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ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE SPONSORS TAP FACTOR COMMUNITY DANCE WORKSHOPS

LED BY TAP FACTOR FOUNDER AND NOAH RACEY'S PULSE CAST MEMBER, CHRISTOPHER ERK

SARASOTA, Fla. (June 5, 2013) — Asolo Repertory Theatre today announced it is sponsoring a series of Tap Factor community workshops for local students that explore the art of tap dancing. Led by Christopher Erk, Tap Factor founder, with the support of Anthony J. Russo, two master tappers from the cast of *Noah Racey's PULSE*, the local Tap Factor workshops take place over the span of this week and next, culminating with a group performance by participants immediately following the Saturday, June 15 matinee in the Mertz Theatre.

Tap Factor is an organization Erk established to further the art of tap dance by introducing it to a new generation, with a mission of preserving tap's history and exploring how tap can interact with the world today. "Tap Factor introduces a form of dance to young people and shows them how it might be utilized as a mode of communication and community engagement," said Erk. "By teaming up with schools and other local organizations, Tap Factor can produce performance projects that are fun for the students and at the same time, educational and inspiring." Tap Factor has given workshops in other U.S. cities and in Mexico, including Dayton, Ohio; New York City, and Guadalajara.

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Tap Factor Workshops

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Participants in the local Tap Factor workshops are high school dance students from Manatee School for the Arts and students with little to no dance experience from the afterschool program at Newtown Estates. The groups are meeting for an hour four to six times between now and June 15. During the workshop sessions, students make their own portable tap boards, learn the basic steps, and develop a signature tap dance style. Asolo Rep is providing the supplies to make the tap boards and tap shoes for participants who do not already have their own.

“We are so excited to be working with The Tap Factor on this amazing project. The young people who are participating in the workshops are thrilled to be exploring tap dancing and developing new modes of expression with Christopher and Anthony,” said Lily Junker, interim Education Director for Asolo Rep. “Having the opportunity to share the talent and passion of artists like Chris and Anthony with our local students is a rare treat, and one of the unanticipated bonuses of producing of *Noah Racey’s PULSE*.”

The public can witness one of the workshop sessions taking place at the Sarasota Farmers Market on Saturday, June 8 from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Participants will be giving demonstrations and holding a group tap jam session by the fountain near the intersection of Lemon Ave. and State Street.

Performances of *Noah Racey’s PULSE* featuring dancing by Christopher Erk and Anthony J. Russo run through June 16, 2103. For tickets or more information, please contact the Asolo Rep Box Office at 941.351.8000 or go to asolorep.org.

For more information about Tap Factor, you can visit one of their social media sites:

YOUTUBE: <http://www.youtube.com/user/TheTapFactor>

FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Tap-Factor/370090879776716>

TWITTER: <https://twitter.com/TheTapFactor>

INSTAGRAM: <http://instagram.com/thetapfactor>

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