



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CATCO is Kids Presents Ohio Premiere of *Press Start!* March 6-15

Nintendo and Sega video games come to life with cast of 21 central Ohio youths

Be transported to the bright, pixelated world of classic Nintendo and Sega video games in *Press Start! A New 8-Bit Musical*, an Ohio premiere presented at CATCO is Kids March 6-15, featuring a cast of 21 central Ohio youths.

When the famous characters in the play run out of lives, they decide to put on a musical fund-raiser that will help them raise gold rings and play on through hilarious and heartfelt musical numbers composed in 8-bit synthesizers, such as *The Villain Song*, *The Hero Song* and *The Sidekick Song*. When things go terribly awry, the quiet sidekick Little Mushroom must find the hero within to help save the day.

“In this new, interactive musical, audience members help their video game favorites gain more lives and ‘play on,’ while learning important lessons about friendship, working together and that heroes are not the only ones who can be heroes,” said Andrew Protopapas, CATCO interim education director and the director of *Press Start!* “This show, which appeals to adults, as well as kids, is part nostalgia, part humorous journey into the world of video games,” he said.

Press Start! contains references to and similar characters from the following video game franchises: The Legend of Zelda, Sonic the Hedgehog, Mario, Pac Man, Megaman, Minecraft and Angry Birds. All performances will be in the VanFleet Theatre, Columbus Performing Arts Center, 549 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 *Press Start!*, which can be found at:

<https://www.catco.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Press-Start-Playguide.pdf>

In addition to his role as a theatre educator, Protopapas enjoys acting, directing, and writing for the stage. Earlier this season, he directed CATCO is Kids’ production of *Alice in Wonderland JR*. Other directing credits at CATCO is Kids include *Babe*, *The Sheep-Pig*, *Garfield: The Musical With Catitude*, and *A Seussified Christmas Carol*.

Acting credits at CATCO and CATCO is Kids include *Breaking The Code*; *A Christmas Carol*; *Peter and the Starcatcher*; *Master Class*; *Jungle Book*; and *Honk!* Acting credits at other central Ohio theatres include *Les Misérables*; *Company*; and *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*.

Members of the production cast are Quinton Jones, music director; Ashlyn Keska, stage manager; Jon Baggs, scenic designer; Rowan Winterwood, lighting designer; Debbie Hamrick, costume designer; Caroline Dittamo, sound designer; Jennifer Maynard, props master; and Chase Holt, technical director.

Members of the cast are:

- Young Adventurer, Nick Sanchez-Zarkos
- Marco the Plumber, Sam Hardjono
- Speedy the Hedgehog, Cali Russell
- Megakid, Claire Christie
- Karate Guy, Kaiden Walker
- LeBron James, Bobby Loyd
- Spikey Turtle, Preston Hudson
- Mad Scientist, Emmett Hamm
- Evil Robot, Emma Schachter
- Slimy Alien, Izzy Vatter
- Generic Ghost, Cameron Krisiewicz
- Zombie, Claire Richey
- Little Mushroom, Katie Hjorstberg
- Lorenzo the Plumber, Grace Hardjono
- Helpful Dinosaur, Lizzie Huelskamp
- Fairy Guide, Kalie Walker
- Paws the Fox, Carson Williams
- K9, JT Foley
- Princess Pomegranate, Jillian Christie
- Pac Anne, Boula Ross
- Square Builder Eve, Danielle Nugent
- Angry Bird/Giuseppe, Jillian Reeb

Show times for *Press Start!* are Friday, March 6 and 13, 7 p.m.; Saturday, March 7 and 14, 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.; and Sunday, March 8 and 15, 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for kids.

There is a sensory-friendly performance at 4 p.m. Saturday, March 14. The theatre 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/>

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.

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. Remaining shows are:

- ***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***
Co-Production with Columbus Children's Theatre
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.

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