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NEAR WEST THEATRE PRESENTS

# *THE* **PROM**

"I'M WHO I AM AND I THINK THAT'S WORTH FIGHTING FOR."

**APRIL 12 - APRIL 28**

PERFORMANCES: APRIL 12, 13, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26, 27 & 28

SPRING MAINSTAGE PRODUCTION

RUNTIME: 2 HOURS AND 25 MINUTES , 15-MINUTE INTERMISSION

THE PROM IS RATED PG-13 AND CONTAINS ADULT LANGUAGE,  
SEXUAL INNUENDOS, AND HOMOPHOBIC LANGUAGE.

**BOOK & LYRICS BY CHAD BEGUELIN**

**BOOK BY BOB MARTIN**

**MUSIC BY MATTHEW SKLAR**

BASED ON AN ORIGINAL CONCEPT BY JACK VIERTEL

ORIGINAL BROADWAY PRODUCTION DIRECTED AND CHOREOGRAPHED BY CASEY NICHOLAW  
ORIGINALLY PRODUCED ON BROADWAY BY BILL DAMASCHKE, DORI BERINSTEIN, JACK LANE

JAMES & CATHERINE BERGES, NELDA SUE YAW, NATASHA DAVISON, JOE GRANDY, KIMBERLEE GARRIS, LISA MORRIS, TERRY SCHNUCK,  
JANE DUBIN, ROSALIND PRODUCTIONS, INC., FAHS PRODUCTIONS, SETH A. GOLDSTEIN, MIKE KRIAK, DON & NANCY ROSS, PAMELA  
HURST-DELLA PIETRA & STEPHEN DELLA PIETRA, CLIFF HOPKINS, MASIE PRODUCTIONS, VIVEK SHAH, THREE BELLES & A BOB,  
ARMENT-TACKEL, ARMSTRONG-MANOCHERIAN, FAKLER-SILVER, FOX THEATRICALS-MOSBACHER-LONOW, PALITZ-STERN-SMEDES,  
NANCY & KEN KRANZBERG/DAVID LYONS, LARRY & ELIZABETH LENKE/ELIZABETH L. GREEN, IRIS SMITH/INSTONE PRODUCTIONS,  
KUHLMAN-KETNER/WALLACE-ATXRANDOMPRODUCTIONS, THE JOHN GORE ORGANIZATION AND THE SHUBERT ORGANIZATION (PHIL-  
IP J. SMITH: CHAIRMAN; ROBERT E. WANKEL: PRESIDENT); PRODUCED IN ASSOCIATION WITH INDEPENDENT PRESENTERS NETWORK,  
MARGOT ASTRACHAN, DARREN P. DeVerna & JEREMIAH J. HARRIS AND REAGAN SILBE

THE PROM IS PRESENTED THROUGH SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH AND ALL AUTHORIZED PERFOR-  
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**Photographing, videotaping or recording audio or images of this  
production, including by camera, cell phone, or other device, is strictly  
prohibited.**

# THE TEAM

**COLIN ANDERSON**  
DIRECTOR

**CALI PAREY**  
ASST. DIRECTOR

**TOM BONEZZI**  
MUSICAL DIRECTOR

**KRISTY CRUZ**  
CHOREOGRAPHER

**WHITNEY MILLER**  
STAGE MANAGER

**LAURA CARLSON-TARANTOWSKI**  
SCENIC DESIGNER

**JOSEE COYLE**  
LIGHTING DESIGNER

**VANESSA COOK**  
COSTUME DESIGNER

**DRED GEIB**  
PROPS MASTER

**JOSHUA CARABALLO**  
SOUND DESIGNER

**PERREN HEDDERSON**  
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

**MICHAEL STEIN**  
PRODUCTIONS & RENTALS MANAGER

**EMILY HEHNEN**  
ASST. TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

**JAMES ROMEO**  
SOUND TECHNICIAN

**KENEDY BROOKS**  
ASST. STAGE MANAGER

**STEPHEN OSTERTAG**  
COSTUME CONCEPT DESIGNER

**JEN HITMAR-SHANKLAND**  
CHARGE SCENIC ARTIST

**DANA & EMMA SUMPTER**  
WARDROBE SUPERVISORS



# THE TEAM

## MUSICIANS

KEYBOARD 1/CONDUCTOR .....	TOM BONEZZI
KEYBOARD 2.....	JACK ROUTHIER
GUITAR .....	MICHAEL SIMILE
BASS GUITAR .....	JASON STEBELTON
DRUMS .....	JAIDEN WILLIS
REEDS .....	CHRISTINA CRUDER & EMILIO ROSARIO

## STAGE CREW

SPOT OPERATORS.....	RED BOOSE & MARTHA LOUGHRIDGE
BACKSTAGE.....	MICKY KING, MAEVE GREISING, RUSS MILLER, & NICK MAISTROS

## PUBLICITY

PRODUCTION PHOTOS.....	AMBER PATRICK
PRODUCTION ART DESIGNER.....	NOAH HRBEK
YOUTH MARKETING TEAM .....	MEGHAN KRIGER, YAMANI SRIDHAR & JULES ZIEL

# SPECIAL THANKS

## SCENIC CARPENTERS

CARTER DEFIBAUGH  
JAMES ROMEO

## PAINTING

SARAH ARMENTA

## HOURE MANAGEMENT

AMARA ALBERTO  
KRISTY CRUZ  
MEGHAN HONACKI

## GROUPS

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# THE CAST

EMMA NOLAN ..... CHRISTINA CIOFANI  
ALYSSA GREENE ..... MIKAELA RAY  
DEE DEE ALLAN ..... TRINIDAD SNIDER  
BARRY GLICKMAN ..... BRENDAN REYNOLDS  
MR. HAWKINS ..... ANTHONY WILLIAMS  
ANGIE DICKINSON ..... JO STARAL  
MRS. GREENE ..... AMANDA DROSTE  
TRENT OLIVER ..... DAVID TURNER  
SHELDON SAPERSTEIN ..... MATT LOEHRKE  
SHELBY..... SYDNEY LEWIS  
KAYLEE ..... ALYSSA HENKELMAN  
NICK ..... KEGAN SULAMOYO  
KEVIN..... McALLISTER THOMAS

ENSEMBLE.....HANNAH ARMENTA^, AMANDA BENDER,  
SARA CHAPMAN\*, BROOKE CICERCHI, GIOVANNI CONTI,  
BRYCE COOK\*, BRIAN CURRIE\*, CATHERINE ELYSE, LAUREN ENGLE\*,  
ELISA GAUNTNER\*, BLESSING GEE, SHANNON MCPEEK,  
KATHRYN O’SULLIVAN^\*, KAI PENNINGTON, MAYELA SQUIRES\*,  
MACK VAN LIER, & KELLEN WILLIAMS\*

PIT SINGERS ..... EMILY BRADY, MAGGIE CHAPMAN,  
JOEL FENSTERMAKER, & ROBERT KOWALEWSKI

^DENOTES DANCE CAPTAIN  
\*DENOTES DANCE ENSEMBLE





**TONIGHT  
BELONGS  
TO US!**

**NEAR WEST THEATRE'S  
ANNUAL BENEFIT  
SATURDAY, MAY 18**

**CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS ON  
TICKETS & SPONSORSHIPS**

# SCENES & MUSICAL NUMBERS

## ACT I

### SCENE 1: A STEP AND REPEAT

OVERTURE ..... ORCHESTRA  
CHANGING LIVES ..... DEE DEE, BARRY, & ENSEMBLE  
CHANGING LIVES (REPRISE) ..... DEE DEE, BARRY, ANGIE, & TRENT

### SCENE 2: SCHOOL

JUST BREATHE ..... EMMA

### SCENE 3: SCHOOL GYM

IT'S NOT ABOUT ME ..... DEE DEE, BARRY, ANGIE, TRENT, & ENSEMBLE

### SCENE 4: SCHOOL HALLWAY

DANCE WITH YOU ..... EMMA & ALYSSA

### SCENE 5: MOTEL

### SCENE 6: CONCERT (RALLY) FOR EMMA

THE ACCEPTANCE SONG ..... TRENT, DEE DEE, BARRY, ANGIE, & ENSEMBLE

### SCENE 7: MOTEL ROOM

### SCENE 8: SCHOOL GYM

YOU HAPPENED ..... EMMA, ALYSSA, & ENSEMBLE

### SCENE 9: APPLEBEES

WE LOOK TO YOU ..... MR. HAWKINS

### SCENE 10: EMMA'S ROOM

TONIGHT BELONGS TO YOU ..... BARRY, EMMA, MRS. GREENE, & ENSEMBLE

## ACT II

### SCENE 1: PRESS CONFERENCE

ENTR'ACTE ..... ORCHESTRA

### SCENE 2: EMMA'S BEDROOM

ZAZZ ..... ANGIE & EMMA

### SCENE 3: PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

THE LADY'S IMPROVING ..... DEE DEE

### SCENE 4: IN FRONT OF THE 7-ELEVEN

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR ..... TRENT & ENSEMBLE

### SCENE 5: SCHOOL HALLWAY

ALYSSA GREENE ..... ALYSSA

### SCENE 6: BARRY'S MOTEL ROOM

BARRY IS GOING TO PROM ..... BARRY

### SCENE 7: EMMA'S BEDROOM

UNRULY HEART ..... EMMA & ENSEMBLE

### SCENE 8: HAWKINS' OFFICE

CHANGING LIVES (REPRISE) ..... BARRY, ANGIE, DEE DEE, TRENT,  
SHELDON, & MR. HAWKINS

### SCENE 9: ALYSSA'S HOME / HIGH SCHOOL GYM

IT'S TIME TO DANCE ..... EMMA, ALYSSA, & ENSEMBLE





# OUR 2024-2025 SEASON



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APRIL 2025

# DIRECTOR'S LETTER

"I'm who I am, and I think that's worth fighting for. And nobody out there ever gets to define the life I'm meant to lead with this unruly heart of mine."

- "Unruly Heart" from *The Prom* -

Dear friends,

When we think of prom, most of us think of endings -- a "last hurrah" before we leave behind most of the people we have known since childhood. In media, we've seen it as an opportunity for romantic proposals, reconciliations (*Mean Girls*), humiliations (*Carrie*), and even revenge (*Prom Night*). Notably, we think of corsages and boutonnieres, tuxes and dresses -- all in pairs, one of each. Queer folks are an afterthought, if we're a thought at all.

For most of us in the LGBTQIA+ community, we've been raised on stories where people like us die around the time that other kids are getting ready for prom. Whether by violence, suicide, AIDS, addiction, or any other means, we are used to seeing ourselves as fated for tragedy. There are whole studies on the psychological and physical effects of this kind of representation and how it follows queer folks long into their adult lives -- lives many of us never really considered because we didn't think we would make it that far.

So, that's depressing, but bear with me! With that context, by producing this musical, *Near West* is taking an important step in providing hope to young queer folks. With the epidemic of suicides among young LGBTQIA+ people, providing this kind of hope is essential to saving lives. It starts with positive representation; the hardest part for many young queer folks is envisioning what a future could look like. There is so much joy to this story, and we get to see older queer folks who have survived (and thrived!) long past their own proms. And, even beyond that, it's hilarious.

# DIRECTOR'S LETTER CONT'D

With such high stakes, we've seen how this topic (and others like it) has polarized people in our lives. When we feel we have the moral high ground, we can sometimes internalize a sense of superiority that keeps us from meeting bigotry with patience and compassion. Most often, people are afraid of what they don't understand, and our "heroes" in this story learn the lesson that they have their own biases to investigate. It has certainly caused me to reevaluate the ways in which I have been unkind and dismissive when I could have changed a mind instead. De-escalating these conflicts is the other half of the life-saving work that starts with representation. In telling stories like *The Prom*, *Near West* is provoking conversations that lead to mutual understanding and growth.

Thank you for supporting this production and for elevating queer stories. It has been an honor to work with this cast and creative team to bring life to a life experience that urgently needs representation. We hope you'll walk away having learned something about yourself and your neighbors.

Love to each of you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Colin Anderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Colin Anderson, Director of *The Prom*





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# GET TO KNOW THE CAST

**Hannah Armenta** (*Ensemble/Dance Captain*) (She/Her) is so incredibly grateful to be back on the Near West Theatre stage to tell a story about love with so many people she loves! Previous NWT credits include *The Music Man* (Featured Dance Ensemble) and *Rogers and Hammerstein's Cinderella* (Ensemble/Waltzer) where she was also the unforgettable latter part of Buttercup. By day, Hannah is NWT's Engagement Manager, and she hopes you get to experience the magic of NWT while you're here. She would like to thank the phenomenal production team of *The Prom*, the cast, NWT Staff, the Brain Cell, Trini, Kristy, Casey, and her incredible fiancé Sarah for all of the love and support. #TPOG

**Amanda Bender** (*Ensemble/ u/s Dee Dee Allen*) (She/Her) is thrilled to be back on stage at Near West Theatre. You've probably seen her face around a Cleveland stage or two. She would like to thank Tee for being the best, most supportive girlfriend, friends and family for being such wonderful humans, the production staff and cast for being so talented, her mom for being the best mom ever, and you, the audience, for supporting local theatre! Follow her shenanigans on all social media @AmandaNicole328 and enjoy the show!

**Emily Brady** (*Pit Singer/ u/s Kaylee*) (She/Her) is excited to be lending her voice to this beautiful production. Recent credits include *CATS* (Jellylorum/Macavity) and *The Addams Family* (Flapper Ancestor) at Fine Arts Association, *Something Rotten* (Ensemble/Dance Captain) with Curtain 440, *Head Over Heels* (Assistant Stage Manager/Dramaturg) and *The Music Man* (Featured Dance Ensemble) at Near West Theatre, and *Noises Off* (Female Swing/Tim Understudy) at Lakeland Civic Theatre. She would like to thank her friends and family for all of their love and support.

**Maggie Chapman** (*Pit Singer*) (She/Her) is thrilled to join the cast of *The Prom*. She just finished performing at Near West Theatre in *BKLYN the Musical* (City Weed). Other recent credits include: *I Am the Brother of Dragons* (Len) at Miami University of Ohio, *Murder Medium Rare* (Carmen Joseph), *Newsies* (Seitz), and *Beauty and the Beast* (Silly Girl) at Fairview Fine Arts & Theatre Association. Maggie is overjoyed to continue performing with Near West Theatre, and sends a huge thank you to everyone involved in making these performances possible.

**Sara Danielle Chapman** (*Dance Ensemble*) (She/Her) is no stranger to the Near West Theatre stage. She was recently seen as the most talked about senior character in our Fall Intergenerational production of, *The Wizard of Oz*. Sara was also the most talked about cast member in NWT's 2015 production of *Move On!* a documentary most of you probably never saw. You can catch her at any given time being yelled at for not wearing shoes or accidentally swearing when she gets excited. From *The Little Mermaid* (Sebastian) to volunteering for numerous events behind the scenes, Sara has always called NWT her home. She can't thank the Brain Cell enough for their texts, voice memos, friendship and LOVE. #soy TPOG



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# GET TO KNOW THE CAST CONT'D

**Brooke Cicerchi** (*Ensemble/ u/s Mrs. Greene*) (She/Her) is excited for her second show at Near West Theatre! Her Near West debut was in *The Wizard of Oz* this past fall. When Brooke is not on stage she enjoys cooking, spending time with friends/family, and cheering on our Cleveland sports teams! She wants to thank her friends and family for their support. Enjoy the show!

**Christina Ciofani** (*Emma Nolan*) (She/Her) is thrilled to be "building a prom" with the most incredible people! A Cleveland Heights native and graduate of The Boston Conservatory's BFA Musical Theatre program, Christina is delighted to be returning to the Near West Theatre stage. Recent credits include *Chess* (Walter) at Brecksville Theatre, *Head Over Heels* (Pamela) at Near West, and *Little Women* (Meg) at Curtain 440. Christina would like to thank her loved ones, this beautiful community, and the phenomenal cast, crew, and creative team for their support.

**Giovanni Conti** (*Ensemble*) (He/Him) is thrilled to join Near West Theatre's production of *The Prom*. Grateful for this opportunity to enhance his theater skills, he has previously been on stage in *Into The Woods* (Narrator/Mysterious Man) at The MAD\* Factory, *The Music Man* (Ensemble) and *Head Over Heels* (Ensemble) at Near West Theatre, *Cabaret* (Ensemble) at The Brecksville Theatre, and *Ragtime* (Ensemble) at Cassidy Theatre. Outside of the theater, Giovanni enjoys singing, playing guitar, and practicing archery. Another fun fact: he's been homeschooled his entire life. He is looking forward to collaborating with the remarkable cast of this production!

**Bryce Daniel Cook** (*Dance Ensemble/ u/s Kevin*) is thrilled to be back at Near West Theatre! Previous credits include: *Bring it On!* (La Cienega) and *Head Over Heels* (Dance Ens.) at Near West Theatre; *Catch Me if You Can* (Frank Jr.), *Footloose the Musical* (Ren), and *Children of Eden* (Japheth) at his highschool; *Elf Jr.* (Buddy) and *The 25th... Spelling Bee* (Chip) at Norwalk Arts Center; *The Lion King Jr.* (Young Simba) and *Seussical!* (Wickedsham Brother) at Heidelberg Community Music School. Bryce wants to thank his parents, past directors/choreographers, the cast, and the NWT staff for this incredible opportunity!  
<https://brycedanielcook.wixsite.com/my-site>

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# GET TO KNOW THE CAST CONT'D

**Brian Currie** (*Dance Ensemble*) (He/Him) is so excited to return to the Near West Theatre stage. He is a senior at John Hay Early College High School and ecstatic to showcase what he can bring to a show as important as *The Prom*. This past November, Brian took on his dream role in Hathaway Brown's production of *The Wiz* (Scarecrow). Other recent credits include: CMSD's All-City productions of *Urinetown* (2019), *In The Heights* (2023), and *Dreamgirls* (2024); *Bring It On!* (Cameron) at Near West Theatre; and at the annual *Station of Hope* festival at Cleveland Public Theatre. Brian would like to thank his amazing All-City and NWT family who has continuously been supportive and loving no matter what. He would also like to thank his mother, father, sisters, brother, grandparents and the rest of his beautiful family and friends for the ongoing support that they have given him throughout this process.

**Amanda Droste** (*Mrs. Greene*) (She/Her) is so excited for her Near West Theatre debut! Her most recent credits include: *Ragtime* (Ensemble) at Cassidy Theatre, *Peter Pan* (Mrs. Darling), and *The Wizard of Oz* (Music Director) both at Muncie Civic Theatre. When Amanda is not on stage she enjoys walking her dogs, embroidering, reading, and spending time with her family. Amanda would like to thank Maddie, Parker, and Douglas for their unending support!

**Catherine Elyse** (*Ensemble/ u/s Angie Dickinson*) (She/Her) is excited to be making her Near West Theatre debut! Catherine has been dancing for 35 years including dancing with such companies as Inlet Dance Theatre, Elu Dance Company, and the Minnesota Ballet. She is trained in multiple styles including Ballet, Modern, and American Smooth Ballroom. While Catherine is making her theatre debut, she has acted in film since 2012 in such films as *With This Ring*, *Made in Cleveland*, and the *48hr Film Festival*.

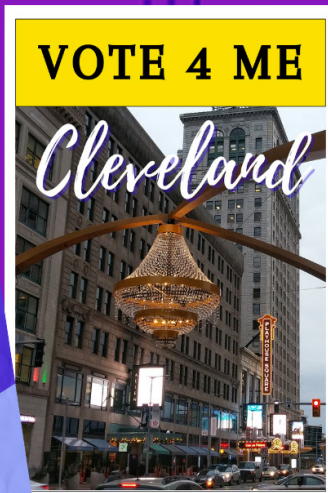
**Lauren Engle** (*Dance Ensemble*) (She/They) is thrilled to be in their first show at Near West Theatre and to tell such an impactful queer story! Lauren is currently a sophomore at Baldwin Wallace University studying Arts Management and Theatre while also serving on the executive board of their School's LGBTQ+ club, Allies. Her favorite credits include: *The SpongeBob Musical* (Sea Anemone/ensemble) at Millennial Theatre Company, *The Rocky Horror Show* (Whorus) at MTC, and *School of Rock* (Summer) at South Range High School. Now, it's time to dance!

**Joel Fenstermaker** (*Pit Singer*) (He/Him) is thrilled to be back on stage at Near West Theatre. Or backstage, or stage left, he isn't really sure where he will end up but he is thrilled about it regardless. Prior experiences at Near West include *Beauty and the Beast* (Magic Rug), *Tommy* (Mr. Simpson/Ensemble), and *Once on this Island* (Ensemble). He wishes to thank Rita for keeping the dogs sane while he was at rehearsal and Brendan for keeping Rita sane similarly. Hope you all enjoy the show!



# NEAR WEST THEATRE'S 2024 BENEFIT RAFFLE

THREE FANTASTIC PRIZES. ONE TICKET. THREE CHANCES TO WIN.



ONE TICKET: \$50

THREE TICKETS: \$ 125

FIVE TICKETS: \$ 200



MUST BE 21+ TO ENTER. WINNER NEED NOT BE PRESENT.



# GET TO KNOW THE CAST CONT'D

**Elisa Gauntner** (*Dance Ensemble/ u/s Alyssa*) (She/Her) is thrilled to end this season with such a meaningful show! She's currently at Baldwin Wallace University studying Arts Management and Theater/Dance. Recent credits include *The Wizard of Oz* (Dorothy) at Near West Theatre and *Fyoo zh en '24: Spatial Proximity* (Dancer/Swing) at BW. She is grateful to be dancing her heart out and be in one of her dream shows with this team and cast! She is thankful for the support from the community, family, friends, and people she looks up to! She truly loves you all <3

**Blessing Gee** (*Ensemble*) (They/She) is so excited to be in *Prom: The Musical!* This is her 12th production at Near West Theatre! They were last seen in *Bring It On: The Musical* as Nautica! They've been doing shows at Near West since she was 13, but they've done shows at other theaters such as Akron Civic Theater, The Brecksville Theater, and Spark Theater for Youth! Blessing would like to thank her sweet family, friends, and her BESTEST friend, Sophie for all the love and support!! She would also like to thank Colin, Callie, Kristy, and Tom, and the cast for bringing this amazing queer-love story alive!! LOVE YOU ALL!! And to the audience, enjoy the show and thanks so much for coming <33 #ITSTIMETODANCE

**Alyssa Henkelman** (*Kaylee*) (She/They) is thrilled to be a part of *The Prom*. She was last seen onstage at Near West Theatre in *Head Over Heels* (Dance Ensemble/Dance Captain), and worked backstage on *Carrie* and *Assassins*. Favorite credits include two dance showcases with Cleveland Dance Project, *Cry-Baby* (Director/Choreographer), and *First Date* (Assistant Director/Choreographer). She would like to thank her family and friends for their support, and to this cast, directing team, and the design team, for sharing this joyous story when queer lives are being threatened everyday. Please consider supporting organizations like the Transgender Law Center or the LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland.

**Robert Kowalewski** (*Pit Singer*) (He/Him) is excited to be back at NWT! Robert has been involved in numerous theatrical performances, in both Pittsburgh and Cleveland. Local highlights include: *All Night Strut*, *Gift of the Magi*, and *It's a Wonderful Life* (Clarence) at Theatre in the Circle; *West Side Story* (Riff) with the Akron Symphony; *Next to Normal* (Henry) at French Creek; *Newsies* at Brecksville Little Theatre (Crutchie); *Sweeney Todd* at Blank Canvas (Anthony); and of course, productions of *Joseph*, *Hunchback*, *Spring Awakening*, *Head Over Heels*, and *Chess* at Near West Theatre. Robert thanks this wonderful cast and crew - in addition to his wonderful grandparents, parents, and family. Much love to Braelin, Patrick and Florence!

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OF GIRLFRIENDS. NOW HE  
NEEDS A BOYFRIEND.”**



# SIGNIFICANT OTHER

**APRIL 26—  
MAY 19, 2024**

**WRITTEN BY:**  
Joshua Harmon

**DIRECTED BY:**  
Colin Anderson

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# GET TO KNOW THE CAST CONT'D

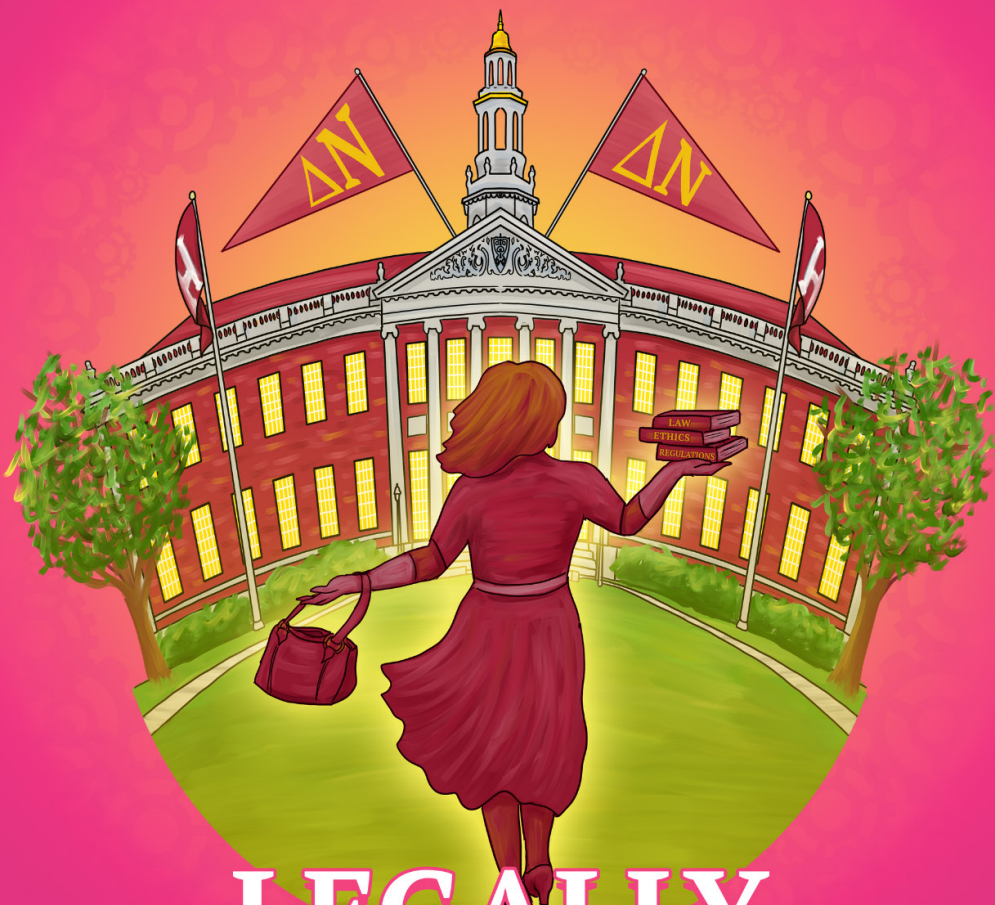
**Sydney Lewis** (*Shelby*) (She/Her) is so excited to be in her second Near West Theatre production! Sydney is currently a Senior Theatre/Movement major with a Graphic Design minor at Baldwin Wallace University. Previously, you might have seen her in NWT's production of *Head Over Heels*! Sydney is excited for everyone to see this production and so grateful to be surrounded by such snazzy people through this process! Sydney would like to thank her Mom, her snazzy roommates, her boyfriend, and her dog Neva for always supporting her! :)

**Matt Loehrke** (*Sheldon*) (He/Him) makes his debut with Near West Theatre after recently(ish) moving to the Cleveland area from Montana with his wife Anna. Favorite previous productions include: *Seussical* (Horton) and *Willy Wonka* (Grandpa Joe) at the Missoula Community Theatre, which is also home to the Missoula Children's Theatre where he served as Education Director. In Cleveland, he worked for a season with Talespinner Children's Theatre as they transitioned into their new home at 78th St. Studio. He holds a BA in Theatre Arts from Linfield College and an MA in Theatre Education from the University of Northern Colorado. Much love and thanks to the cast and crew, Anna, and pups Kiwi and Mojo.

**Shannon McPeck** (*Ensemble*) (She/Her) is pumped to be back at Near West Theatre for another show! Shannon has been involved with musical theatre for MUCH longer than she cares to admit!! When she's not rehearsing Shannon is a teacher at Lakewood High School and a mom to her daughters Beni and Frankie. Theatre makes life better. Express yourself, and build your confidence to tell stories. You never know who you'll inspire, or save.

**Kathryn O'Sullivan** (*Dance Ensemble/Dance Captain*) (she/her) is so excited to be returning to the Near West Theatre stage. She first took to theater in Cleveland by hitting the NWT stage in *The Little Mermaid*, *Cinderella*, *The Music Man* (Ethel Tofflemire), the *2023 Benefit*, and most recently *The Wizard of Oz*! In her free time she is usually volunteering for numerous other productions and events at NWT or somewhere continuing to dance for fun. Kathryn wants to thank her friends, the Brain Cell, and her family for their ever present support and is looking forward to dancing with you tonight, enjoy the show!

**Kai Pennington** (*Ensemble/ u/s Nick*) (He/Him) is ecstatic to be in another show at Near West Theatre! Kai has been a part of Near West Theatre for six years now! His most memorable shows include: *All Shook Up* (Dennis), *The Little Mermaid*, *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella*, and *The Mystery Of Edwin Drood*! Off the stage, Kai is a sophomore at John Hay (Science and Medicine) and is a TV binger to say the least, most recently Abbott Elementary. Kai thanks everyone in his life who has supported him throughout the years, especially this one. Kai wants to let everybody know that this show is a BLAST and hopes everyone loves this show as much as he does! Enjoy!



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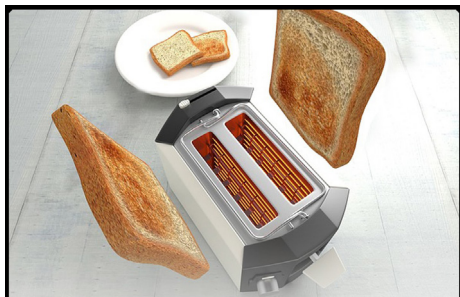


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# GET TO KNOW THE CAST CONT'D

**Mikaela Ray** (*Alyssa Greene*) (She/Her) is incredibly grateful to be making her Near West Theatre debut with this production of *The Prom*! Her recent credits include *Zombie Prom* (Toffee) and *Of Mice and Men* (Curley's Wife) at Blank Canvas Theatre; *School of Rock* (Rosalie Mullins) and *Fun Home* (U/S Med. Alison/Joan) at Cain Park; and *White Christmas* (Judy Haynes) and *Matilda* (Miss Honey) at Rubber City Theatre. She would like to thank her family with all of her "unruly heart" for their continuous support. And while Alyssa can be found on the debate team, student council, and cheerleading squad, you can find Mikaela on Instagram @heymikaelaray and her website mikaelaray.com

**Brendan Reynolds** (*Barry Glickman*) (He/Him) It has been 20 years since Brendan has been on stage and he couldn't be more excited (and nervous!) to join the cast of *The Prom*. Brendan has served on Near West Theatre's staff since 2018. He would like to thank his NWT teammates for their support and most importantly our audiences for supporting live theatre.

**Anthony Savage-Williams** (*Mr. Hawkins*) (He/Him) returns to the Near West Theatre stage after being away since 2015. Previous credits include *Memphis* (Delray Farrell), *Children of Eden* (Noah), and several summer teen and intergenerational productions in our little home on West 38th and Bridge. He would like to thank his grandmother and his small but mighty circle of friends for their love and unwavering support. "Without courage we cannot practice any other virtue with consistency. We can't be kind, true, merciful, generous, or honest." - Maya Angelou #SOY #TPOG

**Trinidad Snider** (*Dee Dee Allen*) (She/Her) is so excited to be returning to the Near West Theatre stage. Her last performance was in 2014 in *Move On* and she is honored to serve as NWT's Artistic Director. Most recently she was seen in *Land of Oz* (Mombi) at Dobama and is excited to perform next in CPH's production of *In The Heights* (Abuela) in May 2024. Trinidad thanks the entire staff at NWT for holding down the fort and for being such a great support system. Anthony, Alexis, Kristy, David, Brenda - you already know. She also sends her unconditional love to her Fab 5 - Michael, Kirstin, Colin, Dylan and Michaela. This show, like every show, she dedicates to her beloved best friend Kevin. TPOG!

**Mayela Lucia Squires** (*Dance Ensemble/ u/s Emma*) (They/Them) is thrilled to be able to work with Near West Theatre again! They are a Senior Acting major and Dance minor at Baldwin Wallace University! A few of their favorite roles have been *Measure for Measure* (Pompey) with the Cleveland Shakespeare Festival, *Head Over Heels* (Ensemble) at Near West Theatre, and *Cabaret* (Frenchie) at the Brecksville Theatre! Mayela wants to thank their family and boyfriend for all the support they have given! They hope you have a wonderful time and enjoy the show!

# GET TO KNOW THE CAST CONT'D

**Johanna Marie Staral** (*Angie Dickenson*) (She/Her) is making her return to the stage after a 20+ year hiatus. This will be her first show with Near West Theatre and she could not be happier to be part of such an incredible ensemble! Johanna has kept her acting skills sharp over the years by getting a law degree, working on political campaigns and convincing stray cats to come home with her. When she's not on stage, Johanna coaches gymnastics at Sokol Ceska Sin, volunteers at Parma Animal Shelter, and manages her furbabies' social media accounts. Johanna would like to thank her amazing and very handsome husband for all the love and support. Enjoy the show!

**Kegan Sulamoyo** (*Nick*) (He/They) is excited to be in their second Near West show! You may have seen him last in Near West's previous production of *BKLYN* (*City Weeds*). Other recent credits include: *Anything Goes* (E. Whitney), *Kinky Boots* (Angel), *Something Rotten* (Minstrel), and *Beauty and the Beast* (M. D'arque). When not doing theatre, Kegan likes watching wrestling with his cat, Nemo. Kegan would like to thank his friends and family for their support, and Trinidad for convincing him to audition at Near West Theatre.

**McAllister Thomas** (*Kevin*) (He/Him) is thrilled to join Near West Theatre in *The Prom*! This is McAllister's second production with Near West, the first being *Bring It On*! McAllister is a music education major at Cleveland State University, and plays percussion as his primary instrument. In his free time, McAllister loves to draw, paint, and play his favorite game ever, Pokémon! McAllister wants to thank you all so much for coming, enjoy the show!

**David Turner** (*Trent Oliver*) (He/Him) was last seen at Near West in *Head Over Heels*. Some favorite theatrical credits include: *42nd Street* (Billy Lawlor), *The Play That Goes Wrong* (Chris), *How To Succeed in Business* (Pierpont Finch), *Avenue Q* (Bad Idea Bear), *Chorus Line* (Mike), *Rock of Ages* (Franz Kleinman), *The Wedding Singer* (Robbie Hart), and *The Producers* (Leo Bloom). Many thanks to Colin, Tom, Kristy & Whitney for leading this wonderful show! Special thanks to my family and friends for their support and especially to my husband for all his love! TPOG

# GET TO KNOW THE CAST CONT'D

**Mack van Lier** (*Ensemble*) (They/Them) is super excited to be a part of this production. They started their theater journey in *Once On This Island Jr.* (Ensemble), and more recently have been in *The Music Man* (Ensemble) and *The Wizard of Oz* (Ensemble), all at Near West Theatre. They're currently a senior at the Mastery School of Hawken, and enjoy drawing, writing, and being so, so silly in their free time. They'd like to thank their parents and brother, as well as the whole NWT community for being supportive and amazing. :-)

**Kellen Williams** (*Dance Ensemble/ u/s Trent Oliver*) (He/Him) is ecstatic to be making his Near West Theatre debut! He started out on the stage of the Chagrin Falls Academy for the Performing Arts. There, he participated in the following shows: *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Titania/Hippolyta), *Rent* (Angel), *The Wild Party* (Black), and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Mitch). He uses different forms of art as an outlet to express himself like doing drag, sewing costumes, dancing, producing and songwriting. Kellen would like to thank his mother for always supporting him and his dreams, as well as Near West Theatre for welcoming him and allowing him to share the stage alongside many talented artists!



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# GET TO KNOW THE ARTISTIC TEAM

**Colin Anderson** (*Director*) (He/Him) has spent his life in Cleveland, which he now calls his artistic home as a director, producer and intimacy choreographer, as well as the Director of Production with Dobama Theatre. He is proud to be openly gay and a fierce advocate for LGBTQ+ equity and access in the theatre industry and beyond. Directing credits include *The Thin Place*, *Significant Other*, *Spring Awakening: A Children's Tragedy*, several readings, various education programs (Dobama); *I'm Alive You Bastards* and *I Always Will Be*, a reading of *Goodnight, Tyler* (Nightbloom Theatre Co); *The Inside Story* (Playwrights Local); *Beyond Therapy* (Access Theatre Project); *The Baltimore Waltz*, *Ordinary Days*, *For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls*, and *Next to Normal* (Oberlin College). Colin has also worked with Near West Theatre, Maelstrom Collaborative Arts, Cleveland Public Theatre, Harlequins Theatre, Olde Town Hall Theatre, Elyria Catholic High School, Lake Ridge Academy, and the BorderLight International Theatre and Fringe Festival, where he acted as Assistant Producer during its founding. BA: Oberlin College. [colintyleranderson.com](http://colintyleranderson.com).

**Tom Bonezzi** (*Musical Director*) (He/Him) is a graduate of Baldwin Wallace University with a Bachelor's degree in music education. He is in his second year teaching music at University School in Shaker Heights. As a pianist, Tom collaborates with musicians of all ages for recitals, concerts, and musicals. His involvement with theater has varied over the years, serving in different capacities such as music director, rehearsal pianist, pit musician, and producer. He is excited to make his Near West Theatre debut with this incredibly talented cast, crew, and creative team! Many thanks to his fiancé, Cole, for his support throughout this process as well as the extra hours spent with their mini bernedoodle, Leo. Can't wait for the wedding!

**Kenedy M. Brooks** (*Assistant Stage Manager*) (She/They) is a stage manager who graduated from Kent State University. Some of their previous work as a stage manager include: *Zoom Play Without a Title*, *Home of the Brave*, *KSU Opera Scenes 2022*, *Urinetown*, and *KSU Opera Scenes 2023*. She also worked on *Freaky Friday*, and *Much Ado About Nothing* in the scenic department. Outside of college work Kenedy also worked as an assistant stage manager at on *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *The Marvelous Wonderetts*, and *The Prom* at Porthouse Theatre in 2023, and *Make Believe* at Dobama Theatre.

**Joshua Caraballo** (*Sound Designer*) (He/Him) is excited to be working on something he has never worked on before, but more excited about working with new designers and collaborators here at Near West Theatre. Opportunities like this bring out his most creative side. Josh has supported live events and designed many shows over the past 17 years in the Cleveland area. He has supported NWT during that time offering his skills in both design and live sound operation for plays, benefits, and other live performances. His most recent design credits include *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Little Mermaid*, and the prerecorded production of *Les Misérables*. Josh is a full-time Lead Theatre Technician at Tri-C. Other design credits include work with Beck Center, Baldwin Wallace, and Tri-C's Jazzfest Productions. He enjoys spending time with his family, volunteering as a youth coach for basketball and baseball and listening to all varieties of music.

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# ARTISTIC TEAM CONT'D

**Laura Carlson-Tarantowski** (*Scenic Designer*) (She/Her) is the resident Scenic Designer and Lecturer at Oberlin College. Recent work at Oberlin includes *L'Orfeo*, *Ancestra*, *Pipeline*, *Stonewallin'*, *Or*, and *The Moors*. Recent designs in the Cleveland area include *Breakfast at the Bookstore* for Karamu House, *Little Women* and *Make Believe* for Dobama Theatre, *Erma Bombeck: at Wits End* for The Cleveland Playhouse, and *Rent* at Cain Park. She holds an MFA in Scene Design from the University of Wisconsin- Madison.

**Vanessa Cook** (*Costume Design*) (She/Her) BW Conservatory (BM) and Regent University (MA) alum, Mrs. 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. In addition to Near West, Mrs. Cook currently works with several Cleveland based theater companies. Most recently; Spark Theatre 4 Youth, The Brecksville Theater, Dobama, Cleveland Opera Theatre, and Hathaway Brown Theatre Institute. She also assists with local and regional HS productions teaching the next generation about technical theatre. She has decades of experience and specializes in costume and prop creation. Mrs. 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.

**Josee Coyle** (*Lighting Designer*) (She/They) is pumped to be participating in their first show with Near West Theatre! Recently in the Cleveland area you may have seen their designs at Dobama Theatre in *Stew* and *Little Women*. Outside of professional credits Josee loves seeing, reading, and enjoying theater in practically any form. They're so excited for you to see all the hard work put into this show by an amazing company! Enjoy the show!

**Kristy Cruz** (*Choreographer*) (She/Her) is overjoyed to be returning to Near West Theatre, where she most recently choreographed last spring's production of *Head Over Heels* and directed the teen production of *Bring It On! The Musical* this past summer. Previously at NWT, she has held the title of Assistant Choreographer to Stephanie Morrison-Hrbek for *West Side Story* and *Finian's Rainbow*, and has had the privilege of being onstage in countless NWT shows over the last 20 years. Since 2004, she has proudly served as the Choreographer for the Solon High School Drama Club, where students have earned four Dazzle Award nominations for Best Choreography Execution recognizing their work in *Shrek The Musical*, *All Shook Up*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *We Will Rock You*. Kristy's direction and choreography has also been seen on the stages of such local theatres as Cassidy, Ashland University, Blank Canvas, French Creek, Aurora Community, Geauga Lyric Theatre Guild, and Solon Center for the Arts. An active member of the Cleveland theatre community both onstage and off, she is a member of the Board for Near West Theatre, and on the Advisory Board of McKinley Career Tech Performing Arts School. Kristy sends endless gratitude to the cast and production staff for all of their hard work, to Trinidad for this incredible opportunity, and to her friends and family (especially Mom and Summer) for their constant support. Enjoy the show!



# ARTISTIC TEAM CONT'D

**Dred Geib** (*Prop Master*) (He/Him) is a production designer for IBG Designs and specializes in properties, costumes, and sets. Working over the last decade in the Northeast Ohio area he focuses mainly in theater, film, and art installation.

**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 Theatre, 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

**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.

**Cali Parey** (*Assistant Director*) (She/Her) is thrilled to be working at Near West Theatre with such an incredible group of artists! Cali most recently finished her year at Dobama Theatre as Directing Intern. There she recently assistant directed *Something Clean*, *Little Women*, and *The Thin Place*. She directed *Office Of Oddballs*, for the Marilyn Bianci Kids' Playwriting Festival and recently directed *Waiting For Godot* as a local fundraiser for Legal Aid. Thank you to her partner Xavier for his love and support always. She would like to thank you all for supporting the arts and for coming to our Prom!!



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# ARTISTIC TEAM CONT'D

**James Romeo** (*Sound Technician*) (He/Him) is elated to be given the opportunity to return back to Near West Theatre for another main stage production. Recent productions include *Avenue Q* (Cleveland State University), *The Last Five Years* (Near West Theatre), *Bring It On* (NWT), *Head Over Heels* (NWT), *By The Way*, *Meet Vera Stark* (CSU), *Ain't Misbehavin* (NWT), *Music Man* (NWT), *Sweeney Todd* (CSU), *All Shook Up* (NWT), CSU Spring 2022 Dance Concert, *Richard III* (CSU), *She Loves Me* (CSU), and *Blithe Spirit* (CSU).

**Michael Stein** (*Production Manager*) (He/Him) is in his seventh year at Near West Theatre (NWT) as PM/ RM. 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. Michael was thrilled to return to Lighting Design for *The Last Five Years* in our Black Box Theatre! His past lighting designs at NWT include *Les Miserable School Edition*, *The Web of Anansi*, 1776, *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, he thanks and sends love to his wife Carlie.

**Whitney Miller** (*Stage Manager*) (She/Her) is thrilled to be back at Near West for this wildly fun show. Whitney attended Case Western Reserve University for Chemical Engineering and Film Studies where she spent most of her time with the CWRU Footlighters. Some of her favorite past shows include *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (Stage Manager), *Evil Dead the Musical* (Stage Manager), *The Last Five Years* (Lighting Designer), *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (Stage Manager), and her most recent work in *Head Over Heels* at NWT (Stage Manager). She's happiest in the theatre, writing, or taking photos with Shiny Penny Studios. You're all very talented!



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