



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**CATCO is Kids Rings in the Holidays with *A Winnie-the-Pooh Christmas Tail* Dec. 6-22**

***Join Hundred-Acre Wood friends for fun, excitement and delightful songs***

Christopher Robin and friends from the Hundred-Acre Wood share a story of a Christmas eve a long time ago in a special CATCO is Kids' holiday theatrical treat, *A Winnie-the-Pooh Christmas Tale*, which features fun, excitement, delightful songs and themes of caring, sharing the importance of friends.

In this heartwarming tale, inspired by A.A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh*, Eeyore, the miserable old gray donkey, who lives by himself in the thistle corner of the Hundred-Acre Wood, has lost his tail. All seems lost until his friends, Winnie-the-Pooh and Piglet, organize a search party.

*A Winnie-the-Pooh Christmas Tale*, with book, music and lyrics by James W. Rodgers, will be presented Dec. 6-22 at the Columbus Performing Arts Center, Van Fleet Theatre, 549 W. Franklin Ave. Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$10 for kids.

To familiarize children with the play before they attend and enrich their experience afterward, parents can access CATCO is Kids' play guide for *A Winnie-the-Pooh Christmas Tail*, which can be found at:

[https://www.catco.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/A-Winnie-the-Pooh-Christmas-Tail-Playguide\\_REV.pdf](https://www.catco.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/A-Winnie-the-Pooh-Christmas-Tail-Playguide_REV.pdf)

CATCO is Kids will present a sensory friendly performance of *A Winnie-the-Pooh Christmas Tail* Saturday, Dec. 14, at 4 pm. The experience will be modified to be more comfortable and accessible to audience members with social and sensory disabilities, which can include, but are not limited to, autism. The performance is presented in partnership with the Autism Society of Central Ohio and sponsored by PNC.

To learn more about this performance, please visit:

<https://www.catco.org/sensory-friendly/>

Directing the cast is Chris Leyva, a director, playwright, and podcast host (Writers Get Animated). He co-directed *Sunshine* at CATCO is Kids last season. His plays *Cowgirls Don't Ride Zebras* and *The Throne of Oz* both premiered in previous seasons at CATCO is Kids.

Cast members are:

**CAROLYN DEMANELIS** (Winnie-the-Pooh), whose favorite roles include the Pilot, *Grounded*, and Catherine Givings, *In the Next Room* (Red Herring Productions); Alma, *Summer & Smoke* (Virginia Repertory Theatre); Lady Macbeth, *Macbeth* (Wit Theatre Company). She also served as stage manager for *Our Town* (University of Virginia).

**GRANT DINE** (Christopher Robin), who only recently discovered his love of acting and entertaining. In the last year he has acted in plays, musicals, and short films. In addition to acting, he enjoys soccer and golf.

**WILL ELLIS** (Eeyore), who is making his CATCO is Kids' debut. Most recently he was seen as Naphtali in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* at Weathervane Playhouse. Other roles include Jehan (*Hunchback of Notre Dame*), Peter (*bare: A Pop Opera*), and Tobias (*Sweeney Todd*).

**KATIE HJORTSBERG** (Piglet), who is appearing in her second role at CATCO/CATCO is Kids, having performed in *The Christmas Schooner* last year. Before moving to Ohio, she was active in community theater in Florida. Credits include Helen Keller (*The Miracle Worker*), Mary Lennox (*The Secret Garden*), and Annie (*Annie*).

**VINCENT MANERI** (Tigger), who is 12 years old, and attends Dominion Middle School. He has performed in BalletMet's production of *The Nutcracker*, *Twisted 2*, and *Giselle*. This summer he was the lead role as Buddy in CATCO is Kids' production of *Elf The Musical JR*.

**JILLIAN REEB** (Rabbit), whose acting credits at CATCO is Kids include *Madeline's Christmas* (Madeline), *Sunshine* (Alex), *Seussical KIDS* (Gertrude McFuzz), *Alice in Wonderland JR*. (Alice), and *Annie KIDS* (Miss Hannigan).

**BOULA ROSS** (Owl), who is a seventh-grader at Columbus School for Girls. Acting credits include *Madeline's Christmas*; *The Throne of Oz*; *Babe*, *The Sheep Pig*; *Nightfall with Edgar Allan Poe*; and *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*.

**EMMA SHACHTER** (Kanga), who is an eighth-grader at Hilliard Heritage Middle School. Favorite roles include *Madeline's Christmas* (Kate), *A Seussified Christmas Carol* (Timmy Loo Hoo), and *Cowgirls Don't Ride Zebras* (Penny).

**EMMETT VAN BUSKIRK** (Christopher Robin), who is making his CATCO is Kids' debut. Recent acting credits include BRAVO's *The Secret Garden* (Colin Craven); Westerville Civic Theatre's *Mary Poppins* (Michael Banks); and CCT's *Peter Pan* (Michael Darling).

Other members of the production cast include Quinton Jones, music director; Rachael Riggs Leyva, choreography consultant; Ashlyn Keska, stage manager; Jon Baggs, scenic designer; Caroline Dittamo, lighting designer; Patrick Bryant, costume designer; and Jennifer Maynard, props master.

Show times for *A Winnie-the-Pooh Christmas Tail* are Fridays, Dec. 6, 13 and 20, 7 p.m.;

Saturdays, Dec. 7, 14 and 21, 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.; Sundays, Dec. 8, 15, and 22, 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. There are two school matinees Friday, Dec. 6, at 9:45 a.m. and 11 a.m., respectively.

CATCO and CATCO is Kids' 35th 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 Bernhart J. Mertz and Barbara B. Coons 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; presenting sponsor 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 [catco.org](http://catco.org).

CATCO is Kids is currently selling subscriptions for the 2019-20 season. Subscriptions for CATCO and CATCO is Kids are available by calling the ticket office at 614.469.0919 or visiting [catco.org](http://catco.org). Single tickets are now on sale for *Dr. Seuss's The Cat in the Hat, Press Start!* and *School House Rock Live!* Remaining shows are:

- ***Dr. Seuss's The Cat in the Hat***  
Based on the book by Dr. Seuss  
Play originally produced by the National Theatre of Great Britain  
Jan. 10-26, 2020  
Shedd Theatre, The Columbus Performing Arts Center  
549 Franklin Ave.
- ***Press Start!***  
Book by Denver Casado, Brian Dawson  
Music and Lyrics by Denver Casado  
March 6-15, 2020  
Van Fleet Theatre, The Columbus Performing Arts Center  
549 Franklin Ave.
- ***Schoolhouse Rock Live! JR.***  
Lyrics by Bob Dorough, Dave Frishberg, George Newall,  
Kathy Mandry, Lynn Ahrens, Tom Yohe  
Music by Bob Dorough, Dave Frishberg, George Newall,  
Kathy Mandry, Lynn Ahrens, Tom Yohe  
Book by George Keating, Kyle Hall, Scott Ferguson  
Based on the ABC-TV educational animated series,  
which aired during the 1970s and 1980s.  
March 21-22, 2020

Shedd Theatre, The Columbus Performing Arts Center  
549 Franklin Ave.

- ***Roald Dahl's Matilda The Musical***  
Book by Dennis Kelly  
Music and Lyrics by Tim Minchin  
Based on the book, *Matilda*, by Roald Dahl  
May 7-24, 2020  
Shedd Theatre, The Columbus Performing Arts Center  
549 Franklin Ave.

### **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](http://catcoistheatre.org).

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