

For Immediate Release

The New York Children's Theater Festival Announces Shows for Spring 2012

First festival created for the development of children's theater in New York chooses spectacular original productions to showcase beginning April 20 at The Marjorie S. Deane Little Theater

New York, NY, February 29, 2012 - - [The New York Children's Theater Festival](#) has announced the accepted participants for its inaugural season, chosen by a judging panel of over 30 industry professionals including Kevin ("Elmo") Clash, Cheryl Henson (President, The Henson Foundation), John Tartaglia (Emmy, Tony, and Drama Desk Award nominated actor, producer, puppeteer), Thomas Schumacher (President, Disney Theatrical Productions), and Michael Jung, (Vice President, Theatrical Development, Walt Disney Imagineering).

The selected productions include the musical ***Go Green! Prince Charming's Quest for Love and Ecology in NYC***; the musical ***Scheme of the Super Bullies***; and a new version of ***The Velveteen Rabbit*** featuring live actors and puppets. The festival will premiere April 20 and run through May 5 at The Marjorie S. Deane Little Theater (10 West 64th Street at Central Park West). Tickets go on sale March 1, 2012, and are \$18 (\$15 YMCA members) available through Ovationtix, (866) 811-4111 or at <http://www.newyorkchildrenstheaterfestival.org/tickets.html>.

In making the announcement, *The New York Children's Theater Festival* co-founder Michael Shawn Lewis said, "The Festival was established to provide a birthplace in New York City for live children's entertainment and serve as a developmental platform for those passionate about creating innovative theatre experiences for children. These productions will colorfully add to the spectrum of theater offerings for children and meet our goal to help foster theater audiences. We are grateful that these pieces entered the competition, and cannot wait to showcase them."

[Go Green! Prince Charming's Quest for Love and Ecology in NYC](#)

Friday April 20 at 5:30 PM; Saturday April 21 at 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM

Music by Mary Feinsinger (www.maryfeinsinger.com)

Book and Lyrics by Joan Ross Sorkin (www.joanrosssorkin.com)

Go Green! is a musical fairy tale about a modern-day Prince Charming who must choose between his passion for saving the earth or completing his quest to preserve true love forevermore.

Festival co-founder Chelsey Shannon says, "*Go Green!* is an up-beat original story with unexpected twists and turns, making it exciting and fun for kids to follow. It has catchy music which totally hooked me and combines classic fairy tales with the idea of being green. Kids will be thrilled to see what Prince Charming would rather be doing with his free time."

[Scheme of the Super Bullies](#)

Friday April 27 at 5:30 PM; Saturday April 28 at 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM

Book, Music and Lyrics by Ross Wade

When mad scientist Countess von Cooties forms the League of Super Bullies, fiercely independent superhero Princess Dodgeball must learn to accept help from her friends (and the audience) to save her school, in this original musical.

Lewis says, "*Scheme of the Super Bullies* has colorful characters and a totally energetic story

that caught my eye right off the bat. The show has very relevant themes that are important to address, and the songs are truly hilarious!”

[The Velveteen Rabbit](#)

Friday May 4 at 5:30 PM; Saturday May 5 at 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM

Adapted by Andrew M. Frodahl, based on Margery Williams’ classic story

The classic story comes to life in this new version featuring live actors and puppets. A journey through time, this enchanting production focuses on the power of love and friendship.

Festival co-founder Renee Barnett says, "This is a wonderful approach to a heartfelt classic; a beautifully touching adaptation that children and adults will relate to."

[About the Festival](#)

Founded by Michael Shawn Lewis, Chelsey Shannon and Renee Barnett, *The New York Children’s Theater Festival* (NYCTF) serves to connect artists and industry professionals who are passionate about creating theatrical experiences and productions for children. NYCTF will foster critical awareness for the art form, in addition to providing professional development and enrichment opportunities for those dedicated to the craft of creating new works for young audiences. In addition to presenting new works, NYCTF will also provide resources and services that will support artists in their work to develop and inspire the next generation of theatergoers. NYCTF is filing as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization

[About the Founders](#)

Michael Shawn Lewis received a 2011 Drama Desk Award nomination as producer of *John Tartaglia’s ImaginOcean*, the internationally acclaimed children’s Off-Broadway musical which is currently on international tour. He co-created and produced family entertainment for Royal Caribbean and Carnival Cruise Lines and has consulted to Walt Disney Imagineering. Acting credits include *The Phantom of the Opera* and *The Woman in White* on Broadway; *Elisabeth - the Musical*, *Les Miserables*, and numerous productions of *Phantom* in Europe; and many Off-Broadway productions including *This Side of Paradise*.

Chelsey Shannon was the marketing manager for Play Me a Story, a New York children's storytelling company, and co-founded Rumpus Children's Theatre in Manhattan. As a performer, she has worked around the country and in NYC in numerous productions for Theatreworks USA, Working Man's Clothes Productions, The New School, The Sam French Festival, The New York Theatre Workshop, Columbia Stages, Prime Stage, and The City Theatre, among others.

Renee Barnett Renee Barnett has toured with ArtsPower National Touring Theater in several children’s productions and has been seen in various plays and musicals throughout the city. She has worked as a music teacher with a variety of children's centers throughout the city and currently works as a piano teacher for children with special needs. Renee is a co-founder of Rumpus Children's Theatre. She is mom to an amazing two year-old daughter.

Media contact: Rodi Rosensweig, 203/270-8929, Rodicompany@earthlink.net.