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THE WOLVES BY SARAH DELAPPE TO HEADLINE 2023 COCAWRITES FESTIVAL

Festival to Showcase COCA Pre-Professional Division Theatre Artists & Local Apprentices

ST. LOUIS (March 9, 2023)—[COCA](#)'s 2023 COCAwrites Festival will be headlined by [The Wolves](#), the debut play of playwright Sarah DeLappe and a Pulitzer Prize Finalist, March 24–26. *The Wolves* chronicles six Saturday mornings in the lives of a girls' high school indoor soccer team as they prepare for their games each week. The Wolves deal with love, loss, and identity in ways that real teenagers do.

Ashleigh Akilah Rucker, a playwright, director, and producer from San Diego, returns to COCA as the director of *The Wolves*. The cast and design-tech team for this production are comprised of COCA Pre-Professional Division Theatre Artist students and teaching artists as well as local apprentices from the Conservatory of Theatre Art at Webster University and local professional actor from The Rep, Adena Varner.

"What happens when we're actually given the space to figure out who we are in a world that's constantly changing? We're living in an unprecedented time where our cultural identity, bodily autonomy, sexual orientation, and gender expression are under attack," said Rucker. "*The Wolves* gives audiences a rare and necessary opportunity to explore these themes through the unfiltered and entertaining lens of a teenage girls' indoor soccer team. It holds the mirror up and asks the audience to see these characters, not as we want them to be, but as they are: complex, curious, angry, powerful!"

The production is recommended for older teens (Ages 15+) and adults.

Additionally, the Festival weekend includes [Student Voices](#), a performance by COCA's Pre-Professional Division Theatre Artist students on March 26. The student works developed within the COCAwrites program encompass the Festivals' theme of adaptation and documentation. The student artists were mentored by professional guest playwrights and composers to bring their stories to the stage. *Student Voices* is recommended for Ages 14+.

"We are breaking new ground for COCA by elevating the voice of our teen playwrights and associating them with DeLappe's disruptive work in such a way that we both entertain our audiences and give voice to a new generation of young artists. We look forward to sharing this unique production with the community," said Orlando Graves Bolaños, Senior Director of Arts Programming.

Students and audiences learn more about documentary theatre and the adaptation process of new work with both a professional production and staged readings of student work during the COCAwrites Festival.

Tickets are \$18 and are on sale at cocastl.org or by contacting the COCA Box Office at 314.561.4873.

The 2022–2023 COCApresents Season is proudly presented by Mary Strauss.

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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 more than 50,000 students, audience members, artists, and families from more than 200 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 more than 200 artists at the heart of their work in schools, community centers, local business, cultural organizations, and on-site at its campus in University City.

COCA HEALTH & SAFETY PROCEDURES

COCA continues to monitor current COVID-19 conditions in the St. Louis region, and protocols are subject to change, as necessary, to address the conditions. To review COCA's current Health & Safety Procedures, visit cocastl.org/our-campus/health-safety-procedures/.