

MEDIA RELEASE

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DALLAS CHILDREN'S THEATER ANNOUNCES ALL-NEW 2026-2027 SEASON

*Artistic Director Emily Ernst Unveils Bold, Entirely Fresh Lineup Celebrating
"Brave Enough to Be Yourself"*

Dallas, TX – Dallas Children's Theater (DCT), the only professional live theater in North Texas dedicated exclusively to young audiences and their families, announces titles for its 43rd season with five main stage productions, every single one making its DCT debut.

The 2026-2027 season lineup includes the Texas premiere of ***Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Rock Experience***, an electrifying musical version of Mo Willems' book; ***Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer***, the holiday classic come to life on the Baker stage; ***Corduroy***, a visually imaginative, highly physical stage adaptation of Don Freeman's beloved children's book; ***Marooned! A Space Comedy***, an exciting collaboration with Alex and Olmsted; and ***The Secret Garden: Spring Version***, Lucy Simon and Marsha Norman's musical masterpiece based on the novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett.

"This is a meaningful moment for Dallas Children's Theater," said DCT Executive Director Michael Meadows. "Our focus is steady and forward-looking. We're strengthening our financial foundation, supporting the artists who make this work possible, and ensuring that every child who walks through our doors experiences the transformative power of live theatre. This organization plays a vital role in Dallas's cultural life, and I'm honored to help guide it into its next chapter."

Chosen by Artistic Director Emily Ernst, the 2026–2027 season is united by a powerful theme: Brave Enough to Be Yourself. It marks a bold new chapter for the institution and signals an exciting new direction for North Texas family theater, reminding young audiences that their most authentic self is also their most courageous one. The 43rd season schedule is:

Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Rock Experience

(September / October 2026)

Texas premiere. Based on the hit children's book by Mo Willems, Wilbur and all his fellow naked mole rats in the Tunnel have always been, well...naked. Wondering what other possibilities are out there, Wilbur discovers a love for clothing and style. A special lesson and rock show all in one, *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed* has energetic songs, quirky characters, and a story unlike any other. Recommended for ages 4 and up.

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer

(November / December 2026)

The holiday classic soars off the screen in this musical adaptation of the beloved television special. Filled with holiday hits like "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" and "A Holly Jolly Christmas," *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*™ features all of your favorite characters including Santa and Mrs. Claus, Hermey the Elf, Bumble the Abominable Snow Monster, Clarice, Yukon Cornelius and, of course, Rudolph. When a storm threatens to keep Santa's sleigh from taking flight, what makes Rudolph different turns out to be what helps him save Christmas! Recommended for ages 4 and up.

Corduroy

(January / February 2027)

Professional Texas premiere. Based on the beloved *Corduroy* and *A Pocket for Corduroy* books by Don Freeman, Corduroy's button has gone missing, and he can't go home with kindhearted Lisa without it! Join the beloved teddy bear as he takes a rollicking ride up the escalator and begins a delightfully destructive romp through every section of the department store to find it. A perfect first theater-going experience for squirmy toddlers and their families. Recommended for ages 3 and up.

Alex and Olmsted's Marooned! A Space Comedy

(March 2027)

An astronaut traveling 87,000 light years into space crash-lands on an uncharted planet where she must resort to emergency measures to seek rescue. From the award-winning team Alex and Olmsted, *MAROONED! A Space Comedy* is a show where elegant puppetry design meets joyful, meaningful storytelling. Live performance, shadow puppetry, and marionettes shine to delightful effect in a production that is "Achingly beautiful..." (*Maryland Theatre Guide*) and "...amusing, charming, delightful and, at times, utterly and completely astonishing" (*DC Theatre Scene*). Recommended for ages 5 and up.

The Secret Garden: Spring Version

(April / May 2027)

This enchanting classic of children's literature is reimagined in brilliant musical style by composer Lucy Simon and Marsha Norman, the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright of *'Night Mother*. Orphaned 11-year-old Mary Lennox returns to Yorkshire to live with her uncle Archibald and his son Colin. The estate's many wonders include a magic garden which beckons the children with haunting melodies and the spirits from Mary's past who guide her through her new life, dramatizing *The Secret Garden's* compelling tale of forgiveness and renewal. Recommended for ages 7 and up.

With a season theme that speaks directly to the hearts of brave young people navigating an ever-complex world, DCT is making its message clear: the stage is a place where every child can see themselves reflected, celebrated, and emboldened.

"All five of these productions will be new to the Dallas Children's Theater stage. While there have been many adaptations of *The Secret Garden*, the gorgeous musical by Marsha Norman and Lucy Simon has never been produced here. Our "Spring Version" of the Tony Award-winning Broadway musical offers a beautifully condensed telling that runs just over an hour—perfectly suited for family audiences. This season also marks an exciting artistic shift as we cast young performers in the roles of Mary and Colin." said Ernst.

Tickets for the 2026-2027 season go on sale Friday, May 1st and can be purchased at www.dct.org or by phone at 214.740.0051.

2025 – 2026 Season Sponsors are: Melinda and Jim Johnson, City of Dallas Office of Arts & Culture, March Family Foundation, Texas Instruments, The M.R. & Evelyn Hudson Foundation, Greene Family Charitable Giving Fund, The Meadows Foundation, The Rosewood Corporation, TACA, Inc., The Shubert Foundation, Lisa K. Simmons, The Theodore & Beulah Beasley Foundation, The Eugene McDermott Foundation, Harold Simmons Foundation, Showalter Family Foundation Fund at The Dallas Foundation, Faus Family Foundation, Loren and Carolyn Greaves, Niels Anderskov and Vibeke Jarnum. **General Sponsors Include:** Laurie Sands Harrison, Kevin and Carol March, Karen and Ken Travis, Texas Commission on the Arts and National Endowment for the Arts, Jane and Bill Travis, The Carl B. & Florence E. King Foundation, Merrill Lynch, The Koz Foundation, Crawley Family Foundation, Dallas Tourism Public Improvement District, Janet Spencer Shaw. **Additional Support Is Provided By:** Tara Lewis and John Swords, Ellen and Jim Markus, Eugene Straus Charitable Trust, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee., Holloway Family Foundation, Strake Foundation, Rachel Orr, Becky and Everett Spaeth, Lauren and Ryan Herrington, Emily Jefferson, Sarah Freedman and Chris Skoog, Kara and Todd Ranta, The Stephen M. Seay Foundation, Joan Becker, Central Market, Margot B. Perot, Harry S. Moss Foundation, Peter and Jennifer Altabef, John and Julie Parolisi, Patrick and Beatrice Haggerty Foundation, Green Mountain Energy DCT's official renewable energy partner. **Sensory-Friendly Sponsors Include:** Fichtenbaum Charitable Trust, The Alice E. and Joseph C. Blewett Foundation, Texas Commission on the Arts and National Endowment for the Arts.

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About Dallas Children's Theater

Co-founded by Robyn Flatt in 1984, Dallas Children's Theater serves over 95,000 young people and their families annually with professional productions and a robust arts-in-education program. As the only professional theater in North Texas focused exclusively on children and families, DCT fosters understanding across generations and cultures, nurturing an early love for literature, art, and the performing arts.

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