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Disney's
NEWSIES

Music & Lyrics
by
**ALAN MENKEN
& JACK FELDMAN**

Book
by
HARVEY FIERSTEIN

**In the Bengt Sjostrom Theatre
June 26 - 29 & July 31 – August 4, 2024**

Producing Artistic Director.....	Christopher D. Brady
Director	Christopher D. Brady
Choreographer	Mychall Miller-Cornejo
Music Director	Mark Miller-Cornejo
Stage Manager.....	Mary Peterson
Scenic Designer	Cameron L. Strandin
Additional Scenic Design	Brandon Mechler
Technical Director	Brandon Mechler
Costume Designer	Bethany Nelson
Lighting Designer.....	Cameron L. Strandin
Sound Engineer.....	Grace Hahn-Varona
Intimacy Designer.....	Spencer Clark
Assistant Director	Marilyn Ramirez-Mendoza
Assistant Choreographer	Marisa Bonzi
Assistant Stage Manager	Jenna Christ
Assistant Stage Manager	Dalia Gonzalez
Assistant Stage Manager	Sabrina Olson

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DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Welcome to Newsies! Even more wonderfully, welcome to Starlight!!!

Our goal here at Starlight Theatre is to crush all expectations as the premiere outdoor community theatre in Illinois! We are humbled to have the honor of shaping the quality of our community through theatrical bliss & beauty in this marvelous venue; we are equally encouraged by your patronage, passionate about hearing your ideas, and exceedingly proud to share our talents with you. While there is so much fun to have at Starlight, we hope that we also exude our artistic motto, "the art is in the work!"

Newsies is a show that I adore. I was a huge fan of the movie in the 90s, and my wife and I went to see the Broadway musical while it was playing in NYC. I have been singing this music since before I knew I loved musicals!

Newsies, at its core - what really makes it crush - is about community. It's about cultivating the community you want; tilling the garden where you live, not finding a freshly-planted one elsewhere. Jack dreams of escaping the city for literal greener pastures in Santa Fe, but the story is beautiful because he (and the rest) decide to stay and better their community instead. The Newsies care about each other. Jack doesn't make the decision to form a union simply because the price hike is unfair. He looks around, he sees his brothers and sisters struggling out there and knows that to protect them they all must band together. And while the story has a very David vs Goliath sensibility, the reason that it resonates with us is that it reminds us what we can do within our own community if we had the same sense of it as the newsies.

I don't have time, in these brief notes, to highlight all the struggles and decisions we needed to make, the pitfalls we needed to avoid, or the outright smiles we needed to suppress (or encourage), but I will tell you, the adventure has been worth it - especially the wedding in the middle (congratulations again, Mychall & Mark). With a cast, crew, VOLUNTEERS, and, especially a team like this one, who really, really made this actually happen, how could it not? And while I get to write these notes, please, please, I encourage you to read the bios of everyone in this program, to get a glimpse of the amazing people that truly made this show happen. It's like standing on the shoulders of a bunch of giants. I may lead in this position, but I'd be doing it listlessly without all of them.

On behalf of us all then, we're so humbled that you would take the time to go on this adventure with us. We can't wait to see your faces light up; to see you look at each other with tears of joy in your eyes. We can't wait to hear that rumble of laughter or shouts of exuberance we live for out here. We cannot wait to have you go on this New York journey with us all while under our roof - and then hear you say, "That... was extraordinary."

To all of you who have joined us on this journey this summer, even if you're just glancing through for this one, thank you. Our current world can be a tough one to navigate; it's only right and proper to navigate it together.

Here, is where we should be. With you. Under the Stars. Thank you. Now, let's open it up!

Sincerely,



Christopher D. Brady
Director & Producing Artistic Director - Starlight Theatre



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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

Jack Kelley	Joshua Lindahl
Crutchie	Gio Bianchi
Katherine Plumber	Natalie Wooden
Davey	Noah Hill
Les.....	Gus Koenig
Wiesel.....	Kevin Poole
Oscar Delancey.....	Tez Lockhart
Morris Delancey	Brock Simmons
Joseph Pulitzer.....	John B. Boss
Snyder	Brendan Maher
Medda Larkin.....	ValMarie Black

NEWSIES

Racetrack Higgins	Nailah Brooks
Albert	Carlos Perez
Specs	Colleen Brown
Henry	Ben Garner
Finch	Dorian Dotson
Romeo.....	Riley Belick
Elmer.....	Sterling Ford
Mush	Pearson Miller
Buttons.....	Sydney Ketterman
Splasher	Chloe Beaver
Tommy Boy.....	Zachary Garner
Jojo	Debraruth Hayag
Mike/Scab #1	Isaiah Campbell
Ike/Scab #2.....	Charlie Horner
Lock.....	Jenny Beck
Stock	Brooke Harp
Nibbles/Scab #3	Carter Denton
Dutchie/Spot Conlon	Chloe Konieczki
Blink.....	Mattsen Heller
Picker	Cierra Weaver
Chico/Scab #4.....	Adam Lendman
Foys.....	Faith Hood
Seabutch/Bowery Beauty	Elyssa Cornejo
Boots/Bowery Beauty	Olivia Williamson
Bumlets/Bowery Beauty	Allison Wilson

Starlight Theatre acknowledges
support from the Illinois Arts Council.

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Council

CAST OF CHARACTERS CONTINUED
(in order of appearance)

The Office & NYC

Seitz/Police Officer	Garrett Pierce
Hannah/Bowery Beauty/Nun.....	Karla Kies
Bunsen/Bowery Beauty/Nun/Strike Buster	Karin Blaski
Carl/Nun/Stage Manager/Police Officer	Sydney Jason
Bill/Nunzio/Police Officer/Nun	Noah Ceniseros
Darcy/Strike Buster	Ryan Maher
Jacobi/Strike Buster	Hannah Sleger
Mayor/Police Officer	Wayne Turner
Teddy Roosevelt/Strike Buster	Phil Cooper
Nun/Ensemble	Beth Hogleund
Nun/Waiter/Ensemble.....	Colleen Maher
Nun/Ensemble	Molly Heller

Workhouse Kids Imogen Brady,
 Ophelia Brady, Amelia Escamilla, Lorenzo Gawaran, Logan Gustafson, Cambria Lisitza, Connor
 Jensen, Abby Rabon, Tatiana Ramirez, Amèlie RosaVelasquez , Henry Simpson, Bella Torres

**BACKSTAGE/
 RUNNING CREW**

STAGE SPOTS

Abi King
 Evan Turley

HOUSE SPOTS

Zolna Blosser
 Luc Johnson

FLOOR

Sarah Seaburg-Wilkerson
 Jaylen Marks
 Ryleigh Christ
 Liam Johnson
 Maddie Hobart
 Ace Cox

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MUSICAL SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE

Overture	Orchestra
Santa Fe (Prologue).....	Jack, Crutchie
Carrying the Banner	Newsies
Carrying the Banner (Tag)	
The Bottom Line.....	Pulitzer, Seitz, Bunsen, Hannah, Carl
Carrying the Banner (Reprise)	Newsies
The Chase	Instrumental
That's Rich	Medda Larkin
I Never Planned on You/Don't Come A-Knocking.....	Jack, Katherine, Bowery Beauties
The World Will Know	Jack, Davey, Newsies
The World Will Know (Reprise)	Jack, Davey, Newsies
Watch What Happens	Katherine, Workhouse Kids
Seize the Day	Davey, Newsies
Seize the Day (Tag).....	Newsies
The Fight	Instrumental, Cast
Santa Fe.....	Jack

ACT TWO

Entr'acte.....	Orchestra
King of New York	Katherine, Newsies, Jacobi
Letter from the Refuge.....	Crutchie
Watch What Happens (Reprise).....	Jack, Davey, Katherine, Les
The Bottom Line (Reprise)	Pulitzer, Seitz, Bunsen, Hannah, Carl
Brooklyn's Here	Spot Conlon, Newsies
Something to Believe In	Katherine, Jack
Seize the Day (Reprise).....	Newsies
Once and for All.....	Jack, Davey, Les, Racetrack Higgins, Katherine, Newsies
Seize the Day (Reprise 2)	Newsies
Finale Ultimo (Part 1)	Newsies, Jack, Pulitzer, Teddy Roosevelt, Crutchie, Medda Larkin, Davey, Katherine, Les
Finale Ultimo (Part 2)	All
Bows	All

MUSICIANS

Mark Miller-Cornejo, <i>Conductor, Keyboard 1</i>	Nadia Jensen, <i>Keyboard 2</i>
Beau DeGennaro, <i>Flute, Piccolo</i>	Sara Leib, <i>Violin</i>
GiGi DeGennaro, <i>Clarinet</i>	Logan Nalley, <i>Trombone</i>
Aidan Galbraith, <i>Percussion</i>	Ricardo Quiñonez, <i>Trombone</i>
Brad Garrett, <i>Guitar</i>	Violet Sjostrom, <i>Cello</i>
Anthony Girone, <i>Saxophone</i>	Myles Walker, <i>Drum Set</i>
Dan Jensen, <i>Bass Guitar</i>	Logan Wooden, <i>Trumpet</i>

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CAST & TEAM BIOS

**CHLOE BEAVER**

(Splasher) [She/Her] is a freshman at Auburn High School in the CAPA program. She has been dancing since age two, and started

getting into theater in middle school. She is very grateful and excited to be in her first Starlight show this summer.

**JENNY BECK**

(Lock (Newsie)) [She/Her] is elated to be a part of this production in her sixth season at Starlight. She is going into her

sophomore year at UW Stevens Point, and is double majoring in dance and arts management. She would like to give a big thanks to the directing team, her fellow cast mates, and her friends and family for all being supportive and encouraging.

**RILEY BELICK**

(Romeo) [He/Him] is beyond excited to be in his first show at Starlight! He is a student at Northern Illinois University

majoring in history and education. Recently, he performed in the ensemble of *Beauty and the Beast* and last fall, played the role of Lucas in *The Addams Family* at Stage Coach Players. When he's not on stage, Riley works as a Digital Artist and enjoys coaching for the DeKalb High School's Speech Team. He also has three adorable guinea pigs, Bear, Blue, and Brownie, who have been thoroughly taught the choreography to this show. He would like to thank his friends, family, and this incredible team for making this show such an amazing experience and an opportunity to grow as a performer.

**GIO BIANCHI**

(Crutchie) [He/Him] is very honored and thrilled to be joining the Starlight Theatre family! Gio caught the theater bug when he

was very young and has never been able to stop singing and dancing ever since. He has played a variety of different roles such as Billy Flynn in *Chicago*, Pippin in *Pippin*, Scarecrow in the *Wizard of Oz*, and Race in another production of *Newsies*! He couldn't be happier to experience this show again! Gio hopes

that you all enjoy the show and would like to thank Starlight for being so welcoming and accepting, his lifelong friends that he has made over the years who have always had his back, and his family for their countless love and support!

**VALMARIE BLACK**

(Medda Larkin) [She/Her] is overjoyed to be in her second season with Starlight.

She made her debut in Summer of

2022 as Lavora Verona in the hilarious stage play, *Disaster* and Marty Madison in the musical drama, *Dreamgirls*. Val is elated to be part of this production once more and even more excited to work with this cast.

**KARIN BLASKI**

(Bunsen, Bowery Beauty, Ensemble) [She/Her] appeared as the loving and resilient wife Vi Moore in

Starlight's *Footloose* last summer and in Starlight's *Hello Dolly!* Ensemble in 2022. In the past, Karin has been seen in Starlight's *Oliver!*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Good Doctor*, and *Murder in a Nunnery*.

This June 2024 marks Karin's early retirement from her day job as an RVC business professor. She is looking forward to being able to spend more time with her beautiful and supportive daughters, and adventuring with her significant other.

**JOHN B BOSS**

(Joseph Pulitzer) [He/Him] is thrilled to make his debut with RVC Starlight in his third portrayal of Pulitzer. Rockford audiences

may remember him from Hoenes Productions at Clock Tower Resort in *La Cage aux Folles* and *Reel Music*. Nearby Wisconsin audiences have seen him as Thenardier in *Les Miserables*, Herr Schultz in *Cabaret*, Mary Sunshine in *Chicago*, and Roger DeBris in *The Producers*, a role he toured the US with. Boss has been seen on TV and in many independent films. He is also a longtime Santa Claus portrayal artist and Hollywood lookalike for many celebrities. He has also toured the UK with Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, a musical drama. He is excited to share the stage with so many passionate artists.

CAST & TEAM BIOS CONTINUED**IMOGEN BRADY**

(Workhouse Kid)

[She/Her] is excited to enter her sixth season with Starlight, and will be going into her freshman

year at Harlem High School. Imogen is a member of Kantorei of Rockford and very much enjoys singing. Enjoy the show!

**OPHELIA BRADY**

(Workhouse Kid)

[She/Her] is very ecstatic to be in her seventh season out at Starlight theatre. She will be in

Newsies as a workhouse kid and *Beauty and the Beast* as a silly girl. "Keep your eyes on the stars and your feet on the ground. You can do this." -Theodore Roosevelt.

**NAILAH BROOKS**

(Racetrack Higgins)

[She/Her] is overjoyed to return to the stage for her third Starlight season! She was previously seen

last season in all five musicals, in roles including Graffiti Pete in *In the Heights*, and Bet in *Oliver!*. Nailah is currently a junior at Auburn High School in the Gifted and CAPA program. She couldn't have made it through this season without her talented cast members for making this experience so memorable, her incredible parents for constantly showcasing their unbounded encouragement for her and her passion, and her Homebase, Mary Peterson, for always being the (coolest person ever) best! She hopes you enjoy the show!

**COLLEEN BROWN**

(Specs) [She/Her] is thrilled to be back for her second season at Starlight. She is an Alumna of Rockford Dance Company and

Dance at Illinois. She would like to thank her family and friends for their continued support of her pursuing her passion. She would also like to thank the creative team for trusting her with this role- it's truly a dream come true. She would like to dedicate this performance to her fellow REA-NEA union members. Seize the Day!

**ISAIAH CAMPBELL**

(Mike, Brooklyn Newsie)

[He/Him] is starring in his first Starlight Theatre production and would like to thank the directors for

the experience and opportunity! He would also like to thank his family and friends for the support.

**NOAH CENSEROS**

(Bill, Crutchie Standby)

[He/Him] is in his first season with Starlight Theatre. He is very happy to be in this community and to have

the privilege of being a part of this talented cast. Noah looks forward to his future with Starlight Theatre.

**PHILIP COOPER**

(Governor Roosevelt)

[He/him] is a veteran of Starlight and numerous other theaters. Last seen in *The Little Mermaid*, *Anything*

Goes, and *Beauty and the Beast*. Favorite roles include Teve in *Fiddler*, Falstaff in *Henry IV* and Don Q in *Man of La Mancha*. He would like to thank his wife, Mary Jo, for encouraging him to follow his dreams.

**ELYSA CORNEJO**

(Newsie, Bowery Beauty)

[She/Her] is so excited to be back for her 15th Starlight season as a Newsie/Bowery Beauty in *Newsies*

and a Sorority Girl in *Legally Blonde!* She was most recently seen in *In the Heights* as Carla, *Rocky Horror* as a Phantom, and *Dreamgirls* as Ensemble. She is so thankful to the amazing production teams for the opportunity to be a part of this season. Elyssa would love to shoutout her boyfriend, Jaylen, for always supporting her busy schedule, the constant encouragement, and helping anyway he can, her brothers, Mychall and Mark, for spending the summer with her and always believing in her, and the rest of her family and friends for the endless support. Much love and enjoy the show!

CAST & TEAM BIOS CONTINUED**CARTER DENTON**

(Nibbles) [He/Him] has been in theater since the fifth grade, but this is his first season at Starlight. He was a part of

Starlight's, *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* as Leroy Herdman, and has been dying to get back on the Starlight stage ever since then. Some of his favorite roles in the past were Orin (*Little Shop of Horrors*), Antipholus of Syracuse (*Shakespeare's The Comedy of Errors*), and Shrek (*Shrek Jr*). He would like to thank his parents for always supporting him in all his endeavors and for all the miles they had to drive.

**DORIAN DOTSON**

(Finch) [He/ Him] is super excited to be back at Starlight again this year! You may have seen him in previous shows like *Rocky*

Horror Picture show as Rocky, *In The Heights* as Benny, *Dreamgirls*, and more ! He is super excited to be in *Newsies* and hopes you all enjoy and have fun!

**AMELIA ESCAMILLA**

(Workhouse Kid) [She/Her] is in her third season at Starlight. She is excited to be back on that stage. In past summers, she has

done *In the Heights* and *The Little Mermaid* . Later in the summer, she will be in *Beauty and the Beast* as a Principal Dancer. Amelia will be attending Hononegah High School in the fall. She would like to thank her family and friends for all the support.

**STERLING FORD**

(Elmer, Brooklyn Newsie) [He/Him] is in his second summer on stage with Starlight and he's excited to perform in one

of his favorite musicals this time around! He has most recently been seen as Joseph (*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*), Drosselmeyer/ Sugar Plum Prince (*The Nutcracker*), and Cinderella's Prince/ The Wolf (*Into the Woods*). He would like to thank the directors, his parents, Grace, Ellen and Andrew, and his friends for their continued support throughout this process. He dedicates his performance to Ryan, "when words fail, music speaks."

**BENJAMIN GARNER**

(Henry) [He/Him] is excited for his sixth season at Starlight and the opportunity to spend the summer with his Starlight friends. This season,

he is the Beast in *Beauty and the Beast* and Henry in *Newsies*. His favorite Starlight role has been Ben/Lisa in *Disaster!*. He was a freshman in CAPA at Auburn and played Gomez in Auburn's fall 2023 production of *The Addam's Family*.

**ZACHARY GARNER**

(Tommy Boy) [He/Him] is excited to return for his seventh season at Starlight, and hopes you enjoy the show!

**LORENZO GAWARAN**

(Workhouse Kid) [He/Him] is thrilled to be in his second show at Starlight and will be going into the sixth grade. He likes drawing, writing,

and would like to thank his family and the cast for their support. He wishes you enjoy the season!

**LOGAN GUSTAFSON**

(Workshop Child) [He/Him] has recently finished junior year at Christian Life High School, while also completing his freshman year at

Rock Valley College as a dual credit student. *Newsies* is Logan's second show at Starlight Theatre, after previously appearing in *Oliver!* as a thief, and he will appear later this season in *Beauty and the Beast*. Outside of theater, Logan likes to participate in the Bergstrom Stasteline Quiz Bowl, stream on Twitch, and listen to his CDs.

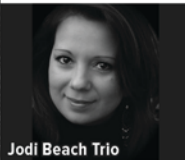
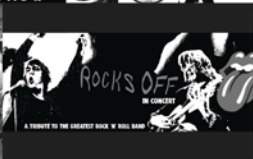
**BROOKE HARP**

(Stock (Newsie)) [She/Her] is thrilled to be on the Starlight stage for her second year in a row! Brooke teaches middle school Literature at

Holy Family School and dance at Evolve Dance Company. Brooke would like to thank her family for their love, her friends for their support, her fellow cast members for the fun, her students for always pushing her to be better, and God for giving her the courage to be here. She hopes that you have as much fun watching the show as she has performing in it!

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CAST & TEAM BIOS CONTINUED**DEBRARUTH HAYAG**

(Jojo (Newsie)) [She/Her] is in her first year at Starlight. She has previously been in *The Addams Family* as Wednesday Addams and

Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Hononegah. This fall, she's planning on going to college for a Social Relations degree with a minor in Theatre. She is so excited to perform as a Newsie and hopes you enjoy the show!

**MATTSSEN HELLER**

(Blink) [He/Him] recently played Warner in *Legally Blonde*, Topher in *Cinderella*, Bill Sikes in *Oliver!*, Jack in *The Stinky Cheese*

Man, & Ferdinand in *Love's Labour's Lost*. He would like to thank his beautiful wife, Molly, for going on these adventures together. When he grows up, Mattsen would like to be Detective John Kimble.

**MOLLY HELLER**

(Nun, Ensemble) [She/Her] is excited to be back for her second season at Starlight performing in *Legally Blonde*, *Guys & Dolls*, and

Newsies! Molly's love of music and performance began at a young age and she eventually went on to earn her degree in music as well as master's degrees in other fields. Special thanks to her family and friends for the support along the way.

**NOAH HILL**

(Davey) [He/Him] is so happy to be back for his 12th season with Starlight. Most recently, you may have seen him in *The Little Mermaid*,

Rocky Horror, and *Footloose*. Recently as well, Noah has been a part of *The Vampire Lesbians of Sodom* with The West Side Show Room. Noah would like to give a huge shoutout to his family, his beautiful wife Lexi, and his wonderful kids Everett and Aurora. Noah would like to dedicate this show to his dear friend, Ryan Sherman.

**BETH HOGLUND**

(Nun, Ensemble) [She/Her] is delighted to be a nun/ensemble person in *Newsies* this summer! Last heard in *Disaster!* as Echo, she has also appeared in *Young*

Frankenstein as a villager and ancestor. Beth enjoys painting, singing, and traveling to new places when she isn't on stage or teaching. She would like to thank Chris and staff for the opportunity to be on stage again. Enjoy your evening under stars and "Seize the Day"!

**FAITH CATHERINE HOOD**

(Foy, Katherine Standby) [She/Her] is thrilled to be

returning for her fourth season at

Starlight! She was last seen as Ermengarde in *Hello, Dolly!*. After years of singing these songs alone in her car, Faith is very excited to finally get to be a Newsie and perform these songs for an actual audience!

**CHARLIE HORNER**

(Ike) [They/Them] has a passion for theatre that was ignited at a young age when they landed the role of Molly in a production of

Annie. Some of their favorite roles include Rusty in *Footloose*, Sandy in *Grease*, and Sally Bowles in *Cabaret*. They have had the opportunity to work with wonderful actors, directors, and coaches, such as Tracy Letts at Steppenwolf, and Rachel Rockwell and Roberta Duchak at Drury Lane in Chicago. Following a brief hiatus, Charlie is overjoyed to make a comeback to the stage alongside such talented individuals. Offstage, Charlie draws strength and encouragement from their family and extends a heartfelt appreciation to their mother, brother, and late father for their unwavering support of their talent and aspirations.

**SYDNEY JASON**

(Ensemble) [She/Her] is thrilled to be back for her third season at Starlight. She is in the ensemble for *Newsies* and has

previously been seen in the ensemble for *Hello Dolly!* and *Oliver!* at Starlight. She was also seen as Eleanor in *The Haunting of Hill House* at Vince Carney Community Theatre. When she isn't on stage, she is a lifestyle producer for the show *Good Day Stateline*. Sydney would like to thank her friends and family for their never ending support!



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CAST & TEAM BIOS CONTINUED**CONNOR DALE JENSEN**

(Workhouse Kid, Les Standby) [He/Him] is so excited to be back on the Starlight stage for his fourth summer! You may have seen him

as the hungry little workhouse boy, Oliver, in *Oliver!* last summer. Connor is 10 and just finished fourth grade at Olson Park Elementary. You can also see him performing alongside his siblings in *Beauty and the Beast* this summer! Enjoy the show and seize the day!

**SYDNEY KETTERMAN**

(Buttons) [She/Her] is thrilled to fulfill her dream of being in the cast of *Newsies!* This is her second appearance at Starlight after being an ensemble

member in their production of *In the Heights*. In her free time, she enjoys dancing at the Main Street Dance Studio, competing in show choir with the South High Street Singers and Lexington Singers, and spending time with her family and friends! She would like to thank her fellow cast, crew, and directors for making this an experience of a lifetime! Shoutout to all her family and friends for their loving support!

**KARLA KIES**

(Hannah, Bowery Beauty, Nun) [She/Her] is excited to be back for her 12th season at Starlight. She was last seen as the blind woman

in *Disaster!*. Karla is thrilled to be the sassy Hannah, an alluring beauty and a nun all in one show as she starts her new chapter performing without her favorite castmates (her boys). She would like to thank everyone involved in this production for all of their hard work & dedication. Much love to Pete, Ben, Eddie, her mom, and all of her friends.

**GUS KOENIG**

(Les) [He/Him] is thrilled to "Carry the Banner" in his first featured Starlight role! Some of his favorite roles include Horton in *Seussical Kids*

and being part of the Thieves' Gang in *Oliver!*. When he's not at rehearsal, Gus loves to ride his bike, research iPhones, eat tostadas, and hang out with his friends. He would like to thank his Starlight and Studio theatre family, and his mom, dad, and sisters for their love and support.

**CHLOE KONIECZKI**

(Dutchie, Spot Conlon) [She/Her] is entering her senior year at NIU pursuing a BFA in Acting. Her most recent performance was

the world premiere of *Booked and Blessed* or *BUST* along with the world premiere of *Rage Play* (Cece) at NIU and *Oliver!* here at Starlight Theatre. Some other notable works include *The Children's Hour* (Rosalie Wells), *The Little Mermaid*, and *How I Became A Pirate* (Jennifer Jacobs). She also has over 30 other plays/ musicals under her belt, along with a few short films and a TV series, *The Deadersons*. She thanks her mom for always supporting her in her many adventures!

**ADAM LENDMAN**

(Chico, Scabber #4, Richmond Newsie) [He/Him] is starting his first season at Starlight, and

he couldn't be more excited. He'd like to thank his directors for this awesome opportunity to perform in his favorite show, and his parents for always supporting him and letting him pursue his passion. Adam hopes that you'll have a great time seeing all the hard work that the cast has put into this show.

**JOSHUA LINDAHL**

(Jack Kelly) [He/Him] is very excited to be able to perform in *Newsies* this season with really fantastic company! He has had so

much fun sharing this awesome experience with all the wonderful cast and crew while also trying to be the best leader he can be for the most amazing Manhattan *Newsies* ever! He hopes the audience really enjoys the show and can see why the world will know us all by the time the show is done tonight.

**CAMBRIA LISITZA**

(Workhouse Kid) [She/Her] is in her second season at Starlight, after her first being in 2022 for *The Little Mermaid*. Cambria's favorite

thing is to spend her summers at Starlight; so she would love to thank Chris Brady, Mary Peterson, and everyone else who helped make this amazing opportunity happen. Cambria also would love to thank her parents for helping her with auditions, and especially transportation because she couldn't get anywhere without it.

CAST & TEAM BIOS CONTINUED**TEZ LOCKHART**

(Oscar Delancy) [He/Him] a.k.a The living legend, T Nasty, has returned for his third season at *Starlight*. Tez would like to

thank his friends and family for the support. He also hopes you take something great from this show.

**BRENDAN MAHER**

(Snyder) [He/Him] is a Circuit Judge and a pretty level-headed, nice guy. That's why his alter ego is thrilled at the opportunity to

play sinister Snyder! And, he gets to do it alongside two of his children, Colleen and Ryan. Brendan is back for his second *Starlight* season, getting bit by the theatre bug and itching to do it again! When he's not on stage or on the bench, he's on his Harley, walking the family dogs, or traveling to see their third child, Caitlin, at the University of Tennessee. He thanks Chris Brady and the directing team for their faith in his amateur talent and growing love for theatre performance.

**COLLEEN MAHER**

(Nun, Ensemble) [She/Her] says her prayers were answered as she adores Brady and is thrilled to be cast in her sixth *Starlight*

season. The recent graduate of Judson University's RISE program knows the angels are on her side, as she's so excited to have started her new job as a paraprofessional at RPS 205's Summerdale Early Childhood Center. She loves it! When she's not working, she's settling into her own place, getting together with friends, and squeezing in an occasional shift at her beloved Beefaroo! She's so excited her dad and brother are with her in the show!

**RYAN MAHER**

(Darcy) [He/Him] feels lucky to have scored the role of Darcy for his fifth season at *Starlight*, working hard during school to

balance *Starlight* rehearsal with volleyball practice, passing from one to the other in the night. This multi-faceted kid will be a junior at Guilford High School, where he also plays on the football team while scoring straight A's. In the off-season, he does club volleyball and enjoys making shakes and working the register at Beefaroo. It's a special

Starlight year as Ryan turns 16 during the second run of the show... a starry night indeed!

**PEARSON MILLER**

(Mush (Newsie)) [He/Him] has been a performer at *Starlight* ever since 2019. You may have seen him in shows such as *A Christmas Story* (Grover Dill) and *Oliver!* (The

Artful Dodger U/S), and a lot more. This will be his third season at *Starlight* Theater, and you can also see him as LeFou in *StarBright's Beauty and the Beast*. He would like to shoutout his family, his friends, and his doggy.

**CARLOS PEREZ**

(Albert, Jack Standby)

[He/Him] is starring in his first season with *Starlight*. He couldn't be more thrilled to have been cast

in this show and is eternally grateful for having been given the opportunity of a lifetime. *Newsies* is one of his favorite shows and he loves being able to perform it with such an inspiring and hard-working cast. He hopes you have as much fun seeing it as he does performing it!

**GARRETT PIERCE**

(Seitz) [He/Him] is very happy to be back in the theatre world, and even more excited to be here for his very first season under the

stars with *Starlight*. He is honored that he not only gets to do *Newsies* for his first season, but *Gyps and Dolls* as well! *Newsies* has always held a special place in his heart and he is very excited to be apart of the *Newsies* world. He wants to give a special thanks to his girlfriend, Jenna Christ, and his friends and family for supporting him and being just as excited for this journey as he is.

**KEVIN POOLE**

(Wiesel) [He/Him] would like

to share a story. Hatching from a large and mysterious rock, a monkey appeared. He soon gathered other

monkeys about him and ruled as king in a waterfall cave. The monkey soon grew bored and challenged Buddha to a children's card game. Having lost, the monkey was trapped under a mountain for an undisclosed amount of time. After being freed under dubious circumstances, the monkey went on a journey with an accident prone holy man, a pig, a fish-thing, and a horse who was secretly a dragon. They then proceeded to get lost.

CAST & TEAM BIOS CONTINUED**ABBY RABON**

(Workhouse Kid) [She/Her] is a junior at Guilford High School. She's previously enjoyed roles in *Shrek! The Musical* and *Footloose* at

Starlight. You may have also seen Abby on stage at *Usual Suspects*, *CTP/YTP*, *Court Street*, *CAPA*, and *Guilford*. She's very excited to be a part of this production of *Newsies*. You can also see her in *Beauty and the Beast* as the narrator this summer. Abby would like to thank all of you for coming out and her family for all of the support along the way.

**TATIANA RAMIREZ**

(Workhouse Kid) [She/Her] is overjoyed to be back at Starlight for her second season! She'd like to thank her family, friends, and

the amazing team at Starlight that encourages her to continue doing what she loves. She'd like to give a super special thanks to her aunt, Marilyn, and her ball and chain at home.

**AMÈLIE ROSAVELASQUEZ**

(Workhouse Kid) [She/Her] is very excited to be in her third season at Starlight! She is very grateful for the friends

she's made at Starlight, and wants to thank her mom for always supporting her!

**BROCK SIMMONS**

(Morris Delancey) [He/Him] is super excited to perform in his first Starlight season, after having previously done multiple

musicals (mainly for Belvidere North High School)! He's looking forward to playing a rather rough-and-tumble role in this rather rough-and-tumble musical; wish him luck!

**HENRY SIMPSON**

(Workhouse Kid) [He/Him] is so excited for his second season of Starlight. He loves the community and family

here at Starlight. Henry's passionate about playing the piano and playing percussion in band. He is fairly new to Theatre, as he was in his first show ever March of 2023. He was instantly hooked! He wants to thank his directors and everyone involved in the show, enjoy!

**HANNAH SLEGER**

(Ms. Jacobi) [She/Her] is elated to be back on the Starlight stage performing and dancing again after a six year

hiatus! Behind the scenes, you can still find her as Starlight's Charge Scenic Artist for the last nine seasons. Besides painting the sets, and performing on the Starlight stage on and off since the mid-1990's, Hannah has also had the awesome opportunity to direct a few productions, and choreograph many. A few include: *Once Upon a Mattress*, 2021 (Choreographer), *The Addams Family*, 2019 (lead director and choreographer), *Starlight Shakes' Taming of the Shrew*, 2018 (lead director), *Peter & The Starcatcher*, 2017 (Assistant Director and Choreographer) *Mary Poppins* and *Young Frankenstein*, 2015 (Choreographer) *Honk!*, *Spamalot*, *Tinypes*, *Sound of Music*, 2014 (Choreographer).

Outside of Starlight, she runs the extra-curricular theatre program at Boylan High School, and can be found behind the bar and drawing chalkboards at Baker Street Burgers. Hannah is grateful for Chris, Mychall, and the production team of *NEWSIES* for all of their hard work, vision, and allowing her the opportunity to perform, again. She sends love to her family, friends, and Chopper, her parrot. And as always, Hannah dedicates her performance to her late mother, Victoria Intravaia Sleger, who first introduced her to Starlight Theatre as a child, and has inspired her in more ways she has room in this bio to express. Cheers!

**ANNABELLA TORRES**

(Workhouse Child) [She/Her] is thrilled to be apart of Starlights production of *Newsies!* She just finished her freshman year at North Boone High School.

This is her third season, fifth show at Starlight, and 19th show overall. Some of her highlights include playing *Flounder* in Starlight Theatre's production of *The Little Mermaid* and playing Wednesday Addams in *The Addams Family* and *Sandy* in *Grease* at North Boone High School. You can also catch her later this summer on the Starlight stage in *Beauty and the Beast*. She hopes you enjoy the show as much as she enjoyed being in it!

**Congratulations,
Starlight Theatre,
on an amazing 2024 season!**

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CAST & TEAM BIOS CONTINUED**WAYNE TURNER**

(Ensemble) [He/Him] is an inspiring character. He has done parts in mens choir, as well as parts in play wrights and fashion shows locally.

Singing and embodying roles is a passion. He has been cast in *Newsies* Ensemble, as well as *The Color Purple* as the Preacher, a role he brings to life naturally. Let's say "Amen" as he preaches to the choir.

**CIERRA WEAVER**

(Picker) [She/Her] is thrilled to be back on the Starlight stage for her fifth season! She would like to thank the directing team for allowing her

to be a part of this beautiful show and for getting the chance to share this story with others. Shout out to her husband and family for thier continuous support throughout the years.

**OLIVIA WILLIAMSON**

(Bowery Beauty, Newsie) [She/Her] is so excited to be here for her first year doing *Newsies*. She has been wanting to do shows and dancing outside of her school, Auburn

High School. Olivia has been in the CAPA program doing dance, choir, and media. Olivia is also part of the ensemble for *The Color Purple*. Olivia is thrilled to learn more about musical theater giving her a chance to experience more so that she is better prepared for this in her future. She would like to give a special thanks to her mom, family, grandfather, dance and media teacher, and the people around her in the show for believing in her and giving her a chance to do what she wants to do.

**ALLISON WILSON**

(Newsie) [She/Her] is very excited to be participating in her seventh Starlight season. Some of her previous credits include *Cinderella* and *Disaster!*. She is also in the Ensemble

of *Legally Blonde* this summer. Allison is a Music Education major at NIU and hopes to teach elementary music. She would like to thank her parents and all her friends for always supporting her in whatever she does. Enjoy the show!

**NATALIE WOODEN**

(Katherine Plummer) [She/Her] is thrilled to spend another summer at Starlight! She is exceptionally grateful to the team for

trusting her with this quirky and free-spirited role. When she isn't on stage, you can find her directing, choreographing, leading a choir, teaching music, and playing with her two lovely golden retrievers. A hug thank you goes out to her friends, family, and, of course, her husband for handling the 12 million things on her schedule.

**MARISA BONZI**

(Assistant Choreographer)

[She/Her] is super excited to be behind-the-scenes for her first time at Starlight this season! She would like to thank the team and

their endless encouragement and kindness. She would like to especially thank Mychall Miller-Cornejo for trusting her to be his assistant for this spectacular show! She is extremely proud of all the hard work each and every member has put into their art and hopes you all enjoy watching!

**CHRISTOPHER D. BRADY**

(Director, Producing Artistic Director) [He/Him]

finds solace in the immersive world of theater, where the

boundaries blur and creativity reigns supreme. While Christopher cherishes his responsibilities, he finds true joy in diving into the sandbox of creativity (a nod to the wisdom of Nick) - a sanctuary from the daily grind. With over 100 acting credits under his belt at Rockford's esteemed Starlight Theatre, Christopher's journey has been a rich tapestry of roles. From his debut as the coachman in *Cinderella* back in 1998, to his decade-long stint as stage manager, he holds a special fondness for those early days. Now, as Director, Christopher endeavors to infuse every production with sharp, strategic, and deeply resonant blocking, aiming to captivate audiences and enrich lives under Starlight's expansive canopy. As an artist, Christopher champions the values of creation, collaboration, empathy, and hard work. He feels privileged to share this ethos with the exceptional talents that grace Starlight, his cherished second home. Amidst his myriad adventures, Christopher holds dear the profound joy of nurturing his vibrant, courageous family. To his beloved daughters Erin, Ophelia, and Imogen, he sends boundless love and gratitude for their presence every day.

CAST & TEAM BIOS CONTINUED**JENNA CHRIST**

(Assistant Stage Manager)
[She/Her] is thrilled to be back under the stars for her sixth Starlight season. In the past,

Jenna has been an ASM for *Once Upon A Mattress*, *Dreamgirls*, and *Cinderella*. She is so happy to be back behind the table this year for *Newsies*, and Stage Managing *The Color Purple*. You may have also seen Jenna onstage this year in *Guys and Dolls*! Starlight has become a home away from home for Jenna and many others, and she would like to give a special thank you to all who continue to make this such a loving place. She would also like to thank her boyfriend, Garrett, best friend, Andrew, and her family for the constant love and support through the long rehearsal process.

**SPENCER DOUGLAS CLARK**

(Intimacy Designer)
[He/Him] is a Chicago based Theatre Artist born and raised in

Rockford! He is thrilled to be back at Starlight to assist with the intimacy this season. Spencer has performed, directed, and choreographed for many theatres in the Chicagoland area. Currently, he directs for the Footlight Youth Theatre program through the community park district of La Grange Park. He is so thankful for Chris, and all of this seasons actors and directors, for their willingness to bring ethical-based trauma informed theatrical intimacy practices to the community.

**MARK MILLER-CORNEJO**

(Music Director,
Conductor - Keyboard 1)
[He/Him] is so grateful and

excited to be back at Starlight for his fourth season! Previous music directing credits at Starlight include *In The Heights*, *Disaster*, *Once Upon a Mattress*, and *The Rocky Horror Show*. Mark graduated from North Central College in 2015, and then he moved to Honduras for a year to volunteer at a home for children called Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos. He has been the choral director at Belvidere High School since 2017. Mark would like to thank Chris for this opportunity; his family and friends for their consistent love and support; his creative genius husband, Mychall for not getting tired of him yet despite spending evening rehearsals

together everyday for the past three months; and our endlessly talented cast, pit orchestra, and creative team for making this entire process such an unforgettable journey!

**MYCHALL MILLER-CORNEJO**

(Choreographer)
[He/Him] is honored to have the opportunities of directing and

doing choreography at his home away from home and dedicates this season to Mark, who he's able to call his husband by the time you all read this bio! He remembers being in the audience of Starlight shows and being in awe when he crewed shows, not realizing the big impact it would have on his love for theatre when he set foot onstage for his first show *The King & I* (Simon of Legree). Starting out as a competitive dancer for Xtreme Dance Center at a young age, to finding passion in musical theatre at North Central College, he has performed and choreographed at several theaters in the Chicagoland area. Previous credits at Starlight include *In The Heights* (Director/Choreographer), *Dreamgirls* (Director), and *Guys & Dolls* (Director). He will always hold Starlight close to his heart, especially since this theatre has been the beginning of passions ignited in so many performers that have come through it. He would not be the artist he is today if it were not for the opportunities and life lessons presented to him by a great friend, Christopher Brady. Mychall sends all his love to his beloved family, friends, Cassie, his Wendy, his Soulmate, Mary, and to the love of his life, his ever loving and supporting husband, Mark! A special and sincere thank you to the audience for supporting his endeavors in the performing arts! "You were given this life because you are strong enough to live it!"

**DALIA GONZALEZ**

(Assistant Stage Manager)

[She/They] is very excited to return for her fourth summer at starlight and very thankful to be

given the chance to be an ASM again this season for not only *Newsies*, but also *Legally Blonde*! Having previously done *Newsies* in 2018 with All-City RPS, Dalia cannot wait for everyone to see all the hard work this team has done to make this show happen.

CAST & TEAM BIOS CONTINUED**BRANDON MECHLER**

(Technical Director)

[He/Him] is happy to be a part of another season! He has been a part of Starlight Theatre since 2007 as a

volunteer for stage crew. He is very excited to have had the opportunity to work with so many talented people this season. He would like to give a shout-out to his beautiful wife for being so supportive of him in this position!

**MARILYN RAMIREZ-MENDOZA**

(Assistant Director)

[She/Her] is so honored and excited to get to shadow and learn

under Chris this season. Ading *Newsies* has been such a challenging and wonderful journey, with such a talented and great cast. Marilyn would like to thank the entire production team for their help and support, the cast for always being so easy to work with, and would like to especially thank her family, primarily her husband and son who are her entire world and who support her in all her joyful endeavors.

**BETHANY NELSON**

(Costume Designer)

[She/Her] is excited to be here for her 7th summer at Starlight!

Bethany's work was most recently seen in *The Rocky Horror Show* and *Cinderella* at Starlight Theatre where she received Lou Award nominations for Best Costume Design. As well as this summer in *Legally Blonde* and *Newsies*. Bethany wouldn't have been able to do everything you see onstage without the support of the costume shop, Chris, Vicki, her friends, family and her boyfriend Parker. She hopes you enjoy all the dancing newsies and the fun costumes.

**SABRINA OLSON**

(Assistant Stage Manager)

[She/Her] is in her first show with Starlight and 13th show total. She has recently developed an interest

in Stage Management and hopes to one day become a Stage Manager or Director. She plans to continue shows with Starlight throughout the years-- whether it's acting, stage managing, or working with crew; she is excited to begin her Starlight adventure with one of her favorite musicals.

**MARY PETERSON**

(Stage Manager)

[She/Her] is in her 10th season at Starlight. She is eternally grateful for the hundreds of

people she has gotten to learn from in her time here at Starlight. She would like to thank the *Newsies* team for their knowledge, hard work, and friendship. She would like to thank her ASMs: Sabrina, Dalia, and Jenna, for their willingness to lead and learn, and for their dedication to the millions of little and big things that keep this show moving. She would like to give a huge shout out to the backstage crews this season, the secret, silent heroes of these shows. Lastly, a big thanks to her friends (SCAM, the Miller-Cornejos, the Rankinsiahs, the Wises, the Bullies) who are her grounding force in the craziness and busyness.

**CAMERON STRANDIN**

(Scenic Designer, Lighting Designer)

[He/Him] is returning to stage

after a nine-year hiatus. He is thrilled to be back for his 10th season here at Starlight Theatre. He started his theatre career here at Starlight at six years old, and (aside from a sort of worldwide hiccup) has been doing theatre non-stop ever since. Cameron graduated from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, where he earned a BFA in Theatre Design and Production Technology. He has worked professionally with the Nebraska Repertory Theatre, Timber Lake Playhouse, Circa '21 Speakeasy, and Mississippi Bend Players. Cameron has also been a guest designer and mentor at Nebraska Wesleyan University and Augustana College. He would like to thank Chris and Brandon for this opportunity, and his parents, sister, and Elizabeth for their love and support.

CAST & TEAM BIOS CONTINUED**GRACE HAHN-VARONA**

(Sound Engineer)

[They/Them] is ecstatic to be back at Starlight Theatre for their 4th show as an assistant stage manager! In 2018, Grace was the sound engineer for Harlem High School's production of *Guys and Dolls*, the first musical they were ever involved with, which made them fall in love with the world of live theater. They started at Starlight as an ASM for

Once Upon a Mattress, and most recently *In the Heights*. Grace has also been in a plethora of run crews including *The Little Mermaid*, *Hello, Dolly!*, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, and *Cinderella*. They are excited to be the sound engineer for *Newsies*. Grace would also like to applaud Mychall for his fearless leadership throughout this whole process, and thank the rest of the team for the many memories created, laughter and tears had, and friendships strengthened. They hope you enjoy this show, and the rest of the season!

PIT ORCHESTRA BIOS

BEAU DEGENNARO (Flute, Piccolo)

[She/Her] is happy to join Starlight theatre for her first season in pit! After being onstage for plenty of past shows, such as Starlight's *Dreamgirls* and plenty of high school shows, she's happy to be back for *Newsies* (one of her dream shows)!! After living in Phoenix for two years to start her Bachelor's in Software Engineering at Arizona State University, she's happy to be part of pit for the summer before heading back for the upcoming school year.

GIGI DEGENNARO (Clarinet)

[She/Her] is so happy to get another opportunity to do pit for Starlight! She did pit last year for *In The Heights* and is so excited to do *Newsies* this year! Pit is always so much fun for her, this is her second show in pit (outside of her high school). She has done quick changes for previous Starlight shows, *Dreamgirls*, *Cinderella*, and this season's *Legally Blonde!* She hopes you enjoy the show.

AIDAN GALBRAITH (Percussion)

[He/him] is extremely excited and honored to be able to preform and participate with Starlight pit. Aidan only had one show with his high school but is wanting to learn and experience more outside of school. Aidan helped with Starlight pit before during the production of *In The Heights*. Inspired, Aidan is more than happy to be apart of Starlight pit once more.

BRAD GARRETT (Guitar)

[He/Him] is excited for his first venture into Starlight being *Newsies*! He has played guitar coming on eight years now, and sparked an interest in musical theater playing in pits for Belvidere High School when he was a student. He thanks Mark for the opportunity he was given, and hopes to be involved in the future of Starlight Theater!

ANTHONY GIRONE (Saxophone)

[He/Him] is very excited to be returning to Starlight for his third season. He graduated from Belvidere High School in 2022, and now studies music and history education at Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa. Previous experience includes Belvidere's production of *Anastasia*, and Starlight's productions of *Disaster!* and *In The Heights*, where he played saxophone in all shows. Special thanks to Mark Miller-Cornejo for inviting him back for another show, and to his family for always supporting his music no matter where it takes him.

DAN JENSEN (Bass Guitar)

[He/Him] is excited to be back in his favorite seat in the theater this year: the bass chair in the pit! He has been playing bass for over two decades, and has been heard (and sometimes seen) at Starlight since 2001. He sends the best of luck to the casts and crews of all five shows, and his love to his wife Becca, and kids, Ian, Mia, and Connor!

PIT BAND BIOS CONTINUED

NADIA JENSEN (Keyboard 2)
[She/Her] is in her third show here at Starlight. She previously played keyboard for *Once Upon A Mattress* and *In the Heights*. She also played in several musicals during her time as a student at Belvidere High School, and participated in the 2022 All-State production of *Cabaret*. She is currently a junior piano performance major at Illinois State University, where she has played for two musicals, including a student directed production of *Fun Home*, for which she led the pit. Nadia is so happy for the opportunity to return to the Starlight community, and she hopes you enjoy the show!

SARA LEIB (Orchestra - Violin)
[She/Her] is a long-time member of the Starlight pit orchestras, the Rock Valley and Community Orchestra, and the Summer Festival Orchestra. She is also a member of the Lake Geneva Symphony Orchestra. She enjoys spending her summers with the very talented members of the Starlight family. *Guys and Dolls* and *Newsies* are the 13th and 14th shows she has played under the stars at Starlight Theatre. She thanks you for supporting the performing arts and hopes you enjoy the shows as much as they enjoy performing them for you!

LOGAN NALLEY
(Trombone, Bass Trombone) [He/Him] just finished his junior year at Auburn High School, where he participates in the concert and jazz bands there. Outside of school, Logan plays with the Rock Valley Community Concert and Jazz Bands, and was a member of the 2023-24 Illinois All-State Honors Jazz Ensemble. This is Logan's second show in the pit at Starlight, and he would like to thank God for the opportunity to make music.

RICARDO QUIÑONEZ (Trombone)
[He/Him] is a band director at Belvidere Central Middle School, and plays trombone in the pit. He's excited to be a part of *Newsies* and hopes you enjoy watching the show!

VIOLET SJOSTROM (Cellist)
[She/Her] just finished her sophomore year at Rockford Lutheran. She has played cello for five years, and also enjoys playing the harp. She enjoys musical theater, and recently made her acting debut in her school's production of *Much Ado About Nothing*. This is Violet's first time playing in a pit orchestra. When not playing music, she enjoys reading, writing, and playing tennis. Violet would like to thank her parents and her music teachers for pushing her to take this opportunity. She hopes you enjoy the show!

MYLES WALKER (Drum Set)
[He/Him] is joining us for his second show with Starlight and his fourth time in a musical pit in general. Myles graduated from Belvidere High School in 2023, where he participated in *Anastasia* and *Wedding Singer*. His first show here at Starlight was last season when he played Percussion for *In the Heights*. Myles is excited and hopes you are too. It's Time to Seize the day!

LOGAN WOODEN (Trumpet)
[He/Him] is the Director of Bands at Rockford Christian, and regularly subs with the Rockford Symphony Orchestra. In addition to his teaching at RCS, Logan owns and operates Rockford Trumpet Studio. His wife, Natalies, is a cast member in both *Newsies* and *Legally Blonde*. Enjoy the show!



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Rick Jenks

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Christopher D. Brady

Technical Director

Brandon Mechler

Scenic Designers

Andrea Bechert

Legally Blonde

Carmen Turner

Guys and Dolls

The Color Purple

Cameron Strandin

Newsies

Brandon Mechler

StarBright's Beauty and the Beast

Master Carpenter

Carmen Turner

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Legally Blonde

Mychall Miller-Cornejo

Guys and Dolls

Marcus Tobias

The Color Purple

Christopher D. Brady

Newsies

Jennifer Thompson

StarBright's Beauty and the Beast

Choreographers

Jenny Vause

Legally Blonde

Elle Laesch

Guys and Dolls

Brooke Johnson

The Color Purple

Mychall Miller-Cornejo

Newsies

Ashley Hogan

StarBright's Beauty and the Beast

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Cassandra Johnson-McGirk

Legally Blonde

Steve Wolfgram

Guys and Dolls

Christopher Joyner

The Color Purple

Mark Miller-Cornejo

Newsies

Jodi Beach & Jim McDowell

StarBright's Beauty and the Beast

Stage Managers

Christine Garner

Legally Blonde & StarBright's Beauty and the Beast

Zachary Marquardt

Guys and Dolls

Jenna Christ

The Color Purple

Mary Peterson

Newsies

Costume Designers

Bethany Nelson

Legally Blonde & Newsies

Vicki Benson

Guys & Dolls & The Color Purple

Daniel'e Taylor Apperson

StarBright's Beauty and the Beast

Costume Shop Patternner

Bethany Nelson

Costume Shop Technicians

Dori Marsh

Jonathan Lane

Helaina Nimmo

Taylor-Jade Laig-Duran

Blake Atterbury

Season Charge Artist

Hannah Sleger

Set & Prop Construction Student Workers

Jehona Bexheti

Isabella Brosnan

Younes El Hilali

Guillermo Hernandez

Kenneth Kaung Htut Linn

Miles Lang

Ethan Loax

Bahle Made

Calvin Kaung Myat Sint

Quinn McCoy

Lee Scharr

Lamarion Taylor

Sinclair Casarotto

Season Show Artwork

Aaron Johnson (Aaron Branding)

In-house Graphic Designer & Social Media Manager

Emma Garner

Box Office Assistants

Rachel Campbell

Emma Garner

Charlie Horner

Eleanor Waldorf

Kaitlyn Tesdorff

Prop Master

Ethan Loax

PRODUCTION STAFF CONTINUED

Sound Engineers

Annabelle Gawaran

Legally Blonde

Angely Bautista

Guys and Dolls

Aaron Hill

The Color Purple

Grace Hahn-Varona

Newsies

Gabriel Inniss

StarBright's Beauty and the Beast

Lighting Designers

Bryan Rivera

Dylan Freund & Riley Freeman

- Assistant Lighting Design

Legally Blonde & Guys & Dolls

Cameron Strandin

The Color Purple & Newsies

Gabrielle Tift

StarBright's Beauty and the Beast

VOLUNTEERS

Assistant to the Producing Artistic Director & Co-Box Office Manager

Catherine I. Martin

Assistant Directors

Imogen Brady - Shadow Assistant

Legally Blonde

Sophia Fanara

Guys & Dolls

Marilyn Ramirez-Mendoza

Newsies

Erin Brady

StarBright's Beauty and the Beast

Assistant Choreographers

Bethany Nelson

Legally Blonde

Nailah Brooks

Guys & Dolls

Marisa Bonzi

Newsies

Brooke Harp

StarBright's Beauty and the Beast

Assistant Stage Managers

Dalia Gonzalez; Jazlyn Oberg; Sabine Shen

Legally Blonde

Grace Hahn-Varona; Jess Sorg-Spencer

Guys & Dolls

Madie Barnas; Chloe Konieczki; Kaitlyn Tesdorff

The Color Purple

Jenna Christ; Dalia Gonzalez; Sabrina Olson

Newsies

Katie Garner; Ethan Loax; Becca Jensen

StarBright's Beauty and the Beast

Set & Prop Construction

Timothy Martin

Bernie Sehr

Lenijah Smith

Matt White

Mattsen Heller

Lamarion Taylor

Ryan Pickerill

Arthur Vinke

Costume Shop Construction

Barb Coffman

Connie Kramer

Stacey Nelson

Annika Wyant

Becky Wyant

Box Office

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Catherine I. Martin

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call the box office at (815) 921-2160 and
have them add you to the list.

DAY CREW & STAFF BIOS

BLAKE ATTERBURY

(Costume Shop Construction)

[She/Her] is in her first year at Starlight Theater working in the costume shop. She has an Associate in Science from Rock Valley College and a B.A. in Psychology from Northern Illinois University. She is currently taking film classes at Rock Valley College in order to learn more about filmmaking. She aspires to direct and write for both film and theater.

VICTORIA BENSON

(Costume Shop Supervisor)

[She/Her] has been costuming for Starlight for 10 years. This year, she has been honored to take on the role of designer for *Color Purple* and *Guys and Dolls*. This new role helps her create through different eyes since she must see through the designer lens, as well as, the construction stage. Over the years, we could not have accomplished what we have without our loyal and talented student workers, staff, and countless hours of community volunteers. She would like to salute all of them for their dedication and talent to make sure each show is costumed at the highest level.

JEHONA BEXHETI (Paint Crew)

[She/Her] is so happy to be back painting with her favorite team after graduating last season, and leaving for a few months. She missed everyone so much and couldn't stay away from the chaos, stinky paint, and shenanigans that make being a part of Starlight's daycrew the best job ever. She wants to give a special shoutout to her painter in crime, Maddi, who couldn't join her this season, but will always be her favorite bestie to work with. She hopes you all enjoy the shows as well as the sets!

CHRISTOPHER D. BRADY

(Producing Artistic Director)

[He/Him] emphatically embraces his roles as both family man and Producing Artistic Director. With fond memories of his early performances in "Cinderella" and "Western Star," he's grateful to this special place for the special memories it brings to this community. His theatrical heart belongs here. Chris aims to bring life and excitement to the stage for every show, and he aims to do that with like-minded people from

the community that reflect the community. He extends heartfelt thanks to the staff, volunteers, and artists who make Starlight possible, and to the audience communing with us this season! Christopher's deepest gratitude goes to his beloved family—Erin, Ophelia, and Imogen—for sharing in the magic of Starlight with him.

BELLA BROSNAN (Day Crew)

[She/Her] is very excited to be part of day crew for her second season at Starlight! She is very happy to be painting and learning more about theatre! She hopes you have a great season!

BARB COFFMAN

(Costume Shop Construction)

[She/Her] is happy to be back for her seventh season, bringing needle and thread to costumes in all their glory. She loves working in her garden and other volunteer activities. She'd like to thank her daughter for her support.

KIM DICKINSON

(Box-Office Volunteer) [She/Her] enjoys volunteering in the Box Office, as well as doing any additional jobs that come up. Her husband, Dale, thanks Chris and Cathy for keeping her busy.

TAYLOR-JADE LAIG-DURAN

(Student Worker-Costume Shop)

[She/Her] is in her second year at RVC and her first year in the Costume Shop. She enjoys working with everyone here and likes helping to make all the costumes for the Theatre Department. The environment is nice and welcoming, and she has used many of the skills she has learned at Starlight in her personal life. She highly suggests for people to get involved here and thanks everyone!

EMMA GARNER

(Box Office Assistant/ Graphic Designer)

[She/Her] is extremely grateful she is able to hone her skills as a graphic designer while being able to work for the theatre she loves. She hopes you enjoy the season and like her social media posts as much as she liked making them!

GUILLERMO HERNANDEZ

(Day Crew) [He/They] is excited to be back in the shop after a break last summer.

DAY CREW & STAFF BIOS CONTINUED

YOUNES EL HILALI

(Day Crew) [He/Him] is an international student from Morocco. He is so happy to join the Starlight Theatre crew. He loves working with all the crew members. He is currently working to receive his Associate of Science at Rock Valley College, and planning to transfer to Northern Illinois University to get a Bachelor degree in Computer Science. He is ecstatic to contribute to the season and hopes you enjoy the show!

CHARLIE HORNER

(Box-Office Assistant) [They/Them] is excited to be working at the box office this season! Aside from this being their first season on stage, this is also their first season behind the scenes. Currently, Charlie is a student at Rock Valley College, pursuing forensic science. They hope you enjoy the show!!

JONATHAN LANE

(Costume Shop Assistant) [They/Them] is in their seventh season at Starlight. They love and appreciate being able to work in such a creative environment and are excited to showcase all of the costume pieces they've been working on. They send big thanks to Vicki Benson, for being such a positive role model and amazing friend!

MILES LANG (Day Crew) [He/Him] is in his second year at Starlight Theatre. Since starting to now, he has learned a lot of new things building the sets; anything from how the lights system, sound system, to rigging on walls that fly in or out of the shows. Miles is super excited for this season and hopes you enjoy it to the fullest!

KENNETH KAUNG HTUT LINN

(Set Construction) [He/Him] is in his second season at starlight working as a Day Crew member. He finds it very exciting to see the sceneries comes alive and more so, to be able to participate in set preparation for new shows. He's glad to be part of the team for another season.

ETHAN LOAX

(Prop Master/Day Crew) [They/He] is a theatre loving technician that's been working with the arts ever since sixth grade. His love for theatre hasn't dwindled in all these years, and it shows as they're now assisting as running crew in every show this season! His experience has been wonderful thus far and he hopes that you have a wonderful time living through this insane season!

BAHLE MADE (Day Crew) [He/Him] is a second-year, international RVC student, and also a member of the RVC men's soccer team. He is ecstatic to be putting on a show again and hopes you enjoy the show!

DORI MARSH (Seamstress) [She/Her] has been working with Starlight for seven years, in both theatrical makeup and costumes. She is incredibly grateful for all the memories she has made, and can't wait to start her new chapter. Dori is moving this summer to attend UWRF to get her degree in Ceramics. She will miss the Starlight family and wishes everyone the best! <3

CATHERENE I. MARTIN

(Co-Box Office Manager, Volunteer Coordinator) has been working in the box office since 2017. First appearing on stage in 1993, Catherine has spent most summers "playing" at Starlight. They send mad hugs and kisses to #Myfavoritehusband, Tim, who has been wielding a hammer and nails in the set department for many years.

TIM MARTIN

(Set and Prop Construction) has been measuring, cutting, sawing, and nailing at Starlight for the past eight years. As a retired electrical engineer, he enjoys traveling with his beautiful wife, Catherine (Who, by the way, wrote his bio!), and reading all of the US presidential biographies in order.

DAY CREW & STAFF BIOS CONTINUED

QUINN MCCOY (Day Crew)

[He/Him] is excited to be in his first show at Starlight. Quinn joined the crew in September of 2023, and has helped construct the sets you see before your eyes. He is currently taking Video and Audio Production classes and is pursuing the Media Production Specialist Certificate through the Mass Communication Department at RVC. He hopes you enjoy the show!!

BRANDON MECHLER

(Technical Director) [He/Him] is happy to be a part of another season! He has been a part of Starlight Theatre since 2007 as a volunteer for stage crew. He is very excited to have had the opportunity to work with so many talented people this season. He would like to give a shout-out to his beautiful wife for being so supportive of him in this position! Enjoy the show!

BETHANY NELSON

(Costume Shop Patternmaker) [She/Her] is excited to be here for her 7th summer in the costume shop! Bethany's work was most recently seen in *The Rocky Horror Show* and *Cinderella* at Starlight Theatre. She loves working in the costume shop among so many wonderful workers, volunteers and hard working people. She wouldn't have been able to work and design this summer without the support of Chris, Vicki, family, friends and her boyfriend, Parker. She hopes you love all the costumes on stage this summer and all of her hard work behind the scenes.

HELAINA NIMMO

(Costume Shop Construction) [She/Her] is in her third summer working at starlight. Currently, she's working towards a Costume Design Degree at Rockford University. She had so much fun working on all the shows this summer and hopes you enjoy them!

BERNIE SEHR

(Set Construction Volunteer) [He/Him] is upset that he hasn't been able to help as much this year, from circumstances beyond his control. However, he has enjoyed working with Brandon, Carmen, and the crew. Next year, he hopes he will have a little more time available; so to all the shows, "Break a Leg".

JENNIFER SIMMS

(Co-Box Office Manager) [She/Her] is delighted to be a part of Starlight from a different side of the theatre this year. Last year, she was in *Oliver!*, and this year, she is helping sell tickets! She is so grateful to Cathy, her co-partner in crime, and to her family (Andrew, Hazel, Eliza, Christopher, Avery, and GARNERS et al.) for all of their love and support through this next chapter. Please enjoy the show!

CALVIN KAUNG MYAT SINT

(Day Crew) [He/Him] is so excited to be seeing new shows during the summer again, and can't wait to see the performance of all the hardworking cast members.

LEE SCHARR

(Student Worker-Day Crew) [Any] (real name Levi) loves to sweep the stage and clean the workshop, which is why he always comes in the afternoons before they shut down. He loves to sweep even more than building and painting. Sweeping is actually so awesome. He appreciates working here for other reasons, as well, including the friendly atmosphere and creative and communal workspace.

HANNAH SLEGER

(Charge Scenic Artist) [She/Her] is in her eighth (full) season as Starlight's Charge Scenic Artist. Outside of Starlight, she has painted sets for a large variety of places, including Artists' Ensemble and the former Usual Suspects. Some of her other visual, artistic endeavors include doing the chalkboard art at Baker Street Burgers, recently showing her personal works for the Wages of Sin art exhibition at 317 Art Collaborative, for 2023 Fall Art Scene at Future Memory Media, and for the art show with Moon Dog's Theatre, RED last summer. Hannah wants to thank Brandon and Carmen for their wonderful hardwork and vision, as well as Jehona, Bella, Lee, and everyone else whose amazing hands have helped her paint sets this season. Most importantly, she sends love to her dad, Jonathon Sleger, for putting a paint brush in her hand as a child, starting her on her path as a scenic artist.

DAY CREW & STAFF BIOS CONTINUED

CARMEN TURNER

(Master Carpenter/Scenic Designer) [She/Her] is thrilled to return as a Scenic Designer for her fourth Starlight season. She loves the opportunity for creative expression and uses her experience as a visual artist to shape settings and transform common materials. She would like to thank her husband and children for their unwavering support and all of the hard working individuals who put their time and energy into making this season the success that it is.

BECKY WYANT

(Costume Shop) [She/Her] is in her third season of sewing in Vickie Benson's magic kingdom. She likes using skills that her mother taught her in the 1950s. She is thoroughly dazzled by how patiently the young designers and student workers teach her new things. They are the BEST!!

ANNIKA WYANT

(Costume Shop Volunteer) [She/Her] is glad to be part of the costume shop family for her third year. She thanks Vickie and everyone involved; there is never a dull moment in this beehive of creativity. She attends Bradley University in the fall!



ABOUT LEOLA ARNOLD

Leola Arnold, long-time music teacher and cultural sponsor in our community, died in 1968 leaving her estate to Rock Valley College under the supervision of the Trust Officers of the Illinois National Bank. In her will she stipulated that the college shall continue to offer to the community musical activities involving as large a segment of the community as possible.

The Leola Arnold Memorial School of Music was established to offer classes and private instruction to students of all ages in the arts. Dance, music, and art classes are offered for students from the age of four years through adulthood. In addition, activities are presented that involved the community. The "Starlight Musicals" are an example of this type of activity.

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Donations received between June 1, 2023 – April 30, 2024

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Can be checked out from the box office for use during performances. These are available on a first-come, first-served basis, and are available one hour prior to the show.

REFRESHMENTS

Are available in the concession stands on both sides of the upper seating section and on the west side of the theatre on the lower level. Concessions can be purchased before the performance and during intermission.

RESTROOMS

Can be found on both sides of the upper seating section - women's on the west side, men's on the east side - and on the west side of the lower level (both).

WHEELCHAIR SEATING

Exists in several seating areas of the theatre. Please notify the Box Office in advance of the performance so we may better serve you.

RECORDING AND TAKING PHOTOS

Are NOT permitted during the production. Use of such devices is a violation of copyright law. Patrons found to be recording will be asked to delete their captures or be escorted from the theatre.

SMOKING

Is not permitted on the Rock Valley College campus, except in your own vehicle.

BOX OFFICE INFO

HOURS 10am-4pm – Tuesday-Friday and one hour before each performance.

CONTACT

For reservations, call (815) 921-2160

Write: Box Office, Rock Valley College,
3301 N. Mulford Road,
Rockford, IL 61114

Fax to: (815) 921-2169

Online: RVCStarlight.com

EXCHANGES

Tickets may be exchanged for a different time of the same performance. Tickets must be physically returned to the Box Office a minimum of 24 hours before the original performance time.

TICKETS

All seats are reserved.

Individual ticket prices are:

Adults – \$28

Seniors/Teachers/Military/

RVC Employees – \$26

Students – \$17

Children – \$12

GROUP RATES

Groups of 20 or more can receive a discount.
Contact the Box Office for more information.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Our success at Starlight Theatre depends heavily on the time our volunteers are willing to commit to the support of our program. We understand how the power of a performance goes beyond the storytelling on stage, and is made greater by the experience you have while you are here. Are you greeted like part of the family? Is the theatre clean and beautiful? Are concessions available with at reasonable prices? We rely on our volunteers, our family, to perform many of these tasks, and they do a tremendous job! Their only reward is a chance to see part of the play, an occasional cup of coffee, an infrequent pat on the back, and the intrinsic reward of being part of a family that has enriched the lives of others. If an opportunity to be a part of our family of volunteers interest you, here are some of the positions and what is involved therein.

HOUSE MANAGERS are responsible for directing the crew of ushers (during Starlight season, they recruit the crew of 12 ushers for the show). They count the ticket stubs and report the count for each performance. They oversee and participate in the post-show cleanup They report any problems to our staff. House Managers arrive an hour before the show, and are usually free to go about twenty minutes after the show ends..

USHERS are responsible for taking tickets from the patrons, distributing programs, helping patrons find their seats, and helping pick up after the performance. Ushers arrive about an hour before the show, and are free to go about twenty minutes after the show.

CONCESSIONAIRES are responsible for preparing the concession stands and food items before the show, selling the food before the show and during intermission, and cleaning the stands after intermission. Concessionaires arrive one or two hours before the show, and are free to leave about twenty minutes after intermission.

BACKSTAGE CREW are responsible for moving set pieces on and off the stage, operating spotlights, and/or flying set pieces in and out

CARPENTERS assist the set construction process during daytime hours and work closely with the Scenic Designer and Technical Director.

BOX OFFICE PERSONNEL are responsible for selling tickets during daytime hours or hours of show. Box office personnel will be trained throughout the year

If you are interested in volunteering,
please visit our Facebook page and sign up via the link
OR
call the box office at (815) 921-2160 and
have them add you to the list.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

RVC President Dr. Howard Spearman

Rick Jenks

RVC Board of Trustees

Every Starlight Theatre family member supporting us throughout the summer

The Amazingly Hard-Working staff here at Starlight Theatre

The Amazingly Hard-Working volunteers out here at Starlight Theatre

The diligently hard-working staff here at RVC

RVC Foundation

Jennifer, Chelsea, George and everyone in the RVC Marketing Department for making this program & our season happen

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All of our volunteers here at the show around us all!

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*Thank you for your continued
patronage and support!*



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We are honored to be associated with Starlight Theatre, which has been a cultural cornerstone of our community for over six decades. From classic musicals to contemporary plays, the theatre has provided countless hours of entertainment and enlightenment to generations of audiences.

As you enjoy tonight's performance, we hope that you will be transported to another world, inspired by the talent and creativity of the actors, musicians, and production crew. We also invite you to learn more about Savant and our commitment to helping individuals, families, non-profits, and companies preserve their hard-earned wealth and pursue steady, wise growth. That's wise counsel, by your side.

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