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November 4, 2016
For Immediate Release

Salt Lake Acting Company Celebrates the Holiday Season With Its 8th Annual Children's Musical: **DIARY OF A WORM, A SPIDER, AND A FLY** Book, Music & Lyrics by Joan Cushing

Salt Lake Acting Company (SLAC) is preparing for the most wonderful time of the year! From **December 2 through December 28, 2016**, SLAC will welcome its youngest audiences for the musical adventure DIARY OF A WORM, A SPIDER, AND A FLY by Joan Cushing, based on the beloved book series by Doreen Cronin and illustrated by Harry Bliss. This year marks SLAC's eighth annual professional play for children (of all ages) and with it, a wide array of community engagement and educational programs.

Based on the clever, colorful book series by Doreen Cronin and Harry Bliss, this musical adaptation combines the lives of Worm, Spider, and Fly as they head back to school. With musical styles ranging from rap and hip-hop to ballads and boogie-woogie, DIARY OF A WORM, A SPIDER, AND A FLY is fun for the whole family.

Penelope Caywood returns to direct and choreograph her seventh SLAC children's play. She has worked as Artistic Director for Youth Theatre at the U for the past ten years and is excited to tackle DIARY OF A WORM, A SPIDER, AND A FLY.

Caywood says, "It's not always easy being a young person, especially when you feel like you're different from other kids. This comedic show deals with that reality through the life cycle of some creepy crawly characters. They discover that it's okay to be different and that our unique qualities make us special. We all need to be reminded of this sometimes – even if it's through a bug's perspective. The story is heartwarming and the music is charming complete with rap, hip-hop, pop, and Broadway."

One of the most rewarding aspects of producing children's theatre for Salt Lake Acting Company is its **Title 1 Arts Education Program**, which allows over 1,700 underprivileged schoolchildren to experience the magic of live theatre at no cost to them or their schools. With arts education receiving less and less attention and funding, this program plays a vital role in providing a more well-rounded education to Utah students. Every children's play that SLAC produces is based on a literary work. SLAC creates a study guide to accompany each play and distributes it to every class that attends the Title 1 Arts Education Program. The guide includes learning activities to be completed before and after the children see the play, reinforcing the connection between literacy and the arts. Terra Baker, a first grade teacher from Woodrow Wilson Elementary (a Title 1 school) said of SLAC's Title 1 Arts Education Program, "This experience allows the students to see a book come to life. They were so excited to compare the play to the book, and it sparked their imaginations in the classroom."

SLAC's 2016 Title 1 Arts Education Program will serve the following Utah Title 1 schools:

Edison Elementary
Escalante Elementary
Kearns St. Ann Catholic School

Lincoln Elementary
Moss Elementary
Mountain View Elementary
North Star Elementary
Park View Elementary
Riley Elementary
Rose Park Elementary
Washington Elementary
Whittier Elementary
Woodrow Wilson Elementary

In addition to Title 1 Matinee performances and regular performances at Salt Lake Acting Company, the cast will make special appearances at local schools, museums, bookstores, and libraries throughout November and December. The schedule so far includes:

Friday, November 18 at 12:00 pm – Beacon Heights Elementary | 1850 S. 2500 E., SLC
Saturday, November 19 at 10:00 am – Song of the Heart Studios | 2670 S. 2000 E., SLC
Tuesday, November 22 at 2:00 pm- Discovery Gateway | 444 100 S., SLC
Saturday, November 26 at 11:00 am – The King’s English Bookshop | 1511 S. 1500 E., SLC
Monday, November 28 at 2:00 pm – Wasatch Elementary | 30 R Street, SLC
Monday, November 28 at 6:00 pm – Voices for Utah Children | SLAC
Thursday, December 1 at 5:00 pm – Sprague Library | 2131 Highland Drive, SLC
Thursday, December 15 at 6:30 pm – Sweet Library | 455 F Street, SLC
Friday, December 16 at 11:00 am – Day-Riverside Library | 1575 W. 1000 N., SLC

Also during this time of year, SLAC bolsters its commitment to enrich and engage community by partnering with several local organizations. SLAC has developed a special relationship with Intermountain Therapy Animals (ITA), a non-profit organization that brings animal resources to human needs in the areas of physical, occupational, speech, and psychotherapies, as well as special education. ITA launched its R.E.A.D. program in 1999 – the first comprehensive literacy program built around the appealing idea of reading to dogs. During the run of ART DOG, SLAC will host volunteers from ITA along with their furry friends in the lobby to raise awareness and money for the organization.

SLAC is proud to once again partner with Voices for Utah Children, a multi-issue child advocacy organization that works to make Utah a place where all children thrive. They will be joining SLAC for a special performance of DIARY OF A WORM, A SPIDER, AND A FLY.

SLAC will also continue its partnerships with its neighbor to the south, Washington Elementary and the Visual Art Institute. Students will decorate SLAC’s lobby and Green Room with original artwork inspired by the books, *Diary of a Worm*, *Diary of a Spider*, and *Diary of a Fly*. SLAC will also be accepting donations on behalf of Washington Elementary and the YWCA throughout the run of the play.

SLAC is thrilled to welcome the holiday season and with it, the magic of children’s theatre. DIARY OF A WORM, A SPIDER, AND A FLY is sure to delight audiences of all ages.

*Adapted from the books DIARY OF A WORM, DIARY OF A SPIDER, and DIARY OF A FLY by Doreen Cronin, illustrated by Harry Bliss. Text copyright © 2003, 2005, and 2007 by Doreen Cronin. Illustrations © 2003, 2005, and 2007 by Harry Bliss. Used with permission of Pippin Properties, Inc.
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WHO’S WHO

DIRECTOR

Penelope Caywood is the Artistic Director of University of Utah's Youth Theatre program. Youth Theatre is a successful year-round performing arts training program for youth ages 4 to 18. Over 650 students train in drama annually and over 6000 elementary school students are bussed to see one of their two productions each year. Through her Partners in Education collaboration (Salt Lake City School District and Kingsbury Hall) she has created a unique theatre-arts program at Bennion Elementary School (SLCSD) in which she demonstrates drama strategies in the classroom, presents scaffolded workshops to teachers, and assists in the implementation of drama as a teaching method. As this program has grown, Penelope has presented at numerous arts integration and teacher training workshops throughout Utah and other parts of the country. Because of her unique position at the University of Utah, Penelope also teaches two courses for pre-service teachers; Materials and Methods of Creative Drama and Integrating the Arts in the Classroom. As a director and choreographer, Penelope has been involved with over forty productions along the Wasatch Front, including work with Rogers Memorial Theatre, Weber State, The Grand Theatre, Plan-B, the Egyptian Theatre, and SLAC.

MUSIC DIRECTOR/SOUND DESIGN

David Evanoff has been the musical director for dozens of SLAC show, including SATURDAY'S VOYEUR, BAT BOY, BLOODY BLOODY ANDREW JACKSON AND GO DOG GO! He owns and operates Sound Designs studio where he produces music for film TV, radio and special events.

CAST

Joseph Paul Branca (Ant) is so excited to be making his debut at SLAC! Joseph is a product of the University of Utah and Westminster College Theatre Programs where he majored in Acting and History. Most recently he was seen as Michael Darling in Peter Pan, Benjamin in Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, and Topper/Solicitor #1 in A Christmas Carol, all at Hale Center Theater Orem. He was a company member at Desert Star Playhouse from 2014-2015, toured with the Ancient Greek Theatre Festival's production of Euripides Hecuba, played the role of Demetrius in A Midsummer Night's Dream with Salt Lake Shakespeare, and starred in the Emmy Award Winning Independent Film Resistance Movement.

Cameron Fleck (Spider) is beyond thrilled and grateful to be making his SLAC debut! You may have seen Cameron perform around the valley in Young Frankenstein (Ziggy) at the Ziegfeld Theatre and Alice in Wonderland (Cheshire Cat/Tweedle Dee) at Salty Dinner Theatre.

Sky Kawai (Worm) is a sophomore earning his BFA in Musical Theatre while studying pre med at the University of Utah. He is stoked to join the SLAC team for this wonderful production! Previous roles include Randall in BRING IT ON (Marriott Center for Dance), Beast in BEAUTY AND THE BEAST (Covey Center), GOD IN CHILDREN OF EDEN (Scera), and Chad in HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL 2 (Hale Center Theatre).

Micki Martinez (Butterfly) is thrilled to be making her SLAC debut! She is a freshman in the Musical Theatre Program at the University of Utah, and was most recently seen as "Nautica" in the University's production of Bring It On. Micki hails from right here in Salt Lake, and has been seen in many productions throughout the valley.

Emilie Starr (Fly) is thrilled to be gracing SLAC's stage in THE DIARY OF A WORM SPIDER AND A FLY! She loves any chance to make her nieces and nephews think she is cool. As a successful starring actress in Utah she has performed all over the state. Some of her favorite roles include, Zooey in MR. PERFECT & Juliet in R&J STAR CROSSED DEATH MATCH both with Salt Lake Acting Company, Diane in NEXT TO NORMAL with the Ziegfeld Theatre, Ivy in BARE with Utah Repertory Theatre Company, Cavale in COWBOY MOUTH with Good Company Theatre and Alice in CLOSER with Wasatch Theatre. She also has performed in Intermountain LIVE WELL TOUR for the past three years where she has traveled to elementary schools all over the state teaching kids about eating healthy and staying active. In February she will be making her debut at Plan B in their production of VIRTUE.

Alicia M. Washington (Bee) is blessed to be surrounded by a community that embraces the arts. She returns to the stage after a four year hiatus. During which Alicia opened a theatre company in Ogden, Good Company Theatre. GCT is now in its fourth year of operation, bringing live theatre to Downtown Ogden. She received a Musical Theatre Degree from Weber State University, along with training from SITI Company and The Second City. Previous roles include: THE NETHER (Morris), AVENUE Q (Gary Coleman), Motormouth Maybelle (HAIRSPRAY).

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WHO:

Salt Lake Acting Company

WHAT:

DIARY OF A WORM, A SPIDER, AND A FLY

Book, Music & Lyrics by Joan Cushing

Adapted from the Diary of a Worm series by Doreen Cronin and Harry Bliss

WHEN:

December 2 – 28, 2016

Performance Dates/Times

December 2 – 7PM

December 3 – 12PM, 3PM

December 4 – 12PM, 3PM

December 9 – 7PM

December 10 – 12PM, 3PM

December 11 – 12PM, 3PM

December 16 – 7PM

December 17 – 10AM, 12PM, 3PM

December 18 – 10AM, 12PM, 3PM

December 19 – 7PM

December 22 – 7PM

December 23 – 3PM, 7PM

December 27 – 12PM, 3PM

December 28 – 12PM, 3PM

WHERE:

Salt Lake Acting Company

168 West 500 North, Salt Lake City

PRICE:

Children \$15, Adults \$25

Discounts are available for groups of ten or more.

MORE INFORMATION:

Box Office: 801-363-7522

Open 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., Mon – Fri

www.saltlakeactingcompany.org

CAST:

Joseph Paul Branca, Cameron Fleck, Sky Kawai, Micki Martinez, Emilie Starr, Alicia M. Washington

ARTISTIC TEAM:

Director: Penelope Caywood

Music Director/Sound Design: David Evanoff

Set Design: Thomas George

Costume Design: Erin Carignan

Light Design: Jesse Portillo

Stage Manager: William Richardson

Assistant Director: Sarah Katherine Walker

Assistant Set Design: Zoë Fetters
Assistant Costume Design: Katie Rogel

ABOUT SALT LAKE ACTING COMPANY

Salt Lake Acting Company (SLAC)'s mission is to engage and enrich community through brave contemporary theatre. Founded in 1970, SLAC is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 professional theatre dedicated to producing, commissioning, and developing new works and to supporting a community of professional artists. SLAC has been nationally recognized by the Shubert Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Pew Charitable Trusts, and the Edgerton Foundation, among others. SLAC operates under a SPT Actors Equity Association contract and is a Constituent Member of Theatre Communications Group (a national organization for non-profit professional regional theatres), and the National New Play Network (a national alliance of non-profit professional theatres that champions the development, production, and continued life of new plays).