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CATCO Re-Organizes Staff Structure

Production, education, marketing, and casting positions added

CATCO announced today the hiring of four new staff members – Tony Koehler, production manager; Francine Marchelle, education director; Aleesha Nash, marketing director; and Christopher Austin, part-time casting director, to position the theatre for future growth.

“During the past year, we strategized about how to best maximize growth at CATCO and position the theatre to thrive in a post-pandemic world. We concluded that the best strategy would be to re-organize our existing staff structure, and are excited to add Tony, Francine, Aleesha and Christopher to our staff in alignment with our purpose to harness the transformational power of theatre that engages with our current moment, inspiring a community of empathy,” said Christy Farnbauch, CATCO executive director.

“The talents and experience Tony, Francine, Aleesha and Christopher bring to CATCO as we embark on our 2021-22 season will enable the theatre to create exceptional work, hire outstanding talent, expand education programs in classrooms and community settings, and engage audiences in immersive experiences,” Farnbauch said.

They join Farnbauch, Leda Hoffmann, artistic director, and Andrew Protopapas, education manager, as members of the CATCO team.

Koehler, teaching artist, actor, director and designer, most recently was production manager at GALA Hispanic Theatre in Washington, D.C., and a teaching artist at The Theatre Lab School of Dramatic Arts also in Washington, D.C. Other positions include properties master at The Folger Shakespeare Theatre, and theatre credits at Constellation Theatre Company and Rainbow Theater Project in Washington, D.C., and Piven Theatre Workshop, Redmoon Theatre and Northwestern University in Chicago. A graduate of the University of Kentucky with a BA in theatre, he has received numerous awards including a 2019 Helen Hayes Award for Best Musical and Best Ensemble and Broadway World’s 2019 regional award for Best Musical in the Small Professional Theatre Category for *FAME the Musical*, and a 2017 Helen Hayes Award for the Spanish language premiere of *In the Heights*. In addition to his theatre background, he also has several years of business management experience as an operational manager at J.Crew.

Marchelle, an educator, producer, director, actress and singer, who has more than 20 years of youth program leadership, curriculum development, youth development, child-care, and education experience, most recently was the director of after-school and summer programming at Broad Street Presbyterian Church. She has a master's degree in educational leadership, curriculum and instruction from the University of Phoenix, and has also led youth education initiatives at the YMCA, Crittenton Community School, and Directions for Youth and Families, where she also was the theatre director. Founder of the *Achievement Retro Awards*, a youth research arts project based in Atlanta, and the founder and director of *Amateur Community Theater*, a youth academic arts program also based in Atlanta, Marchelle has produced and directed her own staged plays, including a gospel musical love story, *A Trip to God's House*, an autobiographic story, *For the Love of Me!*, and monologues, *We the People Telling Hour Story* and *Men on Pause*.

Columbus native Nash, who has experience in theatre and film directing; play and television writing; and theatre marketing, previously oversaw audience development at The Flea Theater in New York City. Before that, she worked in marketing roles for Manhattan-based global nonprofits, collaborating with diverse stakeholders to plan and implement strategies for fundraising, recruitment, and community and government relations. In addition to writing, directing and producing new works on Off-Broadway and Off-Off-Broadway, director and playwriting credits include Cherry Lane Theatre, the National Black Theatre, The Flea Theater, Primary Stages, The Wild Project, The Arctic Group, Goddard College, the Kraine Theatre, and the Drama League in New York City. Nash is an alumna of the Lincoln Center Directors' Lab and the Stage Directors and the Choreographers Foundation Observership Program. A graduate of Otterbein University, she also received an MA from New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, and an MFA in dramatic writing from Goddard College, where she received its Engaged Artist Award.

Austin, who graduated with a BA in theater from Otterbein University and earned his MA in Pastoral and Professional Counseling from Methodist Theological School in Ohio, has worked in voice-over, film and stage productions in Ohio and abroad. His performances as Othello in *Othello* and John in *The Whipping Man* received critical acclaim and award recognition. He served as the emcee for CATCO's 2021 gala, and performed in CATCO's virtual productions of *Short Plays Toward an Antiracist Tomorrow* and *A Columbus Christmas Carol* last season.

CATCO recently announced its 2021-22 season featuring *Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play*, Oct. 28-Nov. 14, 2021; *Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins*, Nov. 27-Dec. 12, 2021; *School Girls; Or, the African Mean Girls Play*, Jan. 27-Feb. 13, 2022; *Luchadora!*, Feb. 17-March 6, 2022; *Head Over Heels*, March 17-April 3, 2022; and *Prima Donna*, April 28-May 15, 2022.

Subscriptions for mainstage and youth audience packages are on sale now. Subscribers who want to lock in their subscriptions now can do so with a \$50 deposit by clicking the link below or calling the CBUSArts Ticket Center at 614.469.0939. Once a deposit is made, a ticketing representative will contact subscribers to complete their subscription process. Deposits are non-refundable. <https://my.cbusarts.com/2740?promoApplied=true>

CATCO's 37th season is made possible in part by state tax dollars allocated by the Ohio Legislature to the Ohio Arts Council (OAC), a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally, and economically. They also are supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

CATCO also appreciates the support of the William C. & Naoma W. Denison Fund 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.

About CATCO

CATCO is central Ohio's leading professional Equity theatre company, providing exceptional productions and educational programs for adults and young people, in response to our community's needs. We believe theatrical storytelling transforms people of all ages by immersing them into immediate, communal experiences. CATCO exists to harness the transformational power of theatre that engages with our current moment to inspire a community of empathy. For more information, visit catco.org.

CATCO's Vision

CATCO strives to become a nationally recognized, anti-racist contemporary theatre company that anchors a thriving Columbus theatre ecosystem in an empathetic, equitable world.

CATCO's Purpose/Mission

To harness the transformational power of theatre that engages with our current moment to inspire a community of empathy.

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