

PRESS RELEASE**For Immediate Release: August 15, 2024****Media Contact:**

Jonathan White

jwhite@childrenstheatre.org

612.872.5110

**Children's Theatre Company Announces Complete Cast and Creative Team for
World Premiere
Drawing Lessons
By Michi Barall**

October 8-November 10, 2024

Minneapolis— August 15, 2024 — Children's Theatre Company (CTC) is thrilled to announce the complete cast and creative team for the highly-anticipated world premiere play *Drawing Lessons* by Michi Barall. Co-commissioned by Ma-Yi Theater Company and Children's Theatre Company, *Drawing Lessons* will be directed by Jack Tamburri, and is based on an original conception by Barall and Tamburri.

Experience the energy of a graphic novelist's imagination at work! Dynamic, jump-off-the-page drawings show Kate's *manhwa* graphic novel coming together, even as she deals with school, friends, and how her Korean heritage fits into her American lifestyle. Will her contentious friendship with Paul help or hinder her progress? Will either of them ever find their true artistic voices? Get drawn into this innovative story that magically takes place both on stage and on screen!

Drawing Lessons will run from October 8-November 10, 2024, on CTC's Cargill Stage (2400 Third Avenue South Minneapolis MN 55404). Opening Night is Saturday, October 12 at 7pm. Tickets may be purchased online at childrenstheatre.org/drawing or by calling the ticket office at 612.874.0400. Ticket prices start at \$15.

Drawing Lessons is proudly supported by the John W. Kurtich Foundation for Study and Research.

"*Drawing Lessons* shows CTC at its best," said CTC Artistic Director Rick Dildine. "This world premiere play is a co-commission with NYC's Ma-Yi Theater Company and a collaboration with Minneapolis's very talented comic artist Blue Delliquanti. CTC has a history of creating new work, and this original piece incorporates the craft of the comic artist into the theatrical process in a dynamic way."

"It's absolutely thrilling to see my initial rendering of *Drawing Lessons* become a multi-dimensional production," said playwright Michi Barall. "I am so immensely grateful to have such innovative and wildly imaginative creative partners on the design team. Led by my longtime collaborator and dear friend, director Jack Tamburri, we have been busy exploring and integrating the compositional landscape of this play through the design process. Comic artist Blue Delliquanti's drawings are full of movement, warmth and humor, beautifully illustrating Kate's inner and external worlds. I know that experiencing Blue's visual storytelling on a theatrical scale will be magical! So many of the actors (and CTC administrators!) on our team helped me find both the direction and depth of this play during the developmental process! I'm excited to deepen these connections and to be in rehearsals with the actors we've added to the cast. The assembled group is so intuitive, playful and joyful, and I look forward to handing over the play to them and to local audiences. This play is a celebration of the diversity and distinctiveness of Minneapolis, both past and present, and every audience member is an essential part of its story!"

“I have been a fan of comic books and cartooning since before I could read. In fact, comics taught me how to read,” said director Jack Tamburri. “And one of the reasons I got into making theatre was because I wanted to create visual art but had no confidence in my drawing. So now, as a director, I make drawings out of people. I am thrilled to be premiering *Drawing Lessons* at CTC because I want to share this beautiful story about how and why a sensitive young person might start to identify as an artist with the incredible audience community that CTC has cultivated in the Twin Cities. I hope that this love letter to Minneapolis, to the 1990s, and to cartooning resonates with you.”

Drawing Lessons was developed as part of Generation Now. Generation Now is a landmark partnership between five theatres, with the goal of expanding the canon of work produced for multigenerational audiences and creating a model of transformative partnership for the theatre field. With funding received from the Mellon Foundation in 2021, the consortium is committed to co-commission and co-develop 16 new plays and musicals by both established and emerging BIPOC artists for multigenerational audiences over five years. The partners strongly believe that if we are to have an extraordinary theatre culture in this country, we must start young, and it must be intergenerational, inclusive, inspiring, transformative, and lifelong. All commissions will receive at least two developmental workshops at the co-commissioning theatres.

The aim of Generation Now is that each play or musical will be produced by each of the commissioning theatres. These may be co-productions or completely independent productions. The co-productions may involve sharing actors, creative teams, and designs, or simply sharing the physical production or some other way of collaborating. The co-commissioning theatres will determine how each of their projects will be produced.

The adult cast of *Drawing Lessons* features **Katie Bradley*** as Gomo, **Jim Lichtscheidl*** as Paul, **Darrick Mosley*** as Jon, **Matt Park** as Matt, and **Sophina Saggau** as Miss Evans.

The student cast of *Drawing Lessons* features **Malia Berg** as Lia, **De’Anthony Jackson** as Omar, **Olivia Lampert** and **Mars Niemi** alternating as Kate, **Anders Thielen** as Jason, and **Cullen Van Ranst** as Justin/Anderson.

The adult understudies include **Dominique Jones** as Jon, **Jeannie Lander** as Gomo, **Ryan Nelson** as Paul, **Nikko Soukup-Raymo** as Matt, and **Colleen Somerville** as Miss Evans.

The student understudies include **Charlie Gold** as Jason/Justin/Anderson, and **Addica Sharbono** as Lia.

In addition to Michi Barall and Jack Tamburri, the creative team and production staff for *Drawing Lessons* includes Junghyun Georgia Lee† (scenic designer), Trevor Bowen† (costume designer), Paul Whitaker† (lighting designer), Victor Zupanc (composer/sound designer), Elizabeth Barrett (projection designer), Blue Delliquanti (illustrator), Amanda Espinoza (student actor coach), Hannah Steblay (assistant director), Kenji Shoemaker* (stage manager), Janae Lorick (assistant stage manager), Taylor Engel (production assistant), and Elijah Virgil Hughes (stage management fellow/production assistant).

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

†Member of the United Scenic Artists, Local 829.

Ticket Information

Tickets to *Drawing Lessons* may be purchase online at childrenstheatre.org/drawing or by calling the Ticket Office at 612.874.0400. Ticket prices start at \$15.

School groups interested in attending *Drawing Lessons* can contact schools@childrenstheatre.org for more information.

Drawing Lessons has a run time of 90 minutes with one 20-minute intermission.

Drawing Lessons

Best for upper elementary, middle school, and high school students and their families!

- *Drawing Lessons* is a full-length show of 90 minutes with one 20-minute intermission. Younger audiences may have difficulty staying connected for the full run of the show.
- *Drawing Lessons* deals with nuanced subject matter such as alienation, loss, friendship, family dynamics, and self-expression that may not connect with or resonate with very young audiences.
- *Drawing Lessons* will feature projections of live drawings of cartoons and graphic novels which many will find captivating and fun to watch, regardless of age.

A Children's Theatre World Premiere Production

Drawing Lessons

By Michi Barall

Original conception by Michi Barall and Jack Tamburri

Directed by Jack Tamburri

Co-commissioned by Ma-Yi Theater Company (New York, New York) and Children's Theatre Company (Minneapolis, Minnesota)

October 8-November 10, 2024

Cargill Stage

Best for independent readers of all ages!

Proudly supported by the John W. Kurtich Foundation for Study and Research

Creative Team & Production Staff

Playwright | Michi Barall

Director | Jack Tamburri

Scenic Designer | Junghyun Georgia Leet

Costume Designer | Trevor Bowent

Lighting Designer | Paul Whitaker†

Composer/Sound Designer | Victor Zupanc

Projection Designer | Elizabeth Barrett

Illustrator | Blue Delliquanti

Student Actor Coach | Amanda Espinoza

Assistant Director | Hannah Steblay

Stage Manager | Kenji Shoemaker*

Assistant Stage Manager | Janae Lorick

Production Assistant | Taylor Engel

Stage Management Fellow/PA | Elijah Virgil Hughes

Adult Cast (in alphabetical order):

Katie Bradley* | Gomo
 Jim Lichtscheidl* | Paul
 Darrick Mosley* | Jon
 Matt Park | Matt
 Sophina Saggau | Miss Evans

Student Cast (in alphabetical order):

Malia Berg | Lia
 De'Anthony Jackson | Omar
 Olivia Lampert and Mars Niemi | Kate
 Anders Thielen | Jason
 Cullen Van Ranst | Justin/Anderson

Adult Understudies (in alphabetical order):

Dominique Jones | Jon
 Jeannie Lander | Gomo
 Ryan Nelson | Paul
 Nikko Soukup-Raymo | Matt
 Colleen Somerville | Miss Evans

Student Understudies (in alphabetical order):

Charlie Gold | Jason/Justin/Anderson
 Addica Sharbono | Lia

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

†Member of the United Scenic Artists, Local 829.

ADULT CAST

Gomo

Katie Bradley*

Katie Bradley (she/her) was previously seen as Mulan in *Mulan Jr.* at Children's Theatre Company. She is based in Minneapolis and has appeared onstage at the Guthrie Theater, Ten Thousand Things, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Indiana Repertory Theatre, and Pacific Conservatory Theatre. She is also a long-time artist with Theater Mu.

Paul

Jim Lichtscheidl*

Jim Lichtscheidl (he/him) has recently acted in productions at Yellow Tree Theatre, Ten Thousand Things, and Jungle Theater. His other acting credits include Guthrie Theater, St. Ann's Warehouse, Berkeley Rep, Portland Centerstage, and Alley Theatre. He has served as choreographer, director, and creator at many regional theatres as well.

Jon

Darrick Mosley*

Darrick Mosley (he/him) is excited to be back after his role in *Locomotion* at CTC. Other credits include *Wine in the Wilderness* (Penumbra Theatre) and *A Raisin in the Sun* (Guthrie Theater). He has performed with Pillsbury House Theatre, History Theatre, and Yellow Tree Theatre. He holds a B.F.A. from Grambling State University.

Matt

Matt Park

Matt Park co-wrote music for Ma-Yi's production of *Peer Gynt* and the Norwegian HAPA Band at ART/NY. He is the guitarist in Diana Oh's My Lingerie Band and performed in *My Lingerie Play* at The Rattlestick Theater. He orchestrated the music for Rebecca Lee Lerman's musical *Her Hotel*. He has performed live at Joe's Pub, OBERON at American Rep Theater, The National Underground, and Parkside Lounge.

Miss Evans

Sophina Saggau

Sophina Saggau (she/her) has performed in *The History Plays* (Guthrie Theater), *Emilia* (Ten Thousand Things), and *Sherwood* (Yellow Tree Theater). She has also worked as an understudy, director, and stage combat assistant with various local companies. She holds a B.F.A from the UMN/Guthrie Acting program.

STUDENT CAST

Lia

Malia Berg

Malia is 16 years old from Woodbury and has enjoyed performing in productions such as *Spamtown, USA*; *Bina's Six Apples* (Children's Theatre Company); *Disney's Freaky Friday*; *Little Women* (Merrill Arts Center); *Disney's Descendants* (Phipps Performing Arts Center); *School of Rock* (Open Door Theatre); *School of Rock* (Zephyr Theatre); and many others. Malia loves to sing, play guitar, and write her own original songs.

Omar

De'Anthony Jackson

De'Anthony is 15 years old and has had notable mentions on PBS National News. De'Anthony's journey as a young actor is marked by passion, dedication, and a deep understanding of the power of storytelling. Through his roles in *Something Happened in Our Town*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, and *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*, he has proven himself as a rising star with immense potential and a bright future ahead in the world of theatre.

Kate

Olivia Lampert

Olivia Lampert (she/her) is a 12th grader at Wayzata High School. Previous CTC credits include: *Alice in Wonderland*, *Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*, *Bina's Six Apples*, and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid the Musical*. Other credits include: *Anne of Green Gables* (SOAR Arts), *The Kung Fu Zombies Saga: Shaman Warrior and Cannibals* (Theater Mu), *Bina's Six Apples* (Alliance Theatre), *We Will Rock You*, *Sound of Music* (BWTC), *Descendants* (Lundstrum Performing Arts). She is also a part of Stages Theatre Company's Teen Mentorship Program 2024-2025.

Kate

Mars Niemi

Mars Niemi (he/they) is ecstatic to make his CTC debut! They have previously performed in Circus Juventas' production of *Jangala*, YPC's Youth Artist Council's production of *Puffs*, YPC's production of *Little Women*, and SPCPA's productions of *Alice by Heart* and *The Prom*. He has performed with numerous organizations including Mixed Precipitation, and Stages Theatre Company.

Jason

Anders Thielen

Anders Thielen has enjoyed roles in *La Bohème* (MN Opera) and *A Christmas Carol* (Guthrie Theater). In his free time, he enjoys tinkering and sketching designs for engines. He also enjoys singing and acting in school plays and professional plays.

Justin/Anderson

Cullen Van Ranst

Cullen Van Ranst (he/him) has enjoyed roles in *Disney's The Little Mermaid*, *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*, *Disney's Finding Nemo*, *School of Rock*, and *A Christmas Carol*. He has performed with the Guthrie Theater as well as several community theatres on the east side of the Twin Cities.

ADULT UNDERSTUDIES

Jon

Dominique Jones

Dominique Jones (they/them) is a multi-versed performance artist and mentor who has participated in many reputable performances through theatre, music, poetry, and dance. A slight Minnesota nomad originally from the Twin Cities, they've been grateful to be a part of various productions as a videographer, actor, producer/composer, and poet.

Gomo

Jeannie Lander

Jeannie Lander is thrilled to be making her debut with Children's Theatre Company. Previous theatre performances include: *The Name Jar* (Stages Theater/Theater Mu), *Fast Company*, *Purple Cloud*, *Kung Fu Zombies vs Cannibals*, *Yellow Fever*, *Into the Woods* (Theater Mu), *36 Views (Walking Shadow)*, *Barefoot in the Park (5th Season Entertainment)*, *American Noise (nimbus theatre)*.

Paul

Ryan Nelson

Ryan Nelson (he/him) has previously appeared in *Diary of a Wimpy Kid the Musical* at Children's Theatre Company. He's performed with several other theatres, including Yellow Tree, The Jungle, Zeitgeist Arts, Brave New Workshop, and *Science Live* at the Science Museum of Minnesota. He holds a B.A. from Southwest Minnesota State University.

Matt

Nikko Soukup-Raymo

Nikko Soukup-Raymo (he/him) has enjoyed roles in *The Flower Drum Song* (Theater Mu/Park Square Theatre), *Princess's Nightingale* (Theater Mu), and *Hairspray* (Artistry). He holds a B.A. in Musical Theatre from Minnesota State University Moorhead, and is an early childhood Montessori teacher at Hopkins Montessori School.

Miss Evans

Colleen Somerville

Colleen Somerville (she/her) makes her CTC debut with *Drawing Lessons!* Other roles: Stepsister Grace in *Cinderella* (Ordway), Maureen in *RENT* (Cardinal Theatricals), and The Baker's Wife in *Into the Woods* (Artistry). She is also a director, educator and activist, creating feminist art through her company, Somerville Productions. For Joss.

STUDENT UNDERSTUDIES

Jason/Justin/Anderson

Charlie Gold

Previous shows include *Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*, and the Theatre Arts Training (TAT) Triple Threat productions *The Garden* and *Be More Chill*. Other credits include *Matilda* (Stages), *Elf* (Bunce), *The Lightning Thief* (Interlochen), and *Fugitive Songs* (SPCPA). He is currently a 10th grader at SPCPA. He dedicates his performance in memory of his sister Lizzie.

Lia

Addica Sharbono

Addica Sharbono (she/her) is making her Children's Theatre Company debut! She has previously enjoyed roles in *Finding Nemo Jr.*, *Dragons Love Tacos: The Musical*, and *Spookley the Square Pumpkin* at Stages Theatre Company. Addica is a FAIR School for Arts student and a PSEO student through Minneapolis College and the University of Minnesota.

CREATIVE TEAM & PRODUCTION STAFF

Playwright

Michi Barall

Michi Barall is a New York City-based actor, playwright, and academic. As an actor Michi has worked extensively in theatres in New York and across the country. Michi's dance-theatre piece, *Rescue Me*, was produced at the Ohio Theatre by Ma-Yi in 2010. Her music-theatre adaptation of *Peer Gynt*, *Peer Gynt and The Norwegian Hapa Band*, premiered in 2107 at the ART/NY Theatre. Michi holds degrees from Stanford University, NYU (M.F.A., Grad Acting) and Columbia (PhD, Theatre/English & Comparative Literature). She has taught at Columbia, NYU, and MIT and is currently on the faculty at Purchase College.

Director

Jack Tamburri

Jack Tamburri has directed performance art, plays, and musicals including: *Stress Exorcist* (Mary McCool), *Twelfth Night* (Shakespeare in Clark Park), *PEER GYNT and the Norwegian Hapa Band* (Ma-Yi Theater Co.), *Not For Profit* (Ferdinand), *School Play* (Tribe of Fools), and short films *Sophocles in Staten Island* and *Clifford Odets in Staten Island* (Ma-Yi Studios). He is a lecturer at SUNY Purchase, where he spent five years as the director of the Conservatory of Theatre Arts. He holds an M.F.A. from the Yale School of Drama.

Scenic Designer

Junghyun Georgia Lee†

Junghyun Georgia Lee has designed for New York Theatre Workshop, Audible Theatre, Atlantic Theatre, Public Theatre, Soho Rep, Ma-Yi, NAATCO, Guthrie Theater, Alley Theatre, McCarter Theatre, Syracuse Stage, Indiana Rep, Playmakers Rep, La Jolla Playhouse, and Huntington Theatre Company. Nominations include: Drama Desk Awards for Outstanding Set Design (*Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord*), Henry Hewes Design Award (*Romeo and Juliet*), CT Critics Circle Award (*The Chinese Lady*). MFA: Yale School of Drama, Faculty at Amherst College, MA.

Costume Designer

Trevor Bowen†

Trevor Bowen is glad to be back at CTC. He has designed costumes for *An American Tail the Musical; Last Stop on Market Street; Corduroy; Spamtown, USA; Three Little Birds; and I Come From Arizona* at CTC. Trevor is a 2020 McKnight Theatre Artist Fellowship recipient. www.trevorbowendesign.com

Lighting Designer

Paul Whitaker†

Paul Whitaker (he/him): CTC Credits: *Alice in Wonderland, Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress, Carmela Full of Whishes, I Come From Arizona, The Snowy Day, Cinderella, Seedfolks, Annie, and Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy*, among others. Paul is a partner at Schuler Shook, a theatre planning and architectural lighting firm.

Composer/Sound Designer

Victor Zupanc

Victor Zupanc has been the resident music director/composer at Children's Theatre Company since 1989, composing music and conducting orchestras for many of your favorite productions. He has worked on over 300 plays at countless theaters across the country. He also composes for orchestras, choirs, and films, and his music has been performed in over a dozen countries. Victorzupanc.com

Projection Designer

Elizabeth Barrett

Elizabeth Barrett (they/them) is a projection and media designer based in New York. Recent design credits include *How to Break* (Village Theatre), *Bulgaria! Revolt!* (Quinnipiac University), and *Undocuments* (Latino Theater Company). Recent associate credits include *Lehman Trilogy* (Guthrie Theater) and *Here There are Blueberries* (NYTW).

Illustrator

Blue Delliquanti

Blue Delliquanti (they/them) is contributing illustrations to *Drawing Lessons* at Children's Theatre Company. They are a comic artist and the author of graphic novels including *Across a Field of Starlight*. They teach comics classes at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design.

Student Actor Coach

Amanda Espinoza

Amanda Espinoza (she/her) served as Acting Coach on *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*, *Carmela Full of Wishes*, and *Locomotion* at CTC. She has performed with Jackdonkey Productions, Gray Mallard Theatre Co, Pulley and Buttonhole Theatre Company, Rachel Lynett Theatre Company, and Two River Theater. She holds an M.F.A from Texas Tech University School of Theatre and Dance.

Assistant Director

Hannah Steblay

Hannah Steblay (she/her) is delighted to return to Children's Theatre Company having served as assistant director on *Alice in Wonderland* (2013, 2024) as well as *Pippi Longstocking* (2012). She is a freelance director, educator, and enthusiastic momma. She holds a B.A. in Theater from Hamline University.

Stage Manager

Kenji Shoemaker*

Kenji Shoemaker (he/they) is a Minneapolis-based stage manager and props designer last seen at CTC for *A Year With Frog and Toad*. Other recent credits include: Theater Mu, The Guthrie Theater, American Players Theatre, and Stages Theatre Company, among others. When not at CTC, Kenji also works in various prop shops around town, and teaches at Macalester College.

Assistant Stage Manager

Janae Lorick

Janae Lorick (they/them)'s favorite CTC Credits: *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*, *Dr. Suess's How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*, *Alice in Wonderland*, and *A Year With Frog and Toad*. Recent Credits: Gremlin Theatre, Stages Theatre Company (2025), TigerLion Arts. They hold a B.A. from St. Olaf College in Theater, Race & Ethnic Studies.

Production Assistant

Taylor Engel

Having graduated from Southwest Minnesota State University with his B.A. in Theatre Arts, Taylor has worked as a stage manager for St. Croix Off Broadway Dinner Theater, Classical Actors Ensemble, Freshwater Theatre, and Lyric Arts. Taylor has been run crew for many CTC productions and was assistant stage manager for *Babble Lab*.

Stage Management Fellow/Production Assistant

Elijah Virgil Hughes

Elijah Hughes (they/them) has worked as a stage manager in *A Christmas Carol*, *YOU MUST WEAR A HAT*, and *the dreamer examines his pillow* at Brevard College, and performed in *Kinky Boots* (Weathervane Playhouse) and *Next to Normal* (Brevard College). They hold a B.A. from Brevard College.

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

†Member of the United Scenic Artists, Local 829.

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 more than 200,000 people annually. CTC is the only theatre focused on young audiences to win the Special Tony Award for Outstanding 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 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

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: A Children's Theatre World Premiere Production

Drawing Lessons

By Michi Barall

Original conception by Michi Barall and Jack Tamburri

Directed by Jack Tamburri

Co-commissioned by Ma-Yi Theater Company (New York, New York) and Children's Theatre Company (Minneapolis, Minnesota)

October 8-November 10, 2024

Cargill Stage

Best for upper elementary, middle school, and high school students and their families!

WHEN: from October 8-November 10, 2024 (Opening Night is Saturday, October 12, 2024, at 7pm)

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

AGE RECOMMENDATION: Best for independent readers of all ages. Due to the capacity of the Cargill Stage, a limited number of lap passes are available for those 18 months and younger.

RUNNING TIME: 90 minutes with one 20-minute intermission.

TICKETS: Starting at \$15 and available at childrenstheatre.org/drawing or by calling the Ticket Office at 612.874.0400.

#