

For Immediate Release

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Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Musical

Kicks Off La Mirada's 2010-2011 Young Audiences Season

Based on the Caldecott Honor-winning children's book
by Mo Willems

La Mirada, CA, October 4, 2010 – **La Mirada Theatre for the Performing Arts** kicks off its 2010-2011 **Programs for Young Audiences** series with **Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences On Tour** newest national touring production, **Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Musical**. With music by Grammy Award winning composer Michael Silversher, six-time Emmy Award winning author/illustrator Mo Willems adapts his Caldecott Honor winning children's book *Knuffle Bunny* into a brand new family musical. Directed by Rosemary Newcott with choreography by Paige Hernandez. The production is recommended for children ages 4 and up. Performances are **Sunday, October 24, 2010** at 1:30 and 3:30 p.m.

Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Musical tells the story of toddler Trixie who has a beloved stuffed bunny, which she misplaces while on a trip to the laundromat with her slightly disheveled dad. Luckily, she finds the stuffed animal and speaks her first words: "Knuffle Bunny!" The production is a story about family, best friends, baby steps, and memories that last a lifetime.

The cast includes Tia Shearer as Trixie, Brian Sutow as Dad, Jennifer Timberlake as Mom, and Jeffery Peterson and Andrea Washington as Puppeteers. ***Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Musical*** features set and puppet design by Kat Conley, projections design by Ryan Wineinger, costume design by Kate Turner-Walker, lighting design by Jeff Bruckerhoff, sound design by Ryan Gastelum, and choreography by Paige Hernandez.

New York Times #1 Bestselling Author **Mo Willems** is best known for his Caldecott Honor picture books, *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!*, *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale*, and *Knuffle Bunny Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity*. His *Elephant and Piggie* early reader series garnered two consecutive Theodore Geisel Medals and *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* was recently one of the first inductees to the Picture Book Hall of Fame. Mr. Willems' career began in television animation where he created the series *Sheep in the Big City*, served as head writer for *Codename: Kids Next Door*, and wrote and animated for *Sesame Street*, where he garnered six Emmy Awards for writing. His ceramics, wire sculptures, and drawings have been exhibited in galleries and museums nationwide; a comic strip about his experiences during the September 11, 2001 tragedy for DC Comics resides at

the Library of Congress. His radio work includes stints at BBC Radio and NPR's *All Things Considered*, where Mr. Willems occasionally serves as a radio cartoonist. *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Musical* is his first book adapted for a musical production.

Composer **Michael Silversher** is a Grammy Award® winning songwriter (*Elmo in Grouchland*), with three primetime Emmy nominations, two for *Winnie-the-Pooh* and one for the *Muppets*. In addition to writing the theme songs for Disney's television series, *Tale Spin* and *Gummi Bears*, he has over one hundred songs in the Disney catalogue, has written over 42 musical theater works, and has worked extensively with Jim Henson Productions, MGM, Sony, Warner Bros., Kaiser Permanente Educational Theatre Programs, The Learning Channel, Los Angeles Opera, South Coast Repertory Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, Sundance Institute as musical director of the children's theater, and resident composer for the Playwright's Lab. He is co-founder of the West Coast Songwriters' Association. His current projects include all the songs for the Henson/PBS Sprout series *Pajanimals* and composing the score for *Dinosaur Train* a new series for PBS (also with Henson).

Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Musical is directed by **Rosemary Newcott**. Rosemary Newcott is the Sally G. Tomlinson Director of Theatre for Youth at Atlanta's Alliance Theatre. As such, she directs two Theater for Young Audiences (TYA) productions, the annual production of *A Christmas Carol* and the High School (playwriting) Collision Project. Some of her favorite Alliance TYA productions are: *Class of 3000 Live*, *Goodnight Moon*, *Seussical*, *The Stinky Cheese Man*, *Einstein is a Dummy*, *Ferdinand the Bull*, *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*, *The Music Lesson*, *Androcles and the Lion*, *The Book of Ruth*, and *The Hobbit*. Rosemary has extensive credits as an actress, director, and teacher and is grateful for the artful variety. She holds an M.A. in theater from Northwestern University and a B.A. in English and Theater from Jersey City University. She was named Atlanta Lexus Leader of the Arts for December 2001 and is a recipient of the prestigious Princess Grace Foundation Fellowship. She was recognized as Best Director of the Year in 2002 by the Atlanta Journal Constitution and in 2005 was awarded the Georgia Theatre Conference's Distinguished Career Award. This past season, she received the 2009 Princess Grace Special Projects award for her work with André Benjamin's *Class of 3000 Live*. She is a proud new board member of Theatre for Young Audiences/USA.

KENNEDY CENTER THEATER FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES ON TOUR

With nationally touring performances of *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Musical* and *Barrio Grrrr!*, the Kennedy Center's Theater for Young Audiences on Tour celebrates its 18th anniversary in the 2010-2011 season. Plays and musicals originate as newly commissioned productions at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. before touring in subsequent years. Artistic teams consist of carefully selected professionals from all corners of the nation who possess extensive experience with both youth and adult theater. The teams strive to create shows that are delightful, educational, and provide a foundation for a life-long appreciation of the performing arts for audiences of all ages. Adding to the Theater for Young Audiences experience are Kennedy Center *Cuesheet* study guides, ArtsEdge online content and post-performance question-and-answer sessions with members of the cast and company. For more information on ArtsEdge, please visit artsedge.kennedy-center.org.

La Mirada Theatre's Programs for Young Audiences is designed to give children exposure to a diverse mix of national and international touring stage acts. The 2010-11 season will continue with *JazzReach presents Hangin' With The Giants* on February 27, 2011, ArtsPower's *Madeline and the Bad Hat* on March 13, 2011, the Disney Channel's *Choo-Choo Soul* on April 10, 2011 and Storybook Theatre's *Jack and the Beanstalk* on May 15, 2011.

All seats are \$8 for children and \$12 for adults. Tickets are available online at www.lamiradatheatre.com or by calling the La Mirada Theatre Box Office at (562) 944-9801 or (714) 994-6310. Season subscriptions are available for \$30 (Children) and \$45 (Adults). The theatre is located at 14900 La Mirada Blvd. in La Mirada, CA. Parking is free. Wheelchair access and Hearing Assist devices available.

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Photos available at <http://www.lamiradatheatre.com/press.htm>

CALENDAR LISTING

Please list under Children's Theatre, Kid's Stuff, Family Entertainment, or related category:

Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Musical. Part of La Mirada Theatre's **Programs for Young Audiences Series**. 2 shows only: 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m., Sunday, October 24, 2010 at La Mirada Theatre, 14900 La Mirada Boulevard, La Mirada, CA. Tickets: \$8 - \$12 online at www.lamiradatheatre.com or call the box office at (562) 944-9801 or (714) 994-6310. Ages 4 and up.