

CIRCUS Abyssinia Tulu

SEPTEMBER 13-OCTOBER 23, 2022

Co-Created and Produced by
Mehari “Bibi” Tesfamariam

Co-Created and Directed by
Binyam “Bichu” Shimellis

Choreography by
Tamrat Ejeta and
Binyam “Bichu” Shimellis

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Photo by David Rubene

Photo of *Something Happened in Our Town*
cast by Glen Stubbe Photography

CTC's Commitment to Anti-Racism

CTC is committed to furthering our progress toward being a fully equitable organization. Last year, we formalized our Anti-Racism Statement (page 7) and our Land Acknowledgement Statement (page 5). We also met the following milestones which advanced our goals:

50%

of the work on our stages was BIPOC-centered

29%

of students in Theatre Arts Training were people of color

21%

of our staff were people of color

23%

of our board of directors were people of color

58%

of actors on our stages were people of color

And we still have more work to do! Read our statement detailing our commitment to anti-racism on page 7.

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Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

Children's Theatre Company creates extraordinary theatre experiences that educate, challenge, and inspire young people and their communities.

Vision

We unleash the power of curiosity, empathy, and imagination.

Values

Imagination
Excellence
Respect
Inclusion



A Message from Peter Brosius & Kimberly Motes

Peter C. Brosius
Artistic Director

Kimberly Motes
Managing Director

We are thrilled to have Ethiopia's Circus Abyssinia back with their new production of *Tulu*. As home to one of our nation's largest East African communities, we welcome this company and the music, spirit, and culture of Ethiopia. These performers celebrate virtuosity, excellence, courage, and cooperation. They have dazzled audiences across the globe and it is a delight to have their enthusiasm, their talent, and their generosity back here in the Twin Cities.

Children's Theatre Company has long been committed to creating a welcoming, inclusive, and equitable environment where all members of our community come together for extraordinary theatre experiences that educate, challenge, and inspire. We know how important it is to see oneself and one's life on stage. We also know how important it is to see stories and artists from around the globe, so we can learn from each other. Our world today is small and deeply interconnected. The clothes we wear, the products we use, the cars we drive, the devices we hold—all are products of a global economy. We must learn how to work together, to gain strength from one another, and to have our uniqueness fuel creativity, innovation, and transformation. We know that teams who come from different countries, perspectives, and histories solve problems faster, come up with more inventive solutions, and see things in new ways.

CTC is dedicated to helping our young people become the global citizens they need to be. We want to share stories and give voice to artists from across this country and around the world so that we all become more curious, informed, and connected. We know that this next generation will be the most diverse generation our nation has seen. They will be our future leaders, our artists, our teachers, our change agents. CTC helps give young people the tools they need to succeed in a world that is ever-changing, increasingly interconnected, and interdependent.

CTC embraces our responsibility to future generations by creating, developing, producing, and presenting new work from Black, Indigenous and People of Color and global artists and by our staff, board, audience, and artists reflecting our community and our nation.

We welcome you to this spectacular show and hope you leave inspired, dazzled, and joyful.

Thanks so much for coming,
Peter and Kim

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Land Acknowledgement



Children's Theatre Company (CTC) acknowledges that the theatre was established on land that the Wahpekiute Tribe of the Dakota nation still calls home. Around the year 1600, the Wahpekiute were a wandering people who landed in Mni Sota Makoce (Land Where the Waters Reflect the Clouds—and the people's roots here remain strong). They are a part of the Dakota Seven Councils of Fire, which include the Mdewakanton (Dwellers by the Sacred Lake), Sisitonwan (People of the Marsh), Wahpetonwan (Dwellers Among the Leaves), Ihanktown (People of the End), Ihanktowna (People of the Little End), Tetonwan (People on the Plains), and Wahpekiute (Shooters Among the Leaves).

Today, Minnesota is a vibrant and diverse state with the history and influence of the Dakota people woven throughout. We honor and respect the many Indigenous People still connected to this land. We acknowledge that we have benefitted from systems that have hoarded power and marginalized Indigenous Nations, communities of color, the LGBTQIAP+ community, people with disabilities, women, children, and all who meet at the intersections.

CTC acknowledges that we are now stewards of the land the Wahpekiute People of the Dakota Nation were largely driven from. As storytellers, it is our duty to recognize that the narratives of this region have long been told from one dominant perspective without acknowledging those whose narratives began before. It is our responsibility to the Dakota Nation, our staff, our board, our audiences, and our artists to collectively honor their lives, amplify their voices, and reimagine our future.

For our full Land Acknowledgement and Anti-Racism statement, please visit
childrenstheatre.org/jedi.



Tulu's Unifying Lap

by Michael Winn

Associate Artistic Director/Director of Equity and Community Partnerships

The Olympic Games are a time when many nations come together to celebrate athleticism and mental strength. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) aims to promote sport competition, and education free of any discrimination, “in a spirit of friendship, solidarity, and fair play.”

Gatherings meant to celebrate each other's differences can also bring about controversy and a need to heal past wounds. The 1992 Olympics were no exception.

This story actually begins after the 1960 Olympics, when South Africa was banned from participating in future Olympic Games because of its policies of Apartheid, a system of institutionalized racial segregation that existed in South Africa from 1948 through the early 1990s. Apartheid means “apartness” in Afrikaans, the official language of South Africa.



All sports in South Africa under Apartheid were segregated by race, with separate clubs and governing bodies. Only White

organizations were affiliated with the South African Olympic and Empire Games Association, which was later known as the South African National Olympic Committee (SANOC). That meant only White South Africans competed in the Olympic Games. In 1959, the South African Sports Association (SASA) was formed to campaign to allow non-White athletes to represent South Africa. In 1963, the IOC voted to revoke the SANOC's invitation to the 1964 Summer Olympics unless it declared its opposition to the government. It did not, and was then excluded from the games.

In June 1991, South Africa's Population Registration Act of 1950 was repealed. This Act was the foundation of South Africa's apartheid legislation. Later, an Interim National Olympic Committee of South Africa (INOCSA) was formed as a unified non-racial Olympic committee. On July 9, 1991, the IOC recognized the INOCSA and dropped the “Interim” from the name. This allowed South Africa to compete for the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona after a 28-year ban.

The 1992 Olympics in Barcelona were momentous. South Africa was competing again, apartheid was in the process of being eliminated, and this would be the first Olympic Games without boycotts since 1972.

One of the most hotly contested events of the 1992 Olympics was the women's 10,000-meter race. British athlete Liz McColgan was the favorite to win. Elana Meyer, a White South African runner who had been denied the chance to compete after qualifying for the 1984 games because of apartheid, was competing. Derartu Tulu, a rising star in Ethiopia who had just won the 1990 World U20 Championship, was also in the race. After 6,100 meters, Elana Meyer pulled away from the field, and only Tulu was able to keep pace with her. Meyer tried to force Tulu to pass her, but Tulu refused. Finally, just before the start of the last lap, Tulu darted into the lead and went on to win by 30 meters. Instead of celebrating this amazing accomplishment with the traditional solo victory lap, Tulu waited for Meyer at the finish line, and then Tulu, the first Black African woman to earn an Olympic medal, and Meyer, whose country's policies prevented her from competing on a national stage for years, set off hand in hand for a victory lap that symbolized hope for a new Africa.

Children's Theatre Company's Anti-Bias and Anti-Racism Statement

Children's Theatre Company is committed to recognizing, addressing, and eliminating all forms of racism, ethnic oppression, and biases on our stages, in our staff, artists, audience, and on our board. We understand that bias can be unconscious or unintentional and that racism is the combination of social and institutional power plus racial prejudice. We acknowledge the historical legacy of exclusion and marginalization in theatre. We are committed to providing a just, equitable, diverse, inclusive, and accessible space for every member of our community.

CTC will work to:

- Take a proactive approach to eliminating biases and/or racism in our daily interactions.
- Restructure our systems to eliminate barriers to access that are visible and invisible.
- Engage in ongoing and intentional anti-bias and anti-racist learning to understand personal biases and privileges.
- Reflect the diversity of our community in the stories we tell on our stages.
- Transform our recruitment, hiring, and retention efforts.

We know that this work is ongoing and evolving. We look to our community and ourselves for accountability as we strive to be a theatre where everyone can bring their full authentic selves.



Theatre Arts Training

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ENRICH

YOUR SKILLS AND CREATE
MEMORIES WITH CTC'S
THEATRE ARTS TRAINING!

Theatre classes are a great way to activate your body, voice, and imagination throughout the cold months! Our popular classes fill up early, so check your calendar and register soon.

The Education team loves working with families to find the right next step! Give us a call at 612.872.5100.

REGISTER FOR
CLASSES TODAY!

childrenstheatre.org/TAT



Photo by Dan Norman

Upcoming Productions | 09

Looking
Ahead

CARMELA FULL OF WISHES

OCT 18-DEC. 4, 2022 | Best enjoyed by ages 5 and up!

Sometimes the most powerful wishes are made by our youngest Dreamers...

See the characters from Matt de la Peña and Christian Robinson's much-loved book come to life on stage in a heartwarming story about the power of wishes!

¡Feliz cumpleaños! It's Carmela's birthday, and she's finally old enough to tag along with her big brother while he runs errands! When Carmela picks a dandelion, she considers several birthday wishes. Does she want something for herself, something nice for her Mami, or the biggest wish—for her Papi to be able to come home soon? When a sudden accident crushes her dandelion, can her brother help Carmela believe in the power of wishes once again?

Filled with hope and offering a window into the magic and wonder of our world as seen through the eyes of an effervescent, strong-willed young girl, this show is perfect for your youngest theatre-goers.

childrenstheatre.org/wishes

Dr. Seuss's How The GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS!

NOV. 8, 2022-JAN. 8, 2023 | Best enjoyed by all ages!

Everyone's favorite grumbling green Grinch returns to CTC this holiday season—and he's bigger and better than ever!

A miserly and miserable, ever-so-cantankerous Grinch has observed the despicable Christmas joy of the Whos with disdain, from a distance, for decades. Enough! In this holiday favorite, filled with music and Seussian rhymes, he conceives a dastardly plot to destroy the holiday they love. It's the smallest of the Whos, tiny Cindy Lou, who extends a hand. Through the combination of kindness and community, we witness not only a change in the course of Who-History, but the size and capacity of the cantankerous Grinch's heart.

Make your family holiday plans today: get your tickets to this spectacular Seussian celebration!

childrenstheatre.org/grinch

Discover More: *Circus Abyssinia: Tulu*



Photo by Andrew Rees

3 Things to Know

1

Circus Abyssinia's second creation, *Tulu*, is a dynamic circus show that celebrates the true tale of an icon. Backed by '70s Ethiopian funk and modern Ethio-pop music and rocking with the exuberant joy of its cast, *Tulu* tells the story of the first Black African woman to win Olympic gold.

2

The show takes its name from the heroine of the piece: Ethiopian distance runner and Olympic legend, Derartu Tulu. Meaning both "valley" and "mountain heights," the name "*Tulu*" plays out in the show's dazzling feats of speed and flight, in a runner's pursuit of her horizon.

3

Dancing with flags and flames, invoking the iconic Olympic rings and showcasing Ethiopia's diverse culture, the show emulates the mesmerizing and heart-racing thrills of the race that made Derartu Tulu a star.



Photo by David Rubene

Music and Instruments

Tulu immerses the audience in the rhythms, songs, and sounds of Derartu Tulu's childhood and the era of her sporting career, from 1970s Ethiopian funk to modern Ethio-pop and Ethiopian rock 'n' roll.

From the music of Hamelmal Abate to Gigi to Seleshe Demassae, *Tulu* rings out with Derartu's favorite songs; songs which also point out the themes and epic subtext of the show, and take the audience on a journey through Ethiopia's rich musical landscape.

Learn a bit more about a few of the traditional instruments from Ethiopia to the right. Can you hear these instruments in the music played during the show?



KRAR

is a five-or-six-stringed bowl-shaped lyre from Ethiopia and Eritrea. It is tuned to a pentatonic scale. A modern Krar may be amplified, much

in the same way as an electric guitar or violin.



MASENQO

(also spelled "masinko") is a single-stringed

bowed lute commonly found in the musical traditions of Ethiopia and Eritrea. Although it functions in a purely accompaniment capacity in songs, the masenqo requires considerable virtuosity, as azmaris ("singer" in Amharic) accompany themselves while singing.

WASHINT

is an end-blown wooden flute originally used in Ethiopia. Traditionally, Amharic musicians would pass on their

oral history through song accompanied by the washint as well as the krar and the masenqo.

Costumes and Aesthetics of *Tulu*



Photo by Andrey Petrov



Fusing fantasy and science fiction with Ethiopian culture, the costumes, artwork, and aesthetic of the show draw on Ethiopian comic books and the contemporary Afropunk movement, injecting avant garde qualities into tribal traditions and reflecting the demographic diversity of Ethiopia.

Many costumes are inspired by historical figures and embody the theme of the warrior. In the show, acrobats transform into mythological and historical figures that embody Derartu's own icons: the great Ethiopian women who came before her and who inspired her to run. Through these figures of bravery and strength, the show fuses Olympic ceremony with epic history, with acts that invoke such scenes as the battle of Adwa and Ethiopia's defeat of fascist Italy.

Costume sketches by Feven Alem



Photo by Andreas Simopoulos

Facts about Ethiopia:



Fun Circus and Olympic Activities to Try at Home



Place a rope or painter's tape on the floor and try to walk the "tightrope" without falling.



Run a race with friends or siblings from one place to another. Time yourself and see if you can beat your time the next time you run.



Create a circus obstacle course at home that includes hula-hoops, balancing, and juggling scarves.

Design Your Own Olympic Medal

Design and color the Olympic medals below. One is for Derartu Tulu, one is for a friend, and one is for yourself

This medal is awarded to Derartu Tulu for her achievement in running!

This medal is awarded to my friend, _____, for their achievement in _____!

This medal is awarded to me, _____, for my achievement in _____!

Interview with Director Binyam "Bichu" Shimellis



Binyam "Bichu" Shimellis is the director of this brand new show by Circus Abyssinia! Learn more about why they decided to focus on Derartu Tulu and how this show has come together with performers spread all over the world!

Why did you choose to create a show around the Olympic Derartu Tulu?

Binyam "Bichu" Shimellis: Derartu is a champion of her sport and a hero to the Ethiopian people. She's the first Black African woman to win Olympic gold who doesn't get the recognition she fully deserves—not just globally, but in Ethiopia, too! And she's been an idol of mine all my life; Derartu single-handedly transformed the landscape of women's sport in Ethiopia and has fought for the rights of female athletes throughout her long career. Many of the newest generation don't know who Tulu is and we can't wait to remind them what Ethiopian women are capable of.

What are some things you hope audiences learn or notice about the show?

BS: I hope audiences enjoy the themes of battle and valor, because this is how *Tulu* pays tribute to the great Ethiopian queens and female warriors who made history and inspired Derartu to run. It'd be especially cool if they notice how often the athlete and warrior combine in one figure, and how through the superhuman skills of the circus artist, the show dramatizes the makings of a modern-day superhero in Derartu Tulu.

Tell us a bit about the circus culture and training in Ethiopia?

BS: Circus is very young in Ethiopia (circa 30 years, compared to over 250 years in other countries) and has developed as more of a social movement than an art form. Circus schools are popping up all over the country and communities tend to cherish them because they are giving children and young adults a creative outlet for socializing as well as a means for building discipline and focus. We wanted to create Circus Abyssinia because there were no true Ethiopian circuses and too many Ethiopian artists thinking they had to borrow their music, costumes, and choreography from western culture for their work to count.

With so many performers all over the world in *Tulu* (Ethiopia, UK, and a few from the United States), what has the rehearsal process been like?

BS: It's had its challenges! Particularly during the pandemic, which meant I couldn't be with the cast when they were able to rehearse. I had to work from recordings of each act and send my notes back to the cast, who would then record their performance again. With inevitable delays due to almost non-existent Wi-Fi in Ethiopia, this often made the rehearsal process feel piecemeal and time-consuming. But, like a lot of struggles and binds, it's also been the catalyst for unexpected creative opportunities.

What are you most looking forward to in your return to Minnesota?

BS: Being around the people of Minnesota again. There are so many incredible communities who embraced us as friends in 2019: the wonderful staff at CTC, the fantastic and generous Ethiopian community in Minnesota—who made sure we were never homesick for a moment!—and the audiences too, who are truly the best at CTC, with such love to give, carrying real joy in their hearts. You can't blame us for wanting to come back!

Questions for the Ride Home

1. Which circus act was your favorite and why?
2. Tulu's story is told non-verbally through the circus performances. Were you able to understand the story? What helped you understand?
3. What does it mean to work as a team? What are ways you can be good team member?
4. What emotions did you feel during the show? Why did you feel those emotions?
5. All the circus performers worked hard to master their circus skills. What is something you worked hard to master? Did you accomplish what you hoped to?

Additional Resources

More About Bibi, Bichu, and Circus Abyssinia:

<https://www.bibiandbichu.com/>

More About Derartu Tulu:

Derartu Tulu:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Derartu_Tulu

Derartu Tulu and the Olympics:

<https://olympics.com/en/athletes/derartu-tulu>

More About Circus and Acrobatic Origins:

History: Who Invented Acrobatics?

<https://www.acroschool.com/who-invented-acrobatics/>

History of Circus:

<http://www.historyofcircus.com/>

More About Ethiopia:

Ethiopia Encyclopedia:

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Ethiopia/Relief>

AUDIENCE SUPPORT STATION

Visit our Audience Access Desk where you can find fidgets, ear plugs, noise canceling headphones, assisted listening devices, basic necessities, and resources to help make the performance the most enjoyable experience possible!

ACCESS SERVICES

Audio-described and ASL-interpreted services are available for select performances.

Sensory Friendly performance schedule, guidance, resources, and tools are available online at childrenstheatre.org/sensory.

Wheelchair seating is available in both theatres. Balcony seating in the UnitedHealth Group Stage is not accessible by elevator.

Accessible/All-Gender restroom is located in the Target Lobby next to the elevator and in the MacMillan Family Lobby.

Please call the Ticket Office at 612.874.0400 with any questions or requests related to access services.

PHOTOS AND VIDEO

Taking any photos or making any audio or video recording inside the theatre is strictly prohibited in accordance with union contracts and copyright laws. However, you are encouraged to take photos and selfies in the lobby!

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Please turn off all electronic devices (phones, tablets, smartwatches, etc.) before the show starts, as the light from your device can be distracting during a performance. Please do not turn on any device while the show is in progress.

FOOD AND BEVERAGES

We are proud to offer a selection of snacks that are gluten-free, nut-free, and vegan friendly. Please note that food and beverages must be consumed in the lobby. For your convenience, drinking fountains are located in the first floor lobby.

CAREFUL, IT'S DARK

If you need to leave your seat during the performance, please allow an usher with a flashlight to assist you. When exiting or entering the theatre during a show, let the first set of doors close completely before opening the second set.

IF YOU'RE LATE, PLEASE WAIT

For personal safety and as a courtesy to those already seated, latecomers will be seated after a designated "hold period."

NEED A QUIET SPACE?

Should your child need a change of environment, we invite you to enjoy the performance from our Quiet Room, located at the rear left side of the main floor of the UnitedHealth Group Stage.

PRAYER/PRIVATE NURSING SPACE

Please ask a member of our staff to use our private space for nursing a child, prayer, or other needs.

Have questions about COVID-19 safety at CTC? Feel free to talk to one of our ushers or front of house staff.



This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support grant, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

Artistic Director
Peter C. Brosius

Managing Director
Kimberly Motes

Children's Theatre Company
presents



Written and Directed by **Binyam "Bichu" Shimellis**
Produced by **Mehari "Bibi" Tesfamariam** and **Binyam "Bichu" Shimellis**
Choreography by **Tamrat Ejeta** and **Binyam "Bichu" Shimellis**

Creative Team & Production Staff

Costume Designer | **Feven Alem**
Lighting Designer | **Mark Whatmough**
Company Manager and Stage Manager | **Gabriella Cooke**
Tour Manager | **Elshaday Shimels**

Cast

Fire Jugglers | **Bibi Tesfamariam, Bichu Shimellis**
Hand Vaulting | **Betelhem Djene Tola, Alemayehu Mulugeta Degenet, Befekadu Esmael Awol, Behaylu Tesfaye Zena, Dagmawi Fekeru Yimer, Cherenet Dereje Negash, Zenebe Fantu Argaye**
Roller Skating Duet | **Betelhem Djene Tola, Befekadu Esmael Awol**
Russian Swing | **Betelhem Djene Tola, Alemayehu Mulugeta Degenet, Cherenet Dereje Negash, Dagmawi Fekeru Yimer, Behaylu Tesfaye Zena**
Contortion | **Semeret Getachew Bekana, Etsegenet Ashenafi Laglago**
Roller Blading | **Semeret Getachew Bekana, Etsegenet Ashenafi Laglago**
Aerial | **Daniel Amara Seid**
Hoop Diving | **Alemayehu Mulugeta Degenet, Cherenet Dereje Negash, Dagmawi Fekeru Yimer, Behaylu Tesfaye Zena**
Hand Balancing | **Daniel Amara Seid**
Icarian Games | **Fitsum Fekadu Geletu, Kdus Yohanes Kasa**
Foot Juggling | **Zenebech Kassa**

Understudy

Contortion, Aerial | **Bezawit Ashagre Gonte**

Cameras and video recorders may not be operated during the performance.
Circus Abyssinia: Tulu runs approximately 90 minutes, including one 20-minute intermission.

Circus Abyssinia: Tulu is
proudly sponsored by

Circus Abyssinia thanks the
African Culture Fund for their support.

TREAT & COMPANY



Circus Abyssinia also thanks Solomon Tadesse, Natasha Cooke, Angela Kolongo, Leila Jones, Cal McCrystal, Sean Gandini, Jacksons Lane, SNF Nostos Festival, and General Wingate Technical and Vocational College.

List of Acts & Songs

**subject to change*

Solo Contortion

Enjar by Betty G

Hand Vaulting

Fullaanneey by Abbush Zallaqaa

Duo Contortion

Ewedihalehu Hagere by Jano Band

Hand Balancing

Adwa by Gigi

Roller Skating Duet

Chall Zendro by Dawit Tsige

Ensemble Roller Skating

Yetikur Almaz by Jano Band

Hoop Diving

Ashkaru by Mahmoud Ahmed

Flaming Hoop Diving and Fire Juggling

Hagere by Gash Abera Mola
(Seleshi Demese)

Flag Dance

Kal Kidan by Dawit Tsige

Icarian Games

Hager Alegn by Jano Band

Aerial

Dunya by Anteneh Minalu

Russian Swing

Hiyaw Seim by Etsubalew Yetayew,
Utopia by Gigi,
Majang by Mitku Bekele (Chewsi)

Finale

Ho Belen by Endegna

Photo by Craig Sugden

Artistic Director

Peter C. Brosius (he/him) has served as Artistic Director of CTC since 1997, directing the world premieres of *Dr. Seuss's The Sneetches The Musical*; *The Last Firefly*; *Seedfolks*; *Animal Dance*; and many others, all of which were commissioned and workshopped by CTC. Previously, he was the Artistic Director of the Honolulu Theatre for Youth and the Improvisational Theatre Project at the Mark Taper Forum.

Managing Director

Kimberly Motes (she/her) has served as Managing Director at CTC since 2016. Previously, she served as the Managing Director at Theater Latté Da, Executive Director at the Cowles Center, Development Director at Arena Stage, and Program Manager at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. She serves on the boards of Meet Minneapolis and Minnesota Women's Economic Roundtable and is a member of the Women Presidents' Organization.

Meet the Creative Team

Producers & Co-Founders of Circus Abyssinia

Bibi Tesfamariam and Bichu Shimellis grew up dreaming of joining the circus, but no circuses ever rolled into town, only televised glimpses from lands overseas. Self-taught and determined, they came to England as teenagers and astonished audiences with their juggling skills.

Throughout their long careers as performers, they've been sending much-needed funding back home, to a circus school in Addis Ababa called Circus Wingate. It was there they discovered many incredible acrobats who started out like they did, honing their skills on city streets with no expectation of pay. Bibi and Bichu teamed up with these artists to create Circus Abyssinia.

Director & Choreographer

Bichu Shimellis

In the creation of Circus Abyssinia, Bichu combines the arts of circus with Ethiopia's astonishing artistic and musical heritage.

In 2017, he directed Circus Abyssinia's first show, *Ethiopian Dreams*, to critical acclaim, and having grown up in awe of Derartu Tulu, he's now thrilled to share her story with the world.

Choreographer

Tamrat Ejeta is a member of the renowned Ethiopia-Winet Cultural Dance Crew: his country's Jackson 5. The group celebrates Ethiopia's deep and rich dance heritage by combining song, dance, and drumming. Tamrat's work in *Tulu* is inspired by the dance traditions of Ethiopia's oldest tribes, reflecting the nation's extraordinary demographic diversity.

Costume Designer

Feven Alem is a costume designer working in Addis Ababa who specializes in the dynamic traditions of Ethiopian dress. She has created for *Tulu* costumes that celebrate the tenacious spirit of the Olympic athlete as well as invoking Ethiopia's great warriors and queens who came before Derartu and inspired her to run.

Lighting Designer

Mark Whatmough studied lighting design at RADA. Since Circus Abyssinia's debut, he's worked closely with Bichu to create a non-physical "set" of light, colour and shade. For *Tulu*, he has developed a design that conjures, through ground tresses and staggered lights, the pillared, star-flecked stadiums of Olympic Greece.

Stage Manager

Gabriella Cooke has a background in academia, but her career path changed when she met Bibi and Bichu in 2016. Enthralled by their vision of an all-Ethiopian circus, she started working with the brothers to launch their company and produce Circus Abyssinia, first in the UK, now around the world.

Tour Manager

Elshaday Shimels organizes the logistics of transport and travel for Circus Abyssinia and takes care of the cast while on the road. With a background in computer programming and a talent for photography and graphic design, Elshaday also plays a part in the creation of the company's artwork and digital publicity.

Meet the Cast

Betlehem (Betty) Dejene has toured the world with Circus Abyssinia since its 2017 debut. In *Tulu*, she performs acts of speed and flight that capture the thrills of Derartu Tulu's race to victory. Her participation in the show's finale makes her the first Ethiopian woman to perform on the hair-raising Russian Swing.

Semeret Getachew has been touring with Circus Abyssinia since 2017 and performs acts of rollerblading and contortion in *Tulu*. With so few women on Ethiopia's burgeoning circus scene, Semeret is proud to be blazing a path for young Ethiopian women and looks forward to the new generation seeing the world differently.

Etsegenet Ashenafi trained at Circus Wingate since she was 10 and is now a four-time national gymnastics champion in Addis Ababa. In *Tulu*, she enlists these skills to perform extraordinary feats of contortion: most remarkably in a sinuous performance inspired by Derartu's real-life encounter with the hyenas that roam Ethiopia's highlands.

Bibi Tesfamariam and Bichu Shimellis, brothers, moved to the UK at just 13 years old, and the pair have since juggled in thousands of shows all over the world: from the Fuji Rock Festival to Philip Glass' *Akhnaten*. In 2017, they were cast in Tim Burton's *Dumbo* and used their wages to fulfill a long-held dream: they created Circus Abyssinia, the world's first bona fide Ethiopian circus. Bibi and Bichu perform daredevil feats of fire juggling in *Tulu*. Their fiery juggling celebrates the magic of the Olympic Flame, as well as conjuring the sacred fire ceremonies of Ethiopia's ancient tribes and churches.

Alemayehu Mulugeta: "Alemayehu" means "to have seen the world" and this young acrobat is living up to his name, and with a good view, too: since Circus Abyssinia was formed in 2017, he has been performing high-flying stunts all over the world, from Australia to Japan, Abu Dhabi to New York.

Ezera Nigusse is the cast's youngest member and has trained at the Circus Wingate school since 2012. Ezera joined Circus Abyssinia at its inception and has performed in Europe, America, Asia and Australia, even gaining a spot on the UK's Royal Variety Performance in 2017, where he met Prince William and Duchess Catherine.

Befekadu Esmael is the rock of the cast, with an eagle eye for the safety of his acrobatic brethren. Having started out as a street performer in Addis Ababa, he joined Circus Wingate when it opened and now trains the younger students when he is not touring with Circus Abyssinia.

Daniel Amara was a street performer before being cast in Circus Abyssinia in 2017. He trained at Circus Wingate for nearly a decade and developed his stage charisma while working as a wayela (a taxi driver's helper). In Ethiopia, winning over passengers from other wayela is very much a performance art.

Behaylu Tesfaye was cast in Circus Abyssinia in January 2020 and now performs in the hoop-diving and Russian Swing acts of the show. He has trained at Circus Wingate since 2015 and often visits schools throughout Ethiopia's capital city to hold workshops and entertain children with his circus skills.

Cherenet Dereje joined the Circus Wingate school in 2015 and specializes in several disciplines, including hoopdiving and Russian Swing. He was cast in *Tulu* in 2020 and made his professional debut in Athens last August at the SNF Nostos Festival.

Zenebe Fantu joined Circus Wingate in 2008 and specializes in hand-vaulting and Icarian Games, a stunning combination of acrobatics and human foot-juggling. Zenebe has performed throughout Ethiopia as well as circus festivals in Germany, Ukraine, Russia, and China. When he is not touring, he coaches aspiring acrobats at Circus Wingate.

Dagmawi Fekeru joined Circus Wingate in 2015. His signature acts are Russian Swing and Icarian Games and for years he has performed at schools throughout Addis Ababa. His first performances with Circus Abyssinia were in Athens at the SNF Nostos Festival and he's thrilled to be performing at Children's Theatre Company.

Zenebech Kassa moved to the US six years ago to work as a circus artist. She specializes in dazzling antipode (foot-juggling) routines and has toured the country with Cirque Zuma Zuma. Zenebech first performed with Circus Abyssinia in 2018 in New York and she's thrilled to be reunited with the cast.

Fitsum Fekadu specializes in Icarian Games, a stunning combination of acrobatics and human foot-juggling which he performs with his young stage partner, KdusYohanes. Fitsum has performed throughout Ethiopia as well as circus festivals in Germany, Ukraine, Russia, and China. When he is not touring, he coaches aspiring acrobats at Circus Wingate.

Kdus Yohanes knew he wanted to learn circus at just 5 years old, when he saw acrobats holding a 'back-flip' competition near his house, flipping over and over, along the full length of a field. To young Kdus, they seemed superhuman. Now his signature act is Icarian Games and he loves nothing more than flipping faster and faster until he becomes a blur.

Bezawit Ashagre joined Circus Wingate in 2010. Like many circus artists in Ethiopia, she trained for years without opportunity to perform professionally. Now she tours the world with Circus Abyssinia, from London to New York. In *Tulu*, performing as understudy for acts of aerial flight and contortion.



Photo by David Rubene



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Photo of Sun Mee Chomet, Joseph Pendergrast, Olivia Lampert, Albert Park, Elizabeth Pan, and Shelli Delgado in *Bina's Six Apples* by Glen Stubbe Photography.

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Theatre Arts Training Teaching Artists | Sarah Arnold, Hannah Bakke, Claire Chenoweth, Maggie Cramer, Laura Delventhal, Bre'Elle Erickson, Talia Fittante, Alex Hagen, Wesley Hortenbach, Nick Husted, Andrew Fleser, Johanna Gorman-Baer, David Hanzal, Megan Kelly Hubbell, Leif Jurgensen, Linda Talcott Lee, Natavia Lewis, Jeffery Nolan, Neco Pachearo, Hawken Paul, Dominic Rogers, Anne Sawyer, Sara Sawyer, Jesse Schmitz-Boyd, Jen Scott, Eli Sibley, Lauren Strauss, Willis Weinstein, Christina Zappa

ACT One

Associate Artistic Director/Director of Community Partnerships and Inclusion | Michael Winn
ASL Interpreters | Cheryl Fielitz, Jules Lehto
Audio Describers | Elana Center, Connie Fullmer, Laurie Pape Hadley, Laura Wiebers

Administration

Facility Systems Manager | Anthony White
Day Porter | Alex Itzep
Safety and Security Supervisor | Adam Scarpello
Safety and Security Associates | Anna Fremont, Aster Kander, Jack Stetler, Jori Walton

Human Resources

Director of Human Resources | Andrew Robertson

Finance

Director of Finance | Jill Jensen
Payroll and Benefits Administrator | Senait Asfaha
Accounting Associate | Libbie Bonnett

Development

Director of Development | Katie Nelsen, CFRE
Associate Director of Development, Institutional Giving | Jill Underwood
Donor Communications and Special Events Manager | Suzy Q. Piper
Corporate Engagement Manager | Ranosha Coffelt
Annual Fund Manager | Vera Jane Lochtefeld
Development Data Assistant | Katlyn Moser

Marketing & Communications

Director of Marketing and Communications | Chad Peterson
Sales Analytics Manager | Meghan Sherer
Design and Digital Manager | Kaitlin Randolph
Design and Digital Assistant | Adán Varela

Audience Services

Patron Experience Manager | Josephine Yang
Ticket Office Manager | Hannah Ulrich
Front of House Performance Supervisors | Sara Klaphake, Gwendolyn Glessner, Molly Sullivan, Kesha Walker
Ticketing Associates | Andrew Gaffney, Alaster Gill, Theo Kidd, Molly Miller, Molly Peterson, Esteban Rodriguez
Front of House Associates | Ben Anderson, Dominic Bonucci, Wren Clinefelter, Carter Jensen, Devon Smith, Maz Her, Molly Peterson, Nicole Raymond, Sophya Zangri, Sophia Nelson, Suzie Robinson, Audrey Smith, Genia Voitsekhovskaya, Ashely Wims
Concessions Leads | Linnea Dahlquist, Asher de Forest, Rebekkah Schultz, Sarah Nazarino

Plays for New Audiences

Director of Plays for New Audiences | Karli Jenkins

Children's Theatre Company is proud to be affiliated with the following organizations:

American Association of Theatre in Education
 ASSITEJ/TYA USA
 IPAY
 (International Performing Arts for Youth)
 Meet Minneapolis
 Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce
 Minnesota Citizens for the Arts
 Minnesota Theater Alliance
 Theatre Communications Group



CTC Costume and Wardrobe Staff, Stagehands and Craftspeople are represented by IATSE Local 13



CTC engages members of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC), a national theatrical labor union



CTC engages designers represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829



CTC engages members of Actors' Equity Association (AEA) under a special agreement with AEA



CTC engages musicians represented by Twin Cities Musicians Union, Local 30-73, AF

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