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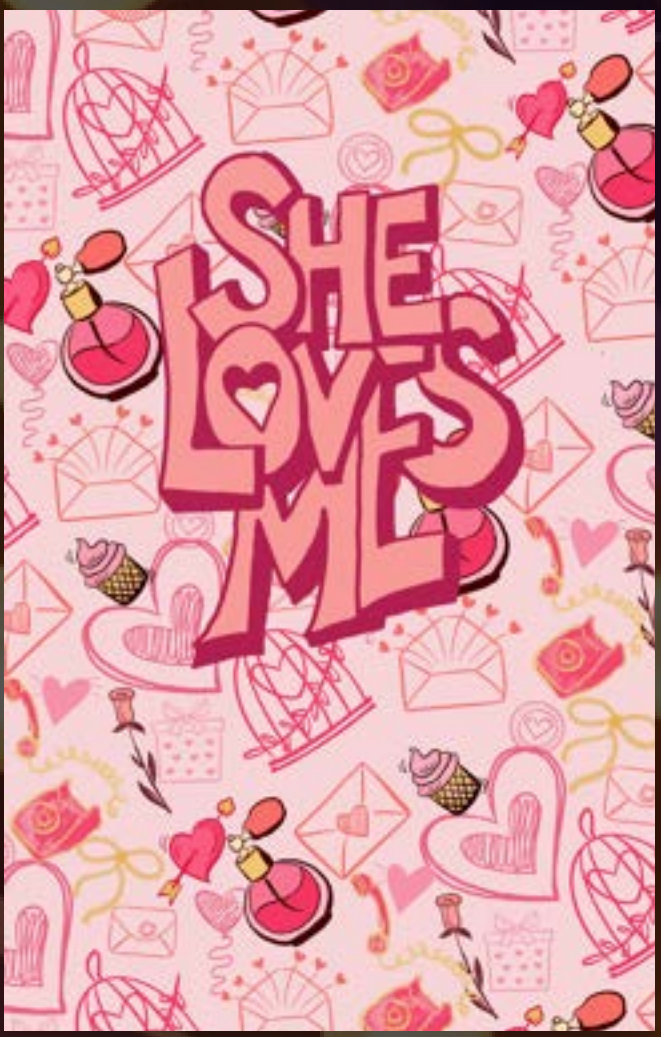
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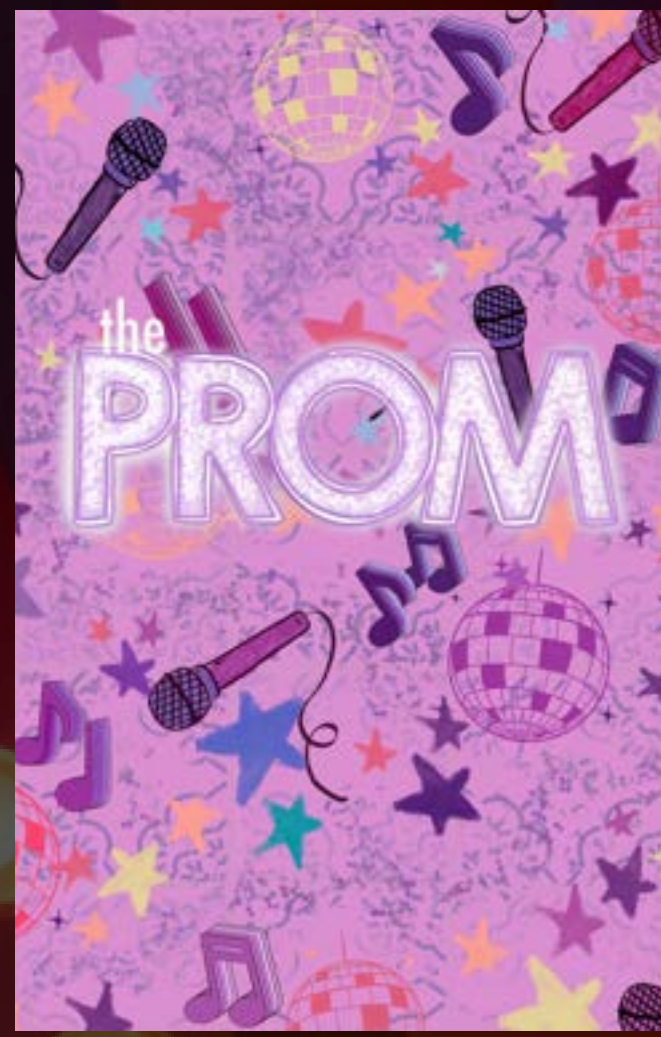
Main Stage 2025



Feb. 7 - Mar. 1



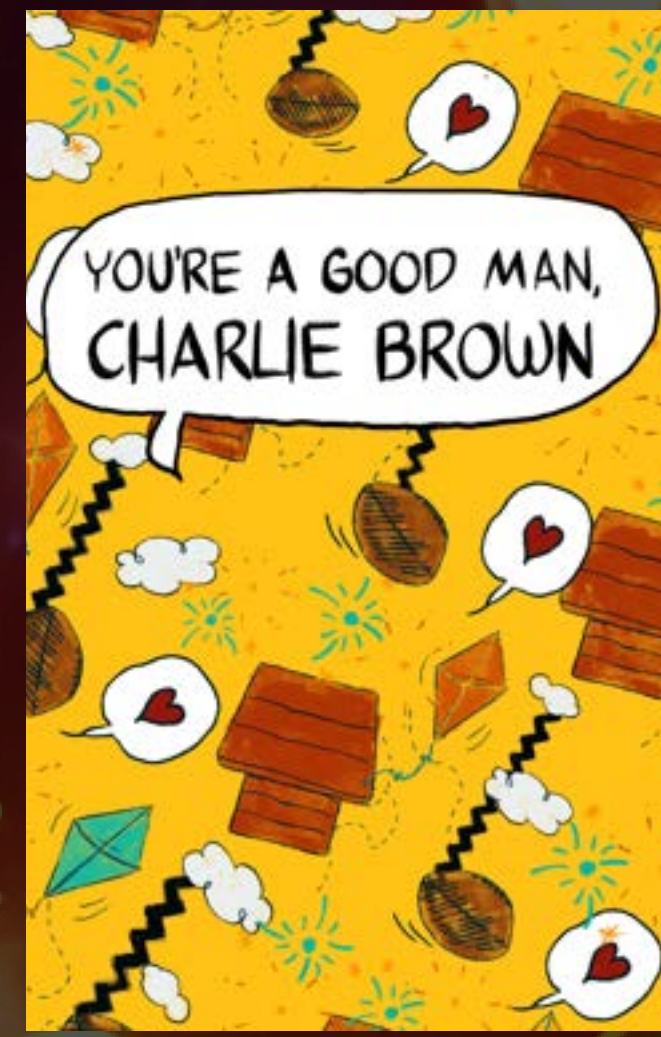
April 4 - 26



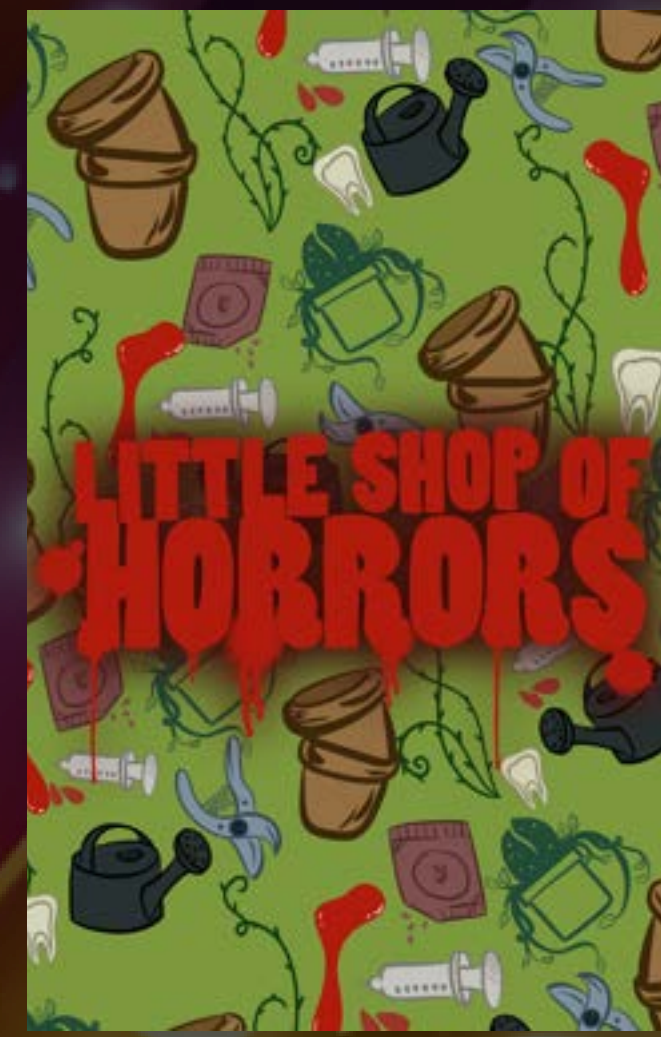
June 20 - July 12



Aug. 8-30



Sep. 19-Oct. 4



Oct. 24 - Nov. 15

Children's Theatre's Creator's Stage



Feb. 28 - Mar. 15



June 6 - 21



Aug. 29 - Sep. 13



Nov. 14 - Dec. 6



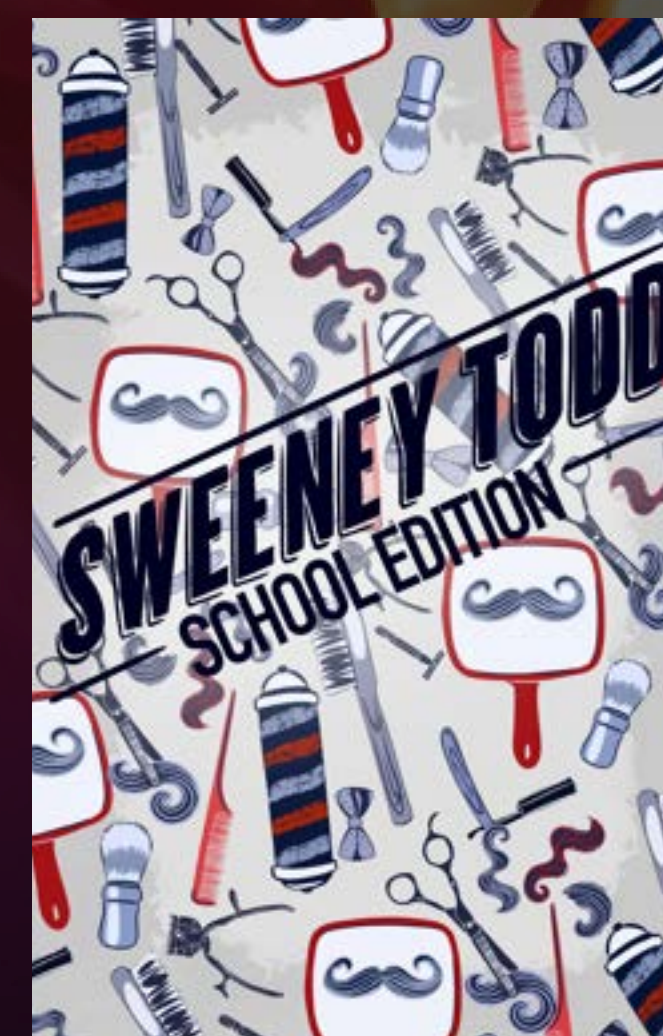
Winter 2025



Winter 2025



Winter 2025



Winter 2025



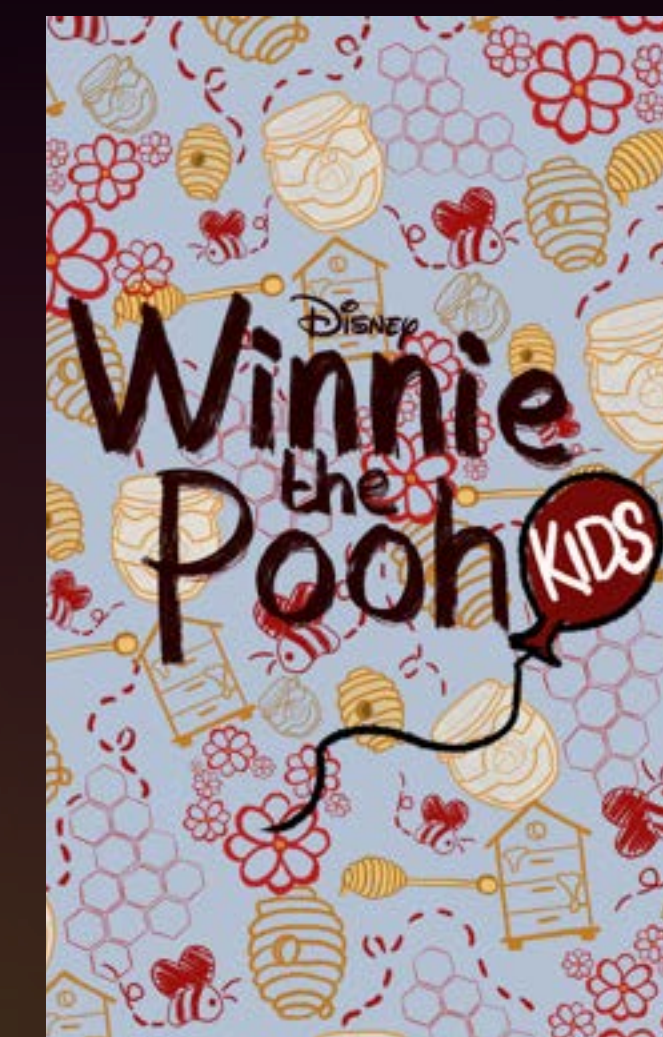
Summer 2025



Fall 2025



Fall 2025



Fall 2025



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Dates Subject to change without notice.

Meet the Cast



SARAH YOUNG
FEMALE 1



CHRISTY ROLFE
FEMALE 2



WILLIAM OLIVER
MALE 1



AJ NEUSCHWANDER
MALE 2

almost,
MAINE



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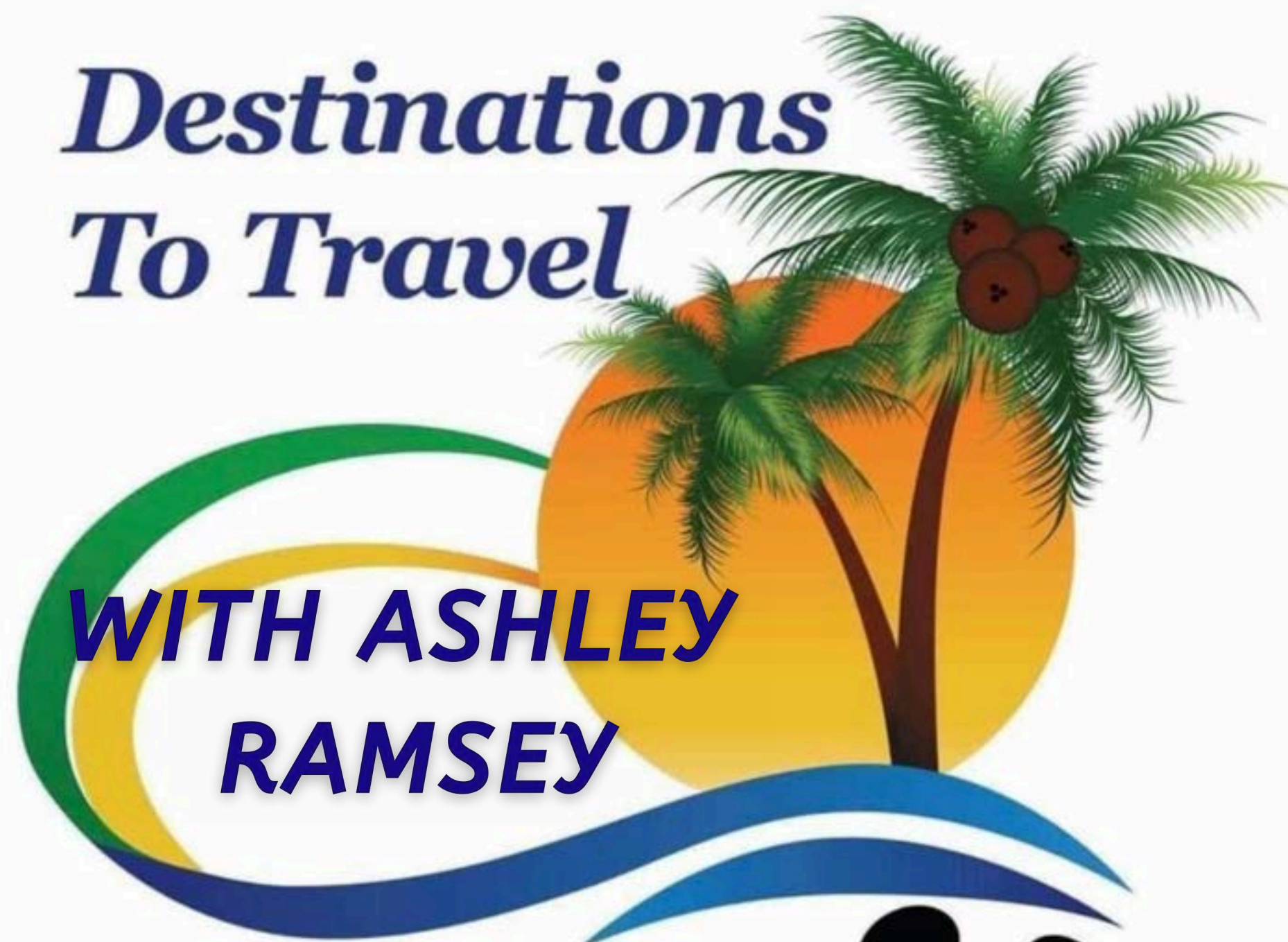


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ON PITCH PERFORMING ARTS PRESENTS:

almost, MAINE

Written By:

John Cariani

Direction

Sterling Shane Allen

Stage Manager

Sarah Wheelwright

Light Design

Dan Tate

Costume Design

Timery Reis

Props Design

Amy Shaffer

Intimacy Director

Anna Graff Rice

Set Design

Brandon Stauffer

Sound Design

Kennedy Miller

Set Paint/build

Heather Poulsen

Run Crew

*Sarah Robinson, Amanda Larsen,
Sophie Tobey, Megan Schultz,
Cassie Hurt-McLarty*

OPPA! STAFF

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Intimacy Director

Anna Graff-Rice

Almost, Maine Is presented through special arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of
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SCENES

ACT 1

Prologue

Scene 1: Her Heart

Scene 2: Sad and Glad

Scene 3: This Hurts

Scene 4: Getting it Back

INTERMISSION

ACT 2

Interlogue

Scene 5: They Fell

Scene 6: Where it Went

Scene 7: Story of Hope

Scene 8: Seeing the Thing

Epilogue

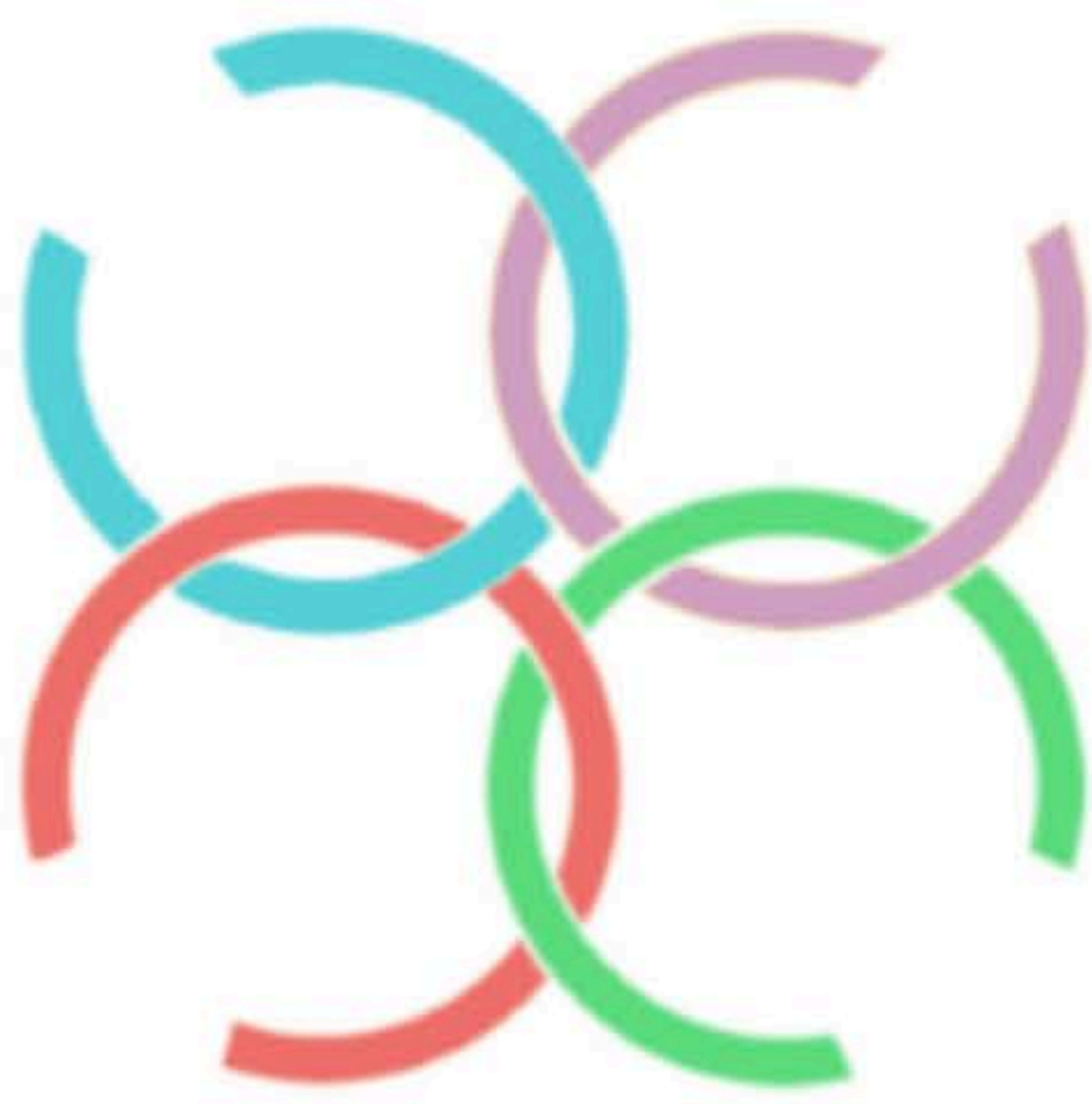
DIRECTOR'S NOTE:

'Almost, Maine' is a modern day fairy tale taking place in Northern Maine. While the "magical" moments within the play are very important they are not the focal point. It's the relationships of the people within this small town. A lot of theatrical and movies will focus on one aspect of relationships rather than being able to show the positive and negative aspects (and everything in between) and treating them equally as important. Within our rehearsals we have found moments with these relationships that each actor has related to heavily. I hope you are able to find those throughout the show as well.

Please enjoy your journey to the quaint town of Almost.

"Almost, Maine is for romantics—not sentimentalists" -John Cariani

-Sterling Shane Allen



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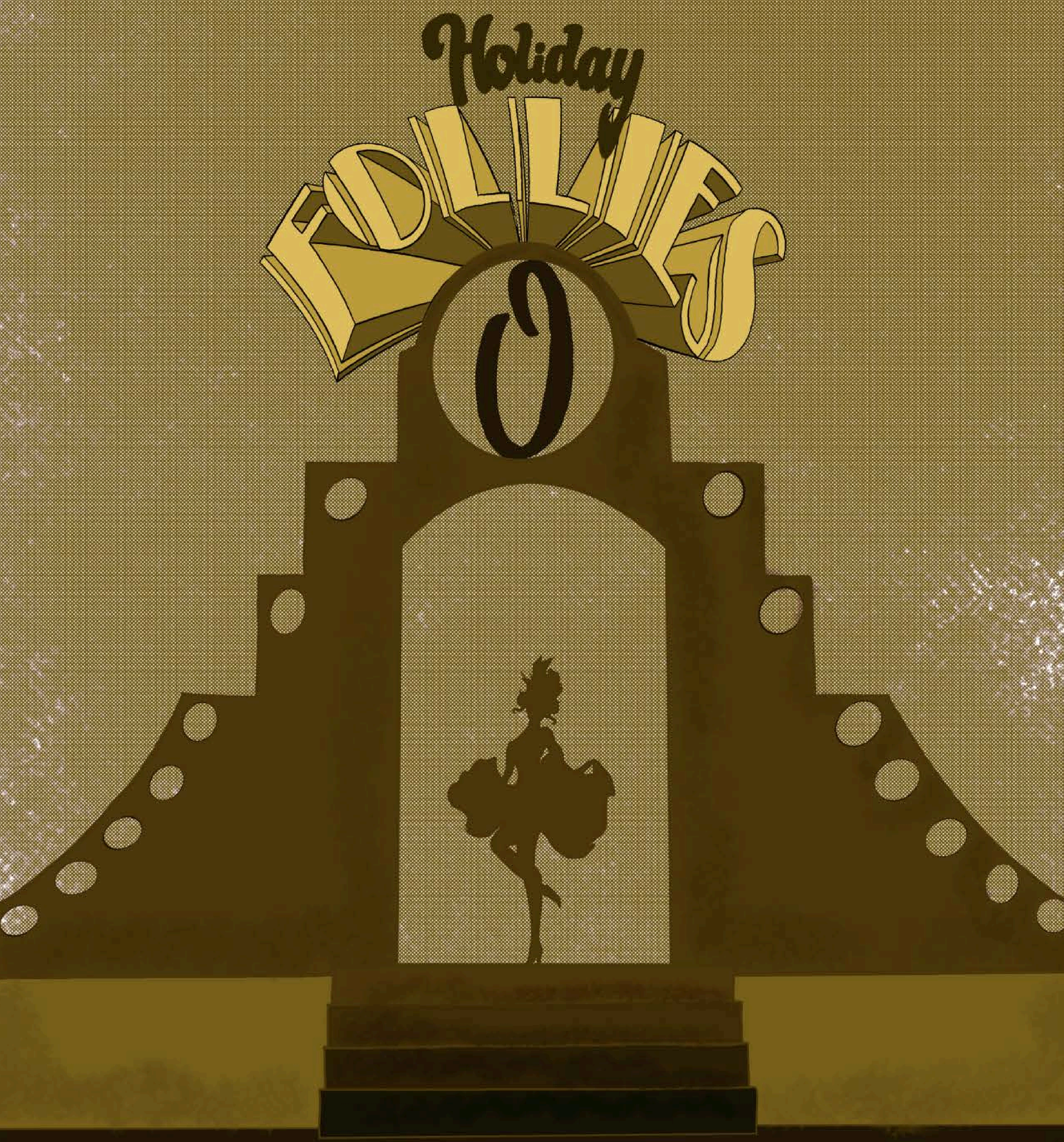
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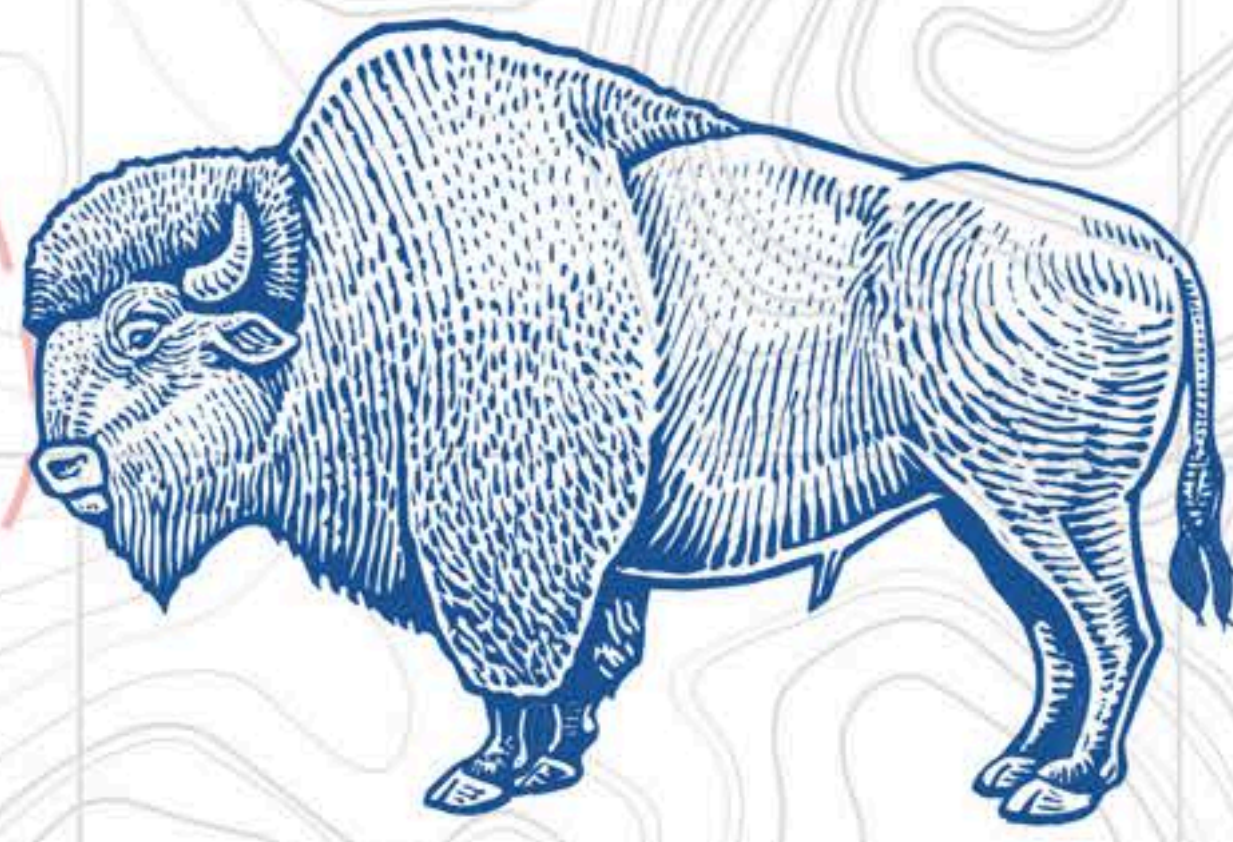


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Teresa Howell

Jeff Duncan

SUPPORTER:

Anne Jones

Ashley Ramsey

Terry Davis

Caitlin Olsen

Chelsea Morris

Matt Higgins

Natalee Stuart

Sommer Ellsworth

Tyler Neil

Anonymous

ADMIRER:

Chris & Jen Morgan

ENTHUSIAST:

Rachel Helwig

Dan Tate

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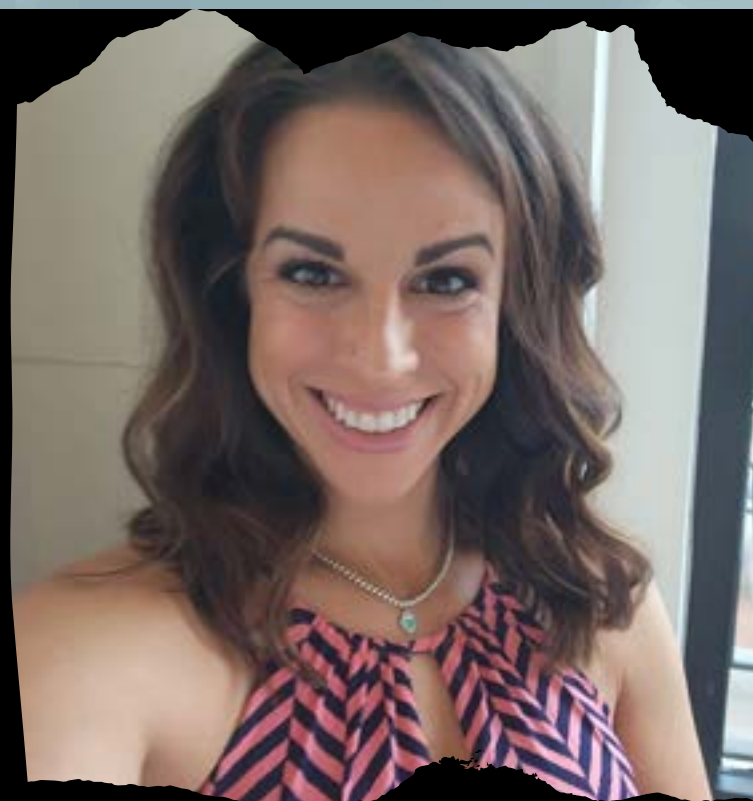
CAST AND CREW

*A.J. Neuschwander
(Male 2)*



A.J. Neuschwander (M2) is making his OPPA debut in *Almost, Maine*. Following his most recent performance in *Seminar* and behind the curtain work as assistant fight director for the Utah Opera's *Rigoletto*, fight director for *Romeo & Juliet*, and working with Cooper Home Entertainment on *Bound in Blood*, he's stoked to be returning to the stage. Alongside his acting work, he is also a fight director and teacher of stage combat with Dueling Arts International. He is so incredibly grateful for everyone who's supported and guided him through his acting career, with special thanks to his phenomenal partner, Elle, who's been the most profound inspiration he could have ever asked for.

*Christy Rolfe
(Female 2)*



Other than *Wait Until Dark*, *Almost Maine* made her fall in love with straight plays and helped herself seeing a future as a stage actress. Christy find this play absolutely beautiful with the focus of love being the main theme throughout the play and all the wonderful and awful things that can happen with love. As always she would like to thank her family and friends for always supporting her in her creative endeavors, and her best friend and new husband Marc, for helping her always trying to be the best she can be for herself and those around her. She would also like to dedicate this play to her late sister Amber.

*Sarah Young
(Female 1)*



Sarah is returning to her theatre roots and finally performing in a show again for the first time in four years! From the time she was a child watching *The Tempest* at the Utah Shakespeare Festival, she has had a deep love for the performing arts and has found joy and fulfillment in both watching theatre and performing it herself. She is a big fan of 90s teen angst tv, autumn, all things books, Taylor Swift, and travel - and she can't wait to bring this gorgeous show to life!

*William Oliver
(Male 1)*



This is one of Will's favorite plays and he's very excited to be in a production of it. He loves it so much because it's "so sweet and cheesy it'll give you several cavities and diabetes" He hopes you enjoy it too <3

*Anna Graff-Rice
(Intimacy Director)*



Anna has worked as an intimacy professional for stage and film for the past two years. She is passionate about consent-forward practices that enable all performers and crew to engage in storytelling in a safe, empowering, and inclusive manner. When not working on a theater project, you can find her making cosplays with her son, and dabbling in film and sound with her husband, Joshua.

*Sarah Wheelwright
(Stage Manager)*



Sarah is excited to be working behind the scenes again at OPPA. Sarah was recently scene on stage in *Mary Poppins* as the Doll. Other credits include *Jekyll & Hyde*, *Cinderella*, and *Anything Goes*. She loves OPPA because of all the learning experiences she has had.

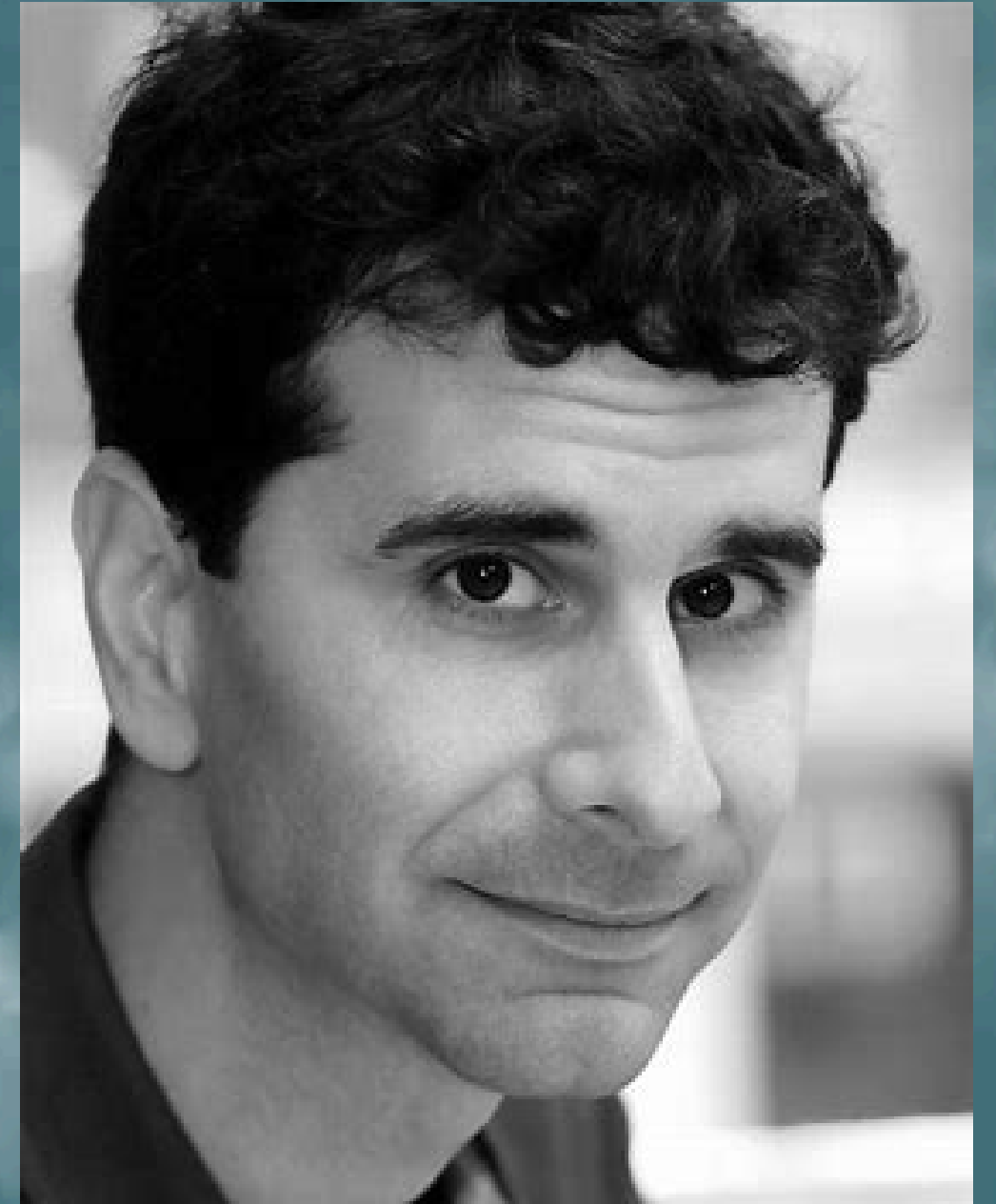
*Sterling Shane Allen
(Director)*



Sterling Shane Allen is a director based out of Salt Lake City. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Musical Theatre from Weber State University. Most recent directing credits include *Seminar* and *Rabbit Hole* (Assistant Director) with Voodoo Theatre Company. Sterling would like to thank everyone who has supported his journey the past decade.

The Playwright

Born and raised in Presque Isle, Maine, John Cariani did his first work in theater in the public schools of his home town; sang in the chorus of a community theater production of *Fiddler on the Roof*, and worked a day job as a landscaper in Aroostook County. His first play, *Almost, Maine*, premiered at Portland Stage Company. In other words, when he writes about life in The Pine Tree State, he comes at his subject with an insider's knowledge. He also graduated from Amherst College in 1991. Cariani majored in History at Amherst, but the lure of the theater overpowered his original plans for a teaching career. Following graduation, he spent three years as an acting intern at StageWest in Springfield, Massachusetts. His



John Cariani

next move took him to New York, where he snagged various roles in theater and television, notably several appearances on the crime series, *Law and Order*.

His major break as an actor came in 2004, when he was cast in the role of Motel in a Broadway revival of *Fiddler on the Roof*. This performance earned him a Tony nomination and won him the 2004 Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Featured Actor in a Musical. (The Outer Critics Circle is made up of reviewers who write for publications outside New York City.) It was also in 2004 that *Almost, Maine* had its premiere production in Portland, a stroke of good fortune that turned into a nerve-racking ordeal. Cariani's dual commitments as actor and playwright required him to shuttle back and forth between Broadway and Forest Avenue, an experience that he remembers with mixed feelings. As he told interviewer T.J. Fitzgerald in *Broadway World.com*, "My focus was pretty split for a while and I'm not very good at multi-tasking, so I was pretty tired, there, for a few weeks. And that's my biggest memory of 2004—being totally beat." Two years later, in January, 2006, the play moved to New York where it opened Off-Broadway to warmly welcoming reviews, with the *New York Times* noting "its whimsical approach to the joys and perils of romance."

Awards and Nominations



Featured in The Wall Street Journal's regional roundup of must-see theater in 2004.

Selected by the American National Theatre as one of the most outstanding regional theatre productions of the 2004-2005 season.

Featured in Smith and Kraus' New Playwrights: Best Plays of 2006.

In 2014, Transport Group revived Almost, Maine Off-Broadway. Lincoln Center recorded the production for its Theatre on Film and Tape Archive.

Dramatists Play Service recently published its 80th Anniversary Edition, a boxed set of 8 definitive titles representing each decade of the Play Service's history. Almost, Maine was selected to represent DPS' eighth decade.

Almost, Maine was the fourteenth most streamed play of the Covid-19 pandemic

Production History

Almost, Maine is a 2004 American play written by John Cariani, comprising nine short plays that explore love and loss in a remote, mythical almost-town called Almost, Maine. It premiered at the Portland Stage Company in Portland, Maine in 2004, where it broke box office records and garnered critical acclaim. The play was published by Dramatists Play Service in 2007 and has since become one of the most popular plays in the United States with nearly 100 professional productions and over 5000 community, university, and high school productions to date. It has become one of the most frequently produced plays in North American high schools. It has also received over twenty international productions and has been translated into over a dozen languages.

Almost, Maine was developed at the Cape Cod Theatre Project in 2002.

It premiered at Portland Stage Company (in Portland, Maine) in 2004.

Almost, Maine opened Off-Broadway at the Daryl Roth Theatre on 12 January 2006 and closed on 12 February 2006. Directed by Gabriel Barre, the cast included Todd Cerveris, Justin Hagan, Miriam Shor, and Finnerty Steeves. Though this run was brief, the play is featured in Smith and Kraus' *New Playwrights: Best Plays of 2006* and was published by Dramatists Play Service in 2007.

It is the most produced play in North American high schools over the past decade.

Almost, Maine is now a novel, published by Macmillan.



almost, MAINE

The Setting

The play is set in various locations in the town of Almost, Maine—a place that doesn't exist on any map of the state. It's a geographic fiction, a composite made up of the kind of people and places the playwright experienced while he was growing up in Presque Isle. But that doesn't stop the author from creating a very specific location for his non-existent community. Says one of the characters in the first of the play's eight vignettes, "You're in unorganized territory. Township 13, Range 7. It's not gonna be on your map, cause it's not an actual town, technically. . . See, to be a town, you gotta get organized. And we never got around to getting organized, so. . . we're just Almost."

This non-existent little town joins an impressive list of imaginary communities invented by American dramatists to provide appropriate locations for the actions and ideas they want to explore. The Brigadoon of Lerner and Loewe is isolated from time and protected from the anguish of change and loss. In *Our Town*, Thornton Wilder conjures up Grover's Corners, the site of an archetypal American chronicle of life, death, and endurance. Meanwhile, Lanford Wilson takes us to Eldritch, a dying speck on the map of the Midwest poisoned by the murderous effect of ingrained hatreds.

And well before these American inventions, European writers were fabricating their own imaginary locations for actions and ideas: St. Thomas More gives us Utopia, a country whose name in Greek means literally "nowhere"—the only place we'll find perfection in this world. Then there's the kingdom of Serendip, the Persian name for Sri Lanka, which is taken up by 18th century playwrights to designate a place of perpetually happy accidents. And, of course, there's the un-named island in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, thought by many to be modeled on Bermuda, then an impossibly faraway and exotic landscape where wonders might well happen.

Like these older imaginary locations, Cariani's make-believe community exists to serve as a kind of magnifying glass for the author's vision. Just as a glass captures and concentrates the diffuse rays of the sun, so these communities allow the author to focus his impressions of real life on a single spot and start a dramatic fire.

In Cariani's play, the emotional spark is provided by the "almost-ness" of Almost, Maine. The American Heritage Dictionary defines "almost" as, "Slightly short of; not quite; nearly."

Like the old Gillette Blue Blade, that definition is double-edged. On the one hand, "not quite;" on the other, "nearly."

On the "not quite" edge, we feel the pang of inadequacy inflicted on us by that little word. From this perspective, it means that the end was in sight, but we never quite made it, and so we nurse an inconsolable regret, made all the worse because we almost got there.

But on the "nearly" edge, the word paints a very different emotional picture. Seen from this angle, "almost" is full of promise: Another nail, and the job is done. And the nail is in my hand. Another mile, and we're there. And the tank is full of gas.

So the word "almost" can conjure regret or hope; the smell of a musty attic, or the aroma of an apple pie in the oven.

almost, MAINE

Themes

Every scene in the play is about gaining or losing love, about discovering love where it is least expected, and not finding it where it had always been.

A woman travels to Maine to say goodbye to her dead husband, and meets the repairman of her heart. A long-married couple seeks to escape the hectic routines of their life by ice skating on a winter night, and they discover that the joy is gone from their relationship; a woman returns to town to accept a marriage proposal she left unanswered years before, and discovers that the man is now married to somebody else; someone gets whacked by an ironing board and realizes that feeling, and possibly love, have entered his life.

Love, the play is telling us, is something that happens, a dynamic process, like the movement of the heavens themselves. And as with the heavens, sometimes it's dawn, and sometimes it's dusk.

This point is made clear in the Epilogue, which is a mirror image of the Prologue. Pete is looking off stage in the direction from which Ginette left at the beginning of the play. But Ginette enters from the opposite side. Sensing her presence, Pete turns to her and holds up his snowball as if to ask her whether she has been all the way around the earth. "And she has! . . . and she's back—and she's 'close' again. . . . They sit on the bench together, and resume looking at the stars.) For Paul and Ginett, the sun both sets and rises again on the possibility of love, just as it sets and rises for the other characters we meet in the play.

Almost, Maine also makes extensive use of surrealism, a non-realistic approach to theatrical representation in which metaphors—or figures of speech—become literally present on stage.

For instance, in realistic plays we are accustomed to hearing characters say something like, "My heart is broken." But in Almost, Maine Gloria actually carries the pieces of her broken heart in a bag. The figure of speech becomes concrete.

Similarly, we're not surprised if a character in a realistic play says, "I'm going to take back all the love I've given you," as if love were a physical object like money or clothing. But we are shocked when, in "Getting It Back," the characters carry sacks of love around, actually exchanging it like a commodity.

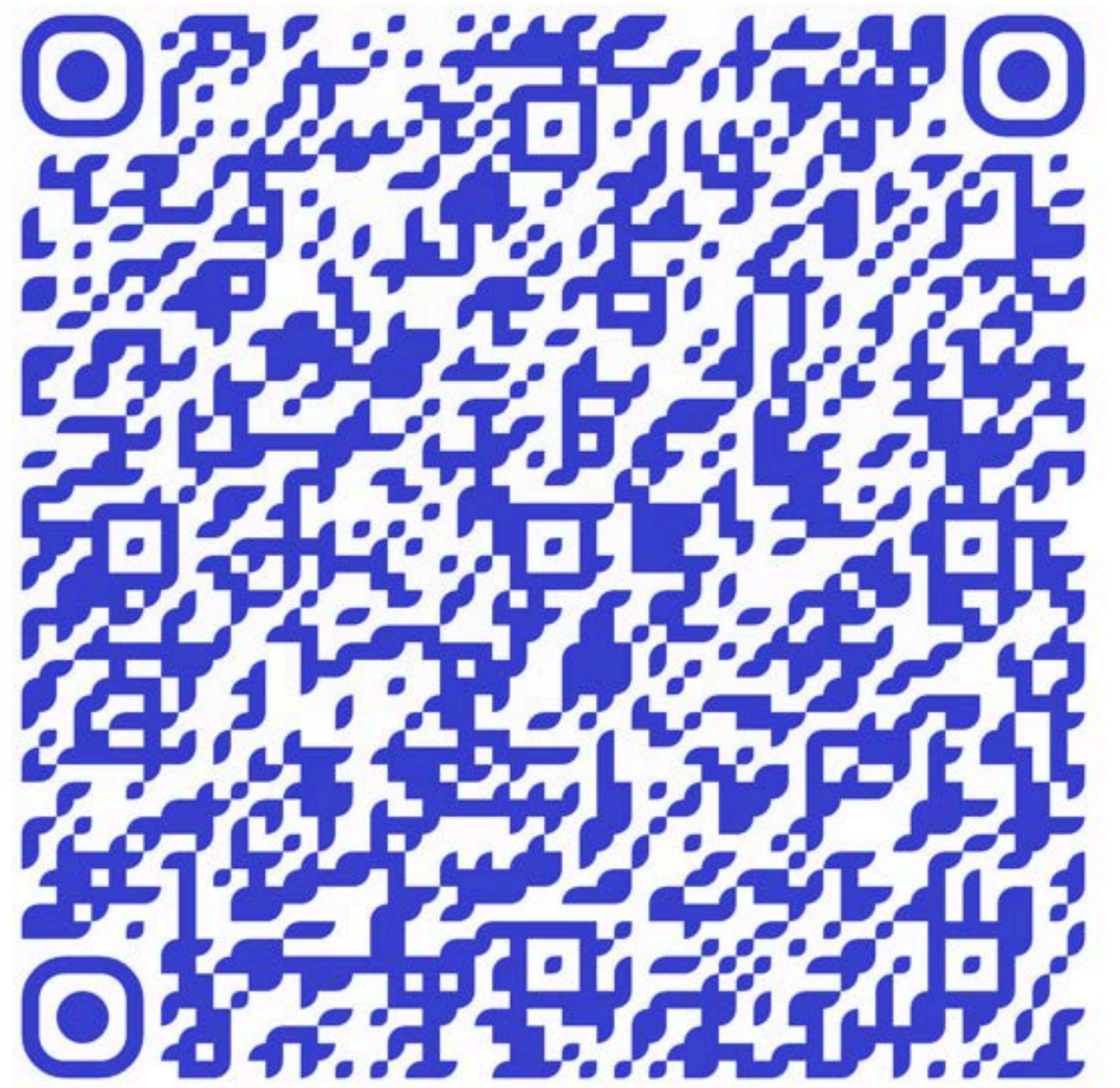
These moments of surrealism are there, it seems, to tell us something about love's extraordinary nature. Not only is love always coming and going, arriving unexpectedly and vanishing without warning, but when we do fully encounter it, when we really take it in, its presence hits us as a kind of miracle, something wholly out of the ordinary. We can take love for granted, and stow it away in life's pantry together with all the rest of the everyday bottles and cans. But if we take the trouble to look at it closely, it stuns us with its wonder in the same way these surreal moments on stage strike us with their poetic force.

almost, MAINE

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