



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NEW MUSICAL BY ST. LOUIS-BASED COMPOSER TO DEBUT AT COCAWRITES FESTIVAL

Big Machine by Colin Healy to Feature Student Artists in the COCAwrites Program

ST. LOUIS—[COCA - Center of Creative Arts](#) will present [Big Machine fka The Butterfly Room](#), a new musical written by St. Louisan Colin Healy, April 14–16 at its annual COCAwrites Festival. *Big Machine* is about the potential of youth amidst the degradation of the American working machine. While clocking in for a company with big dreams and harmful tactics, the young people in *Big Machine* must choose how to respond to the world in front of them. *Big Machine* is based on true events and the lives of Thomas Midgley and Charles Kettering of General Motors Chemical Company.

Big Machine is created in the nationally recognized COCAwrites program, which seeks to tell stories for multi-generational audiences with youth at the center. Student artists work with a company of professional actors and creative team to gain training and develop the new work together.

Healy is one of only a few musical theatre composers in St. Louis generating new work. He serves as Music Director for COCA's Vocal Company. He also is a composer, music director, and the artistic director of Fly North Theatricals. Healy's work as a composer includes *Forgottonia*, *The Gringo*, *Madam*, and *Seeing Other People*.

Additionally, the Festival weekend includes a performance of the [COCAwrites Student Musical](#) on April 16. Drawing on inspiration from a written work, COCAwrites students adapt the selected work with incorporations of song, scene, and dance. Guided by playwright and composing mentors, the COCAwrites students bring a story to the stage with ingenuity and inspiration.

WHAT: *Big Machine fka The Butterfly Room*

At home in 1924, a girl has big dreams of going to college and breaking free of the factory town. Her brother takes a day job at a New Jersey oil refinery where he meets a rag-tag group of young workers for whom America is anything but booming. *Big Machine* recounts the real-life events surrounding the 1924 incident at Bayway Standard Oil through the lens of both those who worked there and those responsible.

WHEN Thursday, April 14 at 7:00 p.m.
Friday, April 15 at 7:00 p.m.*
Saturday, April 16 at 7:00 p.m.

*Audio description provided by MindsEye Radio and ASL interpretation provided by Deaf Inc.

WHERE: Catherine B. Berges Theatre at COCA
6880 Washington Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63130

AVAILABLE INTERVIEWS: Jennifer Wintzer, Artistic Director of Theatre
Colin Healy, *Big Machine* Composer
Nancy Bell, Director
Delaney Piggins, Producer and Dramaturg

Guest artists available upon request

EVENT WEBSITE: cocastl.org/calendar/big-machine-fka-the-butterfly-room/

TICKETS: Tickets may be purchased online at orders.cocastl.org or by phone at 314.561.4877.

COVID-19 PROTOCOLS: Proof of COVID-19 vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test performed within 72 hours of the ticketed performance is required for theatre audiences. Face masks are to be worn during the performance. [View COCA's current Health & Safety Procedures.](#)

SPONSORS: COCApresents season is made possible by: Berges Family Foundation, Hearst Foundations, Mary Ranken Jordan & Ettie A. Jordan Charitable Foundation, Mary Strauss, Lee Bohm, The Cheshire, and Missouri Arts Council.

COCA Core Sponsors include: Emerson, Spry Digital, Regional Arts Commission, Arts and Education Council, Pershing Charitable Trust, The Saigh Foundation, Gertrude & William A. Bernoudy Foundation, Dula-Kobusch Charitable Trust, and The Bellwether Foundation.

COCA Pre-Professional Division Supporters include: Bayer Fund, The Strive Fund, Twinkle Toes Foundation. This project has been supported by the Missouri Department of Economic Development's Neighborhood Assistance Program.

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ABOUT COCA

COCA's mission is to *enrich lives and build community through the arts*. With a commitment to equity and access, COCA serves as a regional hub for learning in and through the arts for all ages from all backgrounds. One of the most diverse cultural institutions in St. Louis, COCA serves over 50,000 students, audience members, artists, and families from over 220 zip codes across the St. Louis region every year. The fourth largest multi-disciplinary arts organization in the country, COCA is committed to supporting the vitality and creativity of over 200 artists at the heart of its work in schools, community centers, local business, cultural organizations, and on-site at its campus in University City.