

For Immediate Release:

May 11, 2016

Media Contact:

Allison Alsup

University of Florida College of the Arts

Office: 352.273.1465

aalsup@arts.ufl.edu

***Puffs* Casts a Spell on the University of Florida School of Theatre + Dance
June 2- 5, 2016**

Gainesville, Fla., May. 11, 2016 – Magic has come to the University of Florida School of Theatre + Dance (SoTD) this summer in the form of a new play *Puffs; or, Seven Increasingly Eventful Years at a Certain School of Magic and Magic*, written by actor and playwright Matt Cox. Cox and director Kristin McCarthy Parker will be joined by a team of New York-based designers, artists, and producers, including the return of UF SoTD alumnus and two-time Tony Award winning producer **John Arthur Pinckard**. Beginning Monday, May 9, Pinckard and the rest of the production team will be in residence for four weeks to workshop and perform *Puffs* at UF before it heads to its Off-Broadway debut in New York City this fall. Performances on campus will take place June 2-5, 2016 in the Black Box Theatre in the Nadine McGuire Theatre and Dance Pavilion. Performance times are 7:30 p.m. June 2-4, 2016 and at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Sunday, June 5, 2016.

“The School of Theatre + Dance is honored to host this special residency as part of our Summer Repertory Theatre program,” said Jerry Dickey, director of the UF School of Theatre + Dance. This will be the second summer of our partnership with John Pinckard and his production company Tilted Windmills. This summer, we will be in rehearsals for the latter stages of development of *Puffs*, a highly original and very funny parody of the world of a certain popular scarred wizard. This play offers our student actors the opportunity to play multiple roles in a fast-paced, physical comedy style. As an added bonus, each of our guests this summer will offer free master classes for all students enrolled in our Summer Rep program.”

Puffs tells the story of an “ordinary” young man, Wayne Hopkins, a boy from New Mexico who finds out he’s a wizard and travels to a certain school of magic, where he is placed in the “Puffs,” a group of loyal and good intentioned misfits. Over the course of his seven years at the school, he gets thrown into situations both dangerous and ridiculous. Between trying to learn magic, not trying to get lost or hurt in the labyrinths of the school, and trying to avoid his four-eyed nemesis, Wayne and the rest of the characters in this play take us on a magical journey unlike any we’ve ever experienced.

-more-

In an interview from January 2016 with Adam Szymkowicz, playwright **Matt Cox** describes *Puffs* as being, “a sort of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern-like trip through that previously mentioned book series. It is a parody and a love letter, but also about growing up.” The play is currently running in New York City at the People’s Improv Theater (PIT) until the end of June 2016.

Joining Cox on this creative team are: **Kristin McCarthy Parker** (director), who has previously worked with Cox on his successful show *Kapow-i GoGo* as well as the award-winning parody, *Hold On To Your Butts*; **Colin Waitt** (producer), a Brooklyn-based actor, writer, and producer, who has collaborated with Tony and Drama Desk award winners and Academy Award nominees and has screened work at Cannes, Tribeca, and Sundance; **David Carpenter** and **John Arthur Pinckard**, producing partners at Tilted Windmills Theatricals; actor and producer, **Stephen Stout**, who is currently performing in *Puffs* in New York; **Madeleine Bundy** (also performing in *Puffs* in New York) and **Liz Blessing** will be rounding out the visiting team as production designers. The visiting artists will collaborate with UF student actors and student and faculty designers for the campus performances.

In addition, students enrolled in Summer Repertory Theatre will have the opportunity to participate in various panels and workshops by the visiting artists. On Tuesday, May 10, Pinckard started the series of panels with “Beyond Your Degree: Further Careers in the Entertainment Industry” in G-15 in the McGuire Pavilion. In the following weeks, Cox, Waitt, Parker, Stout, Bundy, and Blessing will also offer various panels for students in directing and devising comedy, screen acting, theatre consulting, self-producing and transitioning to NYC as a theatre artist.

“I know and love this creative team so I was excited to work with them on this production,” said Pinckard. “It’s quintessentially my taste: a sardonic but heartfelt comedy that’s totally my aesthetic-- the ‘cheap and cheerful’ approach has been my stock in trade ever since I first did *Silence: the Musical*. *Puffs* is both funny and dark, my two favorite things. This show deserves a larger audience because it’s so good, far better than you would ever expect a cheap little parody to be.”

Tickets for the UF production are \$18 for the general public, \$15 for UF faculty/staff and seniors, and \$13 for students. Season and group prices are also available. Tickets are available through the University Box Office located at Gate 3 of the Ben Hill Griffin Stadium on Gale Lemerand Drive (next to the Heisman statues), by calling 352-392-1653 or at ticketmaster.com. The University Box Office is open Tuesdays through Fridays 12-5:30 p.m. and Saturdays 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Tickets can also be purchased at the Constans Theatre Box Office starting 45 minutes prior to the performance. *Puffs* is not suitable for children.

-more-

School of THEATRE + DANCE

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA / COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

The Nadine McGuire Theatre and Dance Pavilion is located at 687 McCarty Drive, Gainesville, FL 32611. On-campus parking is available at the Reitz Union garage and the Museum Road parking lot. Guests are strongly encouraged to pick up tickets early, as shows run the risk of being sold out.

About the School of Theatre + Dance

The School of Theatre + Dance is one of the University of Florida College of the Arts' institutionally-accredited schools. Undergraduate students can pursue a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in acting, dance, musical theatre, theatre production—including costume design, lighting design and scenic design—or a Bachelor of Arts degree in dance studies or general theatre. Minors are also offered in dance and theatre as well as certificates in arts in medicine and dance in healthcare. Student organizations, showcase programs and other intensives provide students with invaluable professional experiences. UF is home to three School of Theatre + Dance performance venues, including the Constans Theatre, Black Box Theatre and G-6 Studio. To learn more about the School of Theatre + Dance, including upcoming performance dates and ticket information, visit www.arts.ufl.edu/theatreanddance.

About the College of the Arts

The College of the Arts is one of the 16 colleges and more than 150 research centers and institutes at the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida. The College of the Arts offers baccalaureate, master's and Ph.D. degree programs in its three institutionally-accredited schools — the School of Art + Art History, School of Music and School of Theatre + Dance. The college is home to the Center for Arts in Medicine, Center for Arts and Public Policy, Center for World Arts, Digital Worlds Institute, University Galleries and the New World School of the Arts in Miami. More than 100 faculty members and approximately than 1,200 students work together daily to engage, inspire and create. The college hosts more than 300 performances, exhibitions and events each year. Faculty and students also exhibit and perform at other local, national and international venues. To learn more, visit www.arts.ufl.edu.

###