

BAY AREA  
CHILDREN'S  
THEATRE

Media Contact: Vivian Auslander, 510-524-2941  
[vivian@vivianauslander.com](mailto:vivian@vivianauslander.com)

### **Bay Area Children's Theatre Matches \$5,000 Challenge Grant**

The Bay Area Children's Theatre (BACT) has successfully matched a \$5,000 challenge grant from the East Bay Community Foundation (EBCF).

The EBCF grant is awarded as part of the East Bay Fund for Artists matching grant program to support artists in the Bay Area, engage the community, and create new works for East Bay audiences and organizations.

BACT will use the grant to produce *Circus Summer*, in collaboration with master clown and Cirque du Soleil artist Jeff Raz. *Circus Summer* will blend theatre and circus arts to create a unified piece of theatre around the theme of fairytales. The show will debut in August, 2011.

To fulfill the goal of the challenge grant, BACT raised \$5,000 from supporters in the community through a campaign that included a benefit performance by Raz and other circus artists at Berkeley's Freight & Salvage.

((high-res .jpg attached of Jeff Raz balancing audience member Jaya Martin. Photo credit: Joshua Posamentier))

"We are honored that the East Bay Community Foundation awarded a challenge grant to the Bay Area Children's Theatre, and grateful to our friends in the community who responded so generously," said Nina Auslander, BACT executive director. "The extraordinary Jeff Raz can now begin work on a production that will blend the thrill, skill and humor of circus arts with the joy of story. We look forward to working with him in this exciting new endeavor."

*Circus Summer* is Raz's second collaboration with BACT. He created and directed *Wonderland: A Circus Adaptation of Alice in Wonderland* for the company in 2009.

Raz has explored the intersection of circus, theater, and music for more than 30 years, as a clown, actor, teacher, director, and playwright. His distinguished career has taken him from remote Alaskan villages to Broadway, across the continental United States, and to Europe and Japan. Jeff founded the Clown Conservatory, the only comprehensive professional clown training program in the United States, now in its 10th year. He is also the Bay Area casting partner for Cirque du Soleil and the associate producer of Circus Flora.

**ABOUT BAY AREA CHILDREN'S THEATRE**

[Bay Area Children's Theatre](#) (BACT) was founded in 2004 as Active Arts Theatre for Young Audiences to bring high quality theatre to family audiences in the Bay Area. BACT specializes in stage adaptations of great children's books. Through productions dedicated to artistic excellence, BACT seeks to engage a new generation of theatergoers and inspire young people to open their imaginations to new worlds. BACT performances feature gifted professional adult performers, designers, and directors who bring vibrant, creative worlds to life and who understand how to make theatre accessible for young audiences. BACT's programs include main stage productions in Berkeley, San Ramon, San Francisco and Saratoga; an educational theatre program; national touring productions; and pre-kindergarten special productions of books that the youngest readers enjoy with their parents.

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