



Sara Gruen's Critically Acclaimed Best-Selling Novel

WATER FOR ELEPHANTS

To be transformed into a musical for Broadway

New York/Düsseldorf, 27.01.2015. **Producers Peter Schneider and Elisabetta di Mambro, in association with Broadway Across America and Mehr! Entertainment, announced today that they have acquired the worldwide rights to reimagine Sara Gruen's Water for Elephants as a musical for the stage. The novel has been published in 43 countries and is the best-selling novel in the history of Algonquin Books, with over 10 million copies sold worldwide.**

In this Depression-era novel, young Jacob Jankowski's life is dramatically changed when he is tossed by fate onto a train that is the home of the "Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show on Earth." Just shy of his veterinary degree, Jacob is hired to doctor the circus's animal menagerie. During this time, he bonds with Marlena, the beautiful equestrian star married to August, the charismatic but emotionally troubled superintendent of animals. The tempestuous triangle that develops becomes even more complicated when Rosie, an Asian elephant with a personality to match any of the humans, enters the picture. "The Great Gray Hope" for this third-rate traveling show raises the stakes—both literally and figuratively—in this romantic saga of love and trust pitted against danger and evil.

"I have loved Sara Gruen's Water for Elephants since it was first published and was captivated by its theatricality," says Peter Schneider, producer of the global smash hit The Lion King. *"It is so dramatic - a woman who is trapped in a relationship for all the wrong reasons meets and falls in love with a man for all the right reasons. Throw in an elephant as a matchmaker and you have the potential for a show of great imagination and emotional depth."*

"The novel evokes an exotic, colorful and gorgeous world and yet its very human emotions are instantly recognizable and universal," says Elisabetta di Mambro, producer of The Old Woman, starring Mikhail Baryshnikov and Willem Dafoe. *"We are just starting the creative process, beginning to talk with composers, writers, and directors who can help transform this vibrant world onto the musical stage. Aware of the exciting challenge ahead of us, we are grateful that Sara Gruen has given us the rights to bring her beloved story and characters to life as a global musical."*

"I am beyond thrilled to be involved in a creative process that is entirely new to me, especially with such wonderfully talented people at the helm to reimagine my work for the stage," says Sara Gruen. *"When I wrote the book, I hoped people would think about the way we treat those who are dependent on us—animals, the elderly, the debilitated, as well as the power of love in all its forms, and it's going to be amazing to see this message delivered in such an exciting medium."*

Sara Gruen is the #1 New York Times and USA Today bestselling author of Water for Elephants, Ape House, Riding Lessons, and Flying Changes. Her works have been translated into 43 languages, and have sold more than 10 million copies worldwide. Water for Elephants was adapted into a major motion picture starring Reese Witherspoon, Robert Pattinson, and Christoph Waltz in 2011. She lives in western North Carolina with her husband and three sons, along with their dogs, cats, horses, birds, and the world's fussiest goat.



Her stunning new novel *At the Water's Edge* (a Spiegel & Grau hardcover) goes on sale March 31, 2015, and has received rave advance reviews. A young socialite in Philadelphia, a social misstep on New Year's Eve in 1944 that changes everything, a journey by ship from America to Scotland during WWII, a husband, a best friend, and the tiny Highland village of Drumnadrochit—these are the opening snapshots in her fifth novel.

Water for Elephants was published by Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill in May 2006. Soon after its publication, the book appeared on national hardcover bestseller lists, including the New York Times list. The hardcover remained on the NYT list for more than 10 months. The trade paperback edition was published in the spring of 2007, rose to #1 on the New York Times bestseller list, and remained on the list for almost five years. It also has the distinction of appearing as the #1 book on the trade paper, mass market, and e-book New York Times bestseller lists simultaneously.

Peter Schneider, the Tony Award-winning producer of the global phenomenon, *The Lion King*, is also an acclaimed theater director and a former Disney film executive whose 17-year tenure at the studio included the development of such animated classics as "The Little Mermaid," "Beauty and the Beast," "Aladdin" and "The Lion King," an extraordinary renaissance of creativity captured in the documentary, "Waking Sleeping Beauty."

Elisabetta di Mambro has produced the work of Robert Wilson worldwide for the past 25 years, and runs a production company based in Italy, Change Performing Arts, responsible for commissioning, producing and presenting the works of established international artists in theater and in visual arts.

Broadway Across America (BAA) is part of the Key Brand Entertainment family of companies, which includes Broadway.com, and is under the leadership of John Gore (Owner & CEO). Current and past productions include *Beautiful*, *Pippin*, *Million Dollar Quartet*, *Hairspray* and *The Producers*.

Mehr! Entertainment (M!E) is one of Germany's leading Live Entertainment companies that produces shows currently including *Starlight Express*, *Dirty Dancing*, *CATS*, among others. Founded by producer and CEO Maik Klokow in 2008, M!E also owns and operates theater venues in Hamburg, Bremen, Cologne, Berlin, Duesseldorf and Bochum and acts as a Rock and Pop Promoter with more than 1,100 concerts per year.

Further information about the creative team will be announced at a later time.