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**Press contact: Hilda Cullen, 206.789.5707 ext. 25,
hildac@nordicmuseum.org**

**NORDIC HERITAGE MUSEUM ANNOUNCES
NEW VICTOR BORGE AND AUGUST WERNER
EXHIBITIONS**

**Exhibition: *Victor Borge: A Smile is the Shortest Distance*
December 3, 2010 – February 6, 2011**

**Exhibition: *August Werner: Uncommon Traditionalist*
December 3, 2010 – February 6, 2011**

Preview Reception: Thursday, December 2, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Seattle—The Nordic Heritage Museum announces two exciting new exhibitions opening this December. ***Victor Borge: A Smile is the Shortest Distance*** and ***August Werner: Uncommon Traditionalist*** both open on December 3 and run through February 6, 2011.

Victor Borge: A Smile is the Shortest Distance explores and illuminates the life and achievements of Victor Borge through photographs, film clips, recordings, and memorabilia from Borge's personal archives. Affectionately known as "The Great Dane," Borge was a musician, humorist, and humanitarian. In the nearly 60 years that he lived in the United States, Borge performed on the radio, in films, on television, in opera houses, in sports arenas, and at the White House. Distinctively Danish, his comedy encouraged audience interaction and found humor in the mundane.

Borge (1909–2000), born Børge Rosenbaum in Copenhagen, Denmark, was the son of two musicians—a violist and a pianist. He was a child prodigy who began piano lessons at the age of two and gave his first piano recital at the age of eight. He began his career as a serious classical musician, but after a few years he created his unique blend of piano music and comedy, touring all over Europe. When the Nazis occupied Denmark during World War II, Borge (who was Jewish) was playing a concert in Sweden. He was able to escape to Finland, and from there he left on the last neutral boat to leave Finland for

the U.S., the *USS American Legion*. He arrived in New York with less than \$20 in his pocket, not speaking English. He watched movies to learn the new language, and was able to adapt his comedy to an American audience, changing his name to Victor Borge. He quickly achieved success, winning the "Best New Radio Performer of the Year" award in 1942. Borge's fame encompassed radio, film, concert halls, Broadway, and television, and he spent several decades touring the world with his one-man show combining wit, musical virtuosity, and physical humor. He was knighted by each of the five Nordic countries (according to Borge, "*after I was knighted five times I became a weekend!*"), and he was awarded the Medal of Honor by the Statue of Liberty Centennial Committee. Borge, a philanthropist and humanitarian who established several trusts, was once called "the funniest pianist on earth" by the Washington Post.

"I am delighted that the Nordic Heritage Museum has the opportunity to celebrate the extraordinary legacy of Victor Borge, whose humor brought joy to so many during a career that spanned 75 years, in Denmark and in the United States," said Eric Nelson, CEO at the Nordic Heritage Museum.

Victor Borge: A Smile is the Shortest Distance was organized by The American-Scandinavian Foundation and first presented at Scandinavia House: The Nordic Center in America, in New York City. The exhibition was organized with the assistance of the family of Victor Borge and with major support from the Scan | Design Foundation by Inger & Jens Bruun; the Sanna & Victor Borge Memorial Fund; the Elsie H. Hillman Foundation; Flemming and Judy Heilmann; Becky and George Kellner; Peter Flinch; Scott Gonge; Stig Høst; Ambassador John L. Loeb, Jr.; Lennard Rambusch, Esq.; Joan M. Warburg; and Ambassador Richard B. and Mrs. Marlene Stone. The exhibition was adapted by and subsequently presented at The Danish Immigrant Museum. The national tour has been organized by The Danish Immigrant Museum.

August Werner: Uncommon Traditionalist showcases the work of Norwegian immigrant August Werner (1893–1980). Werner was born in Bergen, Norway in 1893. He received a BS from the College of Agriculture in Stend, Norway, and graduated from Masters School of Music in New York. Werner was a music professor at the University of Washington from 1931 to 1965, and he also directed the Norwegian Male and Ladies Choruses. A prolific artist in many genres, Werner was also a writer, painter, poet, and sculptor who frequently drew inspiration from his Norwegian heritage. He received the Order of St. Olav from the King of Norway and was knighted by the King of Sweden. Noted works by Werner include the cast bronze statue of Leif Eriksson which stands overlooking Shilshole Bay Marina in Ballard. *August Werner: Uncommon Traditionalist* features works from the Nordic Heritage Museum's rich August Werner collection.

Museum members are cordially invited to the preview reception for both exhibitions on Thursday, December 2, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm

For general information, visit www.nordicmuseum.org or phone (206) 789-5707

Museum hours: Tues-Sat 10 am to 4 pm; Sun 12 noon to 4 pm; Mon closed

Admission: \$6 general; \$5 seniors & college students; \$4 children over 5 years;

FREE for children under 5 and Museum members

The Museum is located at 3014 NW 67th Street, Seattle, WA 9811

About the Nordic Heritage Museum

With over 55,000 visitors annually, the Nordic Heritage Museum is a cultural treasure in the Pacific Northwest. It is the only museum in the United States that represents the cultural heritage of all five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The Museum's mission is to share Nordic culture with people of all ages and backgrounds by exhibiting art and objects, preserving collections, providing educational and cultural experiences and serving as a community gathering place. The Nordic Heritage Museum presents a wide range of vibrant programs including contemporary art exhibitions, outstanding concerts, lectures and films and a variety of special events throughout the year.