

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Curtains up across the state as AAC expands Children's Theatre programming**

*Children's Theatre Restaged to feature community-focused productions as lights go down in MacArthur Park theater*

**LITTLE ROCK, Ark.** – While the Children's Theatre at the Arkansas Arts Center undergoes a much-needed renovation, **Children's Theatre Restaged** will bring the magic of live theatre to stages across Arkansas.

In this reimagined format, the Children's Theatre will expand its touring capacity while the Arts Center's MacArthur Park facility undergoes its major renovation and expansion project. *The Hobbit*, on stage April 26 – May 12, will be the last Main Stage production in the current MacArthur Park building. Main Stage shows will resume in the Arkansas Arts Center's renovated theater in fall 2022.

Children's Theatre on Tour, part of the Arts Center's Statewide ArtsReach program, currently serves more than 35,000 students and families in communities across Arkansas with three traveling productions every year. In this expanded format, Children's Theatre Restaged will allow the Arts Center to reach even more students and families across the state with professional, educational live theatre experiences.

Through this expanded program, literary-based theatre productions will continue to travel to schools, community centers and libraries across Arkansas. The 2019–2020 Children's Theatre on Tour season will include *Wynken, Blynken and Nod: A Play for the Very Young* (September 24 – November 1), *A Christmas Carol* (November 12 – December 20), *The Arkansas Story Porch* (January 14 – February 28), and *The Wind in the Willows* (April 7 – May 15).

Children's Theatre Restaged will also include additional public productions and performances at the Arkansas Arts Center's temporary location in Riverdale and at other community locations. Details about additional programming will continue to be announced throughout 2019.

Children's Theatre Restaged is yet another piece of the Arts Center's commitment to remaining accessible to the community while its MacArthur Park building is under construction. The Arts Center is committed to working with cultural partners across the region to expand access to performing and visual art programming while increasing programming reach.

"Children's Theatre Restaged will continue and grow our mission by inviting more families and more communities to discover creativity on stage," said Laine Harber, Interim Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer. "The Arkansas Arts Center was imagined as a hub for the arts in Arkansas. As we build our new home in MacArthur Park, we're excited to take this interlude to build our reach across the state."

Theatre classes will also continue while the Arts Center undergoes renovation. The 2019 Junior Arts Academy and Summer Theatre Academy will be held at the MacArthur Park facility this summer. While

the Arts Center's MacArthur Park building is under construction, those programs will continue at other community locations.

Children's Theatre staff will work out of the Arkansas Arts Center's temporary Riverdale space during the renovation and expansion project along with the rest of the Arts Center staff. In the Children's Theatre's 14,200 square-foot workshop, theatre staff will create sets, sew costumes, and build props for the Arts Center's touring productions and programs.

"Children's Theatre Restaged is the next chapter in the Children's Theatre's long history of bringing magic and joy to the stage," said Bradley Anderson, Children's Theatre Artistic Director. "We are excited to have this opportunity to expand our traveling programs and we can't wait for families across the state to delight in the productions we're creating."

#### **2019–2020 Children's Theatre on Tour Season:**

##### ***Wynken, Blynken, and Nod: A Play for the Very Young***

**September 24 – November 1, 2019**

Toddlers and preschoolers will delight in the enchanting and whimsical journey of Wynken, Blynken, and Nod as they sail away one magical night and meet the mystical Moon! Inspired by Eugene Field's poem, this interactive musical for early-childhood audiences explores the fantasy world of dreams. The Moon asks, "where are you going, and what do you wish?" And the night sky becomes the sea and stars become fish as audience members see, touch, and participate throughout the play. Join Wynken, Blynken, Nod, and the Moon on this 45-minute multi-sensory adventure for the very young.

##### ***A Christmas Carol***

**November 12 – December 20, 2019**

Clever, comedic, and kid-friendly, this holiday play breathes new life into Dickens' heart-warming classic. Schooled by a team of magical Christmas Eve visitors, Ebenezer Scrooge, the most miserable of all misers, rediscovers the true spirit of the season—one of love, generosity, and family. With these touchstones of happiness revived in him, he wakes Christmas morning to find himself "light as a feather, happy as an angel, and merry as a schoolboy!"

##### ***The Arkansas Story Porch***

**January 14 – February 28, 2020**

Old Winnie and Monroe Jones are the fun-lovin'est pair of Ozark hill folk you'll ever hope to meet. Nothing tickles them more than sitting on their plank-board porch with friends and neighbors spinning yarns and singing songs of Arkansas lore and Arkansas history. And guess what? You're invited! So pull up a seat and get ready to laugh and sing. It's Arkansas story time, y'all!

##### ***The Wind in the Willows***

**April 7 – May 15, 2020**

For Mole, Rat, and Badger, springtime is a time for new life, new friendships, and enjoying the simple pleasures—that is, until Mr. Toad of Toad Hall careens onto the scene. After a madcap spree of weasel clashes and motorcar crashes, it is up to the three friends to take the prodigal toad in hand and rescue him from his most dangerous enemy—himself.

#### **ABOUT THE ARKANSAS ARTS CENTER**

The Arkansas Arts Center is the state's premier center for visual and performing arts, with a renowned collection of local, regional and international art. The AAC also features the award-winning Children's Theatre, art classes and public programs. In addition, the AAC offers touring programs for communities, such as Children's Theatre on Tour, the Artmobile and traveling exhibitions.

*Arkansas Arts Center programs are supported in part by: the City of Little Rock; the Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau; the City of North Little Rock; and the Arkansas Arts Council, an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage and the National Endowment for the Arts.*