PRESS RELEASE
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Children's Theatre Company Announces First Production of Inaugural 'Discovery Series'
Havana Hop

January 22-31, 2027

Minneapolis—November 12, 2026 — Children's Theatre Company (CTC) is pleased to announce *Havana Hop*, the first production of the inaugural Discovery Series for 2026-2027—limited engagement performances that transform CTC's Cargill Stage into a portal for culturally vibrant storytelling, where every production invites audiences to experience the world through fresh eyes. Directed by Danielle Drakes, *Havana Hop* is written, choreographed, and performed by Paige Hernandez. Featuring original music by Nick "Nick tha 1da" Hernandez and Kris Funn, Havana Hop will run January 22-31, 2027, on the Cargill Stage.

"It has always been a bucket list goal of mine to bring my original work, *Havana Hop*, to Children's Theatre Company," said writer and performer Paige Hernandez. "As the nation's largest children's theatre, CTC exceeds all expectations, particularly with a multi-generational focus that encourages audiences to stay curious and to engage in cultural authenticity. For these reasons and many more, *Havana Hop* is a perfect fit for CTC and its audiences. I cannot wait to dig in and be in community with you all. See you soon, Minneapolis!"

In ***Havana Hop,*** Young Yeila dreams of being a superstar, but her stage fright keeps getting in the way. When she visits her grandmother in Cuba, she discovers a whole new rhythm—adding a salsa spark to her hip-hop style. In this lively, audience-participation play, one dynamic actress brings three generations of spirited women to life. As Yeila learns about her roots, she finds the confidence to shine. Filled with music, movement, and plenty of chances to dance along, this joyful story celebrates culture, family, and the power of believing in yourself.

Ticket Information
Havana Hop runs January 22-31, 2027, on the Cargill Stage. This show is best enjoyed by younger audiences. Tickets may be purchased at childrenstheatre.org/havana or by calling the ticket office at 612.874.0400. Ticket prices start at $25.

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

Havana Hop has a run time of one hour with no intermission.

This production is best enjoyed by younger audiences. Lap passes are available for children 3 years and younger.

Havana Hop
Written, choreographed, and performed by Paige Hernandez
With original music by Nick “Nick tha 1da” Hernandez and Kris Funn
Director: Danielle Drakes
Set Design: Kris Funn
Projections: Paige Hernandez / Ruthmarie Tomlin
B-FLY Production Manager: Lisa Vivo
Commissioned by Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning, VA

Developed by Playhouse Square, OH

January 22-31, 2027
Cargill Stage

Creative & Production Team
Writer, Choreographer, and Performer / Projections | Paige Hernandez
Original Music | Nick “Nick tha 1da” Hernandez
Original Music / Set Design | Kris Funn
Director | Danielle Drakes
Projections | Ruthmarie Tomlin
B-FLY Production Manager | Lisa Vivo
Commissioned by | Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning, VA
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Writer, Choreographer, and Performer / Projections
Paige Hernandez is a critically acclaimed and award-winning multidisciplinary artist. She has performed nationwide and collaborated with institutions such as Disney, The Smithsonian, and the Lincoln Center. Paige serves as Associate Artistic Director of Everyman Theatre, Chair of the Maryland State Arts Council, and tours internationally with her original works through her company B-FLY ENTERTAINMENT.

Original Music
Nick “Nick tha 1da” Hernandez is an award-winning sound designer and hip-hop producer whose work spans major venues like The Kennedy Center, Arena Stage, and Ford's Theatre. He has composed for Helen Hayes Award-winning productions, television, and major cultural institutions, while also producing theme music for Netflix and Hot 97 FM.

Original Music / Set Design
Kris Funn is a Baltimore-born upright bassist, composer, and Peabody Institute faculty member. He has toured world-class jazz festivals with artists like Kenny Garrett and Christian Scott. Funn composed music for B-Fly ENTERTAINMENT productions including PAIGE IN FULL and HAVANA HOP, and released his debut album, Cornerstore, in 2017.

Director
Danielle Drakes is a multi-faceted theatre professional and two-time recipient of the TCG Leaders of Color award. Her credits include Arena Stage, The Kennedy Center, and originating Elizabeth

Keckley in Ford's Theatre's History on Foot. She holds a BA from Goucher College and an MFA from Catholic University.

Projections
Ruthmarie Tomlin is a Puerto Rican multimedia and scenic designer. She holds a BFA from Florida International University and an MFA from the University of Maryland. Her design credits include productions at NextStop Theatre, Carroll College, 1st Stage, Step Afrika, Imagination Stage, and GALA Hispanic Theatre.

B-FLY Production Manager
Lisa Vivo has extensive experience in stage management and theatre education, collaborating with Arena Stage, Theater J, Metro Stage, and Olney Theatre. She has also managed projects with the University of Maryland and Catholic University. Based in New York City, she runs a custom cake company #LisaVivoCustomCakes.

Commissioned by
Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning, VA

Developed by
Playhouse Square, OH

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:
Havana Hop
Written, choreographed, and performed by Paige Hernandez
With original music by Nick "Nick tha 1da" Hernandez and Kris Funn

Director: Danielle Drakes
Set Design: Kris Funn
Projections: Paige Hernandez / Ruthmarie Tomlin
B-FLY Production Manager: Lisa Vivo
Commissioned by Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning, VA

Developed by Playhouse Square, OH

WHEN: January 22-31, 2027 (Opening Night is Friday, January 22, 2027, at 7pm).

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

AGE RECOMMENDATION: This production is best enjoyed by younger audiences. Lap passes are available for children 3 years and younger.

RUNNING TIME: One hour with no intermission.

TICKETS: Starting at $25 and available at childrenstheatre.org/havana or by calling the Ticket Office at 612.874.0400.

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