

### Chicago Shakespeare Theater's production of *The Lord of the Rings - A Musical Tale* to travel to Middle-earth™

At The Civic Theatre in Auckland, New Zealand from November 5



Chicago—July 9, 2024—Chicago Shakespeare Theater (CST) announces today that its upcoming production of *The Lord of the Rings - A Musical Tale* will transfer this fall to **The Civic Theatre in Auckland, New Zealand**, beginning November 5. Ever since the release of Peter Jackson's Oscar-winning *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy, New Zealand has become the embodiment of Middle-earth, making the production's journey to Auckland a homecoming for the story. This engagement follows a highly anticipated US premiere at CST this summer, directed by **Paul Hart** and running **July 19–September 1, 2024** in **The Yard**.

“We’re thrilled that Chicago Shakespeare Theater’s production of *The Lord of The Rings* will continue its journey in Auckland,” said Artistic Director Edward Hall. “The Chicago-based ensemble that Paul and our team have put together promises to take us on an extraordinary adventure through Middle-earth, and we look forward to sharing their incredible work with audiences in New Zealand.”

**Annie Dundas**, Director Destination at Tātaki Auckland Unlimited, shared, “This production not only celebrates our unique connection to Middle-earth but also showcases Auckland as a vibrant hub for world-class theatre. We look forward to sharing this extraordinary experience with locals and visitors alike.” **Glen Crichton**, Acting Director Performing Arts at Auckland Live, continues, “I’m excited that The Civic will be hosting the Australasian premiere of *The Lord of the Rings - A Musical Tale*. The iconic status of Tolkien’s epic tale can’t be understated, and we look forward to welcoming local and international audiences alike into Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland’s own iconic venue to embark on what promises to be a remarkable theatrical experience.”

Based on **J.R.R. Tolkien’s** beloved trilogy, with book and lyrics by **Shaun McKenna** (*Maddie, La Cava*) and **Matthew Warchus** (*Groundhog Day*) and original music by Academy Award winner **A.R. Rahman** (*Bombay Dreams, Slumdog Millionaire*), Finnish folk band **Värttinä**, and Tony Award winner **Christopher Nightingale** (*Matilda the Musical*), this theatrical event celebrates community, courage, and camaraderie to create an unforgettable experience for longtime fans and newcomers alike.

“The greatest show on Middle-earth comes home to Middle-earth!” proclaimed **Fredrica Drotos**, of Middle-earth Enterprises. “We are very much looking forward to sharing the Hobbits’ epic re-telling with all our friends there when *The Lord of the Rings - A Musical Tale* premieres in Auckland, New Zealand this November.”

As the Hobbits celebrate Bilbo Baggins’ eleventy-first birthday in the Shire, he gifts his nephew Frodo his most precious belonging—a gold ring. This fateful moment launches Frodo on a legendary and perilous quest across Middle-earth to the darkest realms of Mordor, to vanquish evil with his loyal Fellowship. The folk-inspired score is performed live by the company onstage, weaving together original music with storytelling. The US premiere this summer coincides with the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, the first book in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, which debuted July 29, 1954.

“We are delighted to share Director Paul Hart’s imagining of *The Lord of the Rings* on stage with New Zealand audiences before it embarks on its journey to entertain audiences around the world,” said **Kevin Wallace** on behalf of the producers. “This production that originated in the English Shires, before its US premiere in Chicago, comes to Auckland where we invite New Zealand to join us for Bilbo Baggins’ Long-expected Party.”

The waitlist for Auckland tickets is now open at [www.LOTRonstage.com](http://www.LOTRonstage.com).

The Auckland Season is presented by Kevin Wallace Productions, GWB Entertainment and Middle-earth Enterprises in association with Tim McFarland and People Entertainment Group. *The Lord of the Rings - A Musical Tale* is produced in partnership with The Watermill Theatre and Chicago Shakespeare Theater.

[*The Lord of the Rings - A Musical Tale* tour announcement page 2 of 2]

The press opening for the US premiere of *The Lord of the Rings - A Musical Tale* at Chicago Shakespeare Theater is scheduled for **Friday, July 26 at 7:00 p.m.** More information at [www.chicagoshakes.com/lordoftherings](http://www.chicagoshakes.com/lordoftherings) or on social media at [@chicagoshakes](https://twitter.com/chicagoshakes).

**Based upon the Books by J.R.R. Tolkien.**

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#### **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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