

CHILDREN'S SEASON

VIRGINIA REP CENTER FOR ARTS AND EDUCATION
JESSICA M. BOGESE THEATRE

VIRGINIA **rep**

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**



APRIL 14 - MAY 7, 2023

SCENIC DESIGN
MERCEDES SCHAUM

LIGHTING DESIGN
MATTHEW LANDWEHR

COSTUME DESIGN
MARCIA HAILEY

MUSIC DIRECTOR
JASON MARKS

STAGE MANAGER
HANNAH HOFFERT

DIRECTION/CHOREOGRAPHY
SUSAN SANFORD

SEASON SUPPORTERS:

THE SHUBERT
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ELEPHANT & PIGGIE'S

"WE ARE IN A PLAY!"

This 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.

ELEPHANT AND PIGGIE'S WE ARE IN A PLAY is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. www.mtishows.com

CAST

Piggie **Chelsea Majors**
 Gerald **Ian Page**
 Squirrelle 1 **Hannah Leigh Thomas**
 Squirrelle 2 / Mail Dog **Brenna Duffy**
 Squirrelle 3 / Penguin, Piggie u/s **Erin Chaves**

STAFF FOR THIS PRODUCTION

Artistic Director of Education	Todd D. Norris	Scenic Charge Artist	Amy Gethins Sullivan
Production Manager	Ginnie Willard	Props Manager	Tim Snider
Director of Production	Bruce Rennie	Scenic Artist & Props Assistant	Alondra Castro*
Technical Directors	Tommy Hawfield, Hans Paul	Production Electrician	Kacey Yachew
Assistant Stage Manager	Emily Kimoto*	Electrician	Dennis Cheeks*
Director of Costumes	Sue Griffin	Light Board Operator	Hannah Hoffert
Wardrobe Supervisor	Tajma Graham	Audio Visual Supervisor	Will Fisher
Carpenters	Carol-Anne Petit, Mckinley Sprinkle*	Sound Engineer & Projection Technician	Dennis Cheeks*

*Denotes staff member is participating in Virginia Rep's Apprentice Program.
 To see the entire Virginia Rep staff, please visit: <https://va-rep.org/staff.html>

Photography, Videography Benjah Photography, Jay Paul, Austin Lewis



Chelsea Majors, she/her, (Piggie) is a classically trained vocalist and music educator from Northern Virginia. She most recently appeared as Johanna in Landless Theatre Company's production of *Sweeney Todd: Prog Metal Version*. Additionally, she has performed in such roles as Vanessa from *In the Heights* and Mabel from *Pirates of Penzance*. Chelsea is a graduate of Virginia Tech where she received a B.A. in Voice and M.A. in Education; and has served as a music director for youth programs for over fourteen years. Outside of theatre, Chelsea enjoys gardening, gaming, and spending time with her family and friends.



Ian Page (Gerald) is thrilled to be part of this production with Virginia Rep. Past credits include *Forever Plaid* and *1776* (Virginia Rep); *bare: a pop opera* (RTCC Best Actor in a Musical nomination) and *It Shoulda Been You* (Richmond Triangle Players); *Little Shop of Horrors* (RTCC for Best Actor in a Musical nomination), *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* (RTCC Best Supporting Actor in a Musical nomination), *Bright Star*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, and *The Andrews Brothers* (Swift Creek Mill Theatre). Enjoy the show!



Hannah Leigh Thomas (Squirrelle 1) is a classically trained soprano and a graduate of James Madison University's School of Music. Hannah has been a singer/dancer at Busch Gardens Williamsburg since 2021 (credits: *Emerald Ensemble*, *Celtic Fyre Christmas*, *OktoberZest*, *Unto Us*). Other credits include Drusilla/ Poppea Cover in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (Capitol Opera Richmond), Featured Dancer in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Wayne Theatre at Wintergreen Resort), and Vivienne in *Legally Blonde* (Wayne Theater). Hannah also enjoys working with furry friends at Banfield Pet Hospital. Hannah thanks God, Mom, and Dad for their continued love and support. hannahthomasactor.com



Brenna Duffy, she/her, (Squirrelle 2) is so excited to be a part of this production. She is a senior in high school, and some of her favorite roles have been Ariel in *Footloose*, Heather McNamara in *Heathers*, and Liesl in *The Sound of Music*. She hopes you enjoy this super fun show!



Erin Chaves, she/her, (Squirrelle 3 / Penguin, Piggie u/s) is thrilled to be making her Virginia Rep debut! Erin received her B.F.A. in Musical Theatre from the University of North Dakota in May of 2022. Favorite previous productions include *The 25th ... Spelling Bee* (Olive), *Romeo and Juliet* (Juliet), and *Silent Sky* (Henrietta). When not performing, Erin loves reading, crocheting, and exploring new places. Lots of love to her family, friends, and her partner, Dylan, for always supporting her in her theatrical endeavors! She hopes you have fun and enjoy this wonderful show!

Susan Sanford, she/her, (Director/Choreographer) is thrilled to finally be directing this show after a three-year pause due to COVID. Previous directorial credits at Virginia Rep include *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Musical*, *Goodnight Moon*, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, *The Magic Flute*, and *The Song of Mulan*. Susan's play, *Home Sweet Homer*, has been seen all across the country as part of Virginia Rep On Tour's programming. She is also an accomplished actor, having appeared in such shows as *After December*, *Cinderella*, *Sister Act*, *A Christmas Story*, and *Gypsy*. Susan has received four RTCC awards for her acting work in various plays and musicals. By day, Susan works as the Middle School Theatre and Upper School Public Speaking teacher at The Steward School. All love and thanks to Foster, Willow and Jordan.

Jason Marks (Music Director) is delighted to be working on his second Mo Willems musical with Susan Sanford, after having previously teamed up on *Knuffle Bunny* in 2018. Marks serves as resident music director for Virginia Rep on Tour, and has been music director for numerous mainstage productions including *Tuck Everlasting*, Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, *Seussical*, and many others. His original musicals have toured and been seen by audiences all over the country, including the award-winning *Croaker: The Frog Prince Musical*, which recently received a TYA (Theater for Young Audiences) adaptation from the Children's Theatre of Cincinnati. Local audiences know Jason from his stage work as an actor in *1776*, *The Producers*, *Guys & Dolls*, *Shrek*, and more.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

Lucky to See You	Gerald & Piggie
Swimmy! Fancy!	Squirrelles, Gerald & Piggie
Don't Go	Gerald & Piggie
Ice Cream Hero	Squirrelles & Gerald
Ode to Toy	Gerald & Piggie
Toy Breaker	Squirrelles, Gerald & Piggie
Elephant in the Room	Gerald & Piggie
We're in a Play	Squirrelles, Gerald & Piggie
We'll Be Friends	Gerald & Piggie
We've Been Lucky	Squirrelles, Gerald & Piggie

Mercedes Schaum (Scenic Designer) is delighted to be working with her dear friend Susan Sanford and helping her bring some of our family's favorite characters and stories to the stage. Mo Willems' books have been a constant in her house and the characters are like old friends. Mercedes has been designing and painting in Richmond for 20 years. Family favorites include: *She Persisted*, *Annie*, *Honk!*, *A Christmas Story*, *Mame*, *The BFG*, *Song of Mulan*, *Into the Woods*, *Bunnicula*, *The Magic Flute*, *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*, and *It's A Wonderful Life* for Virginia Rep; *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, and many more for SPARC. She has a B.F.A. from JMU in theatre and an M.F.A. in set design from the University of Illinois. When she's not working in the theatre, Mercedes is raising four kids with her husband, Jason Alley, and looking for new challenges and prepping for crazy family adventures!

Marcia Hailey (Costume Designer) is excited to be designing costumes for *Elephant and Piggie*. She has been playing dress up for years. Some of her favorite shows she has worked on are *Mamma Mia*, *Forever Plaid*, *Bonnie and Claire*, and *She Persisted*. She hopes you have fun singing and dancing with Gerald and Piggie.

Matthew Landwehr (Lighting Designer) is a graduate of Minnesota State University-Mankato with a B.S. in Theatre Technology. After serving as the Associate Lighting Designer for Playhouse on the Square in Memphis, TN and the Lighting Director for the Historic Tibbits Opera House in Coldwater, MI, he moved to Richmond to serve at Theatre IV/Barksdale Theatre as Production Electrician and Lighting Designer. After a multi-year run as Technical Director for SPARC's Live Art concert series he now works for Henrico Theatre as Technical Director.

Hannah Hoffert, she/her, (Stage Manager) is thrilled to be part of the *Elephant and Piggie* team! This is her second season with Virginia Rep, and her previous credits include *Beehive: The '60s Musical*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Chicken & Biscuits*, *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*, and *She Persisted*. Hannah is a proud alumna of Carnegie Mellon University, receiving her B.S. ('16) and M.S. ('17) in Mechanical Engineering. When not at the theatre, she loves taking trips to Virginia Beach with her service dog, Olive, and walking along the beach. Hannah would like to thank her family, mentors and Olive who helped to make this dream a reality!

Mo Willems (Script and Lyrics) #1 *New York Times* Bestseller Mo Willems began his career as a writer and animator for PBS' *Sesame Street*, where he garnered 6 Emmy Awards for his writing. During his nine seasons at *Sesame Street*, Mo also served as a weekly commentator for BBC Radio and created two animated series, Nick-elodeon's *The Off-Beats* and Cartoon Network's *Sheep in the Big City*. While serving as head writer for Cartoon Network's #1 rated show, *Codename: Kids Next Door*, Mo began writing and drawing books for children. His debut effort, *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* became a *New York Times* Bestseller and was awarded a Caldecott Honor in 2004. The following year *Knuffle Bunny: a Cautionary Tale* was awarded a Caldecott Honor. The sequel, *Knuffle Bunny Too: a Case of Mistaken Identity* garnered Mo his third Caldecott Honor in 2008. In addition to picture books, Mo created the *Elephant and Piggie* books, a series of "Easy Readers", which were awarded the Theodor Seuss Geisel Medal in 2008 and 2009 and a Geisel Honor in 2011. For older audiences he has published an illustrated memoir of his year-long trip around the world in 1990-91 entitled *You Can Never Find a Rickshaw When it Monsoons*. Mo's drawings, wire sculptures, and ceramics (done in collaboration with his father) have exhibited in numerous galleries and museums across the nation and his graphic story about his family experiences during 9-11 for DC comics resides in the Library of Congress' permanent collection. Mo has been heard on NPR's *All Things Considered* where he occasionally serves as the broadcast's "Radio Cartoonist". While no longer working in television, Mo voices and produces animated cartoons based on his books with Weston Woods studios. The animated *Knuffle Bunny* was awarded Best Film during the New York International Children's Film Festival in 2008 and received the Andrew Carnegie Medal in 2007. The animated *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* garnered Mo his second Carnegie Medal in 2010. Mo wrote the script and lyrics for *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale*, commissioned by the Kennedy Center for its 2010 season. Mo lives in Massachusetts with his family.

Deborah Wicks La Puma (Music) A composer, music director and orchestrator, Deborah Wicks La Puma is one of the most produced Theatre for Young Audiences artists working today. With bestselling children's author Mo Willems she has created *Elephant and Piggie's: We Are In A Play*; *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Rock Experience*; and *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus: The Musical*. Her many and diverse works with playwright Karen Zacarias include *Ella Enchanted* (based on the book by Gail Carson Levine), *Olivério: A Brazilian Twist*, *Frida Libre*, *Looking for Roberto Clemente* and *Einstein Is a Dummy*. With playwright Adam Tobin she created *She Persisted* (based on the book by Chelsea Clinton), and the upcoming *What Do You Do With An Idea?* (based on the book by Kobi Yamada). Her adult works include the lyric opera *Dakota Sky* and the Mexican folk musical *Perdita* (based on Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*) with Kathleen Cahill. She received her MFA from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, her bachelor's degree from Stanford University, and studied folk music with ethnomusicologist Alfredo López Mondragón. Her honors include the Jane Chambers Playwriting Award, an NEA New American Works Grant, two Parents' Choice Awards, and a Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Musical Adaptation. A proud Mexican-American and "Navy brat" who grew up in Brazil, Portugal and California, La Puma is a member of TYA USA, ASCAP and The Dramatists Guild. Mother to three daughters and Mimi the Cat, La Puma lives in Southern California with her PR agent and loving husband, Chris.

Any video and/or audio recording of the production is strictly prohibited.

Summer

THEATRE CAMPS

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