

Children's Theatre Company

# BEHIND THE CURTAIN BEYOND THE STAGE

SPRING 2024

# CELEBRATING Peter C. Brosius



Over the 27-year visionary tenure of Artistic Director Peter C. Brosius, much has happened at CTC. The theatre has premiered world-class productions, introduced exceptional new programs, and achieved significant milestones. We are privileged to share the following timeline, exploring how CTC has evolved, nurtured young people, and contributed to the world of theatre during his tenure.



## 2005

- CTC expands its physical space with a \$30 million construction project, adding the Cargill Stage, the McGuire Education Center, and new production shops.
- CTC partners with Seattle Children's Theatre to create our licensing division, Plays for Young Audiences (now Plays for New Audiences).

## 2013

ACT One, CTC's cohesive platform for access, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, is created.

## 1997

Peter C. Brosius begins as artistic director of CTC.



## 2003

*A Year With Frog and Toad* opens on Broadway, following an off-Broadway run and the 2002 world premiere at CTC. The show receives three Tony® Award nominations, and CTC receives the Tony® Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre.



## 1998

Neighborhood Bridges is founded by Peter C. Brosius and Jack Zipes. This program uses storytelling and creative drama to help children develop their critical literacy skills and transform them into storytellers of their own lives.

## 2004

CTC receives the Children's Theatre Foundation of America Medallion of Honor and is named the top theatre for children in the United States by *TIME* magazine.

## 2021

The Mellon Foundation awards a five-year grant to five partner theatres—Latino Theater Company, Ma-Yi Theater Company, Native Voices, Penumbra, and Children's Theatre Company—to commission 16 new works by BIPOC artists: eight titles have been commissioned to date, including *Drawing Lessons*, set to have its world premiere at CTC in fall 2024.



## 2010

CTC's first commissioned preschool production, the world premiere of *The Biggest Little House in the Forest*, begins performances on April 27, 2010.



## 2015

CTC is honored with a \$100,000 Community Creativity Cohort grant from the Bush Foundation in recognition of the company's leadership in community engagement with the arts.

## 2024

Peter C. Brosius directs *A Year With Frog and Toad* as his final production as CTC's artistic director.



# Investing in the Next Generation

## Celebrating 20 years of focused programming for CTC's youngest theatre lovers

As the nation's largest multigenerational theatre, young people are at the heart of everything we do at CTC. We believe that theatre can be transformational for every person, at every age—and that no one should be left out because they still have growing left to do.

A hallmark of outgoing Artistic Director Peter C. Brosius' legacy, early childhood programming has been a cornerstone of CTC's work for 20 years. Dedicated programming began in earnest in 2004, starting with a series of theatre classes for preschoolers. In the following year, the theatre presented a world-class preschool play from Sweden on the then-brand-new Cargill Stage, which was built especially to serve our youngest audiences.

Thanks to support from a generous community of donors and partners, CTC officially launched our Early Childhood Initiative in 2007, which combines theatre arts-based learning experiences with best practices in early childhood education to support the healthy development of early learners ages 2-6. Using a comprehensive approach that blends age-appropriate learning opportunities and the magic of theatre, CTC's littlest theatre lovers are supported in their most critical development years and given tools that they will carry with them for a lifetime.

Today, early childhood programming, is thriving at CTC. Our youngest audience members and students enjoy dedicated classes, camps, educational residencies, and productions—all designed with their social-emotional learning, academic advancement, and best sense of fun in mind. Thank you for helping us to create the next generation of theatre lovers!



Since 2012, CTC has produced five preschool productions that were specifically created for audiences ages 2-5. All preschool productions are designed to be sensory friendly—soft lighting, lowered sound, and simple sets—so that our youngest audience members can enjoy the story without being overstimulated.

CTC's Creative Play curriculum serves preschools and Kindergarten classrooms across the Twin Cities, offering lessons that focus on choice, mindfulness, emotional literacy, and sensory exploration. These skills are critical in developing self-awareness, emotional regulation, and confidence, and studies show that the early development of these skills have compounding benefits later in life.

CTC's Early Bridges curriculum is used in lower-elementary school residencies, including in our flagship partnership with Bethune Arts Elementary. This pedagogical approach focuses on integrating arts experiences with ongoing educational work, supporting reading, critical thinking, and public speaking.

Theatre Arts Training classes and camps begin accepting students at 2 years old. Over the last decade, nearly 3,000 preschool-aged students have started their theatre journeys in a CTC classroom.



### Production Spotlight: *Babble Lab*

This spring's production of *Babble Lab* was the latest show in our preschool series. Developed, written, and performed by CTC Acting Company member Autumn Ness, *Babble Lab* tells the story of a scientist experimenting with sounds who accidentally invents the alphabet—leading to sneaky, spritely letters wreaking havoc in her laboratory! Wrapped in the guise of colorful projections and funny noises, this production is an explosion of language, and offers a one-of-a-kind entry into empowered communication.

*"I created the show for preschool because they are in the thick of so much development. Learning how to express their feelings, learning words can hurt, or make people laugh, learning letters, it's such an incredible time. And I'd love for the little ones to leave the show with a playful feeling about expressing themselves, instead of the frustration we see so often with the very young."*

- Autumn Ness, CTC Acting Company member and creator of *Babble Lab*

# The Return of *A Year With Frog and Toad*



"It's Spring"—and Frog and Toad are back on stage at Children's Theatre Company! Over the last 22 years, this beloved Tony® Award-nominated musical has been all over the world, enlivening the stages of small community theatres, large Broadway houses, and everywhere in between.

Originally created right here at CTC, *A Year With Frog and Toad* is a story about friendship, compassion, and purpose. For the first time since 2017, our stage is being transformed into the reedy landscape that is home to these two best friends—and the cast of eclectic characters that make up their community. Read on to learn more about this beloved production, and to hear directly from the two lead actors about what this story means to them.

## A Little History

🍪 In 2000, Artistic Director Peter C. Brosius and Elissa Adams, who at the time was director of new play development, started working with the Lobel family to bring a new musical production of *A Year With Frog and Toad* to the stage. Always envisioned with a future on Broadway, this production started its life with a double run—one here at CTC, and one immediately following at the New Victory Theatre in New York City.

🍪 All of the original sets, costumes, and props were created in CTC workshops. Some of the artisans who created those pieces are still working at CTC today!

🍪 After the end of the premiere run at CTC, the entire show—sets, cast, director, stage manager, costumes, and props—all transferred to the New Victory Theatre. It was there that a special invitation was issued to Broadway producers to see the show and consider it for a run; the show ultimately opened and ran at the Cort Theatre (now known as the James Earl Jones Theatre).

🍪 That same year, *A Year With Frog and Toad* was nominated for three Tony® Awards in 2003, including Best Musical, Best Book of a Musical, and Best Original Score.

🍪 Since closing on Broadway, *A Year With Frog and Toad* has been one of rights holder Musical Theatre International's most requested shows and has been produced hundreds of times across the country and around the world.

🍪 Finally, although it has been many years since this show first opened, this production will feature work from some familiar faces: Adrienne Lobel (scenic design), Daniel Pelzig (choreography), Martin Pakledinaz (costume design), James F. Ingalls (lighting design), and Rob Milburn and Michael Bodeen (sound design) were all members of the original 2002 world premiere.

## "Mostly, I'm Happy, Because I Have You"



"One of the things I love so much about [these stories], especially for young readers, is you have two characters who are incredibly different—they have almost nothing in common. And so often in life, when you meet someone who is the opposite of us in almost every single way, that can create conflict or judgement. And these two characters, instead of judging each other or holding these differences against each other—they celebrate those differences. They embrace them, and they make it what they love about each other."

- Reed Sigmund, CTC Acting Company member, playing Toad

"My favorite thing about this show is that it highlights a male friendship that includes empathy and love. So often we are taught that men should hide their emotions, and getting to see Frog and Toad share a deep friendship with laughter and anger and frivolity proves that everybody is deserving of love, and that it's okay to show that love, even in friendships."

- John-Michael Zuerlein, playing Frog



"The friendship between Frog and Toad is the heart of this story. In a world where we are so quick to eschew those who are different, these two friends find and fight to hold onto their common ground. They support each other and protect each other, even though they are so different and sometimes drive each other crazy. Their relationship welcomes everyone in, because any of us who has ever had a best friend knows how truly special that connection is."

- Peter C. Brosius, CTC artistic director and director of *A Year With Frog and Toad*

***A Year With Frog and Toad* runs April 23-June 16, 2024.  
Get your tickets today at [childrenstheatre.org/FrogToad](https://childrenstheatre.org/FrogToad)**

Theatre Arts Training

children's  
theatre  
company

# THEATRE ARTS TRAINING

## SUMMER 2024

CAMPS FOR GRADES RISING K-12



Theatre camps are a great way to activate your body, voice, and imagination through the summer months!

Our popular camps fill up early, so check your calendar and register soon.

[childrenstheatre.org/camps](https://childrenstheatre.org/camps)