



HIT entertainment

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THOMAS AND HIS ENGINE FRIENDS MAKE TRACKS ON STAGE IN THE BRAND'S FIRST WORLDWIDE TOURING STAGE SHOW

***"Thomas & Friends Live On Stage"* from HIT Entertainment and ThemeSTAR to Begin Its Global Tour in 2007**

NEW YORK, NY – LONDON – January 19, 2007 – In 2007, *Thomas & Friends* takes to the stage in the brand's first live international touring stage show, ***"Thomas & Friends Live on Stage in Thomas Saves the Day,"*** produced by HIT Entertainment and ThemeSTAR. The 90-minute musical adventure stars Thomas and his engine friends, Percy and Diesel and features Sir Topham Hatt, along with the people and engineers from the Island of Sodor.

Thomas & Friends Live on Stage includes new railroad-themed songs and tells the story of Thomas and his engine friends as they work together as 'Really Useful Engines' to get the railroad ready for Sodor's Magic Lantern Festival. Encountering adventures along the way, Thomas, Percy and Diesel, among others share a story that helps encourage life lessons such as discovery, friendship and cooperation.

Beginning in March of 2007, ***Thomas & Friends Live on Stage*** will be making stops in more than 40 cities in the US and Canada, inviting children and their families to hop aboard for new adventures with their favorite steam engine. Tickets for most of the Thomas Live shows are available at www.ticketmaster.com or by calling local Ticketmaster offices. For all scheduling information, please visit www.thomasandfriends.com. Following its US tour, ***Thomas & Friends Live on Stage*** will make stops in Asia and Europe throughout 2007-2008, including Korea, the UK, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Hong Kong and Taiwan, with additional European territories to be announced.

"Thomas & Friends – the #1 engine, the #1 preschool toy brand in the US and the #1 Infant/Preschool licensed brand in the UK – is a worldwide phenomenon, broadcast in more than 145 countries," said Bruce Steinberg, Chief Executive Officer, HIT Entertainment. "This classic, evergreen property holds an enduring appeal for preschoolers everywhere. The new stage show from ThemeSTAR offers children and their families a fresh way to experience the brand, and builds upon the successful *Day Out With Thomas™* events in the US and the UK."

"Thomas & Friends Live on Stage will introduce many children to the magic of live performance," said Mark Avery, CEO, ThemeSTAR. "ThemeSTAR is committed to bringing the highest quality live entertainment to families worldwide. We are delighted to be working with HIT Entertainment on what promises to be an exciting, interactive and inspiring show, fostering fun, friendship and learning for a new generation."



About Thomas & Friends

Created by a father for his son, *Thomas & Friends*, the #1 preschool toy brand in the US and the #1 Infant/Preschool licensed brand in the UK (US source: The NPD Group/Consumer Panel Tracking: YTD-November 2006; UK Source: NPD Group License to Thrill January-June 2006) invites children to enter a world of imagination through the tracks of a train and the words of a story. Today, families in more than 100 countries enjoy fun and adventure with their engine friends while experiencing timeless life lessons of discovery, friendship and cooperation. *Thomas & Friends* is making tracks to great destinations on PBS KIDS® and PBS KIDS SproutSM. For more information about the world of *Thomas the Tank Engine* and his friends, please visit www.thomasandfriends.com.

About HIT Entertainment

HIT Entertainment, owned by private equity investment group Apax Partners since June 2005, is one of the world's leading independent children's entertainment producers and rights-owners. HIT's portfolio includes internationally renowned children's properties, such as *Bob the Builder*TM, *Barney*TM, *Thomas & Friends*TM, *Pingu*TM, *Rubbidubbers*TM and *Angelina Ballerina*TM. HIT acts as a representative for *The Wiggles*® in the UK, US and Canada and as worldwide representative for The Jim Henson Company's library of classic family brands, including *Fraggle Rock*TM. HIT also owns the Guinness World RecordsTM publishing and television property and *Fireman Sam*TM, a joint venture with S4C. Launched in 1989, HIT's lines of business span television and video production (including studios in the US and the UK), publishing, consumer products licensing and live events. With a catalog of more than 1,000 hours of young children's programming, HIT sells its shows to more than 240 countries worldwide, in more than 40 different languages and has operations in the UK, US, Canada, Hong Kong and Japan. In 2005, the Company joined Comcast Corporation, PBS and Sesame Workshop to launch PBS KIDS SproutSM, a 24-hour digital cable channel and VOD service for preschoolers. For more information, visit www.hitentertainment.com.

About ThemeSTAR

ThemeSTAR produces live family entertainment for the global marketplace. Since its inception in 2004, ThemeSTAR has repeatedly acquired high-potential, globally branded intellectual properties from major studios and entertainment brand owners, and then creates, distributes and operates live entertainment productions via their proprietary, global distribution network. ThemeSTAR licensed productions that are currently touring include *Scooby-Doo Live in StageFright* with Warner Bros., *Dora's Pirate Adventure* in conjunction with Live Nation and Nickelodeon, *Mummy Returns Live* with Universal Studios, *Looney Tunes Hollywood House of Fun* with Warner Bros., and *Quidam* with Cirque du Soleil in China. In addition to its growing core business, ThemeSTAR's unique position as a strategic global operator is also generating new and diverse IP and licensing opportunities that leverage management's ability to structure and commercialize new ventures on a global basis and in key developing markets. For more information about ThemeSTAR, please visit www.themestar.com.

To download artwork, please visit www.hitnewsonline.com

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