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LEGALLY BLONDE



The Musical™

JULY 10-26, 2026



THE PLAYHOUSE

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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.

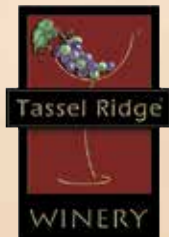
2021 Iowa Sabrevois

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

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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.

Tassel Ridge Dry Red Wines...*Simply Extraordinary*®

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WELCOME TO YOUR PLAYHOUSE



Chelsea Haaland
Executive Director

Welcome to The Playhouse! Thank you for joining us for the final show in our 2025-26 Signature Series: *Legally Blonde*. Elle Woods is a woman who defies stereotypes by staying true to herself. This high-energy musical journey to self-empowerment celebrates confidence, friendship, and finding your own voice in a world where smart is the new pink.

We believe engagement with community theatre offers many a similar path toward confidence, voice, and friendship. Each production is the result of the passion and dedication of volunteer artists who devote countless hours on and off the stage in preparation for the performance you will see today. Volunteers sing, dance, build, paint, sew - and yes, even "bend and snap" - to ensure you have a great experience!

Our 2026-27 Signature Series season is right around the corner! Whether you are currently a subscriber or not, we hope you will purchase a Flex Four season ticket and join us for our next season, featuring *Come From Away*, *Annie*, *The Lifespan of a Fact*, *Les Misérables*, *Amadeus*, and *Mean Girls*. It is a season not to be missed at The Playhouse and the best ticket prices are available to you right now via a season ticket.

Your ticket purchase supports not only this production, but also the greater mission of The Playhouse to create extraordinary, shared experiences through live theatre. These experiences happen through performances as well as our educational programming. We encourage you to explore ways to get involved and find your place here by taking advantage of camps and classes offered year round as well as a variety of volunteer opportunities for every skill level and experience.

Finally, a special thank you for welcoming me to The Playhouse. I feel fortunate to have found a permanent home here as part of a vibrant, creative, and warm theatre community, and I take seriously the task of serving our organization.

Thank you again for supporting extraordinary, shared experiences through live theatre.

LEGALLY BLONDE *The Musical™*

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Outstanding performances are recognized at
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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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LEGALLY BLONDE

By Playhouse Staff

Legally Blonde began life as a book by Amanda Brown. Brown drew inspiration from her own time at Stanford Law School, where she stood out among her classmates as a fashion-loving blonde. While at Stanford, Brown wrote a series of letters to her friends, family, and herself, detailing her college experience. By the end of her first semester, she had 300 letters. Brown considered writing a book of essays based on the letters, but a literary agent urged her to turn it into a book. Her manuscript was sent to publishers and film studios at the same time. Publishers weren't interested, but an overnight bidding war occurred for the film rights that were eventually won by MGM.

Legally Blonde, the film, was released on July 13, 2001. It was a massive box office hit, received Golden Globe nominations, and won the MTV Movie Award for Best Female Performance for its star, Reese Witherspoon. A sequel, *Legally Blonde: Red, White, and Blonde*, was released two years later.

Because of the film's popularity as well as its message of female empowerment, producers Hal Luftig, Fox Theatricals, and Dori Berinstein decided to bring *Legally Blonde* to the stage. *Legally Blonde – The Musical* had a pre-Broadway run in San Francisco before premiering on Broadway at the Palace Theatre on Apr. 29, 2007. It closed on Oct. 19, 2008, after 595 performances.

The original Broadway cast included Laura Bell Bundy as Elle Woods, Christian Borle as Emmett Forrest, Orfeh as Paulette, and Michael Rupert as Professor Callahan. The musical received mixed reviews. It was nominated for seven Tony Awards, including Best Original Score and Best Leading Actress in a Musical, but won none.

MTV broadcast a filmed version of the Broadway musical on its channel in October 2007. It performed so well, a reality program called *Legally Blonde – The Musical: The Search for Elle Woods* was developed and aired in June 2008. The goal was to find the next actress to play Elle Woods on Broadway. The contestants were a mix of novice and working musical theatre actors. In the eighth and final episode, newcomer Bailey Hanks was chosen and made her Broadway debut in *Legally Blonde – The Musical*.

Today, the original film is back in theatres in celebration of its 25th anniversary, and is frequently on TV and available for streaming. There is a new national tour of the stage musical with a stop at Des Moines Performing Arts in February 2027. Witherspoon and her production company are working on a third *Legally Blonde* film, and are behind the new Prime series *Elle*, which covers heroine Elle Woods' formative high school years.

So why does Elle Woods and *Legally Blonde* endure? Witherspoon and fans have shared on Instagram that the character's timeless appeal lies in her boundless optimism, fierce positivity, and inherent underdog status. Witherspoon says Elle is a feminist icon who broke stereotypes without compromising her authentic, kind, and unapologetically feminine self.

From a collection of letters to a book, film franchise, stage musical, and now streaming TV series, one thing is certain: Elle Woods is never going out of style. What, like it's hard?



Melina Murrane with Phoebe Penelope

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 Signature Series via Lightword. 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 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.

Des Moines Community Playhouse

831 42nd Street, Des Moines, IA 50312



DMPlayhouse



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**Ticket office &
group sales:**
515-277-6261

Administrative office:
515-277-6261

**School matinee reservations &
Class information:**
515-974-5365

2026-27 SEASON

Disney's Frozen
2025-26 Season

Come From Away

Sept. 11–Oct. 4, 2026

Annie

Dec. 4–27, 2026

The Lifespan of a Fact

Feb. 5–28, 2027

Les Misérables

Apr. 9–May 2, 2027

Amadeus

June 4–20, 2027

Mean Girls

July 9–25, 2027

Junie B. Jones in Boo... and I Mean It!

Oct. 16–Nov. 1, 2026

Morris Micklewhite & the Tangerine Dress

Jan. 8–24, 2027

Anne of Green Gables

Mar. 5–14, 2027

The Legend of Rock Paper Scissors

July 9–25, 2027

SIGNATURE SERIES

KATE GOLDMAN
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presents

THEATRE

Little Women (the musical)

Apr. 2-5, 2026 • Performing Arts Hall

The Shape of Things

Apr. 30-May 3, 2026 • Coleman Studio Theatre

MUSIC

Turner Center Jazz Orchestra Presents:

All We Need Is... The Beatles

Mar. 26, 2026, 7:30 p.m. • Patty and Fred Turner Jazz Center

Drake Opera Theatre presents Bizet's Carmen with the Drake Symphony Orchestra dir. Héctor Agüero

Feb. 27 & 28, 2026, 7:30pm and Mar. 1, 2026, 2:30pm
Performing Arts Hall

ANDERSON GALLERY

Transformative Impressions:

Richard Black International Juried Print Exhibition

Opening Reception Feb. 5, 2026, 5-7pm
on view through March 13, 2026

55th Annual Juried Student Exhibition

Opening Reception Mar. 29, 2026, 1-3pm
On view through Apr. 19, 2026



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675th Production
107th Season

Opening: July 10, 2026
Closing: July 26, 2026

The Des Moines Playhouse Presents in the John Viars Theatre

LEGALLY BLONDE

Music & Lyrics by
Laurence O'Keefe and Nell Benjamin

Book by
Heather Hach

Based on the novel by Amanda Brown
and the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer motion picture

Original production by Hal Luftig, Fox Theatricals, Dori Berinstein, James L. Nederlander, Independent Presenters Network, Roy Furman, Amanda Lipitz, Broadway Asia, Barbara Whitman, FWPM Group, Hendel/Wiesendorf, Goldberg/Binder, Stern/Meyer, Lane/Comley, Bartner-Jenkins/Nocciolino and Warren Trapp; produced in association with MGM Onstage, Darcie Denkert, and Dean Solber

Presented by EMC Insurance

Director/Choreographer: Alison Shafer

Music Director: Brenton M. Brown

Scenic Designer: Nicholas Amundson

Costume Designer: Angela Lampe

Lighting Designer: Chris Hanian

Sound Designer: Ayat Yousif

Properties Designer: Pluto Evans

Stage Manager: Greg Millar

Intimacy Director: Lyndsy Darland

Assistant Director/Dramaturg: Sierra Coleman

Assistant Choreographer: Sam Stephen

Assistant Stage Managers: Katherine Crowley, Kerry Doyen

Playhouse Artistic Director: Katy Merriman

Cast

*Indicates Playhouse Debut

Elle Woods	Melina Murrane
Warner Huntington III	Gavin Runles
Emmett Forrest	Will C. Johnson
Professor Callahan	Mark Mangum
Vivienne Kensington	Camryn Caruso*
Paulette Bounfonté	Hannah Zepeda
Brooke Wyndam	Jordyn Johnstad*
Margot	Maddie Davis
Serena	Abby Raper*
Pilar	Tiara L. Green
Enid Hoopes	Annika Baker
Kyle B. O'Boyle	Dane Van Brocklin

Ensemble	Danielle Bax, Dakota Betts*, Maggie Blanchard, Lucy Daniels, Ethan Fonseca, Josie Gillette, Riley Holthaus*, Lucille Hopkins*, Xavier Lago, Mio Legaspi, Gabby Leonard, Joy Mielke-Johnson, Matthew Sheaffer*, Andrew Smalley, Sam Stephen, Carter Sousa*, Davis Thompson*
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Covers

Elle Woods	Maddie Davis
Warner Huntington III	Andrew Smalley
Emmett Forrest	Mio Legaspi
Vivienne Kensington	Lucille Hopkins*
Paulette Bounfonté	Maggie Blanchard
Brooke Wyndam	Josie Gillette
Margot	Riley Holthaus*
Bruiser Woods	Jameson
Rufus	Griff III, Maeve

Legally Blonde is performed with a 15-minute intermission.

Legally Blonde is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. www.mtishows.com

Any video and/or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT I

"Overture"

Scene 1: Delta Nu Sorority House, UCLA Campus/Old Valley Mall

"Omigod You Guys" Elle, Serena, Margot, Pilar, Ensemble

Scene 2: A Fine Outdoor Restaurant, California

"Serious" Elle, Warner

Scene 3: UCLA Campus/Harvard Law School Admissions Office

"What You Want" Elle, Serena, Margot, Pilar, Ensemble

Scene 4: Harvard University Campus

"The Harvard Variations" Aaron, Cezar, Enid, Ensemble

Scene 5: Callahan's Classroom

"Blood in the Water" Elle, Callahan, Vivienne, Ensemble

Scene 6: The Harvard Campus

"Positive" Serena, Margot, Pilar, Warner, Vivienne, Ensemble

Scene 7: The Hair Affair Salon

"Ireland" Paulette

"Ireland (Reprise)" Paulette

Scene 8: The Party/Elle's Bedroom/Callahan's Classroom

"Serious (Reprise)" Warner

"Chip on My Shoulder" Elle, Emmett, Ensemble

"Run Rufus Run!/Elle Reflects" Elle

"So Much Better" Elle, Warner, Ensemble

ACT II

"Entr'acte"

Scene 1: Callahan's Conference Room/Women's Correctional Facility

"Whipped into Shape" Callahan, Warner, Brooke, Ensemble

"Delta Nu Nu Nu" Elle, Brooke

Scene 2: Hansen-Harkness Department Store

"Take It Like a Man" Elle, Emmett, Ensemble

Scene 3: The Hair Affair Salon

"Bend and Snap" Elle, Serena, Margot, Pilar, Paulette, Ensemble

Scene 4: The Courtroom

"Gay or European?" Elle, Emmett, Callahan, Warner, Vivienne, Brooke, Enid, Ensemble

Scene 5: Callahan's Office

"Legally Blonde" Elle, Emmett

Scene 6: The Streets of Boston/The Hair Affair Salon

"Legally Blonde Remix" Elle, Paulette, Vivienne, Brooke, Enid, Ensemble

Scene 7: The Scene of the Crime/Harvard Graduation

"Scene of the Crime" Elle, Serena, Margot, Pilar, Emmett, Warner, Vivienne, Brooke, Ensemble

"Find My Way/Finale" Elle, Emmett, Paulette, Vivienne, Enid, Ensemble

"Bows/Exit" Elle, Serena, Margot, Pilar, Emmett, Paulette, Callahan, Warner,

Vivienne, Brooke, Enid, Ensemble



Annika Baker (*Enid*) most recently appeared on The Playhouse stage in *The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical* (Ares/Thalia/Charon/Others) and *Disney's*

Frozen (Ensemble/Anna Cover). Annika played Rona Lisa Perretti in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* and Pamela in *Head Over Heels* at Iowa State University, where she received her B.A. in performing arts and accounting.



Danielle Bax (*Ensemble*) is proud to be a part of this production following her Playhouse debut as Elaine in *Crazy For You*. Originally from Burbank, CA, she attends Drake

University where she is a musical theatre major with a minor in management. At Drake, she's portrayed many roles including Stella in the world premiere of *Duck, Duck, Gay Duck*. This summer she is interning at the Civic Music Association. She is thankful to family and friends for their support.



Dakota Betts (*Ensemble*) is thrilled to be making his Playhouse debut, proving that sometimes the best life decisions involve moving to a new city and immediately

joining a musical. Previous credits include Bickle in *Footloose* (Taylorville [IL] High School) and Razoul in *Disney's Aladdin* (Civic Center, Decatur, IL). He also volunteers and bartends at The Playhouse, often alongside his partner, Jake. A freelance social media marketer by day, Dakota spends his free time playing disc golf, kayaking, camping, crocheting, and enjoying the great outdoors.



Maggie Blanchard (*Ensemble/ Paulette Buonofonté Cover*) previously appeared on The Playhouse stage in *Disney's Frozen* (Pit Singer), *Disney's*

Beauty and the Beast (Ensemble), and *Dragons Love Tacos* (White Dragon). She is a first grade teacher for Johnston Community Schools who enjoys reading and yoga classes. Maggie is grateful to be sharing the stage again with her love, Dane Van Brocklin.



Camryn Caruso (*Vivienne Kensington*) is originally from the Chicagoland area. She is a senior at Drake University, working toward her B.F.A. in musical theatre, where she's

played Vivienne in *Legally Blonde* (ACTF Irene Ryan Acting Finalist), Meg March in *Little Women*, and Brutus in *Julius Caesar*. Other stage credits include *Grease* (Rizzo) and more at Prairie Rep Theatre (Brookings, SD). Camryn is grateful for the support of her family and this cast! camryncaruso.com



Lucy Daniels (*Ensemble*) is thrilled to return to The Playhouse stage following her debut in *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* (Mrs. Slocum/ Reverend Hopkins). Originally

from Minneapolis, Lucy graduated from Drake University in 2025 with a degree in sociology. She loves performing, working with children, and traveling. Lucy is currently nannying while exploring other career opportunities that combine her passions for people, creativity, and community engagement. She thanks her family and friends for their support.



Maddie Davis (*Margot/Elle Woods Cover*) most recently appeared in The Playhouse production of *The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical* (Annabeth) and was

assistant choreographer for *Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical*. Other area credits include Morticia Addams in *The Addams Family* at Southeast Polk High School and Sandy Cheeks in *The SpongeBob Musical* at Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre. Maddie is earning a

CAST NOTES

degree in human resources from DMACC and plans to attend the Institute for American Musical Theatre in New York City in the fall.



Ethan Fonseca (*Ensemble*) is returning to The Playhouse stage after making his debut in *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*. An aspiring actor, he has been involved in theatre since

he was 12 years old with shows in his native California including *The Wizard of Oz* (Nikko), *Annie* (Rooster), *Disney's The Little Mermaid* (Scuttle), *West Side Story* (Riff), and, a favorite, *Sky in Mamma Mia!* Ethan is a Waukee High School graduate who loves to dance, bake, and eat.



Josie Gillette (*Ensemble/Brooke Wyndham Cover*) recently graduated from Drake University where her theatre credits included *Cabaret* (Texas), *First Date*, and *Julius*

Caesar (Cassius). At The Playhouse, she recently appeared in *Crazy for You* (Margie) and *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Josie is a returning Playhouse education intern this summer. In her free time, she enjoys watching *The Lord of The Rings* and *Star Wars*, playing piano, and reading. Josie is grateful for the support of her parents, Renee and Brian.



Tiara L Green (*Pilar*) is a graduate of Drake University with a B.F.A. in acting and a Bachelor of Arts in biochemistry cell and molecular biology. She has been in *Kinky*

Boots twice, at The Playhouse and at Theatre-on-the-Hill (Bollingbrook, IL), and appeared in *Anastasia* with Natural Talent Productions (Naperville/Warrenville, IL). In her free time, Tiara enjoys crocheting, reading, writing music, gaming, and baking sourdough.



Riley Holthaus (*Ensemble/Margot Cover*) is a junior B.F.A. musical theatre major at Drake University and Playhouse

summer education intern. No stranger to the stage, favorite roles of hers include Rosie in *Cabaret* at Drake University, and the Ensemble in *Newsies* at Quincy (IL) Community Theatre. This September she'll be playing Teagan in Drake Theatre People's production of *BEARS BEARS BEARS BEARS BEARS*. Riley is thankful for the support from her amazing mom, Mindy.



Lucille Hopkins (*Ensemble/Vivienne Kensington Cover*) is a rising junior at Drake University where she is getting her B.F.A. in musical theatre. Her previous local theatre credits include

Frenchie in *Cabaret* and Delta Nu/Onstage Swing in *Legally Blonde*, both at Drake, and Rizzo in *Grease* (Union Street Players, Pella) for which she received that theatre's Outstanding Actress in a Supporting Role USPY Award as well as a Broadway World Des Moines Best Performer in a Musical nomination.



Will C Johnson (*Emmett Forrest*) is a recent graduate of Drake University with a degree in vocal performance. While at Drake, he played Papageno in *The Magic Flute*. He is a

favorite with Playhouse audiences where his roles include Billy Cane in *Bright Star*, Crutchie in *Disney's Newsies*, Jonathan Harker in *Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors*, Stuart in *Stuart Little*, as well as *A Christmas Story: The Musical*, *Freaky Friday One Act*, and *Elf The Musical*. In his free time, Will enjoys composing music.



Jordyn Johnstad (*Brooke Wyndham*) is a senior at Iowa State University where they are majoring in performing arts with a minor in biology. Some of their previous roles include Adriana

(*Comedy of Errors*) at Iowa Stage Theatre Company, and assistant director and dramaturg (*The Revolutionists*), Tilly (*She Kills Monsters*), and Little Becky Two Shoes (*Urinetown: The Musical*) at ISU. Jordyn enjoys painting, reading, bird watching, and nature hikes.



Xavier Lago (*Ensemble*) just completed his freshman year at Iowa State University where he is a meteorology and performing arts double major. His many shows include

Urinetown: The Musical and *Peter and the Starcatcher* at ISU, *The SpongeBob Musical* with Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre, and *Anastasia* and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (Guildenstern, a favorite role) at Waukee High School. Xavi plays 13 instruments (several brass, a reed, guitars, percussion, piano, and his favorite, the accordion) and enjoys birdwatching, nature photography, and writing scripts.



Mio Legaspi (*Ensemble/Emmett Forrest Cover*) made his Playhouse debut as Kristoff in *Disney's Frozen* and recently played Sam in *Crazy for You*. At Des Moines Christian

School, his credits include *Radium Girls* (Tom Kreider/co-director), *The Wizard of Oz* (Lion), and *Cameron Mackintosh and Disney's Mary Poppins* (George Banks), the later two earning him Outstanding Performance in a Principal Role from the Iowa High School Musical Theatre Awards. Mio graduated from Drake University, is a part of the music ministry at Walnut Creek Church, and teaches guitar at Sounding Sharp Studio.



Gabby Leonard (*Ensemble*) recently played Tess in *Crazy for You* at The Playhouse. At Des Moines Roosevelt High School, she choreographed productions of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Addams Family*, and *Disney's*

The Lion King Jr. She has served as dancer and choreographer for countless shows with Iowa Dance Theatre; is a board member, dancer, and choreographer for the Iowa Choreography Festival; and performed "Communal Acts of Resistance," choreographed by Amanda Lee. Gabby is a floor manager at Paws and Pints.



Mark Mangum (*Callahan*) played Cal last summer in *Waitress* at The Playhouse. He serves as the board president of CAP Theatre in Altoona where he co-directed *Beauty*

and *the Beast Jr*, assistant directed *Alice in Wonderland Jr*, and designed sets for both. He is also a Cloris Awards judge. Mark is a senior technical program manager at Corteva Agriscience. When he's not performing, he's creating art or watching his "much more talented" sons, Jude and Ezra, perform.



Joy Mielke-Johnson (*Ensemble*) most recently appeared at The Playhouse in an energetic two-person telling of *Red Riding Hood*. She has been involved with The

Playhouse more than 20 years, taking classes, working on backstage crews, and appearing onstage in *School of Rock*, *A Christmas Story: The Musical*, *Ragtime*, and more. Joy is a surgical nurse at Unity Point-Iowa Methodist Medical Center. Her hobbies include reading, being outside, and spending time with her husband, Will, who is also in this show, and their dog.



Melina Murrane (*Elle Woods*) is a music major/theatre minor at Iowa State University where she played Penelope Pennywise in *Urinetown: The Musical*.

She has numerous credits at Southeast Polk High School including *Medda Larkin* in *Disney's Newsies*, and was in the Ensemble and Dawn Understudy in *Waitress* at The Playhouse. In her spare time Melina

CAST NOTES

composes music and enjoys dancing and spending time with friends.



Abby Raper (*Serena*), from Johnson City, TN, is thrilled to be making her Playhouse debut! Abby is earning her B.F.A. in musical theatre at Drake University where her shows include *Little Women* (Beth), *Legally Blonde* (Serena), *Dracula* (Bride), and *Spring Awakening* (Wendla). Abby is grateful for her family, friends, and teachers who support her on her journey.



Gavin Runles (*Warner Huntington III*) is a favorite with Playhouse audiences from his roles in *Crazy for You* (Bobby Child), *Jersey Boys* (Frankie Valli, Encore Award winner), *Kinky Boots* (Charlie Price, Cloris and Dionysos awards nominee), *Disney's Newsies* (Jack Kelly, Cloris Award winner, Dionysos Award nominee), and many more shows. With ACTORS in Ames, he played Gabe in *Next to Normal*. Gavin's love of theatre keeps him coming back, and he is thankful for the support from his mother, Jamie, and friends.



Matthew Sheaffer (*Ensemble*) has been away from the stage for more than 25 years and is thrilled to be part of his first Playhouse production for his theatrical return. As a younger adult, he was involved with Drama Workshop productions such as *The Mikado* and *The Fantasticks*. While one of the older actors in this production, Matthew has been happy to learn from the wealth of experience possessed by this cast and crew.



Andrew Smalley (*Ensemble/Warner Huntington III Cover*) was most recently on The Playhouse stage in *Crazy for You*. A graduate of the American Musical and Dramatic

Academy's Intensive Conservatory training program who spent several years living in New York City and Los Angeles, he is thoroughly appreciating being back in his home state. When he is not working as a forklift operator at Goodwill HQ, Andrew enjoys listening to music, playing piano, and playing video and board games.



Carter Sousa (*Ensemble*) is earning his A.S. degree at Des Moines Area Community College Ankeny. At DMACC, he has appeared in *Ride the Cyclone* (Ensemble) and *Two Noble Kingsmen* (Wooper). He works as a DJ at Skateland. In his free time, Carter likes to skate, sew, sing, and rock climb.



Davis Thompson (*Ensemble*) is a sophomore at the University of Tulsa where he is studying vocal performance. While at Waukeewille Northwest High School, he appeared in their production of *Anastasia*. Davis enjoys making music, singing, playing piano, video games, and volleyball. He is thankful for the support from his parents, Christie Pitts and David Thompson.



Dane Van Brocklin (*Kyle*) has many Playhouse credits including *Disney's Frozen* (Hans), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Jesus [Cloris Award winner]), *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* (Lumiere), and *Hairspray* (Sketch). Other notable roles include Jack in *Into the Woods* (Tallgrass Theatre), Arnie (Cloris Award winner) in *The One Act Play That Goes Wrong* (Ankeny Community Theatre), and Gabe (Cloris Award winner) in *Next to Normal* (Carousel Theatre, Indianola). Dane is an electrical quotation specialist for 3E and enjoys playing guitar, cooking, and spending time with his love, Maggie Blanchard.



Hannah Zepeda (*Paulette Buonufonté*) made her Playhouse debut last summer as Jenna in *Waitress* (Encore Award winner, Cloris Award nominee) and was more recently

a pit singer for *Disney's Frozen*. She grew up performing at the Spotlight Youth Theater in Aurora, IL. She works as a newsletter editor for People Inc. Hannah enjoys thrifting, collecting vinyl records, and trying new coffee shops. She is endlessly grateful for the friends and family in the "front row" of her life whose encouragement inspire her to keep reaching for her dreams..



Alison Shafer (*Director/Choreographer*) is a director/choreographer who has worked on 130+ shows from New York to Seattle and all points in between, especially

the Midwest. Most recently she directed and choreographed Quincy Community Theatre's (QCT) production of *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella*. She also choreographed *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, *Waitress*, *Roald Dahl's Matilda The Musical*, *Peter Pan*, *Rent*, *Elf The Musical*, and *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*, and directed *Stuart Little* for QCT. Other director/choreographer credits include: *Honk!*, *Seussical the Musical*, *Smokey Joe's Café*, *Cats* (Co-Director), *Winnie-the-Pooh*, *Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka* (The Playhouse); *Frozen Jr.* (Market House Theatre, Paducah, KY); and original productions *Six on Six*, *Caucus The Musical*, and *Utopia 5.0* (RJF creative). Two professional highlights include the first Cloris award for Best Choreography for The Playhouse's production of *The New Mel Brooks Musical Young Frankenstein* and collaborating with director Anne Bogart on *Marathon Dancing*, an original production for En Garde Arts in New York. Alison is thrilled to be back in Des Moines collaborating with The Playhouse again



Brenton M Brown (*Music Director*) is an experienced member of The Playhouse's team. His shows include *Legally Blonde The Musical* (2013 and 2026), *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Les*

Misérables, *Shrek The Musical*, *Mary Poppins*, *The Addams Family*, *Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka* (twice), *The New Mel Brooks Musical Young Frankenstein*, *Meredith Willson's The Music Man*, *Ragtime* (Cloris Award Winner), *A Chorus Line*, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*, *Miss Nelson Is Missing!*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Billy Elliot The Musical*, *Elf The Musical*, *Catch Me If You Can*, *Disney's Newsies*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, and *All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914* (Cloris Award winner). He has appeared on stage as the title character in *Sweeney Todd* and as Max in *Lend Me a Tenor*, both at the Ingersoll Dinner Theatre, and as L.M. in *Pump Boys and Dinettes* at The Playhouse. He was awarded the Cloris Leachman Excellence in Theatre Award for best musical direction of The Playhouse production of *Ragtime*. He and his wife, Jessica, enjoy spending time with their children, Lindy and Bennett.



Nicholas Amundson (*Scenic Designer*) earned his B.F.A. in theatre design from the University of South Dakota. He began his career freelancing as a scenic designer in the

Des Moines theatre community, designing for StageWest Theatre Company and Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre, and producing the independent theatre company Kata Klysmic Productions. Since 2017, Nicholas has worked with The Playhouse in various roles, directing and designing *James and the Giant Peach*, *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*, and *Disney's Frozen*. His scenic design credits include *Kinky Boots*, *Native Gardens*, *Roald Dahl's Matilda*, *The New Mel Brooks Musical Young Frankenstein*, and *Ragtime*. Nicholas believes in the power of theatre to inspire growth, foster collaboration, and bring communities together through the shared experience of storytelling.

CAST NOTES



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.



Chris Hanian (*Lighting Designer*) is originally from Des Moines. They are a recent graduate of the University of Memphis with an M.F.A. in theatre design and technology

with a focus in lighting and sound. At The Playhouse, they designed lights for *Disney's Frozen* and other shows. Most recently they designed *The Pet Project*, *The Cottage*, and *The Bridges of Madison County* at the New London Barn Playhouse in New London, NH. Chris currently resides in New York City where they are a freelance designer and technician for lighting, sound, and video.



Ayat Yousif (*Sound Designer*) is a technical intern at The Playhouse this summer and will be attending Iowa State University in the fall. She is a recent graduate of Des Moines

Roosevelt High School where she was pit board operator (*Annie*), sound head (*12 Angry Jurors*; *Mean Girls Jr.*), and shift crew (*Almost Maine*). Ayat's interests include music, photography, and reading.



Pluto Evans (*Properties Designer*) was a technical intern at The Playhouse last year, a substitute stage manager for *Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors*, and designed properties for

Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale. Pluto just finished their first year at Iowa State University where they are majoring in industrial design with a minor in technical theatre. They also work as a stagehand for ISU Theatre. Pluto says they love all things art – in the theatre, they have been an actor, props designer, scenic designer, hair and make-up designer, and will do anything asked of them – but right now they're really into sewing and printmaking.



Greg Millar (*Stage Manager*)

is a favorite with Des Moines area audiences. He has had lead roles in many shows including *Annie*, *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*, *Fiddler on the Roof*,

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, *Leaving Iowa*, *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!*, and *Pippi Longstocking* (Dionysos Award recipient). His favorite roles are Harold Nichols in *The Full Monty* and Nicely-Nicely Johnson in *Guys and Dolls*. He has stage managed numerous shows, most recently *How I Became a Pirate*. Greg teaches in the theatre's education department. His hobbies include horse racing and baking. Greg is a proud first-time grandpa to Roman.



Lyndsy Darland (*Intimacy Director*) pursued her coursework and certification with both Intimacy Directors and Coordinator Professionals (IDC) and Theatrical Intimacy

Education (TIE) in 2020. She continues her education with specialty coursework such as staging intimacy beyond the binary and mental health first aid for youth. She has worked on several Midwest films and in partnership with local theaters on projects including *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* and *Guys and Dolls* (Playhouse), *Exit Laughing* (Ankeny Community

Theatre), and *Meredith Willson's The Music Man* (CAP Theatre, Altoona). As an actor, singer, writer, and editor who also works full time at Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield in the human resources division, she feels blessed to fill her time with other creatives and cohorts to build a consent-forward culture where everyone can thrive. In her spare time, you'll see Lyndsy with her husband Jeff, friends and family, and her two mini-aussies, Nox and Cosmo.



Sierra Coleman (*Assistant Director/Dramaturg*) is excited to be involved with her first Playhouse show as a production team member. As a student with The Playhouse's Performance

Academy in 2011, she played Mrs. Tevee in *Willy Wonka Kids*. Sierra is the seventh grade communications teacher at West Des Moines' Stillwell Jr. High. She is also their director and choreographer where recent shows include *The Music Man Jr.*, *Disney's Newsies Jr.*, *Disney's Beauty and the Beast Jr.*, and *The Wizard of Oz: Youth Edition*. In 2022, she directed *Grease: School Edition*, which has been her favorite to date because she got to choreograph the show with her then-boyfriend, now-husband, Zachary Robertson. Outside of teaching and theatre, Sierra enjoys traveling, scuba diving, and digging in her garden. She is thankful to Zachary for his support.



Sam Stephen (*Assistant Choreographer/Ensemble*) 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 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.



Katherine Crowley (*Assistant Stage Manager*) returns to The Playhouse, having last volunteered with the 2013 production of *Legally Blonde*.

Her first Playhouse appearance was as an Angel in *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*. Katherine received her B.S.N. from Creighton University in Omaha and is a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) registered nurse at Blank Children's Hospital. Katherine is in her Disney Adult Era and enjoys all things Disney and hanging out with her dog, Ellie.



Kerry Doyen (*Assistant Stage Manager*) is excited to be back at The Playhouse. He was recently a crew member this winter for *Disney's Frozen*. Since volunteering backstage in 2019

for *Ken Ludwig's Baskerville A Sherlock Holmes Mystery*, he has since been on run crews for *James and the Giant Peach*; Summer 2021 Tent Theatre productions of *Godspell*, *Plaza Suite*, *Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical*, and *FAE Rides Again*; and *Once*.



Katy Merriman (*Playhouse 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 Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap*, *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

CAST NOTES

for Iowa High School Speech Association (IHSSA) and serves on the education committee for the American Association of Community Theatre (AACT). She was recently elected to AACT's board of directors. Katy was the festival chair for AACT's YouthFest 2025, which was hosted at The Playhouse in June 2025.



Heather Hach (*Book*) received 2007 Tony and Drama Desk nominations for her work on *Legally Blonde*. She is a graduate of the University of Colorado, Boulder, School of Journalism and worked at *The New York Times* Denver Bureau as a research assistant and at Sports and Fitness Publishing in Boulder as a magazine editor. She is a member of Denver's Comedy Sports improv comedy troupe. She worked on the TV shows *Caroline in the City* and *Dilbert*. Heather won a Walt Disney Screenwriting Fellowship in 1999. Her film credits include Disney's *Freaky Friday* and *What to Expect When You're Expecting*. She also wrote the young adult novel *Freaky Monday* with Mary Rodgers. Much love to friends and family, especially Jason, Harper and Drake.



Nell Benjamin (*Music & Lyrics*) co-wrote the score to *Legally Blonde* with composer Laurence O'Keefe, which received Tony Award nominations, Drama Desk nominations, and the Olivier and Helpmann Awards for Best Musical. Nell wrote the lyrics to *Mean Girls*, which received multiple Tony Award nominations including for Best Original Score and Best Musical. Her play, *The Explorers Club*, won the Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Off-Broadway Play, the Edgerton Foundation New American Plays Award, and an Alfred P. Sloan Foundation grant. Nell has written book and/or lyrics for *Pirates! (or Gilbert and Sullivan plunder'd)*; *Sarah, Plain and Tall*; *Cam Jansen* (Drama Desk-nominated); *I Want My Hat Back*; *How I Became A Pirate*; *The Mice*; *Life of the Party*; and *Because of Winn Dixie*. Her upcoming

musicals are: *Huzzah!*, *Life of the Party*, and *Dave*. Her television writing includes *Unhappily Ever After*, Animal Planet's *Whoa! Sunday with Mo Rocca*, *Electric Company*, *Best Time Ever with Neil Patrick Harris*, *Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway*, and *Julie's Greenroom*. Nell is the recipient of the Kleban Foundation Award and a Jonathan Larson Grant.



Laurence O'Keefe (*Music & Lyrics*) received 2007 Tony and Drama Desk nominations for his work on *Legally Blonde*. Larry thanks all Blonde producers and creative team. He won the Ed Kleban Award, the ASCAP Richard Rodgers New Horizons Award, and a Jonathan Larson award for his music and lyrics. Off-Broadway credits: *Bat Boy: The Musical* (Lucille Lortel, Richard Rodgers, Outer Critics' Circle awards), which has received 100+ productions worldwide; music for *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, lyrics by Nell Benjamin (touring with TheatreWorksUSA). Co-author with Nell Benjamin of *Cam Jansen* (Drama Desk nomination) and *The Mice*. Larry is a product of his education with the Harvard Krokodiloes, the Hasty Pudding Theatricals, the Harvard Lampoon, and the Actors' Gang, but especially the incomparable Nell Benjamin.

PRODUCTION CREWS

Dresser: **Pilar Burg**

Run Crew: **Jason Crowley, Troy Ellerbroek, Jenny Bryant, Alysa Goethe, Mike Howland, Kailee Martens**

Sound Engineer: **Sam Stephen**

Sound Board Operators: **Lindsey Nelson, Wren Royer**

Qlab Operator: **Kerry Doyen**

Light Board Operator: **Skylar Bales**

Followspot Operators: **Jude Mangum**

Closed Captioning Transcriber: **Cassie Riley**

Set Construction: **Dave Piper, George Sparks, David Tomlin**

Set Painting: **Kathleen Baustian, Katherine Byers, Shannon Gates, Harold Hinkhouse, Pam Iano, Zac Joerger, Anne Jung, Shari Piper**

Costume Crew: **Kristina Bartlett, Tonya Folkerts, Miranda Hughes, Allison Moore, Marshall Moore**

Master Electrician: **Virgil Kleinhesselink**

Audition Crew: **Cheryl Critelli Anderson, DC Felton, Kate Garner, Lori Pope**

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

Playhouse Archives: **Harold Hinkhouse**

LEGALLY BLONDE SPECIAL THANKS
Erin Bell, Jackie Schmillen, Selina Stoltz, Desland F Vando & Maria T Lago

NOISES OFF SPECIAL THANKS
Due to print deadlines, these individuals could not be acknowledged in the previous playbill
Guest Services Volunteers: **Marj Ahrenholtz, Elias Andersson, Sarah Andersson, Linda L.**

Baltzley, Mary Lou Bandstra, Kathh Bermel, Emery Blackford, Miranda Blackford, Kim Blakesley, Steve Blakesley, Mary Bricker, Juls Bruns, Pilar Burg, Darlene Cangas, Karna Converse, Kenneth Converse, Carol Culmer, Bill Dodd, Al Downey, Ruth Downey, Daniel Dunham, Linda Dunham, Marcella Edmonds, Mark Eikenberry, Troy Ellerbroek, Malik Feisal, Pat Finan, Ellen Fisher, Jeff Fisher, Sabrina Fullhart, Chuck Golliher, Jean Golliher, Deb Gray, Jill Gray, Tesa Greenlee, Deb Grover, Genevieve Gualerzi, Noah Hackbart, Jennifer Hale, Jonathan Hale, Melanie Hartzler, Ellen Harvey, Carol Healy, Maria Heath, Cindy Helgason, Linda Hendricks, Marcia Hewitt, Harold Hinkhouse, Pat Hipple, Laura Hollinrake, Ginny Hood, Aubrey Kohl, Donna Lowry, Dionysus Manuel Jr., Amanda Martin, Sal Mattern, Carolyn McCleary, Sara Michael, Brent Niemeyer, Judy O'Keefe, Pamela O'Keefe, Dale Oakley-Bentlage, Janet Peck, Becky Pillack, Kathy Polson, Deanna Reed, Bailey Rees, Cassian Reveles, Sydney Rowley, Becky Scholtec, Sara Scott, Amy Skarin, Shane Snitker, George Sparks, Mark Standley, Nancy Studebaker, Faye Swan, Eavan Swanson, Shea Swanson, Shanna Taylor, Oliver Thrun, Duc To, Lori VanZee, Bradley Voigts, Cherie Waller, Christine Waschle, Fran Watson, Randy Watson, Janet Whiteside, Steven Willem, Lauren Winders

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Rhya Cowden, *Marketing & Philanthropy Intern*
Keeli Comito, *Concessions*
Jerry Eisenhower, *Final Act Ensemble Director*
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At The Des Moines Playhouse, we recognize that systemic inequities have historically excluded many from full participation in theatre. We are committed to the ongoing work of equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging (EDIB), which we define as ensuring that all people – regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, age, socioeconomic status, or lived experience – have access to and feel welcome in every aspect of our organization. We understand that this work is ongoing. We hold ourselves accountable to our audiences, artists, and community as we grow into a more inclusive and equitable organization.

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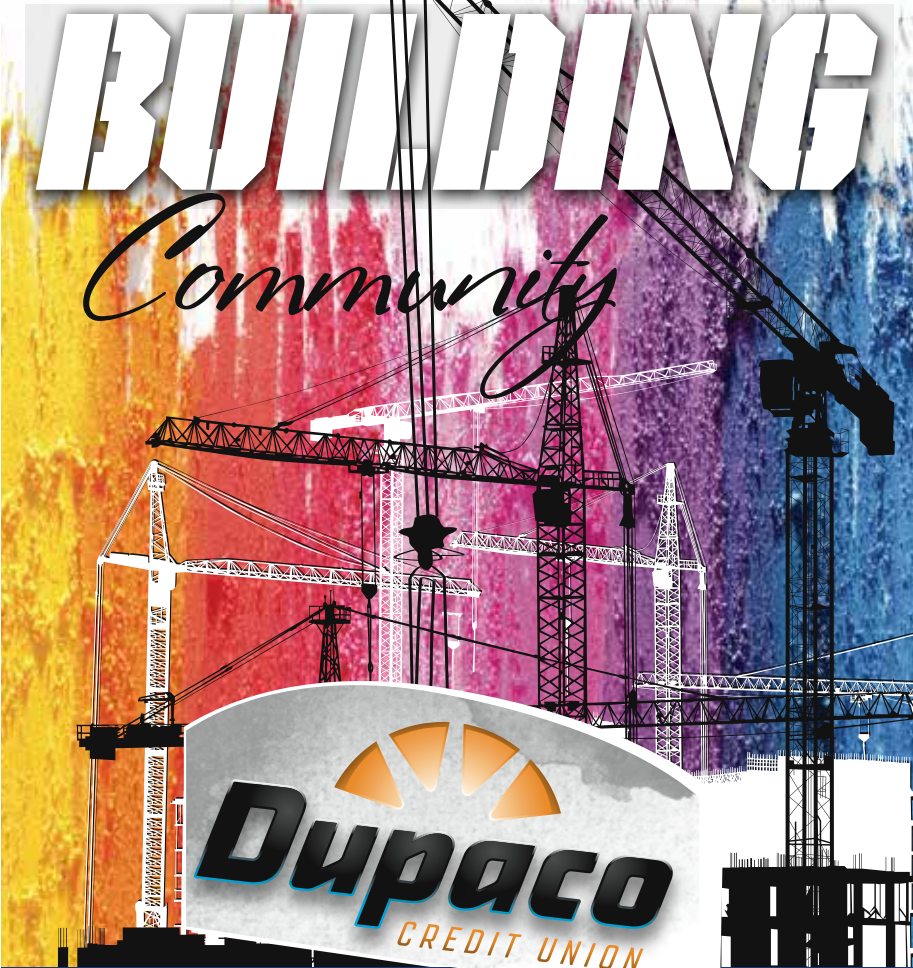
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Music has played an important role in every phase of my life. From growing up with a mother who was a music teacher to singing in Luther College's Nordic Choir, I was raised to see how classical music is central to a healthy social fabric. As a Des 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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