



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 12, 2020

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COCA ANNOUNCES 2020–2021 COCA PRESENTS PERFORMANCE SEASON

Grand Opening season features in-person and virtual opportunities for audiences to engage in theatre and dance

ST. LOUIS—COCA is pleased to announce its 2020–2021 [COCA Presents](#) performance season, offering innovative performances that transform the way audiences think about the world, as part of the organization’s Grand Opening season following the conclusion of its Create Our Future campaign. Focused on the next generation, the COCA Presents season will begin a new chapter of performing arts in St. Louis with opportunities for multi-generational audiences to witness theatre and dance both in-person at COCA’s recently expanded University City campus and virtually.

Beginning the season is a workshop for *Suffer the Children*, a new play by Mariah Richardson and directed by Jacqueline Thompson, featuring COCA students onstage and behind the scenes as a part of the COCAwrites program. This play will receive a full production in February alongside a professional play reading and select student work.

Audience members can experience a holiday classic like never before in Manual Cinema’s *Christmas Carol*. Co-commissioned by COCA, the production will be performed live in Chicago and can be livestreamed from home or at the Berges Theatre for this world-premiere event.

In the spring, COCA’s student dancers will share the stage—for the first time ever—with the professional artists of EVIDENCE, A Dance Company. Audiences will be inspired by the talent displayed during this weekend-long celebration and culmination of Ronald K. Brown’s Artist-in-Residence engagement at COCA. Under the leadership of Co-Artistic Directors of Dance Antonio and Kirven Douthit-Boyd, and Artistic Director Anthony Redd Williams, COCA’s Dance Ensembles: Ballet Eclectica, COCAdance, and the COCA Hip-Hop Crew will be featured in *TRiumphant*.

The COCA Presents season closes with the premiere of *Billy Elliot*, a musical by Elton John and Lee Hall and directed for COCA by Nancy Bell. Originally slated for summer 2020 and canceled amidst the coronavirus pandemic, this musical marks a new beginning for the COCA Summer Musical.

Throughout the season, audience members will have the chance to hear from professional artists across arts disciplines who share their experiences, the stories behind their work, and their visions for the future of performing arts in our city and around the world. COCA’s *Speaker Series: Who’s Keeping the Light On* is a unique opportunity to bring thought-provoking and inspiring work and conversation to the stage.

“This season, COCA is choosing to lead with new commissions in theatre and dance,” said COCA’s Artistic Director of Theatre Jennifer Wintzer. “Our students will connect with leading professional artists in St. Louis and beyond, gaining invaluable learning opportunities and experiences that reflect our hope for a bright future.”

In-person performances will be presented at COCA's new Catherine B. Berges Theatre and Staenberg Performance Lab on COCA's expanded campus. The Black Rep and The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis will each showcase a selection of their season in Berges Theatre.

Tickets go on sale for COCA members on October 12 for *Suffer the Children: A COCAwrites Workshop* and Manual Cinema's *Christmas Carol*. General tickets are on sale beginning October 14. The COCA Presents Season Pass, a risk-free pass to build your season, your way, is also available. The Season Pass offers early access to tickets, no ticketing fees, risk-free purchases, and the ability to build your season with virtual or in-person options. For more information on the season and tickets, visit cocastl.org/coca-presents/.

The 2020–2021 COCA Presents Season is made possible by the Missouri Arts Council and The Mary Ranken Jordan and Ettie A. Jordan Charitable Foundation.

ABOUT COCA

COCA's mission is to *enrich lives and build community through the arts*. With a commitment to equity and access, COCA serves as a regional hub for learning in and through the arts for all ages from all backgrounds. One of the most diverse cultural institutions in St. Louis, COCA serves over 50,000 students, audience members, artists and families from over 220 zip codes across the St. Louis region every year. The fourth largest multi-disciplinary arts organization in the country, COCA is committed to supporting the vitality and creativity of over 200 artists at the heart of the work we do in schools, community centers, local business, cultural organizations, and on-site at our campus in University City.

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COCA Presents Season

October 2020–June 2021

Speaker Series: Playwright's Corner

OCT 29 | 6:00PM

Hear from theatre artists Regina Taylor and Mariah Richardson they discuss the tools and power of playwrights as well as the importance of new work that inspires and lead us to a brighter path.

Suffer the Children: A COCAwrites Workshop

OCT 29 | 7:00PM

This fall, COCAwrites offers a unique chance to engage with a play in process through a special reading of *Suffer the Children*, written by St. Louis playwright Mariah Richardson.

Speaker Series: Musical Theatre Biz Talk

NOV 19 | 6:00PM

Join Broadway artists Chryssie Whitehead and Tamyra Gray as they discuss the future of musical theatre and the Broadway biz.

Joyful

NOV 19 | 7:00PM

Speaker Series: Reinventing a Classic

DEC 4 | 6:00PM

Meet the Artistic Team behind The Rep's *A Christmas Carol* and get a sneak peek into an exciting educational partnership between COCA and The Rep.

Manual Cinema's Christmas Carol

DEC 4 | 7:00PM

DEC 5 | 3:00PM & 7:00PM

DEC 6 | 3:00PM & 7:00PM

Experience a holiday classic like never before in Manual Cinema's *Christmas Carol*.

Winter Improv Troupe

DEC 11 | 7:00PM

Dance Season Preview

FEB 5 | 6:00PM

FEB 6 | 6:00PM

FEB 7 | 3:00PM

COCAwrites Festival

FEB 26 | 7:00PM

FEB 27 | 3:00PM & 7:00PM

FEB 28 | 3:00PM & 6:00PM

This spring, join us for the inaugural *COCAwrites Festival* highlighting the innovative development and work of our student theatre artists. *The COCAwrites Festival* features a production of *Suffer the Children*, a reading of a new local piece, and student plays developed over the course of COCAwrites in collaboration with professional artists.

Ronald K. Brown/EVIDENCE, A Dance Company

APR 9 | 7:00PM

APR 10 | 7:00PM

APR 11 | 3:00PM

Join us for a weekend-long celebration and culmination of Ronald K. Brown/EVIDENCE, A Dance Company's Artist-in-Residence engagement at COCA.

Speaker Series: Visioning Through Dance

APR 9 | 7:00PM

Hear from Ron K. Brown from EVIDENCE, A Dance Company as he discusses his artistic process and what audiences and artists can gain from engaging with the process of dance.

Spring Improv Troupe

APR 16 | 7:00PM

TRlumphant

MAY 6 | 7:00PM

MAY 7 | 7:00PM

MAY 8 | 3:00PM & 7:00PM

MAY 9 | 1:00PM & 5:00PM

Experience the immense talent and versatility of COCA's Dance Ensembles: Ballet Eclectica, COCAdance, and COCA's Hip-Hop Crew in COCA's spring repertoire, *TRlumphant*.

Harmonious

MAY 13 | 7:00PM

MAY 14 | 7:00 PM

Billy Elliot

JUL 29 | 7:00 PM-Preview

JUL 30 | 7:00PM

JUL 31 | 2:00PM & 7:00PM

AUG 1 | Sun 3:00PM

Experience the first COCA Summer Musical in the The Berges Theatre—or from your own home—
with *Billy Elliot!*