



PRESS RELEASE

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The Impossibly Possible Children's Theatre Company's 2020 – 2021 Season

Full season subscriptions go on sale today

Minneapolis, Minn. – Children's Theatre Company (CTC) is proud to announce the impossibly possible 2020 – 2021 Season, including seven productions, a brand new preschool show, and four musicals designed to delight and inspire families and children of all ages and backgrounds.

The 2020 – 2021 Season begins with the touring musical production of the ***The Pout-Pout Fish*** running September 15 through October 18, 2020. This colorful musical adapted from the best-selling picture book series is co-conceived, directed, and designed by the acclaimed puppeteers of **AchesonWalsh Studios**. It premiered at the New Victory Theater in 2019 receiving praise such as "an inventive set...imaginative large-scale puppets...clever script" from *The New York Times*. This new musical turns the poutiest of frowns upside down featuring whimsical puppets, surf rock music, and live performers in a sweeping oceanic adventure. When Mr. Fish sets out on a quest to find Miss Clam's missing pearl, he discovers there is more to him than his permanently plastered pout. The show kicks off its national tour in Minneapolis.

Next comes the return of ***Seedfolks*** running Sept 29 through November 15, 2020. CTC premiered this production in 2014 and has since taken it to South Africa (ASSITEJ World Congress), on a tour of Minnesota, and a national tour that ended in New York City at the New Victory Theater at 42nd and Broadway, receiving such praise as a "tour de force" from *The New York Times*. *Seedfolks* is about an immigrant neighborhood in Cleveland, Ohio that is transformed by a community garden. It begins when nine-year-old Kim plants the first seeds in the rat-infested, vacant lot next to her apartment building. They are six lima bean seeds, planted in honor of the father she never knew. Slowly, each member of the community finds a reason to plant their own seeds, resurrecting a derelict lot and uniting a fractured neighborhood.

For the holiday season, CTC's Ivey Award-winning, spectacular production of ***The Wizard of Oz*** will run November 3, 2020 through January 3, 2021, directed by **Peter C. Brosius** with choreography by **Linda Talcott Lee**. Audiences can expect all the splendor and magic of the classic story beautifully captured in grand-scale CTC fashion.

Ring in the new year, CTC will bring the world premiere of ***Babble Lab*** running January 26 through March 7, 2021, written and performed by CTC Acting Company member, **Autumn Ness** with direction by **Peter C. Brosius**. Ness received the Theatre Communications Group (TCG)'s Fox Fellowship award to develop this work for the preschool aged set, based on Dadaist sound poetry. The fellowship award also serves to support the development of another new work for children on the autism spectrum. *Babble Lab* is the first of her works in development to take the stage. Ness plays a scientist who is working in her lab to discover where sound comes from. When letters magically emerge from her lab, she finds herself immersed in a wonderfully bizarre world of sounds and new language filled with surprises and sonic anarchy.

Running February 16 through April 4, 2021 will be ***Pippi Longstocking: The Family Musical***. New to CTC, this version is based on the novel by Astrid Lindgren, with music and lyrics by Danish folk star, **Sebastian** and has been adapted by **Sebastian** and Swedish playwright **Staffan Götestam**. This famous story of a rebellious, red-headed nine-year-old has influenced incredible women leaders, from Michelle Obama

to Madonna, and is packed with adventures of meeting pirates, avoiding thieves and discovering their kid powers.

Dr. Seuss's Cat in the Hat is back with mischief and mayhem running March 30 through June 6, 2021 with direction by **Peter C. Brosius**. Starring “the always thrilling **Dean Holt**” (City Pages, 2012), this anarchic Seuss favorite is loyal to the book with lines taken straight from the page and costumes and sets that evoke the iconic style of Seuss. CTC gave the production its American premiere 2012. CTC has a special relationship with Dr. Seuss. Long the only theatre in the US to develop and produce original productions based on Dr. Seuss's books, CTC has premiered *Dr. Seuss's The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins*, *Dr. Seuss's The Sneetches*, and *Dr. Seuss's How The Grinch Stole Christmas!*.

The season concludes with the triumphant return of ***Diary of a Wimpy Kid the Musical*** running April 27 through June 20, 2021, with the composer/lyricist team of Minnetonka-native **Michael Mahler** and **Alan Schmuckler**. **Kevin Del Aguila**, famous for his TV series, *Peg+Cat* serves as the librettist. The beloved book series by **Jeff Kinney** hits the stage in musical fashion with Greg Heffley, Rowley, Fregley, Manny, and of course, Rodrick joining in the mayhem. A ridiculous amount of fun for anyone who has survived, is surviving, or hopes to survive middle school, inspired by the award-winning and bestselling book series. This musical was developed by CTC in 2016 with **Kevin McCollum** (producer of *Six*, *Rent*, *In the Heights*, *Avenue Q*, and *Something Rotten!*). Since closing at CTC, the production has gone through some exciting changes and adjustments including new songs to go along with such hit songs as “All About the Mom Bucks,” “Joshie Says,” and “Animal Heart.”

“We are thrilled to bring you a season of work that will delight, surprise, and excite you in so many amazing ways,” stated Artistic Director **Peter C. Brosius**. “This season is all about going on adventures full of bravery, discovery, and personal growth. It is about how we change, grow, and impact our world. We hope these shows start conversations, unleash curiosity, and encourage exploration. We don't want you to miss a single show. Come on the journey. The show is about to begin.”

Full season subscriptions renewals, upgrades, and new full season subscriptions are on sale now at <https://childrenstheatre.org/subscribe> or by calling 612.874.0400. Single tickets will go on sale in July 2020.

CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY'S 2020 — 2021 SEASON

TheatreWorksUSA

by Special Arrangement with Macmillan Entertainment presents

The Pout-Pout Fish

Book by Christopher Anselmo, Jared Corak, Matt Acheson, and Fergus J. Walsh

Music and Lyrics by Christopher Anselmo and Jared Corak

Based on *The Pout-Pout Fish* series of books by Deborah Diesen, illustrated by Dan Hanna

Directed and Designed by Matt Acheson and Fergus Walsh

Music Direction and Arrangements by Jonathan Bauerfeld

UnitedHealth Group Stage

September 15 – October 18, 2020

Best for all ages

If you are fast and strong and smart, is it possible to be afraid of the dark? It is if you are pout-faced Mr. Fish. While searching for Ms. Clam's missing pearl, he encounters the deepest, darkest regions of the ocean, stretching his pout to new lows.

This colorful and quirky musical leads you through a fantastical undersea landscape. Bigger-than-life handheld puppets ride the rockin' soundwaves of surf-inspired harmonies that celebrate the oceanic vibe.

With the help of unexpected allies like a misunderstood shark and a three-card-monte-playing octopus, Mr. Fish discovers his ability to turn “Blub blub blub” into “Hip hip hooray!”

“What we really want audiences to take away from *The Pout-Pout Fish* is that it is OK to feel sad sometimes, and that happiness looks different to everyone,” wrote **Christopher Anselmo** and **Jared Corak**. “One person’s idea of happiness may not fit your own needs, and that’s perfectly fine! Happiness is a journey and a process, and, much like Pout-Pout, you may feel lost before you find what happiness looks like to you. But no matter how you feel, you are going to ‘stay afloat.’ We hope you will swim along with Pout-Pout as he leaves the comfort of his reef and finds the confidence to engage with the vibrant musical world around him. Hopefully, by the end of his journey, we’ll all be singing a different tune.”

Seedfolks

Adapted from the book by Paul Fleischman

Directed by Peter C. Brosius

A Children’s Theatre Company Original Production

Cargill Stage

September 29 – November 15, 2020

Best for everyone ages 8 and up

A vacant lot in a broken neighborhood in the middle of Cleveland can become a lot of things. A garbage dump. A gathering spot for trouble. How could it ever be a source of hope?

In a play *The New York Times* terms “a tour de force,” one actor plays multiple characters, including Ana, the nosey neighbor; Curtis, the weightlifter; and Kim, a young girl who plants six special lima beans. Watch as this one deed inspires many more, with an immersive video landscape that magically brings their intertwining stories to life. As a garden grows, so does the community, blooming into something bigger, better, and beyond all expectations.

“This is a beautifully written, funny and poignant play about the power we all have to be catalysts for change,” stated Director **Peter C. Brosius**. “We came to the decision to use one single actor to portray all of the diverse voices in this production as a demonstration that we are all part of a whole, and together, we can create something beautiful.”

The Wizard of Oz

By Frank L. Baum

Music and Lyrics by Harold Arlen and E.Y. Harburg

Background Music by Herbert Stothart

Dance and Vocal Arrangements by Peter Howard

Orchestration by Larry Wilcox

Adapted by John Kane for the Royal Shakespeare Company

Based upon the classic motion picture owned by Turner Entertainment Co. and distributed in all media by Warner Bros.

Directed by Peter C. Brosius

Choreographed by Linda Talcott Lee

November 3, 2020 – January 3, 2021

Best for all ages

A girl, her dog, and a long road that leads home...or does it? This beloved musical spectacle pits determination and loyalty against a wild tornado, a shoe-obsessed witch, and a not-so-wizardly wizard.

Explore the meaning of home in this grand production that's knock-your-socks-off thrilling! Be amazed by flying monkeys, melting witches, and magical transformations that inspire *ooohs* and *ahhhhs*. Will Dorothy and her friends each find the one thing they want most? Or will they discover that the power to achieve the impossible already lies within them?

"*The Wizard of Oz* is a quintessential American story," said Director **Peter C. Brosius**. "Born out of the mind of L. Frank Baum, it captures the powerful story of Dorothy's overcoming of extraordinary obstacles, her ability to find common cause with the oddest of allies, and finding her courage to stand up for herself and to understand what really matters most to her. This is a piece that inspires us with its resilience and spirit, and delights us in its mix of the wonderfully familiar and the utterly fantastical."

Babble Lab

Written by Autumn Ness

Directed by Peter C. Brosius

A Children's Theatre Company World Premiere

Cargill Stage

January 26 – March 7, 2021

Best for preschoolers

Strap on your safety goggles and clean out your ears! When an experiment unexpectedly goes awry, a concoction of sneaky, sprightly **L E T T E R S** takes over a weird and wondrous science lab. Watch them jump into jars, spring from drawers, bounce around the room, and even play hide-and-seek as our scientist makes her surprising discoveries: **Bluku terullala blaulala loooo! Rakete bee bee? Rekate bee zee!**

Enjoy the blubbering and blibbering exploration of spoken blurbles as they spring forth in this one-of-a-kind, gee-gaw-filled laboratory.

"I am so honored—and totally fired up—that *Babble Lab* is in our season because the early childhood audience is my favorite group to perform for!" stated playwright and performer **Autumn Ness**. "*Babble Lab* was inspired by my own children's experiences and struggles learning to speak, to read, and to communicate. And because I know I am not alone in those struggles, I wanted to create something around learning to communicate that was playful and curious, with a tiny bit of anarchy."

Pippi Longstocking: The Family Musical

Music and lyrics by Sebastian

Adapted for the stage by Sebastian and Staffan Götestam

Based on the novel by Astrid Lindgren

UnitedHealth Group Stage

February 16 – April 4, 2021

Best for all ages

Sure, she's got loads of freckles and two pigtails that defy gravity. But did you know that Pippi Longstocking possesses superhuman strength? And owns a treasure chest full of gold coins? And that her least favorite subject in school is pluttifikation?

Join Pippi, Tommy, and Annika on their thrilling adventures and misadventures as they tip over tea parties and outsmart some not-so-smart robbers. Throughout this spirited musical, discover how Pippi is ready to meet the world head on, but the world is not always ready for Pippi.

Dr. Seuss's The Cat in the Hat

Based on the book *The Cat in the Hat* by Dr. Seuss

Play Originally Produced by the National Theatre of Great Britain

Adapted and Originally Directed by Katie Mitchell

Directed by Peter C. Brosius

Cargill Stage

March 30 – June 6, 2021

Best for everyone preschool age and up

When all you've known are the normalist of norms, what might you do if a cat—in a HAT—walks through your door? That's what happens one rainy day when suddenly chaos reigns (get it?), sending Sally and her brother into fits of panic. From there, two Things pop out of a box and their very regular house is turned into an outright disaster with a loud BONK and a PLOP.

How will the kids bring about order before their mom returns?! Why are they listening to what a fish has to say?!?! And can they ever enjoy just a bit of the best day of their lives?!?!?!

"*The Cat in the Hat*, what a fun little show, full of colors and sounds and Things on the go," stated **The Cat (aka Dean Holt)**. "You'll smile with glee, you'll leap in your seat, and (like it or not) there'll be green meats to eat. So, come in a car or a bike that is nice, visit us once or even come twice! Just know you'll have fun, you and your fam, and think what you will of those green eggs and ham!"



Diary of a Wimpy Kid the Musical

Music and Lyrics by Michael Mahler and Alan Schmuckler

Book by Kevin Del Aguila

Based on the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* book series by Jeff Kinney and the 20th Century Studios films

Produced by special arrangement with Buena Vista Theatricals and Kevin McCollum

UnitedHealth Group Stage

April 27 – June 20, 2021

Best for all ages

Middle school, ugh. It's the worst. But Greg is determined NOT to be at the bottom of the popularity chart. He'll leave that to his weird neighbor, Fregley. Or maybe Greg's best friend, Rowley Jefferson. But it's not going to be Greg... no way.

See Jeff Kinney's popular character take center stage as Greg's cartoon diary becomes a raucous musical. Will Greg's plans lead him to sacrifice his one true friend? Can anyone avoid the dreaded Cheese Touch? Grab a hall pass and don't be late for an adventure familiar to anyone who actually survived middle school!

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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