



***A Circus of Spirit, Song and Dance from Tibet, the Land of Snow  
Featuring the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts, Dharamsala, India***

## **FACT SHEET**

### **KIPO! A Circus of Spirit, Song and Dance**

- As part of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's visit, TigerLion Arts proudly presents the world premiere of KIPO!, a new production created in collaboration with a 20-person ensemble from the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA).
- KIPO! opens during the weekend of His Holiness' visit, May 6th through May 9th, 2011, and will continue for two weeks in May.
- During their stay, TIPA will host post-show dialogues and workshops for the community to deepen our connection to Tibet's ancient, high-spirited style of music and dance.
- Starring local TIPA performer, Tenzin Ngawang, the KIPO! production is a unique collaboration of Western theatrical styles of creation and production with the ancient traditions of Tibetan performing arts.

### **Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA)**

- The Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA), founded by the 14th Dalai Lama, was created to preserve the rich cultural heritage of Tibet. When the Communist Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1959 attacked every aspect of Tibetan culture and civilization, forcing the Dalai Lama and some 100,000 Tibetans to flee to India, His Holiness felt the need to take immediate steps to preserve the traditional performing arts before they were lost forever. Thus, TIPA was established August 1959, four months after the Dalai Lama's arrival in India.
- TIPA's 20 senior, highly-trained performers are the world's most skilled and experienced performers of traditional Tibetan music and dance.
- KIPO!, which means 'happy' in Tibetan, has a style and a sense of delight, humor and depth that is accessible to people of all ages and nationalities.

- **Tenzin Ngawang**, KIPO! Co-Producer, Music & Dance Director, and Lead Performer. Ngawang is a native Tibetan and trained at TIPA in Dharamsala, India, 1993 to 2004. After two years of vigorous training and practice at TIPA, Ngawang was promoted to Junior Artiste, and then after five more years of extensive performing throughout the world, he became a Senior Artiste at the institute. During his eleven years at TIPA, Ngawang performed all around the globe, earning the respect and praise of all Tibetan communities. Being well versed in all forms of traditional Tibetan music, instruments and dance, Ngawang now teaches for the Tibetan American Foundation of Minnesota, which represents the second largest Tibetan community in the United States. Ngawang performed in and choreographed traditional Tibetan dances for The Buddha Prince, and brought an authentic Tibetan voice to the final musical score. He has worked with TigerLion Arts since 2005.

## **TigerLion Arts**

- **TigerLion Arts** (TLA) is a Minneapolis-based production company that celebrates human wisdom and the spirit of nature through creative works that awaken, inform and delight. It plans on taking KIPO! on a world tour to celebrate basic goodness, showcasing the unique Tibetan culture and fostering harmony within communities of all ages and backgrounds.
- **Markell Kiefer**, Executive Artistic Director, TLA, is a writer, director, performer and producer with an MFA in Lecoq-based physical theatre from Naropa University and a BA in Religion and Environmental Ethics from Middlebury College. She was raised a Tibetan Buddhist and her first outdoor productions were developed on the magical lands of Shambhala Mountain Center in Colorado. Directorial credits include: Nature, The Buddha Prince, KIPO!, The Brush Master, The Rabbit in the Moon, The Life of Milarepa, Fully Committed and The Giving Tree, by Shel Silverstein.
- **Tyson Forbes**, Producing Artistic Director, TLA, is a theatre creator, performer, and producer. Forbes has a B.A. in Theatre from Middlebury College. He has performed in regional theaters throughout the United States including the Guthrie, 5th Avenue, and the Ordway. Forbes is currently a company member of the Guthrie and lives in Minneapolis. He has co-created numerous new works including Supermonkey, We are Ugly but We Have the Music, and TigerLion Arts' latest creation, Nature; based on his great, great, great ancestor Ralph Waldo Emerson.