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 **THE PLAYHOUSE**

#DMPlayhouse

Great Red Wine

*made in Iowa
from Grapes
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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.

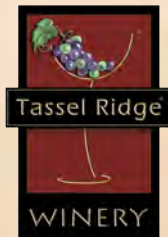
2021 Iowa Sabrevois

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.

2021 Iowa

Petite Pearl

is a dry red with a lightly acidic entry transitioning to dark fruit and a long, drying finish. Made from Petite Pearl grapes grown in our Iowa vineyards, 2021 *Iowa Petite Pearl* will pair nicely with grilled meat or pasta with a tomato-based sauce.



Tassel Ridge wines are sold at about 350 retailers in Iowa. For a list, visit www.tasselridge.com/retail. Or, Tassel Ridge can ship wine directly to you in Iowa, Arizona, Colorado, DC, Florida, Minnesota, and Missouri. Call the Winery at 641.672.WINE (9463) to place your order. Adult signature required for receipt of wine. Visit www.tasselridge.com, our Facebook page, or call 641.672.WINE (9463) for information about hours, Seated Wine Tastings, and Wine & Food Events including Wine & Wood Fired Oven Pizza events.

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WELCOME TO YOUR PLAYHOUSE



Katy Merriman
Artistic Director

Thank you for joining us for our 107th season opener, *Bright Star*.

You may be attending because you are a season subscriber and see every show at The Playhouse. Thank you for believing in your community theatre and providing consistent, year-round support. Perhaps you are friends and family of someone in the cast or crew and came to support them. Thanks to you too! Not only do you share your loved one with us for countless rehearsal hours, you support The Playhouse mission, staff, and programming when you purchase a ticket. If you are here because the show title intrigued you, we thank you as well. You are a fearless patron we count on to see a show at The Playhouse merely because it interests you. Just like the volunteer performers, builders, painters, stitchers, teachers, students, ushers, backstage crew members who come together to make theatre happen at The Playhouse, *you* are audience members who help local theatre thrive.

You may have noticed when you arrived that we are no longer under construction! We are thrilled to have an accessible parking lot, an updated Studio Theatre (see a show in the new space this season!), and expanded facilities for our volunteers and staff members. Thank you for supporting the capital campaign and renovations. Let us know if you'd like a tour!

As a successful summer of classes, serving more than 750 students, ends and the 2025-26 season begins, we feel gratitude and excitement. Gratitude extends to everyone who enters this building for believing in the impact theatre can make on our community. Excitement abounds for the coming season of shows and programming, including the return of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* as the opening title in our Kate Goldman Family Series and our family holiday classic, *Disney's Frozen*. We encourage you to explore what The Playhouse can offer you this year as a patron, volunteer, or student. Our doors are open, and you belong here!

BRIGHT STAR

VOTE for your favorite performances!



Scan the QR code to tell us who your favorite performers were today!

Outstanding performances are recognized at the Encore Awards each September.



From all the volunteers, cast, crew,
and staff at The Playhouse...

Thank you for your support!

To make a donation, please contact:

Jordan Bles

Director of Philanthropy
515.974.5370
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Cast of Waitress 2024/25 Season.

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& Nancy Lavender Bohenhouse
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Special thanks to the corporate partners who support the Signature Series and Kate Goldman Family Series productions.

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Bright Star

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The Best Christmas Pageant Ever

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Disney's Frozen

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Red Riding Hood

Nationwide

Agatha Christie's The Mousetrap

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The conversion of thousands of print materials to digital files is nearly complete. Soon The Playhouse will unveil a website on which guests can find many historical records from prior plays and performances. The donors listed below made contributions toward the effort.

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The Tribute Program provides an opportunity to celebrate milestones such as birthdays, weddings, anniversaries and graduations. It can also be a way to honor the memory of friends and relatives.

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Don't see your name? Those listed in this program have generously supported The Playhouse since August 12, 2024. If we've made a mistake, please contact Katy McCaull at 515.974.5359 or kmccaull@dmplayhouse.com. Gifts of \$100 or more are listed in every playbill throughout the season. Gifts under \$100 are recognized in the spring musical playbill each year.

ABOUT

BRIGHT STAR

Katrina Ploof, Director

If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water. – Loren Eiseley

And if one were allowed to add to Loren Eiseley's beloved observation, one might say, "especially the waters of Appalachia." For it is in the rivers and creeks and waterfalls of the Blue Ridge that miracles lie in wait – where the unwavering dream of one young woman lies buried in the cool earth, waiting for all the bright stars in the sky to align and the world to be made right again.

Reading Steven Martin and Edie Brickell's story for the first time, I was overwhelmed by the images of water brought to life in both script and lyrics, and by the bluegrass melodies which often to me sound like a rushing river or a rambling stream. So setting this production of *Bright Star* beside the cool clear waters of the Blue Ridge Mountains seemed perfect. But how to make that world come alive on a stage? How do we create a world where miracles can happen, and where water delivers those miracles to those who need it?

Our production and Playhouse designers Benjamin Kramer, Nicholas Amundson, and Sam Stephen have created a world of mystery and beauty. Their attention to detail, theatrical craftsmanship, and storytelling is evident in every choice you see in the world before you today. Take a moment to appreciate the old wooden planks utilized in the scenic elements, the hand-crafted leaves of the willow, and the time and skill required in the creation of tree bark and stone.

Bright Star is a story of miracles, of love, of family and fate. The work of this extraordinary design team and the volunteers who gave countless hours of their time to this world is a miracle too. For in the theatre, *where* we tell our stories is as important as the story itself.

I hope you enjoy your time here along the waters of the Blue Ridge. I know that I have, and that I am delighted now to share it with you.

And like our Alice Murphy, may you find that all your "wishes in the water" come true.



Rebecca Hunt

Experience the Arts. Support the Future.



From gallery exhibitions to stirring performances, Drake's fine arts students and faculty share their talent year round. **Friends of Drake Arts** helps make it all possible—funding travel, guest artists, and professional opportunities.

FALL EVENTS

ART

Gallery Hours

Tues–Sun 12–4pm
Thursdays 12–8pm

Sept. 4–Oct. 17

Unfurling Garden: Works by
Nikki Renee Anderson

THEATRE

Oct. 2–5

Cabaret

Nov. 20–23

Julius Caesar

MUSIC

Sept. 25

Drake Symphony Orchestra

Oct. 19

Drake Choirs

Nov. 16

Drake Jazz Ensemble One

Dec. 5

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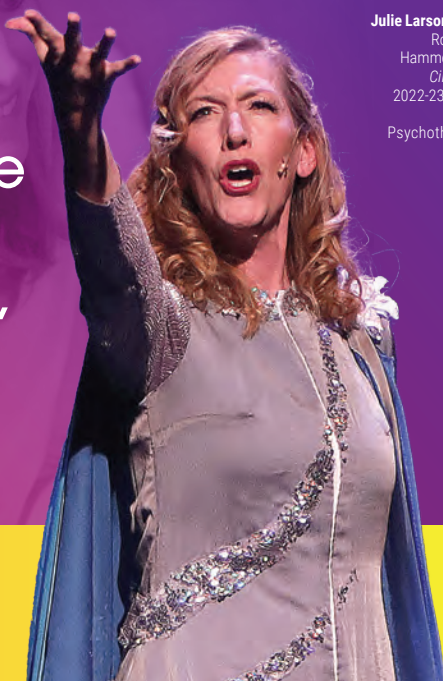


You mean the
social worker
can act, sing,
and dance?

Julie Larson, LCSW
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2022-23 Season

Psychotherapist

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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. Closed captioning is available in the John Viars Theatre via GalaPro. The GalaPro app is available for free in the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. For these and other needs, please call the ticket office with specific service requests.

All-Gender Restroom

An all-gender restroom is located on the lower level across from the coatrack.

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.

Changing Stations

Changing stations are located in the men's and women's restrooms on the lower level.

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 Thursdays and 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, excluding the December show, will begin 30 minutes prior to curtain in the west lobby. The December show will have preshow music 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 the theatre:

- Alcohol, drugs, illegal substances, or any paraphernalia associate 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.

Des Moines Community Playhouse

831 42nd Street, Des Moines, IA 50312

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DMPlayhouse.com

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Administrative office:
515-277-6261

**School matinee reservations &
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CAST LIST

670th Production
107th Season

Opening: September 19, 2025
Closing: October 5, 2025

The Des Moines Playhouse Presents in the John Viars Theatre

BRIGHT STAR Inspired by a True Story

Music, Book, & Story by
Steve Martin

Music, Lyrics, & Story by
Edie Brickell

Produced by

Joey Parnes, Sue Wagner, John Johnson,
Zebulon LLC, Jay Alix & Una Jackman, Len Blavatnik, James L. Nederlander, Carson & Joseph Gleberman,
Balboa Park Productions

The Shubert Organizations, Jammie deRoy/Catherine Adler/Cricket Jiranek

In Association with

Rodger Hess, AC Orange International, Broadway Across America, Sally Jacobs & Warren Baker
Diana DiMenna, Exeter Capital, Agnes Gund, True Love Productions and The Old Globe

World premiere at The Old Globe, San Diego, CA, on Sept. 28, 2014,
Barry Edelstein, Artistic Director, Michael G. Murphy, Managing Director.

A workshop production of *Bright Star* was presented by New York Stage and Film & Vassar College
at the Powerhouse Theatre, Summer 2013.

Presented by Infomax Office Systems

Director: Katrina Ploof

Music Director/Conductor: Brandon Record

Choreographer: Stella Webster

Scenic Designer: Benjamin Kramer

Costume Designer: Angela Lampe

Lighting Designer/Projection Designer: Sam Stephen

Sound Designer: Mary Baca

Properties Designer: Beth Gibbins

Stage Manager: Avery Johnson

Dialect Coach: Lori Engler

Assistant Director: Toni K Farris

Assistant Stage Manager: Chelsey Myers

Artistic Director: Katy Merriman

Cast

In Order of Appearance

*Indicates Playhouse Debut

Alice Murphy.....	Rebecca Hunt	Jimmy Ray Dobbs	Ethan Seiser*
Billy Cane.....	Will Johnson	Stanford.....	Shawn Pavlik
Daddy Cane	Steve Betz	Dr. Norquist/Ensemble.....	Andy McKissick
Margo	Alysa Goethe	Government Clerk/Ensemble	Samm Nicolino*
Max/Ensemble	Ethan Saltz	Well-Dressed Woman/Maid/Ensemble ..	Brittany Roach
Florence/Ensemble	Alayna Wilber	Young Daddy Cane/Ensemble.....	Lucas Obert*
Edna/Ensemble	Hannah Rublaitus	Bus Driver/ Ensemble.....	Whit Ellsworth
Daryl	Dan Tatulli	Bartender/Flirtatious Guy/Ensemble	Dionysus Lewis Manuel Jr
Lucy	Ashley Schaeffer		
Mama Murphy	Charissa L Hamel	Maid/Nurse/Ensemble.....	Katie Wanek*
Daddy Murphy	Christopher White	Sirens ..	Carolyn Kester, Abbey Tauchen, Margaret Wise*
Mayor Dobbs	Paul Olson*		

Time: 1923-24 and 1945-46 **Place:** North Carolina

Bright Star is performed with a 15-minute intermission.

Bright Star is presented through special arrangement with and all authorized performance materials are supplied by Theatrical Rights Worldwide, 1180 Avenue of the Americas Ste 640, New York, NY 10036. www.theatricalrights.com

The video or audio recording of this performance by any means is strictly prohibited.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT I

"If You Knew My Story"	Alice, Company
"She's Gone"	Daddy Cane, Billy
"Bright Star"	Billy, Ensemble
"Way Back in the Day"	Alice, Ensemble
"Whoa, Mama"	Jimmy, Alice, Ensemble
"Firmer Hand/Do Right"	Daddy Murphy, Mama Murphy
"A Man's Gotta Do"	Mayor Dobbs, Jimmy
"Asheville"	Margo, Ensemble
"What Could Be Better"	Jimmy, Alice, Ensemble
"I Can't Wait"	Alice, Jimmy, Ensemble
"Please, Don't Take Him"	Mayor Dobbs, Alice, Daddy Murphy, Mama Murphy, Stanford Adams, Ensemble
"A Man's Gotta Do (reprise)"	Mayor Dobbs, Ensemble

ACT II

"Entr'acte"	Orchestra
"Sun's Gonna Shine"	Alice, Mama Murphy, Margo, Daddy Cane, Edna, Florence, Ensemble
"Heartbreaker"	Jimmy
"Another Round"	Lucy, Daryl, Billy, Ensemble
"I Had a Vision"	Jimmy, Alice
"Always Will"	Billy, Margo, Ensemble
"I Can't Wait (reprise)"	Ensemble
"So Familiar/At Long Last"	Alice, Ensemble
"Finale"	Alice, Jimmy, Billy, Margo, Company
"Bows/Exit Music"	Orchestra

ORCHESTRA

Conductor: **Brandon Record**

Fiddle: **Maggie Stagner**

Violin/Viola: **Heidi Terrell**

Cello: **Marissa Maniglia**

Upright Bass: **F Michael Miller**

Percussion: **Tyler Heep**

Piano: **Kathy Gedler, Mary Schmeltzer**

Guitar: **Anthony Cravero, Gary Goudelock**

Mandolin: **Anna Steenson**

Banjo: **Seth Hartman**

Orchestra manager: **Brandon Record**



Steve Betz (*Daddy Cane*) last appeared at The Playhouse as Cogsworth in *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*. Since his debut in *Big River*, his Playhouse shows have included

How I Became a Pirate (Pirate Seymour Braunschwagger), *The Drowsy Chaperone* (Underling), *The Secret Garden* (Neville), and *All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914*. He has also performed with StageWest and Ankeny Community Theatre. Steve is vice president of communications at Vestaron Corporation. He and his partner, David, have three French bulldogs and enjoy delicious food and drink.



Whit Ellsworth (*Bus Driver/Ensemble*) is thrilled to be back on The Playhouse stage after appearing as Monsieur D'Arque in *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*, Bob Crewe in *Jersey*

Boys, and Sam Craig in *Our Town*. Other recent roles include Don John in *Much Ado About Nothing* at Ankeny Community Theatre and Kip in *Wonder of the World* at Tallgrass Theatre Company. Whit is a graduate of Upright Citizens Brigade Los Angeles's improv and sketch writing programs. In his free time, he loves to paint and support local drag.



Alysa Goethe (*Margo*) has stage credits throughout Iowa including *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Mary Magdalene) at The Playhouse, *Mamma Mia!* at Countryside Community

Theatre (Eldridge, IA) and *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*, *Cameron Mackintosh & Disney's Mary Poppins*, and *The Sound of Music* while at Bettendorf (IA) High School. Alysa, a graduate of Drake University, is the marketing and outreach coordinator at Iowa Diabetes and teaches piano lessons. She can't wait to do what she loves most, performing with her castmates, especially on her birthday, which occurs during this run.



Charissa L Hamel (*Mama Murphy*) has appeared in several Playhouse shows and directed *The Velveteen Rabbit*. She has worked with many area theatre

companies, including Ankeny Community Theatre (ACT), Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre, and Tallgrass Theatre, as an intimacy choreographer, fight choreographer, stage manager, lighting designer, and scenic designer. One of her favorite experiences was as director, lighting designer, and scenic designer for *A Streetcar Named Desire* at ACT. Charissa is a commercial underwriter for Hastings Insurance and loves going to the movies.



Rebecca Hunt (*Alice Murphy*) is a psychotherapist who received her M.S. from Drake University. She has been involved with theatre, performing, and music

directing for much of her life and received her B.F.A. from Carnegie Mellon University. At The Playhouse, she most recently played Mary Delgado in *Jersey Boys*. While *Bright Star* is a dream come true, her favorite roles are partner to Shawn and mama to their three wonderful children.



Will Johnson (*Billy Cane*), a senior at Drake University studying vocal performance, has showcased his talents in various productions. His notable Playhouse

roles include Crutchie in *Disney's Newsies*, Jonathan Harker in *Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors*, Stuart in *Stuart Little*, and feature ensemble roles in *A Christmas Story: The Musical*, *Freaky Friday One Act*, and *Elf The Musical*. In his free time, Will enjoys rock climbing and making music.

CAST NOTES



Carolyn Kester (*Siren*) was last on The Playhouse stage in *Roald Dahl's Matilda The Musical*. Her favorite productions include *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Evita*,

Into the Woods, *Bye Bye Birdie*, and *Godspell*, among others at the Clinton Area Showboat Theatre. She earned her B.A. in theatre at Northwestern College (Orange City, IA), specializing in Christian theatre ministries. She serves as a youth minister at Imani Family Church. In her free time, she loves drawing, reading, and exploring Des Moines with her husband, Josh, and their two sons.



Dionysus Lewis Manuel Jr (*Bartender/Flirtatious Guy/Ensemble*) made his Playhouse debut as Howie Newsome in *Our Town*. Since then, he has appeared in *Last*

Stop on Market Street (Tatted Man, Encore Awards recipient), *School of Rock*, *Waitress*, and *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* (Drifter). He volunteered with the backstage crew for *Jersey Boys* and is in the theatre's Adventure Clubhouse cast. Dionysus is a substitute teacher in the Des Moines Public Schools. In his free time, he enjoys singing and hanging out with friends.



Andy McKissick (*Dr Norquist/Ensemble*) is excited to be back on The Playhouse stage after playing Ogie in *Waitress* (Cloris Award winner) and singing in the ensemble in

Jesus Christ Superstar. He originated the role of Owen in the Off-Broadway production of *Game Boy* as well as Dean in an industry reading of the new Broadway musical *R-E-S-P-E-C-T* at New York Stage and Film. His favorite regional shows include *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* (LeFou), *Forever Plaid* (Jinx), and *Altar Boyz* (Mark).



Samm Nicolino (*Government Clerk/Ensemble*) is excited to be back on stage. A Des Moines native, Samm took classes at The Playhouse and was on run crew for several

shows. After graduating from Des Moines Lincoln High School, where she was involved with theatre, show choir, and chamber choir, she attended The American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York City and was also a featured soprano in the Syracuse (NY) Pops Chorus. A pet sitter, Samm loves animals and travel, trying new things, and being a "cool aunt."



Lucas Obert (*Young Daddy Cane/Ensemble*) is a freshman at Drake University studying political science and international relations. Lucas appeared in *Big Fish* (Edward

Bloom), *The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical* (Percy Jackson), *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* (Gaston), and *Grease* (Vince Fontaine/Teen Angel) at Coon Rapids-Bayard (IA) High School. At History Boy Theatre Company (Jefferson, IA), Lucas was in productions of *Bridges of Madison County* (Michael Johnson) and *Rocky the Musical* (Miles Jergens). Lucas enjoys reading, listening to music, watching movies with friends, and spending time with his brothers.



Paul Olson (*Mayor Dobbs*) is making his Playhouse debut. He is no stranger to the stage, with past credits including *Dial "M" for Murder* (Tony), for which he was nominated for

a Cloris Award, and *White Christmas*, both at Ankeny Community Theatre. His daughter, Zahra, is also passionate about theatre. Paul is an account manager with Avnet and enjoys playing strategy board games and leading worship at Harvest Vineyard Church.



Shawn Pavlik (*Stanford*) has been involved with more than 50 productions throughout Iowa. His favorite roles include Javert in *Les Misérables* in Newton, the Baker in *Into*

the Woods in Leon and Marshalltown, and Teyve in *Fiddler on the Roof* in Leon. His favorite directing gigs were *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* at Carousel Theatre in Indianola and *Fiddler on the Roof* for Knoxville Community Theatre. He was last seen onstage at The Playhouse in *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Shawn is a math teacher at Osceola's Clarke High School.



Brittany Roach (*Well-Dressed Woman/Maid/Ensemble*) is excited to be back on The Playhouse stage after making her debut in *Jesus Christ*

Superstar. Her past shows include *White Christmas* (Martha Watson) with Ankeny Community Theatre and *Proof* (Claire) with Sager Creek Arts Center in Siloam Springs, AR. Brittany enjoys yoga, coffee with friends, and reading. As she spends most of her time raising three boys with her husband, Benjamin, she enjoys the creative outlet of theatre.



Hannah Rublaitus (*Edna/Ensemble*) made her Playhouse debut this spring in *Jesus Christ Superstar* and is grateful to be involved in another production. She

teaches pre-kindergarten and early childhood music at Bergman Academy.



Ethan Saltz (*Max/Ensemble*) is no stranger to theatre. He was last seen on The Playhouse stage in *Jersey Boys* (Bob Gaudio), his favorite role, and served as tech team

coordinator and mentor assistant for The Penguin Project. Other credits include *The 25th*

Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (Mitch Mahoney) and *Next to Normal* (Dr. Fine/ Dr. Madden) at Carousel Theatre (Indianola), and *White Christmas* (Ralph Sheldrake) at Ankeny Community Theatre. Ethan is a registered behavior technician at Stride who enjoys writing, playing video games, and spending time with his dog MJ.



Ashley Schaeffer (*Lucy*) last appeared on The Playhouse stage as Rosie in *Cabaret*.

She has extensive theatre experience, playing Titania/Hippolyta in *A Midsummer*

Night's Dream at Iowa Stage Theatre Company and Cinderella in *Into the Woods*, Charlotte Corday in *The Revolutionists*, and Marian in *The Bridges of Madison County* at Tallgrass Theatre Company. Ashley is a senior talent development consultant at Kum & Go. In her free time, she loves game nights and spending time with her husband, Alex, and their sassy daughter, Lilah.



Ethan Seiser (*Jimmy Ray Dobbs*) is a graduate of the Stella Adler Studio of Acting in New York City, where he played Brack in *Hedda Gabler*.

He has been an active member

of the local arts community since moving back to Iowa. His recent credits include *The Grown-Ups* (Aidan) with Matchbook Theatre Company (Des Moines) and *Torch Song* (Ed) with Iowa Stage Theatre Company. When he isn't performing, Ethan loves to game, read, and wait in anticipation for the next season of *The Traitors* with his wife, Alex.



Dan Tatulli (*Daryl*) made his Playhouse debut as Tommy DeVito in *Jersey Boys*. A lifelong performer, Dan has brought his love of the stage to both theater and his former

life as the frontman for San Diego rock band Danny and the Tramp. By day, he serves as

CAST NOTES

marketing director for Athene, embracing the “businessman by day, entertainer by night” spirit. Having lived on both coasts, Dan and his wife, Melissa, now enjoy exploring the Midwest with their two energetic daughters, Isabel and Hannah.



Abbey Tauchen (*Siren*) made her Playhouse debut in *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*. Her love for theatre began in high school when she played Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*.

She continued performing with the Show-Me Opera at the University of Missouri and earned three degrees: Bachelor of Journalism (magazine editing), Bachelor of Arts in English, and Master of Arts in journalism. Abbey works as a freelance writer and editor. She enjoys going on adventures with her husband, Jonathan, and poodle pup, Finley.



Katie Wanek (*Maid/Nurse/Ensemble*) is on stage for the first time in more than 10 years, when she played Judy in *9 to 5* at the Waterloo Community Playhouse.

Throughout high school and college, Katie was involved in productions including *Grease*, *A Chorus Line*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, and *Wait Until Dark*. Katie teaches 6-12 grade vocal in the Pleasantville School District where she also serves as a speech coach and musical theatre director. Katie is excited to be making her Playhouse debut and thankful for the support from her three children.



Christopher White (*Daddy Murphy*) performed in a variety of musicals growing up in Anderson, SC, including *Peter Pan*, *The Sound of Music*, *Oliver!*, and *Shenandoah*. At

The Playhouse, he made his debut in *All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914*. When he's not working as the employee experience manager at Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield,

he and his wife, Toni, along with their kids, Cameron, Luci, and Annie, are probably busy planning another trip to a Disney Park.



Alayna Wilber (*Florence/Ensemble*) was active in theatre at Des Moines Lincoln High School, playing Katherine Blake in *Freaky Friday* and Margaret White in *Carrie: The Musical*. She also played Red Ruth in Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre's production of *Treasure Island*. Earlier this spring, she made her Playhouse debut in *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Alayna is a service manager with Hy-Vee Aisles Online who enjoys painting, collecting comics, and watching trashy TV.



Margaret Wise (*Siren*) was involved in many productions at Des Moines Roosevelt High School including *The Crucible* (Elizabeth Proctor), *It Can't Happen Here* (Mary Jessup Greenhill), *Disney's High School Musical* (Kelsey), and her favorite, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Olive Ostrovsky). At Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre, Maggie played Agnes in *She Kills Monsters*. She volunteered at The Playhouse on the run crew for *School of Rock*. In her free time, Maggie enjoys reading and painting.



Katrina Ploof (*Director*) is a native of the great state of Maine and the daughter of a music teacher and a vocalist. In the past 40 years Katrina has directed, choreographed, and coached over 250 productions in the U.S. and Canada including works by Chekov, Shaw, Sondheim, Ibsen, Wilder, Wasserstein, and McNally. Her Playhouse directing credits include *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* and *Jersey Boys*. She has been adjudicating theatre festivals throughout the U.S. and Canada for over 20 years. Katrina is also a published playwright and has been a member

of the Lincoln Center Theatre Directors Laboratory since 2000.



Brandon Record (*Music Director*) is a Des Moines based conductor, director, performer, and teacher. He has a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Sioux

Falls and is working on his master's degree in choral conducting. This is his 11th show with The Playhouse as part of the production team. His numerous credits include performing, stage management, lighting design, directing, and musical direction. At The Playhouse, Brandon's past productions include *Jesus Christ Superstar*; *Jersey Boys*; *Roald Dahl's Matilda The Musical*; *Go, Dog. Go!*; and *Pippi Longstocking*. Brandon is the director of choirs and a vocal music teacher at Des Moines Lincoln High School, artistic director and conductor of the Des Moines Diversity Chorus, and a teaching artist of voice at Drake University and City Voices. He spends his free time traveling, playing board games, and being with family, friends, and dogs, Fynn and Theo.



Stella Webster (*Choreographer*) was choreographer for The Playhouse's production of *A Charlie Brown Christmas* and assistant choreographer for *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Kinky Boots*.

Other Playhouse credits include *Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella* (Ensemble) and *Roald Dahl's Matilda The Musical* (Ensemble). Her area stage and production credits include *The Crucible* (Abigail Williams) at Iowa State University, *Legally Blonde Jr.* (Brooke Wyndham) at Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre, and choreographer and assistant director for *Mamma Mia!* and *Disney's High School Musical* at Des Moines Roosevelt High School. Stella is a graduate student at Drake University and a show choir choreographer at Des Moines Lincoln High School.



Benjamin Kramer (*Set Designer*) was scenic designer for The Playhouse's productions of *Once*, *Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors*, and *Men on Boats*. His work has been

seen throughout the U.S. including designs for Arkansas Repertory Theatre (*Laughter on the 23rd Floor*), Actors Theatre of Little Rock (*Bright Star*), Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey (*Complete Works of Shakespeare abridged-revised*), Orange Beach (AL) Performing Arts Center (*Clue*), and Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, TX (*Once Upon a Mattress*). Ben holds an M.F.A. in set design from Minnesota State University – Mankato and is a professor of scenic design at Stephen F Austin State University. In his free time, he loves to cook, play guitar, and create with his 3D printer.



Angela Lampe (*Costume Designer*) began her tenure with The Playhouse in 1993 and has designed costumes, sets, and props for nearly 300 productions including *Guys*

and *Dolls*, *Meredith Willson's The Music Man*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, *Ella Enchanted*, *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*, *Ragtime*, *Les Misérables*, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*, *West Side Story*, *Into the Woods*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Sunset Boulevard*, and *Hairspray*. She has a B.A. from Central College in Pella and a M.F.A. in theatre from the University of Nebraska. She is the recipient of four Cloris Awards for excellence in costuming and puppetry.

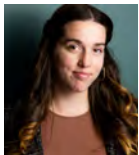


Sam Stephen (*Lightning Designer*) has a B.A. in live entertainment design and technology from North Central College, Naperville, IL. They won a Cloris Award for their

lighting design of *All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914* (Playhouse). They have worked on a multitude of permanent design

CAST NOTES

installations in Chicago as well as designing *The Odd Couple* (Harper College, Palatine, IL), *Footloose* (Big Noise Theatre, Des Plaines, IL), *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, *School of Rock*, and *Waitress* (Des Moines Playhouse), *Clue* and *The Woman in Black* (Theatre Cedar Rapids), and *The Addams Family* and *The Legend of Georgia McBride* (Metropolis Performing Arts, Arlington Heights, IL). Sam is on The Playhouse staff as technical director of audio visual. www.DesignsBySamuelStephen.com



Mary Baca (*Sound Designer*) is a Chicago-based designer, her homebase since she graduated from Belmont University in Nashville, TN, with a B.F.A. in production design and technology. While she has experience in all areas of theater, her A/V highlights include livestream coordinator (DNCC, Chicago), sound designer and mixer for *Disney's Newsies* (BAMTheatre, Hinsdale, IL), mixer for *The Heathers* (Encore Performing Arts, Oak Park, IL), guest sound and projections designer for *The Good Times are Killing Me* (Belmont University, Nashville), Foley artist and editor for *A Collection of Radio Plays* (Belmont University, Nashville), and sound designer for *Crumbs From the Table of Joy* (Belmont University, Nashville). She is thrilled to be back at The Playhouse after designing sound for *Men on Boats* last season. www.marybaca.com



Beth Gibbins (*Properties Designer*) began at The Playhouse as a painter for *Red* (2014), co-designed props for *Jersey Boys* (2024), and worked solo to design the props for *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*. A nonprofit events and communications professional, she now consults for Historic East Village, where she lives with her husband, Paul. While raising their four kids, Beth enjoyed creating Halloween costumes and overzealously decorating for

Trunk-or-Treat. Her 2-year-old grandson now gives her the perfect excuse to play with crayons and Play-Doh.



Avery Johnson (*Stage Manager*) is back at The Playhouse after serving various sound design and programming roles for *Waitress* and *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Musical*, as assistant stage manager for *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, and as fly captain for *Rodgers & Hammerstein's The Sound of Music*. She works as an IATSE Local 67 stagehand and has a passion for stage management and a love for audio. She was recognized by Des Moines Performing Arts for Outstanding Stage Management on *Shrek The Musical*. Avery is a senior at the University of Iowa with plans to apply her business management degree in the live entertainment industry. In her free time, she's typically studying French or with her pets, Rosie and Lady.



Lori L. Engler (*Dialect Coach*) is grateful to return to The Playhouse after dialect coaching *Jersey Boys* and *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* last season. She is a Certified Teacher of Knight-Thompson Speechwork who has also coached productions for Florida theatres and schools including Theatre Winter Haven, Venice Theatre, The Henegar Center, Ocala Civic Theatre, Lake Highland Preparatory School, Florida Southern College, and Polk State College. Additional select coaching credits include *Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express*, *Titanic: the Musical*, *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*, *Underneath the Lintel*, *Diana: the Musical*, and the world premiere of *Paper Thin*. Lori holds a B.A. in communication arts from Ursinus College and is a member of the Voice and Speech Trainers Association, Educational Theatre Association, and American Association of Community Theatre. www.LoriEngler.com



Toni K Farris (*Assistant Director*) has been involved with The Playhouse since 1989 and credits her parents for encouraging her to start volunteering with the theatre.

Toni has worked in virtually every production team role available with stage management and assistant directing being her favorites. She particularly enjoys being a fresh pair of eyes at technical rehearsals. Happily retired, she enjoys reading, traveling, trying new restaurants and coffee shops, and supporting Liverpool Football Club. She is a Cloris Awards judge.



Chelsey Myers (*Assistant Stage Manager*) is excited to return to The Playhouse after serving on run crew for *Waitress* this summer. They studied cinema at University

of Iowa and currently work as a unit clerk for UnityPoint. In their free time, Chelsey loves studying film, crocheting, going on walks, and finding new and interesting places in Des Moines with her husband, Austin.



Steve Martin (*Music, Book, & Story*) is one of the most well-known and pervasive talents in entertainment. His work has earned him an Academy Award, five Grammy Awards

(two for comedy, three for music), an Emmy, the Mark Twain Award, and the Kennedy Center Honor. As an author, Martin's work includes the plays *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, *The Underpants*, and *Meteor Shower*. Also an accomplished banjoist, Martin created the Steve Martin Prize for Excellence in Banjo and Bluegrass, an award established to reward artistry and bring greater visibility to bluegrass performers.



Edie Brickell (*Music, Lyrics, & Story*) released the debut multiplatinum album *Shooting Rubber Bands at the Stars* with New Bohemians in 1988.

Her recent works include a 13-track collaboration with Steve Martin titled *Love Has Come for You*. The album won a Grammy for Best American Roots Song and inspired the musical *Bright Star*. Their second album, *So Familiar*, is out now.



Katy Merriman (*Artistic Director*) moved to Des Moines in 2013 and has worked with numerous arts organizations as a performer, director, musician, teacher, and

administrator. Her recent Playhouse directing credits include *Waitress* (director) *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* (music director); *School of Rock*; *Our Town*; *Once* (music director); and *Native Gardens*. Other local performance and directing credits include *Once* (Girl) at The Playhouse and *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). Katy was the festival chair for ACCT's YouthFest 2025, hosted in Des Moines in June 2025.

PRODUCTION CREWS

Volunteer & Production Coordinator: **Derek Phelps**

Technical Directors: **Nicholas Amundson, Sam Stephen**

Production Assistant: **Caitlyn Porter**

Intimacy Consultant: **Stephanie Schneider**

Dresser: **Maddie Mardesen**

Run Crew: **Jack Enright, Greg Millar, Marshall Moore, Chelsey Myers, Marise Waldschmidt**

Sound Engineers: **Brian Dodson, Sam Stephen**

Sound Board Operators: **Robert Bohannon, Sam Stephen**

Light Board Operator: **Ellie Cole**

Projections Operator: **Robert Bohannon**

Costume Crew: **Laila Collier, Allison Engel, Miranda Hughes, Sophia Knight, Alison Moore, Marshall Moore, Mel Pins, Claire Ward**

Master Electrician: **Virgil Kleinhesselink**

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

Playhouse Archives: **Harold Hinkhouse**

WAITRESS SPECIAL THANKS

Due to print deadlines, these individuals could not be acknowledged in the previous playbill.

Guest Services: **Kayla Adams, Ann Anhalt, Gary Backous, Naomi Backous, Sandy Barton, John Beals, Kathy Bermel, Emery Blackford, Lily Briggeman, Katie Briggs, Juls Bruns, Ann Marie Buell, Jake Buell, Skyler Chambers, Emily Clement, Meg Cook, Isabel Davis, Lydia Davis, Patty Davis, Deborah Dunham, Mark Eikenberry, Ellen Fisher, Sharon Gee, Alysa Goethe, Deb Gray, Tesa Greenlee, Genevieve Gualerzi, Jeffrey Halstead, Melanie Hartzler, Grace Harvey, Carol Healy, Sara Heijerman, Linda Hendricks, Harold Hinkhouse, Pat Hipple, Carol Holland, Sandi Holland, Tamee Holzhauser, Karen Honold, Maylene Jones, Mary Kacere, Abhishek Khanna, Katey Lindaman, Amanda Martin, Carolyn McCleary, Lauren Mills, Joe Murdock, Kim Newman, Pam O'Keefe, Janet Peck, Kathy Polson, Deanna Reed, Sydney Rowley, Sara Scott, Amy Skarin, Shane Snitker, Mar Standley, Sydney Svoboda, Eavan Swanson, Shea Swanson, Lori VanZee, Michael Voigt, Fran Watson, Sam Wendt, Janet Whiteside, Alayna Wilber, Stephanie Wilber, Kailan Wing, Katie Wollan**



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David R Kilpatrick, *Executive Director*
Katy Merriman, *Artistic Director*
Jordan Bles, *Director of Philanthropy/Interim Executive Director*

Staff

Nicholas Amundson, *Technical Director for Scenery*
Lee Ann Bakros, *Marketing & Public Relations Director*
Lindsey Ballard, *Concessions Manager*
Charlee Bender, *Production Intern*
Lynn Bjorlin, *Concessions*
Jerry Eisenhour, *Final Act Ensemble Director*
Pluto Evans, *Production Intern*
Mary Hofer, *Finance*
Gavin Houchins-McCallum, *House Manager*
Abi Houston, *House Manager*
Debbie Jacobson, *Ticket Office Manager*
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Caulinez Lovan, *Concessions*
Tess Meggison, *House Manager*
Katy McCaull, *Marketing & Philanthropy Coordinator*
Cherie Moen, *Ticket Office, Concessions*
Derek Phelps, *Volunteer & Production Coordinator*
Jake Skarin, *House Manager*
Robin Heldt Spahr, *Education Director*
Iris Stanley, *House Manager*
Sam Stephen, *Technical Director for Audiovisual*
Jessica Van Essen, *Costume Shop Supervisor*
David A VanCleave, *House Manager*
Claire Ward, *Costume Shop Intern*
Nate Weber, *Education Outreach*
Luci White, *Production Intern*

Education Staff

Patrick Carew	Napoleon Douglas	Taylor Ann Layden	Molly Thorsen
Melissa Chavas-Miller*	Tali Eisenstadt	Megan Lenstra	Tanner Tillotson
Nicole Chavas-Schwegler	Anne Frett	Greg Millar	Kim Van Haeck
Ben Connolly	Robin Breen Fulton*	Taylor Millar	Henry Vermeer
Alison Crain	Maren Grant	Catie Miller	Anna Zimney
Jenna Darsee	Ron Hyde	Carlie Prymek	* Master Teacher
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Katie Dorrell*	Emily Konzen	Allison Shires	
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MISSION

To create extraordinary, shared experiences through live theatre.

VISION

To be the home for artistic collaboration where any story can be told.

STATEMENT ON EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

We at The Playhouse grieve at the injustice and systemic inequalities committed to marginalized people in our world. We support community as we bond to create awareness and encourage dialogue.

We denounce racism and violence against all people. Our team makes it our mission to engage and enrich all people to provide lifelong educational opportunities and is committed to creating and supporting an inclusive theatre that will give everyone a platform to heal and to move forward into better days.

Published June 2, 2020

POLICY ON EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

All volunteers who come to audition for a show at The Playhouse are welcome, and we do not ask or keep a record of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity, age, or disability status.

The Playhouse is deeply committed to and supportive of diversity in local theatre. We work to include and serve all members of the community to the extent possible in stage productions and in our educational offerings.

The Playhouse has a strong and well-documented history of reaching out to diverse groups for inclusion in its programming. Our goal is to provide a rewarding experience for all volunteers and participants, from performers and students to their families and our audience members.

Published Aug. 18, 2016; Reiterated June 2, 2020

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Music has played an important role in every phase of my life. From growing up with a mother who was a music teacher to singing in Luther College's Nordic Choir, I was raised to see how classical music is central to a healthy social fabric. As a Des Moines Symphony board member, I channel my passion for music into volunteerism, helping shine a spotlight on how the Symphony is making the arts more accessible throughout our community. It's rewarding to make a difference for people and nonprofits in Central Iowa, and I'm proud to work for a company that empowers team members to get involved. In fact, more than 100 of our employees serve on nonprofit boards and committees. It's one of the many ways we help the communities around us grow and thrive.

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