

April 7, 2017

For Immediate Release

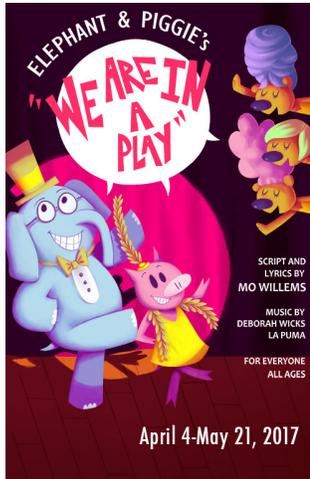
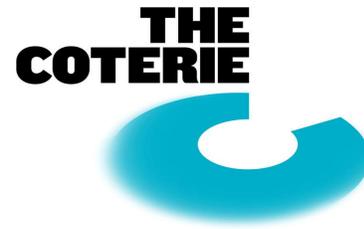
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PRESS RELEASE

**Wildly Popular Kids' Author
Mo Willems Writes
'Elephant and Piggie' Musical,
Now on The Coterie Stage**

OVERVIEW:

WHAT: ***Elephant & Piggie's "We are in a Play!"***

Script and Lyrics by Mo Willems

Music by Deborah Wicks La Puma

Directed by Shanara Gabrielle

WHEN: April 4 – May 21, 2017

Press / Opening Night: Friday, April 7, at 7:00 p.m.

WHERE: The Coterie, Level one of Crown Center, 2450 Grand Blvd., Kansas City, MO

PRICE: \$12.00 for youth under 18, full-time students, and seniors age 60 and older;
\$17.00 for adults; \$5.00 - \$6.50 for Groups of 20 or more

INFO / RESERVATIONS: The Coterie Box Office

Phone: (816) 474-6552 Online: www.thecoterie.org

Kansas City, MO – This spring, The Coterie revels in the joy and whimsy of friendship with the charming family musical, ***Elephant & Piggie's "We are in a Play!"***. Adapted for the stage by creator, Mo Willems, from his own award-winning book series, ***Elephant & Piggie's "We are in a Play!"*** is directed by Shanara Gabrielle and will be performed live on The Coterie's

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stage, April 4 – May 21, 2017.

ABOUT THE PLAY

When “bestus” friends Elephant and Piggie get together, anything is possible. They might get invited to a fancy costume party, learn a crazy new dance, or decide to spend the day playing ping-pong in silly hats. Well, they do all that and more in this lively and irresistibly charming musical featuring Elephant Gerald and Piggie, who are joined by their delightfully nutty back-up singers, the Squirrelles, as they discover the fun of being in a play – all the while encouraging the audience to join in for some interactive fun. Bring your bestie and share in the laughter and how good it feels to put friends first.

Using catchy, jazz- and Broadway-inspired melodies to bring the story to life on stage, author Mo Willems transports his simple – yet endearingly fanciful – look at friendship into a musical message that resonates with every age in the family. It’s the same message about the endurance of friendship that has propelled the Elephant and Piggie books to become one of the best-selling and most beloved young reader series of the past decade. The 25-book series, which debuted in 2007, has twice been awarded the Theodor Seuss Geisel Medal and had two titles appear on *TIME* magazine's Top 10 Children's Books of the Year.

The author of numerous popular children’s books such as *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale*, *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!*, and *Cat the Cat*, Mo Willems has received many of the highest honors for literature, including the Caldecott Medal, the Carnegie Medal, and the Irma Black Award Honor. He served for nine years as an animator for Sesame Street before creating several animated series for Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network. ***Elephant & Piggie's "We are in a Play!"*** marks Willems’ second stage adaptation with composer Deborah Wicks La Puma, who also worked on Willems’ musical adaptation of *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Musical* at the Kennedy Center.

The Coterie’s production of ***Elephant & Piggie's "We are in a Play!"*** will run approximately 60 minutes with no intermission and is perfect for families with all ages. The production is funded in part by Missouri Arts Council, ArtsKC Fund, and Theater League.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The cast of ***Elephant & Piggie's "We are in a Play!"*** features Jake Walker (as Elephant), Shon Ruffin (as Piggie), and Rasheedat “Ras” Badejo, Kimberly Horner and Maggie Renee Marx (as

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The Squirrelles). The artistic and production company includes Shanara Gabrielle (director), Anthony T. Edwards (musical director), William J. Christie (Coterie resident stage manager), Alex Murphy (production stage manager), Zoë Still (set designer), Shane Rowse (lighting designer), Georgianna Londré Buchanan (costume designer), David Kiehl (sound designer), Bret Engle (properties), Scott Hobart (technical director), and Chloé Robbins-Anderson (production assistant/deck manager).

SHOW DATES, TIMES & TICKETS

The Coterie, named "One of the Five Best Theaters for Young Audiences in the U.S." by *TIME* magazine, continues its 38th season with ***Elephant & Piggie's "We are in a Play!"***, April 4 – May 21, 2017, in The Coterie Theatre, located on level one of the Crown Center shops in Kansas City, MO. Press Night will be held on Friday, April 7, 2017, at 7:00 p.m.

Individual Tickets: Tickets are \$12.00 for youth under 18, students, and seniors age 60 and older; and \$17.00 for adults.

Group Pricing: The Coterie offers groups of 20 or more a special preview rate of \$5.00 per person the first week of the run, April 4-9, 2017. After preview week, groups pay only \$5.50-\$6.00 per person on weekdays and \$6.50 per person on weekends (Friday nights, Saturdays, and Sundays).

Subscriptions: In lieu of season subscriptions, The Coterie offers the Spotlight Pass, which works like a season ticket without committing to a set schedule. Spotlight Pass holders pay \$100.00 for a flexible pass that includes 10 tickets - a savings of 40% off individual ticket prices - that can be used for any show or combination of shows in the 2016/2017 Season.

All tickets and Spotlight Passes are on sale now and may be purchased by calling The Coterie's box office at (816) 474-6552, dropping by the box office on level one of the Crown Center Shops, or by visiting www.thecoterie.org.

NOTABLE PERFORMANCE EXTRAS

During the run of ***Elephant & Piggie's "We are in a Play!"***, The Coterie invites audiences to take advantage of these special, free performance extras (with paid admission):

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Friday, April 4, 7:00 p.m.: Opening Night Celebration. A free post-performance reception with the company, staff, and board of directors.

Saturday, April 8, and Sunday, April 9, 2:00 p.m.: Question & Answer session. A free Q&A with members of The Coterie's staff and artistic company will immediately follow the performance.

Fridays, April 14, 21, and 28, May 5, 12 and 19, 7:00 p.m.: Friday Family Fun Night. Post-performance autograph session and photo op with cast members.

Saturday, April 22, 2:00 p.m.: Interpreted performance in American Sign Language.

PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

ELEPHANT & PIGGIE'S
"WE ARE IN A PLAY!"
APRIL 4 – MAY 21, 2017

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		4 10 am	5 10 am	6 10 am 12 pm	7 10 am 12 pm 7 pm	8 2 pm
9 2 pm	10	11 10 am 12 pm	12 10 am 12 pm	13 10 am 12 pm	14 10 am 12 pm 7 pm	15 2 pm
16	17	18 10 am 12 pm	19 10 am 12 pm	20 10 am 12 pm	21 10 am 12 pm 7 pm	22 2 pm
23 2 pm	24	25 10 am 12 pm	26 10 am 12 pm	27 10 am 12 pm	28 10 am 12 pm 7 pm	29 2 pm
30 2 pm	1	2 10 am 12 pm	3 10 am 12 pm	4 10 am 12 pm	5 10 am 12 pm 7 pm	6 2 pm
7 2 pm	8	9 10 am 12 pm	10 10 am 12 pm	11 10 am 12 pm	12 10 am 12 pm 7 pm	13 2 pm
14	15	16 10 am 12 pm	17 10 am 12 pm	18 10 am 12 pm	19 10 am 12 pm 7 pm	20 2 pm
21 2 pm						

CALENDAR LEGEND

-  **Opening Night**
-  **Friday Family Fun Night** featuring post-performance autograph session and photo op with cast members
-  Post-performance **Question and Answer session** with the company
-  **Interpreted performance** in American Sign Language



Left to right: Shon Ruffin (as Piggie), Maggie Renee Marx, Kimberly Horner, and Rasheedat "Ras" Badejo, (as The Squirrelles), and Jake Walker (as Elephant) in *Elephant and Piggie's "We are in a Play!"*. Photo by J. Robert Schraeder.

Elephant and Piggie's "We are in a Play!" was commissioned by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and was first produced at the Kennedy Center during the 2013-2014 season. The Coterie's production is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI, New York, NY, Tel: 212-541-4684. Fax: 212-397-4684. www.MTIShows.com

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THE REMAINING 2016/2017 SEASON

Following *Elephant and Piggie's "We are in a Play!"*, The Coterie's 2016/2017 Season concludes with the summer run of the *Garfield: The Musical with Cattitude*, June 13 – August 6, 2017.

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Due to the nature of live theatre, play selection, performance schedule and casting are subject to change.

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