

PRESS RELEASE

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Cast and Creative Team Announced for the World Premiere of *Something Happened in Our Town*

Cheryl L. West's world premiere play runs February 27-March 27, 2022

Minneapolis, Minn.—Children's Theatre Company (CTC) is proud to announce the cast and creative team for the CTC commissioned world premiere production of *Something Happened in Our Town*, written by **Cheryl L. West** (Broadway's *Play On!*, *Last Stop on Market Street*, *Akeelah and the Bee*) and directed by **Timothy Douglas** (Round House, The Kennedy Center, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Great Theatre of China, and more). The production is based on *The New York Times* bestselling children's book, *Something Happened in Our Town: A Child's Story of Racial Injustice* by **Marianne Celano, PhD, ABPP, Marietta Collins, PhD, and Ann Hazzard, PhD, ABPP**, which was published in 2018 by Magination Press, an imprint of the American Psychological Association. The creative team includes Scenic Designer **Junghyun Georgia Lee** (New York Theatre Workshop, Ma-Yi, The Public, Soho Rep, and more), Costume Designer **Trevor Bowen** (2021-2022 McKnight Theatre Arts Fellow; *Spamtown, U.S.A.*, *Bob Marley's Three Little Birds*), Lighting Designer **Alan C. Edwards** (Audelco Award and Lucille Lortel Award recipient, *Harry Clarke* (Off-Broadway)), and Composer and Sound Designer **Victor Zupanc** (credited with over 300 CTC productions). The cast includes **De'Anthony Jackson** (Josh Perkins), **Calvin Zimmerman** (Malcolm Perkins), **Kevin West** (Calvin Perkins), **Rajané Katurah** (Bella Perkins), **Lola Ronning** (Emma Hartley), **Autumn Ness** (Sue Hartley), **Dean Holt** (Uncle Manny), **Julia Isabel Diaz** (Ms. Garcia), **Zachary Bagnoli** (Daniel), **McKinley Fant** (Sophia), **Ines Rose Mojica** (Ling), and **Geoffrey Morrison** (Omar). The full cast and creative team and bios are listed below.

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."

Friendships challenged, a world changed, and two young people struggling to make sense of it together. 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.

"*Something Happened in Our Town* accurately and respectfully mirrors the world our kids live in today," says **Kristine Enderle**, Editorial Director of Magination Press. "We are thrilled that Children's Theatre

Company is taking the conversation further and partnered with us to produce an honest, unflinching, and authentic work. Together we hope it will empower kids to start a better pattern and actively fight for social justice and respond to the prejudices and exclusion that emerges into their community and schools.”

CTC will facilitate talk backs after most performances with community, business, and non-profit leaders as well as CTC staff who’s work or personal experiences intersect with racial equity. Additionally, local CBS-affiliate, **WCCO** has been following the process of *Something Happened in Our Town*, which included a family special that aired multiple times talking about race with families and experts and added resources for families and caregivers that can be accessed at wcco.com/inourtown. The television station is also producing a five-part, behind-the-scenes series on the making of *Something Happened in Our Town*. The episodes will air on their digital platform, *CBS News Minnesota* throughout February and March, 2022.

“When I was given this book, I knew immediately that it was right for us to adapt to the stage,” states CTC Artistic Director, **Peter C. Brosius**. “This is a story that helps us see these complex issues through the eyes of children and to journey with them as they work to understand and process these events. I knew this was a story that was not only timely, but essential. We so look forward to the conversations that this play will engender and hopefully lead to a deeper insight into each other’s lives and experience.”

Something Happened in Our Town runs February 27-March 27, 2022 on the UnitedHealth Group Stage. Tickets can be purchased at childrenstheatre.org/town or by calling the ticket office at 612.874.0400. Ticket prices range from \$15-\$63. *Something Happened in Our Town* is proudly supported by **Thomson Reuters, Wells Fargo, Beverly Grossman, and the National Endowment for the Arts**.

Something Happened in Our Town

Written by Cheryl L. West

Directed by Timothy Douglas

Based on the book *Something Happened in Our Town* by Marianne Celano, PhD, ABPP; Marietta Collins, PhD; Ann Hazzard, PhD, ABPP

A Children’s Theatre Company World Premiere Production

February 27-March 27, 2022

UnitedHealth Group Stage

Best enjoyed by ages 7 and up

Creative Team and Production Staff

Scenic Designer | Junghyun Georgia Lee

Costume Designer | Trevor Bowen

Lighting Designer | Alan C. Edwards

Composer and Sound Designer | Victor Zupanc

Dramaturg | Miriam Weisfeld

Stage Manager | Jenny R. Friend

Assistant Director | Domino D’Lorion

Assistant Stage Manager/Howard University Stage Management Fellow | Cortney Gilliam

Adult Cast

Calvin Perkins | Kevin West

Bella Perkins | Rajané Katurah

Sue Hartley | Autumn Ness

Uncle Manny | Dean Holt

Ms. Garcia | Julia Isabel Diaz

Student Cast

Josh Perkins | De’Anthony Jackson

Malcolm Perkins | Calvin Zimmerman
Emma Hartley | Lola Ronning
Daniel | Zachary Bagnoli
Sophia | McKinley Fant
Ling | Ines Rose Mojica
Omar | Geoffrey Morrison

Understudies

Calvin Perkins | Payton Woodson
Bella Perkins, Ms. Garcia | Rue Norman
Sue Hartley | Laura Leffler
Uncle Manny | Reed Sigmund
Josh Perkins | Levi McIntosh
Malcolm Perkins | DeJuan Edwards Jr.
Emma Hartley | Hildie Edwards
Daniel | Mateo Huber
Sophia | Ayla Porter
Ling | Chloe Hu

Tickets:

The Ticket Office is accessible by phone two hours prior to most performances. These posted hours are subject to change.

Email: tickets@childrenstheatre.org (inquiries only, no ticket processing)

Phone: 612.874.0400

Website: <https://childrenstheatre.org>

Subscription packages are available. Please see website for complete details: childrenstheatre.org/open
Lap passes available for children newborn to three years for \$5

ASL Interpreted Performances: Friday, March 25, 2022 at 7pm

Audio Described Performance: Friday, March 25, 2022 at 7pm

Sensory Friendly Performance: Saturday, March 26, 2022 at 11am

Performance Dates

Sunday, February 27, 7pm (Preview)
Tuesday, March 1, 7pm (Preview)
Wednesday, March 2, 7pm (Preview)
Thursday, March 3, 7pm (Preview)
Friday, March 4, 7pm (Opening Night)
Saturday, March 5, 1pm and 5pm (Opening Weekend)
Sunday, March 6, 1pm and 5pm (Opening Weekend)

Thursday, March 10, 7pm
Friday, March 11, 7pm
Saturday, March 12, 11am and 3pm
Sunday, March 13, 1pm and 5pm

Thursday, March 17, 7pm
Friday, March 18, 7pm
Saturday, March 19, 11am and 3pm
Sunday, March 20, 1pm and 5pm

Thursday, March 24, 7pm

Friday, March 25, 7pm (ASL Interpreted and Audio Described Performance)

Saturday, March 26, 11am (Sensory Friendly Performance) and 3pm

Sunday, March 27, 1pm and 5pm (closing)

Creative Team:

Playwright

Cheryl L. West's plays include *FANNIE: The Music and Life of Fannie Lou Hamer; Last Stop on Market Street; Shout Sister Shout; Akeelah and the Bee; Pullman Porter Blues; and Jar the Floor (optioned for Broadway)*.

Her plays have been produced in England, off-Broadway, on Broadway (*Play On!*), and regionally including Arena Stage, Old Globe, The Goodman, Williamstown Theatre Festival, CTC, Chicago Children's Theatre, Seattle Rep, Indiana Rep, Merrimack, Arkansas Rep, St. Louis Black Rep, Bay Street Theatre Festival, Syracuse Stage, Cleveland Play House, South Coast Rep, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Manhattan Theatre Club, and Off-Broadway's Second Stage. She has written TV and film projects at Disney, Paramount, MTV Films, Showtime, TNT, HBO, CBS, BET and is the Webby-nominated writer for the original web series *Diary of a Single Mom*. www.cheryllwest.com

Director

Timothy Douglas is making his CTC debut and has staged upwards of 100 productions including locally for Guthrie Theater, Off-Broadway, nationally, and internationally including The Great Theatre of China.

Timothy currently serves as Distinguished Artist in Residence at Emerson College, and this spring he will stage Terence Blanchard's *Champion* for Boston Lyric Opera. www.timothydouglas.org

Scenic Designer

Junghyun Georgia Lee is a Korean-born, NYC-based designer. She designed for New York Theatre Workshop, Ma-Yi, Public, Soho Rep, The Play Co., Alley Theatre, Hartford Stage, Long Wharf Theatre, Guthrie Theater, Huntington Theatre Company, Indiana Repertory Theater, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Alliance, and Syracuse Stage. She is a member of New Neighborhood, a multimedia and theatre group. M.F.A., Yale School of Drama. junghyungeorgialeedesign.com

Costume Designer

Trevor Bowen (he/him) is pleased to have collaborated on CTC productions *Corduroy; Last Stop on Market Street; I Come From Arizona; Bob Marley's Three Little Birds; and Spamtown, U.S.A.* His design credits include Theater Latté Da, Minnesota Opera, The Kennedy Center, and Glimmerglass Opera Festival. He is a 2021-2022 McKnight Theater Artist Fellow. trevorbowendesign.com

Lighting Designer

Alan C. Edwards' work Off-Broadway includes the world premiere of *Harry Clarke* at The Vineyard, for which he received a Lucille Lortel Award, the world premiere of *Kill Move Paradise* at the National Black Theatre, for which he received a Drama Desk nomination, and Anna Deavere Smith's *Fires in the Mirror* at the Signature Theatre, which also received a Lucille Lortel nomination. Regionally, he's had the pleasure of designing four plays by Dominique Morisseau: *Pipeline, Skeleton Crew* (Actors Theatre of Louisville), *Paradise Blue* (Geffen Playhouse), and *Detroit '67* (Chautauqua Theatre Co.); *Twisted Melodies*, a new musical about Donny Hathaway at Center Stage Baltimore; and the new musical *Lights Out: Nat King Cole* at the Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles, as well as its world premiere production at People's Light & Theatre Co. in Malvern, PA in 2017. Additional credits include *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992* and *The Hot Wing King* at Signature Theatre, *Chasing Magic* and *Where We Dwell* (by tap dancer Ayodele Casel), *American Moor* (Red Bull); *Native Son* (The Acting Company), productions of *Dutchman, Antigone, and Macbeth* for the Classical Theatre of Harlem, and *Bluebird Memories* featuring rap-artist Common (Audible Theatre). On Broadway he was the associate to Jennifer Tipton on *The Testament of Mary*. He is a graduate of Yale School of Drama, where he is also an assistant professor of lighting. For more information visit www.alancedwards.com.

Composer and Sound Designer

Victor Zupanc (he/him) is credited with over 300 productions as Composer, Musical Director, and Sound Designer throughout the country and around the world, winning many awards and honors. Victor often composes for orchestras, choirs, films, and for NPR. This is Victor's 32nd season as Music Director/Composer at CTC. He recently released a new album of original music titled "Welcome to MY World" which can be found at: victorzupanc.com

Stage Manager

Jenny R. Friend (she/her) For 17 years, CTC has given her the gift of seeing the world with wonder through a child's eyes. If her work in live theatre in 2022 could bring us all a deepening sense of curiosity about each other and the ability to be brave enough to start a conversation, she will look to the future with hope! Come along on the ride...

Assistant Director

Domino D'Lorion (they/them) has worked as an actor, educator, playwright, and drag queen in the Twin Cities. They have performed with Minnesota Centennial Show Boat, Transatlantic Love Affair, Mixed Precipitation, and this will be their first production at CTC. They hold their B.F.A. from the UMN/Guthrie Theater Actor Training Program.

Assistant Stage Manager/Howard University Stage Management Fellow

Cortney Gilliam (she/her) has been the Production Assistant for Children Theatre Company's *Annie* and *Bina's Six Apples* and is grateful for the exploration and experiences brought by new art at CTC. She has also worked with Sundance Institute and AT&T Performing Arts Center. Cortney holds a B.F.A. from Howard University.

Cast:

Josh Perkins

De'Anthony Jackson is appearing in his first professional production. He has been recognized by many of his peers performing at Stonebridge World School for his singing and dance talents. His latest endeavor includes ballroom, tango, polka, swing, jive, and salsa with the Heart of Dance ensemble. De'Anthony is a native Minnesotan born and raised in south Minneapolis. He's excited to be starring in his first production and looks forward to expanding his artistry.

Malcolm Perkins

Calvin Zimmerman is an activist, athlete, actor, and St. Louis Park High School Sophomore. Calvin has enjoyed performing to Twin Cities audiences through Stages Theatre, CTC, and Park Square Theatre. Calvin is excited to combine his passions for social justice and acting to help open thoughtful and productive dialog within our communities.

Calvin Perkins

Kevin D. West (he/him) appeared in *Buddy, Not Buddy* at Children's Theatre Company. He has performed locally and nationally with various companies including Penumbra Theatre, Mixed Blood Theater, History Theater, Pillsbury House Theater, Jungle Theater, Guthrie Theater, Six Points Theater, Theater Latte Da, Alchemy Theater, Kennedy Center, August Wilson Center and Hartford Stage. B.A. Theater Arts.

Bella Perkins

Rajané Katurah (she/her) has enjoyed roles in *Cinderella*; *The Wiz*; and *Dr. Seuss' The Lorax* at CTC and at several organizations, including Guthrie Theater, Ten Thousand Things, Penumbra, The Ordway, Park Square and Jungle Theater. Rajané holds a B.A. from Spelman College.

Emma Hartley

Lola Ronning (she/her) is ecstatic to be back at CTC, after appearing in this season's production of *Annie*. She has enjoyed roles in *A Christmas Carol* (Guthrie Theater), and got her start in CTC's training intensives, including *COVIDtown* (Stephanie); *Mary Poppins* (Jane Banks); and *Orpheus and Eurydice* (Orpheus). She is grateful to her family, voice teachers, directors, fellow actors, and the Friends School community for supporting her growth.

Sue Hartley

Autumn Ness (she/her) is celebrating her 21st season with the CTC Acting Company! A few of her favorite shows include *Annie*; *Cinderella*; *Roald Dahl's Matilda The Musical*; *The Biggest Little House in the Forest*; *The Jungle Book*; and *Romeo and Juliet*. Autumn is a recipient of the 2018 Fox Fellowship, the 2020 "Next Step" award, and the 2022 MN State Arts Board Creative Support grant.

Uncle Manny

Dean Holt is a member of CTC's Acting Company (1994–present), appearing in more than 100 memorable productions in his time at CTC. He is a two-time Ivey Award winner (*Reeling* and *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*) and the recipient of the Alumni Achievement Award from St. John's University for outstanding work in his field.

Ms. Garcia

Julia Diaz (she/her) is a MN born and raised singer, actress, and activist. Recent credits include *Pippin* (Emerging Professionals Ensemble); *A Relative Relationship* (Minneapolis Musical Theatre); & *Rosario* (Minneapolis–Saint Paul International Film Festival). She holds her B.A. in Sociology of Criminology, Law and Deviance from the University of Minnesota.

Daniel

Zachary Bagnoli is making his CTC debut! Previous shows include *Madagascar* (Saint Paul JCC) and *The Internet is a Distraction* (Mounds Park Academy). In his free time, Zachary enjoys alpine skiing, parody writing, badminton, and hanging out with friends. Zachary lives with his mother and his dog, Root-beer, in Saint Paul.

Sophia

McKinley Fant (she/her) has participated in the Acting Conservatory at Stages Theatre Company. She has performed as a competitive dancer for Turning Pointe Dance Studio in Eagan, MN. McKinley loves to spend time with her friends, create movies, and draw.

Ling

Ines Rose Mojica (she/her) is so excited to be back at CTC and is honored to be a part of this production! This fall, she played Belinda Cratchit in Guthrie Theater's *A Christmas Carol*. Previously, she understudied the part of Carol in CTC's *Spamtown, U.S.A.* and has taken classes with Theatre Arts Training and Lundstrum Performing Arts. She thanks her parents and grandparents for supporting (and driving) her and her sisters for their constant encouragement.

Omar

Geoffrey Morrison (he/him) is a 6th grade student at Aspen Academy. He is on the High Honor Roll. He enjoys playing the saxophone and is an avid soccer player. He is an active member of Penguin Corp and has been in multiple videos and live streams. He is a 1st degree black belt in karate. *Something Happened in Our Town* is his first acting role of any kind.

Understudies:

Emma Hartley

Hildie Edwards (they/them) is excited to participate in their first production at CTC. They regularly perform at Twin Cities Pride, are active in their school plays in Egan, and advocate for LGBTQIA+ youth in local and national media. Hildie sends love to their family/chosen family for their support and guidance.

Sue Hartley

Laura Leffler (she/her) has performed with Guthrie Theater, Park Square Theatre, Umbrella Collective, and more. This is her first time with Children's Theatre Company. She has directed at History Theatre, Park Square Theatre, and more. She holds an M.A. from the University of Kansas and a B.A. from Baker University.

Uncle Manny

Reed Sigmund is loudly celebrating his 21st season as a member of the Acting Company, where he's appeared in shows such as *Dr. Seuss's How The Grinch Stole Christmas!*; *The Wizard of Oz*; and *A Year with Frog and Toad*. Recently, he's also been seen onstage at Jungle Theater and Theater Latté Da.

Josh Perkins

Levi McIntosh (he/him) is excited about his theatrical debut in *Something Happened in Our Town*. Levi enjoys playing soccer and basketball in his spare time. Levi hopes that this play will inspire others to have courageous conversations about race with their friends and families.

Malcolm Perkins

DeJuan "Junie" Edwards Jr (they/them) is performing for the first time with roles in *Something Happened in Our Town*; and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid the Musical* at Children's Theatre Company.

Calvin Perkins

Payton J. Woodson (he/him/hey, you!) is incredibly excited to return to CTC! Payton was last seen at CTC in the production of *Bud, Not Buddy*. Payton has also performed with Zephyr Theatre, Pillsbury House Theatre, Park Square, and Penumbra just to name a few. Payton has a B.A. in theatre from Prairie View A&M University.

Bella Perkins, Ms. Garcia

Rue Norman is delighted to be making her CTC debut as this season's Performing Apprentice. Rue has been featured at the Minnesota Fringe Festival, Paul Bunyan Playhouse, and TheatreX. She is nationally recognized by the Kennedy Center for "Outstanding Performance in a Play" as Alice in *Alice in Wonderland* at UNW Theatre. Norman holds a B.F.A. from the University of Northwestern (Saint Paul).

Daniel

Mateo Huber is a 7th grader at Yinghua Chinese Academy in Minneapolis. He has participated in many acting camps and is excited to be a part of *Something Happened in Our Town*. He plays piano, does karate and basketball, and is in many clubs at school. This is his first production with CTC.

Sophia

Ayla Porter (she/her) has been singing, dancing, and acting since the age of three in her church's choir, praise dance, and thespian ministries. In 2021 Ayla had the honor of showcasing a variety of talents on the stage of the Capri Theater under the direction of Dennis Spears.

Ling

Chloe Hu (she/her) is excited to make her CTC debut in *Something Happened in Our Town*. She trained in CTC's summer acting program and danced at Larkin Dance Studio for over 5 years. Chloe loves books, crafts and playing with her little brother.

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*). 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 is the most significant provider of accessible theatre education opportunities in the region. Every year, thousands of children experience theatre for the first time at CTC. Our student matinees and education programs demonstrably benefit the community, from the intergenerational conversations sparked by our world premieres, to the sequential skill-building that happens in our Theatre Arts Training, to the pre-K focus of our Early Childhood Initiative. 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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