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**FIRSTWORKS PRESENTS MICHAEL MOSCHEN
A Show of Fantastic Feats and Illusions**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – FirstWorks opens their spring 2010 season with visionary performing artist Michael Moschen. Ranked as one of the world’s leading jugglers, Moschen has revolutionized an ancient circus art into a mesmerizing concert form that has dazzled audiences around the globe. Hailed as a “juggling artist extraordinaire”, Moschen is known for his formidable mastery of crystal balls, spheres, hoops, rings and other sculptural forms that fly, float and spin. He will perform on Saturday, March 13 at the VMA Arts and Cultural Center in Providence, R.I.

Jugglers typically control objects by grabbing them, but Mr. Moschen championed the technique of using open hands, creating the illusion that the objects follow their own impulses. “Each new piece that I create is an experiment – there is a risk. That is the only way to discover something truly original and new...and alive.” Moschen explained in his 1991 profile on PBS’ “Great Performances” series.

“Michael Moschen’s continuous engagement with the creative process allows him to focus on something new and unexpected during each performance,” said Kathleen Pletcher, FirstWorks executive artistic director. “His work crosses ethnic and social borders, and is greeted with standing ovations and critical acclaim by audiences of all ages.”

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The recipient of the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship, known as the “Genius Grant”, Moschen has performed throughout Europe, Asia, and North and South America. He was commissioned by Cirque du Soleil to create and stage a new work for their Las Vegas show, and has been featured at international theatre and dance festivals in Hong Kong, Perth, Edinburgh and Barcelona. Festival appearances in the United States include: Spoleto USA, the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival, the Lincoln Center's Serious Fun Festival, the 75th Annual New Yorker Magazine Festival and the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, among others.

In 1991, Moschen’s life and work was profiled in an episode of PBS’ “Great Performances” series titled “In Motion with Michael Moschen”. Other film credits include “Labyrinth”, directed by Jim Henson in 1986 and starring David Bowie. In the film, Moschen’s hands stunt-doubled for Bowie’s in the scene where his character magically manipulates crystal spheres. Moschen has also appeared on numerous TV shows, including “The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson” and the A&E special, “The Mystery of Genius”.

In addition to performing, Moschen is deeply involved in understanding and sharing the physical and mathematical principles that underlie his work. He has been a keynote speaker at the National Conference of Teachers of Mathematics and for the Association of New York Teachers of Mathematics, and he has lectured on innovation and creativity at Carnegie Mellon, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Lincoln Center Education Program. Moschen grew up in a housing project in a Massachusetts mill town, and began his juggling career with boyhood friend Penn Jillette (now of Penn & Teller).

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FirstWorks presents Michael Moschen, a show of fantastic feats and illusions, at the VMA Arts and Cultural Center, 1 Avenue of the Arts, Providence, on Saturday, March 13, 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$18-32 (prices include a \$2 restoration fee), and are available through the VMA Arts and Cultural Center box office window: 220 Weybosset Street, by phone: 401-421-ARTS (2787) or online at www.first-works.org. This project has been made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts as part of American Masterpieces: Three Centuries of Artistic Genius.

About FirstWorks

FirstWorks was launched in 2004 as a vehicle to build community, reach underserved audiences, and present extraordinary arts programs that elevate Providence's national profile. In collaboration with the City of Providence's Department of Art, Culture & Tourism, FirstWorks has flourished. In six years FirstWorks has produced ten groundbreaking arts festivals, attracted over 70,000 participants, and engaged more than 100 nonprofit community organizations and schools. Visit www.first-works.org to learn more.

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