

## **FIGURES OF SPEECH THEATRE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Figures of Speech Theatre of Freeport, Maine will present their shadow puppet play for audiences of all ages, “Nightingale”, at:

Performances will take place at:

Tickets for “Nightingale” are \$

Figures of Speech Theatre uses original vocal music, live actors in flowing silk costumes, and 4’ tall intricately carved puppets to bring to life Hans Christian Andersen’s classic story, “Nightingale”. This lush, dazzling full-stage presentation is well suited to audiences from 6 to 86.

The theme of “Nightingale” is the importance of maintaining a connection with Nature. The Emperor of China learns of the existence of a plain gray bird whose song is the sweetest in all the world. He summons her to court, where she moves him to tears. Later he is given a jeweled mechanical bird which makes him lose interest in the Nightingale, and banish her from his empire. But when he is alone and gravely ill, his tiny compassionate friend returns to bargain with Death and save the Emperor.

The story is framed by narrators -- adventurous medieval “traders in essences” played by Andrea Goodman, formerly a principal vocalist with the Meredith Monk Ensemble, and Carol Farrell, Co-Founder of Figures of Speech. A quest to collect the essence of the sweetest song in the world leads them to China, where they meet the Emperor, the Emperor’s daughter, the courtiers, and the nightingale.

The production features an original vocal score composed by Goodman. Altogether, the layering of people, puppets, and music form a magical mix as the inanimate becomes animated, and the manipulators interact with the manipulated. The result is an exotic, sophisticated rendition of a classic tale which promises to be quite unlike any theatrical experience you’ve ever had before.

Figures of Speech Theatre has performed throughout Japan, North America and Europe with performances which are enjoyed equally by adults and young people. In 1996 “Nightingale” played a successful Broadway run at the New Victory Theater and won the coveted “UNIMA Citation of Excellence,” the highest award in American puppet theater.

The creation of “Nightingale” was funded in part by the Davis Family Foundation, the Jim Henson Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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