



MEREDITH WILLSON'S  
**THE MUSIC MAN**



## OUR 2022/23 SEASON:

*All Shook Up*

**THE MUSIC MAN**

*Ain't Misbehavin'*

*Head Over Heels*

NEAR WEST THEATRE PRESENTS



# MEREDITH WILLSON'S THE MUSIC MAN

*I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT I'D LIKE TO MAKE TODAY WORTH REMEMBERING*

PERFORMED BY A **FALL INTERGENERATIONAL CAST**, AGES 7 AND UP  
**NOVEMBER 18 -DECEMBER 4, 2022**

PERFORMANCES: NOVEMBER 18, 19, 25, 26, 27, DECEMBER 1\*, 2, 3, 4  
\*SENSORY PERFORMANCE

MAIN STAGE

RUN TIME: 2HRS 31MIN, INCLUDES 10 MINUTE INTERMISSION  
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BOOK, MUSIC, & LYRICS BY MEREDITH WILLSON  
STORY BY MEREDITH WILLSON AND FRANKLIN LACEY

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# THE TEAM

**JORDAN COOPER**  
DIRECTOR

**JORDAN COOPER**  
MUSIC DIRECTOR

**JAILYN HARRIS**  
CHOREOGRAPHER

**JULIE BILLINGHURST**  
STAGE MANAGER

**ANGELA WARHOLIC**  
ASST. STAGE MANAGER

**CAMERON MICHALAK**  
SCENIC DESIGNER

**ADAM DITZEL**  
LIGHTING DESIGNER

**SYDNEY DEMATTEIS-GEIB**  
COSTUME DESIGNER

**VANESSA COOK**  
PROPS MASTER

**JOSHUA CARABALLO**  
SOUND DESIGNER

**MICHAEL STEIN**  
PRODUCTION & RENTALS MANAGER

**PERREN HEDDERSON**  
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

**EMILY HEHNEN**  
ASSISTANT TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

**LARISA DASILVA**  
WARDROBE SUPERVISOR

**JEN HITMAR-SHANKLAND**  
CHARGE SCENIC ARTIST

**HEIDI HERCZEG**  
CONDUCTOR/VOCAL COACH

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## PRODUCTION TEAM & ASSISTANTS

### CREW

PROPS.....**OLLIE WILSON-RIETZ, CARMEN ASSUNTA,  
ZACH YEAGER**

FLY OPERATOR.....**RUSSELL MILLER, ROSS FETAL**

COSTUMES.....**CARLOS CRUZ, ROSE KVIDERA**

WARDROBE ASSISTANTS.....**BLESSING GEE, SARAH FARRIS**

SPOT OPERATORS.....**OIL REEDY, SAM JOHNSON**

SOUND OPERATORS.....**EMILY FERRER, JAMES ROMERO**

### MUSICIANS

CONDUCTOR/VOCAL COACH.....**HEIDI HERCZEG**

KEYBOARD.....**HEIDI HERCZEG**

WOODWIND.....**EMILIO ROSARI**

WOODWIND.....**LINDA INNES, JACKIE WOOD**

TRUMPET.....**LAUREN HINKLE**

TROMBONE.....**MARC AWAD, ERIK RICHMOND  
CLAUDIA CANGEMI**

BASS.....**JASON STEBELTON, JP GEORGE**

DRUMS.....**ETHAN GRIFFITH**

### PUBLICITY

CAST SPOTLIGHT RECORDINGS.....**HANNAH ARMENTA**

PRODUCTION PHOTOS.....**AMBER PATRICK**

PRODUCTION ART DESIGNER.....**NOAH HRBEK**

PLAYBILL.....**HANNAH ARMENTA**

# THE CAST

Harold Hill .....	Aaron Phillips
Marian Paroo .....	Gwen Stembridge
Charlie Cowell .....	Nina Aust
Mayor Shinn.....	Mike Obertacz
Eulalie Mackecknie Shinn.....	Amanda Bender
Marcellus Washburn.....	Peter Bradley
Ethel Toffelmire .....	Kathryn O’Sullivan
Mrs. Paroo.....	Sandra Green
Winthrop Paroo .....	Clayton Obertacz
Amaryllis Hix.....	Yamini Sridhar
Ewart Dunlop.....	Anthony “Bones” Kruse
Oliver Hix .....	Sydney Noelle Warren
Jacey Squires.....	Kate Atherton
Olin Birtt.....	Noah Hrbek
Mrs. Britt.....	Carrie Beatty
Tommy Djilas.....	Jacob Yankow
Zaneeta Shinn.....	Audrey Morrison
Gracie Shinn.....	Reese Reichel
Alma Hix.....	Rachel Drotar
Maud Dunlop.....	Amani Green
Mrs. Squires.....	Venchise Phillips
Conductor/Constable Locke.....	Connor Karboski
Adult Ensemble.....	Hannah Armenta*, Emily Brady*, Tom Campbell*, Sara Chapman*, Giovanni Conti, James Fesko*, Alana Lesnansky*, Martha Loughridge, James Malloy, Katie Medvec*, Carmen Rey, Abby Skully, Piet van Lier, Molly Walsh, Dave Weinmann
Young Adult Ensemble.....	Maura Gillis*, Nina Lunde*, Lily Mihelich, Olivia Moore, Mack van Lier, Jules Ziel
Youth Ensemble.....	Melora Dodge, Suni Garcia-Prignitz, Nick Maistros, Claire McGinty, Josie O’Leary, Esther Tan, Lydia Whitehouse

\*deonotes featured dance ensemble

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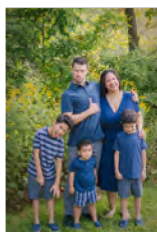
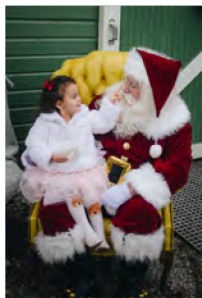
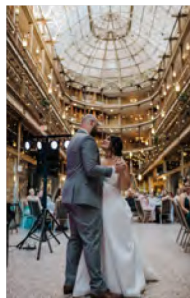
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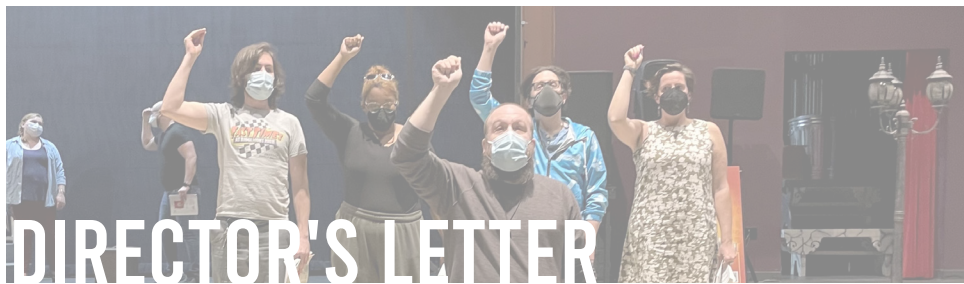
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## **IT WAS PURE MAGIC. IT WAS THE MUSIC MAN.**

Some of my fondest memories of my childhood involve watching a musical on a VHS. I am on the living room floor staring up at the screen as *Peter Pan*, *Oklahoma*, *Mary Poppins*, *Carousel*, *The Pajama Game*, and the big double-decker, *The Sound of Music*, all light up the screen. The music was immediately intoxicating, and I felt transported. Yet of all those wonderful musical journeys, my most vivid memory is hearing that whistle sound, and next thing you know, little toy soldiers marching around filled the screen. It was pure magic. It was *The Music Man*.

*The Music Man* was a staple. From the fast-talking salesman bouncing in the train car to the moonlit footbridge to the final parade, this story was indelibly etched into my memory. I could count on the humor, the elegance, the warmth, and the joy to transport me to Main Street River City. I have tried my hardest to do that for you tonight.

Only at Near West Theatre can we have a cast of 50 bring a town to life. We have spent eight weeks improving our city into existence. Everyone has a family. Everyone has a name. Through these weeks, we have laughed together and cried together. It has been a whirlwind of love and excitement. I couldn't be more grateful to these amazing people. They let me bring my childhood dreams to life.

I am deeply proud and honored to have this chance to direct *The Music Man* at my favorite theater in the world. Sit back and let yourself escape. Forget your troubles and remember it's all going to turn out ok in the end. That's what this show is for. #TPOG

**Jordan Cooper**

Director & Musical Director



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# SCENES & MUSICAL NUMBERS

## ACT I

OVERTURE.....ORCHESTRA

### SCENE 1:

TRAIN OPENING.....ORCHESTRA

ROCK ISLAND.....SALESMEN, CHARLIE COWELL, NEWSPAPER READERS

### SCENE 2:

IOWA STUBBORN.....TOWNSPEOPLE, FARMER, FARMER'S WIFE

YA GOT TROUBLE.....HAROLD, TOWNSPEOPLE

TROUBLE PLAYOFF & WALKING MUSIC.....TOWNSPEOPLE

### SCENE 3

### SCENE 4:

PIANO LESSON & IF YOU DON'T MIND SAYING SO.....MRS. PAROO, MARIAN

GOODNIGHT MY SOMEONE.....MARIAN, AMARYLLIS

### SCENE 5:

COLUMBIA, GEM OF THE OCEAN.....EULALIE, TOWNSPEOPLE

YA GOT TROUBLE (REPRISE).....HAROLD

SEVENTY-SIX TROMBONES.....HAROLD, TOWNSPEOPLE

SEVENTY-SIX TROMBONES – BALLET.....ORCHESTRA

SEVENTY-SIX TROMBONES – PLAYOFF.....ORCHESTRA

ICE CREAM/SINCERE.....HAROLD, QUARTET

### SCENE 6:

WALKING MUSIC (REPRISE) .....ORCHESTRA

THE SADDER BUT WISER GIRL.....HAROLD, MARCELLUS

PICK-A-LITTLE, TALK-A-LITTLE & GOODNIGHT LADIES.....ALMA, ETHEL, EULALIE,

THE LADIES, HAROLD, QUARTET

### SCENE 7:

MARIAN THE LIBRARIAN.....HAROLD

MARIAN DANCE.....HAROLD

1ST SEVENTY-SIX TROMBONES CROSSOVER .....ORCHESTRA

### SCENE 8:

2ND SEVENTY-SIX TROMBONES CROSSOVER.....ORCHESTRA

### SCENE 9:

3RD SEVENTY-SIX TROMBONES CROSSOVER.....ORCHESTRA

### SCENE 10:

MY WHITE KNIGHT.....MARIAN

### SCENE 11:

THE WELLS FARGO WAGON.....TOWNSPEOPLE, QUARTET, WINTHROP

FINALE – ACT 1.....ORCHESTRA

**ACT II**

ENTR'ACTE.....ORCHESTRA

**SCENE 1: .**

EULALIE'S BALLET.....ORCHESTRA  
IT'S YOU.....QUARTET  
SHIPOOPI.....MARCELLUS, TOWNSPEOPLE  
SHIPOOPI DANCE – PART 1.....ORCHESTRA  
SHIPOOPI DANCE – PART 2.....ORCHESTRA  
SHIPOOPI DANCE – PART 3.....TOWNSPEOPLE  
SHIPOOPI DANCE – PLAYOFF.....ORCHESTRA  
PICK-A-LITTLE, TALK-A-LITTLE (REPRISE) .....ALMA, ETHEL, EULALIE,  
THE LADIES, HAROLD, QUARTET-

**SCENE 2:**

LIDA ROSE & WILL I EVER TELL YOU?.....HAROLD, QUARTET, MARIAN

**SCENE 3:**

GARY, INDIANA.....WINTHROP, MRS. PAROO, MARIAN  
LIDA ROSE (REPRISE).....QUARTET  
IT'S YOU – BALLET.....ORCHESTRA

**SCENE 4:**

TILL THERE WAS YOU.....MARIAN, HAROLD  
GOODNIGHT & SEVENTY-SIX TROMBONES (DOUBLE REPRISE).....HAROLD, MARIAN

**SCENE 5:**

ICE CREAM SOCIABLE.....ORCHESTRA

**SCENE 6:**

CHASE MUSIC.....ORCHESTRA  
TILL THERE WAS YOU (REPRISE).....HAROLD

**SCENE 7:**

FINALE – ACT 2.....ORCHESTRA  
CURTAIN CALL MUSIC.....ORCHESTRA  
EXIT MUSIC.....ORCHESTRA

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# GET TO KNOW THE CAST

**Hannah Armenta** (*Ensemble/Featured Dancer*) (She/Her) is incredibly grateful to be back on the Near West Theatre stage. She would like to thank Jordan and *The Music Man* production team, her NWT office family, Trinidad, friends, and Sarah for literally everything. #TPOG.

**Kate Atherton** (*Jacey Squires*) (She/Her) cannot believe she gets to play this role in the company of all of these phenomenal people. Kate is a comics artist, illustrator, and librarian. Since 2013, Kate has collaborated at Near West Theatre on props design for *Hairspray*, *Children of Eden*, *Christmas Story*, *Carrie*, and others and stage-managed many of the Near West 9-15 age productions including *Urinetown*, *Xanadu*, *Aida*, and *Anyone Can Whistle*. She is thrilled to be onstage again in one of her favorite shows and would like to thank The Music Man creative team, her chickens, and her family for their love and support.

**Nina Aust** (*Charlie Cowell*) (She/Her) is elated for her first on stage performance at Near West. Over the past few years you may have seen her carrying around a camera taking pictures, taking tickets, or even in concessions. She'd like to thank her family & friends for stepping up to help out. She'd especially like to thank Julie, Trinidad, & Jordan for believing she could do this & Amy for her endless love & holding down the fort at home. I love you MJ. This one is for KJK - TPOG.

**Carrie Beatty** (*Mrs. Britt*) (She/Her) is agog, simply agog to be back at NWT. It is truly an honor to be involved in this production. Thank you Jordan! Thank you to my family (David, Hayden, Grace, and Fé) for their encouragement to audition and continued support. Thank you to my theatre family for welcoming me back with open arms and hearts.

**Amanda Bender** (*Eulalie Mackecknie Shinn*) (She/Her) is thrilled to be back on stage at NWT. Recent roles include Mrs. Puff (*The SpongeBob Musical*), Chef Louis (*The Little Mermaid*), Elizabeth Benning (*Young Frankenstein*). Amanda would like to thank her mom, family, and friends for all of their love and support. You can find her on all social media @amandanicole328. She would like to dedicate her performances in memory of Kevin Joseph Kelly. TPOG.

**Peter Bradley** (*Marcellus Washburn*) (He/Him) has been acting in Cleveland for the past ten years. He has most recently been in the Ashtabula Arts Center production of *Sunday in the Park with George* (George Seurat), Near West Theatre's production of *Cinderella* (Lord Pinkleton), and Lakeland Civic Theatre's production of *Noises Off*. In his downtime, he enjoys working on his passions of nuclear fission, or practicing for the Floor is Lava. He'd like to dedicate his performance to his brother Andrew, and thank his friends and family for their reluctant, unwavering support.

**Emily Brady** (*Ensemble/Featured Dancer*) (She/Her) is thrilled to be putting on her dancing shoes and making her debut on the Near West stage. She was most recently part of the cast of *Noises Off* (female swing / Tim understudy) at Lakeland Civic Theatre and performed with the FAA Community Chorus. Last fall, Emily worked as part of the crew for *The Little Mermaid* at Near West. She would

like to thank her friends and family for all of their love and support. Welcome to RiverCity! #TPOG.

**Tom Campbell** (*Ensemble/Featured Dancer*) (He/Him) is thrilled to be returning to his home away from home since 2005, the NWT Stage. He was lucky enough to be a part to be a part of the last NWT *The Music Man* cast in 2005. Recent NWT credits include: *Cinderella*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Big Fish* and more. Tom also served as the Choreographer for *Les Miserable* (Ensemble) at Near West! When Audrey is not on stage she enjoys playing the flut. Tom was a professional actor/dancer, choreographer, stage manager, and company manager in the Chicago theater industry. Tom attended Loyola University and studied musical theatre and dance. Tom would like to thank his amazing friends and family for everything. #TPOG

**Sara Danielle Chapman** (*Ensemble/Featured Dancer*) (She/Her) simply *is*. If you know, you know. #SOY #TPOG

**Giovanni Conti** (*Ensemble/Featured Dancer*) (He/Him) is a 17 year old homeschooled student. This is his first production with the Near West Theatre and is very excited to be part of it. He enjoys singing, playing guitar, rock climbing, and archery.

**Melora Dodge** (*Ensemble*) (She/Her) is delighted to be performing in her first show. She is 7 years old, and attends a forest school and homeschools. She loves playing with her two little sisters, three cats, two hamsters, and dog.

**Rachel Drotar** (*Alma Hix*) (She/Her) is so excited to share the story of *The Music Man* with our audiences! Rachel has performed in Near West Theatre productions for over 21 years, debuting as a flower seller in the 2000 production of *My Fair Lady*. Favorite credits include *Cats* (Ensemble), *West Side Story* (Jet), *The Music Man* (Featured Dancer), and *Once Upon a Mattress* (Winifred). Thank you always to this community. Being with you will forever be my favorite role.

**James Fesko** (*Ensemble/Featured Dancer*) (He/Him) James is thrilled to be on stage for his first Near West Production! He is playing the role of Ebenezer Locke while in the featured dance ensemble, a challenge he's found thrilling. Outside the theater he's in graduate school to get his masters in teaching, and plans to bring this energy/excitement into his classroom!

**Suni Garcia-Prignitz** (*Ensemble*) (She/her) This is Suni's second show for Near West Theatre, and she is so excited to be returning. Suni is in fourth grade at Urban Community School. She plays soccer and rugby, enjoys dancing, and is in her school choir. In her free time, she likes to read and choreograph dances for her favorite songs.

**Maura Gillis** (*Ensemble/Featured Dancer*) (She/her) is excited to be back on the Near West Theatre stage with the fantastic cast of *The Music Man*. Maura most recently played the role of Flounder in NWT's production of *The Little Mermaid* and has been in numerous NWT productions since 2017. She is a freshman at

# BREAK-A-LEGS

GWEN! I HOPE YOU BREAK A LEG AND QUOTE BALZAC IMPECCABLY  
TONIGHT! LOVE KAITLYN

AARON'S GOT BIG TROUBLE, AND THAT STARTS WITH "T"  
WHICH RHYMES WITH "WE" AND WE LOVE YOU SO!  
- THE PHILLIPSES

*Gwen, let that little light shine! We love you!*

Sweet Melora, we are so very proud of you! Have fun in  
The Music Man and Break-A-Leg! Love, Grandma and  
Grandpa

**NICK- YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN A MUSIC MAN. KEEP UP THE GREAT  
WORK! MOM, DAD, SAM AND ELI**

SUNI-YOU'RE AMAZING! WE ARE SO PROUD OF YOU! BREAK  
A LEG! LOVE, MOM, BRIAN, COOPER, GUSSIE, FINN, MILES,  
HARRISON, AND CLYDE

Yay, Yamini! We're so excited to see you as  
Amaryllis!

*James, you are amazing. Your joy on  
stage is precious to everybody. With  
love, Mom, Rose, Elizabeth, Joe, and  
Dad.*

KEEP ON SHINING, CLAIRE! WE ARE PROUD OF YOU. LOVE, MOM  
& DAD

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# GET TO KNOW THE CAST CONT'D

Fairview High School where she plays the viola in orchestra and runs track. Maura would like to thank Jordan and the rest of the production team for bringing River City to life. Enjoy the show!

**Noah Hrbek** (*Olin Britt*) (He/Him) is ecstatic to be returning to the Near West stage for his first full production here since *Move On!* (2014). He has stayed in the theater world since then though, creating all season production art at NWT, and working on graphics and video projects here. He has also kept busy both on and off stage at Blank Canvas Theatre (most recently in *One Man, Two Guvnors*), as well as some work at Beck Center. Noah is overjoyed to share the stage with such an incredible group of people, especially with his daughter Lydia for the very first time!

**Amani Green** (*Maud Dunlop*) (She/Her) is very excited to perform in her fifth production on the NWT stage! She most recently assistant directed the summer teen show, *All Shook Up*, and played the role of Madame in NWT's production of *Cinderella*. She is, as always, proud and excited to perform alongside her mother, Sandra Green. Special thanks to her family, especially her beautiful nephew, for being lights in her life!

**Sandra Green** (*Mrs. Paroo*) (She/Her) Ms. Green is blessed to continue her journey at NWT, in her fifth performance. From ages 4 to 8 she performed at the Karamu House and in summer stock theater at Cain Park and Canal Fulton. She continued acting in school at Oberlin College, in community theater, and once in Cairo, Egypt where she taught second grade. Ms. Green treasures the support of her husband and family. As a new "Nana", her heart is SO full with thoughts of her precious grandson and his parents. Break a leg, Amani.... you always shine! Love you, Mama and Daddy!

**Connor Karboski** (*Conductor/Constable Locke*) (He/Him) is so excited to be a part of this amazing cast! He has recently been seen onstage at Near West as Jean-Michel in *Cinderella* and in the most recent benefit. Connor is also one of the RISE! Youth Program teaching artists. He would like to thank everyone for all their love and support through this rehearsal process.

**Anthony "Bones" Kruse** (*Ewart Dunlop*) (He/Him)

**Alana Lesnansky** (*Ensemble/Featured Dancer*) (She/Her) is excited to be performing in her third show at Near West Theatre. She has been dancing since the age of 3 and has a Bachelor's Degree in Biology from Youngstown State University with a minor in Dance. She spent a summer performing as a trombonist/back-up vocalist at Hersheypark. Alana continued her dance training with Rêve Dance Company while at Penn State University, where she earned her Master's Degree in Biochemistry, Microbiology, and Molecular Biology. Alana was most recently on stage in the ensemble of *Cinderella* at NWT.

**Martha Loughridge** (*Ensemble*) (She/Her) is thrilled to have been cast in *The Music Man* with her husband, teen and all the other wonderful humans. This is



Martha's second experience on stage at NWT after her debut as Grimsby in *The Little Mermaid*. A long time NWT patron and parent, Martha never thought she would enjoy being on stage, though she has appeared in street theater – on stilts in the Cleveland Museum of Art Parade the Circle and on stilts and with giant puppets in San Francisco's Wise Fool Puppet Intervention (1990s). She thanks her family for everything!

**Nina Lunde** (*Ensemble/Featured Dancer*) (She/They) After struggling with limelight withdrawal for over a year, Nina auditioned and is very happy to be on stage for *The Music Man*! This is her first on stage performance at Near West. She also was in the pit orchestra playing flute for *Chess* back in 2019.

**James Malloy** (*Ensemble*) (He/Him) James' acting career began in the second grade with a role as a Lost Boy in *Peter Pan*. In the forth grade, he was a part of the children's band in *The Music Man*. He has performed with Near West Theatre since his debut in 2015 in the musical *Scrooge*. James is very grateful to the entire company and crew of *The Music Man*, his sixth NWT production! James would especially like to thank Jordan for all of his kindness and patience in directing. He hopes everyone enjoys the show as much as he enjoys being a part of it!

**Nick Maistos** (*Ensemble*) (He/Him) is in the sixth grade at Urban Community School. He played a clam in *Little Mermaid* at NWT in 2021. He enjoys going to the theatre and has seen 25 musicals! Nick would like to thank his family and friends for all their support. We've worked hard to entertain you with this show and we hope you enjoy it!

**Katie Medvec** (*Ensemble/Featured Dancer*) (She/Her) is thrilled to be celebrating her return to Near West Theatre following *Carrie the Musical* in 2018! NWT first ignited her love for performing in 2006 when she was in her first ever production, *The Music Man*, at 9 years old. She is so excited to be back in River City with new and old friends alike! Love always to Dominic. Hi Molly!

**Claire McGinty** (*Ensemble*) (She/Her) This is Claire's first theatrical performance and she is really excited to join the Near West Community. Claire is 10 years old and a fifth grader at Bay Village Middle School. She is passionate about dance and music and is a member of Absolute Dance Company's Competition Dance Team. She is grateful to the cast and crew for the amazing experience performing in *The Music Man*!

**Lily Mihelich** (*Ensemble*) (She/They) is excited to be back at Near West Theatre! Lily was most previously seen in this summer's teen production of *All Shook Up*! She enjoys reading, eating chipotle, and playing Pokémon! She would like to thank her family, friends, and *The Music Man* production team for letting her be in this musical!

**Olivia Moore** (*Ensemble*) (She/Her) is super excited to be in *The Music Man*. She previously did RISE! Youth Programs and *Carnival* at NWT. Her sister Amaya has done numerous plays and that's what inspired Olivia the most. Ella ama Amaya.

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# GET TO KNOW THE CAST CONT'D

She is a super supportive sister and knows how to comfort Olivia when she feels alone.

**Audrey Morrison** (*Zaneeta Shinn*) (She/Her) is so excited to be returning to Near West Theatre and is a junior at Westlake High School! Her most recent credits include: *Chicago* (Velma) at Westlake High School, *A Christmas Carol* (Skate Girl) at Great Lakes Theater, and *Les Miserable* (Ensemble) at Near West! When Audrey is not on stage she enjoys playing the flute, singing at school, and playing with her cats. Audrey would like to thank her family and friends for their support. Enjoy the show! GO BROWNS!

**Clayton Obertacz** (*Winthrop Paroo*) (He/Him) is overjoyed to join Near West Theatre in his very first production ever! Clayton is a third grader at Onaway Elementary School in Shaker Heights and loves music, dancing and video games. He wishes to thank this entire cast and production team for making his first show so welcoming and supportive. This performance is dedicated to the love of his life (mom), his wingman (Elliot), and chauffeur for every rehearsal and performance (dad).

**Mike Obertacz** (*Mayor Shinn*) (He/Him) swore he would never do this again, but how do you say no to your youngest when he says, "Dad, please audition with me, I want to try out for the theatre." It has been his greatest joy rehearsing alongside his son and making memories that will last a lifetime. He wishes to thank Jordan for casting him in a small role with very little dancing at his age, and to the entire cast and crew for being so Shipoopilicious. To Leta and Elliot, thank you for allowing brother and dad to do this and we will be home soon! We love you!

**Josephine (Josie) O'Leary** (*Ensemble*) (She/Her)

**Kathryn O'Sullivan** (*Ethel Toffelmire*) (She/Her) is thrilled to be returning to Near West Theatre for her third production, previously having been in *The Little Mermaid* and *Cinderella*. Since moving to Cleveland in the summer of 2021, Kathryn has now been able to call NWT home away from home for a whole year! The greatest joy in that year has been meeting and making lifelong friends as well as getting to sing and dance again! She would like to thank her friends and family for their continued love and support of her as this wouldn't be possible without them.

**Aaron Phillips** (*Harold Hill*) (He/Him) is checking off an item from his bucket list playing Harold Hill. It's even better alongside the energy and creative bravery of this Near West Theatre cast and crew. In the last several years, he has been playing trombone in pit orchestras for *Shrek* (Lorain Community Music Theater), *Assassins* (Lakeland Civic Theater), and a few more. His last appearance on stage was with Jordan Cooper in *The Drowsy Chaperone* at French Creek Theater. He thanks NWT, you for coming, and his wife Venchise for reminding him there's always a band.

**Venchise Phillips** (*Mrs. Squires*) (She/Her) is overjoyed to be a part of this beloved show with such a talented cast. She was last onstage at NWT in 2014 in *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Since then, Venchise has performed locally in *Puffs* at Broadview Heights Spotlights Theater, and in shows such as *Cannibal the Musical* and *Yippie Ki Yay: Merry Christmas – A Die Hard Musical Parody* at Blank Canvas Theater. Most recently, Venchise was the prop designer for NWT's production of *All Shook Up*. Love to her music man and husband, Aaron Phillips.

**Reese Reichel** (*Gracie Shinn*) (She/Her) is thrilled to be working with this exceptional cast in *The Music Man*. This is her second production here at Near West, she was previously in *Cinderella* this past Spring. She wants to thank everyone involved and her family for their support.

**Carmen Rey** (*Ensemble*) (She/Her) is excited to be back on the NWT stage for her first post-pandemic musical! She began acting at NWT at the age of seven and is happy to call this her second home. She has recently appeared in *Noises Off* (Poppy Norton-Taylor), *Big Fish* (Ensemble), *The Secret Garden* (Ayah), *Dreamgirls* (Ensemble), and *Annie* (Sophie/Mrs. Greer). Carmen would like to thank the cast and production team for such a supportive, positive process. And thank you to all of her family and friends who have helped and came to watch the show.

**Abby Skully** (*Ensemble*) (She/They) is thrilled to return to the Near West stage after a long hiatus! They have appeared in past productions of *Sweeney Todd* (Lucy), *Cats* (Rumpleteazer), and *Beauty and the Beast* (Silly Girl/Ensemble). They want to thank the chickens, the group chats, and their beloved friends and family for the endless love.

**Yamini Sridhar** (*Amaryllis Hix*) (She/Her) is a seventh grader at Campus International School. She is obsessed with musical theater, specifically *Hamilton*. She is a bookworm and also watches a lot of movies. This is her fourth show at Near West Theatre.

**Gwen Stemberidge** (*Marian Paroo*) (She/Her) is thrilled to join this band of storytellers. A native of Georgia, she has called Cleveland a home for over a decade. Her favorite recent performances include *The Little Mermaid* (Alanna), *Children of Eden* (Father), *She Loves Me* (Head Waiter), *Beauty and the Beast* (Cogsworth), *Mary Poppins* (Mrs. Brill), and *Songs for a New World* (Woman 1). By day, she does policy analysis and community organizing with The Trevor Project. She is honored to take on this role with this endlessly creative leadership team and beautifully loving cast! May the music move you!

**Esther Tan** (*Ensemble*) (She/Her) is a seventh grader and aspiring play actress who loves turtles. Although she will never say no to food, Esther will also never say no to improv. This is Esther's first time performing with community theater and she is very excited to participate in *The Music Man* at Near West Theatre.

**Piet van Lier** (*Ensemble*) (He/Him) is a long-time fan of Near West Theatre, attending shows since he moved back to Cleveland and into the neighborhood in the early 1990s, and later as a parent of a young performer (Mack) and



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# GET TO KNOW THE CAST CONT'D

volunteer. *The Music Man* is his second show as a cast member (he was part of the ensemble and played a guard in *Superstar*), and he is thrilled to be in community with so many great cast members, including Martha and Mack, and nervously excited to be getting out of his comfort zone on stage.

**Molly Walsh** (*Ensemble*) (She/They) is so excited to be acting, singing and dancing again! Previously at Near West, she played Sarah Jane Moore in *Assassins* and was part of the ensemble for *Carrie the Musical*. Molly moved back home to Cleveland in March after living in Chicago for seven years. Offstage, she is usually forcing her girlfriend to listen to showtunes, reporting for The Plain Dealer/cleveland.com or walking her dog, Bert, through the Metroparks. Molly is thankful for the community Near West builds and the support of her friends and family in the audience! Hi Erin! Hi Katie!

**Sydney Noelle Warren** (*Oliver Hix*) (She/Her) is happy to be back at Near West! After her role as Cinderella in *Rogers & Hammerstein's Cinderella* in the spring, she is ridiculously excited to be the baritone in the school board quartet. Her recent credits include Maggie Jones in *42nd Street* at The Brecksville Theatre and Hattie in *Kiss Me, Kate* at CVLT. She is absolutely thrilled to work with this talented group of people! She wants to thank Jordan Cooper for being a passionate, kind, and creative director/friend. Jordan, you truly know the territory.

**Dave Weinmann** (*Ensemble*) (He/Him) is thrilled to be joining Near West Theatre in his first stage performance. Dave has been singing in the shower for ages and is acting a fool for decades. He certainly is a legend in his own mind. You may have seen him in Wiley Middle School's production of *Grease* in 1989 or the CIFF 2022 trailer. He enjoys selling stuff, acting goofy, and being a middle-aged hipster. He is tolerated by his family-Summer, Van, and Kit. They think he is the bee's knees. He loves the Near West family and can't wait to join future shows!

**Lydia Whitehouse** (*Ensemble*) (She/Her) is 9 years old and is very excited to be in this show! She was previously in the Near West benefit show this year and RISE! the year before. She goes to Urban Community School. She loves running and being a visual artist. She also loves cats, video games, playing with legos, and playing the piano and composing songs. She also goes to comic cons and loves the movie Beetlejuice! She likes sweets and anime books and drawing anime! She just helped to illustrate a published book with her dad!

**Jules Ziel** (*Ensemble*) (She/Her) cannot believe her luck to be able to work with Jordan again, especially in this show. Jules was last seen in *Monster In The Closet* (Emily) at Spotlights Theater and *All Shook Up* (Ensemble) here at NWT. You can also find Jules playing her very own trombone in several of her high school's bands! Jules would like to thank all of her family and friends, who come to every opening night, those who make the time to see her on stage for the performances and support her every step she takes. She is so grateful. Enjoy the show!

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# GET TO KNOW THE ARTISTIC TEAM

**Julie Billinghamurst** (*Stage Manager*) (She/Her) is happy to be back at Near West Theatre for her second show! She was the SM for *Cinderella* at NWT this past Spring. She has worked at other theatres in NE Ohio including French Creek Theatre, LCCC, LCMT and TrueNorth. Some of her past favorites include *She Loves Me*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, and *Big Fish*. Julie is an elementary school librarian by day and is excited for you to see our River City Library in this wonderful production of *The Music Man*! Thanks to the entire cast and crew! Teamwork makes the dream work!

**Joshua Caraballo** (*Sound Designer*) (He/Him) has been with NWT for almost 15 years now and has worked on shows that include *Willy Wonka*, *A Christmas Story the Musical*, *Move On, Hair*, and *Scrooge*. His most recent design with the theatre was the prerecorded production of *Les Miserables*. Other design credits include work with The Beck Center, Baldwin Wallace, and Tri-C's Jazzfest Productions. Josh is a graduate of Tri-C's Recording Arts and Technology program that is located on the Metro Campus where he works as a full time theatre technician and audio engineer. He is very excited about the return of live shows!

**Vanessa Cook** (*Properties Manager*) (She/Her) B-W Conservatory (BM) and Regent University (MA) alum, Ms Cook is the owner of Cook Theatre Designs, LLC, a freelance design firm that serves Ohio theatre programs. She served as TD, designer and adjunct professor at Heidelberg University and is former costume/set designer for Heidelberg's Community Music School. Ms. Cook currently works with several Cleveland/Akron based theater companies most recently; Spark Theatre 4 Youth, Near West, Dobama, Cleveland Opera Theatre, and Hathaway Brown Theatre Institute. She assists with local and regional HS productions teaching the next generation about technical theatre. Ms. Cook is the co-founder of the Norwalk Arts Center (NAC) and serves on the board of directors as Secretary, as well as NAC's prop/set and costume mistress.

**Jordan Cooper** (*Director/Music Director*) (He/Him) is an accomplished Director, Music Director, Conductor and Pianist. As a veteran theater professional, Jordan brings his over 25 years of theater experience to every project he works on. He is the founding Artistic Director for Shining Star CLE, The Passion Project and his work frequents the stages all across Cleveland's diverse theatre community. In 2021 he joined the staff of Baldwin Wallace University's acclaimed Musical Theater program. An Akron native, he is a graduate of Miller South School and Firestone High School's VPA programs and is thrilled to be working with his home theater again! Jordan has been active with NWT since 2010! Favorite directorial credits include: *She Loves Me*, *Children of Eden*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *The Diary of Ann Frank*, *Peter Pan*, *Noises Off*, and *A Year With Frog and Toad*.

**Sydney Dematteis-Geib** (*Costume Designer*) (She/Her) is a Staff Assistant Costume Designer at IBG Designs. Her work has been contributed to many theater and film productions as well as commercials and art installations. Recently Sydney has designed for Clague Playhouse, The Millennial Theater Project and Rubber City Theatre. A graduate from Belmont University with a BFA in Fashion Design, Sydney is excited to be working with Near West Theatre for the first time.



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# ARTISTIC TEAM CONT'D

**Adam Ditzel** (*Lighting Designer*) (He/Him) is returning to the world of performing arts after working full-time with a corporate audio visual company for the past few years; and is happy to be working with Near West Theatre again. Past design credits at Near West Theatre include *The Addams Family*, *Chess*, *Anyone Can Whistle*, *Spring Awakening*, *Aida*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Carrie the Musical*. This fall and winter, Adam's work can be seen at Magical Theatre Company, Verb Ballets, and Akron University school of Dance. Adam holds a degree in Lighting Design & Technology from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM). He is currently based in Cleveland where he just bought a house with his loving girlfriend, Corinne.

**Jailyn Harris** (*Choreographer*) (She/Her) is thrilled to make her Near West debut as choreographer with such an amazing and talented group of humans. Jailyn is a dancer and teaching artist from Cleveland, OH. Other choreography credits include *Cabaret*, *Ghost*, and *Hurricane Diane*. For upcoming projects follow on Instagram @jaisherell or check out JaiSherellmoves.com

**Heidi Herczeg** (*Conductor/Vocal Coach*) (She/Her) has been seen music directing all over northeast Ohio for the last 22 years, including at the Beck Center, the Cassidy Theater, and right here at Near West Theatre this past June as Music Director for *The Fantasticks*. Heidi holds a Undergrad degree from Baldwin-Wallace University and a Masters 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 the Bay Village City Schools in 2020 after 33 years, Heidi is thrilled to be able to devote her time continuing to music directing and to be working with such a talented cast and production team. Thank you to Jordan and Trinidad for this opportunity! For Kevin <3

**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.

**Cameron Caley Michalak** (*Scenic Designer*) (He/Him) is a Cleveland-based Scenic Designer, Technical Director, Artist, and Builder. Regional design credits include: Cleveland Play House productions of *These Mortal Hosts*, *Venus in Fur*, and *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*. CWRU/CPH MFA Acting Program's design credits include *She Stoops to Conquer*, *A Philadelphia Story*, *The Three Sisters*, *The Misanthrope*, and *The Winter's Tale*. Cleveland Ballet's *The Nutcracker Suite*. Selected local credits include *When Farah Cries* (Borderlight International Theatre Festival); *Dance Nation*, *John*,

*Appropriate, The Effect* (Dobama); *Les Misérables, Mary Poppins, The Wiz, Assassins, Urinetown, and Joseph...* (Near West Theatre); *Really Really, Young Frankenstein and Seminar* (Beck Center); *Sunday in the Park with George*, and *Of Mice and Men* (True North Cultural Arts); and *Aida, Sweeney Todd, and Hairspray*, among many others (M.A.D. Factory). Cameron is currently a graduate student in Goddard College's MFA Interdisciplinary Arts Program expecting to graduate in spring of 2022. By day, Cameron acts as Technical Director and Instructor for Cleveland State University's Department of Theatre and Dance.

**Michael Stein** (*Production Manager*) (He/Him) This is my sixth year at NWT as PM/RM. My 40+ year career in theatre has taken me 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, I was the Production Manager at the Palace Theater in Wisconsin Dells, WI. My 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. I was also the Co-Lighting Designer for *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and *Mary Poppins*. As always, thanks and love to my wife Carlie.

**Jenny Hitmar-Shankland** (*Scenic Charge*) (She/Her) has been painting for Near West Theatre since 2002. She paints as a scenic artist throughout Northeast Ohio but considers Near West one of her families. She has taught scenic painting at Baldwin Wallace University and regularly paints their mainstage shows. She has painted for the Cleveland Play House for seven years, and now operates under her business name Fresco Scenic Studio. She loves how close the Ohio theater community is and also has painted for Cleveland Opera Theater, Parade the Circle, Blank Canvas, Ballet Theater of Ohio, Carousel Dinner Theater, Sign Stage, and Chagrin Arts Academy. She is proud to have painted the Lobby mural for Near West Theatre, and grateful for the continual trust from an organization that allows her to throw large amounts of liquid around its beautiful stage. Love to her husband and two children who are growing up here

**Trinidad Snider** (*Artistic 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 served as the Business Director for The Memorial Opera House in Indiana and has held many roles in Human Resources and customer service training for Marriott and InterContinental Hotels. Prior to accepting the role of Artistic Director at NWT, she served as a Teaching Artist with The Musical Theater Project, where she taught the Kids Love Musicals and Intergenerational programs, and helped to create and facilitate the Creative Aging Program focused on seniors and the arts. She resides in Chardon, Ohio with her husband Michael and their four amazing, hilarious 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.

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## ARTISTIC TEAM CONT'D

**Angela Warholic** (*Assistant Stage Manager*) (She/Her) is as excited as ever to come back home to Near West Theatre. Previous stage management, assistant stage management, and crew credits include *Big Fish*, *Addams Family*, and *Cinderella* at Near West Theater, *Guys and Dolls* at Heights Youth Theater, *Ragtime* at Cain Park, *The Tree of Oedipus*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Marat/Sade* at Cleveland State University, and *Candlelight Hypothesis* at Cleveland Public Theater. You may have also seen her performing on

stage during *The Little Mermaid* and *Historic Haunts* at Near West Theater, *Emotional Creature: The Secret Life of Girls Around the World* at CSU, or *Candlelight Hypothesis* at CPT. When not on headset, she works as an HR Specialist at STERIS. Endless love to Mom, Dad, Julia, and the pups, and as always, this performance is dedicated to Jim Kisicki, the man who convinced me to do theater instead of law school. Enjoy the show!

**Meredith Willson** Meredith Willson was born in 1902 in Mason City, Iowa. He learned to play the flute as a child and began playing semi-professionally while still in high school. After high school he left Iowa to study at the Damrosch Institute of Musical Art (later the Julliard School), receiving flute instruction from Georges Barrere, the world-renown flutist. While still attending the Institute, he was hired as principle flutist and piccolo player for the John Philip Sousa Band. He later joined the New York Philharmonic Orchestra where he was 1st flutist. He became musical director for various radio programs throughout the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, including Tallulah Bankhead's program, *The Big Show*," for which he wrote the hit song "May The Lord Bless and Keep You." He composed the scores for the movies *The Great Dictator* and *The Little Foxes*, as well as symphonic, band, and choral works, including *The Jervis Bay: Symphonic Variations on an American Theme* and *Anthem of the Atomic Age*. Willson wrote three Broadway musicals: *The Music Man*, his first and most successful; *The Unsinkable Molly Brown* (music and lyrics), and *Here's Love* (book, music and lyrics). As an author he has published two autobiographical works (*And There I Stood with My Piccolo* and *Eggs I Have Laid*), one novel (*Who Did What to Fedalia*) and a memoir about the making of *The Music Man* (*But He Doesn't Know the Territory*). "

**Music Theatre International (MTI)** is one of the world's leading theatrical licensing agencies, granting theatres from around the world the rights to perform the greatest selection of musicals from Broadway and beyond. Founded in 1952 by composer Frank Loesser and orchestrator Don Walker, MTI is a driving force in advancing musical theatre as a vibrant and engaging art form. MTI works directly with the composers, lyricists and book writers of these musicals to provide official scripts, musical materials and dynamic theatrical resources to over 100,000 professional, community and school theatres in the US and in over 150 countries worldwide. MTI is particularly dedicated to educational theatre, and has created special collections to meet the needs of various types of performers and audiences. MTI's Broadway Junior™ shows are 30- and 60-minute musicals for performance by elementary and middle school-aged performers, while MTI's School Editions are musicals annotated for performance by high school students.

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Near West Theatre builds loving relationships and engages diverse people in strengthening their sense of identity, passion, and purpose, individually and in community, through accessible, affordable and transformational theatre arts experiences.

Ordinary people.  
Extraordinary theatre.



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