

The Seattle Times

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Giant Magnet pulls in family fun from across the globe

By Tom Keogh
Special to The Seattle Times

Now in its second year under a new name, Giant Magnet, the former Seattle International Children's Festival, presents its 24th annual slate of performances for children of all ages.

Giant Magnet is at home at Seattle Center for five days next week, then heads to Tacoma's Pantages Theatre for a day.

From Canada comes Cirque du Soleil veteran and clown Jamie Adkins, in a new giggeworthy show about "the triumphs and challenges of a man struggling to say something but not quite able to get it out." From the U.S. comes the fascinating Black Violin, featuring formally trained musicians Kev Marcus and Wil B., who merge the classical repertoire for strings with the hip-hop sound of a DJ and drummer. (Check 'em out on YouTube.)

Senegal is represented by Gansango Music & Dance, combining traditional and contemporary dance and music from West Africa. The German puppet troupe Figurentheater Wilde & Vogel presents an adaptation of "The Hobbit," mixing live music, masterful puppetry and eerie atmospherics. Three other performance groups representing First Nations, Colombia and a Japan-U.S. collaboration are also in the mix.

More than 200 schools across the Pacific Northwest and Canada turn up to enjoy the fun every year, joining thousands of other kids and families from the community.

One of only a handful of global cultural festivals in North America designed specifically for children, Giant Magnet also includes free crafts and activities such as kite-making, hula-hooping and origami.



PHOTO COURTESY GIANT MAGNET
Bunraku Bay Puppet Troupe, shown performing "Kotobuki Shiki Sanbaso and The Lion Dance," will be at Giant Magnet.



COLIN BRENNAN PHOTOGRAPHY
Black Violin is one of the many groups slated to perform at Giant Magnet, formerly the Seattle International Children's Festival.

FESTIVAL PREVIEW
Giant Magnet

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Tuesday-May 15 at Seattle Center, 305 Harrison St.,
Seattle; May 17 at the Pantages Theatre, 901 Broadway,
Tacoma; prices vary per performance
(www.giantmagnet.org).

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