



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**CATCO is Kids Presents World Premiere of *Cowgirls Don't Ride Zebras* March 3-12, 2017**

***Columbus Playwright Chris Leyva Inspired to Write Children's Book With Same Title***

Penny loves books and has just discovered a new one about cowgirls. With her best friends, Cassandra and Jackie, she's determined to become the best cowgirl ever. The problem is she doesn't have one of the most important things a cowgirl needs: a horse. She's undeterred though, and soon sets out to the zoo with her friends to find a viable replacement.

Penny, Cassandra and Jackie meet some new friends and have unexpected adventure along the way. Their imaginative quest is told by Columbus Playwright Chris Leyva in a world premiere of his play, *Cowgirls Don't Ride Zebras*, which will feature original music by composer Russel Boiarsky and is accompanied by Leyva's new children's book with the same title. It all happens March 3-12 at CATCO is Kids.

"We first became familiar with Chris' work in 2013 when he was named the recipient of the CATCO and Greater Columbus Arts Council Playwright Fellowship with his play, *Books & Bridges*, and jumped at the opportunity to work with him again," said Joe Bishara, CATCO's associate producing director, who also is the director of *Cowgirls Don't Ride Zebras*. "Parents and kids will enjoy accompanying Penny and her friends in this heartwarming play about friends, imagination and exploration, all inspired by Chris' 4-year-old son, Jack."

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*. To learn more about Leyva and see videos and read his blog about writing his play and book, *Cowgirls Don't Ride Zebras*, visit his website: [www.chrisleyva.com](http://www.chrisleyva.com)

To familiarize children with the play before they attend and enrich their experience afterward, parents may preorder a copy of Leyva's children's book, *Cowgirls Don't Ride Zebras* and access CATCO is Kids' playguide. Links for both are available at [www.catcoistheatre.org](http://www.catcoistheatre.org), or by clicking these links:

<https://www.createspace.com/6190245>

<http://catco.org/www/dcms/files/pdf/playguides/cowgirls-dont-ride-zebras-playguide.pdf>

*Cowgirls Don't Ride Zebras* will be presented at the Van Fleet Theatre, Columbus Performing Arts Center, 549 Franklin Ave. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for children. The runs approximately 45 minutes with no intermission.

Performing in *Cowgirls Don't Ride Zebras* are William Darby IV (Lion, et al.), Greta James (Cassandra), Abbie Ogilbee (Jackie), Lindsey Parker (Cheetah, et al.), Emma Shachter (Penny), Hannah Simpson (Hippo, et al.), Ben Tracy (Ostrich, et al.), and Abigail Worden (Zebra, et al.)

Darby studied and performed with Theater Columbus State and the Ohio State Opera, and appeared in CATCO is Kids' productions of *Goldilocks and The Three Bears*, *The Jungle Book* and *Isabella e la Bestia*. He also appeared as Captain Von Trapp in SRO's production of *The Sound of Music* and as Spike in CATCO's production of *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*. James is a 6<sup>th</sup> grader at Colonial Hills Elementary School and made her stage debut as Belle in CATCO is Kids Saturday Morning Musicals' production of *Beauty and the Beast Jr.* Ogilbee is an 8<sup>th</sup> grader at Liberty Middle School in Powell where she is active in theatre and show choir. CATCO is Kids credits include *Peter and the Wolf*, *A Seussified Christmas Carol* and *James and the Giant Peach JR.* Parker is a sophomore at Pickerington High School North. Her CATCO is Kids credits include *A Seussified Christmas Carol* and the Saturday Morning Musicals' production of *High School Musical Jr.*

Shachter is a 5<sup>th</sup> grader at Scioto Darby Elementary. Her CATCO is Kids credits include *A Seussified Christmas Carol* and *James and the Giant Peach JR.* Simpson is a 4<sup>th</sup> grader at Columbus Academy, whose acting credits include *Lion King Jr.* and Saturday Morning Musicals' productions of *High School Musical Jr.* and *Beauty and the Beast Jr.* Tracy, a CATCO 2016-17 acting apprentice, who also performed in *Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery* and *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*, graduated from Wright State University where he appeared in *The Great Gatsby* (Nick Carraway) and *The Music Man* (Charlie Cowell), among other shows. A native of Minneapolis, he has worked with CLIMB Theatre and Old Log Theatre. Worden, also a CATCO 2016-17 acting apprentice, is a recent graduate of Capital University. Her stage management theatre credits include *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*; performance credits include *Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery* at CATCO, *Metamorphoses* and *A Flea in Her Ear*.

Bishara has worked at regional theatres in Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, and Florida as an actor, director, producer, and administrator. At CATCO, he directed *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 *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *Forbidden Broadway*, *The Story of My Life* and *Evil Dead: The Musical*. Other acting credits include *Titanic*, *Forbidden Broadway: SVU*, *The Rocky Horror Show* and *The Last Five Years*. Additional directing credits include *The Spitfire Grill*, *Madeline's Christmas*, *Bat Boy: The Musical*, and *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 *Cowgirls Don't Ride Zebras* are Friday, March 3, and March 10, at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, March 4 and March 11, at 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.; and Sunday, March 5 and March 12, at 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. Tickets can be purchased at the door and at the Ohio Theatre Ticket Office, 39 S. State St.; they can also be purchased at all Ticketmaster outlets, and [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com).

Patrons interested in purchasing tickets by telephone can call 614.469.0939. The box office will open two hours before show time.

CATCO is Kids' 32nd 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 Barbara B. Coons, Nina B. Pohlman, and Martha G. Staub Funds 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 is Kids' season sponsor is L Brands; season partner is the Columbus Metropolitan Library; and presenting partner is The City of Columbus Recreation and Parks. For more information, visit [catcoistheatre.org](http://catcoistheatre.org).

CATCO is Kids' remaining show of the season are below:

- ***Anne of Green Gables***  
(Co-Production with Columbus School for Girls)  
Music by Nancy Ford  
Book and Lyrics by Gretchen Cryer  
May 5-14, 2017  
Columbus School for Girls

CATCO's shows for the 2016-17 season are:

- ***Sex with Strangers***  
(Regional Premiere)  
By Laura Eason  
Feb. 15-March 5, 2017  
Studio Two
- ***Henry Ford's Model E***  
(World Premiere)  
By Herb Brown  
April 19-May 7, 2017  
Studio Two
- ***I Do! I Do!***  
Books and lyrics by Tom Jones  
Music by Harvey Schmidt  
May 31-June 18, 2017  
Studio Two

To subscribe or for more information about the 2016-17 season, visit [www.catcoistheatre.org](http://www.catcoistheatre.org)

### **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](http://catcoistheatre.org). Together, CATCO and CATCO is Kids provide quality theatre and educational programs for all ages. The theatres have adopted an innovative strategy, building creative alliances that can sustain growth and development.

### **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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