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**CHERYL L. WEST'S ADAPTION OF *THE WATSONS GO TO BIRMINGHAM-1963* GRACES
THE STAGE OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATER FROM MAY 3 TO MAY 22**

Seattle, Wash.— Seattle Children's Theatre (SCT) is proud to present *The Watsons Go To Birmingham-1963*, Cheryl L. West's adaptation of the beloved novel by Christopher Paul Curtis, co-commissioned by Seattle Children's Theatre in Seattle, WA, (Courtney Sale, Artistic Director), Chicago Children's Theatre in Chicago, IL, (Jacqueline Russell, Artistic Director) and the LAUNCH PAD at University of California, Santa Barbara – Department of Theater and Dance in Santa Barbara, CA in 2017 (Risa Brainin, Artistic Director). This powerful play showcases that perseverance and resiliency can be found in the most unimaginable places. Join the inspiring family road trip on the Eve Alvord Theatre stage from May 3 – May 22.

This heart-wrenching adaption by playwright Cheryl L. West follows Kenny Watson, an imaginative 10-year-old child of the eccentric Watson family, through a cross country journey. Kenny acts as a lens to author Christopher Paul Curtis' own family journeys, as well as the Birmingham church bombings of 1963.

"The themes and experiences captured in this play are historic, very real events in America's past, but they are not history. In a half decade, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham-1963's* relevancy has only increased. Kenny is tasked with understanding a hate and racism that are overt, and while some contemporary experiences are more subtle, we know both continue to persist." said Kevin Malgesini, SCT's Managing Director.

In a documentary with [LAUNCHPAD](#) about the making of *The Watsons Go To Birmingham-1963*, created by the UC Santa Barbara Film and Media Studies students, playwright Cheryl L. West explains, "...what I was interested in is 'How do children understand trauma?' I love the idea that a child can be healed by a sibling." When Kenny is thrust into a world of the unknown, audiences see the bond of these siblings grow.

Originally premiering at Chicago Children's Theatre in 2018, then LAUNCHPAD UC Santa Barbara in 2019, *The Watsons Go To Birmingham-1963* is the fourth production in SCT's 21-22 season.

"At its core this show is about how Kenny makes sense of this real trauma, how it shapes his experience and understanding of the world," said Malgesini. "It seems poignant and timely in its own way that this play is being realized on our stage as all young people have been through a trauma of sorts."

Tickets for *The Watsons Go To Birmingham-1963* are on sale now and can be purchased at sct.org.

What: *The Watsons Go To Birmingham—1963* based on the novel by Christopher Paul Curtis and adapted by Cheryl L. West

Where: Seattle Children's Theatre – under the space needle at **201 Thomas Street**.

When: May 3-May 22

Cost: Tickets from \$25

Purchase at sct.org.

SAFETY

SCT is joining arts and cultural peers in extending COVID policies through the end of the season. To learn more about what we're doing to keep artists, staff, and families safe, visit www.sct.org/safety.

ACCESSIBILITY OFFERINGS

SCT for ALL

Under SCT for ALL, SCT provides low-cost and free tickets to young people and any family who express need. To book tickets simply call (206) 441-3322 or email [the Ticket Office](#) and set any price for any upcoming show in the 21-22 season.

The Sensory Friendly/Relaxed Performance

May 15, 2022 at 2:30 p.m.

SCT's Sensory Friendly performance incorporates special modifications to accommodate children and families with sensory needs. [Learn more about Sensory Friendly Performances here.](#)

American Sign Language and Audio Described Performance

May 14, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.

Central to Seattle Children's Theatre's mission is a commitment to serving diverse communities including those who are deaf and hard of hearing and who have low vision or blindness. Tickets for ASL/AD performances are available throughout the season online or through the Ticket Office at tickets@sct.org or (206) 441-3322.

Industry Night for Educators and Arts Partners

Industry Night is a chance for educators and arts collaborators to connect and experience the joy of SCT ahead of the general public. Pay-What-You-Choose (PWYC) performances occur every first Tuesday preview for all remaining productions in the 21-22 season. Tickets can be booked by contacting the Ticket Office via [email](#), 206.441.3322, or in-person during regular operating hours.

- *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963* | May 3 at 7 P.M.
- *Airplay* | June 1 at 7 P.M.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Road We Travel: Celebrating Intergenerational Activists

May 21, 2022 after the 4:30 PM performance of *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963*

Join Northwest African American Museum and Seattle Children's Theatre for an intergenerational panel of elders in the Civil Rights movement and young leaders today for a conversation about the lived experiences of being young in a period of national conversation around anti-racism.

Moderated by Ms. Michelle Merriwether, President & CEO of the Urban League

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

CAST

Chip Sherman *Kenny Watson*

Rowin Mateo-Breaux *Byron Watson*

Nicholas Japaul Bernard *Daddy (Daniel Watson)*

Kaila Towers *Mama (Wilona Wilson)*

Anjelica McMillan *Joey Watson*

Shaunyce Omar *Grandma Sands*

James Schilling *Buphead/Southerner/Wool Pooh*

Lamar Legend *Understudy for Daddy & Bryon Watson*

Rosslyn "Roz" Cornejo *Understudy for Mama & Grandma Sands*

Shana Edouard *Understudy for Joey Watson*

Andy Walker *Understudy for Buphead/Southerner/Wool Pooh*

CREATIVE TEAM

Risa Brainin *Director*

Rosslyn "Roz" Cornejo *Assistant Director*

Cheryl L. West *Playwright*

Danielle Zandri *Stage Manager*

Cyrus Khambatta *Choreographer*

Noelle Diane Johnson *EDI Consultant*

Alyssa Franks *Dialect Coach*

Burton K. Yuen *Scenic Designer*

Trevor Bowen *Costume Designer*

Sarah Burch Gordon *Associate Costume Designer*

Miko Simmons *Projections Designer*

Michael Klaers *Lighting Designer*

Michael Keck *Original Scoring & Soundscape Designer*

Joseph Swartz *Video Programmer*

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As of 2022, Seattle Children Theatre's celebrates its 120th World Premiere since 1975. SCT is a leading generator of new works, providing children of all ages access to professional theater and theatre education. Under new initiatives, SCT for All provides low-cost and free tickets to young people and families. In addition, every first and fifth grade classroom in Seattle Public Schools can receive free tickets under One&Five. Learn more information about both of these programs at sct.org.

The 2021-2022 season is supported by generous contributions from season sponsors Microsoft, ArtsFund, The Shubert Foundation, Safeco Insurance, and Liberty Mutual Foundation which will help the organization serve 130,000 annually and provide more than 60,000 free or significantly reduced tickets to children in the Puget Sound area.