### TuTuMUCH wins again! TuTuMUCH wins first prize for Documentary Feature Film at the prestigious Chicago International Children's Film Festival

### TuTuMUCH, a co-production of Merit Motion Pictures, and Vonnie Von Helmolt Film awarded first Prize for Documentary Feature Film by 2011 Chicago International Children’s Film Festival

Winnipeg, MB – Produced by Ballet Girls Inc., a co-venture between local production companies, Merit Motion Pictures and vonnie VON HELMOLT film, and directed by Elise Swerhone, TuTuMUCH made its Canadian premiere screening at more than 55 Cineplex Entertainment theatres across Canada in January 2010. Merit Motion Pictures and vonnie VON HELMOLT film are thrilled to announce that their feature documentary *TuTuMUCH* has won yet another award. The **First Prize for Documentary Feature Film/Adult Jury Prize was presented during the 2011 Chicago International Children's Film Festival** held Oct 21 to 30, 2011.

### “We’re delighted that the film has been so well received. The Chicago International Children's Film Festival is the largest children’s film festival in the world and showcases the best in children's media, worldwide” said Executive Producer Merit Jensen Carr. <http://www.cicff.org/content/2011-cicff-awards/78>

“It’s so rewarding to receive this recognition for our film,” added Producer Vonnie Von Helmolt. “TuTuMUCH was five years in the making, and with the assistance of Cineplex Odeon, Telefilm Canada, Manitoba Film and Music and Superchannel, we finally did it. And now after screening at the Cannes Film Festival Marche, and across Canada and Australia, it’s been invited to screen at festivals in the Czech Republic, the UK, Korea, Ireland, China and Chicago. It really is too too much!”

Directed by award-winning filmmaker, Elise Swerhone,TuTuMUCH follows nine young ballet dancers as they plié, pirouette and compete for highly-coveted spots in an intensive four-week professional ballet summer program at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School. Leaving behind their families and friends, often for the first time, each girl confronts the painstaking and sometimes rewarding realities of living her dream.

**About vonnie VON HELMOLT FILM**

vonnie VON HELMOLT film is an internationally recognized producer of features, television movies, series and documentaries. The company’s dance feature, Dracula: Pages from a Virgin’s Diary, directed by Guy Maddin, won numerous international film festival awards, an Emmy and was named one of Canada’s and New York Critic's Top 10 Feature Films of the year. The company focuses on projects based on or featuring the performing arts, literature and comedy, working with award-winning companies and creators to bring uniquely personal and at the same time universally appealing projects to screens and living rooms across Canada and elsewhere.

**About MERIT MOTION PICTURES**

MERIT MOTION PICTURES founded by executive producer and industry veteran Merit Jensen Carr specializes in producing multi-platform programming for the international market. The company is one of Canada's leading producers of factual entertainment programming and has a track record of bringing broadcasters the highest-rated shows for their seasons. From in-depth current affairs to biography and lifestyle series, from observational documentary to history and science programs, MERIT MOTION PICTURES is dedicated to finding fresh and exciting new approaches to telling stories. Smart. Fun! <http://www.meritmotionpictures.com>

**About Director, Elise Swerhone**

Elise Swerhone, is a producer, director and writer whose most recent documentary, **Mysteries of the Deep**, is part of the award winning series, **One Ocean**,was produced by **Merit Motion Pictures** and broadcast on the CBC’s *The Nature of Things with David Suzuki*, Discovery US and National Geographic in 2010. She is completing work on an episode about the teen brain produced by Merit Motion Pictures in association with CBC TV’s *The Nature of Things*. Her work also includes: **Ballet High**, a feature length documentary about the graduating class of the professional school at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and **Ballet Girls**, a 3-part series about young ballerinas. **Restitution** (about the return of Nazi looted art) and **Me, My Brother and My Father’s Van Gogh** for CBC TV’s *Witness***.** Swerhone has written, directed and edited episodes for the Gemini Award-winning series **Recreating Eden (Merit Motion Pictures).** She has more than thirty documentary credits to her name and has won numerous national and international awards.

TuTuMUCH is distributed by the production company, Ballet Girls Inc. <http://tutumuchmovie.com/index.html>

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