

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Chicago Playworks Presents Roald Dahl's *THE BFG***

*Mischievous Giants Grace the Merle Reskin Stage*

Chicago Playworks for Families and Young Audiences, the city's oldest continuously operating children's theatre, presents Roald Dahl's ***THE BFG***, adapted for the stage by David Wood and directed by Ernie Nolan. The play opens Saturday, January 13 and runs through Tuesday, March 6 at DePaul's Merle Reskin Theatre. Performances are Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10 AM and Saturdays at 2 PM. There are no performances on 1/16 and 1/27. This production is sponsored by BlueCross BlueShield of Illinois. **To purchase tickets, call the Box Office at (312) 922-1999.**

In this fun and imaginative story, the orphan Sophie is snatched from her bed by a quirky but harmless Big Friendly Giant who uses a trumpet to blow dreams into children's ears. As they become friends and join forces against a few other mischievous giants, Sophie discovers "frobscottle," "wizzpopping" and all sorts of fantastical things that fill their adventure with mixed-up language, laughs and magical entertainment. Recommended for ages 5 and up.

Tickets are \$8. Group rates are available for 15 or more people. Tickets for Saturday performances are available on-line at [www.ticketweb.com](http://www.ticketweb.com) and [www.hottix.org](http://www.hottix.org). Performances are at DePaul's Merle Reskin Theatre, 60 E. Balbo Drive at Michigan, Chicago. Discount parking is available with coupons from the Box Office, and the theatre is accessible via CTA buses (3-King Drive, 29-State Street, 146-Michigan/Museums and others), and CTA El stops (Red, Blue, Pink, Brown, Green, Orange and Purple).

**Roald Dahl** (Author, 1916-1990) is one of the world's most beloved children's authors for his creation of such memorable characters as Willy Wonka, The BFG and Danny, Champion of the

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World. Dahl was born in Llandaff, South Wales to Norwegian parents and was educated in English boarding schools but never attended university. He was a fighter pilot in the British Royal Air Force in World War II and was severely injured during an emergency landing in the Libyan Desert. As Assistant Air Attaché in Washington, D.C., he became a writer, and that was his job for the rest of his life. He wrote two novels, two autobiographies, nineteen children's books and many short story collections, the most notable being *KISS KISS* (1959). Dahl found inspiration in telling and retelling bedtime stories to his children, and his masterful tales became the basis for *JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH*. He also wrote the famous *CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY* and *MATILDA*.

**Ernie Nolan** (Director) is an Artistic Associate of Emerald City Theatre, where he has adapted and directed *SNOW WHITE*, directed and choreographed last season's world premiere of *THE JUNGLE BOOK* and directed and choreographed this winter's *SEUSSICAL*. Also a Resident Artist at The Coterie Theatre in Kansas City, Missouri, recently named by *TIME* magazine as one of the top theatres for young audiences in the country, his credits include choreographing the world premiere of Stephen Schwartz's *GEPETTO AND SON*, directing and choreographing the premiere of *THE DINOSAUR MUSICAL* by Tony Award-nominees Robert and Willie Reale and directing and adapting *TREASURE TRUNK: AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 STORIES*, as well as *ONCE UPON A TREASURE TRUNK*. In addition to directing and developing new works at places like Chicago Dramatists, Ernie is a faculty member at the Ernestine M. Raclin School of the Arts at the University of Indiana in South Bend. This summer Ernie will direct and choreograph *TWICE UPON A TIME*, a new work by the writing team behind *SEUSSICAL* and *RAGTIME*, Flaherty and Ahrens, for The Coterie. Ernie Nolan has a master of fine arts degree in directing from The Theatre School at DePaul University and a bachelor's degree in musical theatre from the University of Michigan.

Production staff includes **Ernie Nolan** (Director), **Katie Schweiger** and **Wendy Sanabria** (Scenic Design), **Ariel Boroff** (Costume Design), **Chris Prezas** (Lighting Design), **Jeremy Chalmer** (Sound Design), **Kelly Kerwin** and **Leanne G. Medeiros** (Dramaturgy) and **Kyle Conn** (Stage Manager).

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The Cast includes **Chris Brown** (The BFG), **Chris Chmelik** (Bloodbottler/Ronald Simkins/Head of the Army), **Anya Clingman** (Meatdripper/Rebecca's Mother/Mary the Maid), **Millie Debenedet** (Sophie), **Melissa diLeonardo** (Gizzardgulper/Rebecca/Queen of Sweden), **Tim Frank** (Fleshlumpeater/Headteacher/Mr. Tibbs), **David Rispoli** (Bonecruncher/Sam Simpkins/Head of the Air Force), and **Mary Williamson** (Childchewer/Mrs. Plumridge/Queen of England).

ASL INTERPRETED PERFORMANCES: The performances on Thursday, February 8 (10 AM) and Saturday, February 10 (2 PM) will be interpreted in American Sign Language. For further information about interpreted performances, call the Box Office or TTY (773) 325-7975.

OPENING DAY AUTOGRAPHS: After the performance on Saturday, January 13, join the cast for autographs and photo opportunities in the theatre.

ICE CREAM SOCIAL: Enjoy an ice-cream treat, discussion and autograph session with the director and cast at the Hilton Chicago and Towers following the performance on Saturday, February 10. Tickets for this event are \$5.00 and are available at (312) 922-1999.

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM DAY: At the performance on Saturday, January 20, audience members are eligible to win family memberships and more from the Chicago Children's Museum ([www.chichildrensmuseum.org](http://www.chichildrensmuseum.org)).

EDUARDO'S DAY: At the performance on Saturday, February 10, audiences members can win a pizza party for 20, plus other giveaways from Edwardo's Natural Pizza.

NATURE MUSEUM DAY: At the performance on Saturday, January 13, audience members are eligible to win family memberships from the Notebaert Nature Museum ([www.chias.org](http://www.chias.org)).

KIDSNIPS DAY: At the performance on Saturday, February 17, audience members are eligible to win a gift from KidSnips, Chicagoland's premiere children's hair salon and toy store.

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CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY DAY: Join members of the company from 11am-12:15pm on Saturday, February 24, at the Thomas Hughes Children's Library at the Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State Street, to see an excerpt of the play and participate in a discussion and activities.

GLAZED EXPRESSIONS' DAY: At the performance on Saturday, February 24, audience members are eligible to win a birthday party for 15 and other prizes from this "make your own pottery" store.

DINNER OFFERS: Receive a 15% discount at the Pavilion Restaurant, Buckingham's, or Kitty O'Sheas (all at the Hilton Chicago and Towers) with coupons from the Box Office. Other dining, from casual to four-star, is available within walking distance of the theatre – on Dearborn Street in the Printer's Row Historic District, and other options. Obtain complete dining information from the Box Office.

Founded as the Goodman Children's Theatre in 1925, Chicago Playworks is the city's oldest continuously operating children's theatre and was one of the first major children's theatres in the United States. Chicago Playworks is a vital aspect of the training at The Theatre School at DePaul University, providing an opportunity for students to gain pre-professional experience. Chicago Playworks presents three unique productions to more than 35,000 young people each season.

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