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CATCO is Kids, Columbus School for Girls Co-Produce *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* May 3-12

Adaptation of Salmon Rushdie's classic children's novel is Ohio Premiere

CATCO is Kids and Columbus School for Girls will co-produce *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, an adaptation of Salmon Rushdie's classic children's fantasy novel filled with magicians and fantastical talking animals May 3-12. The production is an Ohio premiere.

Haroun and the Sea of Stories, published in 1990 by one of the world's best-known contemporary storytellers, features the journey of a small boy, who sets out on an adventure to restore the poisoned source of the Sea of Stories. The adaptation for the stage by David Tushingham and Tim Supple "will be a feast for the eyes, ears, mind and soul," said Liz Bishara, middle school theater instructor and director at CSG and co-director of *Haroun* along with Joe Bishara, CATCO associate producing director.

"In *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* young and old alike will be captivated by the spell-binding stories, fascinating characters and wild adventures in this children's classic in the same genre as *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Wizard of Oz*," Joe Bishara said.

When the book was first published, *Newsweek* called it "a tribute to the pleasures and terrible powers of storytelling." Said the *Boston Sunday Herald*: "Like all good fables and fairy tales, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* yields its riches on many levels. Readers will relish the wordplay and multilingual punning."

All performances will be held in at the Agnes Jeffrey Shedd Theater at Columbus School for Girls, Columbus Performing Arts Center, 56 S. Columbia Ave. Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$10 for children. Show times are Fridays, May 3 and 10, at 7 p.m.; Saturdays, May 4 and 11, at 2:30 p.m.; and Sundays, May 5 and 12, at 2:30 p.m.

Two adult actors will perform in *Haroun*: Matthew Sierra (Mr. Sengupta/Snooty Buttoo/Khattam-Shud) and Arijit Sur (Rashid Kahlifa). Sierra was an acting apprentice at CATCO during the 2016-17 season. At CATCO he performed in *Breaking the Code*, *Sex With Strangers* and *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*. Sur, who is making is CATCO debut, is the founder of Spotlight Theatre and The Columbus South Asian Theatre Festival.

They are joined by youth actors:

- Gabi Yuan (General Kitab), who is participating in her first production with CATCO is Kids and CSG.
- Chloe Steere (Mudra/Unsmiling Man #2/Bus Passenger), a sixth-grader, who has taken several theatre classes and has played roles such as Happy the Dwarf in *Snow White* and Waternoose at CATCO is Kids.

- C.C. Seamon (Iff, the Water Genie), who is an eighth-grader at CSG and enjoys acting, field hockey, swimming and baking. She is participating in her second CATCO is Kids' production.
- Tyree Walton (Soraya Khalifa), who is participating in her first show CATCO is Kids and second show at CSG, and enjoys acting, singing and art.
- Cammie Bess Kleinman (Mr. Butt/Butt the Hoopoe), who is excited to be performing in her second CATCO is Kids' show. She has performed in the past six shows at her middle school.
- Boula Ross (Bolo/Snooty Soldier/Chorus), who attends CSG and has performed in several CATCO is Kids' plays, most recently *Babe, The Sheep-Pig*.
- Sylvie Schmitz (Mudra's Shadow/Passerby/Man/Bus Passenger/Chorus), who recently moved to central Ohio from Madison, Wis., and is a sixth-grader at CSG. She performed in many plays at her former community theater, and enjoys acting and singing.
- McKenzie Harmon (Goopy/Walrus/Chupwala/Bus Passenger/Chorus), who is performing in her first play with CSG and CATCO is Kids.
- Jayden Clarett (Haroun Khalifa), who performed in *Anne of Green Gables* in 2017, another co-production between CSG and CATCO is Kids.
- Gabrielle Clarke (Blabbermouth), who enjoys acting, singing and dancing.
- Alia Danielle Knight (Ambassador/Princess Batcheat/Passerby/Chorus), who has been performing on stage since she can first remember. Whether improv for family and friends, a role in the school play, or theatre workshops, she enjoys making others laugh or cry.
- Erin Finn (Bagha/Passerby/Chorus), who is making her theatre debut.
- Pearl Harris (Oneeta/A Page/Chorus), who is performing in her first CATCO is Kids' production and third middle school play.
- Asajj Allen (Mali/Chupwala/Chorus), who is a sixth-grader. Acting and singing credits include a Mosaic production, the Keys 2 Life production, and *School House Rock Live! JR*.

Student stage managers for *Haroun* are Violet Demko-Garcha and Penelope Riederer. Demko-Garcha, an eighth-grader, is participating in her second show with CATCO is Kids and fifth show with CSG. Riederer, who calls *Haroun* her favorite show with its jokes and clever lines, is excited to be a stage manager for this co-production.

Joe Bishara has worked at regional theatres in Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, and Florida as an actor, director, producer, and administrator. At CATCO, he directed *The Christmas Schooner*, *Breaking the Code* (co-production with Evolution Theatre Co.), *Sex with Strangers*, *The Realistic Joneses*, *Master Class*, [title of show], *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*, *Forbidden Broadway's Greatest Hits, Vol.1*, and *A Christmas Carol*, 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 *Corpus Christi*, *The Spitfire Grill*, *Bat Boy: The Musical*, *Sticks and Stones*, and *Ferguson: Truth Matters*.

Liz Bishara holds her BFA in acting with an emphasis in musical theatre from Wright State University. She has directed and choreographed for CATCO, CATCO is Kids, Wright State University, SRO, and many others. Some of Bishara's favorite projects include *Evil Dead the Musical*, *Forbidden Broadway*, *Bat Boy*, *The Hobbit*, and *The Never Ending Story*.

CATCO is Kids is currently selling subscriptions for the 2019-20 season. Visit catcoistheatre.com. In addition, CATCO is Kids has announced its Summer Acting Camps for kids ages 4-15 at the Columbus Performing Arts Center, 549 Franklin Ave. Visit www.catcoistheatre.org to register online.

CATCO and CATCO is Kids' 34rd 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 Helen E. Sandfort Arts-in-Education and Florence E.K. Hurd 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 and CATCO is Kids' season sponsor is L Brands; season partner is the Columbus Metropolitan Library; and media sponsor is WOSU public media. CATCO is Kids' presenting partner is The City of Columbus Recreation and Parks. For more information, visit catcoistheatre.org.

About CATCO

CATCO is central Ohio's professional Equity theatre company, providing quality theatre and educational programs for all ages with CATCO is Kids, CATCO's imaginative, captivating theatre program for central Ohio's young theatre lovers and their families. Together, 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. For more information, visit catcoistheatre.org.

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