



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CATCO Presents *Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins* Nov. 27-Dec. 12, 2021

Music and puppetry bring the award-winning children's book to life this holiday season

CATCO will present the beloved children's holiday story, *Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins*, Nov. 27-Dec. 12, 2021, as its first in-person theatre for youth audience production this season.

Legendary folk hero Hershel of Ostropol saves Hanukkah in this stage adaptation of the award-winning children's book by Eric Kimmel written in 1989. Will Hershel's wit, wisdom, and delightful sense of humor be enough to outsmart the goblins, allowing the villagers to celebrate Hanukkah once again?

"We are incredibly excited to welcome families back to in-person productions with the stage adaptation of this beloved children's book," said Giselle Siegel, *Hershel* director. "Audiences will be enthralled by this tale of courage, strength and creativity as it comes to life with live music and puppets."

Kristie Koehler Vuocolo will perform the role of Hershel. A central Ohio native, she who has worked professionally nationwide as a performer and teaching artist with an emphasis on comedy, improvisation and clown theater. She was a founding member of the arts education company, Playmakers Laboratory Theater, an ensemble member of the Neo-Futurists Theater, and part of the clown care unit for Chicago's Big Apple Circus. She is the founder of Good Medicine Productions, a theater ensemble that brings professional comedic performers to Central Ohio pediatric facilities and nursing homes.

She is joined by troupe members and musicians:

- Rachel Arpin, a learning and development consultant for The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center (The James), who returns to the stage after taking a break to pursue a Doctor of Education degree in organizational leadership. Her previous credits include *Something Rotten* (Helena), *In Spite of Reality* (Diane), *Stealing the Show* (Sophie), and *Into the Woods* (Cinderella's stepmother).
- Lauren Bandman, music educator and ordained Cantor, who is making her CATCO debut. She is co-creator and performer of the one-woman show, *Love's Journey*. She is featured on several musical recordings, including *A Sanctuary in Time* and *A Collection of Soulful Jewish Melodies*, and is the founder/owner of and instructor at The Studio: Private Music Lessons, LLC.
- KatieAnn Bonavita, whose recent credits include Ariel in *The Little Mermaid*; Sibella in *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* and Rusty in *Footloose* at La Comedia Dinner Theatre; Sister Mary Amnesia in *Nunsense* (Little Theatre off Broadway); and Cinderella in *Into the Woods* and Maguellone in *Céndrillon* (OSU Opera and Lyric Theatre).
- Alayna Hanson, who is making her CATCO debut and whose recent performance credits include *Much Ado About Nothing* (Dogberry) and *Michael von Siebenburg Melts Through the Floorboards* (Mrs. Rosemary). When not on the stage, she can be found writing plays, painting or taking photos.

- Ryan Jones, who returns to the CATCO stage after appearing in *Eubie!* during the 2018-19 season. Recent theatre credits include *Saturday Night Fever*, *Sister Act*, *HAIR*, *Smokey Joe's Café* and *West Side Story*. He studied vocal performance at Bowling Green State University and is a classically trained dancer.

Hershel Director Siegel is an actress, director, choreographer and theater educator, whose acting credits include national tours, children's theater, original off-Broadway runs and premieres and regional theater. She has served as a director and choreographer for numerous productions featuring kids, teens and adults at programs in New York, New Jersey and Columbus. She currently teaches at Chambers Music Studio, the Columbus JCC and Columbus Jewish Day School.

Other members of the creative team are: Kaitlyn Speakman, stage manager; Nic Lacy, music director; Darin Keesing, set designer; Rowan Winterwood, co-lighting designer; Caroline Dittamo, co-lighting designer; Baylee Sheets, costume designer; Dayton Wilson, props designer; and Isaac Steinhour, technical director.

Hershel will be presented in the Studio Two Theatre at the Riffe Center, 77 S. High St. The show, which opens Saturday, Nov. 27, at 1 p.m. is recommended for ages 6 and up. Performances are at 1 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays throughout the run, as well as at 7 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays. Tickets can be purchased online at www.CBUSarts.com, the CBUSArts ticket center, 39 E. State St., by telephone, 614.469.0939, or at the door.

Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$15 for children. Students may purchase \$20 tickets two hours before any performance at the Riffe Center box office, 77 S. High St., Fourth Floor. One ticket per valid student ID can be purchased based upon availability.

As part of our commitment to ensure our theatre is accessible to every member of the central Ohio community, CATCO also has a Pay-What-You-Can (PWYC) ticket option this season for the first performance of every play at both mainstage and theatre for young audience productions. For *Hershel*, the opening performance is Saturday, Nov. 27, 2021, at 1 p.m. PWYC works like this:

PWYC tickets can be purchased in advance by calling 614.469.0939 or visiting the CBUSArts Ticket Center at 39 E. State St. Downtown. The ticket center is open Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., and the telephone center receives calls Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Same-day tickets are available two hours before the show in-person at the Riffe Center box office, 77 S. High St., Fourth Floor.

For the safety of staff, actors and audience, CATCO will require proof of COVID-19 vaccinations or proof of a negative PCR test within 72-hours of attending a production for all patrons 12 years of age and older. We additionally require mask-wearing indoors at our theater for all audience members and staff until further notice.

Remaining shows in CATCO's 2021-22 season are *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.

Presenting sponsor for *Hershel* is JewishColumbus.

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 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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