



PRESS RELEASE

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Media Contact:

Melissa Ferlaak

Senior Communications Manager

612.872.5110

mferlaak@childrenstheatre.org

**From Ethiopia to Jamaica to Small Town Minnesota,
Experience the World with Children's Theatre Company's 2019 – 2020 Season**
Full season subscriptions go on sale tomorrow, February 19

Minneapolis, Minn. – Children's Theatre Company (CTC) is proud to announce the global 2019 – 2020 Season, including two CTC commissioned works, two international presentations, surprising reimaged classic fairy tales, and exciting musicals. This season will feature a wide range of productions that will engage conversations and create memories. Earlier in January, CTC announced that **Rajané Katurah** (former CTC Performing Apprentice) has accepted the position of Company Member, joining **Autumn Ness, Dean Holt, Reed Sigmund,** and **Gerald Drake** for the 2019 – 2020 Season.

The 2019 – 2020 Season begins with ***Circus Abyssinia: Ethiopian Dreams***. These Ethiopian acrobats have dazzled audiences around the world, from presentations at the Edinburgh Festival to recently in New York City at the New Victory Theater, garnering critical acclaim. This gravity-defying show delves into the rhythms and roots of Ethiopia's rich musical and artistic traditions to weave its story through death-defying tricks, and feats of juggling, clowning, and contortion, all performed to the irresistible beats of modern East African song.

Next comes a CTC-commissioned, fully reimaged ***Snow White*** by one of CTC's favorite director/playwrights, **Greg Banks**, performed brilliantly by two remarkable and hilarious actors, **Joy Dolo** and **Dean Holt** who will take on all 14 roles in an agile and virtuosic performance. This Snow White will have you question the storybook notion of love with a delightful twist.

For the holiday season, CTC is bringing back the magical, fantastical, and all-too-hilarious ***Cinderella***, directed by **Peter C. Brosius**. Originally created by CTC, this musical mixes together the heart-warming story of Cinderella (played by new Acting Company member **Rajané Katurah**) and a Victorian Christmas party with lavish period costumes, grandiose sets and holiday carols, with brand-new, clever pop culture references, shameless physical comedy, audience participation, and gut-busting gags. This production is proudly sponsored by Target.

The new year kicks off with a jammin' Reggae musical production of ***Bob Marley's Three Little Birds***, based on the book by Marley's daughter, **Cedella Marley** and directed by **Nataki Garrett**. Sharing the artist's message of peace and love with a new generation of songbirds, the story follows Ziggy, a shy Jamaican child who finally learns to overcome his fears (tropical storms, evil spirits, and a sneaky hair-grabbing Duppy!) and enjoy life, through one **Bob Marley** hit after another.

Next is the world premiere of ***Spamtown, USA***, written by **Philip Dawkins** (playwright for CTC's *Dr. Seuss's The Sneetches the Musical*), directed by **Will Davis**. Through a deep interview process with the residents of Austin, Minnesota who lived through the 1980s P-9 Hormel Strike, the story is told through the eyes of the children who were affected on both sides of this bitter divide in southern Minnesota history. It is a world of surprising alliances and loyalties, and filled with the dreams of the young people. Dawkins paints an incredible picture through the stories, the sounds, the smells, the humor, and the common rituals that brings the entire community to life in a vivid portrayal of this nationally-relevant event.

The spring brings a colorful, whimsical presentation of Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia's ***The Rainbow Fish***. This visually stunning production includes magical, ultraviolet-vibrant, black-light puppetry and will enchant the very young to the very old through three award-winning stories by **Marcus Pfister** about a beautiful rainbow- and silver-scaled fish who learns to share its most prized possession with others, and in turn, makes the world more beautiful for all. This production is proudly sponsored by Deluxe.

The season concludes with the spirited musical about a fierce orphan, ***Annie***, directed by **Peter Rothstein**. The winner of many Tony Awards, this production is one of the world's best-loved musicals. It is an inspiring story that reminds audiences that hope is always possible, there is always "Tomorrow," and that lives can be changed through kindness, love, and spirit.

"We are thrilled to bring you a season of work from around the world that will delight, surprise, and excite you in so many amazing ways," stated Artistic Director **Peter C. Brosius**. "We love developing new plays and musicals for you and also scouring the world for artists who have created truly inspiring work to bring here to Minnesota. This season you will be dazzled by internationally-celebrated circus artists from Ethiopia, acclaimed puppet artists from Canada, the music of Bob Marley from Jamaica, the vision of English director Greg Banks, and classics brought to new and vibrant life. We love that theatre can take so many forms; from big musicals, to intimate re-imaginings of classics, to delicate puppetry, to celebrations of reggae music that all engage you with stories of change and transformation. Theatre allows us to journey across the globe, to enter into the heart of another, and to see our world with new eyes. We don't want you to miss a single show. Come on the journey. The show is about to begin."

Full season subscriptions renewals and upgrades are on sale beginning tomorrow at <https://childrenstheatre.org/subscribe> or by calling 612.874.0400. New season subscriptions go on sale March 1. Subscription packages include full season options to flexible packaging and value-priced preview and opening weekend packages. Single tickets will go on sale in July 2019.

CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY'S 2019 — 2020 SEASON

Circus Abyssinia: Ethiopian Dreams

Co-created and produced by Mehari "Bibi" Tesfamariam

Co-created and directed by Binyam "Bichu" Tesfamariam

Written by Cal McCrystal

Choreography by Kate Smyth

UnitedHealth Group Stage

September 17 through October 20, 2019

All Ages

A whole new kind of circus is coming to town! The rhythm of Ethiopia comes alive as this internationally-acclaimed, dream-filled adventure makes its daring Minneapolis debut. Jaws will drop as one amazing feat after another defies gravity and awakens possibility; oh, to be part of the spectacle! It's an incredible range of high-flying hilarity, hula hooping, death-defying tricks, and ridiculously joy-filled juggling with the music and movement of East Africa.

"We're over the moon to be bringing Circus Abyssinia to the CTC," stated performer/director **Bichu**. "It's going to be an absolute privilege to perform at such an extraordinary theatre, one so perfect for kids and their families. And we can't wait to come to the brilliant city of Minneapolis!"

Snow White

Written and Directed by Greg Banks
Original Music by Victor Zupanc
An Original CTC Commissioned Premiere
Cargill Stage
September 29 through December 8, 2019
For Everyone 5 and Up

This is not your usual “Once Upon a Time.” Classic? No. Wild? Yes! To start with, it’s a two-person play. Do the math. Snow White and the Seven Dwarves? Two fabulous, whip-smart, super-fast actors play Snow White, the huntsman, the prince, and all seven dwarves! And it’s funny. Really, really funny. So expect the unexpected in this fabulous fairy tale with a (spoiler alert) you-won’t-see-it-coming twist.

“When I was commissioned to write *Snow White* for only two actors, my initial response was, ‘Help! Not Possible! There are seven dwarves!’,” stated Playwright **Greg Banks**. “We know them as fairy tales but they are much more than flights of fancy. Fairy tales were always told as a way of making sense of the world in difficult times. As I work on these stories, I try to hold true to that idea and speak to a young audience honestly and openly about what happens in the world—and not in a patronizing way. We’ve had enormous fun and serious challenges in telling this story, not least, figuring out how one actor can play all seven dwarves at once. We think we’ve nailed it, but that will be for you to judge. I hope you find plenty to enjoy!”

Cinderella

Adapted by John B. Davidson
Original Music and Arrangements by Victor Zupanc
Directed by Peter C. Brosius
Choreographed by Linda Talcott Lee
Music Direction by Jason Hansen
A Children’s Theatre Company Original Production
UnitedHealth Group Stage
November 3, 2019 through January 5, 2020
All Ages

You’re invited to a beautiful Victorian Holiday party—but be prepared to check your coat, and all sense of tradition, at the door. You have NO IDEA WHAT YOU’RE GETTING INTO HERE. Join this high-spectacle, glamorously shameless comedy where anything can happen. We’re really not supposed to say, but there may be audience participation, a kiss cam? Cake? T-shirt cannons? Jokes ripped from the headlines? (Vikings fans, you have been warned!) Immerse yourself in singing the pop songs you love and have fun laughing at the things we can all relate to. Enjoy a production as charming as it is hilarious, while still telling a story of love and redemption.

“*Cinderella* is a story that is beloved because it is a tale of strength, of hope, of possibility,” states Director **Peter C. Brosius**. “In our version, inspired by England’s panto tradition, it is all that and more. Not only do we tell Cinderella’s tender and heroic story, but we also bring you into a Victorian holiday party. Then we fill the stage with contemporary songs, jokes, and hijinks and create moments where the audience is truly the star of the show. We can’t wait to share this production with you, filled with endless invention, outrageous humor, and absolute spectacle. Enjoy.”

Bob Marley’s Three Little Birds

Based on a Story by Cedella Marley

Music and Lyrics by Bob Marley
Adapted for the Stage by Michael J. Bobbitt
Directed by Nataki Garrett
UnitedHealth Group Stage
January 19 through March 1, 2020
For Everyone 5 and Up

Ziggy's afraid to leave the house. He's too busy worrying about tropical storms, evil spirits, and a sneaky, freaky, hair-grabbing Duppy! But, with the help of some feathered friends, Ziggy learns "every little thing is gonna be alright." A musical that jams Jamaican style, it's a timeless tale of peace and love, and of course, Bob Marley, man.

Spamtown, USA

Written by Philip Dawkins
Directed by Will Davis
A Children's Theatre Company World Premiere
Cargill Stage
February 16 through April 5, 2020
For Everyone 9 and Up

You've read the story of the 1985 Hormel strike in Austin, Minnesota. But this is what wasn't printed in the newspapers; the families, the kids, and the idealized town where everything was fine...but was it? A moving portrait of families divided, where confrontation was the new normal, and where children's dreams of fashion school, tennis competitions and science projects were interrupted by arguments and ethical questions. This is the story of the hurt that comes when you're forced to take sides, the hope that comes in surprising alliances, and the laugh-out-loud humor that makes every situation possible.

"*Spamtown, USA* delves into what it means to stand up for what you feel is right, to fight for justice, to compromise, to refuse to compromise, and the consequences of all of this for your family," stated Playwright **Philip Dawkins**. "Based on numerous interviews with those who were children during the P-9 Hormel Strike in the 1980s, this play offers an intergenerational slice of Austin, Minnesota during that time. It is a look at the young people who were dragged (willingly or not) into their parents' conflicts, and where that experience strengthened, harmed, stunted, or pushed them to grow. Expect dancing, head-banging music, and probably a shoulder pad or two. Come be our guest at *Spamtown, USA*. We have lots to say."

The Rainbow Fish

Produced by Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia
The Rainbow Fish book is written and illustrated by Marcus Pfister
Directed and Designed by Jim Morrow
Composed by Steven Naylor
UnitedHealth Group Stage
March 10 through April 5, 2020
All Ages

This original stage adaptation of Marcus Pfister's colorful stories uses innovative puppetry, striking scenic effects, and delightful original music that will mesmerize the entire family. Together, you'll travel with the

beautiful Rainbow Fish through the great unknown deep sea, discover new worlds, meet a wise octopus and a helpful starfish, and learn what it means to share your most prized possession.

“The Rainbow Fish lives in three dimensions and is alive with movement, gesture, thought, and music,” stated Director/Designer **Jim Morrow**. *“Audiences all over the world have responded positively to the bright colors, the playful action, the recognizable characters and imagery, and the beautiful music, but mostly they are happy simply to share their experience with friends and family, and to have an opportunity to laugh and shout and be entertained and, for some perhaps, to be inspired.”*

Annie

Book by Thomas Meehan

Music by Charles Strouse

Lyrics by Martin Charnin

Directed by Peter Rothstein

Music Direction by Victor Zupanc

UnitedHealth Group Stage

April 19 through June 21, 2020

All Ages

It’s a goose-bump-inducing, gorgeous production that fills the stage and the hearts of everyone who watches it. Times are tough, spirits are low, and the world is in dire need of hope. Enter, stage left: a delightful underdog—a cute, yet mischievously feisty little girl. She takes on the world and, with an equal share of moxie and music, unlocks hearts and changes lives through kindness, love, and spirit.

“Annie is, without question, one of the truly great American musicals,” states Director **Peter Rothstein**. *“It is set in the Great Depression and the young hero of the story, offers a profound voice of hope, determination, and optimism. The musical is also a celebration of non-traditional and chosen families. I hope audiences young and old are captivated by her spunk, her charm, and her wisdom.”*

Children’s Theatre Company (CTC) is the nation’s largest and most acclaimed theatre for young people and serves a multigenerational audience. It creates theatre experiences that educate, challenge, and inspire for more than 295,000 people annually. CTC is the only theatre focused on young audiences to win the coveted Tony Award® for regional theatre and is the only theatre in Minnesota to receive three Tony® nominations (for its production of *A Year with Frog and Toad*). CTC is committed to creating world class productions at the highest level and to developing new works, more than 200 to date, dramatically changing the canon of work for young audiences.

CTC’s engagement and learning programs annually serve more than 93,000 young people and their communities through Theatre Arts Training, student matinees, Neighborhood Bridges, and early childhood arts education programs. ACT One is CTC’s comprehensive platform for access, diversity, and inclusion in our audiences, programs, staff, and board that strives to ensure the theatre is a home for all people, all families, reflective of our community. childrenstheatre.org

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