



**WHEELOCK FAMILY THEATRE**  
**EXTENSION ANNOUNCEMENT: *MR. POPPER'S PENGUINS***  
**PRESS RELEASE**

**Press Release**

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Press Performances available upon request.**

**Email or call Jenna Corcoran for press tickets, images, interviews, and more information.**

### **WHAT:**

Wheelock Family Theatre at Boston University (WFT@BU) proudly announces *Mr. Popper's Penguins* February 10th - March 3rd!

### **ABOUT:**

WFT@BU is thrilled to continue their 2023/24 season with *Mr. Popper's Penguins!* A show about the joy of life and finding your chosen family, *Mr. Popper's Penguins* will brighten any Boston winter day. This season, together we learn that love and family come in all forms.

Fans of the original book and movie will be delighted to see their favorite characters come to life this winter. Audiences will enjoy the “adventure”, “fun” and “silliness” of the penguins as they discover “a whole new world”, says director and choreographer, Ilyse Robbins. Everyone will relate to the themes and ideas of the story. “Audiences will appreciate the relationship of Mr. and Mrs. Popper and how they love and support each other even though their life is not always easy.” says ensemble member, Russell Garrett. “They will also appreciate that the Poppers really love and care for the penguins - and love them enough to let them go at the end of the story because that is what is best for them - to return to their natural habitat.”

Audiences will be charmed by the incredible work of Puppet Designer, Alex Vernon. Vernon's penguins take on a persona of their own once they hit the WFT@BU stage led by the incredible ensemble. Director and Choreographer, Ilyse Robbins, is familiar with puppetry and thrilled to be bringing these exciting characters to life. “I work as a choreographer and director first. ‘What would I have the puppets do if they were people?’ ‘What is the story I want to be telling?’” Says Robbins. “Then I use the skills I've learned through Roxie Myhrum and Alex Vernon as to how to give the puppets their own lives and personalities and see what is physically possible with them. I've worked on *Avenue Q*, so it is not a completely foreign medium for me. It's exciting!”

Through whimsical puppetry, beautiful storytelling and much more, audiences of all ages will fall in love with the story of these penguins this winter. “Audiences will find the child in themselves through the show and kids will see their own sense of joy and discovery. It's a show that everyone can see together and enjoy. There is a vaudeville feel that will appeal to our older audiences, characters that resonate with our parents in the audience, and the penguins that are so accessible for children. The music and dance is delightful, the story is straightforward, and the puppets are incredible. There are lots of switching hats and jumping character to character. In a word - FUN!” says Robbins. WFT@BU is thrilled to bring this *fun*, exciting production to families of all kinds this winter.

**SYNOPSIS:**

Money is tight and times are tough in the town of Stillwater. With no houses to paint till next spring, Mr. Popper is stuck at home daydreaming of adventures in far-off lands, while Mrs. Popper must scrimp and save just to put beans on the table. But with the unexpected arrival of a spirited penguin named Captain Cook, a new horizon opens before them. As a quiet partnership expands into a boisterous flock, the Poppers learn that there's no problem that can't be solved with steady determination, lots of love, and a dash of unconventionality. [*Stage Agent*]

**WHERE:**

Wheelock Family Theatre. <https://www.wheelockfamilytheatre.org/>  
180 Riverway, Boston MA 02215

**TICKETS:**

Single ticket prices range from \$24-48

- By phone at (617) 353-3001
- Online at [wheelockfamilytheatre.org](https://www.wheelockfamilytheatre.org)
- At our box office at 180 Riverway, Boston, MA 02215

Discounts are available for groups and students. For a full list of discounts, please visit:  
<https://www.wheelockfamilytheatre.org/discounts-promotions/>

**CAST:**

WFT @ BU's production of *Mr. Popper's Penguins* features, Stephanie Charlton (*Understudy* Mrs. Popper), Alan Cid (*Understudy* Ensemble), Yasmeen Duncan (Ensemble), Kristian Espiritu\* (Mrs. Popper), Russell Garrett\* (Ensemble), Lisa Kate Joyce (Ensemble/Puppet Captain), Michael Jennings Mahoney\* (Mr. Popper), Todd McNeel (Ensemble), and Elias Robles (*Understudy* Mr. Popper). \*Member of Actors Equity Association

**CREATIVE TEAM:**

WFT @ BU's Creative Team of *Mr. Popper's Penguins* includes, Jenn Butler (Prop Designer), Paige D'Ambrosio\* (ASM), Brendan F Doyle\*\*\* (Sound Designer), Sam Galvao (Scenic Charge Artist), Shauwna Dias Grillo\* (PSM), Lindsay Hoisington (Wardrobe Supervisor/Costume Shop Manager), Janie Howland\*\*\* (Scenic Designer), Saskia Martinez (Associate Props Designer/Paint Asst), Nate Morrissey (A2/Production Assistant), Bethany Mullins (Costume Designer), Karen Perlow\*\*\* (Lighting Designer), Ilyse Robbins (Director), Dan Rodriguez (Music Director), Bekah Rudinec (A1/Audio Engineer), Carolyn Saxon (Associate Director/Casting Supervisor), Kira Troilo (EDI Consultant), Alex Vernon (Puppet Designer), and Lawrence Ware (Production Electrician). \*Member of Actors Equity Association \*\*Member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union \*\*\*Member of United Scenic Artists 829

## **ACCESSIBILITY:**

Open Captioning provided at all events.

**Accessibility Performance Dates:** February 25th, 2024 at 2:00 pm, February 29th, 2024 at 10:30 am (student matinee) and March 2nd at 6:00 pm.

Questions regarding access? Please contact Audience Services Manager Jamie Aznive at [jznive@bu.edu](mailto:jznive@bu.edu).

*Mr Popper's Penguins* is presented through special arrangement with and all authorized performance materials are supplied by George Howe & Robert Kauzlaric. *Mr Popper's Penguins* was originally produced by Lifeline Theater, Chicago, Illinois, and premiered there in 2015.

**Wheelock Family Theatre at Boston University** is the greater Boston area's leading professional theatre offering a shared experience for the entire family. Founded in 1981, WFT@BU's long-standing commitment to equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion has garnered recognition and awards at the local and national level. WFT@BU's productions have served more than a half-million audience members and WFT@BU's education programs have provided hands-on training to tens of thousands of students across the state of Massachusetts. On June 1, 2018, Wheelock Family Theatre became a program of Boston University.

Founded in 1839, **Boston University** is an internationally recognized institution of higher education and research. With more than 33,000 students, it is the fourth-largest independent university in the United States. BU consists of 17 schools and colleges, along with a number of multi-disciplinary centers and institutes integral to the University's research and teaching mission. In 2012, BU joined the Association of American Universities (AAU), a consortium of 62 leading research universities in the United States and Canada.