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Creating the Magic of Outdoor Theatre

By Stephanie Harte

Once the summer months hit, Milwaukeeans break out their lawn chairs and picnic blankets to enjoy an evening of theatre underneath the stars. But what goes into producing live, open-air productions? Turns out it’s never a smooth ride. We caught up with American Players Theatre, Optimist Theatre, and SummerStage of Delafield to hear some of their behind-the-scenes stories.

American Players Theatre

Nestled between 110 acres of hilly woods and meadows, American Players Theatre’s newly renovated 1,089-seat outdoor amphitheater often gets some uninvited guests.

“Critters are definitely a feature here,” says Sara Young, APT’s communications director. In the past APT has had a raccoon set up camp in a piece of scenery, a bird land on stage during the middle of a show, deer roam around the lobby, and noisy whippoorwills distract from the action.

When it comes to the whippoorwills, Young says a patron once sent the company a letter suggesting they turn down the recording of the animal—turns out APT doesn’t have control over this added feature.

As far as creating the elaborate sets and costumes to withstand the great outdoors, APT has picked up a few tips and tricks. Young says they add grit to the paint in order to give it more texture and reduce slickness on stage.

In regard to costumes, each play has a heat plan and a cold plan for the actors to follow. For those dreadful 90-degree days, the director and costume designer allow the actors to remove certain layers and help them hide ice packs in their costumes. For the chilly September nights, the actors are given additional coats or other layers to wear.

“One fun thing about the costumes is that for the wigs they almost always use real hair,” Young says. She explains that synthetic hair would not act naturally to rain and humidity like human hair would.

Surprisingly enough, American Players Theatre has only cancelled one performance in advance throughout its 38-year history. The cancellation occurred due to a heavy flood in 2008, making the roads impassable for patrons. Young says the company works closely with Weather Central in Madison and Great Lakes Weather based in North Central Wisconsin to get an expert opinion on what the conditions will be like around show time.

“We take a cue from our audience a little bit,” Young says. “If they are there and
still tuned in, and there isn’t anything dangerous in the area, we just keep going.”

Up this season: At the outdoor Hill Theatre: 
As You Like It (June 9 - Oct. 7), Born Yesterday (June 15 – Sept. 22), The Recruiting Officer (June 22 – Sept. 29), Heartbreak House (Aug. 3 – Oct. 5), Measure For Measure (Aug. 10 – Oct. 6).

At the indoor Touchstone Theatre: Blood Knot (June 9 – Sept. 27), Exit the King (June 26 – Sept. 27), Our Country’s Good (Aug. 11 – Oct. 7), Engaging Shaw (Oct. 25 – Nov. 18). For tickets visit americanplayers.org or call the box office at 608-588-7401.

Optimist Theatre, Shakespeare in the Park

Susan Fry, executive director of Optimist Theatre, describes the company’s new performance space at the Marcus Center’s Peck Pavilion as pure luxury. No longer does the company have to drag port-o-johns up the hill of Riverwest’s Kadish Park, or cart costumes, lighting and sound equipment back and forth to storage at the beginning and end of each performance.

Optimist is preparing for its second season at the Peck after four seasons at Kadish and a prior three seasons at Alverno College. While some artists find the level of unpredictability that comes with outdoor theatre daunting, Fry thrives off the excitement. “For younger actors, it throws them,” Fry says. “You can see it in their face, ‘oh my god there’s a Harley going by? What do I do?’ You can’t prepare for these things. It’s going to throw you the first time a plane goes overhead and you see the audience’s heads all look over. For an actor that’s killer, it’s like ‘I’ve lost them all, they’re not watching what we are doing anymore.’ The audience will look over. They’ll look back. They’re still there with you. It’s ok.”

Fry also describes some of the worldly distractions as “serendipitously cool.” For instance, during the 2013 production of As You Like It, an ambulance abruptly blew by Commerce St. as actor Christopher Elst got dragged off stage following a brutal fistfight. Ironically, during the 2016 performance of Julius Caesar, a heavy downpour came just after Brutus killed Caesar.

Along with learning how to stay focused, working for Optimist allows young actors to work alongside some local performing veterans, including James Pickering, Jonathan Wainwright and Malkia Stempley. Pickering helped launch the company as Prospero in The Tempest in 2010 and will be playing the title role in this year’s production of King Lear.

“After you do a season of outdoor theatre, at the end of it you are fearless,” Fry explains. “You know you can handle anything and that’s a valuable skill for an actor to have.”

Up this Season: King Lear, July 5 – 21 at the Marcus Center’s Peck Pavilion, 929 N. Water Street.
SummerStage of Delafield

Venture into the Lapham Peak Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest and you will find the SummerStage of Delafield’s outdoor amphitheater, just off one of the hiking trails.

Although a performance will not stop a biker or jogger from using the trails, artistic director Dustin J. Martin says the weather is the real distraction for his SummerStage performers.

“They are too worried about the weather to worry about anything else going on,” Martin jokes. “I always tell the cast that by the end of the production they are going to be amateur meteorologists. Everyone involved with the show becomes obsessed with the weather.”

Like true hearty Wisconsinites, SummerStage patrons often come prepared with rain gear and umbrellas, as the show must go on during light rain. Of course, SummerStage has a protocol in place to get everyone out of the park safely in case dangerous weather rolls in.

As far as sets, wind and critters are the biggest threats. Martin says they have learned the hard way that set pieces on wheels should be avoided, as one of their pieces went flying across the stage after a gust of wind hit in the middle of a show.

SummerStage previously had a family of groundhogs who lived under the stage and enjoyed nibbling on the set. Thankfully, with the help of an animal expert, the family of critters was rescued and relocated to a retirement groundhog community in Watertown, Wisconsin.

Despite these added challenges, Martin says nothing beats sitting out in the fresh air enjoying live theatre. He describes some of the classics they perform as having an “earthy” feel, allowing the audience to better connect with the pieces when they are outdoors.

“I always use the word idyllic to describe our setting out in the park, with the sun setting in the west,” Martin says. “Because you are stripped away from things that you rely on indoors, a greater focus is put on the actors, the story and the performance.”

Up this Season: Tartuffe (June 7 – 23), The Trip to Bountiful (July 19 – Aug. 4), Pride and Prejudice (Aug. 23 – Sept. 8) at the Kettle Moraine State Forest, W329 N846 County Highway C Delafield, WI 53018. For tickets visit summerstageofdelafield.org or call the box office at 262-337-1560.
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<td>Benjamin Tajnai</td>
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<td>Rae Elizabeth Pare</td>
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<td>Patrick Schneider</td>
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<td>Young Shrek/Grumpy Dwarf</td>
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<td>Queen Lillian/Fairy Godmother</td>
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<td>Baby Bear/Dance Captain</td>
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<td>Little Pigs</td>
<td>Hannah Esch, Lily Pickart, Ava Thomann</td>
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<td>Lorraine Bueckers</td>
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<td>Ben Briselden</td>
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<td>Guard/Knight</td>
<td>Max Pickart</td>
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<td>White Rabbit</td>
<td>Lindsay Gleason</td>
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<td>AJ Pawelski</td>
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<td>Mad Hatter</td>
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<td>Elf</td>
<td>Abby Rasmussen</td>
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<td>Papa Ogre</td>
<td>Ernest Bell</td>
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Director ......................................................................................................................... Brian Bzdawka

*Original Production Directed by Jason Moore and Rob Ashford

Choreographer/Volunteer Coordinator ................................................................. Stephanie Staszak

Vocal Music Director/Rehearsal Accompanist ........................................ Alison Bekolay

Artistic Director ........................................................................................................... Brian Bzdawka

Managing Director/Orchestra Director ................................................................. Tom Reifenberg

Stage Manager ............................................................................................................ Olivia Sparks

Production Manager/Properties ............................................................................... Rachel Bzdawka

Costume Design ........................................................................................................ Lynn Ludwig

Hair/Wigs .................................................................................................................... Shandon Price

Prosthetics .................................................................................................................. Brian Bzdawka

Technical Director .................................................................................................... Ryan Barry

Technical Design/Construction .................................................................................. Ryan Barry, Alex Hummel, Tim Reilly, Benjamin Gray

Technical crew ........................................................................................................... Haylee Wilcox, Kait Wilcox, Jeremy Gardipee, Andrea Ligocki, Mariah Linske, Christian Linske, Audrey Marcott, Dustin Robinson, Johanna DeWalt, Thomas Nastachowski, David Kalchbrenner, Katie Minik

Lighting Design ............................................................................................................ Ryan Barry

Lighting Assistant ...................................................................................................... Shannon Runnells

Sound Design ............................................................................................................. Adam Loeffler

Sound Assistance ...................................................................................................... Jack Terry

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Violins ............................................................................................Pamela Simmons, Michelle Brody
Cello ..............................................................................................Lauren Simmons
Woodwinds....................................................................................Carolyn Awe, Kellie Stein
Horn .................................................................................................Cheryl Miracle
Trumpet .........................................................................................Adam Fisher
Trombone .......................................................................................Jonah Mutranowski
Keyboards ......................................................................................Alison Bekolay, Lindsay Miller
Bass .................................................................................................Jeff Shoemaker
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Drums .............................................................................................Timothy Tym
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CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Ernest Bell (Papa Ogre) returns to the GCT stage where you may have previously seen him in If/Then and as Judas in Jesus Christ Superstar. He hopes you really enjoy Shrek!

Ben Briselden (Guard/Knight) is super excited to be a part of his second production here at GCT. He is currently a junior at UW-Parkside, and will be taking part in the Disney College Program for the fall semester of 2018. His previous acting credits include Beauty and the Beast (Gaston), Little Shop of Horrors (Seymour), Guys and Dolls (Benny Southstreet), The Mousetrap (Giles Ralston), Godspell (Disciple), and The Little Mermaid (Ensemble). He hopes you enjoy this awesome show!

Emma Brockman (Teenage Fiona/Ugly Ducking) is a senior at Franklin High School and is very excited to be a part of Greendale Community Theater! She has been in 17 productions and can’t wait to make her GCT debut! Emma has previously played roles including, Belle in Beauty and the Beast, Jasmine in Aladdin and Chava in Fiddler on the Roof. She would like to thank everyone who made this show possible and her family for always supporting her. Shoutout to her Franklin friends! Thank you for coming, enjoy the show!

Lorraine Bueckers (Humpty Dumpty) is very excited to be in her first GCT show. In the recent past you may have seen her performing with Sunset Playhouse or the West Allis Players. She is looking forward to performing more in the future and would like to thank her parents for supporting her in theatre!

Jacob Cesar (Mad Hatter) Jacob is very excited to be in his first GCT show! He loves being a part of such a talented cast and hopes you enjoy the show.

Bridget Cushman (Queen Lillian/Fairy Godmother) is beyond excited to make her GCT debut! Currently studying Vocal Performance and Business Administration at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Bridget has been a part of a number of ensembles and performed in numerous productions throughout her life, including Carousel, Sweeney Todd, the Last Five Years, and Urinetown. In addition, she performed as a principle singer/dancer with the Kids from Wisconsin for three summers. Thank you to family, friends, & cast/crew! Enjoy the show!

Raven Dockery (Dragon) is glad to be making her GCT debut in Shrek. A Milwaukee native, she received her B.F.A. in Musical Theater from UW-Milwaukee. She was last seen as Sarah in Ragtime with American Gothic Performing Arts Festival in Iowa. Raven has performed with Skylight...
Music Theater, First Stage, The Milwaukee Rep and other areas in the Midwest. Thank you to her family and friends for their endless love and support.

**Hannah Esch** (Little Pig) is a Milwaukee-based performer and arts educator, holding a BFA in Vocal Performance and Music Education from UW Milwaukee. This is her second performance at Greendale, previously seen as Anne (IF/THEN). Additional credits include Veronica Sawyer (HEATHERS), Cinderella (INTO THE WOODS), and MEG (LITTLE WOMEN). Shout out to Mom, Dad, Sam, Eliza, and Moira for always embracing my weirdness.

**Lindsay Gleason** (White Rabbit), a recent graduate of Oak Creek High School, is thrilled to be performing in her first production with GCT! Some of her favorite credits include Percy in The Spitfire Grill, and Narrator in Fly By Night with Oak Creek High School Theatre, she is also a proud member of The Milwaukee Rep's Professional Training Institute and First Stage's Young Company. This fall, Lindsay will be studying Theatre with a Directing Emphasis and Dance at North Central College. Enjoy the show!

**Hailey Hentz** (Sugar Plum Fairy) is incredibly excited to be a part of Shrek The Musical with GCT! You may have previously seen her in...
Next to Normal as Natalie with All In Productions, or in The Wedding Singer and Jesus Christ Superstar here at GCT. She feels so grateful to have worked with this incredibly talented cast and can’t wait to share this show with audiences!

**Shawn Holmes** (Donkey) is super excited to return to GCT to be yet another animal. Some of his favorite GCT roles were Sebastian in The Little Mermaid, Horse in The Full Monty, and Seaweed in Hairspray. Shawn would like thank his friends and family for their never ending love and support. PARFAITS!!!

**Clayton Irwin** (Baby Bear, Dance Captain) is excited to make his Greendale debut. He’s been in many roles in Southeastern WI including Jason (BARE: A POP OPERA) with Outskirts Theatre, Dan/Ensemble (JOSEPH) and Neleus (MARY POPPINS) at Racine Theatre Guild, Danny Zuko (GREASE) with New Theatre on Main, Phil Davis (WHITE CHRISTMAS) with Mukwonago Village Players, Ensemble/Dance Captain (BEAUTY AND THE BEAST) at Sunset Playhouse, and many dance shows at Carthage College.

**Laura McDonald** (Gingy/Wicked Witch/ Mama Ogre) has been steadily involved with GCT for almost a decade, which makes her feel super old. But she is so grateful for any opportunity to work with these creative freaks, especially Brian again! Thanks and love to her family and her niece, Emme, who makes her watch Shrek a LOT. Shout out to Beebs for being the riff queen she always needed.

**Rae Elizabeth Pare** (Fiona) recently appeared at Sunset Playhouse as Heather Chandler (HEATHERS) and as Elaine (THE GRADUATE). Last summer she worked with Northern Sky Theater as one of their Acting/Production Interns. Other Milwaukee performances include: Lily (PRIDE AND PANCAKES) Milwaukee Chamber Theater, Mary Reade (BONNY ANNE BONNY) Theater RED, and as Dame Olga understudy (ELLA ENCHANTED) at First Stage. Many thanks to all, especially family, for their love and support.

**AJ Pawelski** (Peter Pan, Dance Captain) is over the moon knowing he’ll be bringing you an incredible show with a stellar cast! Though it is his first time with GCT, you might have seen him in a slew of shows on this same stage throughout his high school years, or more recently with the Falls Patio Players and Sunset Playhouse. A special thank you to all who are helping him in any capacity to be better everyday.

**Lily Pickart** (Little Pig) is beyond grateful and thrilled to be a part of Greendale’s Shrek: The Musical! A sophomore at UW-Milwaukee, she is currently pursuing an Acting BFA at UWM’S Peck School of the Arts. Lily has recently been seen as the character Marc in the UWM Honors College production of “Art”. She would like to thank
the cast, crew and creative team involved in the show for an amazing experience, her parents for the constant support, SMML, and Beyoncé. Enjoy the show & power to zippies!

Max Pickart (Guard/Knight), an upcoming junior at Marquette University High School, is thrilled to be in his third consecutive summer show here at GCT. You may have seen him as Flounder in THE LITTLE MERMAID or in the ensemble in IF/THEN. He is over the moon excited to be in a show with his sister, Lily. He would like to thank Brian, Stephanie, and Alison for all of their helpful directions to make this fun and crazy show come alive! Endless love to his family for their constant support! JKSLML. OB.

Jordan Pollard (Pinocchio) is returning to the GCT stage after previously performing in “Legally Blonde”, “Parade”, and “The Wedding Singer”. When not performing on stage, he is an elementary teacher and director in West Allis. Other favorite roles include Benny Southstreet in “Guys and Dolls” (Sunset Playhouse) and Cogsworth in “Beauty and the Beast” (West PAC). He hopes you enjoy the show!

Abby Rasmussen (Elf) is ready to let her freak flag fly in her second show with GCT! She was most recently in Anything Goes (Purity) and Spamalot (Laker Replacement Windows • Bow & Bay Windows
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Girl) with Falls Patio Players and Jesus Christ Superstar (Apostle Woman) with GCT. She would like to thank her family for their endless support and the amazing and talented cast and crew for making this show so fun to be a part of. Enjoy the show!

Patrick Schneider (Papa Bear/Thelonious) is excited to be in his first production with Greendale Community Theatre. He was recently seen in Sister Act (Joey) at the Racine Theatre Guild. Some of his favorite Shows and rolls include Rent (ensemble), Joseph (Asher), Songs for a New World (Man 1), Hair (Margret Meed/ensemble), Chess (The Arbitor/ pop chorus), The Andrews Brothers (Patrick Andrews) and The Producers (ensemble) Patrick would like to thank the creative team for giving him a chance to let his freak flag wave!

Benjamin Tajnai (Shrek) is excited to make his debut at GCT. Some of his most notable roles are: Jean Valjean in Les Miserables, Man 1 in Songs for A New World, and most notably, he sang backup for the Rolling Stones during their Tour in Chicago at the United Center. Look out for Ben next season on NBC’s The Voice. Ben is also a regular National Anthem singer for the Milwaukee Bucks. Ben would like to thank his parents, family, his wife Sarah, and his children Joseph and Annie for all their support!!
Ava Thomann (Little Pig) is extremely excited to be involved and hopes you enjoy the show!

Samantha Thomas (Mama Bear) is too hype to be apart of her first show with GCT. Samantha has done a lot of shows and when she’s not doing shows, she’s probably working or listening to Beyoncé. She would like to thank her family and friends for all there love and support.

Olivia Vitrano (Young Fiona) is thrilled to be playing a princess in Shrek the Musical. She made her stage debut in 2017 in A Christmas Carol with the Milwaukee Rep and will be in The Best Christmas Pageant Ever the Musical with First Stage this holiday season. She will be a 6th grade student at Greendale Middle School. She is a member of the Greendale Jr Panther Poms and also participates in choir and plays the cello. Olivia would like to thank her mom and dad for driving her to rehearsals.

Coltyn VonDeylen (Captain of the Guard, King Harold, Knight) is a musician in classical and rock music, and is now doing his first musical. He normally plays with his band The F in Fun or as a soloist and section leader in the Bel Canto Chorus. Coltyn earned a degree in vocal music education from Wisconsin Lutheran College and now works teaching voice to students throughout the Milwaukee area.

Mitch Weindorf (Lord Farquaad) returns to GCT after previously performing as High Dorsey in PARADE. Recent Milwaukee acting credits include Gaspar in TWAS THE MONTH BEFORE CHRISTMAS, Harold “Stinker” Pinker in BY JEEVES, and Mr. Smith in THE BALD SOPRANO. Mitch would like to thank Lindsey, his family, friends, and mentors for their continued love and support.

David Wickert (Big Bad Wolf) Heyyyyyy there teenage Duloc…….. shoot, wrong show. Relegated to type-casting and refusing to write a bio in the 3rd person, I’m fulfilling a weeks-long dream of wearing a dress on stage and trans-forming into a hairy wolf-queen. The real joy of GCT is the friends you meet and make. My thanks to the directors and cast for that. All my love to Alison. As always, remember who you are. And, hi mom.

Christian Wood (Little Shrek, Grumpy Dwarf) is thrilled to take the stage in Greendale. Last year he featured as Michael in First Stage Milwaukee’s MOCKINGBIRD. Previously he has showcased his comic ability in CINDERELLA KIDS and WILLY WONKA AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY with South Milwaukee Youth Theater. When he isn’t performing he can be found drawing, reading books, and playing football.
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Ryan Barry (Lighting Design) is glad to be working with the amazing cast and crew from GCT again. He has been with them since their first show and fell in love with technical theatre and the ability to try new things and ideas for shows. He would like to thank everyone that has been or is still with GCT, especially Tom and Brian for the many years of fun and exciting shows.

Alison Bekolay (Music Director/Rehearsal Accompanist) is stoked to be on the creative side of GCT, having played in the pit with them since 2010. The most thanks to this production team, pit, and insanely talented (& hilarious) cast for their dedication. Congrats on putting together a gut-busting show to be proud of! All the love to Brian, Tom, and Steph for their confidence & trust, and even more love to David for being my everyday encouragement and support. Many thanks to YOU for supporting local arts and waving your Freak Flag with us. Enjoy!

Brian Bzdawka (Director/Artistic Director) loves movies, drawing, tacos and being nice. He has a smokin’ hot wife, two adorable children, a job that he loves, awesome hobbies, a kick-butt family and amazing friends. He isn’t trying to brag - these are just facts.

Rachel Bzdawka (Production Manager/Properties) performed in her first show with GCT back in 2010 and has been involved in some way or another ever since. She is an engineer at an automotive company who enjoys the outlet GCT provides for her to continue following her passion for the arts. Getting to spend a little extra time with her brother is pretty cool too.

Olivia Sparks (Stage Manager) has been super excited to see her seventh show with GCT come to life alongside this amazing cast and production team. She has been
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Adam Loeffler (Sound Design) has been working with GCT since 2012, and is very excited to be a part of SHREK. Adam just completed his sophomore year at Berklee College of Music in Boston where he is studying Music Production and Engineering. When not playing piano, producing, or recording, he enjoys doing live sound for both bands and theatre. He would like to thank Brian and Tom for their dedication and positive attitudes towards every show they put on.

Mary Postotnik (Marketing Director) has been involved with GCT from its inception. Mary is truly proud to be part of the best community theatre in the area. Thanks go out to all involved, especially the rocking box office team. Mary continues to be amazed by the talent, spirit, and commitment of everything GCT has to offer, and can only wonder what is next!

Tom Reifenberg (Managing Director/Orchestra Director) is a co-founder of the group and has directed the musicians for all GCT shows. Tom is entering his 18th year as Director of Bands at Greendale High School, where he recently received the WSMA Distinguished Service Award, the Greendale Chamber of Commerce Educator of the Year, a Herb Kohl Education Fellowship Award, and was Wisconsin’s representative in School Band & Orchestra’s annual “50 Directors Who Make a Difference” report. He would like to thank Tami, Liam, his parents, and his friends for their support.

Shannon Runnells (Lighting Assistant) is excited to be back in her 16th season with GCT. Shannon teaches at Divine Mercy School in South Milwaukee and coaches varsity cheerleading at Greendale High School. Some of her favorite shows she has worked on include Avenue Q, Rent, and Les Miserables. She would like to thank her fellow production team members for putting in the countless hours to make our shows happen, along with the cast and pit for giving their time and talents to GCT. Lastly, she would like to give a special shout out to Casey for his love and support.

Stephanie Staszak (Choreographer/Volunteer Coordinator) is thrilled to have worked with a cast that's truly thebomb.com. Also a performer, Stephanie has appeared in a variety of productions at theaters such as Skylight and In Tandem, gets to act goofy once in a while for print ads and commercials, and sings with Logan’s Run Band. When not on stage, Stephanie choreographs for some amazing high schools (CCHS, Germantown, Grafton). Come see her as Jesai of the Jaguars in Jason Powell’s DOC DANGER this August, and in PIPPIN at Skylight this fall!
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE is a Pulitzer Prize winning playwright, screenwriter, lyricist and librettist. His most recent play, *Ripcord*, opens this fall at Manhattan Theatre Club. His previous play *Good People* premiered on Broadway, was awarded the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Play, The Horton Foote Prize, The Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award, and two Tony nominations. His play *Rabbit Hole* received the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, five Tony nominations, and the Spirit of America Award. David also wrote the book and lyrics for *Shrek the Musical*, which was nominated for eight Tonys, four Oliviers, a Grammy, and earned David the Ed Kleban Award as America’s most promising musical theatre lyricist. David’s other plays include *Fuddy Meers, Kimberly Akimbo, Wonder of the World* and *A Devil Inside*, among others. In addition to his work in theatre, David’s screen credits include his film adaptation of *Rabbit Hole*, Dreamworks’ *Rise of the Guardians*, and the upcoming *Family Fang*, starring Nicole Kidman, Christopher Walken and Jason Bateman.

JEANINE TESORI won the Tony Award for Best Original Score with Lisa Kron for the musical *Fun Home*, which is currently playing on Broadway. She has also written Tony-nominated scores for *Twelfth Night* at Lincoln Center; *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (lyrics, Dick Scanlan); *Caroline, or Change* (lyrics, Tony Kushner); and *Shrek The Musical* (lyrics, David Lindsay-Abaire). The production of *Caroline, or Change* at the National Theatre in London received the Olivier Award for Best New Musical. Her 1997 Off-Broadway musical *Violet* (lyrics, Brian Crawley) opened on Broadway in 2014 and garnered four Tony nominations, including Best Musical Revival. Opera: A Convenient, affordable care for your family. No appointment needed.

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Blizzard on Marblehead Neck (libretto, Tony Kushner; Glimmerglass) and The Lion, The Unicorn, and Me (libretto, J. D. McClatchy, Kennedy Center). Music for plays: Mother Courage (dir. George C. Wolfe, with Meryl Streep and Kevin Kline), John Guare’s A Free Man of Color (Lincoln Center Theater, dir. George C. Wolfe), and Romeo and Juliet (Delacorte Gala). Film scores: Nights in Rodanthe, Every Day, and You’re Not You. Ms. Tesori is a member of the Dramatists Guild and was cited by the ASCAP as the first female composer to have two new musicals running concurrently on Broadway. She is the founding artistic director of Encores! Off-Center at New York City Center, and is a lecturer in music at Yale University. Most of all, she is the proud parent of Siena Rafter, a senior at LaGuardia High School for the Arts.

JASON MOORE (Director). Broadway: Avenue Q, Steel Magnolias. Carnegie Hall: Jerry Springer: The Opera. Off-Broadway: Speech and Debate (Roundabout), Avenue Q (the Vineyard), Guardians (the Culture Project), The Crumple Zone. Associate directing: Les Misérables (Broadway, national tour), Ragtime (Vancouver). Writer: The Floatplane Notebooks (Charlotte Repertory Theatre). TV directing: episodes of Dawson’s Creek, Everwood, One Tree Hill and Brothers and Sisters. Jason has a BS in performance studies from Northwestern University.

ROB ASHFORD won the 2012 Olivier Award for his production of Anna Christie starring Jude Law and Ruth Wilson at London’s Donmar Warehouse. The production opened to rave reviews with The Independent’s anointing it as “picture
perfect” and David Benedict stating that “the production’s hallmark is its boldness.” Rob most recently directed the Broadway revival of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* starring Scarlett Johansson, and *Macbeth* with Sir Kenneth Branagh at New York’s Park Avenue Armory and The Manchester International Festival. The Telegraph claimed “This is a Macbeth that won’t just go down as a highlight of the Manchester International Festival but as one of the Scottish Play’s great revivals,” and Ben Brantley of the New York Times proclaimed “Mr. Ashford uses his experience as a celebrated director of musicals to stunning, time-bending effect.” Rob received his 8th Tony Nomination for his work on the Broadway revival of *Evita* starring Ricky Martin, and received the Tony Award for his work on the Broadway production of *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. Other Broadway credits include *How to Succeed in Business* (Tony Award Nominations for his direction and choreography), *Promises, Promises* (Tony Award Nomination), *Shrek*, *John Water’s Cry Baby* (Tony Award nomination, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, and Fred Astaire Awards), *Curtains* (Tony Award nomination), and *Wedding Singer* (Tony Award nomination). In London, Rob also directed the highly acclaimed Olivier Award winning revivals of *A Streetcar Named Desire* starring Rachel Weisz and *Parade* at The Donmar Warehouse. Rob did the choreography and staging for last year’s Academy Awards with Seth MacFarlane and won the 2009 Emmy Award for Best Choreography for his work on Baz Luhrmann’s production number (featuring Hugh Jackman and Beyoncé) at the 81st Annual Academy Awards. He has also choreographed the opening number for The Tony Awards starring Neil Patrick Harris for the past 4 years. He choreographed the feature film *Beyond The Sea* directed by and starring Academy Award winner Kevin Spacey and Walt Disney Production’s upcoming film *Cinderella* directed by Kenneth Branagh. Most recently, Rob directed and choreographed NBC’s *The Sound of Music Live!,* for which he received a DGA Award Nomination, and this January directed *The Barber of Seville* at Chicago Lyric Opera. Rob is an Associate Director at The Old Vic Theatre. He also serves on the Executive Board of The Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers and is a Trustee of The Joyce Theatre in New York City.
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