

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: July 8, 2026

Media Contact:

Jonathan White

jwhite@childrenstheatre.org

612.872.5110



Children's Theatre Company Announces New Core Company

MINNEAPOLIS—July 8, 2026 [Children's Theatre Company](#) (CTC) is thrilled to announce a new Core Company, expanding the theatre's longtime Acting Company to include additional artists.

"For decades, CTC has worked with a company of actors," said Rick Dildine, Artistic Director. "As those artists have grown and developed over the years, they have taken on more responsibility within the organization. Today we are expanding the concept of company to include other artists that represent the breadth of theatre-making. Our 'Core Company Members' have shown a commitment to CTC and its mission and play a significant role in the day to day artistic life of CTC. They regularly participate as practicing artists on and off stage either as actors, directors, playwrights, coaches, choreographers, teachers, or designers. Core Company Members support the overall programming of CTC, mentor early career artists, lift up CTC's local, regional, and national profile through their advocacy and participation, and contribute to future artistic planning."

The new Core Company includes **Antonisia (Nisi) Collins** (actor), **Melanie Chen Cole[^]** (sound designer), **Dean Holt^{*}** (actor/director), **Autumn Ness^{*}** (actor) , **Reed Sigmund^{*}** (actor), **Chauncy Thomas^{*}** (actor), and **Christopher Windom[†]**(choreographer).

In CTC's 2026-2027 season, **Antonisia (Nisi) Collins** will appear in *Pinocchio* and *Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*; **Melanie Chen Cole[^]** will be the sound designer for *Twelve Kinds of Ice*; **Dean Holt^{*}** will appear in *Pinocchio*, *Princess Kay of the Milky Way*, *School of Rock The Musical*, and will direct and act in *Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*; **Autumn Ness^{*}** will appear in *Pinocchio*, *Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*, *Princess Kay of the Milky Way*, and *School of Rock The Musical*; **Reed Sigmund^{*}** will act in *Pinocchio*, *Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*, *Princess Kay of the Milky Way*, and *School of Rock The Musical*; **Chauncy Thomas^{*}** will be seen onstage in *Pinocchio*, *Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*, and *School of Rock The Musical*; and **Christopher Windom[†]** will choreograph *School of Rock The Musical*.

"I am honored and couldn't be more excited. It feels like a dream come true, and so surreal," said Antonisia (Nisi) Collins. "In fact, when I was offered, my immediate response was 'don't be messing with me, Rick!' followed by screams of joy. When I first stepped into this building, I knew it was home. I couldn't be more thrilled for what's in store. What a gift to be able to be a

part of a theatre that nurtures and creates for brave, curious minds. I shall step into this company with joy, fierceness, and the biggest heart.”

“I’m thrilled to be included as a new member for the CTC Core Company!” said Melanie Chen Cole. “A commitment to education and dedication to inspiring youth audiences is how we can make a positive impact for growth in our communities for a better future. I’m proud to be a part of this respected tradition at the Children’s Theatre.”

“I am so proud to have been a part of CTC for so many years and the idea of company is what I fell in love with from the start,” said Dean Holt. “A group of artists with a shared vision and goal, bringing out the best in one another with a creative shorthand that seemed like magic. It’s what I saw as I arrived just out of college, and what I continue to see in the room today. This tradition of creating and collaborating together, deepening our collective well of resources and skills, and providing a space where young artists can imagine with us. Now, with this expansion of the idea of company, we increase the scope and reach of those connections. Curiosity, kindness and growth are core to what we do, young or old, and I look forward to the adventure ahead.”

“I have known what it meant to be a CTC Company member since I was 8 years old, attending shows with my family,” said Autumn Ness. “It means you are a staple at this institution that the audience knows throughout their childhood. To expand this group of artists is so significant to me, especially expanding to these joyous friends! I can’t wait for audiences to experience these new talents!”

“Being a Core Company Member is the ultimate gift,” said Reed Sigmund. “It’s the opportunity to create, discover and grow as an artist and a person, while carrying a responsibility that means the world to me.”

“I’m ecstatic to have this opportunity to become a member of such a prestigious institution and expand on my fifteen years of collaboration with Rick Dildine,” said Chauncy Thomas.

“I’m thrilled and honored to join CTC’s Core Company,” said Christopher Windom. “The opportunity to collaborate with a thoughtful community of artists across disciplines is deeply meaningful and inspiring. Theatre for young audiences has an extraordinary ability to ignite imagination, foster connection, and nurture a sense of wonder rooted in discovery, and I’m excited to contribute to a community that holds these ideals in such high regard.”

About The Core Company

The Core Company consists of trusted artists who serve as regular collaborators and artistic partners of Children’s Theatre Company. The members are recognized for their meaningful contributions to the rehearsal room, the creative process, and performance culture. They form a community dedicated to advancing CTC’s mission of creating extraordinary theatre experiences that educate, challenge, and inspire young people and their communities. These

artists have a positive influence on the institution's culture through their professionalism, generosity, rigor, curiosity, and kindness, while also serving as mentors and role models for the Acting Cohort, apprentices, and other young individuals working within the organization's spaces. As ambassadors and spokespeople for CTC, they represent the organization and its values within the theatre field and the larger community. CTC provides the Core Company members with an artistic home where they can propose, develop, and shape new projects and future programming, while also contributing to a collaborative artistic think tank that reimagines what theatre for young audiences can become.

Core Company Members

Actor

Antonisia (Nisi) Collins

Antonisia Collins is thrilled to be joining the Core Company at CTC. MN credits: (CTC): *Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *A Year With Frog and Toad*, *Milo Imagines the World*, *Disney's Frozen The Broadway Musical*. (Artistry): *Once On This Island*. (The Zephyr Theatre): *Robin Hood*, *The Hobbit*. (Penumbra Theatre): *Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope*. You can see more of her work on Instagram @antonisiacollins

Sound Designer

Melanie Chen Cole^

Melanie Chen Cole (she/her) is a San Diego based freelance sound designer. Earlier this year, she was at The Old Globe, Alley Theatre, Denver Center, PlayMakers Repertory Company, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, The Huntington, and South Coast Rep. She holds a B.F.A. and M.F.A. from UC San Diego.

Actor/Director

Dean Holt*

Dean Holt (he/him) is a member of CTC's Acting Company (1994-present), appearing in countless CTC shows over the past 30 years. Highlights include *Reeling*, *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Huck Finn*, *Pinocchio*, and *Cinderella*. He is the recipient of two Ivey Awards (*Reeling* and *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*) and St. John's University Alumni Achievement Award.

Actor

Autumn Ness*

Autumn Ness (she/her) is celebrating her 27th season as a member of the CTC Acting Company! A few of her favorite CTC shows include *Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Babble Lab*, *Annie*, *Cinderella*, *Roald Dahl's Matilda The Musical*, *The Biggest Little House in the Forest*, *The Jungle Book*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. Autumn is a recipient of the TCG Fox Foundation Fellowship, the Minnesota State Arts Board Creative Support Grant, and most recently the 2025 Metro Regional Arts Council Next Step Fund. Autumn is a mom to two wild boys and a naughty pug dog.

Actor

Reed Sigmund*

Reed Sigmund has been a CTC Company Member for the past 26 years, and has appeared in numerous shows, including: *Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Treasure Island*.

Actor

Chauncy Thomas*

Chauncy Thomas (he/him) is thrilled to become a Core Company Member at Children's Theatre Company. He has performed with Utah Shakespeare Festival, Bay Street Theatre, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, St. Louis Rep, Great River Shakespeare Festival, and Gulfshore Playhouse. He holds a B.A. from Washington University in St. Louis.

Choreographer

Christopher Windom†

Christopher Windom† (he/him) choreographed the feature film "Respect" for MGM, starring Jennifer Hudson as Aretha Franklin. He has directed and/or choreographed at The Vineyard Theatre, The Public Theater, Trinity Repertory Company, Guthrie Theater, Alley Theatre, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Cleveland Play House, Dallas Theater Center, and Disneyland. He's a Drama League Fellow. B.F.A., Webster University; M.F.A., Brown/Trinity.

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

†Member of SDC, the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union.

^Member of the United Scenic Artists, Local 829.

Children's Theatre Company's 2026-2027 Season

CTC's 2026-2027 Season will feature *Pinocchio*; two world premiere musicals, *Twelve Kinds of Ice* and *Princess Kay of the Milky Way*; the return of the beloved holiday tradition *Dr. Seuss's*

How the Grinch Stole Christmas!; the playful adaptation *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom: The Musical*; and the Broadway smash hit *School of Rock The Musical*, based on the popular film.

The 2026-2027 Season will also feature a new Discovery Series, including three exciting shows in limited engagements at CTC: *Havana Hop*, *Mr. Messado's School of Magic for the Young and Young at Heart*, and *Joseph Kekuku and the Voice of the Steel Guitar*.

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

#