

Production photos now available for

## *Corduroy*

The beloved children's books come to life  
in an imaginative 60-minute production directed by Amber Mak

June 18–July 14, 2024

Tuesdays–Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m., Thursdays–Sundays at 11:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m.



**Chicago—June 21, 2024**—In a continued commitment to introducing young audiences to the magic of live theater, [Chicago Shakespeare Theater \(CST\)](#) presents *Corduroy* this summer. Based on the cherished children's books *Corduroy* and *A Pocket for Corduroy* by **Don Freeman** and adapted for the stage by **Barry Kornhauser**, this play had its world premiere at the Tony Award-winning Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis in 2018. Esteemed Chicago director **Amber Mak** returns to CST after last summer's smash-hit production of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, bringing a wealth of experience directing shows for young audiences. This 60-minute production plays **June 18–July 14, 2024** in the **Jentes Family Courtyard Theater**.

The cast of *Corduroy* features **Jean Claudio** in the title role, along with **Celeste M. Cooper**, **Danielle Davis**, **Demetra Dee**, **Kat Harvey**, and **Ryan Huemmer**.

Teddy bear Corduroy has discovered he's missing a button on his green overalls. Kindhearted Lisa is begging her mom to bring the bear home, but Corduroy must find his button first. Audiences follow Corduroy's rollicking and delightfully destructive journey through the department store as he searches high and low—up escalators, and to the top of a teetering store display. Following each performance, audiences have the opportunity to meet costumed members of the cast in the lobby for conversation, autographs, and photos.

"*Corduroy* has been a beloved book for over 50 years as an enduring, lovable story of friendship, home, and being accepted just as you are today," says Mak. "I am excited to bring these characters from the book to life in a very fun, whimsical, and imaginative adventure that multi-generational audiences can experience together."

**Jean Claudio** plays the title bear Corduroy. Claudio trained in circus and physical theater in Buenos Aires, before returning home to their native Puerto Rico to establish a theater company. They moved to Chicago to study in the Actors Gymnasium's Professional Circus Training Program in 2016 and have lived and worked in the city since. Credits include *Lucha Teotl* at Goodman Theatre, *Dream King* at Teatro Vista, and work with La Vuelta Ensemble, the Nouveau Sud Circus Project, Midnight Circus in the Parks, Filament Theatre, and Emerald City Theatre.

**Demetra Dee** plays Lisa, a young girl in search of a friend. Dee's credits include *The Penelopiad* and *The Nacirema Society* at Goodman Theatre, *Chlorine Sky* at Steppenwolf Theatre, along with work at Shattered Globe Theatre, Victory Gardens Theatre, Timeline Theatre, and more. **Celeste M. Cooper** plays Lisa's Mother. Cooper is an ensemble member at Steppenwolf Theatre, where her many credits include *POTUS* and *The Most Spectacularly Lamentable Trial of Miz Martha Washington*. Other Chicago credits include work at Court Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Windy City Playhouse, and more.

**Danielle Davis** plays a night guard determined to stop Corduroy's journey through the department store. Davis returns to Chicago Shakespeare after appearing as Maria in last season's *Twelfth Night*, and her other CST credits include multiple Chicago Shakespeare in the Parks productions and *Romeo and Juliet*. Additional credits include *Antigone* at Court Theatre, performing the title role in *Clyde's* at Goodman Theatre, and many more. **Kat Harvey** and **Ryan Huemmer** play two clowns Corduroy encounters along his adventure. Harvey and Huemmer are

aerialists and acrobats who make up Duo Refraction, a circus duo, and are both graduates of the Actors Gymnasium Professional Circus Training Program.

Understudies include **Madie Doppelt**, **Sonia Goldberg**, **Kat Hoil**, and **Jada Jackson**.

Director **Amber Mak** is one of Chicago's most sought-after directors. Mak's Chicago Shakespeare credits include directing and choreographing summer family productions of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* and *Peter Pan – A Musical Adventure*, and choreographing the American premiere of *Nell Gwynn*. Her recent credits include the acclaimed production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* at Drury Lane Theatre and *The Sound of Music*, *Rock of Ages*, *Hairspray*, *The Wizard of Oz* (for which she received a Jeff Award nomination for Best Director), Disney's *The Little Mermaid*, and choreographing the world premiere, *The Secret of My Success* at Paramount Theatre, where she was the New Works Development Director for many years.

The creative team also includes Scenic Designer **Jeffrey D. Kmiec**, Costume Designer **Christine Pascual**, Lighting Designer **Greg Hofmann**, Video Designer **Mike Tutaj**, Sound Designer and Composer **Satya Chávez**, Assistant Director **Jasmine B. Gunter**, Assistant Lighting Designer **Jessica Neill**, Costume Design Assistant **Melissa Perkins**, Assistant Projection Designer **Parker Molacek**, Casting by **Alexis Taylor**, Production Stage Manager **Jennifer Aparicio**, and Assistant Stage Manager **Lili Bjorklund**.

For multi-generational family audiences, Chicago Shakespeare Theater offers a theatergoing experience of the highest quality, introducing live performance to young hearts and minds and sparking a lifelong interest in the arts. CST has engaged hundreds of thousands of young people over the years through summer family productions, abridged Shakespeare plays, and performances in partnership with neighborhood arts organizations across the city.

CST is proud to partner on additional community engagement opportunities around the production:

- *Corduroy* attendees can keep the fun going with a visit to the award-winning **Chicago Children's Museum (CCM)** on Navy Pier. Young audience members may present their child's ticket to redeem a free admission to CCM on the day of the performance, or at a return visit Monday–Thursday through September 30, 2024. On **Wednesday, June 26 at 2:00 p.m.**, Chicago Children's Museum will host **Storytime with Corduroy** featuring members of the cast. Museum visitors are invited to bring their favorite stuffed animals to enjoy stories about friendship and belonging together.
- On **Saturday, June 29**, **Harry Caray's Tavern on Navy Pier** will host a **Teddy Bear Brunch**, during which attendees can meet and take photos with the beloved characters while enjoying a special menu themed to the production.
- Throughout the run, audiences are encouraged to bring a children's book to exchange at Chicago Shakespeare Theater's **Little Free Library**. Located just outside of CST's lobby doors on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Navy Pier, the Little Free Library is part of a global network of volunteer-run exchange boxes which build community, inspire readers, and expand book access for all.

The press opening for *Corduroy* is scheduled for **Saturday, June 22 at 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.**

More information at [chicagoshakes.com/corduroy](http://chicagoshakes.com/corduroy) or on social media at [@chicagoshakes](https://www.instagram.com/chicagoshakes).

*Corduroy* is produced by special arrangement with Plays for New Audiences.

## *Corduroy*

Based on the books *Corduroy* and  
*A Pocket for Corduroy* by Don Freeman  
Adapted for the stage by Barry Kornhauser  
Directed by Amber Mak  
June 18–July 14, 2024  
Jentes Family Courtyard Theater  
Best enjoyed by ages 4 and up

Tickets: \$26 for children 12 and under | \$42 for adults  
*Special discounts available for groups of 10 or more*  
Box Office: 312.595.5600 | Group Sales: 312.595.5678  
[www.chicagoshakes.com/corduroy](http://www.chicagoshakes.com/corduroy)

## PERFORMANCE LISTING

- Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m. (except June 25 and July 9)
- Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m. (except July 10)
- Thursdays at 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. (except July 4)
- Fridays at 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.
- Saturdays at 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.
- Sundays at 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

Chicago Shakespeare strives to make its facility and performances accessible to all patrons. Accessible seating, assistive listening devices, large-print and Braille programs, and sensory tools are available at every performance. Enhanced performances include:

- **Audio-described performance with optional touch tour – Sunday, July 7, 2024, at 11:00 a.m.**  
*A program that provides spoken narration of a play's key visual elements for patrons who are blind or have low vision. Touch Tours provide patrons the opportunity to experience, firsthand, a production's design elements.*
- **Sensory-friendly performance – Wednesday, July 10, 2024, at 11:00 a.m.**  
*Aspects of the performance, including lights, sound, and audience engagement, are adjusted to create a comfortable and safe environment for patrons with sensory sensitivities. Noise-reducing headphones and sensory tools will be available, along with space for audience members to take breaks as needed.*
- **ASL interpreted performance – Friday, July 12, 2024, at 2:00 p.m.**  
*All dialogue and lyrics are translated into American Sign Language by two certified interpreters.*

## Creative Team

**Amber Mak** - Director  
**Jeffrey D. Kmiec** - Scenic Designer  
**Christine Pascual** - Costume Designer  
**Greg Hofmann** - Lighting Designer  
**Mike Tutaj** - Video Designer  
**Satya Chávez** - Sound Designer and Composer  
**Jasmine B. Gunter** - Assistant Director  
**Jessica Neill** - Assistant Lighting Designer  
**Melissa Perkins** - Costume Design Assistant  
**Parker Molacek** - Assistant Projection Designer  
**Alexis Taylor** - Casting  
**Jennifer Aparicio** - Production Stage Manager  
**Lili Bjorklund** - Assistant Stage Manager

## Cast

**Jean Claudio** - Corduroy  
**Celeste M. Cooper** - Lisa's Mom  
**Danielle Davis** - Night Guard  
**Demetra Dee** - Lisa  
**Kat Harvey** - Clown  
**Ryan Huemmer** - Clown  
**Madie Doppelt** - Understudy  
**Sonia Goldberg** - Understudy  
**Kat Hoil** - Understudy  
**Jada Jackson** - Understudy

## ABOUT CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER

A Regional Tony Award recipient, Chicago Shakespeare Theater (CST) produces a bold and innovative year-round season—plays, musicals, world premieres, family productions, and theatrical presentations from around the globe—alongside education programming for students, teachers, and lifelong learners, and engagement with communities across the city. Located on Chicago's iconic Navy Pier, CST's campus features the Jentes Family Courtyard Theater, The Yard, and the Carl and Marilyn Thoma Theater Upstairs. Onstage, in classrooms and neighborhoods across the city, and in venues around the world, Chicago Shakespeare is a multifaceted cultural center—inviting audiences, artists, and community members to share powerful stories that connect and inspire.

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