THE MADNESS OF EDGAR ALLAN POE
A LOVE STORY

By David Rice  Directed by Skyler Schrempp

OCTOBER 25 - NOVEMBER 17

Cheney Mansion | Oak Park, Illinois
DTOP 2019 EVENTS
learn more at www.downtownoakpark.net

Events subject to change

ART DANS LA RUE
Tuesday, August 6th, 2PM-9PM

MICROBREW REVIEW
August 17th

OAKTOBERFEST
September 20th - 21st,
(Friday 4PM-10PM,
Saturday 12-10PM)

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS
December 21st,
11AM-3PM

Event List:
- THURSDAY NIGHT OUT
  Every Thursday
  May 30th - August 29th,
  5PM-9PM
- SHOP OUTDOOR SALE
  July 11th - July 14th
- ART DANS LA RUE
  Tuesday, August 6th,
  2PM-9PM
- MICROBREW REVIEW
  August 17th
- OAKTOBERFEST
  September 20th - 21st,
  (Friday 4PM-10PM,
  Saturday 12-10PM)
- HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS
  December 21st,
  11AM-3PM

Shop Outdooor Sale
July 11th - July 14th

Uncork Illinois
Saturday, June 15th,
1PM-9PM

Winterfest
December, 7th

Winterfest
December 7th

Events subject to change
Dear Friends,

Happy 45th Anniversary Season! For the last 45 years, we have been bringing theatre to Austin Gardens in downtown Oak Park, and we could not be more excited to share this milestone season with you! Our 45th season promises to continue not only our rich legacy of professional theatre, but what we have always felt to be the very spirit of Shakespeare—exploring our humanity.

This summer we celebrated our 45th Anniversary Season with a Jeff nominated Elizabeth Rex and a critically acclaimed hit Much Ado About Nothing! This fall we are excited to enter a brand-new partnership. For the first time, we are bringing you The Madness of Edgar Allan Poe: A Love Story at Cheney Mansion! This wildly innovative theatre experience leads audience members through historic Cheney Mansions’ gilded halls with a different tale of terror in every room. Follow the ghost of Virginia Poe as she stirs up memories from beyond the grave, or follow Edgar as he winds his way from The Tell-Tale Heart to The Pit and the Pendulum. Lonely ghosts, mad murderers and memories are around every corner in this autumn’s most unexpected haunted house!

In addition to our traditional summer season of outdoor plays, this spring we were also honored to present, in cooperation with Open Door Repertory, Lauren Gunderson’s funny and poignant I & You, which received rave reviews and allowed us to examine the intimate relationship and gift of organ donation.

Our work continues to be surprising, touching and powered by bringing fresh life to classic stories. We could never have made it to a 45th Anniversary Season without YOU, our loyal audience. It is for you and only with your help that we come to the gardens each year and build a theater from scratch. We wish to thank our loyal audience, as well as those individuals, businesses, arts agencies, and foundations that support us with their generous donations and gifts. Without you, we simply would not exist. Together we are striving to create not only great theatre, but also that more humane world that we all seek.

Sincerely,

Anne Rooney
President, Board of Director

Jhenai Mootz
Managing Director

Barbara Zahora
Artistic Director
THE CAST (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Erica Bittner*† ................................................................................................. Virginia/Rowena
Christian Gray*................................................................................................. Edgar Allan Poe
Kyle Curry ..................................................................................................................... Madman
Dina Monk .................................................................................................... Policeman/Angelo
Joan Nahid ........................................................................................................................ Ligeia
Jillian Patterson ............................................................................................................ Ensemble
Kevin Tre’Von Patterson ......................................................................................... Fortunato/Monk
Dave Skvarla ..................................................................................................................... Prisoner
Sarah Rachel Schol ........................................................................................................ Luciana
Drew Straub ..................................................................................................................... Ensemble

Place: Baltimore
Time: October, 1849

90 minutes running time.

No intermission

UNDERSTUDIES

Understudies never substitute for listed performers unless announced at the time of the performance.

For Virginia and Rowena–Jillian Patterson;
For Luciana and Helena–Joan Nahid; For Ligeia–Sarah Rachel Schol;
For Prisoner, Fortunato, Madman and Monk–Drew Straub;
For Policeman and Angelo–Kevin Tre’Von Patterson

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director ..................................................................................................................... Skyler Schrempp
Stage Manager ......................................................................................................... Sarah West*
Production Manager .................................................................................................... Samantha K. Barr
Dialect Coach ........................................................................................................... Barbara Zahora*
Sets Design ............................................................................................................. Nicholas James Schwartz
Original Lighting Design........................................................................................... Michael McNamara§
Associate Lighting Design........................................................................................ Garrett Bell
Original Music/Sound Design..................................................................................... Christopher Kriz§
Costume Design ........................................................................................................ Rachel Lambert
Assistant Stage Manager .............................................................................................. Wallace Craig
Assistant Sound Designer/Sound Operator .................................................................. Matthew Chase
Photographer ............................................................................................................. Jhenai Mootz†

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers

§Member of United Scenic Artists

†Oak Park Festival Theatre Company Member
CAST PROFILES

Erica Bittner*† (Virginia and Rowena) is thrilled to return to The Madness of Edgar Allen Poe, where she was previously seen in the same role at First Folio Theatre in both 2018 and 2012. She is an Artistic Associate at Oak Park Festival Theatre, where she has appeared in I & You, You Can’t Take It With You, A Dickens Carol (2017 & 2018), Pygmalion, and Love’s Labours Lost. Other Chicago credits include: Noises Off (Windy City Playhouse); Bad Jews (Theatre Wit/North Shore/Royal George); A Christmas Carol (Drury Lane); Richard III: No Beast So Fierce (Oracle Theatre); Dead Man Walking (Piven Theatre); and productions with Redmoon Theater, Music Theatre Works, One Year Chekhov, GreatWorks, Chicago Dramatists, Victory Gardens, and Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Regional: King Charles III (Cardinal Stage). International: The Two Noble Kinsmen (RADA) and Momentary Opera (Redmoon). Television: The Chi (Showtime – recurring), Chicago Fire (NBC), Soundtrack (Netflix), American Greed (CNBC). Erica holds a BFA from the Chicago College of Performing Arts and a certificate from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. She’s represented by Gray Talent Group. www.ericabittner.com

Kyle Curry (Madman) is excited to be returning to Oak Park Festival Theatre where he was previously seen in Pygmalion (Freddy) and The Taming of the Shrew (Curtis). He has worked around Chicago for such companies as Steppenwolf (We are Proud to Present...), Theatre Wit (Admissions), Boho (Three Days of Rain), Remy Bumppo (Pygmalion), Chicago Shakespeare Theatre (Macbeth, Dunsinane, Shakespeare’s Greatest Hits, and Romeo and Juliet), among others. Regionally, Kyle has worked for various companies including: Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, NextAct, Utah Shakespeare, Houston Shakespeare Festival 56, Virginia Shakespeare, Kentucky Shakespeare, and Stages Repertory. Kyle holds an MFA from the University of Houston Professional Actor Training Program and is represented by Gray Talent.

Christian Gray* (Edgar Allan Poe) happily returns to OPFT, where he played Tom Wingfield in The Glass Menagerie and assistant directed Of Mice and Men. He recently played George Bernard Shaw in By George at ShawChicago, where he is an ensemble member, appearing in over 30 shows. He is also an Artistic Associate of First Folio Theatre, where he has appeared in over 20 productions, including Edgar Allan Poe in The Madness of Edgar Allan Poe. He has performed with over 20 Chicago area companies, including Court Theatre, Remy Bumppo, and Writers’Theatre. Regional credits include Clarence Brown Theatre (TN), Fort Worth Shakespeare (TX), and Pennsylvania Stage Company. Film credits include Plastic (FPPI Films: Best Supporting Actor Award), Reclamation (NTG Productions), Day 1 (Skibo Films: numerous awards including Best Feature). Television credits include Chicago P.D. (NBC), The Blackwood Prophecies (Joe and Joe Media), and commercials for Stein Garden and Gifts, Horseshoe Casino, and Sprint/Nextel. Love to Lydia!
Dina Monk (Policeman and Angelo) is delighted to work with OPFT for the first time. She just returned from a three-month tour of Books in Brooks, an abbreviated version of As You Like It with Montana Shakes! Recent Chicago credits include Southern Gothic (Windy City Playhouse), One-Minute Play Festival (The Den Theatre), She Kills Monsters (The Cuckoo’s Theater Project), Coriolanus (Commission Theatre), Groundswell (Prop Thtr), and A Midsummer Night’s Dream (First Folio Theatre). Regional credits include Love’s Labour’s Lost and The Winter’s Tale with the Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival. She holds a BFA from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and is a teaching artist at Infinity Arts Academy. www.dinamonk.com

Joan Nahid (Ligeia) is delighted to work with Oak Park Festival Theatre for the first time. Joan is an Iranian Chicago-based actor, writer and voice artist. Her Chicago credits include Kiss (Haven Theatre), Tango (Trap Door Theatre), The Madness of Edgar Allan Poe (First Folio Theatre), The Lockteer (Trap Door Theatre), The House of Bernarda Alba (Saint Sebastian Players), The Malta Play (Artemisia Theatre) and other productions with On The Spot Theatre Company, One Year Chekhov, Theatre Y, Second City and Saltbox Theatre Company. Joan has also appeared in Miss Julie, A Doll’s House and Life x 3 in Tehran. She holds a M.F.A in theatre and dramatic literature and a B.S in Industrial Engineering from Tehran University. She is also a graduate of Second City’s Acting Lab Conservatory in Chicago. She is represented by DDO Artists Agency. www.joannahid.com

Jillian Patterson (Ensemble) is an actor-singer-dancer originally from California, making her debut with Oak Park Festival Theatre! Chicago credits include A Midsummer Night’s Dream (The Shakespeare Project), Cymbeline (Strawdog Theatre), The Roaring Ones (Rhinofest), Variations on a Theme (Piven Theatre Lab), and Gold Medal Pills (DDADIS Festival). Regional work includes Peter and the Starcatcher (PCPA), My Fair Lady (PCPA), and Christmas Is Here Again (PCPA), among others. Jillian holds an Artistic Associate position at Quick silver Shakespeare Theatre. Education: Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts, Class of 2015. Love to Chad and Piper.

Kevin Tre’Von Patterson (Fortunato and Monk) is extremely excited to be returning to OPFT. He was recently seen in Between Riverside and Crazy (Redtwist Theatre) Other credits include Michigan Shakespeare Festival 18’ season, Not about Nightingales (Raven Theatre), Rutherford’s Travels (Pegasus Theatre), The Marvin Gaye Story (Black Ensemble Theatre), and the Jeff award winning (Best Ensemble) production of Direct from Death Row: The Scottsboro Boys (Raven Theatre). Television credits include...
Chicago P.D. (NBC), Mindhunter (Netflix), Empire (FOX) and The Redline (CBS). Kevin would like to thank his friends and family for the endless support. He is represented by the amazing team of Big Mouth Talent.

**Sarah Rachel Schol (Luciana)** is thrilled to make her Oak Park Festival Theatre debut. Chicago credits: The Doppelganger (Steppenwolf); The Madness of Edgar Allan Poe (First Folio); The Dark at the Top of the Stairs (Eclipse); Machinal (Greenhouse); Fefu and Her Friends (Halcyon Theatre); Miss Major Cushman (Greenhouse and Water Street Studios); New Country (Fair Trade Productions); and Eden in Silence (Links Hall). From 2006-2015 Sarah was a company member of EgoPo Classic Theater, a Philadelphia-based theater devoted to Viewpoints training and the reinvention of classic texts for new audiences. With EgoPo she performed over a dozen works, including Marat/Sade (Simonne), Not I (Mouth), Spring Awakening (Martha/Frau Bergman), Woyzeck (Margaret), and Gint (Older Woman). Sarah worked with many other companies in the Philadelphia area, including the Walnut Street Theatre, Delaware Theater Company, Arden Theatre Company, Passage Theater Company, Brat Productions, Luna Theater Company, and the Philadelphia Fringe Arts Festival. Sarah is proudly represented by DDO Artists Agency.

**Dave Skvarla (Prisoner)** is a Chicago native, an actor, and a comedian, and has studied at Columbia College Chicago, The Second City, Annoyance, and Vagabond School of the Arts. With OPFT, Dave appeared in Robin Hood, Richard III, and is so grateful to have gotten to play Lenny in Of Mice And Men. Dave is also grateful to have played Prospero in The Tempest at City Lit, Henry II in The Lion In Winter and Edward III in The Scullery Maid, both with Idle Muse, and Bluto in New Adventures of Popeye with The Factory Theatre, and to have performed with Lifeline, Mary-Archie, The Hypocrites, PTE, Three Cat, Strawdog, Zombie Army Productions, Open Eye, Asylum, Careening, Big Game, Backstage, Caffeine, and Shaw Chicago.

**Drew Straub (Ensemble)** is making his OPFT debut in Poe. Born and raised in Saint Louis, Drew is a recent graduate from Northwestern University’s Theatre program. He is beyond excited to be in his first post-graduation show and would like to thank all his family and friends for constant support and love.

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Across
6. What did Poe’s mom die of?
9. What could Poe not afford for his dying wife Virginia?
10. Who adopted Poe?
12. Last name of famous author from the early 1800s
14. Where does Poe want to go to be an editor?
15. What was Dickins pet?
16. What did Poes dad die of?
17. What does Poe watch his mother do?
20. What did Poe’s mom come to America to be?
24. How much money does Poe make on his pieces of writing?
25. Name of Poe’s aunt
27. Color Poe used to resemble death
28. What university did Poe attend?
29. Who did Poe go to lunch with?
30. What was Poe’s birth name?

Down
1. What is a Baltimore Lemonade?
2. What does Poe fall into and goes into a coma?
3. What unusual tool assisted Poe in his school studies?
4. What was the poem that Poe made for his wife that was originally called “To Virginia”
5. What was the name of Poe’s Mother?
7. Where does Poe live?
8. What red flower was embroidered on women’s handkerchiefs to help disguise consumption?
11. When you have consumption was are you drowning in?
13. What did Poe’s mom play in the play Romeo and Juliet?
18. What was the name of his cousin that he fell in love with?
19. Poe was the first to write ___ stories
21. Most popular poem
22. What was the name of Poe’s dad?
23. What was Poe’s dad’s name?
26. Where did Poe go to school (private school)?
Samantha K. Barr (Production Manager) is pleased to be working again with Oak Park Festival Theater. Samantha is a company member and production manager at Aston Repertory Theatre Company, Production Manager for Dominican University, and is an Artistic Affiliate with Babes With Blades Theatre Company. When not working, Sam can be seen haunting the CTA, looking up funny cat pictures, or drinking coffee. Sam would especially like to thank all the cast and crew for doing such great work, and of course much love to Jeremiah and Edgar.

Matthew R. Chase (Assistant Sound Designer/Sound Operator) is a Chicago-based Theatrical Sound Designer and Audio Engineer. Recent credits include: Sound Design of Who Killed Joan Crawford (Glittera Productions) 1776 and The Fantasticks (Skokie Theatre), Wolves (Exit 63 Theatre), 110 in the Shade (Boho Theatre), Mama Mia (Golden Ticket Productions). Assistant Sound Design of Hedwig and the Angry Inch (Theo Ubique), The Ballad of Lefty & Crabbe (Underscore Theatre Company), Sunset Boulevard, A Chorus Line, Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder & Gypsy (Porchlight Musical Theatre). Audio Engineer of Evil Dead the Musical (Black Button Eye’s Productions). Audio Supervisor for Pinocchio (The House Theatre) and Timeline Theatre Company.

Garett Bell (Associate Lighting Designer) is excited to be working with Michael McNamara and Oak Park Festival Theatre. Recent design credits include Hamlet and The Tempest with Richmond Shakespeare Theatre, These Shining Lives with Purdue University, and The Elephant in the Room at Yale University. Garrett is pursuing his MFA in Theatre at Purdue University, after receiving his BA in Theatre: Lighting and Scenic Design, and Studio Art: Photography, at College of Charleston. He is also a recent recipient of the Fred Foster award. Some of Garrett’s work can be found at www.garettmbell.com, and he can be reached at garettmbell@gmail.com

Wallace Craig (Assistant Stage Manager) is thrilled to work with OPFT again! She is a graduate of The University of Cincinnati-CCM with a BFA in Stage Management. Previous Chicagoland production credits include Measure for Measure (Any Other Name Company), Elizabeth Rex, A Dickens Carol, The African Company Presents Richard III (Oak Park Festival Theatre), The Firestorm, All Childish Things, and The Madness of Edgar Allen Poe (First Folio Theatre).

Christopher Kriz (Sound Designer) is an award winning composer and sound designer based in Chicago, and has received four Joseph Jefferson Awards with a total of 21 nominations. Chicago: Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf, Chicago Shakespeare, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Court Theatre, Northlight, Remy Bumppo, Victory Gardens, Timeline, and many others. Regional: Seattle Repertory Theatre, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, and many summer seasons at Peninsula Players. Kriz is a proud member of United Scenic Artists 829. To hear more of his work, please visit christopherkriz.com.

Rachel Lambert (Costume Designer) is delighted to be working with Oak Park Festival again after designing both shows this past summer. Her other Chicago design credits include Santaland Diaries and The King of Hell’s Palace (Goodman Theatre); Twist Your Dickens (The Second City); Mothers and Sons (Northlight Theatre); Puff: Believe It Or Not, Henry IV, The Life of Galileo, and Travesties and Northanger Abbey (Jeff nominations–Remy Bumppo Theatre); Mary’s Wedding, Silent Sky, Cymbeline, Merchant of Venice, and Romeo & Juliet (Jeff nomination); Time Stands Still and The Dingdong (Buffalo Theatre Ensemble); A Swell In The Ground (The Gift); Jesus Hopped the ‘A’ Train, A Perfect Ganesh, Intimate Apparel (Jeff nomination), After the Fall (Eclipse Theatre); Hansel & Gretel, The Merry Widow, Die Fledermaus, Magic Flute, Gianni Schicchi (DePaul School of Music); Rose (Greenhouse Theatre); Next to Normal (BoHo Theatre); My Name Is Annie King (Underscore Theatre); The Drowning Girls (Signal Ensemble); and American Myth (American Blues Theatre). Regionally she has designed for Peninsula Players and the Texas Shakespeare Festival.
Michael McNamara (Lighting Design) is a frequent lighting designer in the Chicago area and was the 2012 Jeff Award winner for his design of The Turn of the Screw with First Folio Theatre in Oak Brook. For eight years he was Resident Assistant Lighting Designer with the Washington National Opera at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC where he worked on more than fifty productions with artists from around the world. Michael is a member of United Scenic Artists Local USA-829 and is an Associate Professor at Purdue University.

David Rice (Playwright) is co-founder (with his late wife Alison C. Vesely) of First Folio Theatre, where he has produced over 70 productions which have earned 40 Jeff Nominations and 6 Jeff Awards. He is also a playwright specializing in adaptations, whose works include Shrew’d!, Captain Blood, Cymbeline: A Musical Folk Tale (Jeff Awards – Original Adaptation and Original Music), The Madness of Edgar Allan Poe: A Love Story (Jeff Nomination – Original Adaptation), The Castle of Otranto, and Dean Monti’s Why Dogs Don’t Talk. David is a proud member of both the Dramatists Guild and Actors Equity Association.

Skyler Schrempp (Director) is delighted to return to the stages of Oak Park Festival Theatre, this time as a director. You may have seen her on stage in Austin Gardens in Of Mice and Men and Love's Labours Lost. She is a Chicago based theatre artist with strong roots in ensemble focused work and she is a proud artistic associate with First Folio Theatre. She has worked in New York and Chicago with Manhattan Children's Theatre, Griffin Theatre, BoHo, The Gift, Artemesia, Cole Theatre, Adventure Stage Chicago, Walkabout, the Chicago Mammals and lower case theatre. She frequently collaborates with Back Room Shakespeare Project and is a founding member of One Year Chekhov where she works to bring classics to a wider audience through irreverent accessibility. She is artistic director of The Viola Project, a program that works to empower and embolden middle school girls through the performance and exploration of Shakespeare's plays. Skyler has trained with The School at Steppenwolf, the Moscow Art Theatre, Shakespeare and Company, not to mention the French Pastry School. She will be receiving her MFA in writing for children and young adults from Vermont College of Fine Arts this January.

Nicholas James Schwartz (Scenic Designer) Originally from New York, Nick now resides in Chicago as a scenic designer, scenic artist and production manager. He has recently been nominated for best Scenic Design by the BTAA for his work on Juneteenth Street at ETA Creative Arts Center and for Harbour Gate at 16th Street Theatre. Nick’s previous works include: Comedy of Errors (Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre), Elephant Man (William Street Repertory), King Lear, Between Riverside and Crazy (Red Twist Theatre), Blood at the Root, Antigone (Elgin Community College), In The Blood, Rounded Heads and Peaked Heads (Red Tape Theatre), Naked (Trapdoor Theatre), Book of Merman, Defacing Michael Jackson (Flying Elephants Productions), Juneteenth Street (ETA Creative arts), Green Book, YPF (Pegasus Theatre Company), Memphis, Young Frankenstein, Memphis (Parkland College), and Revolt (Vision Latino Theatre).

Sarah West* (Stage Manager) is excited to be working with Oak Park Festival Theatre for the first time. She is a proud Artistic Associate at First Folio Theatre. Her managerial credits there include Mary's Wedding, Women in Jeopardy, As You Like It, Silent Sky, Captain Blood, Dr. Seward's Dracula, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Amish Project, Jeeves at Sea, The Madness of Edgar Allan Poe, Laughter on the 23rd Floor, The Gravedigger, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Salvage, Rough Crossing, The Rainmaker, Unnecessary Farce, Searching for Peabody's Tomb and Macbeth. Other credits include Mary Poppins (Mercury Theatre), 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (Capital City Theatre), and Women of 4G (Babes with Blades.) She is a proud graduate of North Central College. She would like to thank her family for always being so supportive and involved in her career.
STAFF PROFILES

Robert W. Behr*† (Finance Manager & Park Operations) Since Jack Hickey brought him aboard in 2003, Bob has stage managed 24 productions for OPFT. He has also performed and stage managed for many Chicago area theatres as well as in Toledo, Ohio, Muskegon and Saugatuck, Michigan, and with the opera company of Eastman School of Music. He was last seen on stage in OPFT’s Robyn Hood. He now specializes in finance/bookkeeping and park operations for Oak Park Festival Theatre and was the Treasurer from 2007-2012. He is also a freelance director.

Lucy Carr† (Casting Director) has been involved with Oak Park Festival Theatre since 2008. As an actor: Much Ado About Nothing, Midwinter’s Tales, and The Hound of the Baskervilles. Assistant Director: Betrayal, Faith Healer, Richard III and Someone Who’ll Watch Over Me (Jeff Recommended). She has been the Casting Director since 2012. She has cast Beyond the Fringe, Richard III, Someone Who’ll Watch Over Me (Jeff Recommended), Seascape (Jeff Recommended), Amadeus (Jeff Recommended) and Twelfth Night. Lucy has worked with such theatres as Shaw Chicago, Remy Bumppo, Rasaka, Irish Repertory, Lookingglass, Bailiwick, Glass Onion, Absolute Shakespeare, A Reasonable Facsimile, Strangeloop, Spartan, The Poor Theatre, Abbie Hoffman Festival and Kennedy Center (Washington DC) as well as PR Casting, Simon Casting, Grossman Jack Talent and Stewart Talent. She also teaches at Piven Theatre Workshop and The Viola Project. Lucy holds a BFA from University of the Arts (Philadelphia), where she was twice nominated for the Kennedy Center ACTF Best Ensemble award, and Gaeity School of Acting (Dublin, Ireland).

Mary Liming† (Box Office Manager) began her career with Oak Park Festival Theatre in 1990 as Administrative Assistant to then Managing Director, Sue Levine-Kelly, and Box Office Manager for the 1990 production of Falstaff. She returned as Box Office Manager in 1992 for Dr. Faustus and has been here ever since. Because of her longevity in this position, she has become an archivist/historian for the company.

Jhenai Mootz† (Managing Director) is honored to have been working with OPFT since 2006 as an actor where she has been seen as Kate in A Dickens Carol, Lady Macduff/Hecate in Macbeth, Kate in The Taming of the Shrew, Osric in Hamlet, Olivia in Twelfth Night, Lady Anne in Richard III, Raina in Arms and the Man, Chrissie in Dancing at Lughnasa, Margaret in Much Ado About Nothing, Christine in Murder by the Book and Madge in Picnic. Other credits around town: Hay Fever, Saint Joan, Man & Superman, Pygmalion, The Widowers’ Houses, The Millionaires, Mrs. Warren’s Profession, Arms and the Man (ShawChicago), Sparky!, Jane Eyre, The Moonstone (Lifeline Theatre), The Mystery of Edgar Allen Poe (First Folio Shakespeare Company), The Women and The Philadelphia Story (Circle Theatre). Jhenai holds a B.F.A. from the University of Utah’s Actor Training Program and joined the staff in 2016 as OPFT’s Managing Director. Also a visual artist, Jhenai’s artwork can currently be found in the lobby of the Lifeline Theater & Andersonville Galleria, O’Hare Airport, Northwestern Hospital gift shops and on her website at JhenaiMootz.com

Barbara Zahora*† (Artistic Director) was asked to join the OPFT staff as Interim Artistic Director in 2018, and at the beginning of this year she became the permanent AD for the company. She directed Elizabeth Rex early this summer, and 2017’s acclaimed Macbeth. As an actor, she’s appeared on our stages as Penny in You Can’t Take It With You, Maggie in Dancing at Lughnasa, and several benefit performances of Belinda Bremner’s Mrs. Coney and Midwinter’s Tales. Additional acting credits include All My Sons and Les Liaisons Dangereuses (American Players Theatre); Hamlet, Heartbreak House, A Little Night Music, and Misalliance (Writers’
STAFF PROFILES cont.

Theatre); The Country Girl (Illinois Theatre Center); Marionette Macbeth, The Moliere Comedies, The Taming of the Shrew, As You Like It, Richard II, The School for Scandal, and All’s Well That Ends Well (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); Lady Windermere’s Fan (Northlight Theatre); A Christmas Carol, Wit (Goodman Theatre); Hard Times (Lookingglass Theatre); Arms and the Man, The Devil’s Disciple, Heartbreak House, Major Barbara, Coward in Two Keys, and What Every Woman Knows (ShawChicago); and many appearances with the Shakespeare Project of Chicago, where she served as Associate Artistic Director for eight years. Her other directing credits include Shrewish (Artemisia Theatre); Candida, Hay Fever, Misalliance and Private Lives (ShawChicago); and Ovidian Myths, Something Shaw, and Spoon River: Coming Home for the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. TV and film credits include Chicago Fire and Operator. Barbara is a visiting assistant professor at Roosevelt University’s Chicago College for the Performing Arts, and she previously taught at Northwestern University’s Bienen School of Music and North Central College. She is represented by Paonessa Talent Agency and is a proud member of Actors’ Equity Association. Love to George, always. Barbara@OakParkFestival.com

ACTORS’ EQUITY ASSOCIATION (AEA OR EQUITY)

Founded in 1913, is the labor union that represents more than 48,000 actors and stage managers in the United States. Equity seeks to advance, promote and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society.

OAK PARK FESTIVAL THEATRE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President..............................................................................................................................................Anne Rooney
Vice President ...................................................................................................................................Len Grossman
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Members.................................................................................................................................................Brad Bartels, Becca Moran,
Alice Ocrey, Alicia Fontanetta, Robert Becker
Debo Balogun recently finished Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein at Lookingglass Theatre.

Leigh Barrett* just designed spooky lighting for the currently running Oh Sh#t! It’s Haunted! at the Factory Theater.

Erica Bittner* See Cast Profile

Belinda Bremner appeared this summer in Barbara Zahora’s Jeff Nominated production of Elizabeth Rex as Tardy, the company seamstress. She continues this theme of dispatching domestic duties as she is currently appearing as Mrs. Hudson in First Folio’s Sherlock’s Last Case. Keeping her apron on, she will soon debut her one woman Julia Child program. These balance her decidedly non-housekeeping roles in her other one-woman programs of Molly Ivins and Dorothy Parker. The one-woman programs are part of OPFT’s annual on-line auctions.

Aaron Christensen recently appeared in the public reading of Lived Through This (based on the acclaimed book by Anne K. Ream) at Lit Fest, directed by Ann Filmer. He is also a personal trainer, a certified instructor with the American Women’s Self-Defense Association, and a certified suited self-defense instructor with IMPACT Chicago.

John Crosthwaite is currently an Adjunct Professor at several community colleges throughout the San Francisco and Sacramento regions of Northern California. Currently John can be heard as the Police Chief, and various characters on the Netflix original Go, Go Cory Carson, premiering this Winter. John’s full resume and credits are available at www.imdb.me/Crosthwaite.

Luke Daigle is currently on stage in Southern Gothic at Windy City Playhouse. He recently completed work on two print ad campaigns for Tyson Foods and Cimzia Pharmaceuticals as well as a national commercial for Balsam Hill set to debut this coming holiday. He was also recently seen in the short film Collide at the Chicago Feedback Film Festival and Shortcut100 Festival.

Tony Dobrowolski* is currently understudying the Archbishop of Canterbury in the North American premiere of The King’s Speech at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre.

August Forman recently finished Tiny Beautiful Things at Victory Gardens Theater. Up next you can catch them as Richard in TimeLine Theatre’s production of Rutherford and Son.

Matt Gall has been working with Oak Park Festival since 2014, appearing in Hamlet, The Taming of the Shrew, Macbeth, A Dickens Carol, and several readings and radio plays. Most recently, he co-directed the remount of the World Premiere production of A Dickens Carol in 2018 with Kevin Theis. He is an actor, director, model, and educator based in Chicago.

Jack Hickey* served as Artistic Director of the Oak Park Festival Theatre for 15 years, where he has acted in or directed over 25 productions. Jack now serves as Artistic Director Emeritus, where he helps continue the growth of this extraordinary company. This past summer, Jack was featured in OPFT’s Jeff Recommended performance of Elizabeth Rex playing Percy Gower. Earlier this year, he played Ralph Trapdoor in The Roaring Girl for the Shakespeare Project of Chicago. Jack is also part of the newly formed Misalliance Repertory Company.

Mark Lancaster has been an OPFT Artistic Associate since 2017 when he appeared in Macbeth and The Fair Maid of the West. He has since served as the fight choreographer for the festival’s summer productions. Most recently he has been on the stages of The Lyric Opera, The Goodman Theatre, and First Folio Theatre Company. He can currently be seen through November 3rd as Nox, the Demon Overlord of Fright Fest at Six Flags Great America.

Savanna Rae will soon make her Irish Theatre of Chicago debut in Pineapple. Other 2019 credits include Faith in columbinus (Random Acts), Short Shakes! Macbeth (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre),
Macbeth (Back Room Shakespeare Project), Julius Caesar (BRSP), and Titus Andronicus (Shakespeare Project of Chicago).

Rio Ragazzone recently appeared in OPFT’s production of Much Ado About Nothing. He is currently understudying in Steep Theatre Company’s production of Mosquitoes by Lucy Kirkwood, premiering this Fall.

Mark Richard* most recently had the bittersweet honor of appearing in Shaw Chicago’s final production, The Doctor’s Dilemma as Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonington.

Matty Robinson recently appeared in OPFT’s spring production of I & You. Want more Matty? Check him out Friday nights at Pimprov as Prince Mida$, doing improv with The Moonsharks, writing and performing sketches with The Martin Luther Kings of Comedy, and performing stand-up around the city. Follow his adventures on instagram: @mattydor11

Kevin Theis* directed Noises Off for Timber Lake Playhouse this summer and will stage The Nerd for Theatre of Western Springs in the fall.

Bryan Wakefield* most recently appeared at Oak Park Festival Theatre as Benedick in Much Ado About Nothing and directed I & You in collaboration between Oak Park Festival and Open Door Repertory earlier this year. Bryan can be seen this October as Claudius in the Shakespeare Project of Chicago’s production of Hamlet.

George Zahora is currently working on music and sound design for The Shakespeare Project of Chicago’s 2019-2020 season, and continues to revise his script for Christmas Comes But Once A Year, the Project’s holiday offering for 2019, which opens December 10th. He’s also looking for an IT management job, if you happen to have one that’s open.
MISSION AND CORE VALUES

Oak Park Festival Theatre explores our shared humanity by telling stories that stand the test of time. By looking to our past and re-imagining the familiar, we hold a mirror up to the times in which we live, bringing us all a little closer.

Central to this mission are three important core values:

ROOTED IN SHAKESPEARE Shakespeare had a genius for telling stories that speak to all of mankind. His work was universal, visceral, and acutely complex. Following his lead, we aim to explore the human condition through stories that stand the test of time, both classic and contemporary.

INCLUSIVE & COLLABORATIVE From the stage to the boardroom, we strive to represent the world around us by telling stories that are inclusive of all, and by doing so enrich our art, our relationships with each other, our audiences, and our community. By collaborating with community partners, we widen the scope and deepen the impact of our mission within our community and endeavor to cultivate a sense of family and inclusion of all.

COMPANY CENTERED Passion, bravery, and a generosity of spirit have been guiding principles of the artists and patrons of Oak Park Festival Theatre since 1975. We aim to create a safe, supportive, and artistically invigorating environment for all.

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