

PRESS RELEASE**For Immediate Release: July 27, 2026****Media Contact:**

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**Children's Theatre Company Announces Complete Cast and Creative Team for
*Pinocchio***

Adapted and Directed by Greg Banks

September 8-October 18, 2026

Minneapolis—July 27, 2026 — Children's Theatre Company (CTC) is thrilled to announce the complete cast and creative team for the first production of the 2026-2027 Season, *Pinocchio*, based on Carlo Collodi's timeless classic. Adapted and directed by Greg Banks, *Pinocchio* will run from September 8-October 18, 2026, on the UnitedHealth Group Stage. Opening night is Friday, September 11, 2026, at 7pm.

"*Pinocchio* has endured for generations because it asks one of childhood's biggest questions: What does it mean to become a good person?" said Rick Dildine, Artistic Director. "Greg Banks' inventive adaptation is filled with humor, music, and theatrical magic, but beneath the adventure is a story about empathy, accountability, and finding the courage to make better choices. It reminds us that imagination isn't an escape from growing up—it is one of the ways we learn how. That's what makes *Pinocchio* the perfect way to begin a season celebrating the imagination, resilience, and possibility that live inside every young person."

"I am thrilled to find myself back at the Children's Theatre, and even more thrilled to be remounting our production of *Pinocchio*, a fabulously fast-moving show full of fun," said playwright and director Greg Banks. "I am lucky enough to be getting the chance to work once more with some of our favorite actors from the theatre, as well as a couple of fresh new faces, and, of course, the wonderful composer/musician Victor Zupanc. I hope you enjoy the show as much as I am looking forward to directing it!"

Using only the tools of their trade—paint brushes, scaffolding, wallpaper rolls—five theatre painters inventively stage a spontaneous retelling of *Pinocchio*'s quest to become a "real boy." Get real answers to burning questions, like: How do he and Geppetto end up inside a whale? Will the good fairy actually fly? And what's up with *Pinocchio*'s nose anyway? Discover the truth, amidst a few lies, in this music-filled play where *Pinocchio* learns empathy and accountability, things that truly bring a person to life.

CTC's production of *Pinocchio* is recommended for ages 5-10. Tickets may be purchased at childrenstheatre.org/Pinocchio or by calling the Ticket Office at 612.874.0400. Ticket prices start at \$25.

The cast of *Pinocchio* features **Antonisia (Nisi) Collins** (member, CTC Core Company), **Dean Holt*** (member, CTC Core Company), **Autumn Ness*** (member, CTC Core Company), **Reed Sigmund***

(member, CTC Core Company), **Chauncy Thomas*** (member, CTC Core Company), and **Victor Zupanc‡**.

The understudies for *Pinocchio* are **Anya Naylor** (member, CTC Acting Cohort) and **Jeffrey Nolan** (member, CTC Acting Cohort).

In addition to Greg Banks, the creative team and production staff for CTC's production of *Pinocchio* includes Joseph Stanley (scenic designer), Mary Anna Culligan (costume designer), Rebecca Fuller Jensen (original lighting designer), Karin Olson (lighting designer), Victor Zupanc (composer/sound designer), Reid Rejsa (associate sound designer), Stacy McIntosh* (stage manager), Taylor Engel (assistant stage manager), and Jada B. Smith (stage management fellow).

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

‡Member of the Twin Cities Musician Union, Local 30-73, AFM.

Ticket Information

Tickets may be purchased at childrenstheatre.org/Pinocchio or by calling the Ticket Office at 612.874.0400. Ticket prices start at \$25.

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

Pinocchio is proudly sponsored by Ameriprise and Best Buy.

Pinocchio has a run time of 1 hour and 35 minutes, with one 15-minute intermission.

This production is recommended for ages 5-10. Lap passes are available for children 3 years and younger.

Pinocchio

By Carlo Collodi

Adapted and Directed by Greg Banks

September 8-October 18, 2026

UnitedHealth Group Stage

Creative Team and Production Staff

Scenic Designer | Joseph Stanley

Costume Designer | Mary Anna Culligan

Original Lighting Designer | Rebecca Fuller Jensen

Lighting Designer | Karin Olson

Composer/Sound Designer | Victor Zupanc

Associate Sound Designer | Reid Rejsa

Stage Manager | Stacy McIntosh*

Assistant Stage Manager | Taylor Engel

Stage Management Fellow | Jada B. Smith

Cast

Antonisia (Nisi) Collins (Member, CTC Core Company)
 Dean Holt* (Member, CTC Core Company)
 Autumn Ness* (Member, CTC Core Company)
 Reed Sigmund* (Member, CTC Core Company)
 Chauncy Thomas* (Member, CTC Core Company)
 Victor Zupanc‡

Understudies

Anya Naylor (Member, CTC Acting Cohort)
 Jeffrey Nolan (Member, CTC Acting Cohort)

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CAST

Antonisia (Nisi) Collins (member, CTC Core Company) is thrilled to be returning to CTC once more. Minn. 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

Dean Holt* (he/him) (member, CTC Core Company) 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.

Autumn Ness* (she/her) (member, CTC Core Company) 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.

Reed Sigmund* (member, CTC Core Company) welcomes y'all to another thrilling season at CTC! He has been a company member here 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*. When not chasing after his li'l puppet, Reed can be found bounding around with his two real boys!

Chauncy Thomas* (he/him) (member, CTC Core Company) is ecstatic to make his Children's Theatre Company debut. He has performed with Utah Shakespeare Festival, Bay Street Theatre, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, The Black Rep (Saint Louis,

Mo.), Illinois Shakespeare Festival, and Gulfshore Playhouse. He holds a B.A. from Washington University in Saint Louis.

Victor Zupanc grew up in Victoria, British Columbia. Since 1989, Victor has been the resident music director/composer at Children's Theatre Company composing music and conducting orchestras for many of your favorite productions. He has worked on over 300 plays at countless theatres across the country. He also composes for orchestras, choirs, and films and his music has been performed in over a dozen countries around the world. victorzupanc.com

UNDERSTUDIES

Anya Naylor (she/her) (member, CTC Acting Cohort) is very excited to return to Children's Theatre Company after understudying *Treasure Island*! Other recent credits include *The Hobbit* (Zephyr Theatre), *Men On Boats* (Ten Thousand Things), and *The Nacirema Society* (Guthrie Theater). She holds a B.F.A. in Acting from the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater.

Jeffrey Nolan (He/him) (member, CTC Acting Cohort) is thrilled to be making his CTC debut! He has performed with Brave New Workshop, Zephyr Theatre, Gremlin Theatre, and Melancholics Anonymous, of whom he is a proud company member. He'd like to thank his friends and family for all their support.

CREATIVE TEAM

Playwright and Director

Greg Banks has been working as an actor, writer, and director since 1979. His work taking him from Singapore to Seattle via Moscow, New York, and the Arctic Circle. Previous work for Children's Theatre Company includes his adaptations of *Antigone*, *Huck Finn*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Robin Hood*, *The Hobbit*, *Snow White*, and *The Jungle Book*.

Scenic Designer

Joseph Stanley designed *The Hobbit*, *Jungle Book*, *Pippi Longstocking*, *A Wrinkle in Time*, *Robin Hood*, *Mulan* (Ivey Award), *Romeo and Juliet*, *Magic Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle*, *Huck Finn*, and others at CTC. He's designed for Mixed Blood, Stages, Frank, Illusion, Park Square, History Theatre, Pillsbury House, Theater Mu, and more.

Costume Designer

Mary Anna Culligan's design work appeared in many Children's Theatre Company productions including: *Charlotte's Web*, *Pinocchio*, *The Biggest Little House in the Forest*, *Huck Finn*, *Buccaneers!*, *A Wrinkle in Time*, *Robin Hood*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Pippi Longstocking*, *The Magic Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle*, *Antigone*, and *The Iron Ring*. Mary costumed numerous Twin Cities theatre productions at companies including: Ten Thousand Things, Mu Performing Arts, Park Square Theatre, Joe Chvala, and the Flying Foot Forum and 15 HEAD—a theatre lab. Mary, who passed away in May 2014, was on staff at CTC as the costume painter/dyer for nearly 30 years.

Original Lighting Designer

Rebecca Fuller Jensen enjoyed 13 seasons as lighting, sound, and video director at CTC. Her design credits include: *Pinocchio*, *Dr. Seuss's The Cat in the Hat*, *Pippi Longstocking*, *A Wrinkle in Time*, *Robin Hood*, *The Iron Ring*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Magic Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle*, and *Dr. Seuss's The*

500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins.

Lighting Designer

Karin Olson (she/her) has previously designed *Spamtown, USA!* at Children's Theatre Company. She has designed locally with MN Opera, Park Square, the Jungle, Guthrie Theater, Mixed Blood, Artistry, the Ordway, and regionally at the Alliance and Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Karin is a '23-'24 McKnight Theater Artist fellow and a United Scenic Artist 829 member.

Associate Sound Designer

Reid Rejsa has worked in the Twin Cities for over 35 years. He has sound designed for The Jungle Theatre, Mixed Blood, Guthrie Theater, Katha Dance Theatre, Six Points Theater, Children's Theatre Company, and others. He also works as a recording engineer, musician, and audio mixer for independent films.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage Manager

Stacy McIntosh* has been a stage manager at Children's Theatre Company for 28 years, and has also enjoyed working at other local theatres including Mixed Blood Theatre, Guthrie Theater, History Theatre, Illusion Theater, and Sod House Theater. She is a proud member of Actors Equity and a recipient of a Minnesota Theatre Award. When not doing theatre she has been a part of managing large events including the Super Bowl, NHL Winter Classic, NHL Stadium Series, Taste of Minnesota, and the Special Olympics 2026 USA Games.

Assistant Stage Manager

Taylor Engel (he/him) is excited to return to the stage management side at Children's Theatre Company. Previous shows include *Babble Lab* and *Drawing Lessons*. But you probably recognize him from many shows here at Children's Theatre Company, as well as Guthrie Theater, working backstage as run crew. Supported by his wife, Talia.

Stage Management Fellow

Jada B. Smith is a stage manager and theatre technician from Raleigh, N.C. Recent credits include *Come From Away* (ASM, Theatre Raleigh), *Once On This Island* (ASM/A2, Theatre Raleigh), and *Mad Libs Live!* (PSM, Raleigh Little Theatre). She holds a B.A. Stage Management and B.S. Broadcast Communication from Western Carolina University.

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Children's Theatre Company (CTC) activates the creative lives of children and families—strengthening imagination, connection, and belonging to help young people thrive and communities grow stronger. Participating in year-round programming, theatre attendees and arts learners represent diverse racial, cultural, socioeconomic, neurocognitive, and geographic backgrounds. 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.

For 200,000 people annually, CTC aims to be a destination where families create lasting memories and grow together through the power of story and play. We seek to build emotional connections and position CTC as essential to family life and childhood development. Every year, thousands of children experience theatre for the first time at CTC. Our innovative education programs demonstrably benefit the community, from the resilience-based Creative Play program for early learners to the pre-professional skill-building in our Theatre Arts Training. 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:

Pinocchio

By Carlo Collodi

Adapted and Directed by Greg Banks

UnitedHealth Group Stage

WHEN: September 8-October 18, 2026 (Opening Night is Friday, September 11, 2026 at 7pm)

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

AGE RECOMMENDATION: This production is recommended for ages 5-10. Lap passes are available for children 3 years and younger.

RUNNING TIME: 1 hour and 35 minutes, with one 15-minute intermission.

TICKETS: Starting at \$25 and may be purchased at childrenstheatre.org/Pinocchio or by calling the Ticket Office at 612.874.0400.

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