



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CATCO is Kids, CATCO Open 2020-21 Season With Free Virtual Event Oct. 24

***Short Plays Toward an Antiracist Tomorrow presented as part of
King Arts Complex's HeART of Protest initiative***

CATCO is Kids in conjunction with CATCO will open its 2020-21 season with a free virtual presentation of *Short Plays Toward an Antiracist Tomorrow*, Saturday, Oct. 24, at 3 p.m., featuring four short plays for multigenerational audiences by award-winning playwright, poet and educator Idris Goodwin.

The plays, *The Water Gun Song*, *ACT FREE*, *Nothing Rhymes with Juneteenth*, and *#Matter*, are being presented as part of the King Arts Complex's HeART of Protest initiative, honoring George Floyd's 46 years of life and ongoing worldwide protest for social justice, and in collaboration with Goodwin and TYA/USA.

"Earlier this year, Goodwin made these plays available to everyone as open-source scripts, without any barriers to access, to spark conversations about race in America and to serve as a catalyst for action," said Leda Hoffmann, CATCO artistic director. "It is our sincere hope that audiences will watch and discuss *Short Plays Toward an Antiracist Tomorrow* with their families and friends Oct. 24 and long afterward."

Each play explores a different theme to encourage dialogue about an antiracist future, and targets various age groups:

- A parent and child discuss why a water gun isn't simply a toy in *The Water Gun Song* (for audiences age 6 and up), approximately 10 minutes.
- Three kids wrestle with the definition of freedom in *ACT FREE* (for audiences age 9 and up), approximately 8 minutes.
- A parent and child try to complete a rap for a school presentation in *Nothing Rhymes with Juneteenth* (for audiences 9 and up), approximately 8 minutes.
- Former high school friends debate life and race in *#Matter* (for audiences age 14 and up), approximately 11 minutes.

The plays will be produced separately and streamed simultaneously on YouTube (the link will be available at <https://kingsartscomplex.com/heartofprotests/> and <https://www.catco.org>). In conjunction with the plays, (3 p.m., *The Water Gun Song*; 3:30 p.m., *ACT FREE*; 4 p.m. *Nothing Rhymes with Juneteenth*; and 5:30 p.m., *#Matter*), CATCO is Kids and CATCO will host talkbacks with the artists following each performance; a panel discussion titled “Talking to Kids about Race” will take place at 4:30 p.m. At the end of the performances, the theatres will host a virtual opening celebration at 6 p.m.

After Oct. 24, the plays will be online at <https://www.catco.org> and available to stream free of charge to continue the conversation.

The *Short Plays Toward an Antiracist Tomorrow* will feature Central Ohio actors, both young performers and adults. Actors and stage managers for each production include the following:

- *The Water Gun Song*
Stage Manager – Kaitlyn Speakman
Jules – Christopher Austin
Sam – Simone Dean
- *Nothing Rhymes with Juneteenth*
Stage Manager – Vivica McCrary
Jean – Sharon Udoh
Pete – Preston Hudson
- *ACT FREE*
Stage Manager – Hannah Pohlman
Kid 1 – Carter Minor
Kid 2 – Lynnix Price
Kid 3 – Micah Carnes
- *#Matter*
Stage Manager – Hannah Pohlman
Cole – Philip Hickman
Kim – Lori Lindsey

Directing the plays are :

- Shanelle Marie, (*The Water Gun Song*), who appeared at CATCO in *Home* last season, and is a board member and collaborator with the Maroon Arts Group, which creates performance arts to nurture local talent and enrich the community. Previously, she was the assistant director of *The Color Purple* with State of the Arts Productions.
- Kenneth Brown, (*Nothing Rhymes with Juneteenth*), who is a Columbus-based renaissance artist with acting, singing, dancing, writing, choreography and directing credits. Recent credits include working as an actor, singer, dancer and assistant choreographer for *Renaissance Magic*, and actor, singer, dancer and choreographer in several productions with Thioissance West African Dance Institute.
- David S. Harewood, (*#Matter*), who has spent the last 20 years exploring the intersection of art and social justice movements. He was the dramaturg for CATCO’s production of *Eubie!* and

directed *Home* last season. Recent credits include re-imaginings of great speeches and letters from the Civil Rights era and before.

- Patricia Wallace-Winbush, (*ACT FREE*), who is a longtime central Ohio actor and director. She has performed with several local theatre companies: Players Theatre, Gallery Players, Red Herring Theatre Ensemble, Short North Stage and CATCO. Directing credits include several productions with PAST Productions Columbus, of which she is co-founder and co-producer.

When Hoffmann assumed the role of CATCO's artistic director earlier this year, she shared commitment to using the power of theatre to inspire conversation, action and change in these unprecedented times of cultural and social changes under way in our community and world.

"Theatre has amazing power – and the responsibility – to bring people together. Those shared experiences have the power to transform," she said. "I am grateful to the King Arts Complex for leading the HeART of Protest effort and bringing so many artists and arts organizations together."

Hoffmann has background in youth theatre education and directing adult shows, and enjoys opportunities to combine them. The multigenerational Goodwin plays offer that opportunity to connect CATCO and CATCO is Kids' adult and youth audiences, she said.

CATCO and CATCO is Kids' 36th 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 is Kids' presenting sponsor is The City of Columbus Recreation and Parks. CATCO and CATCO is Kids' season partner is the Columbus Metropolitan Library and media partner is WOSU Public Media. For more information, visit catco.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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