

PRESS RELEASE**For Immediate Release: August 31, 2023****Media Contact:**

Jonathan White

jwhite@childrenstheatre.org

612.872.5110

**Children's Theatre Company Announces Complete Cast and Creative Team for
World Premiere
*Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress***

October 10-November 19, 2023

Minneapolis— August 31, 2023 — Children's Theatre Company (CTC) is thrilled to announce the complete cast and creative team for the highly-anticipated World Premiere play *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*, based on the acclaimed children's book by Christine Baldacchino with illustrations by Isabelle Malenfant.

The stage adaptation of *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* is written by **juliany taveras** (*Desarrollo* at The Lark's Playwrights' Week and Corkscrew Theater Festival; *the anatomy of light*, featured on the Kilroys' List and the 50 Playwrights Project List; *SYZGY, or the ceasing of the sun*, featured in the 2021 Crossing Borders/Cruzando Fronteras Festival at Two River Theater; and *Yaelis*, a Page 73 Finalist).

Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress will be directed by **Heidi Stillman**, Artistic Director of Lookingglass Theater in Chicago (*Cascabel*; *The Brothers Karamazov*; *Hard Times* at Lookingglass Theatre Company; *The Year I Didn't Go to School* at Chicago Children's Theatre; and *The Book Thief* at Steppenwolf).

Morris likes lots of things: doing puzzles, painting pictures, pretending to be an astronaut, and wearing a tangerine dress from his school's dress-up box because it "reminds him of tigers, the sun, and his mother's hair." But some of his classmates think boys can't wear dresses because ... well, because they're boys. With his vivid imagination and space-animal friends, Morris travels the galaxy in search of an answer to the all-important question: "Do astronauts wear dresses?"

Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress will play from October 10-November 19, 2023 at CTC's Cargill Stage (2400 Third Avenue South Minneapolis MN 55404). Opening Night is Saturday, October 14 at 7pm. Tickets may be purchased online at childrenstheatre.org/morris or by calling the ticket office at 612.874.0400. Ticket prices start at \$15.

"When I first read *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*, I was immediately intrigued by the delightful cover art which showed a spaceship, a quirky and unusual planet, and a little boy in a bright orange dress," said CTC Artistic Director Peter C. Brosius. "I loved the celebration of imagination, the tenderness of a child's exploration, and the innate curiosity of this young boy. It was filled with innocence, whimsy and the joy Morris found in expressing all aspects of himself. I knew this could make a fabulous play. When we read the plays of juliany taveras we knew we had found a playwright of immense creativity and wonder and when we paired juliany with director Heidi Stillman, whose work has been filled with invention and delightful theatricality, we knew that we had the right team to bring this story to life. We can't wait to share it with you."

"One of the strongest motivations behind anything I create—really, behind all I do—is the desire to offer to the world that which my younger self needed, wanted, and deserved," said playwright juliany taveras. "Working on *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* is such an honor in part

because it allows me to do just that, to celebrate and uplift a story of self-love and collective care. Morris's journey of self-expression, of embracing one's whole self—and his community's journey of receiving that truth with support and compassion—is exactly the kind I think our young people (and those who love them) need in this moment, and I'm so excited to be a part of sharing it with them!"

"I am thrilled to be working with this talented cast and creative team on juliany's beautiful world premiere play at Children's Theatre Company," said Director Heidi Stillman.

The 2014 children's book *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* has received widespread praise, from critics, readers, families, and educators. Dame Julie Andrews featured it on her podcast, *Julie's Library*. It has received the following recognition:

- Stonewall Book Award-Mike Morgan and Larry Romans Children's and Young Adult Literature Award, 2015, Honor, Children's (Young Adult Literature).
- Australian Family Therapists' Award for Children's Literature, 2017, Picture Book.
- Marilyn Baillie Picture Book Award, 2015, Finalist, Children's Literature.
- Prix TD De Litterature Canadienne Pour L'Enfance et la Jeunesse, 2015, Finalist, English Language.
- TD Canadian Children's Literature Award, 2015, Finalist, Children's Literature.

This new play explores themes of finding your identity, exploration, resilience, intolerance/bullying, acceptance, and creativity.

The Adult Cast of *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* features **Joy Dolo** as Ms. Melo/Moira.

The Student Cast of *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* features alternating casts of **Mathias Brinda** and **Scout Groshong** as Morris, **Baron Heinz** and **Truman Bednar** as Henry, **De'Anthony Jackson** and **Sam Patterson** as Eli, **Arianna Hymes** and **Indra Khariwala** as Lila, and **Hildie Edwards** and **Mia Lang** as Becky.

Deidre Cochran will understudy Joy Dolo in the roles of Ms. Melo/Moira.

In addition to juliany taveras and Heidi Stillman, the Creative Team and Production Staff for *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* includes William Boles (Co-Scenic Designer), Sotirios Livaditis (Co-Scenic Designer), Sully Ratke (Costume Designer), Paul Whitaker (Lighting Designer), Rick Sims (Composer/Sound Designer), Sylvia Hernandez-DiStasi (Movement Director), Emma Lai (Assistant Director), Dante Benjegerdes (Assistant Lighting Designer), Z Makila* (Stage Manager), Dylan Nicole Martin (Assistant Stage Manager), and Janae Lorick (Stage Management Fellow/PA).

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers.

Ticket Information

Tickets may be purchase online at childrenstheatre.org/morris or by calling the ticket office at 612.874.0400. Ticket prices start at \$15.

School groups interested in attending *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* can contact schools@childrenstheatre.org for more information.

Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress has a run time of 45 minutes with no intermission.

This production is best enjoyed by everyone aged 4 and up. Due to the capacity of the Cargill Stage, a limited number of lap passes for those 18 months and younger will be available.

Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress

By juliany taveras

Based on the Book by Christine Baldacchino and Isabelle Malenfant

Directed by Heidi Stillman

A Children's Theatre Company World Premiere Production

Co-Commissioned by Children's Theatre Company, Chicago Children's Theatre, and The Rose Theater

October 10-November 19, 2023

Cargill Stage

Best enjoyed by everyone aged 4 and up!

Creative Team & Production Staff**Co-Scenic Designer** | William Boles**Co-Scenic Designer** | Sotirios Livaditis**Costume Designer** | Sully Ratke**Lighting Designer** | Paul Whitaker**Composer/Sound Designer** | Rick Sims**Movement Director** | Sylvia Hernandez-DiStasi**Assistant Director** | Emma Lai**Assistant Lighting Designer** | Dante Benjegerdes**Stage Manager** | Z. Makila***Assistant Stage Manager** | Dylan Nicole Martin**Stage Management Fellow / PA** | Janae Lorick**Adult Cast (in alphabetical order):**

Joy Dolo | Ms. Melo / Moira

Alternating Student Cast (in alphabetical order):

Mathias Brinda and Scout Groshong | Morris

Baron Heinz and Truman Bednar | Henry

De'Anthony Jackson and Sam Patterson | Eli

Arianna Hymes and Indra Khariwala | Lila

Hildie Edwards and Mia Lane | Becky

Understudy

Deidra Cochran | Ms. Melo/Moira U/S

Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers.*ADULT CAST**

Ms. Melo/Moira

Joy Dolo

Joy Dolo (she/her). Her past CTC productions include *The Last Firefly*; *The Hobbit*; and *Snow White*. She hosts the podcast *Forever Ago*—a history podcast for the family. Next, she will appear at Theater Latte Da's *Christmas at the Local*. Enjoy the show and keep up with her at joydolo.org!

ALTERNATING STUDENT CAST

Morris

Mathias Brinda

Mathias Brinda (she/he) has enjoyed roles in *Corduroy*; *Merrily We Roll Along*; *Seussical the Musical*; and Loyce Houlton's *Nutcracker Fantasy*. She has performed with several organizations, including Children's Theatre, Red Eye Theater, Theater Latté Da, Morningside Theatre, and Minnesota Dance Theatre and School. Mathias is currently a 6th grader at Lake Country Montessori in Minneapolis, MN.

Morris

Scout Groshong

Scout Groshong is excited to make his Children's Theatre Company debut! He has enjoyed roles in *Cinderella*; *The Wizard of Oz* (Centennial Theatre); *Mary Poppins* (Zephyr Theatre/Centennial Community Education); *Peter Pan* (Prairie Fire Children's Theatre); and *Nutcracker! Magical Christmas Ballet* (Talmi Entertainment). He currently attends Centennial Middle School.

Henry

Baron Heinz

Baron Heinz (he/him) is a 6th grader at St. Thomas More. He has been in *Galactic Wonders*; *Rudolph the Musical*; and *What Do You Do with an Idea* at Stages Theatre. He has also performed in *Seussical* at Open Window Theatre and school productions. This is his Children's Theatre Company debut!

Henry

Truman Bednar

Truman Bednar (he/him) has performed in *Corduroy* at Children's Theatre, *School of Rock* at Zephyr Theatre, *Loyce Houlton's Nutcracker Fantasy* at Minnesota Dance Theatre. He has had five years of ballet training, including invitations and scholarships for summer intensives at School of American Ballet, Chautauqua Institute, and Miami City Ballet.

Eli

De'Anthony Jackson

De'Anthony William Jackson (he/him) was born an entertainer. He has performed in *Something Happened in our Town* (Children's Theatre Company); *A Raisin in the Sun* (American Players Theatre); and now *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* (Children's Theatre Company). While he has had notable mentions on PBS National News, he also enjoys dance as well as Musical Theatre. De'Anthony Jackson also has played trombone at HBCU Performing Arts.

Eli

Sam Patterson

Sam Patterson is thrilled to be appearing in his first CTC production! His previous performances include *Singing in the Rain* (Falcon Ridge MS); *Seussical* (St. Paul JCC); and *Moana* (CastleCo Theatre). Sam also enjoys swimming, running, and participating in Scouts BSA. He thanks his family for their support.

Lila

Arianna Hymes

Arianna Hymes (she/her) is very excited to be making her Children's Theatre Company debut! She has previously appeared in productions with Stages Theatre Company, Front Porch Musical Theater, Open Window Theatre, and Lyric Arts. Arianna is currently enrolled in the Young Ensemble training program with Children's Theatre Company.

Lila

Indra Khariwala

Indra Khariwala (she/her) has had the pleasure of performing in *Diary of a Wimpy Kid the Musical* (Children's Theatre Company). In addition, she has taken part in many shows at Stages Theatre Company. A few include *Frederick*; *Mary Poppins Jr.*; *Madagascar Jr.*; *Peace For the Ages*; and *Elf Jr.*

Becky

Hildie Edwards

Hildie Edwards (she/her) is a trans actor/performer who advocates for affirmation and celebration of trans kids. After experiencing gender-based discrimination in kindergarten, Hildie has become a passionate advocate for the affirming spaces trans kids need to thrive. Hildie appears in the multiple Welcoming Schools' videos and commercials. Hildie frequently delivers powerful speeches at rallies, protests, and LGBTQ+ fundraisers across the Twin Cities on the needs of trans and gender expansive youth. Hildie has always loved performing. Most recently she was Olaf in her school's musical, She was an understudy at The Children's theater last year and is excited to be making her CTC debut . In 2022 Hildie was a Grand Marshal of the Pride Parade 2022 - making her the Twin City's youngest parade Grand Marshal in history.

Becky

Mia Lang

Mia Lang (she/ her). This is her first role and official acting debut! She is a second-year student in the Pre-Professional Acting Program at Children's Theatre Company. Mia is a current 7th grader at Minnehaha Academy in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

UNDERSTUDY

Ms. Melo/Moira US

Deidre Cochran

Deidre Cochran (she/her) was most recently seen in *An American Tail* at Children's Theatre Company. Other credits include *Ruthless*; *Islander* (Theatre Elision); *Shrek*; *Songs for a New World*; *Mary Poppins* (Artistry); *Ordway Cabaret: Rise Up* (Ordway); and *Jelly's Last Jam* (Theater Latté Da).

CREATIVE TEAM & PRODUCTION STAFF

Playwright

juliany taveras

juliany taveras (they/them/elle) is a storyteller from Ayití Bohío (Dominican Republic) by way of Lenapehoking (New York City). Their work, which centers the lives and liberation of the Afro/Indigenous and queer/trans diasporas, takes many forms, including playwriting, screenwriting, poetry, photography, graphic design, teaching artistry, and (perhaps most importantly) kinship.

Director

Heidi Stillman

Heidi Stillman (she/her/hers) is an actor writer, director, and Ensemble Member of Lookingglass Theatre Company. She has written nine plays, and created two circuses, directing many of them. Favorites include *Cascabel*; *The Brothers Karamazov*; *Hard Times* (Lookingglass Theatre Company); *The Year I Didn't Go to School* (Chicago Children's Theatre); and *The Book Thief* (Steppenwolf). She is a graduate of Northwestern University.

Co-Scenic Designer

William Boles

William Boles most recently designed Dr. Seuss's the *Sneetches* for Children's Theatre Company. William has designed sets around the U.S. and internationally and is currently pursuing a master's degree in landscape architecture at Harvard University. See more of William's work at <https://wbdesigns.carbonmade.com>

Co-Scenic Designer

Sotirios Livaditis

Sotirios Livaditis (he/him/his) is a set designer and illustrator based in Chicago. Recent projects include *Birthday Candles* (Northlight Theatre); *The Writer; Light Falls* (Steep Theatre); *The October Storm* (Raven Theatre); *Queen* (Penobscot Theatre); *Enough to Let the Light In* (Teatro Vista/Steppenwolf); and *Stew* (Shattered Globe). He has worked with Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Alliance Theatre, and Audible Theatre at Minetta Lane. He holds an M.F.A. from Northwestern University. Experience his work at www.sotiriosdesigns.com

Costume Designer

Sully Ratke

Sully Ratke is a Chicago-based theatre maker. Her work has been nominated for awards in Chicago, Atlanta, St. Louis, and L.A. She writes, creates, and designs for theatre in Chicago while teaching at various institutions including U of C, Northwestern, DePaul, and Columbia College. Follow her art @sully.ratke and www.sullyratkestudios.com

Lighting Designer

Paul Whitaker

CTC: *Carmela Full of Whishes; I Come From Arizona; The Snowy Day; Cinderella; Seedfolks; Shrek the Musical; Annie; Alice in Wonderland; and Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy*, among others. Paul is a Principal Lighting Designer/Theatre Consultant for Schuler Shook.

Composer/Sound Designer

Rick Sims

Rick Sims is a Chicago based composer and sound designer with countless Chicago, national, and regional credits. He most recently composed music for *The Thanksgiving Play* at Second Stage Theatre on Broadway. Sims is an award-winning artistic affiliate of Lookingglass Theatre Co.

Movement Director

Sylvia Hernandez-DiStasi

Sylvia Hernandez-DiStasi is Artistic Director of The Actors Gymnasium and an Ensemble Member of The Lookingglass Theatre Company. Theatre Credits include: *Lookingglass Alice; Moby Dick; Mary Shelleys' Frankenstein* (Lookingglass Theatre Company); *The Who's Tommy* (Goodman Theatre) among others. She is the recipient of Five Joseph Jefferson Awards.

Assistant Director

Emma Lai

Emma Y. Lai (she/her) has enjoyed working with CTC on *An American Tail the Musical* and as a Directing Intern. She has worked with organizations such the Guthrie, Lincoln Center Theatre, Alley Theatre, and Two River Theater. Upcoming projects include Assistant Directing *A Christmas Carol* at the Guthrie. emmaylai.com

Assistant Lighting Designer

Dante Benjergdes

Dante is a freelance lighting designer and technician based in Minneapolis. Selected Assistant Lighting Design credits include *Annie* (Children's Theatre Company), *The Song Poet* (Minnesota Opera), *Rusalka*; *Pelleas et Mellisande*; *The Flying Dutchman* (Santa Fe Opera Festival) *Sound of Music*; *The Jungle Book* (Glimmerglass Opera Festival).

Assistant Stage Manager

Dylan Nicole Martin

Dylan Nicole Martin (they/them) is a manager of people, events, theatre, and weddings. They have worked with E/D, Parallel 45 Theatre, the Guthrie Theater, Walking Shadow Theater Company, Open Eye Figure Theatre, Creede Repertory Theater, and many more. Dylan also teaches classes and workshops for young theatre technicians.

Stage Manager

Z Makila*

Z Makila* (he/him & they/them) is excited to be back at Children's Theatre Company after working on *An American Tail*. Other credits include *Jersey Boys* (Chanhassen Dinner Theatres); *Beauty and the Beast* (The Ordway); *Twelve Angry Men: A New Musical* (Theater Latté Da); *Joyful Echoes* (Minnesota Orchestra); and *Thunder Knocking on the Door* (Ten Thousand Things).

Stage Management Fellow/PA

Janae Lorick

Janae Lorick (they/them) has created onstage, offstage, and now outside in *The Buddha Prince* (TigerLion Arts). Just finishing *Fargo Allegro* (Nightfall Productions), they are excited to work with Children's Theatre Company for their 2023-2024 season. They hold a B.A. in Theater and Race and Ethnic Studies from St. Olaf College.

**Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers.*

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's engagement and learning programs annually serve more than 93,000 young people and their communities through Theatre Arts Training, student matinees, 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

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*

By juliany taveras

Based on the Book by Christine Baldacchino and Isabelle Malenfant

Directed by Heidi Stillman

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Best enjoyed by everyone aged 4 and up!

WHEN: from October 10-November 19, 2023 (Opening Night is Saturday, October 14, 2023 at 7:00pm)

WHERE: CTC's Cargill Stage (2400 Third Avenue South Minneapolis MN 55404)

AGE RECOMMENDATION: This production is best enjoyed by everyone aged 4 and up. Due to the capacity of the Cargill Stage, a limited number of lap passes for those 18 months and younger.

RUNNING TIME: 45 minutes with no intermission.

TICKETS: Starting at \$15 and available at childrenstheatre.org/morris by calling the ticket office at 612.874.0400.

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