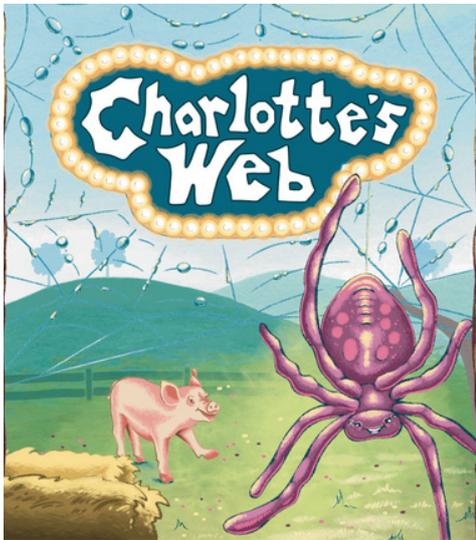


Wheelock Family Theatre Announces *Charlotte's Web* for Spring 2026

A Beloved Literary Classic Comes to Life on Stage as the Final Production of the 45th Season This Spring

Running April 3rd – April 26th, 2026

BOSTON, MA – Wheelock Family Theatre concludes its 2025/2026 season with *Charlotte's Web*, based on the classic novel by E.B. White and adapted for the stage by Joseph Robinette, running April 3- 26, 2026, in Boston.



Adapted from one of the most treasured children's books of all time, *Charlotte's Web* tells the heartwarming story of friendship, loyalty, and the cycle of life on a family farm.

Directed by Elliot Norton Award-winner Ilyse Robbins, with original music by Elliot Norton Award-winner Dan Rodriguez, *Charlotte's Web* features Malik Mitchell (Wilbur) and Anna Slate (Charlotte), leading a dynamic multigenerational cast of Boston-local performers.

“We are thrilled to welcome Ilyse back to Wheelock Family Theatre,” said Nick Vargas, Wheelock Family Theatre’s Executive Director. Robbins returns to Wheelock Family Theatre with personal and professional ties to the organization. A former faculty member at Wheelock College and *Wheelock Family Theatre’s summer programs*, Robbins previously performed on its stage in productions ranging from *Fiddler on the Roof* to *Once Upon a Mattress*.

“Her deep history with this company and her thoughtful, imaginative approach to storytelling make her the ideal director for *Charlotte's Web*.” Robbins most recently directed and choreographed Wheelock Family Theatre’s 2024 production of *Mr. Popper’s Penguins*.

About the Show: When young Fern Arable saves the runt of the litter, a pig named Wilbur, his life unfolds in a barnyard brought to life by a small ensemble of performers who shift seamlessly between human and animal roles. Through inventive staging and

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storytelling that invites the audience's imagination to do part of the work, Wilbur encounters a vibrant community of creatures and begins to understand the very real danger that comes with being the smallest pig on the farm.

Everything shifts when he befriends Charlotte, a wise and compassionate spider whose carefully spun words become acts of courage and hope. As Wilbur becomes an unlikely celebrity, the barnyard is transformed by moments of joy, fear, and loss, ultimately revealing a story about friendship, empathy, and the quiet power of selfless love.

"When Nick asked me to direct *Charlotte's Web*, I felt a huge responsibility," said Director Ilyse Robbins. "First, to the source material; E.B. White's book has stood proudly on my bookshelf, or that of one of my children, for as long as I can remember. Second, to the past productions that I remember so clearly from my early years at Wheelock Family Theatre."



Robbins is particularly excited about the dynamic theatricality of this production. She shared, "I can't wait to work with a multigenerational cast where actors transform on stage from human to animal and back again. It's a cast of friends old and new, and I know audiences of all ages will be as enamored of them as I am."

Malik Mitchell, a Boston-based actor, brings both professional experience and a personal connection to the role of Wilbur. "I am super excited to be a part of this production because of what this story meant to me growing up," Mitchell shared. "Wilbur's



vulnerability and need for community allow him to find his purpose in a world that sees him as small. Playing him is an honor because it can show children that no matter what, you're put on this earth for a bigger purpose, and it shows parents that when a strong community surrounds young people, they can truly shine."

Mitchell's work has been seen on the stages of the Huntington Theatre, Speakeasy Stage, and Wheelock Family Theatre, having appeared in *Bud, Not Buddy* and *In the Heights*.

Making her Wheelock Family Theatre debut as Charlotte, Anna Slate, a lifelong New Englander, believes *Charlotte's Web* is "One of the most uniquely stunning children's books." Slate shares, "Both as an actor and early childhood educator, I am thrilled to get to help bring this story to life."

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A resident of Providence, RI, where she works as an actor, singer, and arts educator, Slate is a self-proclaimed “extreme bug lover” and excited to bring her role as Charlotte to life.

“So many people know and love this character, and my goal is to bring as much love and grace to portraying Charlotte as E.B. White brought to creating her. I recently took my first aerial silks class to get acquainted with hanging upside down from a ceiling!” Slate shared.

Slate has appeared on stages across New England, including the Huntington Theatre Company, Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, and Lanes Coven Theater.

As the third and final production of Wheelock Family Theatre’s 45th season, *Charlotte’s Web* reflects the organization’s ongoing commitment to storytelling, literacy, and educational engagement through theatre. Wheelock Family Theatre intentionally programs stories that students across Greater Boston encounter in the classroom, allowing young audiences to experience literature transformed from page to stage. Nearly 6,000 students are anticipated to attend a subsidized student matinee performance during the course of the run, many of whom will be seeing live theatre for the first time.

“This timeless adaptation continues to resonate because it speaks directly to children’s lived experiences with friendship, empathy, courage, and change,” said Vargas. “Bringing this story to the stage today allows young audiences to make meaningful connections between the literature they encounter in the classroom and the world around them, while sharing a powerful theatrical experience with their friends and families.”

Full cast Listing:

Stephen Caliskan (Understudy Wilbur; Mr. Arable/et al; Mr. Zuckerman/et al), Maria Espinal Lopez (Youth, Understudy Fern), Janelle Grace* (Mr. Arable, Gander, Judge), Julian Hirshfield* (Understudy Avery), David Jiles, Jr.* (Mr. Zuckerman, Sheep, Uncle), Anna (AK) Kovz (Fern), Malik Mitchell* (Wilbur), Gray Olivera (Avery, Photographer), Hannah Shihdanian (Understudy Charlotte; Lurvy/et al; Mrs. Arable/et al), Tader Shipley (Mrs. Arable, Goose, Judge), Anna Slate (Charlotte), Lisa Tucker* (Lurvy, Templeton, Announcer at the Fair). Along with numerous youth actors as baby spiders.

Full Creative Team Listing:

Ilyse Robbins+ (Director), Daniel Begin (Associate Director), Fanni Horvath* (Stage Manager), Iaslyn Lewis (Assistant Stage Manager), Shelley Barish (Scenic Designer), Isaak Olson (Lighting Designer), Sophia Baramidze (Costume Designer), Sarabeth Spector (Props Designer), Dan Rodriguez (Composer).

*Indicates member of Actors’ Equity Association

+Indicates member of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society

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Access Performances

In alignment with its mission to provide affordable, accessible, and inclusive theatre for all, Wheelock Family Theatre will offer the following accessibility performances of *Charlotte's Web*: **Sunday, April 12** at 2:00 PM, **Thursday, April 16** at 10:30 AM (Student Matinee), **Saturday, April 18** at 2:00 PM

Tickets and additional information are available at wheelockfamilytheatre.org.

About Wheelock Family Theatre

Celebrating its 45th season, Wheelock Family Theatre at Boston University is the greater Boston area's only professional theater offering a shared experience for the entire family. Founded in 1981, Wheelock Family Theatre's longstanding commitment to equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion has garnered recognition and awards at the local and national levels. The theatre's productions have served over half a million audience members, and Wheelock Family Theatre education programs have provided hands-on training to tens of thousands of students across the state of Massachusetts.

Wrap-Around Activities

Full Run – More Than Words book cart

Keep an eye out for a book cart in the Wheelock lobby featuring a curated collection of books in relation to the show!

Full Run – Curated Gallery Exhibit

Make sure to take a stroll through our gallery behind the lobby of Wheelock Family Theatre, to experience a specially curated gallery based on *Charlotte's Web* from a Boston University Master's Student!

Saturday, April 11th & 18th – Emerson Student pre-show workshop & tabling event! Join Emerson College Theatre Education students, more details to come soon!

Saturday & Sunday 2 pm performances – Red Carpet

Meet the Cast of *Charlotte's Web* after every public 2 pm performance on Saturdays and Sundays during the run of the show, in the lobby of the theatre at our red carpet events! Cast members will be available to meet, sign autographs, and take pictures!

Run Time: Approximately 75 minutes

Recommended Ages: 5 and up

Location: 180 Riverway, Boston MA

Press Contact: Bonnie VosWinkel, Marketing & Communications Manager



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