

# Uptown Players

WORLD PREMIERE



A CAROL ANN CHRISTMAS

Original Lyrics and Music by

**MARK WALDROP**

Co-Creator of WHEN PIGS FLY

additional materials by **B.J. CLEVELAND**

**DEC 5-14, 2025**

KALITA HUMPHREYS THEATER

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## **A NOTE FROM THE PRODUCERS**

Welcome to the world premiere of *Star of Wonder: A Carol Ann Christmas*, and thank you for helping us launch Uptown Players' 24th season. Beginning a new year of theatre is always meaningful, but starting it with a brand-new musical created just for our stage feels especially joyful.

When we founded this company twenty-four years ago, we dreamed of building a theatre that celebrated community, embraced queer joy, and welcomed everyone who walked through our doors. Nights like this—filled with laughter, sparkle, and shared experience—remind us exactly why we continue this work.

If you joined us tonight with a single ticket, you can still apply the value of that ticket toward a full season subscription. It's the best way to experience everything ahead and to support the artists and stories that define Uptown.

As we begin our 24th season, your presence means more than ever. In a time when LGBTQ+ rights and stories are increasingly questioned or minimized, your support helps ensure that spaces like Uptown Players continue to thrive. This theatre has always been a home—somewhere our community can gather, celebrate, reflect, and see our lives represented honestly onstage.

Thank you for being part of that mission. Your support keeps inclusive, joyous, and daring theatre shining brightly in Dallas.

With appreciation,  
Jeff Rane & Craig Lynch  
Producers, Uptown Players

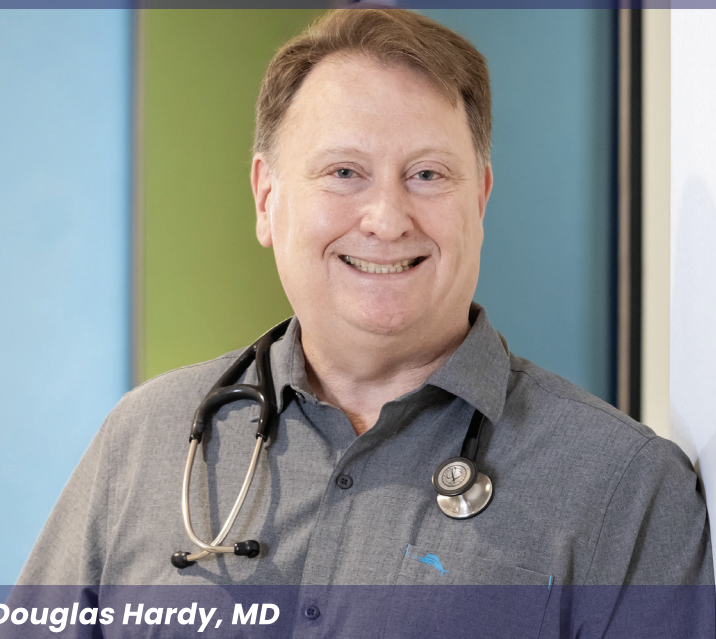
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# Star of WONDER

A CAROL ANN CHRISTMAS

**Book and Original Lyrics by Mark Waldrop**

**Original Music by Jeff Lodin**

**Additional Materials by B.J. Cleveland**

**Musical Arrangements by Adam C. Wright**

**Directed by B.J. Cleveland**

**Musical Direction by Adam C. Wright**

**Choreography by Alli Betsill**

**Scenic Design by**  
Dennis Canright

**Lighting Design by**  
Mia Lindemann

**Sound Design by**  
Brian Christensen

**Costume Design by**  
Suzi Cranford

**Hair/Makeup Design by**  
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**Stage Managed by**  
Lexi Salmon\*

**Assistant Stage Manager**  
Rain Phillips

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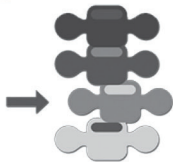
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# CAST

(in alphabetical order)

Peter.....	Peter DiCesare
Ryan.....	Ryan Michael Friedman
Carol Ann Knipple.....	Micah Green
Jacob.....	Jacob Hemsath
Laura.....	Laura Lites
Seth.....	Seth Paden
Kylie.....	Kylie Stewart
Jada.....	L. Walter*
Brett.....	Brett Warner*



*\* Member of Actors Equity Association,  
the union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers  
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*Actors Equity Association negotiates wages and working conditions and  
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*Through its agreement with Equity, this theatre has committed to the fair treatment  
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Master Carpenter.....	Dennis Canright
Master Electrician.....	Garrett Brannan
Dance Captain .....	Jacob Hemsath
Production Assistant.....	Phillip Hearne
ASL Interpreters (Dec 7).....	American Sign Language Interpreting Services
Running Crew.....	Ian Salmon, Garrett Brannan
Spot Operators.....	Leo Thomas, Andrew Parry
Dressers.....	Suzi Cranford
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Production Photographer.....	Mike Morgan Photography
Additional video by.....	Burnt Pie Productions
Opening Night Cake provided by.....	Daisy Cakes

## ORCHESTRA

Keyboard/Conductor.....	Adam C. Wright
Woodwinds.....	Chad Ostermiller
Guitar.....	Sam Walker
Percussion.....	Michael Ptacin

## SPECIAL THANKS

Daisy Cakes, Dallas Theater Center, Lyric Stage,  
Theatre Arlington, Vonda K. Bowling

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Jack Lewis & Alan Colvin  
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Philip Martin  
Mark McCool & Rick Deere  
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Samuel McKinzie  
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Carolyn Webber  
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Marianne Wilson  
David Womack  
Carol Young

# MUSICAL NUMBERS

## ACT I

***We Three Kings/I Wonder as I Wonder***.....Full Company  
Traditional

***It's The Most Wonderful Time***.....Carol Ann and Company  
Music & Lyrics by Eddie Pola & George Wyle

***All Those Christmas Cliches***.....Peter  
Music by Stephen Flaherty, Lyrics by Lynn Ahrens

***It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas***.....Carol Ann and Jada  
Music and Lyrics by Meredith Willson

***I Wanna Be a Rockette***.....Carol Ann  
Music by Alan Menken, Lyrics by Tom Eyen

***A Walk in the Rain, Dear***.....Jacob with Brett, Kylie, Laura  
Music by Jeffrey Lodin, Lyrics by Mark Waldrop

***The Truth About Christmas***.....Kylie  
Music & Lyrics by David Friedman

***I Only Want You***.....Seth with Peter, Jacob, Ryan  
Music by Jeffrey Lodin, Lyrics by Mark Waldrop

***Bethle-Hams Medley***.....Full Company  
Various

**There will be one 15-minute intermission between acts**



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# MUSICAL NUMBERS

## ACT II

***Christmas is an Island***.....Full Company  
Music and Lyrics by Marshall Barer & Lance Ong

***Just Like Every Christmas***.....Laura  
Music by Jeffrey Lodin, Lyrics by Mark Waldrop

***Chinese For Christmas***.....Ryan  
Music by Jeffrey Lodin, Lyrics by Mark Waldrop

***Surabaya Santa***.....Brett  
Music and Lyrics by Jason Robert Brown

***Winter Wonderland***.....Jacob & Seth  
Music by Felix Bernard, Lyrics by Richard B. Smith

***Sweet As You***.....Laura & Kylie  
Music by Jeffrey Lodin, Lyrics by Mark Waldrop

***Star of Wonder***.....Carol Ann and Company  
Music by Adam C Wright, Lyrics by Mark Waldrop

***Share the Gift You've Got***.....Peter and Company  
Music by Jeffrey Lodin, Lyrics by Mark Waldrop

***The Christmas Dance***.....Full Company  
Music and Lyrics by Darren Criss & Matthew Callaha

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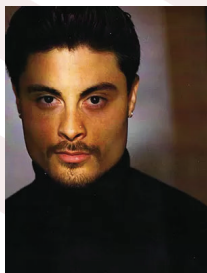
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# COMPANY PROFILES



**PETER DICESARE (Peter)** Uptown Players credits include Buddy in *The View Upstairs*, Pirelli in *Sweeney Todd*, Miss Deep South in *Pageant*, the Young Thing in *Hello Again*, Buddy in *The Last Session*, Carmen Ghia in *The Producers*, many *Broadway Our Ways*, and *IMAGINE* (Uptown Players/ Bruce Wood Dance). Regional credits include Andrew in *Facing East* (Lyric Theatre, London), Shermy in *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (Dallas Children's Theater), Mr. McQueen in *Urinetown* and Peter in *Mix Tape* (Theater Arlington), the Waiter in *She Loves Me* (Stage West), Herald in *Kismet* (Lyric Stage), Bud Frump in *How To Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* and Dr. Kitchell in *Bells Are Ringing* (MILK). Peter holds a BFA in Musical Theatre from Texas Christian University.

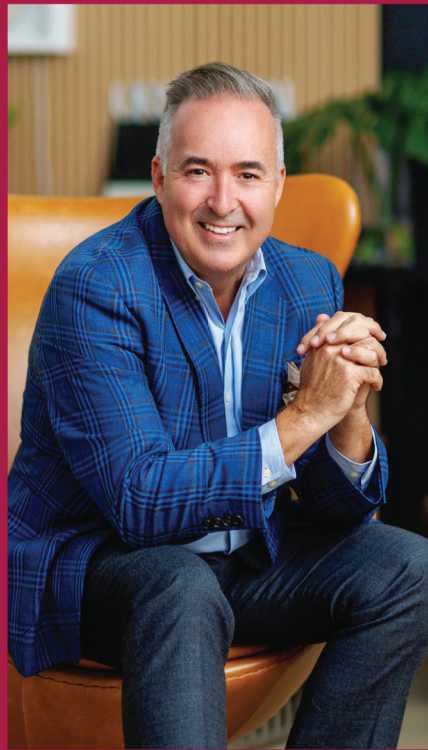


**RYAN MICHAEL FRIEDMAN (Ryan)** Uptown Players credits include Man 1 in *A Queer Carol* and *Broadway Our Way* 2025. Regional credits include Benny Southstreet in *Guys and Dolls*, Adolfo Pirelli in *Sweeney Todd*, Carmen Ghia in *The Producers*, Radames in *Aida* (Lyric Stage), the devising company of *h\*llo k\*tty syndrome* (Undermain Theatre), Feste in *Twelfth Night* (Shakespeare Dallas), Victor Castillo in *Safe At Home* (Kitchen Dog Theatre), Leo in *I Wanna F\*\*\*\*\* Tear You Apart* (Stage West) and Miles in *Tuck Everlasting* (Casa Mañana, Dallas Children's Theatre). Ryan is a graduate from Florida State University's School of Theatre, Theatre Academy London and Department of Psychology, and an alumnus from Florida Studio Theatre's Acting Apprentice Company.



**MICAH GREEN (Carol Ann Knipple)** Uptown Players credits include Carol Ann in *When Pigs Fly*, Miss Great Plains in *Pageant*, *Broadway Our Way*, and himself in *Jada Bells* and *Christmas Our Way*. Regional credits include Roger De Bris in *The Producers* (Lyric Stage), Harold in *Black Comedy*, Cooper Callahan in *Hooray for Holidays*, Melvin P. Thorpe in *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, Sawyer in *Miracle on 34th Street*, Tom/Phyllis/Leslie in *Sylvia* and countless one-man cabarets (Theatre Arlington). Directorial credit includes *The 25th Annual...Spelling Bee* (Theatre Arlington). Micah holds his BM in Musical Theatre from Oklahoma City University and performed with Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma and was a featured singer with the Oklahoma City Philharmonic for various concerts.

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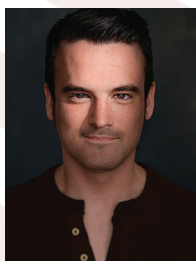
# COMPANY PROFILES



**JACOB HEMSATH (Jacob)** Uptown Players credits include Georg in *Spring Awakening*, Ensemble in *Disaster! The Musical*, Ensemble/Swing in *The View Upstairs*, Howard Crabtree in *When Pigs Fly* (2021), himself in *Helen Holy's Holiday Spectacular* and *Jada Bells*, and many *Broadway Our Ways*. Regional credits include Teen Angel in *Grease* (Murry's Dinner Playhouse), Romeo in *Newsies* and Ensemble in *Evita* (Lyric Stage), and Oliver in *Frank-N-Friend* (Casa Mañana). Jacob holds a BM in Musical Theatre from Ouachita Baptist University.



**LAURA LITES (Laura)** Uptown Players credits include Pamela in *Head Over Heels*, Sister Mary Downey in *Disaster! The Musical*, one of the Divas in *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*, Kate McGowan in *Titanic: The Musical*, Songs for a New World, the Nurse in *Hello Again* and many *Broadway Our Ways*. Regional credits include Francesca in *The Bridges of Madison County*, Lizzie and *Murder Ballad* (IMPRINT Theatreworks); *Hair* and *Les Misérables* (Dallas Theater Center); Franca Naccarelli in *The Light in the Piazza* and Fraulein Kost in *Cabaret* (Brick Road Theatre); and *Ragtime*, *Cabaret* (Lyric Stage).



**SETH PADEN (Seth)** Uptown Players credits include Alan in *The Boys in the Band*, himself in *Jada Bells*, Musidorus in *Head over Heels*, and *Broadway Our Way* 2023 and 2025. Regional credits include Neleus/Northbrook/Bert US in *Mary Poppins Jr.* (Casa Manana); Emcee in *Cabaret* (Theatre Arlington); Jeff in *[title of show]*, Chad in *Disaster! the Musical*, Sam Wheat in *Ghost - The Musical* (Pollard Theatre); Roger in *Rent*, Orin Scrivello in *Little Shop of Horrors*, Cousin Kevin in *The Who's Tommy*, DeeDee Ramone in *Four Chords and a Gun* (Tulsa Project Theatre); and Brad Majors in *The Rocky Horror Show* (TADA Theatre Inc).

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NAMT and its member theaters,  
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# FUELING A *VIBRANT* ARTS COMMUNITY FOR *DALLAS*

A photograph of two dancers in a dynamic pose. The dancer in the foreground is wearing a white tank top and has a tattoo on their left arm. The dancer in the background is wearing a white tank top and has a tattoo on their right shoulder. They are both looking upwards and have their heads tilted back. The lighting is dramatic, with strong red and blue hues. The background is dark, and the overall mood is energetic and artistic.

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[taca-arts.org](http://taca-arts.org)

Prison Movement Theater | La Magasin: The French Abolitionist | Photo by Courtney Amaro

# COMPANY PROFILES



**KYLIE STEWART (Kylie)** Uptown Players credits include Philoclea in *Head Over Heels*, Kate Murphy in *Titanic: The Musical*, Ensemble roles in *Disaster! The Musical* and *Catch Me If You Can*, *Sweeney Todd* in concert, many *Broadway Our Ways*, and the IMAGINE concert with Bruce Wood Dance. Regional credits include Kate/Pirate/Police in *The Pirates of Penzance* (Theatre Three), Swing in *The Other Josh Cohen* (Circle Theatre), Oona O'Neill in *Chaplin* (WaterTower Theatre), Evelyn Nesbit in *Ragtime* and Kate McGowan in *Titanic: The Musical* (Lyric Stage), Ado Annie in *Oklahoma!* and Sister Mary Robert in *Sister Act* (Riverside Center for the Performing Arts). Kylie holds a BFA in Theatre: Musical Theatre Emphasis from Texas Christian University.



**L. WALTER (Jada)** Uptown Players credits include Miss Texas in *Pageant*, Man 1 in *Songs For A New World*, Black Dude in *The Toxic Avenger*, Belize in *Angels In America I & II*, Tracey Mills in *The Legend Of Georgia McBride*, Richie in *A Chorus Line*, Willie in *The View Upstairs*, Lola in *Kinky Boots*, and Pythio in *Head Over Heels*. Regional credits include Jim Conley in *Parade*, Victor in *Smokey Joe's Cafe*, Carson in *Hit The Wall* (WaterTower Theatre); Audrey in *Little Shop Of Horrors* (Theater Three); Angel in *RENT* (Casa Mañana Theater); Frenchie in *Cabaret*, Columbia and Frank-N-Furter in *The Rocky Horror Show*, MC in *Dreamgirls* (Dallas Theater Center). Other credits include Frank-N-Furter in *The Rocky Horror Show* (Lyric Theatre Of Oklahoma), Fairy Godmother in *Cinderella* (Zach Theatre), and Three in *What To Send Up When It Goes Down* (Stage West).



**BRETT WARNER (Brett)** Uptown Players credits include IMAGINE, Ray in *Everybody's Talking About Jamie*, herself in *Jada Bells*, Mopsa in *Head Over Heels*, Carmen in *The Nance*, Trio in *The Boy From Oz*, Velcro in *Soho Cinders*, and many *Broadway Our Ways*. Regional credits include Marya in *The Great Comet of 1812*, Woman 1 in *I Love You, You're Perfect...* (Theatre Three), EKO in *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*, Josh Cohen and Others in *The Other Josh Cohen*, Pippin in *Fellowship!* (Circle Theatre), Rona in *The 25th Annual...Spelling Bee* (Theatre Arlington), Woman 1 in *First Date* (Stage West), Sarah in *Murder Ballad* (IMPRINT Theatreworks), Lucy in *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, and Mayzie La Bird in *Seussical the Musical* (Dallas Children's Theater).



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# PRODUCTION STAFF

**ALLI BETSILL (Choreographer)** Uptown Players credits include *Broadway Our Way* 2024, 2025. Other credits include Director/Choreographer for *The Pigeon Gets A Big Time Holiday Extravaganza!* and *Pete the Cat* (Dallas Children's Theater); Assistant Director/Swing for the *Sound of Music* and *Clue* and Associate Director for *Into the Woods* (Dallas Theater Center); Co-Choreographer and Associate Director for *Manic Monologues* and Dance Captain for *Mary Poppins* (Watertown Theatre); Choreographer for *Bright Star* and *Sister Act* (TCU); Director for *Cabaret* (UNT); Cat in the Hat in *Seussical The Musical* and Wilbur in *Charlotte's Web* (Casa Mañana); Carol in *Black Comedy* (Theatre Arlington); Director/Choreographer for *The Addams Family* (Firehouse Theatre); Choreographer for *Six Flag's Holiday in the Park*; and other credits with Circle Theatre, Amphibian Stage, Garland Summer Musicals, and Prism Movement Theatre. Alli holds a BFA in Acting - Honors Thesis in Musical Theatre Dance and Choreography from TCU.

**DENNIS CANRIGHT (Scenic Design & Master Carpenter)** Celebrating forty-six years in this business of show, the last nineteen years with Uptown Players as Master Carpenter. Dennis has also lent his talents as Scenic Designer, Actor and Director. His directorial credits include *The Boys in the Band*, *Nun Crackers*, *Good Boys and True*, and *Boomer Tyro is Coming Home*. On stage he has appeared in *The Last Session*, *The Boy from Oz* and *Regrets Only*. Dennis has designed several productions including *Twilight of the Golds* (w/ Doug Miller), *Xanadu*, *Head Over Heels*, *When Pigs Fly*, *A Very Sordid Wedding*, *Disaster! The Musical* (w/ Kevin Brown) and many productions of *Broadway Our Way*.

**BRIAN CHRISTENSEN (Sound Designer)** Uptown Players credits include *Everybody's Talking About Jamie*, *Xanadu*, *Head Over Heels*, *Kinky Boots*, and almost every Uptown Players production since 2017. Brian is also the resident sound engineer at Dallas Children's Theater since 2015. Other regional credits include *Lizzie* (IMPRINT Theatreworks), *Taming* (WaterTower Theatre), *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* (Lewisville Playhouse), and *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* (Lakeside Community Theatre). Productions of his original musicals include *Daughter of Re* and *Greece: A Mythical Comedy* (IMPRINT Theatreworks' First Impressions Festival), *Daughter of Re* (Rogue Theatre Festival/MusicalWriters Productions), and *Lend Me A Chainsaw* (MusicalWriters Productions, Lakeside Community Theatre). Brian holds a BA in Theatre from the University of North Texas.

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**B.J. CLEVELAND (Director)** is delighted to return for his 25th season as an original Uptown Player having starred as Howard Crabtree in the inaugural show, *When Pigs Fly*. Since then, he has starred in the regional premieres of *The Prom*, *The Nance*, *The Producers*, *Legends!*, *Regrets Only*, *Valhalla*, as well as *Love! Valour! Compassion!*, *Pageant*, *It's Only A Play*, and the one-man 44-character play, *Application Pending*. Returning this year, B.J. has directed *Vanya and Sonya* and *Masha and Spike*, *A Queer Carol*, *Disaster!*, *A Very Judy Christmas*, *Sister Helen Holy's Holiday Spectacular*, *Forbidden Broadway*, *Beautiful Thing*, *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told*, and many Broadway *Our Ways*. Appearances on other DFW stages include *God in An Act of God* (Stage West), *Trunchbull* in *Matilda* (Casa Mañana), *Alphie Byrne* in *A Man of No Importance* (Brick Road Theatre), and the entire Dysquith Family in *A Gentlemen's Guide to Love and Murder* (Theatre Frisco). B.J. directed productions for Theatre Three, WaterTower Theatre, Contemporary Theater of Dallas, Casa Mañana, 1:30 Productions, Theatre Arlington (16 years as Artistic Director), and Dallas Children's Theater. He is widely known as the #1 kids television host of TV's Disney Afternoon and won numerous awards for acting and directing from the DFW Theater Critics Forum, D Magazine, Dallas Voice, Star Telegram, BroadwayWorld.com, and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Live Theatre League of Tarrant County.

**SUZI CRANFORD (Costume Design)** Uptown Players credits include *Everybody's Talking About Jamie*, *Xanadu*, *we are continuous*, *Fire & Air*, *Down South*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (2003/2013), *A Man of No Importance*, *The Who's Tommy*, *Pageant* (2004/2014), *Aida* (2006/2016), *The Valley of the Dolls*, *Die Mommie Die!*, *bare!*, *breathe!*, *Bent*, *The Trials and Tribulations of a Trailer Trash Housewife*, *History Boys*, *Forbidden Broadway*, *The Temperamentals*, *The Facts of Life*, *Thank You for Being a Friend*, *The Divine Sister*, *Songs for a New World*, *The Boy from Oz*, *The Nance*, *End of the Rainbow*, *Vanya and Sona and Masha and Spike*, *Angels in America* (Part 1/Part 2), *The Legend of Georgia McBride*, *The Cake*, *The View Upstairs*, *A Very Sordid Wedding*, *When Pigs Fly*, *Fun Home*, *Torch Song*, *Silver Foxes*, *Chicken and Biscuits*, *Jada Bells*, and all Broadway *Our Ways/Christmas Our Way*.

**MIA LINDEMANN (Lighting Designer)** Uptown Players credits include Master Electrician for *Everybody's Talking about Jamie*, *Xanadu* and *Broadway Our Way* 2025. Regional credits include Master Electrician for *Othello* and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Shakespeare Dallas), Lighting Design for *Ghost-The Musical* (Upright Theatre Company), *The Sunshine Boys* (Mainstage Irving-Las Colinas), and *Alice: A Variation...in Wonderland* (Plague Mask Players). Mia holds a BA in Theatre from Stephen F. Austin State University.

# PRODUCTION STAFF

**MICHAEL B. MOORE (Hair/Wig/Makeup Designer)** Uptown Players credits include *Everybody's Talking About Jamie*, *Xanadu*, *A Queer Carol*, *The Boys in the Band*, *The Prom*, *The Producers*, *The Boy from Oz*, *Catch Me If You Can*, *Hedwig, End of the Rainbow*, *It's Only a Play*, *Aida*, *Titanic: The Musical*, *La Cage...*, *Angels in America*, *It Shoulda' Been You*, *A Chorus Line*, *The Full Monty*, *Priscilla*, *The Legend of Georgia McBride*, *Spring Awakening*, *A Very Judy Christmas*, *Disaster!*, *A Very Sordid Wedding*, *Kinky Boots*, *The Little Dog Laughed*, *Torch Song*, *Head Over Heels*, *Silver Foxes*, and *Chicken & Biscuits*. Regional credits include *Chaplin*, *Goin' Hollywood*, *A Gentleman's Guide...*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *...Trailer Park...*, *Cinderella*, and *The Cuban and the Redhead*.

**RAIN PHILLIPS (Assistant Stage Manager)** Uptown Players credits include ASM for *Xanadu*, *Broadway Our Way*, *we are continuous*, *The Prom*, *Head Over Heels*, *Kinky Boots*, *Fun Home*, and *When Pigs Fly*; Stage Manager for *A Queer Carol*, *Oy Vey In A Manger*, and *Fire and Air*. Regional credits include Stage Manager for *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* and *The Underpants* (MainStage Irving-Las Colinas) and Costume Designer for *Kodachrome* (Circle Theatre). Rain holds a BFA in Theatre Design and Technology from TCU.

**LEXI SALMON (Production Stage Manager)** Uptown Players credits include *Silver Foxes*, *The Prom*, *we are continuous*, *Jada Bells*, *Everybody's Talking About Jamie*. Regional credits include *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and *Carmen* (The Dallas Opera); *The Rocky Horror Show* (Dallas Theater Center); *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Manic Monologues*, *Satchmo at the Waldorf* (WaterTower Theatre); *God of Carnage*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf*, *Stede Bonnet*, and *Maytag Virgin* (Theatre Three). Touring credit includes *Magic Mike Live* (North American Tour). She has a B.A. in Theatre from TWU and is a proud member of AEA.

**KENNEDY SMITH (Properties Designer)** Uptown Players credits include Props Designer for *Everybody's Talking About Jamie*, *Xanadu*, *Broadway Our Way*, *we are continuous*, *Queer Carol*, and *The Boys In The Band*. Regional credits include Assistant Stage Manager for *Carrie: The Musical* (Theatre Three), Set Designer for *Cloud Tectonics* (Teatro Dallas), Props Designer for *Sleuth* (Theatre Three), Props Designer for *Artemisia* (Circle Theatre), Assistant Stage Manager for *Noises Off!* (Theatre Three), and Props Designer and Assistant Stage Manager for *Sweeney Todd* (Lyric Stage). Kennedy is the Resident Props Designer for Uptown Players and holds a BFA in Theatrical Design and Technology from The University of Texas at Arlington.

**ADAM C WRIGHT (Music Director/Arranger/Orchestrator)** is a prolific pianist, composer, accompanist, and director who has maintained a lengthy and abundant career across North Texas. His primary home is the Dallas Children's Theater, but he also music directs productions at Uptown Players, WaterTower Theatre, and Circle Theatre. Completed original works include *Imposter!*, *Hypocrite! TARTUFFE!*, *A Taste of Beauty*, *Mama: a musical*, *If a Frog Had Wings*, and *The Starlight Lounge*. He also worked as Betty Buckley's rehearsal pianist for her show *The Other Woman – The Vixens of Broadway*. You can find him collaborating with vocalists at various cabaret venues and piano bars across the Metroplex.



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