



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CATCO is Kids Opens season with *Shakespeare and Star Wars: Verily, A New Hope* Aug. 25-27

Retelling of Star Wars in the style of the immortal Bard of Avon made possible by PNC Arts Alive

Return once more to a galaxy far, far away with this sublime retelling of *Star Wars* in the style of the immortal Bard of Avon at CATCO is Kids' 2017-18 season opener, *Shakespeare and Star Wars: Verily, A New Hope*, Aug. 25-27. The play, written by Ian Doescher and featuring a cast of 26, 23 of them local youth actors, is made possible by PNC Arts Alive.

CATCO is Kids' presentation, full of all the adventure, valor and villainy of Shakespeare's greatest plays, is the sage of a wise (Jedi) knight, an evil (Sith) lord, a beautiful princess held captive, as well as a young hero coming of age.

"Imagine what *Star Wars* would be like if William Shakespeare had penned it and you have *Shakespeare and Star Wars: Verily, A New Hope*," said Joe Bishara, CATCO associate producing director and the show director. "CATCO is Kids' audiences who have enjoyed the *Seussification of Romeo and Juliet* and *A Seussified Christmas Carol* won't want to miss this imaginative spin on a classic. *Star Wars* fans won't want to miss it either."

To familiarize children with the play before they attend and enrich their experience afterward, parents can access CATCO is Kids' play guide for *Shakespeare and Star Wars* at <http://catco.org/catco-is-kids/2017-2018/shakespeare-and-star-wars-verily-a-new-hope> or by clicking this link:

<http://catco.org/www/dcms/files/pdf/playguides/starshakesplayguide3.pdf>

All shows will be performed at the Lincoln Theatre, 769 E. Long St., a different location than the Columbus Performing Arts Center, 549 Franklin Ave., where the majority of CATCO is Kids' shows are performed and classes are held.

Tickets to *Shakespeare and Star Wars* are free, and due to anticipated high demand, subscription to the 2017-18 CATCO is Kids season is the ONLY way to guarantee seats. Tickets are limited to four per person in advance at the Ohio Theatre Ticket Center, 39 E. State St., and one per person day-of show at the door. You must be physically present to obtain a ticket at the theatre on the day of the performance. To become a subscriber, call the box office at 614.469.0939 or visit www.catcoistheatre.org

Principal actors in *Shakespeare and Star Wars* are:

- Monty Almore (Han Solo), whose recent roles include an apostle in *Corpus Christi* (Bartholomew) and a brother in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Judah).
- Jim Azelvandre (Obi-Wan Kenobi), an actor for 35 years and artistic director of MadLab Theatre, who was most recently seen in *The Emperor of the Moon* (Actors Theatre) and *Corpus Christi*

(Evolution Theatre). Other notable performances include roles in *The Tempest*, *Titus Andronicus* and *Waiting for Godot*. He received the 2015 Playwright Fellowship sponsored by CATCO and the Greater Columbus Arts Council.

- Gabriella Cain (Chewbacca), a 14-year-old and ninth-grader at Columbus School for Girls. She recently appeared in the CATCO is Kids/Columbus School for Girls co-production of *Anne of Green Gables*.
- Grace Emmenegger-Conrad (Princess Leia), a sophomore at Columbus School for Girls, who has participated in CATCO's Audition Showcase camp for seven years and performed the role of Lady Bug in *James and the Giant Peach Jr.* last summer.
- Abby Ogilbee (C3PO), who has appeared in numerous CATCO is Kids' productions, including *Cowboys Don't Ride Zebras*; *A Seussified Christmas Carol*; and *James and the Giant Peach JR.*
- Matt Piper (Luke Skywalker), a recent graduate from Newark High School, who recently appeared in CATCO is Kids' production of *Anne of Green Gables*; *Mamma Mia* (Weathervane) and *Catch Me If You Can* (Interlochen Performing Arts Camp).
- Matthew Sierra (Darth Vader), a 2016-17 CATCO acting apprentice, who has appeared on stage at multiple central Ohio theatre organizations. His acting credits include *Anne of Green Gables*, *Sex With Strangers*, *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*, *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* and *The Kabuki Sleeping Beauty* at CATCO, and *POZ* with Evolution Theatre company.
- Jenny Tupper (R2-D2) is a seventh-grader at Walnut Springs in Westerville, who is making her fifth CATCO is Kids appearance.

They are joined by Anna Cochran, Lexi Kepling and Lydia Gray (Chorus); Jillian Cline (Chorus, Beru Lars); William Darby III (Owen Lars, Biggs Darklighter, Innkeeper); Lindsey Snyder (Grand Moff Tarkin); Lucas Cloran (Admiral Motti, Kylo Ren); Carson Zorn (Commander Tagge, Wedge Antilles); Kaitlyn Brown (Greedo, Sandperson 1, Imperial Envoy); Hannah Simpson (Commander Willard, Rebel 1, Cantina Band); Jeremy Hardjono (General Dodonna); Johnny Crough (Stormtrooper 1); Rose Wagner (Stormtrooper 2, Gold Leader); Ashlyn Schrader (Stormtrooper 3, R5-D4); Trinity Gayle (Stormtrooper 4); Kate Hofmann (Jawa 1, Cantina Band); Abigail O'Koon (Jawa 2, Cantina Band); and Evelyn Strayer (Rey, Young Leia, Cantina Band).

Bishara has worked at regional theatres in Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, and Florida as an actor, director, producer, and administrator. At CATCO, he directed *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 *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 *Shakespeare and Star Wars* are Friday, Aug. 25, at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, Aug. 26, and Sunday, Aug. 27, at 2:30 p.m.

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. For more information, visit catcoistheatre.org.

CATCO is remaining shows for the 2016-17 season are:

- ***Madeline's Christmas***
Book and lyrics by Jennifer Kirkeby
Music by Shirley Mier
Based on the book by Ludwig Bemelmans
Dec. 8-17, 2017
Shedd Theatre, CPAC
549 Franklin Ave.
- ***Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Musical***
Books and lyrics by Mo Willems
Music by Michael Silversher
Jan. 12-21, 2018
Van Fleet Theatre, CPAC
549 Franklin Ave.
- ***Garfield: The Musical with Cattitude***
Book by Michael J. Bobbitt and Jim Davis
Music and lyrics by John L. Cornelius II
March 2-11, 2018
Van Fleet Theatre, CPAC
549 Franklin Ave.
- ***The Throne of Oz***
Based on Frank Baum's *The Marvelous Land of Oz*
Adapted by Chris Leyva
May 4-13, 2018
Shedd Theatre, CPAC
549 Franklin Ave.

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 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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