



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CATCO is Kids Presents World Premiere of *The Throne of Oz* May 4-13

Based on L. Frank Baum's The Marvelous Land of Oz; adapted by Columbus Playwright Chris Leyva

Few fantasy lands have captured our hearts and imaginations as has the marvelous land of Oz. In this captivating adaptation of L. Frank Baum's *The Marvelous Land of Oz* by Columbus playwright Chris Leyva, join a young boy named Tip as he travels throughout the lands of Oz. You'll meet familiar, old friends, the Scarecrow and Tin Woodman, as well as some new friends, such as Jack Pumpkinhead, the Wooden Sawhorse, the Highly Magnified Woggle-Bug, and the amazing Gump, and watch as they thwart the wicked plans of an evil witch and overcome a rebellion.

Their imaginative quest is captured by Leyva, whose previous highly acclaimed world premiere, *Cowgirls Don't Ride Zebras*, was presented at CATCO is Kids last season, and was accompanied by a children's book with the same name also written by Leyva. Leyva's play, *Books & Bridges*, was awarded the CATCO and Greater Columbus Arts Council Playwright Fellowship in 2013.

Leyva received his MFA from the Playwrights Workshop at The University of Iowa and has written numerous plays. In 2015, Columbus School for Girls commissioned and performed his play, *Persephone Uncut*.

"Parents and kids will enjoy accompanying Tip and meeting new characters from the Land of Oz in this classic 'good triumphs over evil' tale," said Joe Bishara, CATCO associate producing director and director of *The Throne of Oz*, which features 28 youth actors from central Ohio.

To familiarize children with the play before they attend the play and enrich their experience afterward, parents can access CATCO is Kids' playguide for *The Throne of Oz* by clicking this link:

<http://catco.org/www/dcms/files/pdf/playguides/throne-of-oz-playguide.pdf>

The Throne of Oz will be performed at the Van Fleet Theatre, Columbus Performing Arts Center, 549 Franklin Ave. Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$10 for kids.

Youth actors in *The Throne of Oz* are:

- Sophie Bergmann (Loud Soldier of the Revolt), an actor and dancer from Upper Arlington, who performed as Freddie in CATCO is Kids' *Descendants* Summer Camp production and Anne in *Madeline's Christmas*.
- Stella Bergmann (Princess Ozma), an actor and dancer from Upper Arlington, who performed as Evie in CATCO is Kids' *Descendants* Summer Camp production and Amy in *Madeline's Christmas*.

- Gabriella Cain (H.M. Woggle-Bug, T.E. #1), a freshman at Columbus School for Girls, whose acting credits include *Letters to Sala*, *Shakespeare and Star Wars: Verily, A New Hope*, *Anne of Green Gables*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Musical*.
- Lucas Cloran (Soldier of the Revolt), a 6th-grader at Hilliard Tharp Sixth Grade School. Acting credits include *Mothers and Sons* at CATCO and *The Seussification of Romeo & Juliet* at CATCO is Kids.
- Oscar Humbert (Tip), a 9-year-old and 4th-grader at Clintonville Academy, who has performed in four CATCO is Kids Saturday Morning Musicals.
- Sofia Feinberg (Forceful Soldier of Glinda's Army), a freshman at Columbus School for Girls, who is performing in her third CATCO is Kids production. She appeared in *A Seussified Christmas Carol* and *Anne of Green Gables*.
- Maddie Halpin (Soldier of the Revolt), a 5th-grader at Maryland Elementary in Bexley, who performed in *A Seussified Christmas Carol*. She enjoys singing, dancing and acting.
- Natalie Harper (The Tin Woodman #1), a multitalented performer, who is making her CATCO is Kids debut. Acting credits include *Peter Pan*, *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* and *Seussical*.
- Elijah Horn (Soldier of Glinda's Army), a 9-year-old, who is performing in his first theatre production. He enjoys sports, video games, books, cooking, theatre and music.
- Greta James (Dorothy), a 7th-grader at Kilbourne Middle School in Worthington. She performed as Cassandra in CATCO is Kids' production of *Cowgirls Don't Ride Zebras* and participated in multiple CATCO is Kids camps.
- Lexie Kepling (The Saw Horse #2), has appeared in *A Seussified Christmas Carol*, *Honk!* and *Shakespeare and Star Wars: Verily a New Hope* at CATCO is Kids. Other acting credits include *Legally Blonde, Jr.* at New Albany Middle School.
- Adrianna Massimiani (Friendly Soldier of Glinda's Army), a 10-year-old who attends Columbus School for Girls, and who is appearing in her second CATCO is Kids' production. She performed the role of Daphne in *Madeline's Christmas*.
- Christina Massimiani (Friendly Soldier of Glinda's Army), a 3rd-grader at Columbus School for Girls, who is appearing in her second CATCO is Kids' production. She performed the role of Simone in *Madeline's Christmas*.
- Lia McMillan (Jellia Jamb #1), a student at Columbus Gifted Academy, who is making her CATCO is Kids debut. She has performed as a dancer, plays the cello, and sings in her school's choir.
- Caleb Nelson (The Scarecrow #2), an 8th-grader at OCA, whose acting credits include *High School Musical* and *Mary Poppins*. This is his first CATCO is Kids production.
- Abbie Ogilbee (General Jinjur #2), has appeared in six CATCO shows, including *James and the Giant Peach JR* and *Shakespeare and Star Wars: Verily, A New Hope*. She is a freshman at Liberty High School in Powell where she is active in theatre and choir programs.

- Lindsey Parker (General Jinjur #1), a junior at Pickerington High School North, whose acting credits include *Shakespeare and Star Wars: Verily, A New Hope* and *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Musical*.
- Maggie Pepper (Mombi #2), a sophomore at Metro ECHS, has performed in multiple CATCO is Kids productions.
- Jillian Reeb (The Saw Horse #1), a 5th-grader at Columbus Montessori Education Center, who recently performed in *Madeline's Christmas* and in *The Jungle Book Saturday Morning Musical*.
- Lilah Repuyan (Soldier of the Revolt), a 5th-grader at Maryland Elementary in Bexley who is making her CATCO is Kids and theatrical debut. She loves reading, music, and playing tennis.
- Boula Ross (Winkie Soldier/Soldier of Glinda's Army), a 5th-grader at Columbus School for Girls, whose acting credits include *High School Musical* and *Aladdin Jr.* at CATCO is Kids' Saturday Morning Musicals, and *Madeline's Christmas*.
- Emma Shachter (Soldier of the Revolt), a 6th-grader at Hilliard Station Middle School, who has been in numerous CATCO is Kids' productions, most recently appearing as Penny in *Cowgirls Don't Ride Zebras*. She is also performing in her school play, *James and the Giant Peach JR.*
- Lydia Silver (Mombi #1), a 9th-grader at Upper Arlington High School, has performed in *Elephant & Piggie's "We Are in a Play!"*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *The Music Man Jr.*, *The Lion King Jr.*, and *Anything Goes*.
- Hannah Simpson (H.M. Woggle-Bug, T.E. #2), a 5th-grader at Columbus Academy, whose credits include *High School Musical* and *Music Man* at CATCO is Kids' Saturday Morning Musicals, the world-premier of CATCO is Kids' *Cowgirls Don't Ride Zebras* and *Madeline's Christmas*.
- Samantha Stegen (The Tin Woodman #2), who most recently performed as Enid Hoopes in *Legally Blonde Jr.* and Mayon Shinn in *The Music Man Kids*.
- Jenny Tupper (Stoic Soldier of the Revolt), a 7th-grader at Walnut Springs in Westerville, who is performing in her seventh production at CATCO is Kids.
- Zofia Walkowski (Jelli Jamb #2) a middle school student in Dublin, who is making her CATCO is Kids debut. Acting credits include *Cinderella*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Shrek, Jr.*
- Maggie Wertz (Soldier of Glinda's Army), who is making her CATCO is Kids debut. Acting credits include *Mr. Scrooge*, *The Lion King Kids* and *The Little Mermaid*.

They are joined by adult actors Monty Almore (The Scarecrow #1), Candice Kight (Glinda the Good), Charlie Rowe (Green Mustached Guard) and Nolan Thomaswick (Jack Pumpkinhead). Almore is a college student pursuing a degree in theatre, whose acting credits include *Sweeney Todd*, *Shakespeare and Star Wars: Verily, A New Hope*, and *Corpus Christi*. Kight, a 2017-18 art education apprentice at CATCO, also appeared in *Madeline's Christmas*, *Daddy Long Legs* and *Garfield: The Musical with Cattitude* at CATCO.

Thomaswick, also a 2017-18 art education apprentice, appeared in CATCO is Kids' *Madeline's*

Christmas, Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Musical and *Garfield: The Musical with Cattitude*. Rowe is making his CATCO is Kids' debut. His acting credits include performing at the Conservative Theatre Festival and small parts in three films.

Bishara has worked at regional theatres in Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, and Florida as an actor, director, producer, and administrator. At CATCO, he directed *Madeline's Christmas*, *Shakespeare and Star Wars: Verily*, *A New Hope*, *Anne of Green Gables*, *Sex With Strangers*, *James and the Giant Peach JR.*, *The Kabuki Sleeping Beauty*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Elephant and Piggie's "We are in a Play!"*, *The Seussification of Romeo and Juliet*, [title of show], *Master Class*, *A Christmas Carol*, *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*, *Revenge of the Space Pandas*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *The Rude Mechanicals*, and *Forbidden Broadway's Greatest Hits: Vol. 1*, and appeared in *Daddy Long Legs*, *I Do! I Do!*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *Forbidden Broadway*, *The Story of My Life* and *Evil Dead: The Musical*. Other acting credits include *Titanic*, *The Rocky Horror Show* and *The Last Five Years*. Additional directing credits include *The Spitfire Grill*, *Madeline's Christmas*, *Bat Boy: The Musical*, *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, *The House at Pooh Corner*, *Wind in the Willows*, *Encyclopedia Brown*, *Peter and the Wolf*, *Beauty and the Beast (Isabella e la Bestia)*, and *School House Rock Live!*

Show times for *The Throne of Oz* are Friday, May 4 and May 11, at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, May 5 and May 12, at 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.; and Sunday, May 6 and March 13, at 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. Presenting sponsors for *The Throne of Oz* are Mary Yerina and Bob Redfield.

CATCO and CATCO is Kids' 33rd season is sponsored by support from The Ohio Arts Council, which helps fund the theatre with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, education excellence, and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans, and supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

CATCO also appreciates the support of the James W. Overstreet Fund of The Columbus Foundation, assisting donors and others in strengthening our community for the benefit of all of its citizens, and the Greater Columbus Arts Council, supporting the city's artists and arts organizations since 1973. Other supporters include The Shubert Foundation Inc. and Nationwide Insurance Foundation.

CATCO and CATCO is Kids' season sponsor is L Brands; season partner is the Columbus Metropolitan Library. CATCO is Kids' presenting partner is The City of Columbus Recreation and Parks; media partner is WOSU Public Media. For more information, visit catcoistheatre.org.

For subscription information for the 2018-19 season, visit catcoistheatre.org. The remaining shows at CATCO for the 2017-18 season is:

- **Aspects of Love**
Book and music by Andrew Lloyd Webber
Lyrics by Don Black and Charles Hart
From David Garnett's novel
May 30-June 17, 2018
Studio One, Riffe Center
77 S. High St.

About CATCO

CATCO is central Ohio's professional Equity theatre company, providing quality theatre and educational programs for all ages. The theatre organization has adopted an innovative strategy, building creative alliances that can sustain growth and development. For more information, visit catcoistheatre.org. Together, CATCO and CATCO is Kids provide quality theatre and educational programs for all ages. The

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CATCO Mission Statement

Theatre is a shared experience that illuminates the mysteries of our humanity. Its magic has the power to transform us whether on stage, in the classroom or in our diverse communities. CATCO creates theatre that delights, challenges, and transports.

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