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For Immediate Release

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The Coterie Premieres
Theatre for Young Audiences
Version of Beloved Movie Musical
Featuring Award-Winning Songs
By Leslie Bricusse

Doctor Dolittle

OVERVIEW:

WHAT: ***Doctor Dolittle***

Book, Music and Lyrics by Leslie Bricusse

WHEN: June 27 – August 6, 2023

Press / Opening Night: Friday, June 30, at 7:00 p.m.

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

PRICE: \$14.00 for youth under 18, full-time students, and seniors age 60+;
\$18.00 for adults; \$6.00 - \$12.00 for Groups of 20 or more

INFO / RESERVATIONS: The Coterie Box Office

Phone: (816) 474-6552

Online: www.thecoterie.org

Kansas City, MO – Nationally-recognized Coterie Theatre concludes its 44th season of live theatre for young audiences this summer with the world premiere of the Theatre for Young Audiences version of ***Doctor Dolittle***. Adapted from the beloved movie musical and featuring the award-winning songs written by Leslie Bricusse, ***Doctor Dolittle*** is directed by Ernie Nolan, with musical

direction by Anthony T. Edwards and choreography by Marc Wayne, and will be performed live on The Coterie's stage, June 27 – August 6, 2023.

THE MUSICAL

Eccentric Doctor Dolittle, a country physician, has learned to talk to animals - complicating his life and leading to trouble with authorities. Accompanied by his tutor and mentor, Polynesia, a 200-year-old parrot, as well as a trusty band of human and animal companions, the Doctor sets out to change the way animals are treated and understood in the world. The songs include "I've Never Seen Anything Like It," "My Friend the Doctor," and the marvelous Academy Award winning song, "Talk to the Animals."

The Coterie's production of *Doctor Dolittle* will run approximately 60 minutes with no intermission and is perfect for families with all ages. The production is funded in part by the Missouri Arts Council, The Shubert Foundation, Muriel McBrien Kauffman Family Foundation, Neighborhood Tourism Development Fund, and Theater League.

THE PUPPETS

The Coterie's production of *Doctor Dolittle* will feature amazing puppets designed and created by What if Puppets, which was established as Paul Mesner Puppets in 1987. Today, the company is led by Meghann Henry, Mike Horner, and Alex Espy and a team of artisans and teaching artists who work to fulfill the company's mission of "inspiring play and cultivating connections through puppets." They do this through touring puppet productions, innovative social-emotional learning school residencies, and creating custom puppets for commercial and theatrical clients.

THE ARTISTS

Doctor Dolittle is directed and choreographed by Ernie Nolan, who is the Executive Artistic Director of Nashville Children's Theatre and director of The Coterie's previous productions of *James and the Giant Peach*, *Frindle*, *Twice Upon a Time*, *The Dinosaur Musical*, and *U:BUG:ME*, as well as served as choreographer on *Geppetto & Son* and *Lucky Duck*, which was also Ernie's Off-Broadway debut. The cast features Francisco Javier Villegas (as Doctor John Dolittle), Gay Glenn (Polynesia the parrot), Liam Smith and Jay Allen (sharing the role of Tommy Stubbins), Reed Pearman (Madelyn Mugg), Elise Poehling (Emma Fairfax), Simon Schupp (General Bellows/Albert Blossom), Julie Shaw (Gertie Blossom/Straight Arrow), Thomas Blake Hogan (Ensemble including CheeChee), Andrea Fantauzzi (Ensemble including GubGub), and Declan Franey (Ensemble including Jip). The artistic and production company includes Anthony T. Edwards (musical director), Marc Wayne (technical director), Jordan Canon-Kruis (production stage manager), Aark A. Exline (set designer), Jarrett Bertoncin (lighting designer), Arwen J. White (costume designer), David Kiehl (sound designer), Eric Palmquist (properties), Mike Horner

(shadow puppet designer), Erin Walley (shadow puppet build team), Layne Griffin (assistant stage manager), and Jason Coats (Covid safety officer).

THE WRITER

Composer, lyricist, and librettist Leslie Bricusse was a double Oscar and Grammy winner who contributed to many musical films and plays during his career. He was born in London in 1939, and educated at University College School and Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge in England. Bricusse's first successful stage musical was *Stop the World - I Want to Get Off* (1961), which he wrote in partnership with Anthony Newley. It was made into a film in 1966, and its success led to more opportunities for the duo, including partnering again on *The Roar of the Greasepaint – The Smell of the Crowd* (1965). In 1971, they wrote the score for the feature film, *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*, which includes the beloved classic, "Pure Imagination," and earned their first Academy Award nomination for Best Original Song Score. As a lyricist, Bricusse continued to collaborate with a variety of composers, from Henry Mancini (*Victoria/Victoria*) to Frank Wildhorn (*Jekyll & Hyde* and *Cyrano de Bergerac*). With Henry Mancini, Bricusse won his first Academy Award in 1982 for Best Music Score for *Victor/Victoria* – and over a decade later, the show went to Broadway. With Wildhorn, he was nominated for the Tony Award for Best Book of a Musical in 1997 for *Jekyll & Hyde*. Bricusse wrote more than forty musical shows and films, including writing the screenplay and music for ***Doctor Dolittle***, the movie musical which was nominated for Best Original Music Score at the 1968 Academy Awards, and won the Oscar for Best Song for "Talk to the Animals." Altogether, Bricusse was nominated for Tony, Grammy, and Academy Awards dozens of times. Bricusse died on October 19, 2021 in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, France, at the age of 90.

SHOW DATES, TIMES & TICKETS

The Coterie, named "One of the Five Best Theaters for Young Audiences in the U.S." by *TIME* magazine, will perform ***Doctor Dolittle*** June 27 – August 6, 2023, 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 30, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. The performance runs approximately 60 minutes with no intermission and will be appreciated by families with all ages.

- **Individual Tickets:** Tickets are \$14.00 for youth under 18, students, and seniors age 60 and older; and \$18.00 for adults.
- **Group Pricing:** The Coterie offers groups of 20 or more a special preview rate of \$6.00 per person the first week of each production. After preview week, groups pay only \$6.50 - \$12.00 per person depending on performance date.
- **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 \$150.00 for a flexible pass that includes 10 tickets that can be used for any show or combination of the shows remaining in the 2022/2023 Season.

PERFORMANCE CALENDAR
DOCTOR DOLITTLE

JUNE 27 - AUGUST 6, 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		27 11 am	28 11 am	29 11 am	30 11 am 1 pm 7 pm	1 1 pm
2 2 pm	3 11 am	4	5 11 am 1 pm	6 11 am 1 pm	7 11 am 1 pm 7 pm	8 1 pm
9 2 pm	10	11 11 am	12 11 am 1 pm	13 11 am 1 pm	14 11 am 1 pm 7 pm	15 1 pm
16 2 pm	17	18 11 am	19 11 am 1 pm	20 11 am 1 pm	21 11 am 1 pm 7 pm	22 1 pm
23 2 pm	24	19 11 am	26 11 am 1 pm	27 11 am 1 pm	28 11 am 1 pm 7 pm	29 1 pm
30 2 pm	31	1 11 am	2 11 am 1 pm	3 11 am 1 pm	4 11 am 1 pm 7 pm	5 1 pm
6 2 pm						

CALENDAR LEGEND



Opening Night



Interpreted performance in American Sign Language



Sensory Friendly Performance for neurodiverse audiences featuring technical adjustments, sensory supports, house lights on and flexible audience expectations

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 *Doctor Dolittle*, The Coterie invites audiences to take advantage of these special, free performance extras (with paid admission):

- **Opening Night** - Friday, June 30 at 7:00 p.m.
- **Interpreted performance** in American Sign Language - Saturday, July 8 at 1:00 p.m.

- **Sensory Friendly Performance** for neurodiverse audiences featuring technical adjustments, sensory supports, house lights on and flexible audience expectations - Thursday, July 27 at 1 p.m. & Friday, July 28 at 7:00 p.m.

THE COTERIE

The Coterie Theatre was designated by *TIME* magazine in the top three theaters for young audiences in Nov. 2004, calling it “groundbreaking... one of the nation’s most respected.” As a not-for-profit professional company founded in 1979 in Kansas City, Missouri, The Coterie has been at the forefront of commissioning new works or adaptations that contribute to the field of theatre for young audiences. More than 100 world or American premieres for all ages have been produced by The Coterie over the last 43 years, including hosting multiple major Broadway composers and lyricists to shape quality musicals for youth and families. The Coterie is interested in intergenerational conversation, and consistently includes teen programming in its season and outreach efforts. The Coterie’s community programming redefines traditional notions of work for young audiences with its unique dramatic writing programs (Young Playwrights' Roundtable), teen LGBTQ work (Project Pride), and mental health workshops in a dramatic format (Project Daylight), all free of charge. All these components serve an average of 97,000 per year through over 350 performances. The Coterie Theatre School has locations throughout greater Kansas City. Donate at www.thecoterie.org.

OUR FUNDERS

The Coterie is funded, in part, by National Endowment for the Arts, Missouri Arts Council, The Shubert Foundation, Muriel McBrien Kauffman Family Foundation, and Theater League.



Production photos will available online at www.thecoterie.org/press-room.

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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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