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NEAR WEST THEATRE PRESENTS

The Fantasticks

DEEP IN DECEMBER OUR HEARTS SHOULD REMEMBER, AND FOLLOW

PERFORMED BY A **SPRING ADULT CAST**, AGES 16 AND UP

JUNE 17 - 26, 2022

PERFORMANCES: JUNE 17, 18, 19, 24, 25, & 26

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MUSIC BY HARVEY SCHMIDT

THE MUSICAL IS SUGGESTED BY A PLAY *LES ROMANESQUE* BY
EDMOND ROSTAND.

Since its opening in May 1960 at the Sullivan Secret Street Playhouse in New York, and its subsequent revival at the Jerry Orbach Theatre, The Fantasticks remains the longest-running production of any kind in the history of American theatre.

THE FANTASTICKS is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also provided by MTI. www.MTIsShows.com

Photographing, videotaping or recording audio or images of this production, including by camera, cell phone, or other device, is strictly prohibited.

THE TEAM

DARIUS STUBBS
DIRECTOR

HEIDI HERCZEG
MUSIC DIRECTOR

MAEVE GREISING
STAGE MANAGER

SEQUOIA BOSTICK
SCENIC DESIGNER

JEREMY PAUL
LIGHTING DESIGNER

KELLY ELLIOTT
COMBAT CHOREOGRAPHER

MIA JONES
COSTUME DESIGNER

KATE ATHERTON
PROPS MASTER

THOMAS JEFFRIES
SOUND DESIGNER

MICHAEL STEIN
PRODUCTION & RENTALS MANAGER

PERREN HEDDERSON
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

EMILY HEHNEN
ASSISTANT TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

MUSICIANS

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DRUMS **JOHN MUSAT**
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PUBLICITY

PRODUCTION PHOTOS **AMBER PATRICK**
PRODUCTION ART DESIGNER **NOAH HRBEK**
PLAYBILL **BAILEY PFOHL**

THE CAST

El Gallo	CARLOS ANTONIO CRUZ
Luisa	SARAH FARRIS
Matt.....	OSCAR WATERS IV
Hucklebee.....	JABRI JOHNSON
Henry	KEVIN KELLY
Mortimer	ROMAN NOVOSEL
The Mute.....	MACK VAN LIER
Bellomy.....	STEPHEN BERG

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT ONE

Overture	The Company
Try to Remember.....	El Gallo
Much More.....	Luisa
Metaphor	Matt and Luisa
Never Say “No”	Hucklebee and Bellomy
It Depends On What You Pay.....	El Gallo, Bellomy, Hucklebee
Soon It’s Gonna Rain	Matt and Luisa
The Abduction Ballet	The Company
Happy Ending	Matt, Luisa, Hucklebee, Bellomy

ACT TWO

The Plum is Too Ripe	Matt, Luisa, Hucklebee, Bellomy
I Can See It.....	El Gallo and Matt
Plant a Radish	Hucklebee and Bellomy
Round & Round	El Gallo, Luisa, Company
They Were You.....	Matt and Luisa
Try to Remember (reprise)	El Gallo

A NOTE FROM TRINIDAD

For as long as I can remember, Near West Theatre has been a place where big musicals feel intimate and personal. The cast could have sixty people and it still feels like they're speaking directly to you.

Thanks to the tenacity and passion of our founders, the idea of having our own building became a reality. We began considering how we could activate this facility further to **create more creative opportunities for our participants, audiences, and youth**. We are fortunate to thrive in a collaborative district--one that sought and received a state capital budget grant of \$750,000 in 2018 divided equally between Near West Theatre, The Capitol Theater, and Cleveland Public Theatre. We thank all of those passionate leaders who championed and lobbied for our vision, and after over two years of COVID delays, **we are honored and overwhelmed with joy to welcome you to Near West Theatre's Black Box!**

As we prepared for our 2021/2022 season, I knew the first show had to be something special. This was an opportunity to work with a smaller group of artists and to continue to produce work that supports our mission and community. *The Fantasticks* was a musical I was exposed to in college and fell in love with the beauty and poetry of the dialogue and music. It's the type of art that can be presented and shared in a small way while having a major impact. Since it is one of the longest running off Broadway musicals in history, it has been produced and performed many times. Although theatre continues to evolve and change, the reality is that this story is typically shared by a white director, with white actors, and from a white perspective. That was a story we had no interest in producing.

There was always one person I had in mind to direct this piece: Darius Stubbs.

Darius is a poet, artist and NWT alumni who truly understands our mission, values, and community. Even after our first initial conversation about the show I knew Darius was the perfect person.

A NOTE FROM TRINIDAD

So here we are today, with this beautiful show and this incredibly talented and diverse cast. I sincerely thank Darius, and the entire production team (Maeve, Sequoia, Jeremy, Kate, Mia, Kelly, Tommy, Heidi, Stein, Perren, and Emily) for all of your hard work. We could have never done it without you!

With that I welcome you, our community, family, and friends to the inaugural Black Box Theatre production, *The Fantasticks*!

With Gratitude,



Trinidad Snider
Artistic Director

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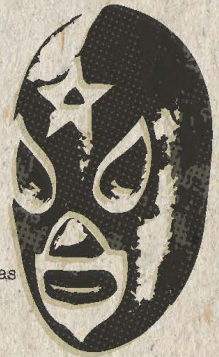
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GET TO KNOW THE CAST

Stephen Berg (Bellomy) (he/him) is excited to be making his debut in the new Near West Theatre space! Some of his recent acting credits include *Dreamwalkers* (The Doctor), *Wind in the Willows* (Rat), *Young Frankenstein the Musical* (Inspector Kemp), *Cannibal the Musical* (Shannon Bell), *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Captain Phoebus), *Beauty and the Beast* (Beast). He sends love to his friends, family, and YOU for being here.

Carlos Antonio Cruz (El Gallo) (he/they) is elated to be a part of NWT's first Black Box theatre production. He has been a part of the NEO theatre community for over 20 years and is very proud to call Near West Theatre home. His performance credits include *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Jesus), *Candide* (Candide), *Passing Strange* (Mr. Franklin, Joop, Mr. Venus), and *The Web of Anansi* (Anansi). He blesses God from whom all good things flow and the cast and crew for such a wonderful experience. ARRIBA PUERTO RICO! ARRIBA BORICUA!

Sarah Farris (Luisa) (she/her) is ecstatic to be back on the Near West Theatre stage and to be a part of their first black box production! Other shows at NWT that Sarah has been in include: *Spring Awakening* (Wendla), *Chess* (Florence), and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Ensemble). She has also performed in various other productions in NE Ohio such as: *The Sound of Music* (Liesl), *Legally Blonde* (Kate/Chutney), *Sister Act* (Ensemble), *Bye Bye Birdie* (Kim MacAfee), and others. She has also performed at Feinstein's/54 Below in NYC in *Secrets: A Spy Musical*. Love and thanks to her family, friends, and to her boyfriend, Brendan, for all their continuous love and support. She hopes you enjoy the show!

Mack van Lier (The Mute) (they/them) is very excited to be cast in the Fantasticks, as it's their first teen/adult show at Near West. They started performing when they were 8, in *Once On This Island Jr.* (2013), and since then have been a part of many shows at the theatre, including taking the role of Bazzard in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (2020). Mack would like to thank their family for being supportive and for sparking their interest in theatre in the first place, as well as everyone else involved with the show for being part of this experience.

GET TO KNOW THE CAST

Kevin Kelly (Henry) (he/him) is honored to share the stage with incredible friends and artists. He has directed, taught and performed in the Cleveland area for 27 years. Much love to our Director Darius Stubbs, for leading us over the wall. As always, TPOG.

Jabri Johnson (Hucklebee) (he/him) is happy to be back at NWT in their first blackbox production! Playing the role of Huck has made him feel more and more like his own father, and he's not exactly sure how to feel about that. He was last seen at NWT in *Hair* (2015) as a Tribe Member and *Assassins* (2016) as The Balladeer. All the love in the world to Mom, Dad, Emily Suzanne Plank, Lorna, and everyone else who's helped him along the way.

Roman Novosel (Mortimer) (all pronouns) is thrilled to return to Near West for NWT's first ever Black Box production! You may have previously seen Roman in NWT shows such as *Chess* (2019), *1776* (2019), *Carnival* (2018), *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (2018), and *Urinetown* (2016). Roman was also a member of the Saint Ignatius Harlequins, and performed in their productions of *Spamalot!* (2018), and *The Wedding Singer* (2019). You can also see Roman at Cedar Point's Hallowweekends as a scare actor. Outside of performing, Roman's "big-boy job" is selling fine meats and cheeses, and making delicious charcuterie boards for Astoria, located in Gordon Square.

Oscar Waters IV (Matt) (he/him) was recently seen on our main stage in Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* (Ensemble/U/S Topher, Jean Michel.) Other credits include *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Ensemble), *First Date* (Reggie), *Mamma Mia* (Ensemble), and *Dreamgirls* (Wayne.) Oscar would like to thank Darius, for allowing him to be a part of his vision! "Only sleep with a person that's going to be kind to you, a person that has humor, a person that's wealthy, and make sure the three never meet." - Joan Rivers

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GET TO KNOW THE ARTISTIC TEAM

Kate Atherton (Props Designer) (she/her) is a comic artist, librarian, and theatre artist living and working in Cleveland, Ohio. Kate attended Rhode Island School of Design, BFA in Illustration, class of 2011, and since has worked as a set painter (for the Cleveland Playhouse and Talespinner Children's Theatre), illustrator (Kringles Inventionarium, Heights Arts, Edible Cleveland), comics/art workshop teacher (Lake Erie Ink, RISE at Near West Theatre), Props designer (Near West Theatre), performer, actor, and stage manager. Kate collaborated on props design for *Hairspray*, *Children of Eden*, *Christmas Story the Musical*, *Carrie and Musical*, and others at Near West Theatre and stage-managed many of the Near West 9-15 age productions including *Urinetown*, *Xanadu*, *Aida*, and *Anyone Can Whistle*. She is thankful to have had the opportunity to contribute a great deal of confetti, some paint, and a lot of singing along in the props room to the first Near West black box theatre production *The Fantasticks*.

Sequoia Bostick (Scenic Designer) (she/her) is an Illustrator, maker, and designer living in Cleveland, Ohio. After earning her BFA in Illustration from the Cleveland Institute of Art in 2014, she pursued a career as a resident teaching artist where she works with local youth to grow their visual art skills all while growing her own artistic practice as a multi-disciplinary freelancer. She is a project-oriented artist and loves working with others on large assignments. Sequoia's work has been featured in Cleveland Scene Magazine, Vagabond Comics, and ideastream, The CAN Journal, And the Plain Dealer. You can also find her work in Cleveland Botanical Gardens, The Cleveland Museum of Art, and Maelstrom Collaborative Arts.

Kelly Elliott (Combat Choreographer) (she/her) has, for the past 20 years, choreographed stage combat all over Northeast Ohio, Central Virginia, Washington DC, and a little bit of Michigan. Her violence has been seen in schools, colleges, and universities, as well as Cleveland Public Theatre, Rubber City Theatre, Clague Playhouse, and The Cleveland Shakespeare Festival, among others. Kelly uses her training in Intimacy and consent-based practices with stage combat as well as directing and teaching. She currently teaches through Great Lakes Theater and the University of Mount Union and holds an MLitt and MFA in Shakespeare and Performance from Mary Baldwin University.

Heidi Herczeg (Music Director) (she/her) has been seen music directing all over Northeast Ohio for the last 22 years, including at the Beck Center, Cassidy Theater, Blank Canvas, Fairview Performing Arts, and the Brecksville Theater.

GET TO KNOW THE ARTISTIC TEAM

Heidi holds an Undergraduate degree from Baldwin-Wallace University and a Master's degree from Case Western Reserve University in Music Education. She has been a member of the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus and the Cleveland Opera Chorus, serving as Children's Choir Master during her tenure. Retiring from Bay Village City Schools in 2020 after 33 years, Heidi is thrilled to be able to devote her time continuing to music directing. She is also grateful to connect to old and new friends here at Near West Theatre and to be working talented cast and production team. Thank you to Darius and Trinidad for this opportunity!

Maeve Greising (*Stage Manager*) (all pronouns) is an alum of Oberlin College (BA-Creative Writing and Theater) who now serves with AmeriCorps. She has stage managed and assistant stage managed for student and faculty-directed shows at Oberlin, including operas, plays, musicals, circuses, and even one cabaret. She has previously performed with Near West as part of the Historic Haunts tour, and was Assistant Stage Manager for *Cinderella*.

Perren Hedderson (*Technical Director*) (he/him) has been with Near West Theatre for many years, starting as a young teen acting and helping construct the sets. He is now the Technical Director and a freelance Projection Designer. He has also worked in film here in Cleveland and for a few years in New Mexico. Credits include *We Will Rock You* (projections) at Blank Canvas Theatre, *Chess* (projection design) at Near West, and a side music project called Triage. He's a Dad now too with two kids. Love to Sarah, Kellen, Asa, and Sab!

Emily Hennen (*Assistant Technical Director*) (she/her) graduated from Ohio University with a BFA in Production Design and Technology in 2016 and has been with Near West full time since 2018. Occasionally, she also works as a sound and video technician for Near West events and performances, and she is thrilled to continue working with such a talented and creative team.

Mia Jones (*Costume Designer*) (she/her) is delighted to be part of this wonderful production of *The Fantasticks*! Mia has had the privilege of performing, stage managing, costume design, and directing, in such venues as Karamu House, Dobama Theater, Cain Park, The Cleveland Playhouse (State Theater), Cleveland Public Theatre (CPT), and Near West Theatre. She has been recognized by the city of Cleveland receiving an award for Arts and Entertainment.

Jeremy Paul (*Lighting Designer*) (he/him) is director, designer, and interdisciplinary artist. As the founder and Executive Artistic Director of

GET TO KNOW THE ARTISTIC TEAM

Maelstrom Collaborative Arts since 2006, Jeremy has led the creation of the original productions *Four Futures*, *The Wandering*, *Inferno*, *Who We Used To Be*, *Don't Wander Off*, *Broken Codes*, *The Turing Machine*, *The Grand Celebration of the Celestial Mystery*, *TingleTangle*, *Code: Preludes*, *The Excavation*, and *Marble Cities*. He has directed the world premieres of *Tall Skinny Cruel Cruel Boys*, *Black Cat Lost* and *My Barking Dog* as well as the regional premiere of *Inoculations*, *Anna Bella Eema*, and *Stranded on Earth*. Jeremy graduated from Wesleyan University in Connecticut with dual majors in Theater and Film, and has post-graduate training with the Pig Iron Theatre Company, New World Performance Lab and the Celebration Barn International School for the Performing Arts. Jeremy is a recipient of CPAC Creative Workforce Fellowships in 2012 and 2016. He recently joined the faculty of the Cleveland Institute of Music as the inaugural Interdisciplinary Artist in Residence.

Trinidad Snider (*Director*) (she/her) has been a part of the Near West Theatre family since her first production in 1989 of *Fame* as Doris Schwartz. Her excellence as an artist also was developed through education at the Cleveland School of Performing Arts and Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati, as well as extensive work as a director and performer in the Northeast Ohio community, including experience directing adults, teens and children. She resides in Chardon, Ohio with her husband Michael and their children: Kirstin, Colin, Dylan and Michaela. She would like to give a special thank you to the cast and crew, the production team, the NWT staff, all the volunteers, and all of our friends and family members within our community and surrounding ones who continue to challenge, love and support NWT and its vision and mission.

Michael Stein (*Production Manager*) (he/him) celebrates his sixth year at NWT as Production and Rentals Manager. His 40+ year career in theatre has taken him across the U.S. from Maine to California, but mostly in Ohio as the Stage Manager/Production Manager/Lighting Designer at the Carousel Dinner Theatre in Akron, OH. Prior to returning to Near West Theatre in 2016, he was the Production Manager at the Palace Theater in Wisconsin Dells, WI. His lighting designs at NWT include *Carnival*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Once on this Island* 2009, *Secret Garden* 2010, *The Wiz* 2010, *Rent* 2010, *Willy Wonka* 2011, *A Christmas Story the Musical*, *Move On!*, *Urinetown* and many of the yearly Benefit performances. He was also the Co-Lighting Designer for *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and *Mary Poppins*. "As always, thanks and love to my wife, Carrie."

GET TO KNOW THE ARTISTIC TEAM

Darius Stubbs (he/him) is a poet, playwright, performer, vocalist, educator and LGBTQ advocate who has been living and working in Cleveland, OH since 2006. Artistically, he has collaborated with many creative thinkers across the city with whom he has created over a dozen original performance pieces spanning the genre spectrum from performance art to fully-staged productions. Darius was last seen on Near West Theatre's stage as the Baker in NWT's 2012 production of *Into The Woods*. He is grateful beyond words to be back working with the wonderful people of Near West!



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