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CATCO OPENS 2022-23 SEASON WITH *INDECENT* BY PAULA VOGEL NOV. 3-20

A spirited, revolutionary love story by Pulitzer-Prize winning playwright celebrates Yiddish language and literature

CATCO will open its 2022-23 season Nov. 3-20 with a spirited and revolutionary love story celebrating Yiddish language and literature written by celebrated Pulitzer-Prize winning playwright Paula Vogel.

INDECENT was inspired by the events surrounding the controversial 1923 Broadway debut of Sholem Asch's *God of Vengeance*, and charts the history and path of artists who risked their careers and lives to perform it.

“Welcome to our new season and to this beautiful play that reminds us why art matters – and to share hope and joy. These are the kinds of stories that we need right now,” said Leda Hoffmann, CATCO’s artistic director and *INDECENT* director. “I am thrilled to share the work of these incredible actors and designers – many of whom are working at CATCO for the first time – with audiences.”

INDECENT, a play with music, was first produced in 2015 and opened on Broadway in 2017, ultimately winning three Tony Awards. *The Los Angeles Times* called the play “hauntingly captivating” while *Newsday* described it as a “gripping extraordinary play about a play.” TheaterMania said it’s “a must-see for anyone who cares about the important legacy of Yiddish theater, or of theater in general.”

Performing in the cast are:

- Benny Zelkowicz (Lemml), who is making his CATCO debut. An animator (*The LEGO Movie*, *Robot Chicken*); voice actor (Lunar Jim, BBC/CBC); and novelist (*The Books of Ore Trilogy* published by Disney-Hyperion), his award-winning, sand-animated film *The ErlKing* showed at Lincoln Center and Sundance. Recent roles include *Plaza Suite* (Jesse Kiplinger, Gallery Players), *A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder* (Ensemble, Gallery), and *Oliver!* (Bill Sikes, Gallery). He is working on an animated documentary and has published two neuroscience papers.

- Becky Keeshin (Chana), whose acting credits include *CHICAGO: ShakesFest!* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre); *Fiddler on the Roof* (Lyric Opera of Chicago); *Nunsense, Chicago Sings Sondheim, New Faces Sing Broadway NOW* (Porchlight Music Theatre); *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Shrew'd* (First Folio Theatre); *33 to Nothing, Killing Game* (A Red Orchid Theatre); *Junie B. Jones* (Marriott Theatre); and *A Little Night Music* (Writers Theatre). Workshops include San Diego Repertory Theatre, 11th Hour Theatre Company and American Theater Company.
- Ben Tracy (Avram), who is a former CATCO acting apprentice. His acting credits include *Gross Indecency, Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery, Cowgirls Don't Ride Zebras* and *Anne of Green Gables* at CATCO; *Let the Right One In* and *A Christmas Carol* at Hippodrome Theatre; *Peter and the Starcatcher* at West Virginia Public Theatre; and *Charlotte's Web* at Old Log Theatre. Also a playwright, his short play, *One Cow Mooing*, was the Audience Choice Winner (2016) for the Theatre Oxford National Ten Minute Play Contest, and his full-length play, *Disingenuous – a Cock (and Bull) Story*, was a Semifinalist (2021) for the Garry Marshall New Works Festival.
- Cassandra Bissell (Halina), whose regional credits include Actors' Theatre of Louisville, Arizona Theatre Company, Cleveland Playhouse, Court Theatre, Great Lakes Theater, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Indiana Repertory, Milwaukee Repertory, Northern Stage, Northlight Theatre, People's Light, and the Utah Shakespeare Festival. In Chicago, she has performed at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, First Folio, Rivendell Theatre and Steppenwolf. Small Professional Theatre credits include Company of Fools (Hailey, Idaho); Forward Theater (Madison, Wis.); freeFall Theatre (St. Petersburg, Fla.); Next Act Theatre and Renaissance Theaterworks (Milwaukee, Wis.); and Third Avenue Playworks (Sturgeon Bay, Wis.)
- Ryan Bernstein (Mendel), who is making his CATCO debut. Acting credits include *The Drowsy Chaperone* (Robert), *West Side Story* (Riff), *Newsies* (Race), *The Wedding Singer* (Sammy), *Young Frankenstein* (Igor), *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Leaf Coneybear), and *Bare: A Pop Opera* (Jason).
- Anne McEvoy (Vera), who is making her CATCO debut. She is a Cleveland-based actor and director, who has performed extensively over the years at The Beck Center, Cleveland Playhouse, Cleveland Public Theatre, Dobama, Ensemble Theatre, Karamu, None Too Fragile, Ohio Shakespeare Festival, and Seat of the Pants.
- Phillip Wells (Otto), who is making his CATCO debut. He most recently appeared in *Murder on the Orient Express* (LTOB); *The Sound of Music* (Westerville Civic Theatre); and *Present Laughter* (Curtain Players). Other performances include *Side Show, Ragtime, Guy & Dolls, Les Miserables, Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (Gallery Players); *Hello, Dolly!* (OU-Lancaster); *Kiss Me, Kate* (Northland Performing Arts Center); and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Curtain Players).

Before joining CATCO in 2020, Hoffmann was the artistic director of Chicago-based Strawdog Theatre Company. She 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. Her CATCO directing credits include *Head Over Heels*, *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play*, *An Iliad*, and *A Columbus Christmas Carol*.

INDECENT features music, which will be performed by musicians Jeff Rolland, clarinet; Mathew Kinnear, violin; and Marian Funk, accordion. They will perform under the direction of music director Allan Finkelstein. Other members of the production staff are: Asher Vickers, movement director; Jessica Morgan, intimacy and violence director; Melissa Lusher, dialect coach; Kirsten Upchurch, stage manager; Brooke Stiles, assistant stage manager; Dan Gray, set designer; Molly Tiede, lighting designer; Mary McMullen, costume designer; Doc Davis, sound designer; Lonelle Yoder, props designer; Rowan Winterwood, master electrician; Isaac Steinhour, technical director; and Matthew Sierra, assistant director.

Tickets for *INDECENT* are \$47.50 each and can be purchased [online](#). Thursday, Nov. 3, 7:30 p.m., and Friday, Nov. 4, 8 p.m., are preview performances; opening night is Saturday, Nov. 5, 8 p.m. Performances during the run are Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays, 8 p.m.; and Sundays, 2 p.m. The play runs for 90 minutes with no intermissions and is recommended for patrons 12 years of age and older.

CATCO will present *INDECENT* in the Studio One Theatre, Riffe Center, 77 S. High St., fourth floor. This season patrons will be able enter the theatre from the High Street entrance, or through the parking garage.

Subscriptions for the 2022-23 season are currently on sale for \$171 (four shows; the New Works Festival is an add-on of \$25 per subscription). Flex tickets are available for \$179 for a pack of four tickets. Visit <https://www.catco.org/season-pass/> for details.

New this season is a COVID-19 policy occurring the first Sunday of each production, Nov. 6, 2 p.m., for *INDECENT*, which will require patrons to wear masks. The safety of our patrons, actors and staff remains our top priority. Our HVAC system has been professionally evaluated and meets federal guidelines to ensure a safe environment. Additionally, all performances will be open seating.

The theatre also offers a Pay-What-You-Want (PWYW) ticket option for every preview this season. PWYW tickets may be purchased in advance by telephone (614.469.0939), in-person at the CBUSArts ticket office, 55 E. State St., or at the venue starting two hours before showtime. CATCO also offers \$20 student rush tickets to every performance. Tickets (one per student with

a valid ID) are sold at the box office, 77 S. High St., Fourth Floor, up to two hours before curtain and are subject to availability.

CATCO's presenting sponsor for *INDECENT* is The Lurie Family; supporting sponsor is JEWISHCOLUMBUS.

The Robert Weiler Company is the season sponsor for CATCO's Pay-What-You-Want program.

CATCO's 38th 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.

CATCO also appreciates the support of the Ella Richey Wells and Theodore R. Magnuson 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., Nationwide Insurance Foundation, SUNNY95 94.7FM, WOSU public media and Columbusunderground.

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 an anti-racist, nationally recognized 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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