



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CATCO PRESENTS OHIO PREMIERE OF ...*BUT YOU COULD'VE HELD MY HAND*

*Whimsical, playful drama celebrates the beauty of friendship
with dance, music and poetry*

Four 10-year-olds meet at a wedding. Little do they know this chance encounter will change their lives for decades to come. Moving eloquently through time, dance, music and poetry are used to explore sexuality, gender, race, love and other weighty life topics in CATCO's production of the Ohio premiere of *...but you could've held my hand* by JuCoby Johnson.

Columbus director, actor and teaching artist David J. Glover will make his CATCO debut directing *...but you could've held my hand*, which will be produced March 23-April 8, 2023, in Studio Two, Vern Riffe Center.

"In this play with elegant writing and striking images, JuCoby gives us an opportunity to watch four acquaintances – complex, broken, yet beautiful human beings – transform into soulmates," Glover said. "The relationships are exquisite, and many viewers will see themselves within the story."

...but you could've held my hand was originally developed at the 2020 O'Neill National Playwright Conference by Tony-nominated Director Lileana Blain Cruz. Playwright Johnson, a 2021-22 McKnight Fellow in Playwriting, has also written: *How It's Gon' Be*, *5*, *Revelations* and *I'll Be Seeing You Again*.

"Johnson's effective use of time-jumping and his exquisitely wrought characters ... lift the play from the merely marvelous into the sublimely superb. ... Beautiful, exquisite, profound," says the *New Play Exchange* about *...but you could've held my hand*. Austin-based *Sight Lines* called the play "... thoughtful, imaginative."

Performing in the cast are:

Robbi Fryer (she/her), a Cleveland-based actor and graduate of Baldwin Wallace University with a bachelor's degree in fine arts, who will perform on the CATCO stage for the first time. Her previous acting credits include *Stop Kiss*, *The Burial at Thebes*, *Marginalia: Interplay with Poe*,

Weimar and *Troilus and Cressida* (Baldwin Wallace), and *The Odyssey* and *Our Town* (Dobama Theatre);

Jabari Johnson (he/him), who last performed at CATCO in the 2011 production of *Encyclopedia Brown*. Since then, he has appeared on stage at numerous Columbus theatre companies. Most recently, he performed in *A Tale of Two Cities* at Actors' Theatre of Columbus and *Everybody* at Available Light Theatre;

Taylor Nelson (she/they), who made her acting debut in ArtPrize 2009 in *RabbitMitten USA!* and studied Black and Africana Studies at Denison University. She was recently seen in the Association of University Women's #StandUpToSexism campaign, as well as the indie film *Poser* at the Tribeca Film Festival. Acting credits include CATCO's *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play* and Actors' Theatre of Columbus' *The African Company Presents Richard III*; and

Alan Tyson (he/him), who is making his CATCO debut. His recent credits include Gary in *Slave Play* at Short North Stage; Frank Thorney in *Witch* at Available Light Theatre; and King in August Wilson's *King Hedley II* with Actors' Theatre of Columbus. He also starred in the delightful horror comedy film, *Obstacle Corpse*, as the loveable Ezra.

Glover, an active artist in the Columbus theatre scene, is proud to call Available Light Theatre his artistic home. When not making professional theatre, the graduate of Heidelberg University can be found training the next generation of artists and students as the Upper School Dean of Students and Director of Theatre Arts at the Wellington School. Recent directing credits are *Everybody* at Available Light and *The African Company Presents Richard III* at Actors' Theatre of Columbus.

Tickets for *...but you could've held my hand* are \$47.50 each and can be purchased [online](#). Thursday, March 23, 7:30 p.m., and Friday, March 24, 8 p.m., are preview performances; opening night is Saturday, March 25, 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 14 years of age and older.

CATCO will present *...but you could've held my hand* in the Studio Two Theatre, Riffe Center, 77 S. High St., fourth floor. This season patrons will can enter the theatre from the High street entrance, or through the parking garage entered from Front Street.

New this season is a COVID-19 policy occurring the first Sunday of each production, March 26, 2 p.m., for *...but you could've held my hand*, which will require patrons 14 years of age or older to wear masks.

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 supporting sponsors for *...but you could've held my hand* are Thompson Hine and The Robert Weiler Company. Additional support is provided by Heartland Bank.

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. The theatre also is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

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. 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 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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