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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**The Wilma Theater celebrates immigrant and international artists at  
the 2017 Theater Lovers Fête**

**The Wilma's annual fundraising event will honor the contributions of immigrant and international  
artists to the cultural life of Philadelphia.**

**PHILADELPHIA** – The Wilma Theater will hold its annual Theater Lovers Fête on **Monday, July 17 at 5:30pm**, at the **National Museum of American Jewish History** at 101 South Independence Mall East. The celebration is inspired by the Wilma's recent premiere of *Adapt!* and the company's mission, which compels us to "represent a range of voices, viewpoints, and styles." As an internationally influenced cultural organization within a sanctuary city of the United States, the Wilma is committed to giving voice to immigrant and international artists, and their ongoing role in enriching the lives of citizens in our community. The evening will include a tribute performed by ARTolerance under the direction of Philadelphia Orchestra cellist Udi Bar-David, who will bring together international performers from cultural organizations throughout the city, as well as members of the Wilma's HotHouse Company of actors.

"As I was writing *Adapt!* – a play exploring immigration, belonging, and adaptation – the subject of refugees surged to the forefront of our political discussions," says Wilma Artistic Director Blanka Zizka. "The Board and staff at the Wilma thought it was critical, at this moment, to recognize and celebrate the great impact that immigrant and international artists have had on the cultural life of our city."

*Adapt!* is loosely based on Zizka's own immigration experience from Czechoslovakia to the United States in 1977. *Adapt!* featured performers from the Czech Republic and Greece, and an artistic team with representation from the Ukraine, Argentina, and Romania. In 2016, Zizka was honored with the Vilcek Prize in Theatre. The Vilcek Foundation annually awards immigrants who have made lasting contributions to American society through their extraordinary achievements in biomedical research and the arts and humanities.

The Wilma's commitment to working with international artists has expanded in recent years to include workshops for the HotHouse Company with master trainers such as Csaba Horváth (Hungarian director and choreographer who will direct the 2017/2018 Season opener *Blood Wedding*), Theodoros Terzopoulos (Artistic Director of Attis Theatre in Athens, Greece, and director of the Wilma's 2015 production of *Antigone*), and Jean-René Toussaint (French-born Primitive Voice instructor). This past season, the Wilma presented *Seuls*, written, directed, and performed by Wajdi Mouawad, a Lebanese-Canadian theater artist who now serves as the Artistic Director of La Colline théâtre national in Paris, France. In her program notes to *Seuls*, Zizka writes: "Being an emigrant myself I detect in Wajdi's work a familiar emotional stage of displacement; this sense of a spiritual in-between existence, not completely belonging to a new culture or to the old one."

Tim Sabol serves as Chair of the Theater Lovers Fête Committee. Proceeds from the Theater Lovers Fête will support the Wilma's mission to represent a range of voices, viewpoints, and styles.

Sponsorships, tickets, and ads can be purchased by calling 215-893-9456 x124 or at [wilmafete.org](http://wilmafete.org). Tickets are \$250 per person, or \$150 for Young Friends aged 40 and below.

For press inquiries, please contact the Wilma's Community Relations and Marketing Director, Alison Ehrenreich, at [aehrenreich@wilmatheater.org](mailto:aehrenreich@wilmatheater.org) or 215-893-9456 x102.

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