcast on the WHYY Y Arts Channel (12.2) at 9:00 p.m. Wednesdays, 10:00 p.m. Thursdays, 11:00 p.m. Fridays, 2:00 p.m. Sundays, 7:00 p.m. Mondays and 8:00 p.m. Tuesdays following the premiere broadcast on WHYY TV. Additionally, episodes are available on Comcast's Channel 1 On Demand service.

"Unlike so many public TV and radio shows, which crowd the air with interviews and explanation, *On Canvas* lets the artists perform," Philadelphia Inquirer television critic Jonathan Storm says.

Stanley Jordan at Wiggins Waterfront Park, 8:00 p.m. January 7

A three-time Grammy Award nominee, Stanley Jordan ushered a new sound into instrumental music with his tapping technique, which enables him to play two independent parts — and even two guitars or a guitar and piano — simultaneously. Jordan has released more than 10 records since the mid-'80s, when his debut, *Magic Touch*, shot to the top of *Billboard's* jazz charts and stayed perched there for 51 weeks on its way to selling more than half a million copies.

His most recent release, *State of Nature*, finds Jordan integrating the sounds of nature into his tracks as if they were musical instruments. Jordan played guitar and piano in a performance with Charnett Moffett (bass) and David Haynes (drums) at Wiggins Waterfront Park in Camden, N.J., on August 19.

**Pistolera at the Kimmel Center's Perelman Theater, 8:00 p.m. January 14**

A Brooklyn-based quartet, Pistolera borrows from traditional styles of Mexican music, fusing it with indie-rock sensibilities to amass a melodic, danceable sound. The group — Sandra Lilia Velasquez (vocals and guitars), Ani Cordero (drums), Inca B. Satz (bass) and Maria Elena (accordion) — have released two records since 2006, *Siempre Hay Salida* and *En Este Camino*, and toured the United States, Mexico and Europe. Sung in Spanish on both records, the lyrics teem with political vigor, covering U.S.–Mexico border issues, the plight of immigrants and other topics.

The New York Post raves about Pistolera: “Velasquez’s intoxicating voice and her passion while playing the electric guitar matched with Cordero’s driving drumming style make for quite a spectacular live performance.” *Billboard* says about the band’s second CD: “The musicianship is superb here, and it’s a pleasure to listen to a whole museum of brass, bongos, congas, caxixi, maracas and pandereta incorporated beautifully into a sound that doesn’t fit neatly into any genre.” Pistolera performed at the Kimmel Center’s Perelman Theater in Philadelphia on July 17.

The Baird Sisters at the Philadelphia Folk Festival, 8:00 p.m. January 21

Influenced by Appalachian mountain music, contemporary outsider folk and Library of Congress recordings of their great-great uncle, I.G. Greer, sisters Laura and Meg Baird have played venues in their home base of Greater Philadelphia since 2000. Intertwining their natural harmonies, The Baird Sisters perform using guitar, banjo, mandolin, cello and dulcimer.

The artists’ collection of songs on its two releases includes haunting versions of traditional favorites, ballads and original compositions. Their second CD, *Lonely Town*, recorded live in Philadelphia in August, is foreboding yet wistful. Meg Baird is also a founding member of the Philadelphia-based psychedelic folk sextet Espers and recently released her first solo album, *Dear Companion*. The Baird Sisters performed at the 47th Annual Philadelphia Folk Festival in Schwenksville, Pa., on August 16.

Andrew Bird at Lehigh University’s Zoellner Arts Center, 8:00 p.m. January 28

Andrew Bird’s solo performance at Lehigh University’s Zoellner Arts Center will be broadcast by WHYY just eight days after *Noble Beast*, his awaited follow-up to 2007’s *Armchair Apocrypha*, hits shelves. The Chicago-based multi-instrumentalist has been wowing music fans since the mid-1990s with his blend of rock, folk, jazz, swing and other genres. He has churned out six records (seven, including *Noble Beast*) and three live offerings.

“Every night, I am rewriting all my songs for the audience,” Bird says. Looping violin, guitar, glockenspiel and other instruments, he creates a lush, textured sound that is improvised with each performance. Bird performed at Zoellner Arts Center on October 3.

**Lightspeed Champion at First Unitarian Church, 8:00 p.m. February 4**

Lightspeed Champion is the name of the new musical venture by Devonte Hynes, a former member of the disbanded U.K.-based dance-punk group Test Icicles. His first record under Lightspeed Champion — taken from a comic strip vocalist-guitarist Hynes developed as a teen — is *Falling off the Lavender Bridge*, a collection of indie folk and countrified rock songs blown up widescreen-size at times with orchestration.

Released in January 2008, *Falling off the Lavender Bridge* was produced in Omaha, Neb., by Saddle Creek Records producer Mike Mogis (Bright Eyes, Cursive). Several Saddle Creek band members moonlighted during the recording. With a full instrumentation section, Lightspeed Champion performed at First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia on June 4.

Trudi Brown serves as executive producer for *On Canvas*; Hugh Haynie, producer; and Heidi Saman, associate producer. Pete Scaffidi serves as editor and technical director. Part of WHYY's wide variety of community programming, *On Canvas* serves as a window to artists' stories, combining interviews with performances captured live at venues throughout Greater Philadelphia.

On Canvas is made possible through the extraordinary generosity of an anonymous family of donors and the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation. For more information, visit www.whyy.org/artsandculture/oncanvas.

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