

BAY AREA  
CHILDREN'S  
THEATRE

**For Immediate Release**

June 16, 2010

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**Musical *Little Engine That Could* Opens July 10 at Children's Fairyland**

Oakland, CA... *The Little Engine That Could*, adapted for the stage by James Larson with music and lyrics by Stuart Kenny, opens for a five weekend run on Saturday, July 10, at Children's Fairyland in Oakland.

Produced by [Bay Area Children's Theatre](#) (BACT) and directed by Doyle Ott, this musical version of the beloved picture book by Watty Piper tells the story of the little engine who bravely takes over when a bigger train breaks down while carrying toys to the children on the other side of the hill. Can he do it? He thinks he can! And he has the doll, the clown, and the monkey to cheer him on.

Ott, a longtime circus performer, director and teacher, adds to the delight of this classic tale by introducing acrobatics to the production.

*When:* Saturdays and Sundays, July 10 – August 8, at 10:30 a.m. and 4 p.m.

*Where:* [Children's Fairyland](#), 699 Bellevue Avenue, at Lake Merritt in Oakland

*Tickets:* \$14 (includes admission to Children's Fairyland); \$10 for BACT Flex Pass subscribers, Children's Fairyland members, and groups of 10 or more

*Box Office:* <http://www.bactheatre.org/> and (510) 296-4433

**Artists**

**Director Doyle Ott** is the artistic director of children's theatre at Children's Fairyland and teaches theatre at Sonoma State University. A graduate of the Clown Conservatory, he has performed in numerous theater productions and clown and circus shows, including Make A Circus, the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival and Lunatique Fantastique. He has taught classes for children and adults in puppetry, clowning, acting, movement, creative drama, storytelling, improvisation, mask making, juggling, and aerial arts. Ott has presented his research on youth circus training internationally. His directorial experience includes theater and circus shows for such organizations as the New Conservatory Theater, the Crucible, and Splash Circus Theatre.

— more —

Ott is supported by Music Director **Julia Norton**; Stage Manager **Dora Daniels**; **Michael Fink** and **John Draginoff**, set design and construction; and **Felicia Lilienthal**, costume design.

**Charlie Cromer** (Clown) makes his Bay Area debut in *The Little Engine That Could*. He recently moved to Oakland from Ohio, where he studied theatre and religion at Kenyon College. His latest role was the Commedia dell'arte character Arlecchino in the Dayton Human Race Company's educational outreach program.

**Tamara Miller** (Doll) began her performing career as an actress in Los Angeles, appearing for several seasons at Shakespeare L.A., where her roles included Desdemona, Beatrice, Titania and Viola. She holds a degree in music from the University of California, Berkeley, where she studied vocal performance and conducting. She most recently appeared in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* with Mission City Opera. An avid hiker and backpacker, Miller lives in Oakland with her husband, son, and dog, Charlie Brown.

**Slater Penney** (Monkey) teaches circus arts to the young and young at heart, and performs ensemble physical theatre around the world. He won an Emmy for motion capture work with Tech TV in 2001, was a monkey chanter at the Bali Arts Festival in 2005, and has taught workshops and classes for many circus schools in the Bay Area for the last 10 years. He and his wife live in Oakland.

**Reggie White** (Little Engine and all five other engines) recently appeared as the limber and tuneful Snoopy in BACT's production of *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*. A native of Upland, CA, White is currently earning his bachelor's degree in Theatre and Communications at California State University, East Bay. He has appeared in Bay Area productions of *RENT*, *Spunk*, and *A Chorus Line*.

(Please note: high-res jpeg of the cast is attached. Clockwise from left top: Reggie White, Charlie Cromer, Slater Penney, Tamara Miller. Photo by Nina Meehan.)

**Bay Area Children's Theatre** 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 literary adaptations of great children's books. Through exciting productions that emphasize 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; educational drama classes; touring productions; and pre-kindergarten special productions of books that the youngest readers enjoy with their parents.

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### **Calendar Listing**

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

*What:*           *The Little Engine That Could*

Acrobatics add to the delight of this musical stage version of the popular children's book about the little engine who bravely takes over when a bigger train breaks down. Can he get the toys over the hill? He thinks he can! Produced by Bay Area Children's Theatre at Children's Fairyland, adapted for the stage by James Larson with music and lyrics by Stuart Kenny, and directed by longtime circus performer and teacher Doyle Ott.

*When:*           10:30 a.m. and 4 p.m., Sat. - Sun., July 10 – Aug. 8

*Where:*          [Children's Fairyland](#), 699 Bellevue Ave., Oakland

*Tickets:*        \$14 (includes admission to Children's Fairyland); \$10 for BACT Flex Pass subscribers, Children's Fairyland members, and groups (10 or more)

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