



PRESS RELEASE

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Children's Theatre Company is OPEN! for the 2021 – 2022 Season

Artistic Director, Peter C. Brosius' 25th Anniversary Season features two blockbuster musicals, two world premieres, and the American premiere by Ethiopia's Circus Abyssinia of their newest production

Minneapolis, Minn. – Children's Theatre Company (CTC) celebrates the excitement, power, and joy of live theatre with its 2021 – 2022 Season, which includes five inspiring productions that will enthrall and delight audiences of all ages. As the nation's leading theatre dedicated to developing new works for multigenerational audiences, CTC is thrilled to announce two world premieres by celebrated playwrights **Lloyd Suh** (*The Chinese Lady*, *The Wong Kids* and *the Secret of the Space Chupacabra GO!*) and **Cheryl L. West** (*Last Stop on Market Street*, *Jar the Floor*) as well as the American premiere by Ethiopia's internationally acclaimed **Circus Abyssinia** of their new show. This season marks **Peter C. Brosius' 25th** Anniversary as CTC's Artistic Director.

"We are thrilled to bring you a season that will inspire you, that will delight you, that will take your breath away, and start extraordinary conversations," states Artistic Director **Peter C. Brosius**. "Our season is filled with journeys—of discovery, of bravery, of growth and change. We hope these shows unleash curiosity, open your hearts, and fill you with joy. We can't wait to share them all with you. We have been waiting for this moment and so look forward to seeing you all soon."

The 2021 – 2022 Season begins with **Annie**, the spirited musical about a mischievous and feisty orphan who unlocks hearts and changes lives through kindness, love, and spirit. Directed by **Peter Rothstein**, *Annie* runs November 7, 2021 through January 9, 2022. The winner of seven Tony Awards, this show 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." *Annie* is proudly sponsored by Polaris.

"*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."

Beginning the new year is **Bina's Six Apples**, a world premiere, commissioned and developed by CTC, written by **Lloyd Suh** and directed by **Eric Ting** running January 9 through February 13, 2022. This is the journey of a young Korean girl searching for her family after war forces them from their home. With only six precious apples to her name, Bina will discover the power of her own resilience, and find that she is not the only one on a difficult journey for a place to call home. *Bina's Six Apples* is inspired by stories from Suh's parent's childhoods during the Korean War. This is a co-production with the **Alliance Theatre** in Atlanta.

"It's such a thrill to be returning to CTC, after premiering *The Wong Kids* there in 2013," reflects Playwright **Lloyd Suh**. "*Bina's Six Apples* is rooted in family lore. It is inspired by my parents, in what they experienced as children during the Korean War, but it is equally inspired by my kids – not just in the remarkable differences in how they're growing up, but in the similarities, too. My greatest ambition for the play is that

it speaks to both generations: their emotions, their imaginations, their sense of discovery and journey towards empathy. The play was written for young audiences, of course – but also for their parents and grandparents.”

World-famous Circus Abyssinia is back by popular demand with a brand-new, breathtaking show for all ages! **Circus Abyssinia: Tulu** runs January 18 through February 13, 2022 and is inspired by the story of Ethiopian runner Deratu Tulu, the first Black African woman to win Olympic gold. This celebration of athleticism features dazzling feats of speed and flight, with astonishing spectacles of high-flying acrobatics, hand balancing, and juggling (sometimes with fire!) backed by the beat of Ethiopian music. Don't miss the company that the *Star Tribune* raves for its “immediate thrills.”

“We're seriously over the moon to be coming back to Children's Theatre Company,” state the creators, **Bibi and Bichu Tesfamariam**. “With our new show, *Tulu*, we'll be pulling out all the stops to celebrate the story of Ethiopian icon and Olympic legend, Deratu Tulu, the first African woman to win Olympic gold. We can't wait to perform with the wonderful audiences of Minneapolis again!”

CTC has commissioned the world premiere of ***Something Happened in Our Town*** running February 27 through March 27, 2022 written by playwright, **Cheryl L. West** and directed by **Timothy Douglas**. The play is based on the book written by a multiracial, child psychologist team of authors, **Marianne Celano**, PhD, ABPP, **Marietta Collins**, PhD, and **Ann Hazzard**, PhD ABPP and is published by Magination Press, an imprint of the American Psychological Association. Two young friends—Emma, who is White and Josh, who is Black—have questions when a police shooting occurs in their town. Both children have conversations with their families to try and make sense of what happened and get the answers they need. Experience what can happen when perceptions are challenged and awareness grows. *Something Happened in Our Town* is proudly supported by Wells Fargo with additional support from Thomson Reuters.

Playwright **Cheryl L. West** states, “In a time of reckoning in our country, this work is a call to action, to facilitate the much-needed discussion about inclusion, compassion, and what it really means to be peace makers in our homes, schools, and communities. Hopefully, this story will move us one step closer to healing our racial divide.”

The season concludes with the triumphant return of ***Diary of a Wimpy Kid the Musical*** running April 22 through June 18, 2022, with the composer/lyricist team of Minnetonka-native **Michael Mahler** and **Alan Schmuckler** and directed by **Jenn Thompson**. **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 the premiere at CTC, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid the Musical* has continued its development and you will want to see the new surprises in this production. *Diary of a Wimpy Kid the Musical* is proudly sponsored by Delta Airlines.

To make the patron experience as clean, safe, and enjoyable as possible, CTC has added MERV-13 air filters and ionization systems to all HVAC units. HVAC ionization kills the coronavirus and other types of viruses, such as the flu and other air pollutants. CTC has installed touchless fixtures to all public restrooms. CTC will have hand sanitizing stations, increased cleaning of surfaces, and electronic ticketing available. CTC will continue to monitor CDC and Minnesota Department of Health guidelines and adjust protocols as recommended. CTC keeps updated information on the website at childrenstheatre.org/covid19.

Full season subscriptions renewals, upgrades, and new full season subscriptions are on sale now at <https://childrenstheatre.org/open> or by calling 612.874.0400. Single tickets for *Annie* will go on sale in July 2021 and the rest of the season will be on sale in the fall of 2021. CTC's 2021 – 2022 Season of artistic and

educational programming is supported by the Minnesota State Arts Board, The Shubert Foundation, Inc., and Target.

CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY'S 2021 — 2022 SEASON

Annie

Book by Thomas Meehan
Music by Charles Strouse
Lyrics by Martin Charnin
Directed by Peter Rothstein
Choreography by Kelli Foster Warder
Music Direction by Victor Zupanc
November 7, 2021-January 9, 2022
UnitedHealth Group Stage
All Ages

It's a goosebump-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 good-natured, yet mischievously feisty, young 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. Like Annie and Daddy Warbucks sing, “The Sun Will Come Out Tomorrow!”

Bina's Six Apples

Written by Lloyd Suh
Directed by Eric Ting
A Children's Theatre Company Original World Premiere Production
A co-production with the Alliance Theatre
January 9-February 13, 2022
Cargill Stage
Ages 9 and Up

Bina's family grows the finest apples in all of Korea. But when war forces her to flee her home, Bina is alone in the world with just six precious apples to her name. Can these meager possessions help her find her family?

Join Bina on her journey that ranges from the heartbreaking to the humorous. Encountering new challenges at every turn, Bina is forced to rely upon her apples and their meaningful legacy as she begins to discover the power of her own resilience. Often mesmerizing, always heartwarming, Bina realizes she's not the only one on a difficult quest for a place to call home.

Circus Abyssinia: Tulu

Co-created and produced by Mehari “Bibi” Tesfamariam
Co-created and directed by Binyam “Bichu” Tesfamariam
Choreography by Tamerat Ejeta and Binyam “Bichu” Tesfamariam
A Children's Theatre Company American Premiere Production
January 18-February 13, 2022
UnitedHealth Group Stage
All Ages

World-famous Circus Abyssinia returns by popular demand with a fantastical celebration of athleticism and the power of speed inspired by Ethiopian runner Deratu Tulu, the first Black African woman to win Olympic gold.

Watch in awe as a dazzling spectacle of high-flying acrobatics, hand balancing, and juggling (sometimes with fire!) flashes before your eyes, backed by the beat of Ethiopian music. Witness the energy and spectacle of the Olympic games, packed with extraordinary circus acts, and be amazed as the world of triumph and virtuosity come to dynamic life!

Something Happened in Our Town

Written by Cheryl L. West

Based on the book “Something Happened in Our Town” By Marianne Celano, PhD, ABPP, Marietta Collins PhD, Ann Hazzard, PhD, ABPP

Directed by Timothy Douglas

A Children’s Theatre Company Original World Premiere Production

February 27-March 27, 2022

UnitedHealth Group Stage

Ages 7 and up

Friendships challenged, a world changed, and two young people struggling to make sense of it all. Follow friends and neighbors, Josh and Emma, as they navigate their way through an experience beyond their control and understanding.

Josh and Emma have many questions about the tragic killing of a Black man by a White police officer. Real questions that deserve real answers. But during conversations over dinner, at bedtime, before and after school, their families (one Black and one White) find such answers don’t come easily. Layered with compassion and humor, this show invites you to walk alongside Josh and Emma as they confront uncertainty within their town and between themselves. More than just a “must see,” this play will help families more fully understand how their neighbors’ experiences might be different than their own.

Diary of a Wimpy Kid the Musical

Book by Kevin Del Aguila

Music and Lyrics by Michael Mahler and Alan Schmuckler

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 Theatrical and Kevin McCollum

Directed by Jenn Thompson

UnitedHealth Group Stage

April 22-June 18, 2022

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 hilarious and heartfelt 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 250,000 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*). Since the 1997 arrival of current Artistic Director Peter C. Brosius, CTC has added over 50 new works to the canon of theatre for multigenerational audiences, most of which are available through CTC’s licensing house, Plays for New Audiences.

CTC’s education and engagement programs annually serve more than 77,000 young people and their communities. ACT One is CTC’s comprehensive platform for access, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in our audiences, programs, staff, partnerships, 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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