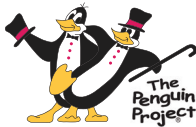


STANDING VATION



August 15-18, 2024



THIS PLAYHOUSE PRODUCTION IS GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY



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Great Red Wine

*made in Iowa
from Grapes
grown in Iowa*



Iowa In the Dark

is a dry red with light, fresh notes. First impressions are tangy acid followed by black cherry fading to plum, a dry mid-palate, and a long, pleasing finish. Made from Marquette, St. Croix, Petite Pearl, and Steuben grapes grown in Iowa, it's a versatile wine that pairs well with grilled meat and spicy foods.

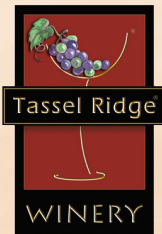
2021 Iowa Sabrevois

is a dry red with bold aromas of spices and leather on the nose followed by blackberry and plum notes with hints of baking spice, smoke, and licorice on the palate. Made from Sabrevois grapes grown in our Iowa vineyards, it pairs well with grilled meat.

2020 Iowa

Reserve Marquette

is a dry red with bright cherry notes and hints of baking spice on the nose and palate followed by a long, moderately acidic finish. Made from Marquette grapes grown in our Iowa vineyards, it pairs well with spicy foods.



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David R. Kilpatrick
Executive Director

Thank you for joining us today for our Penguin Project production of *Disney's Frozen JR.* To create theatre is to celebrate skills, talents, and capabilities. Your presence demonstrates that you believe in the value of the performing arts and know that everyone should be able to participate.

For those who may not be aware, The Penguin Project is a national organization that understands theatre should be for all. Target participants are youths, ages 10-21, who present a shortened version of a well-known musical. All roles are performed by young artists with developmental disabilities. They share the stage with dedicated peer mentors – youths of the same age who are there to support, guide, and ensure that everyone succeeds. Together, all participants work side-by-side for more than four months of rehearsals to present four public performances. At the national level, The Penguin Project is committed to not letting anything inhibit a child's ability to participate in theatre and at The Playhouse this commitment is primary to our mission, vision, and values.



Katy Merriman
Artistic Director

Once more, thank you for showing your support to our artists and mentors, our production team, and everyone who helped bring this program to life. It is an honor to be your community theatre and to serve the whole community. Thank you.

See you next year!

2024-25 SEASON

SIGNATURE SERIES

- Jersey Boys**
Sept. 13–29, 2024
- Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors**
Oct. 18–Nov. 3, 2024
- DISNEY'S Beauty & the Beast**
Dec. 6–22, 2024
- Men on Boats**
Feb. 7–Mar. 2, 2025
- Jesus Christ Superstar**
Mar. 7–23, 2024
- Waitress**
July 11–27, 2025

KATE GOLDMAN FAMILY SERIES

COLLABORATION WITH PYRAMID THEATRE COMPANY & CITY VOICES

- Last Stop on Market Street**
Nov. 8–24, 2024
- Diary of a Wimpy Kid**
Jan. 17–Feb. 2, 2025
- Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Musical**
Mar. 28–Apr. 13, 2025
- Alice in Wonderland**
May 2–18, 2025

Beautiful: The Carole King Musical
2023-24 Season



PURCHASE SEASON TICKETS
[DMPLAYHOUSE.COM](https://dmplayhouse.com)



MUSICAL NUMBERS

<i>Let the Sun Shine On</i>	Townspeople, Young Elsa, Young Anna, King Agnarr, Queen Iduna
<i>A Little Bit of You</i>	Young Elsa, Young Anna, Snow Chorus
<i>First Joik</i>	Queen Iduna, Pabbie, Bulda, Hidden Folk
<i>Do You Want to Build a Snowman?</i>	Young Anna, Middle Anna, Middle Elsa
<i>For the First Time in Forever</i>	Castle Staff, Anna, Elsa, Townspeople
<i>Dangerous to Dream</i>	Townspeople, Elsa, Anna
<i>Love Is an Open Door</i>	Anna, Hans
<i>Reindeer(s) Are Better Than People</i>	Kristoff, Sven
<i>You're Hired</i>	Olaf
<i>In Summer</i>	Olaf, Sven, Summer Chorus
<i>Hygge</i>	Oaken, Oaken Family, Anna, Olaf, Sven, Kristoff
<i>Let It Go</i>	Elsa, Snow Chorus
<i>For the First Time in Forever (reprise)</i>	Anna, Elsa, Snow Chorus
<i>Mountain Fall</i>	Snow Chorus
<i>Kristoff's Joik</i>	Kristoff, Hidden Folk
<i>Fixer Upper</i>	Pabbie, Bulda, Hidden Folk, Olaf
<i>Colder by the Minute</i>	Townspeople, Snow Chorus, Elsa, Hans
<i>Finale (Part I)</i>	Townspeople
<i>Finale (Part II)</i>	Company
<i>Bows</i>	Company
 <i>Don't Stop Believing</i>	 Company

THE PLAYHOUSE

**Evelyn,
Our Town**
2023-24 Season

Student,
Language Student, Japanese
American Society of Iowa

You mean the student can act, sing, and dance?

Ordinary People.
Extraordinary Theatre.

Opening August 15, 2024
Closing August 18, 2024

CAST LIST

The Des Moines Playhouse Production of **DISNEY'S FROZEN JR**

Music & Lyrics by **Kristen Anderson-Lopez & Robert Lopez**

Book by **Jennifer Lee**

Based on the Disney film written by Jennifer Lee and directed by Chris Buck & Jennifer Lee

The original Broadway production of *Frozen* was directed by Michael Grandage and produced by Disney Theatrical Productions

Original Broadway Orchestrations by Dave Metzger

Original Broadway Music Supervision & Arrangement by David Chase

Additional Broadway Dance Arrangements by David Chase

Frozen JR Music & Orchestrations Adapted & Arranged by Madeline Smith

Frozen JR Script Adapted by Sara Wordsworth

Sponsored by **Fareway Stores, Prairie Meadows, Workspace x Storey Kenworthy**

Director: **Derek Phelps**

Music Director: **Sarah Jorgenson**

Choreographer: **Natalie Thomas**

Scenic Designer: **Nicholas Amundson**

Costume Designer: **Joy Barlean**

Lighting Designer: **JP Ungo**

Sound Designer: **Brian Dodson**

Properties Designer: **Katie Hughes**

Stage Manager: **Ash Howland**

Assistant Director/Mentor Assistant: **Kim Van Haecke**

Assistant Music Director/Mentor Assistant: **Emma Feldhans**

Assistant Choreographer/Mentor Assistant: **Anna Sunstrom**

Assistant Sound Designer/Mentor Assistant: **Travis Edrington**

Assistant Stage Manager/Mentor Assistant: **Jenny Bryant**

Production Assistant: **Paul Honold**

Mentor Coordinator: **Annie Mielke**

Technical Team Coordinators: **Greg Millar, Ethan Saltz**

Family Liaison: **Karen Honold**

ASL Interpreter: **Trish Barton**

Program Coordinator: **Nate Weber**

Artistic Director: **Katy Merriman**

Cast

In Order of Appearance

Names listed are Artist, Mentor

* Indicates a Playhouse Debut

Townspople

..... **Mia Fine***, **Isabelle Edge***

..... **Jonah Gieseke***, **Kylie Jorgensen***

..... **Xander Talbot***, **Harper Butterworth**

Castle Staff/Hidden Folk

..... **Indigo Ekhardt**, **Paige Neighbors**

..... **Konnor Fynaardt***, **Annie White**

..... **Shea Hunt**, **Maddie Deyen**

Snow Chorus/Summer Chorus

..... **Sofia Curtis***, **Lexi Neighbors***

..... **Kamilla Freeman**, **Madison Sanders**

Guards

..... **Logan Barlean***, **Anabelle Weis**

..... **Luke Barlean***, **Mya Owens***

Young Anna/Middle Anna/Snow Chorus/Summer Chorus

..... **Ivelle Grace Bayasgalan***, **Julia Neighbors**

Anna **Izzabella Olson***, **Corley Blackford**

Young Elsa/Middle Elsa/Snow Chorus/Summer Chorus

..... **Elizabeth Xiao Janni**, **Maddie Lehman**

Elsa **Sabina Shelton**, **Kylie Halstead**

King Agnarr/Oaken Family..... **Max Bird**, **Emery Blackford**

Queen Iduna/Oaken Family

..... **Anna Bylund***, **Rhya Cowden***

Pabbie..... **DJ Brown**, **Porter Kimble**

Bulda..... **McKenna O'Meara**, **Julia Richer**

Bishop/Oaken..... **Conlon Topf***, **Jaren Jorgenson**

Kristoff..... **Eli Zimmerman**, **Joshua Janni***

Sven **Bowie Geigley**, **Ainsley Jenkins**

Hans **Sawyer Hess***, **Liam Jorgenson***

Weselton..... **Whitman Birk**, **Kyleigh Barlean**

Olaf **Elias Andersson**, **Knox Schubbach**

Swing Mentor **Ingrid Oakley**

Technical Artists **Owen Hartin**, **Alex Noah**,

..... **Daniel Pietig**, **Alex Shaw**, **Robert Thacker**

Disney's Frozen JR is presented without intermission.

Disney's Frozen JR is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI, www.MTIShows.com.

The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

CAST NOTES



Elias Andersson (*Artist: Olaf*) is an eighth grader at Stilwell Junior High in West Des Moines. He made his Playhouse debut in *Annie JR* (Rooster Hannigan/Star To Be). Since then, he has appeared in Playhouse productions of *Our Town* (Si Crowell) and *Disney's High School Musical JR* (Troy Bolton). In addition to acting, Elias enjoys singing and playing video games.



Kyleigh Barlean (*Mentor: Weselton*) will be a freshman at Des Moines Roosevelt High School. She is no stranger to Penguin Project, having appeared in *Disney's High School Musical JR* as Mentor: Braniac. In addition to theatre, Kyleigh participates in track and swimming, being a member of the North Side Swim Team. She works as a courtesy clerk at Hy-Vee.



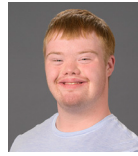
Logan Barlean (*Artist: Guard*) is making his Playhouse debut alongside his twin brother. Logan's many interests include drawing, watching movies, and swimming. He is a sixth grader at Merrill Middle School, Des Moines.



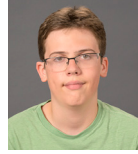
Luke Barlean (*Artist: Guard*) is a sixth grader at Merrill Middle School, Des Moines, who enjoys swimming, wrestling, and playing video games. This is his Playhouse debut.



Ivelle Grace Bayasgalan (*Artist: Young Anna/Middle Anna/Snow Chorus/Summer Chorus*) is an eighth grader at Timberline Middle School in Waukee. Her first theater experience was performing in her school's production of *Camelot and Camelittle* (Troll). Ivelle is an accomplished gymnast and swimmer who equally enjoys her time on the mat and in the water.



Max Bird (*Artist: King Agnarr*) is a returning Penguin Project artist, having played Drake in *Annie JR* and a Jock/Cheer Squad Member in *Disney's High School Musical JR*. Max works for Chick-Fil-A and as an ambassador for Finley's Dog Treats. He attends the Community Training Center at Waukee Community School District. Max loves music and going to the movies.



Whitman Birk (*Artist: Weselton*) is an experienced actor, having performed with Seedlings Summer Camp at Tallgrass Theater Company and *The Wizard of Oz* (The Wizard) among other shows at Cowles Montessori School in Des Moines where he is an eighth grader. At The Playhouse, he was in *Disney's High School Musical JR* (Cat Loving Student).



Corley Blackford (*Mentor: Anna*) has volunteered in Playhouse guest services, served as an education PIP (pre-intern program), taken classes, stage managed Performance Academy *Willy Wonka KIDS*, was a mentor with Penguin Project productions of *Disney's High School Musical JR* and *Annie JR*, and played the title role in *The Velveteen Rabbit*. Corley graduated this past spring from Blackford Homeschool/Johnston High School.



Emery Blackford (*Mentor: King Agnarr*) is excited to return to Penguin Project as a mentor. She was a mentor for productions of *Annie JR* (Molly) and *Disney's High School Musical JR* (Taylor McKessie). She is active in theatre with Home Instruction in Des Moines and Altoona's CAP Theatre where her favorite role was Dromio of Ephesus in *The Comedy of Errors*. Emery is a homeschooled freshman.

CAST NOTES



DJ Brown (*Artist: Pabbie*) is no stranger to Penguin Project, having appeared in *Annie JR* (Pepper) and *Disney's High School Musical JR* (Ryan). He is a member of the Miracle League and Adventures in Social Development and is active in his Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints' youth group.



Harper Butterworth (*Mentor: Townsperson*) is new to theater but not performing. She is a member of Johnston Middle School's show choir and runs cross-country. She also plays piano and violin. Harper is in eighth grade.



Anna Bylund (*Artist: Queen Iduna/Oaken Family*) graduated from West Des Moines Valley High School. She enjoys singing, volunteering around town, watching movies, and spending time with her friends and family.



Rhya Cowden (*Mentor: Queen Iduna/Oaken Family*) graduated from Pleasantville High School this past spring. She is attending the University of Iowa with a double major in theatre and communications and a minor in cinema. Rhya performed with HOPE! Drama Troupe at The Playhouse. She has numerous credits at school and with Knoxville Area Community Theatre with her favorite role being The Cat in the Hat in *Seussical The Musical*.



Sofia Curtis (*Artist: Snow Chorus/ Summer Chorus*) is excited to be in her first show. She looks forward to each rehearsal where she will see friends and work hard for a snack. Her favorite part of the The Penguin Project is singing and dancing to "I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)" with all her friends. Sofia is in sixth grade at Bondurant Intermediate School.



Maddie Deyen (*Mentor: Castle Staff/Ensemble*) has been with Penguin Project since its first Playhouse production, *Annie JR*. She has numerous stage credits with Johnston High School and CAP Theatre in Altoona. A student at Des Moines Area Community College, she works as a substitute teacher associate with Johnston Community School District. Maddie enjoys working with kids with special needs. Her hobbies include coloring and diamond painting.



Isabelle Edge (*Mentor: Townsperson*) has performed in several productions with Bondurant-Farrar High School, where she is a senior, including *The Lightning Thief Musical* (Annabeth Chase), *The Alibis* (Franc Dubois), *She Kills Monsters* (Lilith), and *Little Women* (Clarissa). Isabelle enjoys playing guitar and watching movies.



Indigo Ekhardt (*Artist: Castle Staff/Hidden Folk*) is an experienced member of Penguin Project, having performed in *Annie JR* (Lily St. Regis) and *Disney's High School Musical JR* (Kelsi). At Des Moines Roosevelt High School, from which she graduated this spring, Indigo performed in *The Crucible* (Witch) and worked as part of the set crew for *Mamma Mia!*

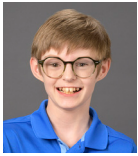


Mia Fine (*Artist: Townsperson*) says *Frozen* is one of her favorite movies and she is very excited to be part of the show. A senior at Bondurant-Farrar High School, she loves all the socialization that high school has to offer. Mia also enjoys babies, animals, and spending time at Camp Sunnyside.

CAST NOTES



Kamilla Freeman (*Artist: Snow Chorus/Summer Chorus*) fell in love with theatre when she started Penguin Plus classes at The Playhouse. She performed in *Disney's High School Musical JR* (Cheerleader). While she likes singing and dancing, what she loves about the Penguin Project is making friends and being who she truly is. Kamilla is a sophomore at Urbandale High School.



Konnor Fynaardt (*Artist: Castle Staff/Hidden Folk*) is a seventh grader at Urbandale Middle School who is having the time of his life in his first play! His favorite part of the production process is learning his lines and memorizing the music. He's already looking forward to future roles. When not at rehearsal, Konnor is an Iowa ambassador for Best Buddies and enjoys playing video games with his twin brother Cody.



Bowie Geigley (*Artist: Sven*) is a seventh grader at West Des Moines Stillwell Junior High. Bowie likes skateboarding and snowboarding. His hobbies include drawing, making animations, and playing video games. He also has a Russian tortoise named BMO and a Siamese cat named Dinah.



Jonah Gieseke (*Artist: Townsperson*) is a seventh grader at Stillwell Junior High in West Des Moines. He enjoys playing basketball, riding his bike, jumping on the trampoline, and swimming. His interests include dinosaurs and all animals, but especially marine animals.



Kylie Halstead (*Mentor: Elsa*) has been a mentor for previous Penguin Project productions, appearing in *Annie JR* (Mentor: Pepper) and *Disney's High School Musical JR* (Mentor: Mrs. Tenny).

She is a senior at Waukee Northwest High School where she has been in productions of *Mean Girls*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, and *POE Dreams of Madness*. Kylie likes bike riding, plays the ukulele, and works in Northwest High School's Wee Care.



Owen Hartin (*Artist: Technical Crew*) is a junior at Johnston High School where he participates in choir and the bowling team. He plays soccer for JUSC and loves fishing, camping, and hanging out with his friends and his family. Owen is excited about his first Penguin Project experience.



Sawyer Hess (*Artist: Prince Hans*) is a sophomore at Urbandale High School where he is a member of UHS Vitality Show Choir and will be Best Buddies director for the 2024-25 school year. He plays ice hockey for the Des Moines Raptors in the Iowa High School Hockey Alliance. He loves hunting and fishing, playing video games, and hanging out with his friends.



Shea Hunt (*Artist: Castle Staff/Hidden Folk*) began his theatrical journey in The Playhouse's Penguin Plus program, going on to play Zeke in *Disney's High School Musical JR*. In addition to acting, he is writing his own plays and performing with Adventures in Social Development. A sophomore at Ankeny High School, Shea is active in show choir. He enjoys swimming, horseback riding, and cycling.



Elizabeth Xiao Janni (*Artist: Young Elsa/Middle Elsa*) loves being part of The Playhouse family and is thrilled to be in her third Penguin Project production following past performances as Tessie in *Annie JR* and Taylor McKessie in *Disney's High School Musical JR*. An eighth grader at Des Moines Weeks Middle School, Elizabeth enjoys creating art, hiking and biking with her family,

CAST NOTES

walking her dog Ollie, and helping lead ASL worship at NorthPoint Church.



Joshua Janni (*Mentor: Kristoff*) is a senior at Johnston High School where he plays saxophone in the Innovation show band. His interests include 3D printing, hiking, and biking. He is a

member of The Atomic Narwhals robotics team, leads ASL worship at NorthPoint Church, and volunteers with the Iowa Baseball Camp for the Deaf.



Ainsley Jenkins (*Mentor: Sven*) has appeared previously at The Playhouse in *Disney's High School Musical JR* (*Mentor: James*) and as John Darling in the

Performance Academy production of *Peter Pan*. A ninth grader at Johnston Middle School, she was in her school production of *The Day the Internet Died* (Jules/Harriet). Ainsley likes all things Taylor Swift, writing, and acting.



Kylie Jorgensen (*Mentor: Townsperson*) is a junior at Ankeny High School where she plays bass drum in the band and played Alice in *You Can't Take It with You*. She played Elsa in the

Performance Academy production of *Frozen KIDS*. She also volunteers as an education PIP (pre-intern program). Kylie enjoys singing, drawing, and playing instruments.



Jaren Jorgenson (*Mentor: Bishop/Oaken*) is a junior at Des Moines Lincoln High School. He enjoys modding video games and building things.



Liam Jorgenson (*Mentor: Hans*) is an eighth grader at Brody Middle School, Des Moines. He played Horton in *Seussical KIDS* in The Playhouse's Performance Academy. Liam likes to play video

games and table tennis.



Porter Kimble (*Mentor: Pabbie*) is a junior who sings in his school's show choir, runs cross-country, and is active in Best Buddies. Last year, he was

Mentor: Ryan in The Penguin Project production of *Disney's High School Musical JR*.



Maddie Lehman (*Mentor: Young Elsa/Middle Elsa/Snow Chorus/Summer Chorus*) is a sophomore at Johnston High School where she works on props crew and front-of-house for theatre

productions. She has appeared on The Playhouse stage in *Tinker Bell* (Nibs). Maddie enjoys biking, reading, and hanging out with friends.



Julia Neighbors (*Mentor: Young Anna/Middle Anna/Snow Chorus/Summer Chorus*) is excited to be back for her third Penguin Project, having appeared in

Disney's High School Musical JR (*Mentor: Zeke*) and *Annie JR* (*Mentor: Lily*). She was in The Playhouse production of *The Hundred Dresses* (Peggy) and *Marvel Plays* (Cul) with Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre. Julia, an eighth grader at Johnston Middle School, likes running, riding her horse Jose, and being a mentor for Adventures in Social Development.



Lexi Neighbors (*Mentor: Snow Chorus/Summer Chorus*) is a fifth grader at Beaver Creek Elementary in Johnston. She enjoys riding horses, playing basketball, and fostering dogs.

Her sisters Julia and Paige are also in the *Frozen JR* cast.



Paige Neighbors (*Mentor: Castle Staff/Hidden Folk*) is appearing in her second Penguin Project production, her first being *Disney's High School Musical Jr* (*Mentor: Kelsi*). With Des

Moines Young Artists' Theatre, she appeared

CAST NOTES

in *Hammered* (Lady Sif). Paige is a mentor for Adventures in Social Development and participates in CrossFit. She is a sophomore at Johnston High School where she participates in mock trial.



Alexander Noah (*Artist: Technical Team*) graduated this past spring from the Community Transition Center at Waukee Schools and has a summer internship at Big Lots. He made his Playhouse debut as Coach Bolton in *Disney's High School Musical JR*. Alex plays percussion, baseball, and video games, and likes science.



Ingrid Oakley (*Swing Mentor*) has numerous stage credits with area theatres including Story Theatre Company, Boone Community Theatre, and The Playhouse (*Rodgers & Hammerstein's The Sound of Music*, Gretl von Trapp; *Annie JR*, Mentor: July). A homeschooled seventh grader, Ingrid plays guitar, banjo, and piano; dances; swims; and makes YouTube videos.



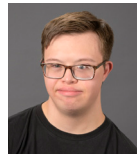
Izzabella Olson (*Artist: Anna*) fell in love with theatre when she began volunteering in guest services at The Playhouse. She's an avid drawer and has created her own comics and written a novel, *Scream*. Izzabella is a freshman at Des Moines Lincoln High School where she sings in the choir and participates in drama. She also loves swimming and walking with her grandparents.



McKenna O'Meara (*Artist: Bulda*) loves going to concerts, singing and dancing, and theatre, especially Penguin Project. She is familiar to Playhouse audiences as Gabriella in *Disney's High School Musical JR* and Miss Hannigan in *Annie JR*, a role for which she received a Jeanne Hopson Rising Star recognition from the Cloris Awards. McKenna is in West Des Moines Valley High School's senior plus program.



Mya Owens (*Mentor: Guard*) is a freshman at Des Moines Roosevelt High School where she plays clarinet in the band. Her hobbies include longboarding, which is a variation of skateboarding.



Daniel Pietig (*Artist: Technical Crew*) is active in theatre with Adventures in Social Development. At The Playhouse, he was FDR in *Annie JR* and is now enjoying learning about the backstage aspect of theatre. A graduate of Urbandale High School, Danny is a brand ambassador for Finley's Dog Treats. He is a drummer and likes making videos.



Julia Richer (*Mentor: Bulda*) is excited for this, her third Penguin Project performance, previously mentoring Miss Hannigan in *Annie JR* and Gabriella in *Disney's High School Musical JR*. She is a junior at Urbandale High School where she serves as the chapter president of Best Buddies, is a member of Inspira treble choir and STUDIO2025 show choir, is a Fellowship of Christian Athletes officer, and volunteers as a student ambassador. In her free time, Julia enjoys swimming and running.



Madison Sanders (*Mentor: Snow Chorus/Summer Chorus*) is a junior at Johnston High School where she is active in theatre, serving on run crew for *Macbeth*, *Frozen*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*. She has been involved with Best Buddies since eighth grade and is director of buddy matches. She performed in *Disney's High School Musical JR* (Mentor: Susan) at The Playhouse. Madison's interests include working with children with special needs. She enjoys practicing ASL and works at ChildServe as a respite assistant.



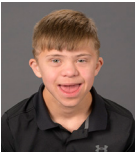
Knox Schupbach (*Mentor: Olaf*) made his Playhouse debut as Boy in *Dragons Love Tacos*. A sixth grader at Jordan Creek Elementary in West Des Moines, he likes creating and editing videos, swimming, and hanging with his friends.



Alex Shaw (*Artist: Technical Crew*) has worked on backstage crews for Playhouse productions of *Disney's High School Musical JR* and *Dragons Love Tacos*. He likes watching NASCAR racing and enjoys everything Disney. Alex graduated from Urbandale High School this spring.



Sabina Shelton (*Artist: Elsa*) has numerous Playhouse credits including *Annie JR* (Grace Farrell), *Disney's High School Musical JR* (Ms Darbus), and *Our Town*. She also performed *Singin' in the Rain JR* with CAP Theatre, Altoona. Sabina is a homeschooled senior who enjoys singing, reading, drawing, and photography.



Xander Talbot (*Artist: Townsperson*) is a seventh grader at Johnston's Summit Middle School. He enjoys singing, dancing, playing basketball, and playing PS5.



Robert Thacker (*Artist: Technical Crew*) is familiar to Penguin Project audiences as the suave deejay Jack Scott in *Disney's High School Musical JR* and Daddy Warbucks in *Annie JR*. A super senior, Robert is completing his academic studies at Focus/Central Learning BroadCasting and will receive his degree from Des Moines East High School in 2025. Robert is media specialist for A-NOD for Situation Awareness LLC and A-NOD Inc, organizations that strive to proactively support those who deal with special health concerns.



Conlon Topf (*Artist: Bishop/Oaken*) is an eighth grader at St. Augustin School in Des Moines where he has played a Brainiac in *Disney's High School Musical JR* and Oaken Family in *Disney's Frozen JR*. He has also performed in many homemade skits with siblings Elizabeth and Tiernan. Conlon has sung with the Iowa Youth Chorus since kindergarten. He enjoys crafting, singing, playing Minecraft, watching movies, and playing with his dog, Mya, and cat, Mercury.



Anabelle Weis (*Mentor: Guard*) is a seventh grader at Summit Middle School in Johnston who participates in competitive swimming. At The Playhouse, she played an Oompa Loompa in the Performance Academy production of *Willy Wonka KIDS* and was a Mentor: Jock in *Disney's High School Musical JR*. Anabelle likes playing Dungeons & Dragons and attending Renaissance fairs.



Annie White (*Mentor: Castle Staff/Hidden Folk*) has been involved in the past two Penguin Project productions, *Annie JR* and *Disney's High School Musical JR* and played Cecile in *The Hundred Dresses*. She has been in *A Christmas Carol* with Iowa Stage Theatre Company. Annie is in eighth grade at Johnston Middle School.



Eli Zimmerman (*Artist: Kristoff*) is in ninth grade at Johnston Middle School where he performs in Sound Advice show choir. He is active in Scouts. He has taken several Playhouse theatre classes, and appeared in the past two Penguin Project productions, as an Orphan in *Annie JR* and as Chad in *Disney's High School Musical JR*. Eli is very excited to be performing in Penguin Project once again.

CAST NOTES



Derek Phelps (*Director*) received their B.A. in directing and theatre performance from Chadron State College in Nebraska, and are thrilled to make their Playhouse directing debut with *Disney's Frozen JR*. They began volunteering at The Playhouse in 2018, portraying Younger Brother in *Ragtime*. Since then, they have appeared in *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, and more recently, *Kinky Boots*. Derek is The Playhouse's volunteer and production coordinator and a member of the theatre's teaching staff. They were music director for the Penguin Project production *Disney's High School Musical JR*. Derek is extremely proud to see these penguins fly.



Sarah Jorgenson (*Music Director*) has performed in both regional and national productions with some of her credits including *Oliver!* (Nancy), *Children of Eden* (Eve), *Dialogues de Carmelites* (Blanche), and *The Secret Garden* (Lily). She was a seamstress and dresser for a national tour of *Les Misérables*. At The Playhouse, she met her husband, Jeremy, when they were both cast in *Master Class* and they later appeared together in *A Year With Frog and Toad*. Sarah is a teaching artist at City Voices and with Music Class for Tots. The Jorgenson family enjoys going to Disney World and watching Miracle League baseball games.



Natalie Thomas (*Choreographer*) is a choreographer for Simpson College, St. Mark Lutheran Church in West Des Moines, and Children's Fantasy Theatre and Children's Fantasy Theatre in the Park in West Des Moines. On The Playhouse stage, Natalie has performed in *Ragtime* and *A Christmas Story*, *The Musical* and choreographed *Annie JR* and *Disney's High School Musical JR*. Natalie says her hobbies are mom-ing Wesley, Maddie, and Remy; wife-ing Dustin; and reading as many nerdy books as her tiny humans will allow.



Nicholas Amundson (*Scenic Designer*) earned his B.F.A. in theatre design from the University of South Dakota. He served as scenic designer for *Kinky Boots*, *Native Gardens*, *Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical*, and many more at The Playhouse. Nicholas is looking forward to directing and designing *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* this coming holiday season. His favorite thing about theatre is creating out-of-the-box ways to present a story that gives the audience something fun to experience.



Joy Barlean (*Costume Designer*) has designed costumes for Playhouse productions of *Disney's High School Musical JR*, *Annie JR*, and *Anne of Green Gables*, and worked as a seamstress for several other productions including *Singin' in the Rain* and *Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella*. She received her B.F.A. in theatre with a specialty in costume design from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She works as a member engagement specialist with Molina Healthcare of Iowa. Working on the Penguin Project combines her passions of supporting people with disabilities and costume design. She enjoys spending time with her husband and three kids, doing just about anything outdoors. Kyleigh, her daughter, is a mentor in this production, and her twin sons, Luke and Logan, are both artists in this production.



JP Ungs (*Lighting Designer*) is a freelance theatrical designer and recent graduate of Drake University where they received their B.F.A. in theatre design and technology. They have been active in Des Moines area theatre for more than a decade, both on and off stage. JP's recent production roles include set design for *The Wizard of Oz* at Urbandale Community Theatre and *Marvel Plays* at Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre, assistant director of *Storyville* for Waukee's South Middle School, properties design for *Disney's High School Musical JR* at The

Playhouse, costume and props design for *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* at Des Moines Area Community College, and set design for *Silent Sky* at Drake. Their Playhouse acting credits include *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (Pig Pen) and *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!* www.jpungs.com



Katie Hughes (*Properties Designer*) is an art/theatre graduate from Central College in Pella where she performed as Penelope Pennywise in *Urinetown The Musical*. She designed the

puppets for *Little Shop of Horrors* at Spencer (IA) Community Theatre and played Annelle in their production of *Steel Magnolias*. Katie made her Playhouse debut as Greta Ohlsson in *Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express*, played Miss Agatha Trunchbull in *Roald Dahl's Matilda The Musical* for which she received both the Dionysos Award and Cloris Award for outstanding performance, and more recently operated Audrey II in *Little Shop of Horrors*. A graphic designer and gift shop lead for UnityPoint Foundation, Katie likes knitting, film, and attending festivals.



Ash Howland (*Stage Manager*) is returning as a stage manager for Penguin Project. They have previously stage-managed Playhouse productions of

Disney's High School Musical JR and *Kinky Boots*. They took Playhouse classes as a kid and started volunteering as a high school student, dressing *Monty Python's Spamalot*. Ash has also worked as a stage manager with Iowa Stage Theatre Company. They are pursuing their associate's degree in early childhood education and currently work as a preschool teacher.



Kim Van Haecke (*Assistant Director/Mentor Assistant*) earned her master's degree in directing from Roosevelt University in Chicago and honed her skills directing HOPE! Troupe,

Ankeny Community Theatre, Valley High School's IHSSA team, and in her teaching position with

Des Moines Home Instruction Program. She directed the Penguin Project productions *Annie JR* and *Disney's High School Musical JR*. She has been teaching classes at The Playhouse for more than 20 years. Kim and her husband, Joe, enjoy traveling with their family and spreading simple joy as they give train rides at the Downtown Farmer's Market.



Emma Feldhans (*Assistant Music Director*) was the assistant music director for *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella* with The Playhouse. She also worked

as the music director for *How I Became a Pirate*. Her acting credits include *Oklahoma!* at Iowa State University and *Bring It On: The Musical* at Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre. Emma received her bachelor's degree in vocal music education from Iowa State University and works as a choir teacher at Parkview Middle School in Ankeny. When not teaching, Emma enjoys singing in the Des Moines Choral Society.



Anna Sunstrom (*Assistant Choreographer/Mentor Assistant*) recently received her master's degree in mental health counseling from Grand View University. Her backstage

credits with The Playhouse include Penguin Project mentor assistant for *Disney's High School Musical JR* and costume intern/dresser for the 2005 production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and as a dresser for *Shrek The Musical*. Other credits include *She Loves Me* (choreographer) and *Middle of Yesterday* (Leanna) at Ankeny Community Theatre, *Dracula* (Lucy) and *Tempest* (Iris) at Iowa Shakespeare Experience, and *The Producers* at Newton Community Theatre.



Travis Edrington (*Assistant Sound Designer/Mentor Assistant*) was the sound board operator for the Penguin Project production of *Disney's High School Musical JR*. He

has volunteered on many Playhouse shows'

CAST NOTES

technical crews. Travis works as a lifeguard, swim instructor, and mermaid instructor. His interests include electronics, computers, aquatics, theatre, and teaching children.



Jenny Bryant (*Assistant Stage Manager*) works as an elementary school teacher. She recently volunteered at The Playhouse as assistant stage manager for *Seussical Theatre for Young Audiences* and as a run crew member for *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*. Jenny enjoys baking, reading, and playing board games.



Paul Honold (*Production Assistant*) was named a Playhouse Volunteer of the Year for his work with The Penguin Project. He has appeared onstage in Playhouse productions of *Ragtime* and *Go, Dog. Go!* and Urbandale Community Theatre productions of *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*, *Annie*, and *Guys and Dolls*. Paul is a fry cook at Arby's. He enjoys theatre, singing, acting, going to the movies, and following sports.



Annie Mielke (*Mentor Coordinator*) has served in various leadership capacities with Penguin Project since its inception. Her numerous Playhouse acting credits include *Charlotte's Web* (Charlotte) and *The Hobbit* (Gollum), and she has taught Playhouse classes. Annie is the executive director for Adventures in Social Development, a non-profit that empowers neurodivergent individuals through the creative process. In her free time she enjoys reading and spending time with her family and their Boston terrier, Tesseract.



Karen Honold (*Family Liaison*) is returning as family liaison for the Penguin Project program. She served on the backstage run crew for The Playhouse production of *Go, Dog. Go!* Karen is a training manager for Collins Aerospace. She enjoys theatre and traveling in her free time.



Nate Weber (*Program Coordinator*) facilitates education outreach at The Playhouse. With a deep passion for the performing arts and a commitment to inclusivity, Nate focuses on creating a supportive and nurturing environment for young performers. He is dedicated to empowering individuals of all abilities through the magic of theater. Nate's background is in education and he has extensive experience in coordinating community programs.



Katy Merriman (*Playhouse Artistic Director*) has been an active member of the local theatre community since moving to Des Moines in 2013. Her Playhouse directing credits include *Our Town*; *Go, Dog. Go!*; *Guys and Dolls*; *Rodgers & Hammerstein's The Sound of Music*; the world premiere of *Escaping the Labyrinth*; *A Love Offering* (co-directed with Tiffany Johnson and Pyramid Theatre Company); and *I and You*. Other local performance and directing credits include *The Glass Menagerie* (Laura), *King Lear* (Cordelia), *Our Town* (Emily), and *Fun Home* (director) with Iowa Stage Theatre Company. She has coached for Iowa High School Speech Association (IHSSA) and serves on the education committee for the American Association of Community Theatre (AACT). Prior to her time in Des Moines, Katy worked with numerous theatres in the Midwest as a performer, director, musician, and administrator.

PRODUCTION CREWS

Technical Directors: **Nicholas Amundson, Paul Cartwright**

Run Crew: **Aria Huizenga, Adyanaa Jamiyanbaatar, Jerome Keller, Laurie Keller, Cate Miller, April Talbot, Lisa Wiggins**

Sound Board Operators: **Brian Dodson, Travis Edrington**

Light Board Operator: **JP Unga**

Followspot Operators: **Owen Hartin, Paul Honold**

Set Construction: **Dan Jessen, Dave Piper, George Sparks, Thomas Wilson**

Scenic Painter: **Nicholas Amundson**

Set Painting: **Vivi Baker, Kathleen Baustian, London Bernstein, Halle Davis, Maggie Flynn, Fred Gruca, Harold Hinkhouse, Pam Iano, Arthur Johnson, Anne Jung, Ezra Kuenzel,**

Caelin Larsen, Ella Jane Losh, Emmett Naber, Dmitri Norris, Hanalay Peterson, Shari Piper, Darlene Pullen, Lakayla Robinson, Lorenia Scofield, Madelynn Shetler, Rylan Williams, Cyrus Willis, Audeleh Zarghami

Costume Crew: **Alison Moore, Barb Mydland, Claire Ward**

Properties Crew: **Alissa Olson**

Master Electrician: **Virgil Kleinhesselink**

Photographers: **Jonathan Garton, Steve Gibbons, Brent Isenberger**

Historians: **Mark Morrison, Lloyd Von Hagen**

Playhouse Archives: **Harold Hinkhouse**

FROZEN JR/PENGUIN PROJECT SPECIAL THANKS
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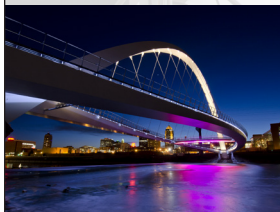
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 Jessica Van Essen, *Costume Shop, Supervisor*
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 Claire Ward, *Costume Shop Intern*
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GUEST INFORMATION

Accessibility

The Playhouse strives to make its facility and performances accessible to all guests. Our theatres are wheelchair accessible. Service animals are welcome. Assisted listening devices are available in the John Viars Theatre. If your hearing aid has a T-coil, toggle to that setting to receive the audio signal directly without any headset or other equipment needed. ASL interpreted performances and audio description performances are available upon request. For these and other needs, please call the ticket office with specific service requests.

Cameras

The taking of photographs and the use of recording devices are not allowed during a performance and are a violation of state and federal copyright laws.

Cancellations

If a show is cancelled due to bad weather, an email will be sent to ticket holders. Cancellations will be noted on the phone system, website, and social media sites. Tickets for a cancelled performance may be exchanged for another performance. Please be sure the ticket office has your email information and current phone in the event a performance is cancelled. The Playhouse does not sell its contacts and does not sell or trade its email addresses.

Companion Restroom

A companion restroom is located on the lower level across from the coatrack.

Concessions

A variety of beverages and candy may be available for purchase and are allowed in auditoriums. No outside drink or food are allowed. Staff reserve the right to deny alcoholic beverage service to anyone at their discretion.

Elevator

An elevator between levels is located at the east end of the building.

Emergency Exits

Please note the exit nearest your seat location. In the event of an emergency, ushers will provide direction.

Etiquette

Latecomers will be seated at an appropriate break in the play. Lobby chimes are sounded five minutes before curtain as well as the close of intermission. Disruptive, unruly guests, regardless of age, will be asked to leave. Cell phone ringers should be turned off.

Lost Items

Lost items will be held in the ticket office.

Parking

Free parking is available in The Playhouse lots and on streets surrounding the theatre. After 5:00 PM daily, free parking is available in the Shops at Roosevelt's east/back parking lot. Parking in the west/front Shops parking lot is restricted to Shops customers at all times. The Playhouse is not responsible for loss of any personal property left in vehicles.

Performance Content

The Playhouse does not rate subject matter as sensitivities vary from person to person. Questions about content, age appropriateness, or other aspects of the show such as strobe lights and other theatrical affects should be directed to the ticket office.

Performance Schedule

The regular Signature Series performance schedule is 7:30 PM Wednesdays through Saturdays, and 2:00 PM Sundays. The regular Kate Goldman Family Series performance schedule is 7:00 PM Fridays, and 1:00 PM and 4:00 PM Saturdays and Sundays. The December performance schedule is 7:00 PM Fridays, and 1:00 PM and 5:00 PM Saturdays and Sundays. All times are subject to change.

Preshow Talk

A preshow talk for each Signature Series performance will begin 30 minutes prior to curtain in the west lobby.

Safety Protocols

In order to best serve our whole community, The Playhouse respectfully requests the following items are not brought into theatre:

- Alcohol, drugs, illegal substances, or any paraphernalia associated with drug use
- Weapons of any type, including chains, knives, and firearms (excluding law enforcement officers)
- Pepper spray/mace/other chemicals
- Noisemakers such as air horns
- Laser Pens/Pointers of any type
- Fireworks

Tickets

Each audience member must occupy a seat and have a ticket, including infants.

Ticket Office Hours

The ticket office is open Noon to 5:00 PM, Tuesday through Friday, and 90 minutes before each performance. Tickets are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, online. Ticketing fees are the same whether purchased online, by phone, or at the ticket office.

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