Children’s Theatre Company

BEHIND THE CURTAIN BEYOND THE STAGE

Greta Oglesby and Alejandro Vega in *Last Stop on Market Street* by Dan Norman
Carving a Path to CTC’s Stage and Beyond

With your support, talented high school students launch theatrical careers right here at CTC.

Theatre Arts Training’s newest program, the Pre-Professional Institute, is helping talented young artists pave a path to Children’s Theatre Company professional productions. Students audition for the program as high school freshmen and, once accepted, commit the next four years to growing as artists alongside a group of like-minded peers.

Now in its third year, the Institute was born from Artistic Director Peter C. Brosius’s desire to offer more vibrant experiences for teens. The resulting program offers high-level, competitive training that prepares students for collegiate and professional theatrical careers, and has served 29 students to date. Boasting accomplished teaching artists like Acting Company members Autumn Ness and Reed Sigmund, and local actor H. Adam Harris, the Institute offers students personalized training and attention from the most talented and passionate theatre educators around.

Institute curriculum is comprehensive in its approach and long-term in its impact, and each of the four years has a different theatre focus. Third-year students are currently prepping for college auditions, and are preparing monologues they’ll perform as mock auditions before Peter C. Brosius in the spring.

Off-the-stage opportunities are abundant as well. Next year, they’ll hear from an HR professional about how majoring in theatre has benefits beyond the stage. Students also attend two plays around the Twin Cities each year, allowing them to explore diverse artistic experiences and the local theatre landscape.

Institute students are already seeing success. This season, audiences enjoyed the performances of Madison Neal (class of 2020) in I Come From Arizona, and Symphonie Whitted (class of 2022) as understudy in Last Stop on Market Street and Dr. Seuss’s How The Grinch Stole Christmas!

To Ellie McKay, Director of Education, what’s most impressive about this program is the way these determined, hard-working students support each other. By putting together students who love theatre and are willing to invest time and energy in their own growth, CTC is fostering a powerful group of like-minded peers that support one another’s dreams.

Donors like you help us create meaningful theatre education opportunities like this for students of all ages. With your support, CTC is able to offer financial aid to Theatre Arts Training classes, including the Pre-Professional Institute. Thank you!
According to Pew Research Center, young people ages 6 – 21 are on track to be the most diverse generation. "The world is changing," says Michael Winn, "and as the world diversifies so do the stories that we want to tell—that we need to tell—on CTC’s stages."

As CTC’s new Director of Community Partnership and Inclusion, Michael is now part of the team charged with making sure the stories we tell reflect our broader community. This season’s *I Come From Arizona* is just one example of recent efforts to highlight multicultural stories. The realistic play portrayed fourteen-year-old Gabi facing the challenges of attending a new school, while also learning that her parents are undocumented immigrants. "The characters in *I Come From Arizona* are human beings who reside in America, making their stories relevant and impactful to all human beings who reside in America," says Michael.

And it’s clear that this story resonated with the young people in our audiences. CTC holds talk-backs after each student matinee performance, and Michael notes that students were particularly engaged at talk-backs for *I Come From Arizona*. "Many of these kids have friends who are dealing with immigration issues, so they have a personal connection to the story," says Michael.

Art—theatre in particular—gives us a unique chance to see into another person’s life, and experience the world from a new perspective. "It’s important that we focus on diversity and inclusion, because as the largest and most respected theatre for multigenerational audiences, CTC’s work has the power to create a ripple effect of change that will resonate throughout the entire theatrical community," says Michael.

Support from donors like you enables CTC to engage with leading playwrights, directors, and designers to bring you plays like *I Come From Arizona*. Thank you for helping us share stories like these so everyone in our community can see themselves reflected on our stages.

---

Building The Biggest Little House in the Forest

Your gifts help delight preschoolers with a one-of-a-kind set.

CTC’s special preschool production *The Biggest Little House in the Forest* wows audiences each time Company Member Autumn Ness brings Bernice the Butterfly, Millie the Mouse, Fred the Frog, and the rest of our puppet friends to life. But this early-childhood play is also special in ways that only CTC’s production team can reveal.

Thanks to the support of donors like you, CTC employs exceptional artists and crafts people to create magical worlds on stage. For most of our original productions, CTC’s scene shop carpenters are responsible for building the production’s set. *The Biggest Little House* is unique in that it’s exclusively built and maintained by our props shop, led by Props Director Sue Brockman.

“Because this show was designed for a preschool audience, it was necessary to make sure the set and props were just the size to create an intimate setting” says Sue. Because preschoolers are naturally curious, the props team created latches for the puppets so they stay in place as children investigate, and special hiding places within the set so little ones won’t see the puppets until they are introduced.

“The Biggest Little House is an energetic show that requires significant interaction with the set,” explains Sue. “We worked with Eric Van Wyk, who designed the show, to make the set the perfect height and width for Autumn, so she’d be able to reach up and around, and interact with it without inconvenience.”

Sue and her team even measured each puppet to fit Autumn’s hand just right, which makes it easier for her to manipulate multiple puppets at the same time.

The pancakes in the show are made from fake pizza dough that pizza shops use to teach their staff how to toss perfect pies. “We went through a long process of trial and error to find this dough,” says Sue. To give the pancakes a finished look, Sue and her team top them with real cinnamon. When you come to the show, see if you can catch a whiff!

Donors like you help us create artistically exceptional sets like this one, and support our commitment to produce developmentally appropriate work for children ages 2 - 5. Thank you for your generosity!
Subscriptions go on sale February 19!