

## MEDIA RELEASE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### CELEBRATE HOW DIFFERENCES MAKE FRIENDSHIPS STRONGER IN THIS PRODUCTION BASED ON THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

(DALLAS, TX) – Popular *New York Times* bestselling children's author Mo Willems is back at Dallas Children's Theater with two beloved characters charming audiences with a play-within-a-play about friendship, positivity, overcoming anxiety, and, of course, theater.

Based on characters from Willems' award-winning *Elephant & Piggie* picture books, *Mo Willems' Elephant and Piggie's "We Are In a Play!"* stars best friends Elephant Gerald and Piggie in a new adventure as they try to put on a play; however, they have *very* different feelings about it. The ever-upbeat Piggie is thrilled to be on stage, while Elephant is a bit busy hoping nothing goes "terribly, horribly, best-friendship endingly wrong." Audiences will see if his worries come true in this comedic yet heartwarming production, performing at DCT from January 21 through February 25.

The show brings to life the dynamic friendship between Elephant and Piggie, promising a delightful experience for audiences. "It's an exploration of the friendship between friends who are opposites of one another but love being together," says Nancy Schaffer, Director of *Elephant and Piggie's "We Are In A Play!"* and Artistic Director and Education Director at Dallas Children's Theater. "They're best friends regardless of how different they are. Gerald is always nervous about things, while Piggie is always ready to jump in, but they don't let that stop them from being friends." This show shares an important message that will help young audiences learn to celebrate what makes their friends unique. Gerald is anxious, but he "knows" parties, and everyone wants to learn his Elephant Dance. Meanwhile, Piggie is excited because she has no idea what will happen but thinks of the possibilities! They know that whatever they do together, they will have fun because no matter what happens, they'll still have each other.

Starring in this production are returning DCT favorites Brian Hathaway from 2020's *Schoolhouse Rock Live!*, playing Elephant Gerald, a cautious Elephant who worries enough that his best friend doesn't have to, and Leslie Marie Collins, from last season's Mo Willems-based production *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!* is playing Piggie, an adventurous pig who is always smiling. This show features upbeat music and hilarious antics and will leave everyone laughing and dancing in their seats.

"Even though this is a children's book, it feels good for the whole family. Mo Willems adapts his work for the stage and keeps the audience engaged," says Schaffer. "I think audiences will feel joy for the characters and even be on the edge of their seats waiting to see what happens next."

As a bonus show event, as part of the February 24th, 1:30 PM performance, there will be an *Elephant and Piggie's Play and Party* fundraising event with proceeds benefiting Dallas Children's Theater's Student Matinee Performance Series. Guests will learn Elephant Gerald's Elephant Dance, meet the actors, get special photo and autograph opportunities, and put on their own Elephant & Piggie play. Party tickets are \$60 per person in addition to the show ticket price.

Tickets for *Elephant and Piggie's "We Are In A Play!"* and *Elephant and Piggie's Play and Party* are available online at [www.dct.org/plays](http://www.dct.org/plays) or by calling the Box Office at 214-740-0051.

Mo Willems'

**ELEPHANT & PIGGIE'S "WE ARE IN A PLAY!"**

Based on the *Elephant & Piggie* books by Mo Willems

Published by Hyperion Books for Children

Script and Lyrics by Mo Willems

Music by Deborah Wicks La Puma

Originally commissioned and produced

By the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

Directed by Nancy Schaeffer

Recommended for ages 3 and up

Cast

Gerald – Brian Hathaway\*

Piggie – Leslie Marie Collins\*

Squirrelle #1 / Dance Captain – Ania Lyons

Squirrelle #2 – Gena Loe

Squirrelle #3 – Madison Polozola

Dog / Penguin – Karl Schaeffer\*

Production Team

Director - Choreographer – Nancy Schaeffer

Scenic Designer – Katherine Stepanek

Lighting Designer – Aaron Johansen

Props Designer – Sally Fiorello

Sound Designer – Marco Salinas

Costume Designer – Lyle Huchton

Stage Manager – Maddie Collins\*

Performance Dates and Times

Sunday, January 21, 1:30 PM – Public Opening

Sunday, January 21, 4:30 PM

Saturday, January 27, 1:30 PM

Sunday, January 28, 1:30 PM

Sunday, January 28, 4:30 PM (ASL)

Saturday, February 3, 1:30 PM (Sensory-Friendly)

Saturday, February 3, 4:30 PM

Sunday, February 4, 1:30 PM

Sunday, February 4, 4:30 PM

Saturday, February 10, 1:30 PM

Saturday, February 10, 4:30 PM  
Sunday, February 11, 1:30 PM  
Saturday, February 17, 1:30 PM  
Saturday, February 17, 4:30 PM  
Sunday, February 18, 1:30 PM  
Sunday, February 18, 4:30 PM  
Saturday, February 24, 1:30 PM - Play and Party Event  
Sunday, February 25, 1:30 PM  
Sunday, February 25, 4:30 PM – Public Closing

**Photo Credits:** Mo Willems' *Elephant and Piggie's "We Are In a Play!"* photo courtesy of Colin Peterson and Nashville Children's Theatre. Models: The Squirrelles: Martha Wilkinson, Rona Carter, and Lauren Elyse Fitzgerald. Elephant Gerald: Shawn Knight and Piggie: Amanda Card.

**Title Sponsor:** Texas Instruments **2023-2024 Season Sponsors are:** Texas Instruments, City of Dallas Office of Arts and Culture, March Family Foundation, The Carlson Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, The M.R. & Evelyn Hudson Foundation, The Theodore and Beulah Beasley Foundation, Inc., The Rosewood Corporation, The Melinda and Jim Johnson Family. **General Sponsors Include:** The Hearst Foundations, The Holloway Family Foundation, Sharron Hunt, Lara and Stephen Harrison, TACA, Carl B. & Florence E. King Foundation, TXU Energy, The Rocky Howard Family, Texas Travel Industry Recovery Program. **Additional Support is Provided By:** Dallas Tourism Public Improvement District, Capital for Kids, Joan Becker, Texas Commission on the Arts and National Endowment for the Arts, Stephen M. Seay Foundation, Margot B. Perot, The Eugene McDermott Foundation, Ellen and Jim Markus, Central Market, Laurie Sands Harrison, Lisa K. Simmons, Green Mountain Energy DCT's official renewable energy partner. **Sensory-Friendly Sponsors Include:** Fichtenbaum Charitable Trust. **Building Fund Supported By:** The Carlson Foundation, The March Family Foundation, Laurie Sands Harrison, The Rosewood Corporation, Anonymous Family, Elizabeth & Bart Showalter, Karen & Ken Travis, The Hersh Foundation, Everett & Becky Spaeth.

Dallas Children's Theater  
Rosewood Center for Family Arts  
5938 Skillman Street  
Dallas, Texas 75231

### **About Dallas Children's Theater**

Dallas Children's Theater features professional actors performing for an annual audience of 150,000 young people and their families through mainstage productions and an arts-in-education program. As the only major organization in Dallas focusing solely on youth and family theater, DCT builds bridges of understanding between generations and cultures, instilling an early appreciation of literature, art, and the performing arts in tomorrow's artists and patrons.

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