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Nov. 17, 2020

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CATCO Announces Virtual Holiday Play: *A Columbus Christmas Carol*

Contemporary retelling of Dickens' classic presented virtually Dec. 16-27

CATCO's virtual season continues next month with a contemporary retelling of Charles Dickens' classic, *A Columbus Christmas Carol*, Dec. 16-27. Directed by CATCO artistic director Leda Hoffmann, written by Julianna Gonzalez, and featuring a cast of Ohio actors. CATCO's contemporary adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* is set in Columbus and features bank owner Ebony Scrooge as she embarks upon a journey of family, redemption and love.

"We can't wait to introduce audiences this holiday season to a new, contemporary, and local version of the story that we know well. Julianna's play asks us to rethink its familiar themes of kindness, charity and redemption through a present-day lens," Hoffmann said. "During this upcoming holiday season, when many family traditions will be celebrated differently, it is our sincere hope that this production will brighten spirits and bring people together even when we are apart."

This virtual story of a central Ohio family will be told by an all-Ohio cast and creative team. Longtime Columbus actor Patricia Wallace-Winbush will perform the role of Ebony Scrooge. She has performed with local theatre companies, most notably CATCO, Players Theatre, Gallery Players, Red Herring Theatre Ensemble, Short North Stage and PAST Productions Columbus, where she is also co-founder and co-producer. She is a member of Good Medicine Productions as Doctor Funzi, a healthcare clown, and recently performed her one-woman show, *Thank God I Look Good in Pink*, which chronicled her journey as a breast cancer survivor.

Wallace-Winbush is joined by Ernaisha Curry (Fanny); Kathy Mendenhall (Scrooge's Mom); Frank Ruiz (Cratchit); Andrew Pandolfi de Rinaldis (Tiny Tim); Nadja Simmonds (Ghost #1); and Christopher Austin (Ghost #2).

Tickets are available by purchasing CATCO's 2020-2021 virtual season pass for \$55 at www.catco.org/season-pass. Single virtual passes (one ticket per device) for *A Columbus Christmas Carol* are available for \$20 each at www.catco.org/columbus-christmas-carol/

Ticketholders have two ticket options:

- an opening night ticket with a link to view the inaugural airing of the show, including a live chat with other viewers and access to a post-show opening celebration and talkback with members of the cast and artistic team.

- a standard ticket with a link that provides access for one viewing, whenever it's convenient for the virtual ticket holder, throughout the run of the show (Dec. 16-27). Once viewing has begun, the show will be available for 24 hours.

This multigenerational virtual play features one young performer as Tiny Tim and is appropriate for all ages. It has a run-time of about one hour.

Hoffmann, who was named CATCO's artistic director after a nationwide search, will make her CATCO directing debut with *A Columbus Christmas Carol*. She recently served as the artistic director of Chicago-based Strawdog Theatre Company and was a member of Milwaukee Rep's artistic staff for seven years, working in the education and literary departments and founding Milwaukee Rep's community engagement department.

Also in Milwaukee, as the artistic director of Luminous Theatre, Hoffmann produced and directed site-specific productions of *Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play* and *The Penelopiad*. Her work as a director has been seen nationwide at Milwaukee Rep, Illinois Shakespeare Festival, Texas Shakespeare Festival, University of Miami, Door Shakespeare, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks, Jedlicka Performing Arts Center, Northbrook Theatre, The Alchemist Theatre, Max and Louie Productions, and Riverside Theater Iowa City. She has also been a teaching artist for more than 10 years, directing youth and teaching with Hartford Stage, Milwaukee Rep, Mudlark Theater, Northbrook Park District, and Skyline Studios.

Gonzalez is a playwright and theatre-maker living in Detroit, Michigan, where she works with Black and Brown Theatre. She holds a BFA in Drama from Vassar College, and her work has been produced in Portland, New York City and at Vassar College. She served as the assistant director for the world premiere of *Óye Óya* at Portland's Milagro Theater.

A Columbus Christmas Carol is an original production adapted from Gonzalez' play, *Blessed – A Christmas Carol Adaptation*, which was performed by Black and Brown Theatre in Detroit last holiday season.

Other members of the creative team are: Rachel Heine, stage manager; Chris Leyva, digital designer; Shelby Holden and Tabitha Abney, costume designers; Pat Ward; sound designer; and Caroline Dittamo and Rowan Winterwood, production coordinators.

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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