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For Immediate Release

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**The Annenberg Center presents First Person Arts' annual Grand Slam  
as a part of its By Local series**

(Philadelphia, April 25, 2012)—The widely acclaimed Annenberg Center By Local series closes the 11/12 season in style with the presentation of First Person Arts' beloved Grand Slam. This annual event features the winners of First Person Arts' monthly StorySlams as they go head to head for the title of "Best Storyteller in Philadelphia."

The performance will take place in the Harold Prince Theatre on **May 19, 2012 at 8:30 PM**. Tickets are \$20-\$30 (prices are subject to change). For tickets or for more information, please visit [AnnenbergCenter.org](http://AnnenbergCenter.org) or call 215.898.3900. Tickets can also be purchased in person at the Annenberg Center Box Office.

The Grand Slam will feature 11 storytellers in total, 10 of whom have won a StorySlam, plus the highest-scoring Audience Favorite, since December 2011. **The evening's designated theme is "Burned."** Judges for the evening include Liz Spikol (writer for *Philadelphia Weekly*, *The Philly Post* and *Curbed Philly*) and Elijah Dornstreich (founder of Fourth Wall Arts Salon).

Contestants include: Diana Spechler, Bernardo Morillo, Evan Roskos, Marjorie Winther, Jake Frechette, Chris Oberlin, Anissa Weinraub, Katie Samson and S.M. Shrake.

Entering their sixth season, First Person Arts' StorySlams are popular storytelling competitions at which audience members share true stories from their lives based on the night's specific theme, ranging from "Burned" to "the EX-Files." Anyone can sign up for a chance to be one of 10 randomly selected storytellers. Each contestant has five minutes to captivate the crowd with their storytelling prowess. Winners from Slams in December through April go on to vie in the Grand Slam for the title of "Best Storyteller in Philadelphia" and free Slam admission for life.

**INSIGHTS**

Storytelling in Hyperdrive with First Person Arts

May 19 at 7:30 PM

Patrons can join First Person Arts before the show to learn storytelling fundamentals in a flash with popular StorySlam winner, Martha Cooney. Martha's expertise and First Person Arts' StorySlam format will guide guests in crafting a two-minute micro story sparked by a theme suggested on the spot. Guests can perform their story for the group or just sit back and enjoy. This workshop is for storytellers at all levels, will take place in the Montgomery Theatre and is free to all ticket holders.

Learn more about StorySlams and First Person Arts at [firstpersonarts.org](http://firstpersonarts.org).

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**INSIGHTS—Performance Enhancement Events**

The Annenberg Center offers a range of exciting and informative pre- and post-performance events that are free for all ticket holders. Featuring discussions led by Penn faculty members, area experts and guest artists, these events are designed to illuminate the work on stage. For more information, visit [AnnenbergCenter.org/INSIGHTS](http://AnnenbergCenter.org/INSIGHTS).

**40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season**

For the past 40 years, the Annenberg Center has dedicated itself to the advancement of a diverse and thriving cultural community through the pursuit of excellence, innovation and intellectual engagement in the realms of music, theatre and dance. To celebrate the momentous occasion, the Annenberg Center has put together one of the most expansive seasons ever—a nod towards the colorful history of presenting the best of the best from all corners of the globe. With

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highly acclaimed artists from six continents, audiences can take a journey around the world without leaving their seat. From Zakir Hussain of India and Chunky Move of Australia to the Gate Theatre of Ireland to the Spirit of Uganda from Africa, audience members will see the world in a whole new way.

### **The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

The University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts has been the region's leading multi-disciplinary performance venue for theatre, dance, jazz, world music, new music and children's programming since its inception in 1971. The Annenberg Center's curatorial vision emphasizes four primary values: artistic integrity, cultural diversity, curatorial balance and a willingness to take risks. By presenting world-renowned and cutting edge artists and companies that express adventuresome perspectives on contemporary issues, timeless ideas and diverse cultures, the Annenberg Center promotes critical thinking and dialogue among its audiences, creating a uniquely rewarding arts experience.

The Annenberg Center has achieved national recognition for its outstanding, 29-year Dance Celebration series—presented in partnership with Philadelphia's Dance Affiliates—touring theatre series, and for its superior offerings for children, including both its Student Discovery Series and the acclaimed 28-year Philadelphia International Children's Festival, the oldest festival of its kind in the United States.

Through a generous grant from The Wallace Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts, the Annenberg Center showcases outstanding local artists each year through its exciting and diverse By Local series.

Throughout its history, the Annenberg Center has presented innovative and critically-acclaimed theatre productions with some of the biggest stars of stage and screen including Liv Ullmann and Sam Waterston in *A Doll's House*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* with Glenn Close, Jessica Tandy in Beckett's *Not I*, and Tennessee Williams' *Sweet Bird of Youth* with Irene Worth and Christopher Walken. University of Pennsylvania alumnus and noteworthy Broadway producer and director Harold Prince staged many of his plays at the Annenberg Center before taking them to Broadway.

*Generous support for the 11/12 Annenberg Center season is provided by The National Endowment for the Arts, The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, The Philadelphia Cultural Fund, The Philadelphia Foundation, The Wallace Foundation, PNC, The Philadelphia Phillies and The University of Pennsylvania. The Sheraton Philadelphia is the exclusive hotel sponsor.*

### **For additional press information or to set up interviews, please contact:**

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