



**KRANNERT CENTER AT
THE VIRGINIA**

**ILLINOIS THEATRE PRESENTS
*RENT***

Book, music, and lyrics by Jonathan Larson
Lisa Gaye Dixon and J. W. Morrisette, co-directors
Justin M. Brauer, music director
Alexandra Barbier, Choreographer
Thursday–Saturday, October 26–28, 2023, at 7:30pm
The Virginia Theatre

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

*This performance of RENT is sponsored in part by
the following generous donors:*



SUSAN & MICHAEL HANEY

WELCOME

Welcome and welcome back to Illinois Theatre! This season we invite you to join us as we present our productions—a range of new work and innovative approaches to performance—on campus and about town. We're excited that our student artists will have the opportunity to extend their education beyond the classroom on the stages of the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts as well as other performance spaces in Champaign-Urbana. We look forward to our collaborations at the Virginia Theatre, CU Adventures in Time and Space, and Fat City Bar and Grill for our 2023–2024 season. Our season invites you to dream, play, contemplate and connect in unexpected places and in new ways.

Fall 2023 marks the return of our Daniel J. Sullivan Playwright-in-Residency Program. Inaugurated with Chicago-based playwright Mallory Raven-Ellen Backstrom's *A Darkling at Nightfall*, this program allows us to engage in the early stages of development of new work by exciting American playwrights. This year, our alum and celebrated writer Matthew-Lee Erlbach returns to campus to develop a brand-new work, *The Birds of North America*. Questions about displacement and extinction are at the core of this dark comedy. We are thrilled to work with Erlbach just

before his new play, *Revelations*, premieres on Broadway next year.

This season offers musical and satirical adaptations focusing on connection and discovery in unstable, unpredictable worlds. Some of the authors we showcase—Jonathan Larson (*RENT*), Jen Silverman (*Witch*) and Bertolt Brecht in adaptation (*The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*) look to the shadows of the past as a guide—or a warning—about the futures we build. The productions explore games, gameplaying, and gamesmanship—whether we watch the gamesmanship of a demagogue or a devil, see characters who win or lose at playing pretend, or play the games ourselves—this season brings new attention to the games we play. I hope you'll explore new worlds with us at Krannert Center and join us as we venture into spaces throughout Champaign-Urbana.

—Valleri Robinson
Associate Professor and Head, Theatre

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Once upon a time in the middle of the Midwest, there lived a young black boy, whose heart was as delicate as the flowering seeds of a dandelion being scattered to the winds. This boy's heart yearned for something unspoken of in his loving working-class family, and so he kept his heart covered, kept his desire under wraps. To whom could he speak, when he had no vocabulary for his love? As he grew, he learned more about himself—sadly, oftentimes by the reflection of those around him, pushing, molding, carving, scolding him. "Be a man," "walk the walk," "talk the 'right' talk," "what are you wearing?" "Why do you sound like that?" "Who . . . are you?"

In order to survive, he quickly learned the "cheat codes" to black boyhood, and although he tried, he never got them quite right—telltale (and honestly delightful) signs always gave him away—a love for "Christmas in July," dancing wildly in the living room to the soundtrack to the movie *Grease*, and an uncanny skill for taking a poor pantry of beans, rice, and sausage and creating a feast beyond measure.

But the greater world outside the confines of the family kitchen wanted something more—and less. He would forever be too much—and not enough.

But one miraculous day, he discovered what he didn't know he'd been searching for, in the heart of another young man. And while his family rejoiced, the world did not.

So, he decided he would "fix" himself—that he would deny himself the very thing the universe offered him with open heart. After all, the church (he loved it so), and so many other places, people, institutions loved him as long as he kept his

dandelion heart under lock and key, he thought he could belong to the world, finally.

He tried, and tried, and tried to be "a good boy," until the world became too much for him, and his delicate, dandelion heart burst with loneliness—the love and care of his family and friends could not hold the weight of the world from his heart.

The musical *RENT* is about a lot of big ideas—politics, art, revolution. But also, small substantial things. The family you are born into. The loving, raucous family you create. Finding your specific place in the universal tribe of humankind. The chance to hold the heart of another, even as they are holding yours. These are things I have always valued as an artist and a teacher, and things I hope to have imparted to my students over the years.

This will be my final production as a faculty member for the University of Illinois Department of Theatre—my Illinois Theatre family. I dedicate it to the memory of my brother Stephen, and to all the "othered" souls in our community and beyond. So please join us—laugh, dance, sing, cry. LIVE.

—Lisa Gaye Dixon, Co-director

PROGRAM

ILLINOIS THEATRE

RENT

Book, music, and lyrics by Jonathan Larson
Lisa Gaye Dixon and J. W. Morrisette, co-directors
Justin M. Brauer, music director
Alexandra Barbier, choreographer
Thursday–Saturday, October 26–28, 2023, at 7:30pm
The Virginia Theatre

Time: Christmas Eve

Place: Lower East Side, Manhattan—Alphabet City

ACT I

1. Tune Up A
- 1a. Voice Mail #1
2. Tune Up B
3. Rent
4. Christmas Bells #1
5. You Okay, Honey
6. Tune Up - Reprise
7. One Song Glory
8. Light My Candle
9. Voice Mail #2
10. Today For You A
- 10a. Today For You B
11. You'll See
12. Tango Maureen - Intro.
- 12a. Tango Maureen
13. Support Group

14. Out Tonight
15. Another Day
16. Will I
17. On The Street
18. Santa Fe
19. I'll Cover You
20. We're Okay
21. Christmas Bells
22. Over The Moon
- 22a. Over The Moon Playoff
23. La Vie Boheme / I Should Tell You

20-minute Intermission

ACT II

24. Seasons of Love
25. Happy New Year A

26. Voice Mail #3
27. Voice Mail #4
28. Happy New Year B
29. Valentine's Day Crossover
30. Take Me or Leave Me
31. Seasons of Love B
32. Without You
33. Voice Mail #5
34. Contact
35. I'll Cover You - Reprise
36. Halloween
37. Goodbye Love
38. What You Own
39. Voice Mail #6
40. Finale A
41. Your Eyes
42. Finale B

RENT was originally produced in New York by New York Theatre Workshop and on Broadway by Jeffrey Seller, Kevin McCollum, Allan S. Gordon, and New York Theatre Workshop

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

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

FROM "LA VIE BOHÈME"

MARK

Let he among us without sin,
Be the first to condemn—

ALL (INCLUDING AUDIENCE)!

La Vie Bohème
La Vie Bohème
La Vie Bohème

La Vie Bohème
La Vie Bohème
La Vie Bohème

MARK

The Riot Continues
The Christmas Tree goes up in Flames
The snow dances
Oblivious, Mimi and Roger share a small, lovely kiss

ALL

VIVA! LA VIE BOHÈME!!

RENT

BOOK, MUSIC, AND LYRICS BY JONATHAN LARSON

CO-DIRECTORS

Lisa Gaye Dixon
J. W. Morrisette

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Justin M. Brauer

CHOREOGRAPHER

Alexandra Barbier

INTIMACY DIRECTOR

Gaby Labotka

SCENIC DESIGNER

Will Sexton

COSTUME DESIGNER

Chantel Renee

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Kyle Wurtz

SOUND DESIGNER

Aidan Gardner

MEDIA DESIGNER

Lili Federico

ASSISTANT MUSIC DIRECTOR

Noah Larson

VOCAL COACHES

Allison Moody
Sarah Wigley

STAGE MANAGER

Angela Harrington

DRAMATURG

Anne Kolaczkowski-Magee

CAST

ROGER DAVIS

Anthony Maggio

MARK COHEN

Jonathan Kaplan

TOM COLLINS

Jaylon Muchison

MAUREEN JOHNSON

Grania McKirdie

JOANNE JEFFERSON

Meliza Gutierrez

MIMI MARQUEZ

Elizabeth Ruiz-Goranson

BENJAMIN COFFIN III

David Sommer

ANGEL DUMOT SCHUNARD

AJ Paramo

MARKS MOM/PAM/JUNKIE

Mary Jane Oken

**MRS. JEFFERSON/BLANKET PERSON/COAT
VENDOR/SOL SOLOIST**

Justine Ryan

**SUE/JUNKIE/ALEXI/ROGERS MOM, DANCE
CAPTAIN**

Sissy Anne Quaranta

**HOMELESS MAN/MR. JEFFERSON/SOLOIST/
PASTOR/THUG/COP**

Imran Rizvi

**GORDON/THE MAN/MR. GREY/HOMELESS
PERSON**

Evan Arnold

STEVE/SQUEEGEE MAN

Isabella Cooper

**PAUL/COP/HOMELESS PERSON/RESTAURANT
MAN/THUG**

Patrick Jackson

ALI/VENDORS/MIMI'S MOM

Laney Rodriguez

UNDERSTUDY FOR MAUREEN

Mary Jane Oken

UNDERSTUDY FOR JOANNE

Justine Ryan

UNDERSTUDY FOR MARK

Imran Rizvi

UNDERSTUDY FOR ANGEL

Evan Arnold

UNDERSTUDY FOR MIMI

Isabella Cooper

UNDERSTUDY FOR COLLINS

Patrick Jackson

UNDERSTUDY FOR BENNY

Laney Rodriguez

THE LANDLORDS OF ANARCHY

MUSIC DIRECTOR/KEYBOARD

Justin M. Brauer

ASSISTANT MUSIC DIRECTOR/KEYBOARD/ GUITAR

Noah Larson

DRUMS

Alek Mann

GUITAR

David Butler

BASS

Andrey Gonçalves

DRAMATURG'S NOTE

In the closing moments of *Rent*, the ensemble sings "Give into love, or live in fear. No other path, no other way." When Jonathan Larson wrote those words thirty years ago, he likely hoped they would help to bring about acceptance for those infected with HIV/AIDS as well as for members of the LGBTQ+ community. What he couldn't possibly have foreseen is how relevant that message would be in 2023.

Like many of the people involved in our production of *Rent*, Larson grew up singing the songs of his musical heroes, in his case, Billy Joel and Stephen Sondheim. After graduating from college in 1982, Larson moved to New York City where, according to his sister, he hoped to write a show that would change Broadway. He got that chance starting in 1989 when he began collaborating with writer Billy Aronson on an idea to create a modern musical based on Puccini's opera *La Bohème*. After working together for about a year, Larson and Aronson parted ways, but negotiated a deal in which—if the show made it to Broadway—Aronson would receive credit and a portion of the proceeds.

Larson, a straight cisgender male, populated his musical with the people he saw around him in his East Village neighborhoods. Mimi, a seamstress with tuberculosis in Puccini's opera, is a stripper with HIV/AIDS in *Rent*. Puccini's Rodolfo, a poet, becomes Larson's Roger, a frustrated rock musician with HIV/AIDS. Collins, a philosopher like Colline in *La Bohème*, is a computer scientist and a queer man in love with Angel, a trans woman.

Larson brought the show to the New York Theatre Workshop and the show was scheduled to premiere on January 26, 1996. Larson attended the final dress rehearsal and then went home

to his apartment, much like the one inhabited by Mark and Roger in *Rent*. Later that night, his roommate came home to discover that Larson had died. The cause of death was an aortic dissection, most likely caused by an undiagnosed case of Marfan syndrome. In consultation with Larson's parents, the devastated cast and crew decided to open as scheduled, but to perform the show more as they would a staged reading, with just a few tables and no costumes. However, as the cast sang their way through "La Vie Bohème," they could no longer hold back and presented the rest of the show with full staging and energy. The show sold out for the remainder of its run at the New York Theatre Workshop. It moved to Broadway and opened at the Nederlander Theater on April 29, 1996. It ran for more than twelve years.

In many ways, Larson's dream of creating a musical that would change Broadway was fulfilled. New York Times critic Ben Brantley wrote in his review of *Rent* that it "shimmers with hope for the future of the American musical." *Rent* received four Tony Awards and the Pulitzer Prize in Drama. Lin-Manuel Miranda, who has Tony Awards for both *In the Heights* and *Hamilton*, said, "I can tell you that everything that's good in *Hamilton* was inspired by seeing *Rent* by Jonathan Larson on my 17th birthday." Larson likely could not have envisioned that a grant named for him would one day be given to Michael R. Jackson, author of *A Strange Loop*. Recipient of the Tony Award for Best Musical in 2022, *A Strange Loop* is the story a gay, black man who works as an usher for *The Lion King* and is dealing with the ongoing impact of HIV/AIDS on the gay community. But maybe Larson hoped *Rent* would open the door for the stories and actors those Tony Award-winning shows employ. Larson was a man with great hope. Mimi dies in *La*

Bohème, but she lives at the end of *Rent*. Some might question that choice as too unrealistic for the gritty world of the musical. But Larson chose to have his Mimi live because, in a time when HIV/AIDS was a death sentence, he wanted to end his story with hope.

At the end of *Rent*, the ensemble gives voice to that hope as they urge the audience to “Give into love.” *Rent* premiered in 1996, yet this message of choosing love over fear is just as pertinent. Montana, Texas, and Florida recently passed laws, currently under injunctions, that restrict drag performances. As we prepare this production, twenty-two states have laws that ban gender-affirming care. Schools throughout the country have removed books that feature gay characters and same-sex parents from their libraries. According to the ACLU, 496 anti-LGBTQ+ bills have been introduced in state legislatures this year.¹

In 1995, a year before *Rent* premiered, the AIDS crisis in the US was at its worst, with around 50,000 AIDS-related deaths that year.² Since then, with more effective medicines and treatments, the number of deaths per year in the US and worldwide have declined; yet according to UNAID, an organization created by the United Nations, 630,000 people worldwide died from AIDS related illnesses in 2022.³

The popularity of *Rent* brought marginalized people into America’s living rooms and asked those inhabitants to choose love. They are still asking.

—Anne Kolaczowski-Magee, Dramaturg

¹“Mapping Attacks on LGBTQ Rights in U.S. State Legislatures.” American Civil Liberties Union, Sept. 2023, www.aclu.org/legislative-attacks-on-lgbtq-rights.

² “HIV Surveillance—United States, 1981–2008.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6021a2.htm. Accessed Oct. 2, 2023.

³ “Global HIV & AIDS Statistics—Fact Sheet.” UNAIDS, 31 Aug. 2023, www.unaids.org/en/resources/fact-sheet.

The Greater Community AIDS Project of East Central Illinois (GCAP) exists to serve the needs of those living with HIV/AIDS and empower them to live full, healthy lives. We collaborate with various community organizations to provide HIV education and awareness, and support those living with HIV/AIDS in the form of transitional housing, nutritional assistance, emergency financial assistance grants, and other supportive services.

If you need support or would like to volunteer with us, please reach out to 217-351-2437 or info@gcapnow.com.

If you'd like to get tested for HIV or get on PrEP (a medication that prevents HIV), please contact the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District at 217-531-5365

GCAP

**GREATER COMMUNITY
AIDS PROJECT
OF EAST CENTRAL ILLINOIS**

PROFILES



Evan Arnold (Gordon/The Man/Mr. Grey/Cop/Homeless Person) is a current freshman pursuing a BFA in acting at the University of Illinois. After participating in various high school shows, the Heist is his first production with the Illinois Theatre department. At Maine South High School he

performed as Lord Wessex in *Shakespeare in Love*, Roger in *Rose and the Rime*, and Rudolpho in *Matilda the Musical*.



Isabella Cooper (Steve/Squeeze Man) is pursuing a BFA in acting at the University of Illinois. Her previous Illinois Theatre credits include *The Heist* as Peyton and *Close* as Ensemble. Film credits includes the feature film *Don't Let Me Stay*, written and directed by Aaron Thomas; the web series

Writer's Block, written by Elazia Key, short film *Inner Child*, written and directed by Madeline Blair; and a few others. In addition to her passion for the arts, she enjoys lifting weights, and is on the executive board for Illini Barbell.



Meliza Gutierrez (Joanne Jefferson) (she/they) is an actor, playwright, and poet from Southern California. She received her BA in drama with honors in acting from the University of California, Irvine, where she also served as artistic Director for Brown Bag Theater Company and

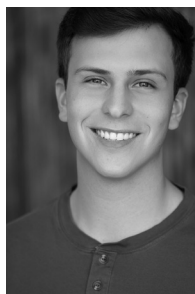
Schrodinger's Cast: 30 Plays in 60 Minutes. Meliza has since worked with Breath of Fire Latina

Theatre Ensemble, Casa 0101 Theatre, Workshop Theater, and Chicanas Cholas y Chisme as an actor, poet, playwright, and producer in developing new works. They are currently an MFA in acting candidate at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign where they were recently seen as Volumnia in *Coriolanus*, and their original play *Valiente* was presented as a part of the U of I's Theater Studies New Works Project. Meliza is thrilled to collaborate with such brilliant artists on this incredible production. Instagram: @melizakg Website: www.melizagutierrez.com



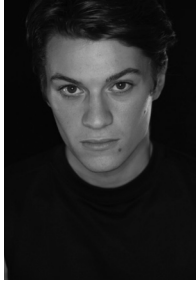
Patrick Jackson (Paul/Cop/Homeless person/Restaurant Man/Thug) (he/him) is a junior pursuing a BFA in acting at the University of Illinois. He has been seen in Illinois Theatre productions such as *Urinetown* (Hot Blades Harry/Old Man Strong), *The 48* (Jeremy) and *Close* (Eric/Prince/Hansel). While

not on stage, Patrick can also be seen on screen in short films such as *After Algos* (Mr. Cameron); *Oversight* (David); and *Tint of Red* (Gordon), winner of the Jury award at the University of Illinois film festival. While not on stage, Jackson enjoys working as a secretary in the Department of Theatre office at Krannert Center, as well as writing and painting in his free time.



Jonathan Kaplan (Mark Cohen) (he/him) is a senior pursuing his BFA in acting at the University of Illinois. His Illinois Theatre credits include *Sweat* (Jason), *Coriolanus* (Adrian), *Urinetown* (Robby the Stockfish), and *Native Gardens* (Frank U/S & Landscaper). He was recently in a U of I student-produced and

directed short film, *After Algos*, which will be submitted to various film festivals in 2024. His past theater credits include productions of *Matilda: The Musical* (Miss Trunchbull) & *Into the Woods* (Baker), based in his hometown of Park Ridge, Illinois. When not acting on stage, Kaplan spends his free time composing instrumental and lyrical music. He hopes to foster art that proposes more questions than answers to challenge societal expectations.



Anthony Maggio (Roger Davis) is a senior acting major. Recently he performed as Coriolanus in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* and Officer Barrel in *Urinetown*. Anthony loves art that focuses on the human experience. In his spare time he sings with the a capella group

No Comment on campus. In the

summer he works at Kosart Effects studio as a special effects makeup artist, his credits include *Candyman* (Monkeypaw Productions), *Fargo* (FX), *Shining Girls* (Apple TV+), and *Lovecraft Country* (HBO Max).



Grania McKirdie (Maureen Johnson) is currently a senior pursuing a BFA in acting at the University of Illinois as an Evans Scholar. This past summer, Grania interned with the Illinois Shakespeare Festival, appearing in their productions of *The Tempest*, *The Book of Will*, and *Toss Me a Tempest* (TYA). Her

Illinois Theatre credits include *Sweat* (Tracey), *Urinetown* (Officer Lockstock), and *Coriolanus* (Citizen #2). Other on campus credits include *Into the Woods* (Baker's Wife) and *Little Women* (Aunt March) with Illini Student Musicals and *Twelfth Night* (Malvolio) with the What You Will Shakespeare Company. Grania is a proud

graduate of t,he Chicago Academy for the Arts where some of her credits included *Macbeth* (Macbeth), *Everybody* (Everybody), *The Wolves* (#14), *columbinus* (Rebel), *King Lear* (Gloucester), *Sense and Sensibility* (Margaret), and *Sunday in the Park with George* (Yvonne).



Jaylon Muchison (Tom Collins) is a third-year acting major at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. In Illinois Theatre, he performed in six productions: *The Heist* (Hawk), the stage reading of *Redline* (narrator), *Sweat* (Chris), the stage reading of *A Darkling at Nightfall* (Abbas Samar),

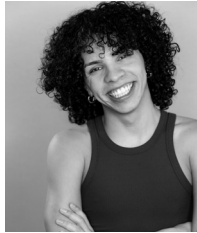
Urinetown (Caldwell B. Cladwell), and *The Royale* (Jay). With the Illinois Shakespeare Festival he played Lord, Sexton, and Messenger in *Much Ado About Nothing*; Duke of Burgundy and Soldier in *King Lear*; and Tour Guide, and Don John in *Much Ado About Quite a Lot*. In short films, he worked on *Subliminal* as Male Protagonist and *Ghost Gun* as Black Boy. He plans to complete his studies at U of I and work hands-on with the craft of acting. Good theatre moves the soul, and theatre that moves the soul is what Jaylon strives to create.



Mary Jane Oken (Mark's Mom/ Pam/Junkie) is a junior at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign pursuing a BFA in acting. She has previously performed in her hometown of Deerfield, Illinois. There, she appeared in: *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Miep Gies), *You Can't Take It with You* (Martine

Vanderhof [Grandma]), and *Mamma Mia!* (Donna). Mary Jane has also performed in various shows with Krannert Center for the Performing Arts: *Fugitives in America* (Sarah/Student 2/Nurse [Also

with PrideArts]); *Varslaren: The Whistleblower* (Heidi); and most recently, *Urinetown* (Josephine Strong). She has also played the Armory Free Theatre, appearing in *Stupid F***ing Bird* (Mash) and most recently, *The Moors* (Moor-hen). She also has on screen acting experience; you may have seen her in *Phillies* (Woman in Red), *Days and Days* (Olive), and *War* (Vic). Mary Jane extends her thanks and gratitude to the cast, crew, and audience for helping to bring a wonderful show to life!



AJ Paramo (Angel Dumot Schunard): Recent regional theatre credits include *CarmXn* (Dancairo/Dancer), *Nativity Variations* (Mateo/Father Juan (u/s)), *A Christmas Carol* (Vicar), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Watchman). They also are an

alumnus of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, graduating with the BFA acting class of 2022. Illinois Theatre credits include: *Sweat* (Oscar), *P*hitter* (Bougerlas). So thankful to have been given the opportunity to come back and play this dream role with this dream of a cast and team. They thank their three beautiful mothers, brothers, friends, and mentor for their consistent support and love. Instagram @_AjParamo_ for all updates.



Sissy Anne Quaranta (Sue/Junkie/Alexi/Rogers Mom, Dance Captain) Sissy Anne is in her second year of the acting MFA program here at the University of Illinois. She has a BA in theatre with music and dance minors from Kansas State University and trained at Second City Chicago & iO

Chicago, where she was also an ensemble member. This past summer, she made her Illinois

Shakespeare Festival debut as Ariel in *The Tempest*, Cortesan/Luce in *Comedy of Errors*, and Ensemble in *The Book of Will*. Chicago Credits: University of Illinois, *Coriolanus* (Valeria); Prop THTR, *Neverland* (Nini); *Wild Women of Planet Wongo* (Dinette/Swing/Dance Captain); Surging Theatrics' *American Idiot* (Ensemble/Dance Captain); The Annoyance's *Dank Tank* (President Tomo/Ensemble); Profiles, *Hell Cab* (Girlfriend). Regional Credits: *Teatro Martini* (Jinx); *SeaWorld* (Donder Elf Missy); Orlando Shakes Playfest 2019 and 2021; Orlando Fringe Festival, *Selling Out: The Musical* (Swing); Theatre Lawrence, *The Great Gatsby* (Jordan Baker); Busch Gardens, *Entwined/Celtic Fyre* (Park Vocal Swing); The Columbian, *Steel Magnolias* (Shelby). Instagram: @MissSissyQ



Imran Rizvi (Homeless Man/Mr. Jefferson/SOL Soloist/Pastor/Thug/Cop) (he/him) is a sophomore at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign pursuing a BFA in acting. *RENT* marks his Illinois Theatre debut. Previously on campus, he was in Illini Student Musicals' production of *Grease*. Imran is a

graduate of Barrington High School with credits there including *Medea* (Jason), *Mamma Mia!* (Harry Bright), and *Clue* (Mr. Green). He has also worked with the Goodman Theatre in Chicago on *Alone Together: A Solo Voices Project* (Solo Performer) and Actor's Training Center in Wilmette on *Urinetown* (Tiny Tom/Bobby Strong u/s). When not performing on stage, Imran spends his free time playing tabletop role-playing games, video games, guitar, and drums in his band Odd Men Out.



Laney Rodriguez (Ali/Vendors/ Mimi's Mom) (she/her) is delighted to be joining Illinois Theatre in this exciting production of *RENT*. Laney is a Cuban actress and choreographer hailing from Miami, Florida. She is currently pursuing her MFA in acting here at the University of Illinois

Urbana-Champaign. She holds a BFA in acting from Florida International University. Most recently, she was seen (insert something here). Illinois Theatre credits include: (insert something here). Notable South Florida theatre credits include: *Everybody* (Somebody), *Tres Hermanas* (Olga), *Sonnets for an Old Century* (Cordelia), *Right You Are ... Think You Are* (Mrs. Sirelli). Big thanks to all the artists who made this production possible! All the love and dedication to my family, friends, and teachers. Seguimos pa'lante! Website: www.laneyrodriguez.com / IG: @laneyrodz



Elizabeth Ruiz-Goranson (Mimi Marquez) is currently a junior pursuing a BFA in acting at the University of Illinois and a minor in musical theatre. Her Illinois Theatre credits include *The 48* (Brittany), *Varslaren* (understudy), and *Valiente* (Valentina/Mama). Some of her Army Free Theatre Credits

include *The Moors* (Huldey), and *G Train* (Emilia). She has also been in *Little Women the Musical* (Jo) for the Illini Student Musicals. On the side, she acts in short films directed by Ryan Leshock. *Bodies of Water* is her most recent short film, which is free to watch on Youtube. Elizabeth is also in a band called The Meantime. She performs at different venues including the Illini Union, Canopy Club, and house shows. Elizabeth is also a model and makeup artist for TFN, The Fashion Network!



Justine Ryan (Mrs. Jefferson/ Blanket Person/Coat Vendor/ SOL Soloist) is making her second Krannert appearance as an MFA student. She recently appeared as Osric in Notre Dame's Shakespeare Festival 50/50 *Hamlet*. She debuted at TheatreSquared as the show understudy for

School Girls; Or the African Mean Girls Play in 2021. Ryan returned to appear as Mrs. Phelps in Theatre Squared's summer (2021) production of *Matilda, The Musical*; 2021 ANPF reading; Pearl understudy in *Miss You Like Hell*; and is an understudy in the World Premiere of *FLEX*. Her other credits include; being a member of the LatinX Theatre Project cohort (20192022); a television credit as Ciera Johnson on the TV One network series *For My Man* (S:4, Ep.23); and co-writing and starring in her one-woman show, *Lessons From My Suitcase*, which premiered at the 2018 Kansas City Fringe Festival. Justine earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts in theatre from Bennett College.



David Sommer (Benjamin Coffin III) (he/him) is a fourth-year pursuing a BFA in acting at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and he is so excited to be a part of *RENT*. David has worked with Illinois Theatre in *A Dance in the Dark* (David), and *Varslaren: The Whistleblower* (u/s Dr.

Stockman, u/s Peter Stockman, u/s Morton Kiil, devisor). Outside of the Krannert Center he has worked on productions with Illini Student Musicals in *Little Women* (Professor Bhaer), with the New Rebel Players in *Jekyll and Hyde* (Dr. Jekyll), at the Army Free Theater in *Stupid F*****G Bird* (Doyle Trigorin) and *The Moors* (the

Mastiff). This past summer he was at the Station Theatre in *Ride the Cyclone* (Mischa Bachinski). David has written two short plays based on the life of a Holocaust survivor, with the effort to preserve her memory and story with the Stories That Live fellowship program. He is also a model in The Fashion Network here at the university. In his hometown he was a member of the Playback Theatre Troupe. He plans to graduate from U of I and continue his acting in the professional world. "Good art is fire, water and steam for the soul." —Lisa Gaye Dixon —and that is what David aspires to create.



Lisa Gaye Dixon (Co-Director), professor of theatre, professor of dance, member of the acting faculty, resident director, and producer for Illinois Theatre, has worked professionally across the country and around the globe. She began her professional career with Steppenwolf

Theatre Company in Chicago, and has been seen on the stages of the Royal Shakespeare Company and the New Globe Theatre in London, and regionally at the Attic Theatre, Performance Network, Lost Nation Theatre, The Kitchen Theatre, Illinois Shakespeare Festival, Milwaukee Shakespeare, and The Goodman Theatre of Chicago. She has done film work as actor, acting coach, and AD. At the University of Illinois, Lisa has directed several successful productions for the Department of Theatre, all dealing with a range of social and political issues, and all addressing the common threads of humanity, and the universality of experiences across racial, cultural, class, economic, sex, and gender lines, all while 'keeping the passion' and 'finding the funny.'



J. W. Morrisette (Co-Director) is the associate head of the Department of Theatre at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and has served in the Department of Theatre for 28 years. He has served as chair of the BFA Theatre Studies Program, the assistant head for Academic Programs, as well as

the assistant program coordinator for INNER VOICES Social Issues Theatre. He worked for Stuart Howard and Associates Casting in New York interning as a casting assistant for many Broadway productions and television commercials. J.W. taught and directed for 23 years with the summer theatre department at Interlochen Center for the Arts. At the University of Illinois, his classes include Acting, Directing, Introduction to Theatre Arts, and Broadway Musicals. He has been integral in developing components for the online course offerings in the department as well as supervising all senior Theatre Studies thesis projects. He has spent several summers acting with the Utah Shakespeare Festival and the Interlochen Shakespeare Festival and directs professionally when time allows. He has received the Provost's Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award, the College of Fine and Applied Arts Specialized Faculty Award for Excellence, and the Illinois Theatre Association Award of Excellence in College/University Theatre.



Alexandra Barbier (Choreographer) is an assistant professor in the Department of Dance at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Her current teaching, research, and choreographic projects focus on Black vernacular dance forms with origins in queer and/or Southern US communities.

Previous choreographic credits include University of Utah (Salt Lake City), Deseret Experimental Opera (Salt Lake City), Of Moving Colors Productions (Baton Rouge, Louisiana), Joffrey South summer intensive (Athens, Georgia), as well as self-produced choreographic and performance art works presented through loveDANCEmore (Salt Lake City), The National Center for Choreography at the University of Akron (Akron, Ohio), Great Salt Lake Fringe Festival (Salt Lake City), and Salt Lake City Performance Art Festival. www.abarbier.com



Justin M. Brauer (Music Director) is a director, musician, and educator whose career includes work with Music Theatre International, the Curtis Institute of Music, Purdue University, Children's Musical Theater San Jose, the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra, Parkland College,

and other colleges and high schools across the country. For Illinois Theatre: *Failure: A Love Story*, *Assassins*, *A Funny Thing... Forum*, *The Neverland*, and *Urinetown*, as well as teaching the classes Acting in Musical Theatre and Broadway Musicals in US Culture. Brauer holds an MM in musicology with a focus in American musical theatre and a BME in choral music from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. By day, he serves as Assistant Director of Strategic Engagement in the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement, and in his free time, he enjoys baking bread and making puppets. www.JustinMBrauer.com

Lili Federico (Media Designer) is currently a second-year student pursuing her MFA in media design. Prior to starting her degree at the University of Illinois, Lili was awarded her BA in theatre design and technology from Colorado State University, where she concentrated in

digital media design and stage management. Her most recent design credits include *City of Angels* (media designer; Lyric Theatre @ Illinois), *October Dance* (media designer; Dance at Illinois), *The Rocky Horror Show* (Media Designer; Colorado State University), and the Rock Band Project (VJ / media designer; Colorado State University). In the summer of 2023, Lili joined the Des Moines Metro Opera company as their video engineer. There she worked on *A Love for Three Oranges*, *Carmen*, *The Falling and The Rising*, and *Bluebeard's Castle*, where she was also the video programmer.

Aidan Gardner (Sound Designer) is pursuing a BFA in sound design & technology at the University of Illinois. His Illinois Theatre credits include *A Little Night Music* (Assistant Designer and Engineer), *March Dance 2022* (Assistant Engineer), and *Dance at Illinois Downtown* (Sound Designer). Aidan is also the vice-president of Illini Student Musicals, a student-run 501(c)3 organization dedicated to providing musical theatre opportunities to students of all majors.

Angela Harrington (Stage Manager) is a third year MFA stage manager in the production management track. She graduated in 2018 from Bridgewater State University and served as the associate managing director for Brown Box Theatre Project, a touring theater company based in Boston. She served as the production stage manager for Ogunquit Playhouse's Arts Academy in 2023 and worked as a production stage manager for Gene Kelly's widow, Patricia Ward Kelly, for a legacy event at the Ogunquit Playhouse. In 2022 she was the assistant production manager and production schedule for Utah Festival Opera and Music Theatre's 30th Season. Her recent stage management credits include February Dance, Spring Studio Dance, *Hogwash Hog Ranch or Putting Lipstick on a Pig*, *Urbanites* (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign); *Antigone Ablaze*, *The Totalitarians*,¹⁷

The Bald Soprano (Bridgewater State University); *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Jukebox 2.0*, *As You Like It* (Brown Box Theatre Project); *We are Proud to Present . . .* (Brandeis University); *Bare Stage* (Boston Center for the Arts). She worked as an assistant stage manager for *Fun Home* (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign) and *The Murder on the Orient Express* (The Lyric Stage Company.)

Anne Kolaczowski-Magee (Dramaturg) is pursuing a PhD in theatre studies at the University of Illinois after earning her MA in 2023. She was the lead dramaturg for Illinois Theatre's production of *The Revolutionists* and the assistant dramaturg for *Varslaren*. She directed *Valiente*, written by Meliza Gutierrez, for last season's Theatre Studies New Works production. She also served as the assistant director for *Bad F-ing Hamlet* at the Armory Free Theatre. Anne is a 35-year veteran of high school teaching and directing who is now relishing the comparatively easier life of a graduate student.

Gaby Labotka (Intimacy Director) [she/they/anything respectful] is a Chicago-based, multi-disciplinary theatre artist who works as an actor, director, intimacy director, fight director, and choreographer across the country. She is a fierce advocate for respect, empathy, representation, inclusion, and safety in the theatre, and they are dedicated to making art that reflects that. Broadway: *Paradise Square* (Intimacy Director). Regional (selected): *A View From the Bridge* (Shattered Globe, Fight & Intimacy Director); *Lucy and Charlie's Honeymoon* (Lookingglass, Intimacy Director); *The Writer* and *Our Dear Dead Drug Lord* (Steep, Intimacy & Fight Director); *House of Joy* (Repertory Theatre St. Louis, Fight & Intimacy Director); *Revenge Song* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Asst. Director & Asst. Fight Director); and *The First Deep Breath* (Victory Gardens,

Fight & Intimacy Director). Training: Intimacy Directors & Coordinators, Society of American Fight Directors, Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA), Pig Iron Advanced Performer Training, Illinois State University (BA, Acting and Directing with Exceptional Merit in the Arts). www.gabylabotka.com @theatre_warrior

Noah Larson (Assistant Music Director) is a multi-instrumentalist, composer, and producer. His music direction credits include: *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Lyric Theatre @ Illinois), *Memphis: The Musical* (Parkland College), *Fun Home* (Station Theatre), *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Bye Bye Birdie* (Mahomet-Seymour High School), as well as appearing in the pit for *A Funny Thing . . . Forum* (Illinois Theatre), *Songs for a New World* and *She Loves Me* (Lyric Theatre @ Illinois). Noah is also active in the local music scene, as keyboardist for Castle Finn, and co-founder, drummer, and producer behind Booth Blues.

Allison Moody (Vocal Coach) is the teaching assistant professor of voice and speech for the BFA and MFA acting programs in the Department of Theatre. She is a designated Linklater Teacher, a Guild Certified Feldenkrais Practitioner, and is working towards her certification in Estill Voice Training Figure Proficiency. Other Illinois Theatre credits include *The Wolves* as SOCCER MOM, a featured playwright for *The 48*, and voice/dialect/text coach for the following productions: *Neverland*, *Origin Story*, *Pshitter!*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Cabaret*, *Gem of the Ocean*, *Because I Am Your Queen*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*.

Chantel Renee (Costume Designer) is currently pursuing a MFA in costume design at the University of Illinois. Chantel is from Detroit, Michigan and received her BFA in apparel and

textile design from Michigan State University, she also studied briefly at Ohio University before coming to the U of I. Her Illinois Theatre credits include *RENT* (Costume Designer), *Coriolanus* (Assistant Costume Designer), and *Urinetown* (Assistant Costume Designer and Wardrobe Supervisor). Other credits include *Absentia* (Costume Designer) Vibrancy Theater; *Everybody* (Craft Shop Supervisor), *Be Head, The Women of Lockerbie* (Costume Designer) Ohio University Theater; *Bonnets: How Ladies of Good Breeding are Induced to Murder* (Costume Designer), *Frankenstein* (Hair and Makeup Designer) Michigan State University Theatre; *Our Town, Dames at Sea* (Costume Designer) Summer Circle Theatre. More of Chantel's work can be viewed on her website chantelreeneedesigns.com. Chantel is also the Owner of So'Cha Handmade a jewelry and accessories business, Find me on Instagram @sochahandmade.

Will Sexton (Scenic Designer) is an Air Force veteran and third-year scenic design MFA candidate with his BA in theatre arts and BS in business management from Bridgewater State University. Previous scene design work includes *The Revolutionists* (Illinois Theatre); *Descendants: The Musical*, *Moana*, and *James and the Giant Peach* (Ogunquit Playhouse); *Constellations*, *The Totalitarians*, and *The Bald Soprano* (Bridgewater State University). He has presented at the United States Institute for Theatre Technology on his topic: "Integrating Military Experience into an Undergraduate Theatre Education." Further, Will was scenic carpenter for *Singin' in the Rain*, *On Your Feet!*, *The Da Vinci Code*, *The Cher Show*, *The Nutty Professor*, and *Mr. Holland's Opus* (Ogunquit Playhouse); and *Much Ado About Nothing* (Brown Box Theatre Project). He was crew chief/deck carpenter for *Into the Woods*, *Gertrude and Claudius*, and *Fall Springs* (Barrington Stage

Company). He would like to thank his fiancée, Angela, for always being his rock.

Sarah Wigley (Vocal Coach) Sarah Wigley is a clinical pssociate Professor of voice for lLyric theatre department at the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana, where she instructs Lyric Theatre Studio, Musical Theatre Repertoire, and Singing in Musical Theatre while maintaining a private voice studio and frequently stage directing both opera and musical theatre. Wigley holds an MM in voice performance from Colorado State University and a BM in voice from the University of Minnesota. While residing in Minneapolis, Wigley performed professionally with regional companies such as the Guthrie Theatre, the Skylark Opera, the Mystery Cafe, the Minnesota Centennial Showboat, and the Minnesota Opera. Ms. Wigley's Denver credits include roles such as Aldonza in *Man of LaMancha*, Emma in *Jekyll and Hyde*, Dolores in *The Wild Party*, and Miss Scarlett in *Clue—The Musical*. She has served as faculty for the musical theatre department at the University of Northern Colorado as well as Parlando School for the Arts in Boulder, Colorado, and has had several students appear on Broadway and in national tours and regional theaters across the nation.

As a contemporary voice specialist, Ms. Wigley frequently presents workshops concerning flexible voice technique and crossover training for both studio voice teachers and choral educators. Sessions ranging from "Crossing Over: Contemporary Voice Technique for Solo and Ensemble Singing" to "Crossing Genres: A Classical Singer's Guide to Jazz" have energized the International Congress of Voice Teachers in Stockholm, Sweden, the National Association for Teachers of Singing, Illinois Music Education Association, Iowa Choral Directors Association, and Minnesota Music Education

Association. Professor Wigley's students are frequently awarded as finalists in musical theatre competitions for the National Association for Arts and Letters and the National Association for Teachers of Singing, and she currently sits on the board of the Chicago chapter of the National Association for Teachers of Singing.

Kyle Wurtz (Lighting Designer) is a third-year graduate student at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign. This is his 11th year working in theatre. His University of Illinois design credits include *The Revolutionists* and Spring Studio Dance 2022. Kyle would like to thank his parents for always supporting his creativity, his little brother for always being his best friend, his uncle for introducing him to the world of theatre, and the rest of his family and friends for supporting him. He would also like to thank all the mentors and professors at Pepperdine and the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign for guiding him through his time there and preparing him for a career in theatre.

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As a land-grant institution, the University of Illinois has a particular responsibility to acknowledge the peoples of these lands, as well as the histories of dispossession that have allowed for the growth of this institution. We are also obligated to reflect on and actively address these histories and the role that this university has played in shaping them.

This acknowledgment and the centering of Native peoples is a start as we move forward.

Krannert Center affirms the commitment by the university to move beyond these statements, toward building deeper relationships and taking actions that uphold and preserve Indigenous rights and cultural equity.

As we gather to experience this performance, we have an opportunity to reflect on the ways that systems of oppression have shaped our society. We can work together to create systems that support human dignity, establish equity, strengthen cross-cultural relationships, and draw upon the creative capacity of all people that make up this community, state, nation, and world.

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Tony Mapson, Assistant Facility Manager
Joe Butsch, Building Electrician

Jared Painter, Assistant Chief Building
Operations Engineer
Scott Butler, Eric Carr, Emmett Catlin,
Austin Dearth, Sara Dietrich, John
Ekstrom, Jessica Fancher, Bryan
Franzen, Mark Lashbrook, Jacob
Lerch, Kevin Logue, Chad Schwenk,
Attendants
Glenda Dalton, Office Support Associate

MARKETING

Maureen V. Reagan, Associate Director
for Marketing

Communications

Linea Johnson, Communications Director
Sean Kutzko, Assistant Communications
Director
Nicholas Mulvaney, Art Director
Jodee Stanley, Program and Web Editor

Public Services

Amy Thomas, Food Services Director
Abraham Castro, Intermezzo Kitchen
Lead
Elizabeth Henke, Stage 5 Bar Manager
Michael Bunting, Hospitality Supervisor
Whitney Havice, Ticketing and Patron
Services Director
Ty Mingo, Assistant Ticket Services
Director
Jon Proctor, Nick Wurl, Ticket Sales
Supervisors
Ann-Marie Dittmann, Patron Services
Assistant Director
Adrian Rochelle, Front of House
Performance Supervisor

PRODUCTION

Terri Anne Ciofalo, Director
of Production
Maria Miguens, Interim Production
Manager

Audio Department

Rick Scholwin, Audio Director
Alec LaBau, Associate Audio Director/
Video Director

Costume Shop

Andrea Bouck, Costume Director

Richard Gregg, Costume Rentals Director/
Wardrobe Adviser/Associate Costume
Director
Paige Stewart-Rankins, Hair & Makeup
Supervisor
Julianna Steitz, First Hand
April McKinnis, EB McTigue,
Cutters/Drapers
Kari Little-McKinney, Theatrical Stitcher

Lighting Department

Lisa Kidd, Lighting Director
David Krupla, Associate Lighting Director
Nick Jukes, Lighting and Media
Technician

Properties Department

Adriane Binky Donley, Properties Director
Kira Lyon, Assistant Properties Director

Scene Shop

Ryan Schultz, Technical Director
Tatsuya Ito, Associate Technical Director
Bill Kephart, Scene Shop Chief Clerk
Bobby Reynolds, Theatrical Scene Shop
Coordinator
Liam Romano, Kayley Woolums, Theatrical
Scene Shop Assistants

PERFORMING ARTS BUSINESS

SERVICE CENTER

Debbie Delaney, Stacey Elliott, Shelly
Thomas-Eichorn, Accounting Staff



MISSION

The Virginia Theatre is an historic performing arts center and movie palace that hosts concerts, stage plays, dance, spoken word, children's events, films, comedy, private parties, corporate events, the Roger Ebert's Film Festival, meetings and more. Since 1921, the 1463-seat Virginia has been a Champaign-Urbana landmark, offering entertainment first as a vaudeville house, legitimate theatre, and movie house. Now fully restored, the Virginia is ideally positioned to resume its role as vibrant community center, active performance space, and bustling cinema!

The Champaign Park District, which owns and operates the Virginia Theatre, is here to connect you to a vibrant community of people and opportunities. Our mission is to enhance our community's quality of life through positive experiences in parks, recreation, and cultural arts.

FACILITY POLICIES

Tickets are required for all ages, for all shows. One admission per ticket. Infant comp tickets may be made available to the public at select performances; please inquire with the Box Office prior to ordering tickets. Each show's presenter will determine age restrictions for entry, if applicable.

If your tickets are waiting for you at Will Call, please bring a photo ID with you.

In some cases, latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the production.

No cameras or recording devices allowed inside the theatre. Any exception to this policy will be announced at the performance as well as in-advance, when possible.

Weapons of any kind (including pepper spray or mace) are strictly prohibited inside the venue and

may result in ejection without refund.

There is no outside food or drink allowed inside the Virginia Theatre at any time.

Smoking is strictly prohibited in the Virginia Theatre.

For everyone's safety, the Virginia Theatre inspects all bags upon entry of the theatre. Please allow extra time for this process.

ACCESSIBILITY

The newly-restored Virginia Theatre now includes transfer seating on both levels plus wheelchair-accessible seating on the auditorium's main floor. One companion seat is available per wheelchair seat.

The theatre is equipped with an elevator allowing access to the building's upstairs lobby and restrooms. Please note that the Virginia's mezzanine and upper balcony seating are still accessible only via stairs. The venue has also updated its public restrooms to be ADA-compliant.

Assisted listening devices are available upon request at no charge. A single earpiece bud, ear speaker, or neck loop may be used by patrons to enhance their enjoyment of films, spoken word events, and live performances. Devices may be obtained at the box office before the show. A credit card, driver's license, or other form of ID is required.

Sign Language interpretation can be made available for events, upon request. Please give a minimum of two weeks' notice to the box office.

For specific questions about assisted listening devices, accessible seating, or other accommodations, please call the box office at 217-356-9063.



\$10 U OF I STUDENT TIX

COME AS YOU ARE. LEAVE DIFFERENT.



U of I students, come on in. In whatever clothes, whatever state of mind, from whatever world of experience, you are welcome here. We don't have a dress code, we don't have an opinion code, and we want the Center to be your kind of place. Because of the vital support of Krannert Center donors and the Krannert Center U of I student fee, U of I students never pay more than \$10 for a ticket, and dozens of events each year are completely free.

Your presence helps to make Krannert Center a place like nowhere else—and what you can experience here makes your education like nobody else's. If you are inspired by what you find here, invite others to join you.

When you come to Krannert Center, we promise that you'll leave different: refreshed, reaffirmed, renewed!

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TH-SA JAN 18-20 AT 7:30PM

INDIAN INK
THEATRE COMPANY:
MRS. KRISHNAN'S PARTY



 krannert center