

BAY AREA CHILDREN'S THEATRE *CIRCUS ADVENTURE* PREMIERE OPENS AUGUST 6

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WHO: [Bay Area Children's Theatre](#)

WHAT: ***CIRCUS ADVENTURE***

The story of KaiKu the Clown, whose curiosity sends him halfway around the world, will intrigue children of all ages when ***CIRCUS ADVENTURE*** comes to town on August 6. Inspired by the epic tale of the hero seeking to return to his roots, this world premiere production by the Bay Area Children's Theatre blends toe-tapping music, the thrill and skill of the circus, and the excitement of live theatre. ***CIRCUS ADVENTURE*** is created and directed by Cirque du Soleil artist Jeff Raz, with support from the East Bay Community Foundation.

WHEN: Saturdays and Sundays at 2 p.m., August 6 – 21

WHERE: Freight & Salvage, 2020 Addison Street, Berkeley, CA

TICKETS: \$15 children, \$17 seniors, \$20 adults

BOX OFFICE: <http://www.bactheatre.org/> and (510) 296-4433

((High-res .jpeg attached. L to R: Mahsa Matin, Juliana Frick, Cassie YueChun Weigel, Nobutaka Mochimaru. Photo credit: Joshua Posamentier))

DESCRIPTION:

Musical clowns, agile acrobats, a gifted young aerialist, and a host of other circus artists tell the tale of KaiKu the Clown in the Bay Area Children's Theatre production of ***CIRCUS ADVENTURE***, opening Saturday, August 6, for a three-week run at Berkeley's Freight & Salvage, 2020 Addison Street, Berkeley, CA.

Created and directed by Cirque du Soleil artist Jeff Raz, ***CIRCUS ADVENTURE*** combines music, magic, artistry, and interactive fun with the audience, as KaiKu the Clown suddenly finds himself far from home, facing down an evil wizard, and meeting other challenges in his quest to return to his family.

The production, a world premiere, is partially supported by a grant from the East Bay Community Foundation (EBCF) 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.

Weekday Performances for Summer Camps

The Bay Area Children's Theatre will perform **CIRCUS ADVENTURE** for summer camps on weekdays. Tickets are \$9 per camper with one free staff member for every 10 campers attending.

CAMP SHOWS: groups@bactheatre.org

Artists

Jeff Raz, creator and director, 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, most recently as the central character in Cirque du Soleil's *Corteo*. A decade ago, Raz founded the Clown Conservatory, the only comprehensive professional clown training program in the United States. He is the Bay Area casting partner for Cirque du Soleil, the artistic director of the Medical Clown Project, and a coach with the global consulting firm Stand & Deliver. Raz's play, *Road to Hades*, runs at Shotgun Players through mid-September. *Circus Adventure* is his latest collaboration with Bay Area Children's Theatre; he created and directed *Wonderland* for the company in 2009.

Juliana Frick is a physical theatre performer working in the Bay Area. After studying music at Hampshire College, she moved to California to pursue a life in the circus. She is currently studying mime, mask, and character work at the Flying Actor Studio in San Francisco.

Luz Gaxiola specializes in musical feats of dexterity to delight and amaze. Her main instrument is accordion, but she also plays trombone, tuba, and theremin. After graduating from the San Francisco Clown Conservatory and the Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theatre, she co-founded San Francisco's all-women clown troupe Circus Finelli. She performs regularly with Circus Finelli in the Bay Area.

Felicity Heses received her BA in theatre arts from Kalamazoo College (Michigan), completed the Clown Conservatory Program in San Francisco, and has trained in acrobatic and aerial arts at the San Francisco Circus Center. Her performance credits include *Lysistrata*, *The Tangerine Family Circus*, *The Pickle Family Circus*, *Monkey King: A Circus Adventure*, and *Cabaret Lunatique* with Teatro ZinZanni. She will direct *Emil of Lonneberga* for Bay Area Children's Theatre this winter. Felicity is not only a performer and a director but also the mother of a 14 month old.

Calvin Kai Ku graduated with a BA in theater from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and spent the next few years training at the San Francisco Circus Center, where he honed his craft

as a physical comedian and acrobat. Using his skills in clowning, acrobatics, and magic, he combines a variety of performance arts to create a unique balance of theater and circus.

Mahsa Matin is a living cartoon character. Her comedy is reminiscent of the golden age of silent films, with a touch of break dancing thrown in. Mahsa plays trombone, trumpet, guitar, and various percussion contraptions. She can often be seen busking the streets of San Francisco with her one-woman band, the Beat Feet Orchestra, or playing trumpet atop her eight-foot unicycle with Circus Finelli, a four-woman clown troupe specializing in irreverent, cartoonish circus comedy.

Nobutaka Mochimaru, a native of Kanagawa, Japan, started dancing when he was 19. After dancing in various dance companies and theatrical productions, he moved to San Francisco to train in the two-year professional contortion program at the San Francisco Circus Center under Serchmaa Byamba. He is very grateful for the opportunity to study, train, and work with so many talented artists.

Cassie YueChun Weigel joined the aerial troupe Les Aerielles, directed by Janene Davis, at the age of 7. Her performance credits include Circus for Arts in the Schools, the DeYoung Museum, You Tube Live, Lawrence Hall of Science, Google, and Ted X World Youth Day. Cassie loves all of the aerial specialties, including static trapeze, tissu, and aerial hoop. Cassie also studies acrobatics, tumble track, trampoline, and flying trapeze. She will be a sixth grader at St. Philip Neri in Alameda.

About Bay Area Children's Theatre

Our Mission: To inspire young audiences with imaginative productions, introduce children of all backgrounds to the excitement of live theatre, and create an engaging, entertaining, and educational environment in which children and their families can explore and enjoy the arts.

How We Carry Out Our Mission

- Bring high quality, professional theatre to children and their families, with artists who create vibrant worlds that are intriguing to young audiences
- Encourage young people to explore literature, language, and the arts by producing stage adaptations of great children's books
- Engage pre-kindergartners in the world of theatre with productions specially designed for them
- Develop and perform exciting new work for the stage
- Reach out to children who might not otherwise experience live theatre with free tickets and touring productions at local schools, libraries and community centers
- Create touring productions for young audiences nationwide
- Introduce children to the joy of performance with classes, workshops, and summer camp theatre programs

Bay Area Children's Theatre (BACT) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.