

BAY AREA  
CHILDREN'S  
THEATRE

**Bay Area Premiere before National Tour**

***THE MAGIC SCHOOL BUS LIVE! THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE***

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At the world premiere of *The Magic School Bus Live! The Climate Challenge*, Bay Area families can “climb aboard” for a breathtaking field trip, as the exuberant Ms. Frizzle, her curious students, and their beloved resident reptile, Liz, travel from the polar ice to the tropics and from the ocean to the upper atmosphere to investigate why the world is getting warmer and why we should care.

Co-produced by the Bay Area Children’s Theatre (BACT) and Oregon Children’s Theatre, *The Magic School Bus Live! The Climate Challenge* opens at the Dougherty Valley Performing Arts Center in San Ramon on Saturday, September 24, and moves to Berkeley on Saturday, October 1, for a four-weekend run at Freight & Salvage.

After its Bay Area debut, the show takes off for a national tour to more than 20 states, in association with Maximum Entertainment Productions (MEP).

((High-res .jpeg attached of Jessica Payne as Ms. Frizzle. Photo Credit: Bay Area Children’s Theatre))

Based on the latest book in the popular Magic School Bus series by Joanna Cole & Bruce Degen, this energetic new musical, directed by Tracy Ward and written by Doug Cooney and Scott Elmegreen, with music and lyrics by Scott Elmegreen, follows the adventures of everyone’s favorite Magic School Bus characters—endearingly hesitant Arnold, petite powerhouse Wanda, smart and spunky Keesha, and their classmates—as they sing up a storm, dance along with a hip-hopping Liz, and gather information about global warming and what to do about it.

“There’s something fishy going on with planet earth,” says Keesha. “We need to find out what!”

**San Ramon:**

*When*: Saturday, September 24, and Sunday, September 25, at 2 p.m.

*Where*: The Dougherty Valley Performing Arts Center, 10550 Albion Road, San Ramon

*Tickets*: \$20 for adults, \$17 for seniors, and \$15 for children (14 and under)

*SAN RAMON BOX OFFICE*: <http://www.bactheatre.org/> and (925) 973-3343

**Berkeley:**

*When*: Saturdays and Sundays at 2 p.m., October 1 - 23

Where: Freight & Salvage, 2020 Addison Street, Berkeley  
Tickets: \$20 for adults, \$17 for seniors, and \$15 for children (14 and under)  
BERKELEY BOX OFFICE: <http://www.bactheatre.org/> and (510) 296-4433

## ARTISTS

**Tracy Ward** (director) is a freelance director in the San Francisco Bay Area, focusing on new works for the American theater. Ward worked with BACT on its two national tours of *Strega Nona*, in association with MEP (2009 and 2010). Recent productions include: *The Horses* by Brian Thorstenson at AlterTheatre, *The Shaker Chair* by Adam Bock at Shotgun Players/Encore Theater, *JUANA*, a new opera by Carla Lucero at Theatre Artaud, and the critically acclaimed, award-winning production of *Hunter Gatherers* by Peter Nachtrieb. Other directing credits include work with Theatre Rhinoceros, Abydos Theater, Stephen Pelton Dance Theater, Playground Company, Z Space, and the Summer Plays Festival in New York City. Ward will be assisted by costume designer Ulises Alcala, set designer Emily Greene, projection designer Lloyd Vance, music director Sean Fenton, and choreographer Nicole McGann.

**Doug Cooney** (playwright) is a screenwriter, playwright, novelist, lyricist, and educator based in Los Angeles. In 2010, he was awarded the prestigious Charlotte Chorpenning Cup by the American Alliance for Theater and Education for his distinguished body of work for young audiences. In 2009, *NOBODY'S PERFECT*, his youth musical based on the novel co-written with actress Marlee Matlin, received a national tour through the Kennedy Center. *IMAGINE ME*, a musical, was produced at South Coast Rep in 2008. His play, *THE FINAL TOUR*, was developed at the Sundance Theatre Labs 2003 with director Moises Kaufmann. His musicals, *THE VERY PERSISTENT GAPPERS OF FRIP* and *THE LEGEND OF ALEX*, premiered at the Mark Taper Forum's P.L.A.Y. and toured Los Angeles County. *THE BELOVED DEARLY* was produced by Lincoln Center Institute in a production directed by Elizabeth Swados.

**Scott Elmegreen** (playwright, composer, and lyricist) is a playwright, composer, lyricist, and novelist whose work has premiered on Broadway, television, and in film, as well as off-Broadway, regionally, and internationally. Recent projects include the Emmy Award-nominated *COLIN QUINN LONG STORY SHORT*, directed by Jerry Seinfeld (original compositions; Helen Hayes Theatre, HBO special, national tour), *AWESOME ALLIE: FIRST KID ASTRONAUT* (book; Vital Theatre, pub. Theatrical Rights Worldwide), *COLLEGE THE MUSICAL* (NYMF Award for Excellence in Writing, pub. Dramatic Publishing), *VOTE FOR ME: A MUSICAL DEBATE* (New York Musical Theatre Festival, commissioned by Aged in Wood productions), *STRAIGHT* (developed by Tony Award-winning producer Andy Sandberg), and *THUCYDIDES* (Samuel French Off Off Broadway Festival Winner, pub. Samuel French). Elmegreen's original music is featured in *PILED HIGHER AND DEEPER THE MOVIE*, based on the popular webcomic, PhD Comics. He has scored and orchestrated numerous plays, including *WHAT I TOOK IN MY HAND* (Ontological-Hysteric Incubator, Brick Theatre), *DAGUERREOTYPE* (Abingdon Theatre), *WE CAN'T REACH YOU*, *HARTFORD* (Fringe First Nomination), Joyce Carol Oates' *TONE CLUSTERS* (Fringe Report Award - Best Play), and *'S WONDERFUL: THE NEW GERSHWIN MUSICAL* (orchestrations; national tour).

((Note: Scott Elmegreen will be available for interviews in the Bay Area September 13-September 24. Call 415/509-1422.))

**Jessica Payne** (Ms. Frizzle) originates the role of Ms. Frizzle for BACT after playing Clorinda in BACT's 2010 national tour of *Strega Nona* in association with MEP. In the San Francisco Bay area, she has been seen in *The Full Monty* at Cabrillo Stage, *The Great American Trailer Park Musical* at the Willows, 42nd

Street Moon's *Girl Crazy* and the premieres of *Chaos Rules*, *SF Follies*, *Forever Broadway*, and *Oh My Godmother!* With the California Theatre Center, she and her actor-husband Kyle Payne toured the West Coast and took the first English-language children's musical to China. Payne, who hails from western Pennsylvania, earned her MFA in acting from Western Illinois University. She is also a private voice coach, music director, fight choreographer, and has taught theatre to students of all ages. Online at [www.iamjessicapayne.com](http://www.iamjessicapayne.com).

**Brian Conway** (Carlos) has appeared in commercials, TV, films, and numerous theatrical productions. Favorite stage credits include : Paul in the regional tour of *A Chorus Line* (Plan B Entertainment), Thalia (Sonny u/s) in *Xanadu* (The Retro Dome), Vega in *Damn Yankees* directed by Seinfeld's Jason Alexander (Reprise), Angel in *Rent* (Palo Alto Players), Tommy Keeler in *Annie Get Your Gun*, Chino in *West Side Story* (Moonlight Productions), Judah in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Sierra Repertory Theater), Linus in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* (Grove Productions), *Footloose*, *Annie*, *Aida* (Tuacahn Amphitheater), *Flower Drum Song* (American Musical Theater), and *All Shook Up* (Musical Theater West).

**Catherine Gloria** (Wanda) makes her BACT debut with this performance. Past credits include *Oliver!* ("Bet"; Woodminster), *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* ("Narrator"; TVRT), *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown* ("Lucy Van Pelt"; Willows Theatre Company), and *Miss Saigon* ("Kim"; Broadway by the Bay, DTC). When she's not journeying on the Magic School Bus, Gloria, a native of San Francisco, works as an elementary school teacher.

**Jacqueline Goalwin** (Dorothy Ann) boards the Magic School Bus after spending the last school year touring Northern California with Kaiser Permanente's Educational Theatre Program. Her credits include: *Beauty and the Beast* (Silly Girl), *Much Ado about Nothing* (Ursula) and a reading of *Torch: A New Musical*. Born and raised in Southern California, Goalwin earned her BA in theatre from California Baptist University, where she appeared in *Oklahoma!* (Laurie), *The Fantasticks* (Luisa), *Godspell* (Disciple), *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (Bride-Sarah), *Fiddler on the Roof* (Hodel), and *Seussical, the Musical* (Gertrude).

**Calia Johnson** (Keesha), a graduate of the University of California, Santa Cruz, with a major in theatre, appeared as Titania in the Shakespeare Santa Cruz Company's 2008 regional school tour of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Last year, she appeared in *Singing in the Rain* (Berkeley Playhouse) and in *Jerry Springer, the Opera* (Ray of Light Theater). During the Mountain Play's production of *Hairspray*, she had the opportunity to be a "Dynamite." Most recently, she appeared in the Internet dating musical, *OMFG*, produced at *ODC Theater*. She feels extremely blessed to be learning more and teaching others about...going GREEN! More at [www.caliajohnson.com](http://www.caliajohnson.com)

**Kyle Payne** (Arnold) has appeared in Bay Area productions at TheatreWorks, 42nd Street Moon, Bay Area Children's Theatre, Hapgood Theatre, California Theatre Center, Golden State Theatre Productions, Berkeley Playhouse, and the Zeum Theatre. He is featured on the original cast recording of *Oh My Godmother!* (available on iTunes), participated in the first American children's theatre tour to China, and has performed in England, Russia, and on many national tours. Last year, Payne played Big Anthony in the national tour of *Strega Nona*, produced by BACT in association with MEP. He is thrilled to be originating the role of Arnold in *The Magic School Bus Live! The Climate Challenge*, working alongside his

wife, Jessica. Payne has a BA in theatre from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and an MFA in Acting from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. [www.kylepayne.com](http://www.kylepayne.com)

**Matt Ono** (Liz), a native of Hawai'i, has appeared with Pacific Children's Theatre in *Children of the West* and *People America* and with Pacific Theatre Arts in *Blue Window*, *First Comes Love* and *All That Glitters*. A hula and hip-hop specialist, Ono also plays the ukulele. He graduated from the University of the Pacific in 2010 with a BS in biochemistry.

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## 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.