

RUTH ECKERD HALL

RICHARD B. BAUMGARDNER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

PRESS RELEASE

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ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST VIOLINISTS PERFORMS IN WASHINGTON D.C. INCOGNITO

**Joshua Bell to perform with Jeremy Denk on Tuesday, January 20
at Ruth Eckerd Hall.**

Tickets are on sale now.

January 12, 2009, Clearwater, FL – A man sat at a metro station in Washington D.C. and started to play the violin; it was a cold January morning. He played six Bach pieces for about 45 minutes. During that time, since it was rush hour, it was calculated that thousands of people went through the station, most of them on their way to work.

Three minutes went by and a middle aged man noticed there was musician playing. He slowed his pace and stopped for a few seconds and then hurried up to meet his schedule. A minute later, the violinist received his first dollar tip: a woman threw the money in the till and without stopping continued to walk. A few minutes later, someone leaned against the wall to listen to him, but the man looked at his watch and started to walk again. Clearly he was late for work.

The one who paid the most attention was a 3 year old boy. His mother tagged him along, hurried but the kid stopped to look at the violinist. Finally the mother pushed hard and the child continued to walk turning his head all the time. This action was repeated by several other children. All the parents, without exception, forced them to move on.

In the 45 minutes the musician played, only 6 people stopped and stayed for a while. About 20 gave him money but continued to walk their normal pace. He collected \$32. When he finished playing and silence took over, no one noticed it. No one applauded, nor was there any recognition.

No one knew this but the violinist was Joshua Bell, one of the best musicians in the world. He played one of the most intricate pieces ever written with a violin worth 3.5 million dollars. Two days before his playing in the subway, Joshua Bell sold out at a theater in Boston and the seats average \$100.

Joshua Bell playing incognito in the metro station was organized by the Washington Post as part of a social experiment about perception, taste and priorities of people. The outlines were: in a commonplace environment at an inappropriate hour: Do we perceive beauty? Do we stop to appreciate it? Do we recognize the talent in an unexpected context?

Here is the entire performance:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnOPu0_YWhw

Joshua Bell will be performing at Ruth Eckerd Hall with pianist Jeremy Denk on Tuesday, January 20 at 8 pm. Tickets priced at \$50.00, \$45.00 and \$35.00 are available at the Ruth Eckerd Hall Ticket Office located at 1111 McMullen Booth Road in Clearwater, by calling 727.791.7400 or by logging onto www.rutheckerdhall.com. The Ruth Eckerd Hall Ticket Office is open Monday through Saturday, from 10 am to 6 pm and one hour prior to showtime.

Designed by the prestigious Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, Ruth Eckerd Hall enters its 26th season as the number six ranked venue in the world, according to the entertainment industry trade publication Billboard Magazine.

*Entertainment industry trade publication Pollstar announced the nomination of Ruth Eckerd Hall for a **2008 Pollstar Concert Industry Award** in the category of **Theatre of the Year**.*

Known for its 2,180-seat acoustically perfect auditorium, artists from America and around the world, ranging from classical, rock, opera, Broadway, Jazz, pop and more are included in the stellar lineup of more than 200 performances a year.

Ruth Eckerd Hall and the Ruth Eckerd Hall Foundation are 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organizations.

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