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CONTACT:
Rebecca Bailey, Publicity Coordinator/Writer
Hopkins Center for the Arts, Dartmouth College
rebecca.a.bailey@dartmouth.edu
603.646.3991

A (musical) portrait of the scientist as a young girl

HANOVER, NH—Before she was a renowned humanitarian, conservationist, and animal activist, Dr. Jane Goodall was a little girl with a very special toy chimpanzee named Jubilee. Created by the Kennedy Center’s renowned youth theater program, the musical *Me...Jane* shows how that youthful attachment to a toy became a lifelong devotion to real primates which has transformed how humans view and treat these fellow beings. It also foreshadows the gender-based discrimination that Goodall would repeatedly vanquish in her lifelong quest to study wild animals.

The Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences on Tour performs *Me...Jane* on Sunday, May 5, 3 pm, in Spaulding Auditorium of the Hopkins Center for the Arts at Dartmouth. School groups will see the performance on Monday, May 6, and both shows will be American Sign Language-interpreted.

Based on the 2011 book by Patrick McDonnell, a beloved, bestselling author-artist and creator of the Mutts syndicated comic strip, *Me...Jane* shows Jane and Jubilee as they go on outdoor adventures and observed all the miracles of nature around them. As they learned more and more on their expeditions, Jane dreams of spending the rest of her life living with and helping animals—despite nosy neighbors who say her dreams are silly. She takes her Jubilee with her as she watches the chickens and squirrels in her rural English neighborhood, recording her observations in a notebook. With anecdotes taken directly from Goodall’s autobiography, this adaptation makes a true story accessible for the young—and young at heart. Original songs like "Animals, Animals, Animals!" and "Be Still" memorably communicate the principles that animated this budding scientist.

Goodall herself gave the show a stamp of approval when it premiered at the Kennedy Center in 2017. “The idea of bringing *Me...Jane* to the stage is very exciting,” she told the Kennedy Center. “I love the book and I am sure that the live action will inspire children of all ages to pursue their dreams and to realize if Jane did it, they can do it, too.”

Critics, too, cheered the production. Wrote *DC Theatre Scene*, “5 STARS! One of the most poignant moments I’ve recently seen at the theater.” Wrote the *Washington Post*, “Animals sing and dance throughout the show. Not real animals, but ... actors ... [who] leap, swing, scamper, pant and peck just like the creatures they portray. Judging by the cheers and laughter of the audience, they were a big hit.”

Goodall, born in 1934 and raised in Bournemouth, England, was the first person to study chimpanzees in their native habitat, in Africa, and has written about 30 books on her experiences. She also travels and speaks...
frequently about conservation and protecting our shared planet. The play ends with a video of Goodall as an adult, showing her observing and playing with chimps in Africa and sharing a surprise message.

MORE ABOUT...

The Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences (KCTYA) Program commissions, produces, tours and presents performances in theater, opera, dance, music, puppetry and storytelling for children and their families. With a focus on new and innovative theater and musical theater works that excite, inspire, and challenge young audiences, KCTYA devotes itself to producing and presenting diverse productions that draw on the talents of playwrights, composers, directors, designers and actors from around the country and the world. Its busy season includes three to four commissioned works for in-house productions and two tours that travel across the US for up to eight months at a time. KCTYA also produces a biennial program, New Visions/New Voices, that helps theaters in the US and abroad develop new work for young audiences. KCTYA previously came to the Hop in 2017 with the musical Elephant and Piggie’s “We Are In a Play!”

Dame Jane Morris Goodall is best known for her nearly six-decade study of social and family interactions of wild chimpanzees, primarily in Gombe Stream National Park, Tanzania, in 1960. She is the founder of the Jane Goodall Institute and Roots & Shoots (a global environmental and humanitarian education program for young people), and she has worked extensively on conservation and animal welfare issues. She has served on the board of the Nonhuman Rights Project since its founding in 1996. In 2002, she was named a UN Messenger of Peace. She is also honorary member of the World Future Council.

Passionate about animals from early childhood, Goodall couldn’t afford to attend university so instead worked as a typist and in documentary films, continuing to educate herself about Africa and its wildlife. When she had the good luck to be invited to visit a friend in Kenya in 1957, she met the famous paleontologist Louis B. Leakey and impressed him with her knowledge of the continent’s flora and fauna. He hired her to accompany him and his wife on a fossil-hunting expedition in Tanzania. After that, Goodall was able to get permission and funding to live among and study the wild chimpanzees in Gombe Stream National Park. Patiently acclimating the chimps to her presence, she was able to observe them more closely than any previous scientist, discovering til-then unknown behaviors such as meat-eating and tool-making. Word of her work spread, and Goodall was accepted in 1962 at Cambridge University as a PhD candidate, one of very few people to be admitted without a university degree.

National Geographic decided to sponsor her work, and Goodall published her article in the magazine in 1963. She earned her PhD in ethology (the study of animal behaviour) in 1965. Also in 1965, National Geographic granted funds for the construction of the first buildings of what would become the Gombe Stream Research Centre. National Geographic television specials introduced an international audience to Goodall and her unconventional practices--such as naming the chimpanzees rather than referring to them by, say, number. While some scientists scoffed at this, Goodall steadfastly defended what is now conventional wisdom: that primates have individual personalities, just like humans.

In 1977, she founded the Jane Goodall Institute for Wildlife Research, Education and Conservation. That institute’s programs have included ChimpanZoo, an international effort dedicated to the study of captive chimpanzees and to Roots & Shoots; in 1994, the Lake Tanganyika Catchment Reforestation and Education project, to help communities situated around Lake Tanganyika to create sustainable livelihoods agriculture, micro-finance initiatives and education as a means to conserve local habitat and animal species. In 2002, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed Goodall to serve as a United Nations Messenger of Peace. In 2004, she was made a Dame of the British Empire (the equivalent of a knighthood). In 2006, she
received the French Legion of Honor, presented by the Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin, as well as the UNESCO Gold Medal Award.

Goodall’s list of publications includes *Hope for Animals and Their World: How Endangered Species are Being Rescued from the Brink*, two overviews of her work at Gombe — *In the Shadow of Man* and *Through a Window* — as well as two autobiographies in letters, the best-selling autobiography *Reason for Hope* and many children's books. *The Chimpanzees of Gombe: Patterns of Behaviour* is the definitive scientific work on chimpanzees and is the culmination of Goodall's scientific career.

She has been the subject of numerous television documentaries and is featured in the large-screen format film *Jane Goodall's Wild Chimpanzees* (2002). She also has been featured in five Animal Planet specials. She continues her work today by travelling an average of 300 days per year speaking in venues around the world about the threats facing chimpanzees, other environmental crises, and her reasons for hope that we will ultimately solve the problems that we have imposed on the earth. She continually urges her audiences to recognize their personal power and responsibility to effect positive change through consumer action, lifestyle change and activism: “Every individual counts,” she says. “Every individual has a role to play. Every individual makes a difference.”

**The Hopkins Center for the Arts**

Founded in 1962, “the Hop” is a multi-disciplinary academic, visual and performing arts center dedicated to uncovering insights, igniting passions, and nurturing talents to help Dartmouth and the surrounding Upper Valley community engage imaginatively and contribute creatively to our world. Each year the Hop presents more than 300 live events and films by visiting artists as well as Dartmouth students and the Dartmouth community, and reaches more than 22,000 Upper Valley residents and students with outreach and arts education programs. After a celebratory 50th-anniversary season in 2012-13, the Hop enters its second half-century with renewed passion for mentoring young artists, supporting the development of new work, and providing a laboratory for participation and experimentation in the arts.

**CALENDAR LISTING**

**Kennedy Center Theatre for Young Audiences on Tour presents**

*Me . . . Jane: The Dreams and Adventures of a Young Jane Goodall*

Before she was a renowned humanitarian, conservationist and animal activist, Dr. Jane Goodall was a little girl with a very special toy chimpanzee named Jubilee. Join young Jane and Jubilee as they find adventure in the outdoors, learning firsthand about animals from their own backyard and discovering the importance of protecting all living species. With anecdotes taken directly from Goodall’s autobiography, this musical makes an inspirational true story accessible for both the young and the young at heart.

Sunday, May 5, 3 pm

Spaulding Auditorium, Hopkins Center for the Arts at Dartmouth College, Hanover NH

$23/18, 18 & under $18/13, Dartmouth students $10

Info: hop.dartmouth.edu, 603.646.3991

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