

June 19, 2015

For Immediate Release

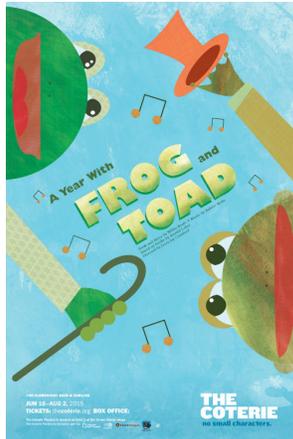
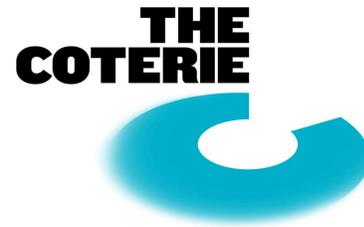
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PRESS RELEASE

**The Coterie Celebrates Friendship
in Musical Adaptation of
Favorite Children's Book Series with
*A Year With Frog and Toad***

OVERVIEW:

WHAT: *A Year With Frog and Toad*

Book & lyrics by Willie Reale | Music by Robert Reale

Based on the books by Arnold Lobel

Directed & Choreographed by Jerry Jay Cranford

WHEN: *June 16 – August 2, 2015*

Press / Opening Night: Friday, June 19, at 7:00 p.m.

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

PRICE: \$10.00 for youth under 18, full-time students, and seniors age 60 and older;
\$15.00 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 summer, The Coterie celebrates enduring friendships with the sweet-natured family musical, *A Year With Frog and Toad*, adapted from the beloved Frog and Toad book series by Arnold Lobel. Directed by Jerry Jay Cranford, *A Year With Frog and Toad* will be performed live on stage June 16 – August 2, 2015.

- more -

ABOUT THE PLAY

Well-loved characters hop from the page to the stage in *A Year with Frog and Toad*, the Tony Award®-nominated musical following two great friends - the cheerful, popular Frog and the rather grumpy Toad - through four, fun-filled seasons. Part vaudeville, part make-believe, all charm, *A Year with Frog and Toad* tells the story of a friendship that endures, weathering all seasons. The jazzy upbeat score bubbles with melody and wit; an inventive, exuberant, and enchanting musical for the whole family.

A Year with Frog and Toad is based on the popular Frog and Toad book series originally written and illustrated by Arnold Lobel. Weaving several short stories from the six books together with tuneful, catchy Broadway melodies, the musical adaptation follows Frog and Toad's friendship over the course of one year. Each of the four seasons brings an exciting, new adventure for the two – with the reluctant Toad usually being won over in the end - and shows how each of those experiences strengthen and grow their friendship.

A Year with Frog and Toad is directed by respected Kansas City performer Jerry Jay Cranford, who won praise for his portrayal of Baron Bomburst in The Coterie's production of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* last summer. The production takes full advantage of Cranford's singing, dancing, comedic, and directing talents, as he explains, "*The short scenes from the books were stylistically perfect to craft into a 1920's, vaudevillian-style musical. I made my mark in Kansas City as an actor who goes over the top with many of my characters, so it came naturally to me to stage each musical number as a big, Broadway-style production. This show may have been written for young audiences but it will undoubtedly entertain all ages.*"

Cranford also credits his Kansas City cast and creative team for bringing the musical to life on stage, "*I'm so pleased to work with such a talented cast of seasoned, local performers. Everyone in the cast and all the designers are extremely gifted, so it's been fun finding ways to try and showcase each of their talents in the show. They've made this production a wonderful experience for me and the fun we've had shines through in every performance.*"

A Year with Frog and Toad was commissioned as a musical by Arnold Lobel's daughter, Adrienne, after the author's death. The show was written by brothers Robert (music) and Willie Reale (book & lyrics), who, in 2005, previously worked with The Coterie on their musical, *The Dinosaur Musical*, as part of The Coterie's Lab for New Family Musicals. Their musical version of

Frog and Toad played successfully on Broadway and was nominated for three Tony Awards, including best musical – a rare feat for a show written specifically for young audiences.

A Year with Frog and Toad will be best appreciated by families with ages five and older. The production is funded in part by the Missouri Arts Council, ArtsKC Fund, Theater League, and the Neighborhood Tourist Development Fund.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The cast of *A Year with Frog and Toad* features Seth M. Jones (as Frog), Steven Eubank (as Toad), Emily Shackelford (as Bird, Mouse, Squirrel, Terrible Frog, Mole), Elise Poehling (Bird, Turtle, Squirrel, Mother Frog, Mole), and Francisco Javier Villegas (as Bird, Snail, Lizard, Father Frog). The artistic and production company includes Jerry Jay Cranford (director), Anthony T. Edwards (music director), Jeremy Watson (pianist), Brant Challacombe (pianist), Jordan Janota (set designer), Art Kent (resident lighting designer), Georgianna Londré Buchanan (resident costume designer), John Story (sound designer), Caitlin Brisendine (properties), William J. Christie (resident production stage manager), Scott Hobart (resident technical director), and Chloé N. Robbins-Anderson (production assistant/deck manager).

SHOW DATES, TIMES & TICKETS

The Coterie, now in its 36th Season and named “One of the Five Best Theaters for Young Audiences in the U.S.” by *TIME* magazine, will perform *A Year With Frog and Toad* June 16 – August 2, 2015, in The Coterie Theatre, located on level one of the Crown Center shops in Kansas City, MO. Press Night will be held on Friday, June 19, 2015, at 7:00 p.m.

Individual Tickets: Tickets are \$10.00 for youth under 18, students, and seniors age 60 and older; and \$15.00 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, June 16-21. After preview week, groups pay only \$5.50 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 Club Pass, which

works like season tickets without committing to a set schedule. Spotlight Club members pay \$90.00 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 2014/2015 Season.

All tickets and Spotlight Club 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 *A Year With Frog and Toad*, The Coterie invites audiences to take advantage of these special, free performance extras (with paid admission):

Friday, June 19, 7:00 p.m.: Opening Night celebration featuring a free post-performance reception with the director, company, staff, and board.

Saturday, June 20 and 21, 2:00 p.m.: Post-performance **Question and Answer session** with members of the company

Fridays, June 26, July 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31: Bring the whole family for **Friday Family Nights** and meet with members of the cast after the show for photos and autographs.

Saturday, July 11, 2:00 p.m.: **Interpreted performance** in American Sign Language

PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

A YEAR WITH FROG AND TOAD

JUNE 16 – AUGUST 2, 2015						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		16 11 am	17 11 am	18 11 am	19 11 am 1 pm 7 pm 👨👩👧👦	20 2 pm 👨👩👧👦
21 2 pm 👨👩👧👦		23 11 am	24 11 am 1 pm	25 11 am 1 pm	26 11 am 1 pm 7 pm 👨👩👧👦	27 2 pm
28 2 pm		30 11 am	1 11 am 1 pm	2 11 am 1 pm	3 11 am 1 pm 7 pm 👨👩👧👦	4
5 2 pm		7 11 am 1 pm	8 11 am 1 pm	9 11 am 1 pm	10 11 am 1 pm 7 pm 👨👩👧👦	11 2 pm 👨👩👧👦
12 2 pm		14 11 am 1 pm	15 11 am 1 pm	16 11 am 1 pm	17 11 am 1 pm 7 pm 👨👩👧👦	18 2 pm
19 2 pm		21 11 am 1 pm	22 11 am 1 pm	23 11 am 1 pm	24 11 am 1 pm 7 pm 👨👩👧👦	25 2 pm
26 2 pm		28 11 am 1 pm	29 11 am 1 pm	30 11 am 1 pm	31 11 am 1 pm 7 pm 👨👩👧👦	1 2 pm
2 2 pm						

Calendar Legend:

- 👨👩👧👦 **Opening Nights**
- 👨👩👧👦 **Friday Family Fun Night** featuring post-performance autograph session, photo op, or other event
- 👨👩👧👦 **Post-performance Question and Answer session**, speaker, discussion, or other event
- 👨👩👧👦 **Interpreted performances** in American Sign Language



Left to right: Seth M. Jones (as Frog) and Steven Eubank (as Toad).
Photo by J. Robert Schraeder.

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

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