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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CATCO Warms Up Winter With *Almost, Maine*, Feb. 4-22**

***Columbus premiere of John Cariani's hit romantic comedy  
presented at Riffe Center***

On a cold, clear, moonless night in the middle of winter, all is not quite what it seems in the remote, mythical town of Almost, Maine. As the Northern Lights perform their magic in the star-filled sky, down below it's electric.

Almost's residents find themselves falling in and out of love in unexpected and often hilarious ways. Knees are bruised. Hearts are broken. But the bruises heal, and the hearts mend – *almost* – in this delightful midwinter night's dream presented by CATCO Feb. 4-22, 2009, just in time for Valentine's Day. All shows will be performed at the Vern Riffe Center, Studio Two Theatre, 77 S. High St.

"Magical happenings bloom beneath the snowdrifts," says *The New York Times*. Broadway.com describes *Almost, Maine*, as "utterly endearing."

"It's the perfect magical romantic comedy to warm up your winter," said Geoffrey Nelson, CATCO founder and artistic director, who grew up in northern Maine. Nelson will direct the nine different stories about love in *Almost, Maine*, written by John Cariani

*Almost, Maine* is Cariani's first play, which is based on his hometown and two other smaller towns in northern Maine. Cariani is an actor and a regular on the hit TV show, *Law and Order*.

An ensemble cast consisting of four actors – Malcolm Callan, Kevin McClatchy, Christina Ritter and Michelle Schroeder – will play various roles in the love stories.

Callan returns to CATCO after performing in Martin McDonagh's *The Pillowman*, the season opener for the 2007-08 season. Now a resident of Chicago, Callan previously appeared in *The Weir*, *Ghost Light: The Shorts Festival 2006* and *The Exonerated* at CATCO.

Joining him is Kevin McClatchy, who is making his CATCO debut. He most recently appeared in Carrickmacross Productions' *Stones in His Pockets*. New York theatre credits include *Tartuffe*, *Balm in Gilead* and the solo show, *Walking In the Shadow of The Big Man*. TV credits include *ER*, *NCIS*, *X-Files*, *That 70's Show*, *Guiding Light*, *General Hospital*, *Another World*, *The Pennsylvania Miners' Story* and *The War That Made America*.

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Rounding out the cast are Christina Ritter, a guest lecturer in the Department of Theatre at The Ohio State University, who has appeared in *The Weir*, *Ghost Light: The Shorts Festival 2006* and *Doubt* at CATCO, and Michelle Schroeder, who also makes her CATCO debut. Schroeder has performed locally with Phoenix Theatre for Children and Available Light theatre in Columbus.

Geoffrey Nelson, CATCO's founder and artistic director, will direct *Almost, Maine*. Nelson previously directed *A Christmas Memory/The Thanksgiving Visitor*, *Doubt*, *The Santaland Diaries*, *Season's Greetings*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Of Mice and Men*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *A Tuna Christmas*, *The Anger in Earnest and Ernestine*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Taking Sides*, *The Bat*, *The Little Foxes*, *Orphans*, *True West*, *1959 Pink Thunderbird*, *Murder in Green Meadows* and *Handy Dandy*.

The sponsor for *Almost, Maine* is Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP.

CATCO's 2008-09, 25th anniversary season is being sponsored by support from the Fred B. and Mabel Dean Hill and Eileen M. and Josiah Brooks Heckert Funds of the Columbus Foundation, Greater Columbus Arts Council, Nationwide Foundation, Limited Brands Foundation and the Ohio Arts Council, which funds CATCO with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. The season's media sponsor is Time Warner Cable. CATCO's sponsor for \$11@11 performances is Chase Bank.

### **Preview (Discounted Tickets)/Opening Night Performances**

There are two previews for *Almost, Maine*, Wednesday, Feb. 4, at 11 a.m. and Thursday, Feb. 5, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$11.50 for the 11 a.m. performance, and \$32.50 for the main floor and \$20.50 for the balcony for the 7:30 p.m. show. The opening performance is Friday, Feb. 6, at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$40 for the main level (rows A-M) and \$25 for the balcony, and include admission to a post-performance party in the theatre lobby.

### **Half-Price Happy Hour**

The first Thursday of each show run tickets and drinks are half price. For *Almost, Maine*, the Half-Price Happy Hour is Thursday, Feb. 12, at 8 p.m.

### **\$11@11 Matinees**

For *Almost, Maine*, there will be three \$11@11 performances: the first preview Wednesday, Feb. 4, and Feb. 11 and Feb. 18. CATCO's \$11 @ 11 is an offering for theatre-goers who want to see a play mid-week (Wednesday) and mid-day (11 a.m.) at a great price (\$11 plus a 50-cent restoration fee). For ticket information, please call 614.469.0939 or visit [ticketmaster.com](http://ticketmaster.com).

### **Dramaturg/Actor Talkbacks**

For a deeper understanding of each play, CATCO presents talkback sessions for audiences. For *Almost, Maine*, the dramaturg talkback will follow the Sunday, Feb. 8, matinee; the actor talkback will follow the Sunday, Feb. 22, matinee.

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### **Audio Description**

On the last Sunday of each production, CATCO provides an audio-described performance for the visually impaired along with free headset rental. The audio description for *Almost, Maine*, will be Sunday, Feb. 22, at 2 p.m.

### **Ticket/Parking Information**

Tickets for regular performances are \$40 for the main level (rows A-M) and \$25 for the balcony. Students and senior may purchase half-price tickets on Sunday and Thursday performances based on availability and valid I.D. All tickets can be purchased at the box office at 41 E. State St., next to the Ohio Theatre, by calling 614.469.0939 or by visiting [ticketmaster.com](http://ticketmaster.com) or by calling or visiting any central Ohio Ticketmaster location. Performances are in the Studio One Theatre at the Vern Riffe Center, located at 77 S. High St. in Downtown Columbus at the corner of State and High streets. Attached parking is available in the Riffe Center garage, which is entered from Front Street.

### **About CATCO**

CATCO is central Ohio's professional Equity theatre company. Its mission is to produce diverse, high-quality, and exciting theatrical work that celebrates our common humanity. For more information, visit [catco.org](http://catco.org).

Subscriptions for CATCO's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary season are now available by calling CATCO's box office at 614.469.0939. Remaining shows this season include:

- *The Clean House* by Sarah Ruhl, April 1-26, 2009
- *Blackbird* by David Harrower, June 3-21, 2009

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