

March 15, 2023

For Immediate Release

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**The Coterie Partners with  
What if Puppets to Bring  
Beloved Characters from  
Iconic Children's Author  
Mo Willems to Life on Stage**

***Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!  
The Musical!***

**OVERVIEW:**

**WHAT: *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!***

Based on the book by Mo Willems

Written by Mo Willems and Mr. Warburton

Music by Deborah Wicks La Puma

Directed by Shanara Gabrielle

**WHEN: April 4 – May 21, 2023**

**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: \$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](http://www.thecoterie.org)

**Kansas City, MO** – The Coterie Theatre partners with What if Puppets to bring ***Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!*** to life in a musical comedy for the whole family. Adapted for the stage by creator Mo Willems from his own best-selling and award-winning book series, ***Don't***

***Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!*** is directed by Shanara Gabrielle, with musical direction by Anthony T. Edwards and choreography by Marc Wayne, and will be performed live on The Coterie's stage, April 4 – May 21, 2023.

## THE MUSICAL

Hitting The Coterie stage just in time to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the book's first publication, ***Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!*** features an innovative mix of actors, puppets, songs, and feathers — plus a script written by Mo Willems, the creator of the #1 *New York Times* best-selling, Caldecott Honor "Pigeon" picture book series. Using catchy, jazz- and Broadway-inspired melodies to bring the story to life on stage, Willems adapts his simple – yet endearingly fanciful – story of The Pigeon into a fun and charming musical that will get everyone's wings flapping. Poor Pigeon: he never gets to anything he wants. But when the Bus Driver has a crisis that threatens to make his passengers late (gasp!), maybe the wily Pigeon CAN do something... he might even save the day. Whatever you do, don't let the Pigeon star in his own musical production!

## THE PUPPETS

The Coterie's production of ***Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!*** will feature amazing puppets designed and created by What if Puppets, which was established by Paul Mesner 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 WRITERS

The author of numerous popular children's books such as *Elephant & Piggie*, *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed*, *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale*, and *Cat the Cat*, 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, where he earned six Emmy Awards for writing, before creating several hit animated series for Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network. ***Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!*** reunites Willems with co-writer and longtime collaborator, Mr. Warburton, who previously served as executive producer on Disney Jr.'s *Muppet Babies*, and composer Deborah Wicks La Puma, who also scored Willems' musical adaptation of *Elephant & Piggie's* "We are in a Play!," The Coterie's best-selling production of all time.

Mo Willems' *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!* at stage at The Coterie, page 3

The Coterie's production of *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!* 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, and Theater League.

## THE ARTISTS

*Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!* is directed by Shanara Gabrielle, who previously directed The Coterie's productions of *Elephant and Piggie's "We Are In A Play!"* (2019 & 2017) and *Tomás and The Library Lady* (2016). The cast features Hew McKoy (as The Pigeon), Darrington Clark (as The Bus Driver), T. Eric Morris (as Hot Dog Vendor/Business Man), Kathleen Mitchell (as Little Old Lady), Daphany Edwards (as Duckling/Bus Engine), and Lucas Lowry (as Nerdy Teen). Understudies for the production are Luke Gilmore, McKenna Harvey, and Andrea Fantauzzi. The artistic and production company includes Anthony T. Edwards (musical director), Marc Wayne (choreographer/technical director), Dorian Allen (production stage manager), Scott Hobart (set designer), Jarrett Bertoncin (lighting designer), Arwen J. White (costume designer), David Kiehl (sound designer), Eric Palmquist (properties), Mike Horner (puppet designer/director), Erin Walley, Jamie Urban, Cooper Rasmussen, Leah Clemmons, Sara Unrein (puppet build team), Layne Griffin (assistant stage manager), and Jason Coats (Covid safety officer).

## 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 *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!* April 4 – May 21, 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, April 7, 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.

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](http://www.thecoterie.org).

## NOTABLE PERFORMANCE EXTRAS

During the run of *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!*, The Coterie invites audiences to take advantage of these special, free performance extras (with paid admission):

- **Friday, April 7, 7:00 p.m.: Opening Night**
- **Saturday, April 15, 2:00 p.m.:**  
**Interpreted performance** in American Sign Language.
- **Thursday, May 11, at 12:00 p.m. and Friday, May 12, at 7:00 p.m.:**  
**Sensory Friendly performances** for neurodiverse audiences featuring technical adjustments, sensory supports, house lights on and flexible audience expectations.

## 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 50 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

## PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

### DON'T LET THE PIGEON DRIVE THE BUS!

APRIL 4 - MAY 21, 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		<b>4</b> 10 am	<b>5</b> 10 am	<b>6</b> 10 am	<b>7</b> 10 am 12 pm 7 pm 	<b>8</b> 2 pm
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>12</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>13</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>14</b> 10 am 12 pm 7 pm	<b>15</b> 2 pm 
<b>16</b> 2 pm	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>19</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>20</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>21</b> 10 am 12 pm 7 pm	<b>22</b> 2 pm
<b>23</b> 2 pm	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>26</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>27</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>28</b> 10 am 12 pm 7 pm	<b>29</b> 2 pm
<b>30</b> 2 pm	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>3</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>4</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>5</b> 10 am 12 pm 7 pm	<b>6</b> 2 pm
<b>7</b> 2 pm	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>10</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>11</b> 10 am 12 pm 	<b>12</b> 10 am 12 pm 7 pm 	<b>13</b> 2 pm
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>17</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>18</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>19</b> 10 am 12 pm 7 pm	<b>20</b> 2 pm
<b>21</b> 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

Mo Willems' *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!* at stage at The Coterie, page 5

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](http://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.



## THE 2022/2023 SEASON

Following *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!*, The Coterie's 2022/2023 Season concludes with the world premiere of the youth and family version of *Doctor Dolittle*, based on the popular movie musical, June 27-August 6, 2023.

Production photos will available online at [www.thecoterie.org/press-room](http://www.thecoterie.org/press-room).

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*Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!* was commissioned by and premiered at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C.

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

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