

ENCHANTMENT THEATRE COMPANY
PRESENTS



MY FATHER'S DRAGON

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- Alyssa B.

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stacy Rutherford".

Stacy Rutherford
Director for Events & Conferencing
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Enchantment Theatre Company

Presents
My Father's Dragon

Story adapted by Jennifer Blatchley Smith, Leslie Reidel and Landis Smith.

Music by Charles Gilbert.

Based on the beloved stories by Ruth Stiles Gannett and illustrations by Ruth Chrisman Gannett.

Artistic Director Zachary Chiero
Resident Director Leslie Reidel
Production Designer C. David Russell
Choreographer Scott McPheeters
Lighting Designer Andrew Cowles
Projection Designer Nicholas Hussong
Narration Performed by Susan Sweeney

THE ENSEMBLE

Daniel Burgess	Boris, the Dragon
Nina Seri Gold	Mother, Warthog, Tiger, Crocodile, Puppeteer
Shane Troxell	Father, Warthog, Lion, King Canary, Puppeteer
Rebecca Jay Caplan	Cat, Tiger, Mouse, Flute the Canary, Crocodile, Seagull, Puppeteer
Eliza Carson	Elmer Elevator

Touring Technical Director Jessica Beaver

*This production has been made possible in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts that believes that a great nation deserves great art.
Art Works.*

CAST AND CREW

Daniel Burgess (he/him) is excited to be a part of his third national tour with Enchantment Theatre, as Company Manager. He's also been in *Peer Gynt*, *Peter Rabbit Tales*, *Harold* and *The Purple Crayon*, and *The Brave Little Tailor*. Daniel has found immense joy in the creation of children's theater and is excited to present *My Fathers Dragon* to you all! Which he finds to be the most exciting and fastest pace show he's been a part of yet!

Nina Seri Gold (she/her) is thrilled to be a part of *My Father's Dragon*! A Philadelphia-based actor, her regional credits include: *Brave Little Tailor* (Enchantment Theatre Company), *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (Candlelight Dinner Theatre), *The Merry Widow* (Delaware Valley Opera Company). Educational: *Emilia*, *Metamorphoses*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Penn State Centre Stage). Nina would like to thank Zach, Beaver, Jen and Landis for their dedication and leadership, as well as her fellow cast mates for their generosity and spirit both on and offstage. Most of all, she thanks her family for their tireless support and encouragement. She hopes you enjoy the show!
www.ninaserigold.com

Shane Troxell (he/they) is delighted to bring this production to life! Shane is a choreographer, director actor, and stage combatant from Coatesville PA interested in the intersection of art and justice. His recent work includes an original show in the Philadelphia Fringe Festival on the applications of modern day abolition, a world premiere as a dancer in a new opera titled, *At That Hour*, and now this! Enjoy the show! @Shane.Troxell

Rebecca Jay (they/she) is an actor and multidisciplinary artist, specializing in movement. She is inspired by the intersection of athleticism and artistry and enjoys finding new and interesting ways to bridge them together. Rebecca works as an actor, dancer, stunt performer, aerialist, acrobat, and puppeteer. She is thrilled to be on her Second National Tour with Enchantment Theater Company! Her recent work includes the role of Princess Surpanakha in the India Tour of *Ramaavan the Musical* and the role of actor/puppeteer in *Exagoge at La Mama*. Rebecca is a two time finalist for The Poetry Matters award and enjoys writing songs, poetry, children's books, fiction, and musical theater. She is a huge advocate for coffee, dogs, and self reflection.

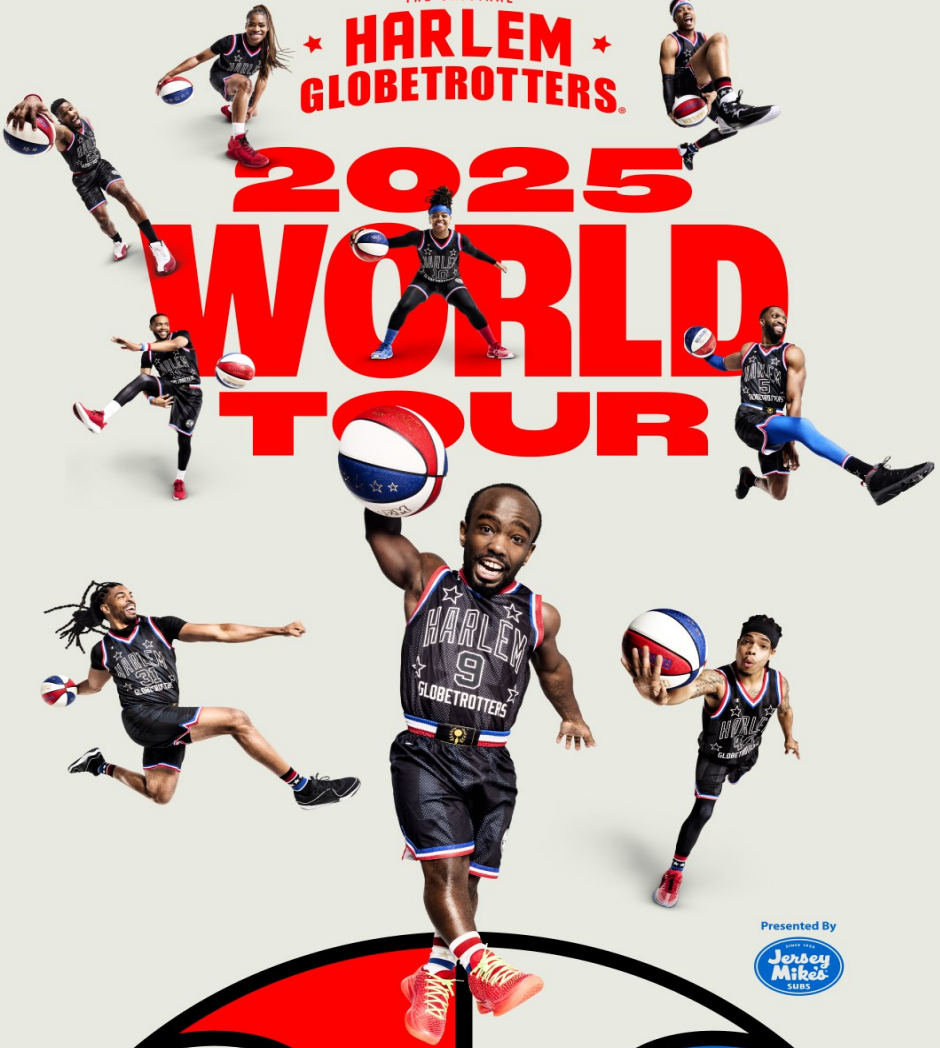
Eliza Carson (she/her) is an actor and educator in Philadelphia. Credits include *Jack and the Beanstalk* with Family Stages, *Girlfails* with Lemonade Stand, *The Pecking Order* with Paper Doll Ensemble, and *Much Ado About Nothing* with Capital Classics. She graduated from the University of Connecticut with a BFA in Acting and has toured as a performer and teacher in France with Pickles Company and has trained with Shakespeare and Company in Lenox, MA.

Jessica Beaver (she/they) is a Philadelphia native, Arts Educator, Stage Manager, and Technical Director. With a background in English Literature and Urban Studies, Beaver was an English and Theatre Teacher for the School District of Philadelphia for seven years and now works with organizations such as Music Theatre Philly, The Strides Collective, Yes And... Collaborative Arts, Appel Farms, Philly Young Playwrights, Artwell, and Philly Enchantment Theater on technical theater, theater production, and theater education. Beaver is also a wedding coordinator and officiant with their small business @GetGayMarried. Visit jes-sicarachelbeaver.com for more updates on performances, productions, and more.



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STAFF AND COLLABORATORS

Zachary Chiero (Artistic Director) has been working with Enchantment Theatre Company since he graduated from Muhlenberg College in 2009. He began as part of the original cast of the national tour of *The Adventures of Harold and the Purple Crayon*. Since then, he has appeared in ten Enchantment productions, including national tours (*The Velveteen Rabbit*, *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*), Enchantment Everywhere productions (*The Brave Little Tailor*, *The Beast in The Bayou*), and most recently, the symphony production of *Peer Gynt*, where he played the title role and choreographed the show for its world premiere with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Over the years, Zachary has worked as a choreographer and associate director for multiple productions, as an administrator, and most recently he has taken on the role of Artistic Director of ETC. In addition to his work with ETC, Zachary is an Equity performer who works regularly in Philadelphia. His work with ETC over the last 15 years makes him an ideal collaborator on this benchmark production, that will usher in a new age of ETC productions.

Andrew Cowles (Lighting Designer) has worked with Enchantment Theatre Company since 2005 starting when he served as the technical director for their touring production of *Cinderella*. He has designed over 200 productions around the Greater Philadelphia Area for such companies as Enchantment Theatre, Simpatico Theater Project, Theatre Horizon, Idiopathic Reticulopathy Consortium, Curio Theatre Company, Center City Opera Theater, South Camden Theatre Company, Cabaret Red Light, Rutgers University, Arcadia University and Penn State University. Andrew received a Philadelphia Barrymore Nomination for his design for *The Brothers Size* with Simpatico Theatre Project. He holds a B.A. from Washington College in Chestertown, MD.

Charles Gilbert (Composer) is a composer, director, writer and educator who has spent forty years making provocative original work for the musical stage and training young artists for professional careers in musical theater. He headed the Musical Theater Program at The University of the Arts in Philadelphia from its inception in 1990 until 2008, and served from 2008 to 2013 as Director of the Ira Brind School of Theater Arts at UArts. As Composer-in-Residence for Enchantment Theatre Company, Charles created the musical scores for *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*, *Peter Rabbit Tales*, *The Bremen Town Musicians*, *The Beast in the Bayou* and *The Brave Little Tailor*, and contributed music and arrangements to *The Velveteen Rabbit* and *Aladdin and Other Enchanted Tales*. His other works for young audiences include *A Is For Anything*, commissioned by the Delaware Institute for Arts in Education, and *Goosefeathers*, created for Duet Productions. Charles has created a wide range of works for the musical stage, including the 1979 musical *Assassins*, which provided the idea for the Tony Award-winning musical of the same name by Stephen Sondheim and John Weidman; and *Gemini the Musical*, written in collaboration with playwright Albert Innaurato and presented at the Prince Music Theater in Philadelphia and the New York Musical Theater Festival. He is a Barrymore-nominated musical director whose credits include the premiere productions of *The Three Maries* and *The Dinosaur Musical*.
www.chasgilbert.com

Nicholas Hussong (Projection Designer) This is Nicholas' first production with Enchantment Theatre Company. His Off-Broadway credits include: *White Guy on the Bus* (59E59, Delaware Theatre Company), *Skeleton Crew* (Atlantic Theater Company), *These Paper Bullets!* (Drama Desk Nomination, Atlantic Theater Company, Geffen Playhouse, Yale Rep), *Chix 6* (LaMama). Regional credits include: *Grounded* (Alley Theatre), *Informed Consent* (Lantern Theatre Company), *Two Trains Running* (Arden Theatre Co.), *The Mountaintop* (Playmakers Rep), *I Saw My Neighbor on the Train and I Didn't Even Smile* (Berkshires Theatre Group), as well as productions with Urban Bush Women, Esperanza Spaulding, Abrons Art Center, Tiny Dynamite, Premieres NYC, Ars Nova, Heartbeat Opera, Cantata Profana, Nashville Symphony, Hartford Symphony, I am a Boys Choir, Summerworks Toronto, LaMaMa Summer Share and Joe's Pub. Nicholas was the Artistic Associate at Triad Stage in Greensboro, NC, where he continues to design new works based on Appalachian life written by Preston Lane. 70th & 71st Tony Awards Screens and Content Department under Darrel Maloney (CBS).

Scott McPheeters (Choreographer) graduated from Dickinson College in 2005 with a B.A. in Theatre Arts and has worked as a freelance performer/choreographer in Philadelphia ever since. He is a co-director of Subcircle, a multimedia dance collective, and performs with the Nichole Canuso Dance Company and Bearded Ladies Cabaret. Performance credits with Enchantment Theatre Company include *Pinocchio*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Snow Queen*, *Sorcerer's Apprentice* and *Cinderella*. In addition to *Peter Rabbit Tales*, he has choreographed Enchantment's productions of *Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales*, *The Fisherman and the Flounder*, *The Brave Little Tailor* and *The Beast in the Bayou*. Independently, his choreography has been performed as a part of the Philadelphia Fringe Festival and the SoLow Festival.

Leslie Reidel (Artistic Director, Resident Director) has dedicated the last 30 years of his professional life to the preservation of classical theatre and the development of theatre for young audiences. He holds a bachelor's degree from Muhlenberg College and a M.F.A. from Temple University. He served as a member of the M.F.A. faculty at Temple University and was a founding member of the Professional Theatre Training Program at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the University of Delaware. His directorial credits include The Walnut Street Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, the Madison Civic Rep, the Pennsylvania, Utah, Colorado and Fort Worth Shakespeare Festivals and 12 years as the resident director of the Great American Children's Theatre. His most recent creations with Enchantment Theatre Company are Ravel's *Mother Goose* and *Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales*. Other productions include the recent *The Flounder and the Fisherman* and *The Brave Little Tailor*, as well as *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*, *The Adventures of Harold and the Purple Crayon*, *Scheherazade*, and *The Velveteen Rabbit*. Leslie is Professor of Theatre at the University of Delaware and a director for the Resident Ensemble Players in Newark, DE, where his recent projects have included Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Pinter's *The Homecoming* and McPherson's *The Weir*. In the fall of 2011 he directed a critically acclaimed production of Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes*. Leslie is also a frequent guest lecturer on "Acting Shakespeare" and is a member of The International Shakespeare Conference, located in Stratford-upon-Avon.

C. David Russell (Production Designer) David's varied career includes costume and scenic design, costume and property crafts, event design, project management and teaching. He is currently Assistant Professor of Scenic Design at Ohio University School of Theater. He served as Head of the Costume Crafts Technology Program and instructor of Costume Design at Ohio University from 2003 through 2010. David has been Production Designer for Enchantment Theatre Company for 12 years and has been responsible for the costumes, puppets and scenic designs for *Mother Goose*, which premiered with the Montréal Symphony; *Scheherazade*; and *The Firebird*. He also designed national tours of *The Velveteen Rabbit* and *Pinocchio*. David has designed numerous productions with the REP/PTTP Company at the University of Delaware, including set designs for *Macbeth*; *Angels in America*; *Hayfever*; *Travesties*; *Ah, Wilderness!* and *The Mousetrap*, for which he also designed the costumes, and costume designs for *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Tartuffe*. Other costume design work includes *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Julius Caesar* and *The Tempest* at the Shakespeare Theater of New Jersey. In addition to his design work, David has been on staff at The Santa Fe Opera for 18 years, where he has served as the Master Craftsperson in the prop shop. David received his B.F.A. from Ohio University School of Theater and his M.F.A. from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. cdavidrusselldesign.com

Jennifer Blatchley Smith (Artistic Director, Literary and Education) studied writing and theater at Bennington College. For the last 30 years, she has co-created and performed in over 20 original productions presented around the United States and abroad. As a founding member of Enchantment Theatre Company, Jennifer created roles as diverse as the Broom in *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* and Beauty in *Beauty and the Beast*. She performed in Enchantment productions at Lincoln Center and the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York; the John F. Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.; and the Annenberg Center, the Kimmel Center, and the Academy of Music in Philadelphia. She has traveled to Asia six times with Enchantment productions. Her most recent roles have been in Enchantment's newest symphony production, *Mother Goose*, as well as *The Firebird* and *Scheherazade*. Her recent co-creations with Enchantment's artistic team are *Peter Rabbit Tales*, *Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales*, *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*, *The Adventures of Harold and the Purple Crayon*, *Scheherazade*, and *The Velveteen Rabbit*. She is a co-creator of Enchantment's newest program, Enchantment Everywhere, which brings high quality, portable productions into schools and community venues in the Greater Philadelphia Area. Recent Enchantment Everywhere productions are *The Fisherman and the Flounder*, *The Brave Little Tailor*, *The Beast in the Bayou* and *The Bremen Town Musicians*.

Landis Smith (Artistic Director, Production) studied theater with Jewel Walker at Carnegie-Mellon and with Jacobina Caro at Webster University Conservatory in St. Louis. He began performing magic at the age of six and studied violin and voice beginning at the age of nine. His love of theater, music and the art of illusion led to the founding of Enchantment Theatre Company in 1979. (cont.)

In 1985, Landis and Enchantment collaborated with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra to premiere *The Symphony and the Sorcerer*, the first of a series of programs introducing young people to the magic of symphonic music. Since then, Landis has appeared with major orchestras nationwide, including the premiere of Enchantment's theatrical adaptation of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* with The Cleveland Orchestra in 2008. Landis appeared with the Boston Pops on their annual holiday PBS television special, which aired for five years. He has performed in Enchantment symphonic productions of *The Firebird*, *Cinderella*, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* and *Mother Goose* with the Philadelphia, Baltimore, Atlanta, Montreal and Seattle symphonies, among others. Landis collaborated in the creation of all of Enchantment's most recent national touring productions. He toured in Asia six times with Enchantment, performing in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. Landis is a co-creator of Enchantment's newest program, Enchantment Everywhere, which brings professional, portable productions to students and family audiences around the Greater Philadelphia area. Recent Enchantment Everywhere productions include *The Fisherman and the Flounder*, *The Brave Little Tailor*, *The Beast in the Bayou* and *The Bremen Town Musicians*. Landis has been an adjunct professor of theater at Muhlenberg College since 2012.

Susan Sweeney (Narrator) has been a Voice/Speech/Text/Dialects Coach to professional theatres for the past 35 years, among them the Guthrie Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Madison Repertory Theatre, Skylight Opera Theatre, Philadelphia Drama Guild, Walnut Street Theatre, Baltimore Center Stage, Virginia Stage Company and the Colorado, Illinois, Utah, Sedona and Oregon Shakespeare Festivals. She is now a UW-Madison Professor emerita. Susan has acted and sung for many years at such theatres as the Utah Shakespearean Festival, Dallas Theatre Center, Cleveland's Great Lakes Theatre, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, the International Classical Theatre and the Skylight Theatre. Susan's recorded voice is heard as the Story Lady and all character voices in Enchantment's productions of *Cinderella*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Snow Queen*, *Pinocchio*, *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*, *The Velveteen Rabbit* and *Peter Rabbit Tales*. She is a voice-over artist, a regular voice on Wisconsin Public Radio's "Chapter a Day," and also a consultant to various professional voice users, including clergy, politicians, teachers, motivational speakers and toastmasters.

ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION COLLABORATORS

Masks, Props and Puppets Construction: Jason Kramer at GD Theatrical, Thom Sirkot, Aaron Lathrop, Scott McMaster, Holly Cole, C. David Russell, Tom Fiocchi, Brandon Kirkham

Costume Construction: Thom Sirkot

Recording Studio: Redwoods Studio

Studio Musicians: Erica Miller - Violin 1, Lisa Vaupelr - Violin 2, Sheila Browne - Viola, Lawrence Stomberg - Cello, Mark Cristofaro - Drums, Christopher Farrell - Guitar, Andrew Nelson - Bass, Ron Kerber - Saxophone and Flute, Jon Shaw - Trumpet



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ENCHANTMENT THEATRE COMPANY'S MISSION

Enchantment Theatre Company's mission is to inspire children to dream, explore, think and connect through imaginative storytelling onstage and in the classroom.

We bring stories to life in a way that encourages children to dream about who they are and may become, to explore story from different perspectives, to think using inductive reasoning and to connect to other people and ideas. Our programs encourage children to question and explore how to live in a complex world so that they grow up healthier, smarter and kinder.

ABOUT THE COMPANY

Enchantment Theatre Company has produced original theatre for school groups and families since 2000, when it was established as a non-profit arts organization in Philadelphia. The company presents only original work based on classic stories from children's literature, using its signature blend of masked actors, pantomime, magic, large-scale puppets and original music. Building on the more than 30 years of theatrical experience of its artistic directors, Enchantment has quickly become known for high quality imaginative productions, not only in its home city but throughout the United States and Asia. Enchantment has toured its original productions all over the world, appearing each year in more than 30-40 states. It has performed in such sophisticated urban arts venues as Lincoln Center in New York and the John F. Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., as well as in small town high school auditoriums and even performance tents. In Philadelphia, Enchantment has appeared at the Kimmel Center and the Annenberg Center. The company has toured in Asia six times, performing in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. Enchantment has also shared the stage with more than 65 orchestras in the U.S. and Canada in its special symphonic works that pair great stories with great music for the benefit of school and family audiences.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The work of Enchantment Theatre Company is transformational. We are committed to creating theatre pieces that shift the very nature and substance of both audience and performers. Our devices are as old as the theatre itself—older in fact. Masks, puppets, music and illusion are the mystical tradecraft of pre-historic shamans and priests who could heal the body and soul. These workers of magic became the actors of ancient Greece whose purpose was to unfold the nature of being a human being with a wildly diverse audience—citizen, slave, rich and poor discovered the essence of their humanity in the company of one another in numbers sometimes reaching 30,000 souls. We of Enchantment Theatre Company are the heirs to this great work. Our mission is to engage the imagination and spirit of the audience until a transformation occurs and the true grace of our mutual humanity is revealed—not one time but each and every time that we perform. Enchantment Theatre bases its work on fables, fairy tales or classic children's literature.

We choose stories that are journeys of adventure and possibility and that have an enduring power to delight and enlighten across time and generations.

My Father's Dragon is just such a story. Written by Ruth Stiles Gannett in 1948, and followed up by two sequels, the "Dragon" books have continued to enchant young readers with their whimsy, tenderness and adventure. Like many great adventure tales, this one has a compelling hero whose gifts are grounded in his outsized compassion, ingenuity and courage. Elmer sets off on his journey, not for the sake of heroics, but with the urgency of concern for another being, albeit a very magical one. In these times of polarization and national strife, when models of selflessness seem rare and a concern for the "other" is being challenged, children and their parents need and deserve to have the opportunity to experience, through Elmer, an alternative way to be in the world. As we approach the 70th anniversary of the "Dragon" books, it is particularly appropriate to translate these literary treasures to the stage and for modern audiences to re-discover the humor, sweetness and adventure that they brilliantly embody. This is the essence of the work of Enchantment Theatre. Let your imagination work as you join us on this magical journey to Wild Island.

Leslie Reidel, Resident Director

ABOUT THE ADAPTATION

Ruth Stiles Gannett wrote three books in her "Dragon" series, which feature the intrepid Elmer Elevator and his friend, Boris the Dragon. In order to create a dramatic version of the stories, we decided to use the first two books in the series, *My Father's Dragon* and *Elmer and the Dragon*, which together tell the story of Elmer rescuing Boris and then their return home.

At the beginning of the first story, Elmer finds out from his friend the Alley Cat that a baby dragon is being held captive by the animals of Wild Island and being forced to ferry them across a river. The book gives the readers a brief glimpse of Boris, but they don't get to actually meet him until the end of the first story. To enhance the drama, we introduce Boris early in the play to show his plight and then return to him periodically, keeping the tension afloat and giving urgency to Elmer's task. Likewise, once Elmer has rescued Boris, we let the audience see what's happening back at home. In this way, we build empathy for Elmer's Mother – who was initially rude to the Alley Cat – and create a sense of urgency for Elmer to return home.

The first book is told through the voice of a grown child, sharing the story of his father. It begins: "One cold rainy day when my father was a little boy...." We use a narrative voice throughout the play, which reinforces the sense of being read to and subtly reminds the audience that Elmer did, indeed, make it back home. There are characters and elements in the stories that we adapted with imaginative whimsy. Elmer encounters a large cast of animals – a mouse, wild boars, tigers, a rhinoceros, a gorilla, monkeys, crocodiles and lots of canaries, not to mention a large, flying dragon. To effectively bring these characters to life, we use puppets, masks and inventive costuming. Each book begins with a splendid map that foreshadows the adventure in the stories, and we use projection to enhance the maps and create the magical environment of Wild Island for our audience. (cont. pg. 21)



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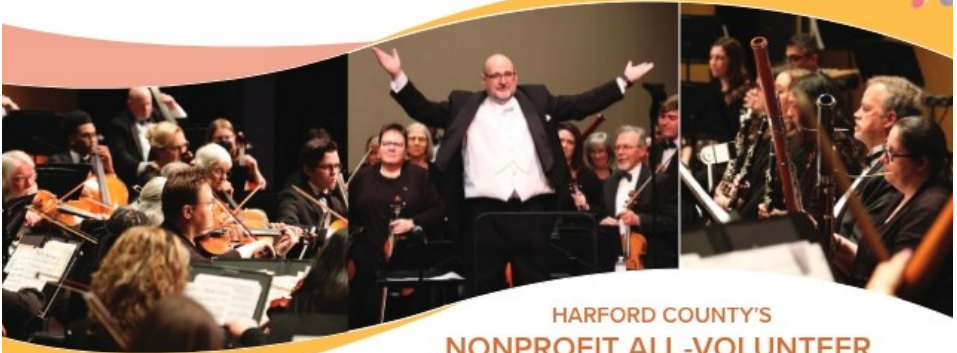
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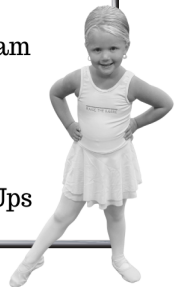
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MON – SAT 10AM-9PM

Our goal is not to exactly reproduce the gorgeous illustrations by Ruth Chrisman Gannett, but rather to capture the spirit of the world they depict on stage, dramatically evoking the enchanting world of Elmer and Boris and introducing a whole new audience to Ruth Stiles Gannett's delightful stories.

Jennifer Blatchly Smith, Artistic Director, Literary and Education

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: RUTH STILES GANNETT

Ruth Stiles Gannett was born on August 12, 1923 and grew up in New York City. Her father, Lewis Stiles Gannett, was a book reviewer for the New York Herald Tribune, and her mother, Mary Ross Gannett, was also a book reviewer and an editor. Her parents divorced in the early 1930s and her father remarried Ruth Chrisman, an award-winning illustrator. Ruth Stiles Gannett attended George School in Newtown, PA and graduated from Vassar College in 1944 with a degree in chemistry.

When Ruth was twenty-three years old, during "two rainy weeks" in 1946 while between jobs, she began writing what would become *My Father's Dragon*. At the time she wrote the story "to amuse myself" and never anticipated that her delightfully funny tale would be published. But her family encouraged her to show the story to a Random House editor, who accepted the book and then asked her stepmother, Ruth Chrisman Gannett, to illustrate it. The book became a family affair when her husband to be, Peter Kahn, chose the type. *My Father's Dragon* was published in 1948 and went on to become a Newbery Honor Book and ALA Notable Book. Ruth wrote two "Dragon" sequels, all three of which have been in print continuously. The books have been translated into sixteen languages and are much beloved in Japan, where the book is required reading in elementary schools. Children and parents from around the world continue to write Ruth fan letters about her magical tales. In talking about where the stories came from, Ruth says, "I attended the City and Country School in New York City where I was encouraged to read and write 'just for the fun of it' and to explore the world of my imagination. My books came out of a happy childhood."

In 1947, Ruth married Peter Kahn, an artist and professor of art, calligraphy and art history, who taught at Cornell University for more than 30 years. Ruth raised seven daughters and has continued to be active in her community and involved with activities related to her books. She lives in a large yellow Victorian house in the outskirts of Trumansburg, NY.

**Visit our Discover page at
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