

# DC THEATER ARTS

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DC theater *makers* discuss what happens on stage, backstage, in rehearsals, & more.



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## ‘The Selfish Giant’s Garden’ on tour at the Puppet Co. is a rare treat

*A children’s book by Oscar Wilde, adapted by Bits ‘N Pieces Puppet Theatre, has become magical moments for the entire family.*

By

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August 29, 2025

Oscar Wilde’s children’s tale *The Selfish Giant* as adapted by Bits ‘N Pieces Puppet Theatre is on tour at the Puppet Co. through September 14. The celebrated author of such works as *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *A Woman of No Importance*, and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* wrote children’s stories as well, and catching this fun adaptation is a rare treat.

A little brother and his older sister have fun playing after school and decide to hit their favorite spot, a beautiful garden that belongs to a giant that they’ve never seen because he’s been away so long. They cautiously approach, ever mindful of the giant they’ve heard about, terrified that he could appear around the corner any minute. But the trees are perfect for climbing and the delicious peaches are so irresistible that the boy has finally eaten the last one. The giant, exhausted from his long trip, only wants the peace and quiet of home, and confronts the intruders. Although big sis flees in terror, the little boy tries to coax the giant to play, but the giant will have none of it. Once the boy is banished, the weather turns icy cold with howling winds, icy snow, and pattering hail. Eventually, the

giant reflects that he's alone and cold in his quiet solitude, he longs for the laughter and fun of children playing, and finally he enjoys the sunshine and warmth when they return.

Jerry Bickel brings the sweet story to life with bouncy music and marionette puppets that he introduces by actually coming out into the audience. He brings out the brother who looks for his sister during hide-and-seek with the puppet dancing on the children's outstretched hands wondering where she could be hiding. The puppets are instantly transformed into curious little friends in Bickel's seasoned presence. I saw a particularly rambunctious little one become quietly attentive when listening to the story and approached by the puppet on the strings. Puppets have a way of bringing you into magical moments.

Bits 'N Pieces Puppet Theatre has been entertaining audiences throughout Tampa Bay, Florida, and on national tours. Founder Jerry Bickel developed the company in 1976 having dreamt of having his own puppet company when he was a child. The vision statement for the company says it all:

*Bits 'N Pieces Puppet Theatre is dedicated to influencing the world of tomorrow by enchanting the children of today. Through the theatrical retelling of classic children's stories, each with its own unique life lesson and moral, Bits 'N Pieces brings to life the magical wonderment of children's fantasy and reinforces the core values long told and emphasized by great storytellers.*

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