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Spirit

The Seventh Fire

Stunning production captures tale of Native American culture

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EDITOR

Every so often, one's mind is changed. Where darkness reigned, light explodes into every corner. Where ignorance has hoarded unto itself a mound of preconceived notions, understanding takes root. Such things may indeed happen to viewers who watch with an open heart the upcoming multimedia production: *Spirit – The Seventh Fire*.

The Native American theatrical journey will be presented May 20 through July 4 in a state-of-the-art, climate controlled 750-seat tent perched upon Lemon Hill in Philadelphia's Fairmount Park.

The production combines Native American regalia with dance; a full musical contingent, powwow drummers, vocalists and an intense splash of National Geographic Imax film footage help illustrate *Spirit's* poignant narrative – the tale of one man's journey to reconnect with his ancestors and a cultural history that spans centuries.

Spirit – The Seventh Fire tells the dramatic story of an office worker, a suit-and-tie guy – an American Indian – who is driven by the "American Dream" and assailed by deadlines, cell phones, technology and the race against the clock. He needs to seek his roots, his heritage and his connection to the natural world. Upon finding by pure chance a feather in a file folder, the spirits of his ancestors are summoned to guide him to a magical place where his past meets his present.

Spirit – The Seventh Fire is alive with dance and drums and more. It's a multimedia extravaganza that had its official opening last year on The Mall in Washington D.C. The grand debut was launched in conjunction with the opening of the Smithsonian's

National Museum of the American Indian and subsequent presentations in other cities have only added to its list of accolades.

Peter Buffet, the producer and composer of the show is the son of Warren Buffet. Peter, a highly respected recording artist and producer, long ago began a personal journey to better understand Native American culture and music. He scored the "Fire Dance" scene in the Academy Award winning film, "Dances with Wolves," and also scored "500 Nations," produced by Kevin Costner. After that, the quest to develop *Spirit* took hold of him. The Philadelphia tour promises to be a revelation of traditions and wisdoms almost lost. Buffet is joined in the project by co-composer Chief Hawk Pope, a Shawnee Chief, music master, consultant and expert in Native American ways.

Chief Hawk Pope says of the production, "When I'm backstage, I can look down along the wall of the tent and I can see grass. I couldn't see that in a theater and it made the theater a foreign place. This is not a foreign place – this is nothing but an enormous teepee, a huge lodge. And, I feel perfectly comfortable in there and I think everyone else does too."

In Philadelphia, there will be an educational adjunct to the main tent – The Spirit Lodge. There, beautiful handmade art, displays of Native American artifacts, and



exhibits presented by cultural organizations that are reacquainting society with the wisdom inherent in Native American cultures. The Spirit Theater also serves as a site where there will take place panel discussions, lectures and films.

In addition, lining the outside of the main tent are pow-erful photographic images taken by Edward Curtis. Inside

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– Chief Hawk Pope

the tent are three screens measuring 40 feet high and 90 feet wide. When the center scrim rises, the main circular stage is seen. On either side, screens display images then become transparent to high-light soloists, among whom is included Chief Hawk Pope whose powerful narrative is backed by powwow singers and musicians.

Spirit – The Seventh Fire is more than just a show. It's an arts and education project of

the Rudolf Steiner Foundation (RSF) Global Community Fund, a charitable organization. *Spirit's* purpose is to honor and showcase the traditions of Native American culture and bring the wisdom of Native traditions into daily life.

Tickets prices range from \$25 to \$60 with discounts for children, students, seniors and groups. To learn more about the production, visit: www.spirit7thfire.com. To obtain tickets purchase through any Ticketmaster outlet, charge by phone by calling 215-336-2000 or purchase online: www.ticketmaster.com