



EMERALD CITY THEATRE

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Announcing the Emerald City PlayGround

A lab for developing new works for families

CHICAGO, June 10, 2008 – Emerald City Theatre announces the formation of a lab for New Works Development for family audiences – **Emerald City PlayGround!**

Spring-boarding from successes in new works development, Emerald City has formed a Lab to formalize its new works process. The **PlayGround** will also research needs of young audiences and how those needs can be supported through theater. “Emerald City Theatre has become one of Chicago’s largest Gateways to the Arts for young children,” says Associate Artistic Director Ernie Nolan. “Understanding the difference between how a 4-year old learns from a play and how a 10-year old learns, takes a lot of time and research. This Play Ground will frame the work we have been doing to combine the understanding of our audience with the work our artists are creating.”

In recent years, Emerald City’s work has been receiving more attention across the country and even internationally. Works by Artistic Associates Alyn Cardarelli & Steve Goers such as **Frosty**, **Cinderella** and this season’s hit **How I Became a Pirate** have been licensed and will see a production by eight theaters across the country including

Walnut Street Theatre	Philadelphia, PA
Columbia Children’s Theater	Columbia, SC
Stages Theater	Minneapolis, MN
Active Arts Theatre	Oakland, CA
The Grand Theatre Company	Winter Park, CO
Lexington Children’s Theatre	Lexington, KY
The Children’s Theatre of New Jersey	
Chemain’s Theatre Festival	British Columbia, Canada

Just last month Ernie Nolan’s **A Fairy Tale Life** was selected for a reading at the International Association of Theater for Children and Young People Conference in Australia. And in Fall 2009 a children’s book version of Ralph Covert and G. Riley Mills’ **A Nutcracker Christmas** will be published by Chronicle Books (illustrated by Wilson Swain). All of these productions were originally commissioned by Emerald City Theatre.



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The **Emerald City PlayGround**, lead by newly appointed Associate Artistic Director Ernie Nolan, will serve as the incubator for all future new works. The PlayGround will manage the selection of concepts for adaptation, organize the internal creative input and produce table and staged readings.

Importantly, at The **PlayGround**, staged readings occur in front of the age group for which each new work is expected to be appropriate. This is a key component to the child development research. The research portion also includes accessing Emerald City's Education staff along with other early child education experts like those within Head Start and Chicago Public Library. Lastly, important input will be provided by a newly formed Parents and Teacher Advisory Group.

This season three new works will be produced coming out of the **Emerald City PlayGround** – ***If You Take a Mouse to School*** (based on the best-selling book by Laura Numeroff), ***Hansel & Gretel*** (from Ralph Covert & G. Riley Mills) and ***The Voyages of Dr. Dolittle***. Additionally 3-4 works for future seasons will begin their development.

About Emerald City Theatre

Emerald City Theatre is one **Chicago's most attended non-profit theaters with an annual attendance of nearly 100,000** (45,000 in attendance at its performance home at Apollo Theater, 55,000 on tour). **It's mission is to produce family theater experiences that serve as a Child's Gateway to the Arts and readies them for a world of opportunities.**

Emerald City is proud to be the home of **twenty-three world premiere productions** as well as **four Chicago premieres**. Emerald City employs nearly 100 of Chicago's top artistic and teaching talent to bring magical, interactive productions and programs that entertain children and their grown-ups in all parts of Chicagoland. The company's year-round programming includes live productions at the Apollo Theater and other venues, theater class offerings, summer theater camps, an extensive touring program, and an annual Celebrate Reading literacy initiative.

Emerald City continues to expand its artistic and institutional boundaries under the guidance of Executive Director Karen Cardarelli, Associate Artistic Director Ernie Nolan an 22-member Board of Directors, a ten-person Administrative staff, and an Advisory Council of nearly 40 civic and business leaders, media personalities and theater professionals. Emerald City is a non-profit company, supported by KPMG, Shore Bank, Elizabeth Morse Genius Charitable Trust, Chicago Community Trust, Illinois Arts Council and City Arts.

For more information, visit emeraldcitytheatre.com

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