

Photos and video available for
Circus Abyssinia: Ethiopian Dreams
 Soaring spectacle at Chicago Shakespeare Theater on Navy Pier this summer

Chicago—June 25, 2025—[Chicago Shakespeare Theater](#) (CST) is thrilled to present the world-famous [Circus Abyssinia](#) on Navy Pier this summer for a limited engagement beginning July 10. You'll be astounded by heart-stopping acrobatics, stunning feats of juggling, high-flying hilarity, and death-defying tricks—all set to the irresistible beats of Ethiopian music. Inspired by the story of its creators, brothers Mehari "Bibi" Tesfamariam and Binyam "Bichu" Shimellis, the tale follows Little Bibi and Little Bichu who dream of joining the circus. Throughout their journey, they are joined by a host of circus dreamers whose acts of acrobatic daring call up a world of rushing adventure that awakens the possibility of the first Ethiopian circus made by and for Ethiopian artists. This soaring spectacle is the perfect, unforgettable outing for audiences young and old alike.

Creators Bibi and Bichu shared, "We're beyond excited to partner with Chicago Shakespeare Theater to share the joy, energy, and magic of *Circus Abyssinia: Ethiopian Dreams* with new audiences. This show is a celebration of Ethiopian culture, storytelling, and breathtaking circus artistry—an unforgettable journey filled with heart-pounding acrobatics and boundless dreams."

Circus Abyssinia has toured the globe and been hailed as "sensational entertainment" by *The Times* (UK) and "extraordinary, irresistible circus" by *The Daily Review* (UK). After leaving Ethiopia to perform at Brighton Fringe, founders Bibi and Bichu trained at the UK's National Centre for Circus Arts, and their diverse performance credits include the Millennium Dome Celebrations, the Olivier Award-winning English National Opera production of Philip Glass' *Akhnaten*, and Disney's live-action *Dumbo*. They returned to Ethiopia to found a circus school for would-be circus artists just like them, and in 2017, Bibi and Bichu teamed up with artists from circus schools across Ethiopia to form Circus Abyssinia, which debuted in London at the Rose Theatre Kingston, enjoyed two sold-out seasons at the Edinburgh Fringe, and shared a stage with Cirque du Soleil at the Royal Variety Performance. On their first world tour, they performed in Australia, Japan, Hungary, the United Arab Emirates, and a run at the Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis, Minnesota.



Press opening for *Circus Abyssinia: Ethiopian Dreams* at Chicago Shakespeare Theater is **Friday, July 11 at 7:00 p.m.** More information at chicagoshakes.com/circusabyssinia or on social media at [@chicagoshakes](#).

Circus Abyssinia: Ethiopian Dreams

Co-Created & produced by Mehari "Bibi" Tesfamariam

Co-Created & directed by Binyam "Bichu" Shimellis

Written by Cal McCrystal

Choreography by Kate Smyth

July 10 – August 3, 2025 in the Jentes Family Courtyard Theater

PERFORMANCE LISTING

- Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.
- Thursdays at 2:00 p.m.
- Fridays at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. (*no matinee on July 11*)
- Saturdays at 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.
- Sundays at 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.

CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER (CST)

CST is a leading international theater company and the nation's largest year-round theater dedicated to the works of Shakespeare. Under the visionary leadership of Artistic Director Edward Hall and Executive Director Kimberly Motes, the Regional Tony Award recipient is committed to creating vivid, entertaining theatrical experiences that invigorate and engage people of all ages and identities by illuminating the complexity, ambiguity, and wonder of our world. Each year, nearly a quarter of a million people experience CST's artistry through more than 12 productions. With Shakespeare at the heart of the artistic work, CST also produces compelling, contemporary stories from fresh voices of today. CST brings the world to Chicago and sends Chicago out into the world as Chicago's foremost presenter of international theater, and consistent producer of North American and world premieres. Serving more students and teachers than any theater in the city, CST annually welcomes more than 20,000 students to performances and programs like Chicago Shakespeare SLAM, alongside professional development opportunities for teachers. CST activates its campus with three venues: 700-seat The Yard; the 500-seat Jentes Family Courtyard Theater; and the 200-seat Carl and Marilyn Thoma Upstairs Studio. Free programs like Shakes in the City bring performances to parks and community spaces across Chicago's 77 neighborhoods. Shared humanity and unforgettable stories—now THIS is Chicago Shakespeare.

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