

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CATCO presents the central Ohio premiere of *The Seafarer* by Conor McPherson Nov. 24-Dec. 13

Dark, humorous yuletide tale 2008 Tony nominee for best new play

Jon Putnam returns as Crumpet the elf in Sedaris' hilarious Santaland Diaries Dec. 3-27

COLUMBUS – It's a dreary Christmas Eve in Dublin, Ireland. Sharky and his blind older brother, Richard, are preparing to celebrate the holiday with drinks and friends – and poker. At the height of the festivities an unexpected guest arrives to join the card game.

The newcomer seems vaguely familiar, but it's only when the liquor flows freely and the bets rise that he forces Sharky to revisit demons from his murky past. As the game builds in intensity throughout the night, Sharky begins to play as if his very life – and soul – were at stake. Is redemption in the cards?

This dark, humorous play has been described by *The New York Times* as “a thinking person's alternative to Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life*.” The *London Observer* calls it “succinct, startling and eerie, and the funniest McPherson play to date.” Written by acclaimed Irish playwright Conor McPherson, *The Seafarer* was a smash hit in London and on Broadway. It was nominated for an Olivier Award in 2006 and a Tony Award for best new play in 2008. The *Wall Street Journal* named it “The Best New Play of the Year” in 2008.

CATCO will present *The Seafarer* Nov. 24-Dec. 13, at the Vern Riffe Center, Studio One Theatre, 77 S. High St. The play, which contains strong language, is the third McPherson work presented at CATCO, following *St. Nicholas* in 2001 and *The Weir* in 2006.

McPherson, called the “finest dramatist of his generation” by the *London Telegraph*, recently opened his play, an adaptation of Daphne du Maurier's story, *The Birds*, at the Dublin Theatre Festival to rave reviews. His film, *The Eclipse*, is playing – and winning awards – at film festivals worldwide.

Running concurrently in the Studio Three Theatre will be David Sedaris' one-act comedy, *The Santaland Diaries*, Dec. 3-27, 2009. CATCO favorite Jon Putnam reprises his role as Crumpet the elf in this perversely hilarious memoir of Sedaris' experiences from working as an elf at Macy's Santaland in New York City during the busiest retail time of the year. Sponsors are Macy's Foundation and Huntington Bank.

Starring in *The Seafarer* are Damian Bowerman (Ivan); Rick Clark (Nicky); Ken Erney (Richard); Mark Mann (Sharky); and Geoffrey Nelson (Lockhart). Bowerman has worked at several regional theatres including CATCO, Porthouse Theatre, Barn Theatre and the Wexner Center. At CATCO he has appeared in *The Foursome*, *The Underpants*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Escanaba in Da Moonlight*, and *The Laramie*

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Project. Clark returns to CATCO for his eighth production. His past shows include *The Foursome*, *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof*, and *The Exonerated*. Erney a veteran of CATCO's early years, is well-known for his roles in *True West*, *Orphans*, *1959 Pink Cadillac*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Aunt Dan and Lemon*, *The Normal Heart*, *Jupus Redeye*, and *Arsenic and Old Lace*.

Mann was last seen on CATCO's stage as Albert Soady in *Escanaba in Love*, CATCO's 2008-09 season opener. His other CATCO shows include *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Escanaba in Da Moonlight*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Proof*, *You're My Boy*, and the 2002 *Shorts Festival*. Nelson, CATCO's founder and artistic director, appears in his third McPherson play, having performed in *St. Nicholas* and *The Weir*. He also acted in *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me* by Frank McGuinness (1995) and *The Pillowman* by Martin McDonagh (2007), two other prominent Irish playwrights.

Directing *The Seafarer* is Mandy Fox, who recently directed *Godspell* and *The Rocky Horror Show* at the Southern Theatre in a collaboration between The Ohio State University and CAPA. She most recently performed at CATCO in *Doubt* and will appear in *Evie's Waltz* Feb. 17-March 7, 2010.

Jonathan Putnam (Crumpet), CATCO's associate artistic director, has acted in or directed dozens of shows at CATCO since 1986. Acting credits include *The Pillowman*; *You're My Boy*; *Greater Tuna*; *A Tuna Christmas*; and *Uncle Vanya*. Directing credits include *The Shorts Festivals in 2006, 2004, and 2002*; *Escanaba In Da Moonlight*; *The Underpants*; *Lobby Hero*; *The Foursome*; *Escanaba In Love*; and *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof*.

CATCO's 2009-10, 26th anniversary season is dedicated to community leaders, Loann Crane, Barbara Fergus and Tom Katzenmeyer. Donors for the season are Limited Brands; the Robert Bartels and Edith Doud Unrestricted Funds of The Columbus Foundation; Nationwide Foundation; Ohio Arts Council, which funds CATCO with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans; and the Greater Columbus Arts Council, which is providing a project support grant for *Pierce to the Soul*, which will be produced April 7-25, 2010.

Preview (Discounted Tickets)/Opening Night Performances

There are two previews for *The Seafarer*, Tuesday, Nov. 24, at 7:30 p.m. and Wednesday, Nov. 25, at 11 a.m. Tickets are \$11.50 for the 11 a.m. performance, and \$32.50 for the 7:30 p.m. show. The opening performance is Friday, Nov. 27, at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$40, and include admission to a post-performance party in the theatre lobby. **All tickets for *The Santaland Diaries* are \$35.**

Half-Price Happy Hour

At least one Thursday of each show run tickets and drinks are half price. For *The Seafarer*, the Half-Price Happy Hour is Thursday, Dec. 10, at 8 p.m.

\$11@11 Matinees

For *The Seafarer*, there will be three \$11@11 performances: Wednesday, Nov. 25, Dec. 2, and Dec. 9. CATCO's \$11 @ 11 is an offering for theatre-goers who want to see a play mid-week (Wednesday) and mid-day (11 a.m.) at a great price (\$11 plus a 50-cent restoration fee). For ticket information, please call 614.469.0939 or visit ticketmaster.com.

Dramaturge/Actor Talkbacks

For a deeper understanding of each play, CATCO presents talkback sessions for audiences. For *The Seafarer*, the actor talkback will follow the Sunday, Nov. 29, matinee; the dramaturge talkback will follow the Sunday, Dec. 6, matinee.

Audio Description

On one Sunday of each production, CATCO provides an audio-described performance for the visually impaired along with free headset rental. The audio description for *The Seafarer* will be Sunday, Dec. 6, at 2 p.m.

Ticket/Parking Information

Tickets for regular performances are \$40. Students and seniors may purchase half-price tickets on Sunday and Thursday performances the day of the performance based on availability and valid I.D. All tickets can be purchased at the box office at 41 E. State St., next to the Ohio Theatre, by calling 614.469.0939 or by visiting ticketmaster.com or by calling or visiting any central Ohio Ticketmaster location. Performances are in the Studio Theatres at the Vern Riffe Center, located at 77 S. High St. in Downtown Columbus at the corner of State and High streets. Attached parking is available in the Riffe Center garage, which is entered from Front Street.

About CATCO

CATCO is central Ohio’s professional Equity theatre company. Its mission is to produce diverse, high-quality, and exciting theatrical work that celebrates our common humanity. For more information, visit catcoistheatre.org.

The remaining shows in CATCO’s 26th anniversary season are:

Evie’s Waltz

By Carter Lewis

Feb. 17-March 7, 2010

Pierce to the Soul

By Chiquita Mullins Lee

April 7-25, 2010

The Mystery of Irma Vep: A Penny Dreadful

By Charles Ludlam

June 2-27, 2010

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