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BERKSHIRE
THEATRE GROUP

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BTG PLAYS! 2018-2019 Touring Show:
Showtime with Shakespeare: A Magic Tree House Adventure
A New Hip-Hop Musical

Based on
Magic Tree House: Stage Fright on a Summer Night
by Award-Winning Author
Mary Pope Osborne

Pittsfield, MA— Berkshire Theatre Group and Artistic Director/CEO Kate Maguire are excited to announce BTG PLAYS! 2018-2019 Touring Show, *Showtime with Shakespeare: A Magic Tree House Adventure*, based on *Magic Tree House: Stage Fright on a Summer Night* by Mary Pope Osborne, book and lyrics by Jenny Laird and Will Osborne, music and lyrics by Randy Courts and directed by Travis Daly, in partnership with Berkshire United Way. BTG PLAYS! 2018-2019 Touring Show is sponsored by Lead Sponsor, Berkshire Bank; Massachusetts Cultural Council; and The Shubert Foundation.

BTG PLAYS! Touring Show is a part of Berkshire Theatre Group's year-round education program, which reaches 13,000 school children annually. Beginning in October and

running through the school year, this production is appropriate for elementary and middle school aged children and family audiences, and is designed to introduce students to the excitement of live theatre. Touring to schools and venues all throughout Berkshire County and surrounding towns with a local company of artists, a question and answer session with the actors follows each performance.

The show must go on, in this new hip-hop musical, *Showtime with Shakespeare: A Magic Tree House Adventure*. That's what Jack and Annie learn when the Magic Tree House whisks them back to Elizabethan England. There they meet William Shakespeare himself—one of the greatest writers of all time! But, Mr. Shakespeare is having a hard time with some of the actors in his latest show. Are Jack and Annie ready to make a big entrance? Or, will it be curtains for Shakespeare?

Mary Pope Osborne, award-winning author of the best-selling children's book series, Magic Tree House, says, "I'm thrilled that BTG will be touring *Showtime with Shakespeare* this year! *Stage Fright on a Summer Night* has long been one of my favorite titles in my Magic Tree House series, and I love the way Randy Courts, Jenny Laird, and Will Osborne have adapted the story and added a hip-hop element to the show. Live theatre is a wonderful tool for stimulating children's imaginations, and this show will introduce them to the lively world of Elizabethan England—and the person many consider to be the greatest writer of all time!"

Through her Classroom Adventures Program, Mary Pope Osborne will provide every student who sees the show with a free copy of Magic Tree House Book #25, *Stage Fright on a Summer Night*. "We are thrilled to provide books and inspire children not only to read, but also to make the important connection between literacy and the arts," Osborne said.

ABOUT:

About Mary Pope Osborne

Mary Pope Osborne is an ardent advocate and supporter of children's literacy, and the award-winning author of more than 100 books for children and young adults, including novels, retellings of mythology and folklore, picture books, biographies, mysteries, and the best-selling children's book series, Magic Tree House. From 1993 to 1997, Ms. Osborne served as president of the Authors Guild. She has traveled extensively in the US and abroad, visiting schools and speaking on issues related to children's literacy. She recently spoke at the United Nations regarding the importance of worldwide literacy and was profiled on NBC's *Rock Center* with Brian Williams for her continued efforts. Mary's personal contributions have put hundreds of thousands of books in the hands of children in need through her own "Classroom Adventures, Gift of Books" Literacy Program. She resides between Connecticut and Massachusetts with her husband, Will.

About the Magic Tree House Series

Widely regarded among parents, teachers, and librarians for its power to instill a passion for reading, Mary Pope Osborne's award-winning Magic Tree House series is an international phenomenon that has sold over 143 million books worldwide since its debut in 1992 and has been translated into 33 different languages in over 30 international markets. Magic Tree House Fact Trackers is a best-selling series of nonfiction companion books to the Magic Tree House fiction books. Mary Pope Osborne's sister, Natalie Pope Boyce, is the author of over thirty Fact Trackers. All Magic Tree House books are available in print, as e-books, and as Listening Library audio books, which are all narrated by Mary Pope Osborne. Visit MagicTreeHouse.com and Magic Tree House's [Facebook](#) page for more information about the series, activities, and more.

About Mary Pope's Osborne's Classroom Adventures Program

Mary Pope Osborne's Classroom Adventures Program is Mary's gift to teachers who have supported her over the years. The program includes free online resources for the Magic Tree House (MTH) fiction and nonfiction Fact Trackers as well as an opportunity for Title 1 educators to be awarded an individual Gift of Books grant. Mary's program is also responsible for the coordination of widespread book giveaways to schools in conjunction with MTH shows. Through Classroom Adventures and Gift of Books, Mary and Will Osborne have placed hundreds of thousands of books in the hands of underserved children across the country. Visit MTHClassroomAdventures.org for more information.

About Random House Children's Books

Random House Children's Books is the world's largest English-language children's trade book publisher. Creating books for toddlers through young adult readers, in all formats from board books to activity books to picture books, novels, ebooks, and apps, the imprints of Random House Children's Books bring together award-winning authors and illustrators, world-famous franchise characters, and multimillion-copy series. The company's website, Kids @ Random (www.randomhousekids.com), offers an array of activities, games, and resources for children, teens, parents, and educators. Random House Children's Books is a division of Random House LLC, a Penguin Random House Company.

About Berkshire United Way

For more than 90 years, Berkshire United Way has been building a stronger community right here in Berkshire County. We support children and families wherever they are in their lives. We provide early education opportunities, so children enter school ready to learn; give young people the tools they need to make healthy decisions; and help working families become financially stable. As part of a worldwide effort to create lasting change, we mobilize people and organizations to develop long-term solutions to current and emerging needs throughout the county. Our vision is for Berkshire County to become a dynamic, engaged community with opportunities for all.

Visit berkshireunitedway.org to learn more.

About Berkshire Theatre Group

The Colonial Theatre, founded in 1903, and Berkshire Theatre Festival, founded in 1928, are two of the oldest cultural organizations in the Berkshires. In 2010, under the leadership of Artistic Director and CEO Kate Maguire, the two organizations merged to form Berkshire Theatre Group (BTG). Berkshire Theatre Group's mission is to support wide ranging artistic exploration and acclaimed performances in theatre, dance, music and entertainment. Every year, BTG produces and presents performances to over 68,000 attendees and, through our Educational Program, serves over 13,000 Berkshire County school children annually.