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For Immediate Release

## Salt Lake Acting Company Celebrates the Holiday Season With Its 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Children's Musical:

# ART DOG

By John Olive

Music by Susan Ennis

Based on the Book by Thacher Hurd

As the first snow of the season begins to fall, Salt Lake Acting Company (SLAC) is preparing for the most wonderful time of the year. From **December 4 through December 23, 2015**, the SLAC lobby will be filled to the brim with artwork from the young artists of Bad Dog Arts and the theatre rumbling with thrilled young voices chattering excitedly as they await the opening music of **ART DOG**. This year marks SLAC's seventh year producing professional plays for children (of all ages), and of partnering with local schools and organizations that serve the needs of children in the community.

Based on the colorful book by Thacher Hurd, the musical version of ART DOG is written by John Olive (book) and Susan Ennis (music). By day, Arthur Dog is a mild-mannered museum guard; by night, he is Art Dog – a mysterious artist who makes the city his canvas. However, when Leonardo Dog Vinci's *Mona Woofa* goes missing from the Dogopolis Museum of Art, Art Dog is a prime suspect.

Returning again this year is director Penelope Caywood who has directed six of SLAC's seven children's plays. She has worked as Artistic Director for Youth Theatre at the U for the past nine years and is excited to tackle ART DOG.

Caywood says, "ART DOG is doggone fun! The idea of a hero who uses painting instead of punches to win the day is a brush stroke of genius. It makes me wish I'd written it. So I feel really lucky that at least I get to direct it."

One of the most rewarding aspects of producing children's theatre for Salt Lake Acting Company is its **Title 1 Matinee Arts Education Program**, which allows over 1,700 underprivileged schoolchildren to experience the magic of live theatre at no cost to them or their schools. With arts education receiving less and less attention and funding, this program plays a vital role in providing a more well-rounded education to Utah students. Every children's play that SLAC produces is based on a literary work. SLAC creates a study guide to accompany each play and distributes it to every class that attends the Title 1 Matinee program. The guide includes learning activities to be completed before and after the children see the play, reinforcing the connection between literacy and the arts. Kelley Morgan, a kindergarten teacher at Franklin Elementary (a Title 1 school) said of SLAC's Title 1 Matinee program, "Our students have little opportunity to see live performances. Not only is the opportunity mazing, it is always the favorite field trip of the year."

SLAC's 2015 Title 1 Matinee program will serve the following Utah Title 1 schools:

Bennion Elementary  
Franklin Elementary  
Jackson Elementary  
Kearns Saint-Ann Elementary  
Mountain View Elementary  
North Star Elementary  
Rose Park Elementary  
Washington Elementary  
Woodrow Wilson Elementary

In addition to Title 1 Matinee Arts Education performances and regular performances at Salt Lake Acting Company, the cast will make special appearances at local schools, museums, bookstores, and libraries throughout November and December. [See schedule below.]

*Saturday, November 14 at 1:00 pm – Utah Museum of Contemporary Art | 20 West Temple, SLC*  
*Thursday, November 19 at 2:00 pm – Indian Hills Elementary School | 2496 St. Mary's Dr, SLC*  
*Saturday, November 21 at 1:00 pm – The King's English Bookshop | 1511 S. 1500 E, SLC*  
*Monday, November 30 at 10:30 am – Sandy Library | 10100 Petunia Way, Sandy*  
*Monday, November 30 at 6:00 pm – Voices for Utah Children | SLAC*  
*Tuesday, December 1 at 5:00 pm – Sprague Library | 2131 Highland Drive, SLC*  
*Wednesday, December 2 at 6:00 pm – Utah Museum of Fine Arts | 410 Campus Center Drive, SLC*  
*Thursday, December 3 at 5:30 pm – Art Access Gallery | 230 S. 500 W, SLC*  
*Tuesday, December 8 at 6:30 pm – South Jordan Library | 10673 S. Redwood Rd, South Jordan*

Also during this time of year, SLAC bolsters its commitment to enrich and engage community by partnering with several local organizations. SLAC has developed a special relationship with Intermountain Therapy Animals (ITA), a non-profit organization that brings animal resources to human needs in the areas of physical, occupational, speech, and psychotherapies, as well as special education. ITA launched its R.E.A.D. program in 1999 – the first comprehensive literacy program built around the appealing idea of reading to dogs. During the run of ART DOG, SLAC will host volunteers from ITA along with their furry friends in the lobby to raise awareness and money for the organization.

SLAC is also partnering with Voices for Utah Children, a multi-issue child advocacy organization that works to make Utah a place where all children thrive. They will be joining SLAC for a special performance of ART DOG.

And finally, SLAC will be partnering with Bad Dog Arts. Bad Dog Arts (BDA) strives to inspire kids, teens, and adults from all cultures to experience the power and freedom to imagine, dare, and create new possibilities, individually and collaboratively, through the creative arts. BDA is an artist run non-profit arts organization located in downtown Salt Lake City that fills the need for a safe space for at-risk youth in the community ages 5-18. At Bad Dog Arts, students can engage in confidence-building and highly creative activities in the studio, in the classroom, and out in the community. BDA uses art as a means to mentor at-risk youth through a process of personal development that strengthens confidence, core values, and critical life skills.

Bad Dog Arts is requesting donations to sustain their tuition waiver scholarships to children from low-income families as well as donations of materials such as buttons, beads, colored plastic bottle caps and costume jewelry for multimedia projects. SLAC will be collecting these donations in the lobby throughout the run of ART DOG.

SLAC is thrilled to welcome the holiday season and with it, the magic of children's theatre. ART DOG is sure to delight audiences of all ages.

## WHO'S WHO

### DIRECTOR

**Penelope Caywood** returns to direct her fifth children's production at SLAC. Penny started acting at the age of five. Her first role was the Shy Princess in *THE KING AND I*, she still has the costume to prove it. Her career started early, but her talents were not limited to the stage. She traveled across the country with a youth singing group—The LaMarca American Variety Singers. She sang on children's records, attended math school in Japan, took jazz and tap, played the flute and participated in speech contests. When she was 19, Penny was involved in the creation of a youth theatre company in Palos Verdes, CA called Curtains Up! Locally Penny is best known for her work with the University of Utah's Youth Theatre where she has been the director for the past seven years. She has directed every U Youth Theatre production and is responsible for educational and outreach programming too. Penny has directed at Rogers Memorial Theatre and SLAC.

### MUSIC DIRECTOR

**Kevin Mathie** is pleased to be back at SLAC after working on his 11<sup>th</sup> year with *SATURDAY'S VOYEUR*. His recent directing and conducting credits include the U.S. Premier of Monty Python's new show *NOT THE MESSIAH, ALWAYS...PATSY CLINE, FOREVER PLAID, and INTO THE WOODS*, only to name a few. As a composer for theatre, Kevin has produced complete original vocal scores for *SHEAR LUCK* (book/lyrics by Brenda Cowley), *RUMPELSTILTSKIN* (book/lyrics by Dana Keiter), *JACK AND THE BEANSTALK* (book/lyrics by Dana Keiter), and Intermountain Health Care's *LIVE WELL* (co-written with Eric Jensen and Robin Wilks-Dunn) that tours schools throughout Utah. He has also written incidental scores for Salt Lake Acting Company's *TWO- HEADED* and *VOICES IN THE DARK*, The Grand Theatre's *MISS EVERS' BOYS*, and *OUR TOWN*, and Weber State University's *DANSE MACABRE*. Kevin also writes for film/tv, including arranging and musically directing a special comedy song for the Showtime special Larry Wilmore's "Race, Religion, and Sex in Utah." Kevin was recently awarded "Best Musical Score" for his work on the short film "Enthusiasm" at the 2014 Las Vegas 48 Hour Film Project. Kevin is a member of the Dramatists Guild.

### CAST

**Alexis Baigue** (Arthur): *GOODNIGHT DESDEMONA (GOOD MORNING JULIET), ANGELS IN AMERICA, HOW I BECAME A PIRATE, fifteen summers in SATURDAY'S VOYEUR, staged readings MOTHER COLLEGE, THE LIVELY LAD, BUNBURY, THE CANCER DIARIES, CHARM, PROPHETS OF NATURE, HARBUR GATE (S.L.A.C.), ONE MAN, TWO GUVNORS (Pioneer), DEAR WORLD (Sundance Summer Theatre), THE BOYS IN THE BAND (Wasatch), SURFIN' SAFARI (Desert Star), JACQUES BREL IS ALIVE AND WELL AND LIVING IN PARIS (TheatreWorks West), ANASTASIA (StageRight), WIT (Emily Company), NO EXIT (SallyFourth), BEYOND THERAPY, THE SEX HABITS OF AMERICAN WOMEN (Pygmalion Productions), CHARLEY' AUNT understudy (Utah Shakespeare Festival), SUMMER AND SMOKE, CABARET, RHINOCEROS, QUEEN CHRISTINA, ANTIGONE, THE RIMERS OF ELDRITCH (University of Utah), YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU, THE TREE OF LACE (Salt Lake Community College), BRIGADOON, DAMN YANKEES, THE FOREIGNER, ONCE ON THIS ISLAND (West Jordan High), staged readings THE UNDERPANTS, THE VIOLET HOUR, THE LAST SUNDAY IN JUNE (Utah Contemporary Theatre); films: *SLOW MOE, SINGLE TRACKS, 12 DOGS OF CHRISTMAS: GREAT PUPPY RESCUE*; television: *GRANITE FLATS, Utah's Own, and Yes Utah commercials*; voice-overs; and industrials.*

**Jenessa Bowen** (Thief 2, Chief of Police) is proud to call SLAC her second family, and has been happily living here on the stage for the past two years. Jenessa has been in the casts of *SATURDAYS VOYEUR 2013* as a Docent, *THE CAT IN THE HAT* as Thing 2, *SATURDAYS VOYEUR 2014* as Gayle Godzicka & Dead Docent, *A YEAR WITH FROG AND TOAD* as Mouse & Young Frog, and *SATURDAYS VOYEUR 2015* as Eula & Verleen the Bearded Bride. Other credits include: Ruby in *SHELTER* (Off-Broadway debut), Natalie in *NEXT TO NORMAL* (Ziegfeld Theatre), Little Red in *INTO THE WOODS* (Centerpoint Legacy), Adelaide in *GUYS & DOLLS* (Ziegfeld), Annabel Glick in *LUCKY STIFF* (WSU), Sara Waybourne in *PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK* (WSU), Jolene in *DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS* (Centerpoint Legacy & Ziegfeld Theatre), Ursula in *BYE, BYE, BIRDIE* (Rodgers Memorial Theatre), Nehebka in *AIDA* (Rodgers Memorial Theatre), Peggy Swift in *FATHER OF THE BRIDE* (HCT), Erin in *RING OF FIRE* (Dark Horse Theatre Co.), Anybods in *WEST SIDE STORY* (Rodgers Memorial Theatre), Adele in *JANE*

EYRE (HCT), and Lulu in NUPTIALS (HCT). Jenessa has earned her Bachelors of Science in Musical Theatre from Weber State University, and is finishing up on earning her Pharmacy Technician license at the DATC. Jenessa is so giddy to be acting alongside her dear friends Olivia, Jaten, and Alexis in ART DOG.

**Olivia Custodio** (Museum Director, Cat, Moon) is beyond thrilled to be a part of this fun production! You may have recently seen her in the New Play Sounding Series reading of BLEEDING HEARTS as Felicia Reed-Walker, Heavenly Mother in SATURDAY'S VOYEUR (SLAC), Domina in A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM (University of Utah), Eunice in A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE (Radical Hospitality Theater), or as the understudy for Sue Mengers in I'LL EAT YOU LAST (SLAC). Olivia has a BFA from Carnegie Mellon University and her Masters in Music from the University of Utah. She has sung leading roles in such operas as LA VOIX HUMAINE, HANSEL AND GRETEL, and FALSTAFF. A lover of all things comical, Olivia has studied improv at The Second City in Chicago and hopes to one day get famous on YouTube for something random that took very little effort. Much love to her family, Dan, and her perfect pug, Otis.

**Jaten Lee McGriff** (Thief 1, Cop) A Salt Lake Native and recent Graduate from The University of Utah Actor Training Program, Jaten Lee McGriff has worked locally at SLAC in SATURDAY'S VOYEUR, THE CAT IN THE HAT, as well as participating in the New Play Sounding Series reading of THE VERMILLION HAND by Cort Brinkerhoff. Jaten has spent the summer working with The U's Youth Theatre Conservatory Program and performed in Salt Lake Shakespeare Company's production of TWELFTH NIGHT. Much love to his family and Puppy.

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**WHO:**

Salt Lake Acting Company

**WHAT:**

ART DOG

By John Olive

Music by Susan Ennis

Based on the books by Thacher Hurd

**WHEN:**

December 4 – 23, 2015

Performance Dates/Times

December 4 – 7PM

December 5 – 12PM, 3PM

December 6 – 12PM, 3PM

December 11 – 7PM

December 12 – 12PM, 3PM

December 13 – 12PM, 3PM

December 18 – 7PM

December 19 – 10AM, 12PM, 3PM

December 20 – 10AM, 12PM, 3PM

December 21 – 10AM, 12PM, 3PM

December 22 – 10AM, 12PM, 3PM

December 23 – 10AM, 12PM, 3PM

**WHERE:**

Salt Lake Acting Company

168 West 500 North, Salt Lake City

**PRICE:**

Children \$15, Adults \$25

Discounts are available for groups of ten or more.

Subscribers always pay the lowest price.

**MORE INFORMATION:**

Box Office: 801-363-7522

Open 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., Mon – Fri

[www.saltlakeactingcompany.org](http://www.saltlakeactingcompany.org)

**CAST:**

Alexis Baigue, Jenessa Bowen, Olivia Custodio, and Jaten Lee McGriff.

**ARTISTIC TEAM:**

Director: Penelope Caywood

Music Director: Kevin Mathie

Set Design: Glenn Brown

Sound Design: Shea Madson

Costume Design: Linda Brown

Light Design: Spencer Brown

Assistant Stage Manager: Danielle Quintana

*Salt Lake Acting Company (SLAC) is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 professional theatre founded in 1970 whose mission is to enrich and engage community through brave contemporary theatre. SLAC is dedicated to producing, commissioning and developing new works and to supporting a community of professional artists. SLAC has been nationally recognized by the Shubert Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Edgerton Foundation, among others. SLAC operates under a STP Actors Equity Association contract. SLAC is a Constituent Member of Theatre Communications Group, a national organization for non-profit professional regional theatres, and the National New Play Network.*