



# Seussical

FEBRUARY 06 - FEBRUARY 22, 2026



**NEAR WEST THEATRE PRESENTS**

# Seussical

**"A PERSON'S A PERSON, NO MATTER HOW SMALL."**

**FEBRUARY 06 - 22, 2026**

**PERFORMANCES: FEBRUARY 06, 07, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22**

**YOUTH WINTER MAINSTAGE PRODUCTION**

**RUNTIME: 2 HOURS & 30 MINUTES, 15-MINUTE INTERMISSION**

**MUSIC BY STEPHEN FLAHERTY**

**LYRICS BY LYNN AHERNS**

**BOOK BY LYNN AHERNS AND STEPHEN FLAHERTY**

**CO-CONCEIVED BY LYNN AHERNS, STEPHEN FLAHERTY, AND ERIC IDLE**

**BASED ON THE WORKS OF DR. SEUSS**

SEUSSICAL IS PRESENTED THROUGH SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH MUSIC THEATRE INTERNATIONAL (MTI). ALL AUTHORIZED PERFORMANCE MATERIALS ARE ALSO SUPPLIED BY MTI. [WWW.MTISHOWS.COM](http://WWW.MTISHOWS.COM)

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# OUR 2025-2026 SEASON OWN YOUR OWN STORY

## HADESTOWN

TEEN EDITION

Art © by SpotCo

JULY 18  
-  
AUG. 3

## Next to Normal

SEPT. 18  
-  
SEPT. 28

## HAIRSPRAY

NOV. 21  
-  
DEC. 7

THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY

## SPELLING BEE

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BALDWIN WALLACE UNIVERSITY

JAN. 22  
-  
JAN. 25

## Seussical

FEB. 6  
-  
FEB. 22

## Everybody's Talking About Jamie

APR. 17  
-  
MAY 3

# THE TEAM

**TRINIDAD SNIDER**  
DIRECTOR

**HEIDI HERCZEG**  
MUSICAL DIRECTOR

**KENYA WOODS**  
CHOREOGRAPHER

**TYREE FRANKLIN**  
STAGE MANAGER

**ROB WACHALA**  
LIGHTING DESIGNER

**TODD PLONE**  
SCENIC DESIGNER

**HANNAH & SARAH ARMENTA**  
PROPS DESIGNERS

**KATHRYN O'SULLIVAN**  
COSTUME DESIGNER

**PERREN HEDDERSON**  
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

**SYDNEY NOELLE WARREN**  
ASST. COSTUME DESIGNER

**EMILY HEHNEN**  
ASST. TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

**EMILY FERRER**  
SOUND DESIGNER

**JEN HITMAR-SHANKLAND**  
SCENIC CHARGE ARTIST

**AVA SIMON**  
AUDIO TECHNICIAN

**KENEDY BROOKS**  
ASST. STAGE MANAGER

**RUSS MILLER**  
ASST. STAGE MANAGER

**JAN SNIDER**  
COSTUME SEAMSTRESS

**DARLENE SCHMIDT**  
COSTUME SEAMSTRESS

**KRISTY CRUZ**  
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

**MICHAEL STEIN**  
PRODUCTIONS & RENTALS MANAGER





# THE TEAM

## MUSICIANS

CONDUCTOR/KEYBOARD 1 ..... HEIDI HERCZEG  
TRUMPET ..... MATT WIRFEL  
WOODWINDS ..... EMILIO ROSARIO/RJ ROVITO  
GUITAR ..... MORGAN MILLS  
DRUMS .....JAMES COOPER SANDERS

## CREW

BACKSTAGE CREW ..... NATE HAYTAS & SAI OTTOBRE  
SPOTLIGHT OPERATOR ..... RED BOOSE, NICK MAISTROS, SAMANTHA  
JOHNSON, MICHAYLA KING, & JOSIE O'LEARY  
WARDROBE CREW ..... KIT WEINMANN

## PUBLICITY

PRODUCTION ART DESIGNER..... NOAH HRBEK  
TEEN MARKETING TEAM ..... CHARLIE GOLDBERG & YAMINI SRIDHAR

# SPECIAL THANKS

TO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE FOR HELPING US PUT THIS SHOW TOGETHER

GOODWILL OF GREATER CLEVELAND AND EAST CENTRAL OHIO  
SNIDER RECREATION FOR SLIDE MATERIALS

# THE CAST

## HORTON CAST

CAT IN THE HAT .....	SAHANA SKIFTENES
HORTON.....	PARKER DROSTE
JOJO.....	NYIMA TURNEY
GERTRUDE .....	MARGOT PAYNE
SOUR KANGAROO .....	ELISE PAINE
MAYZIE .....	NORA GUPTA

## JOJO CAST

CAT IN THE HAT .....	DOROTHY BROWN
HORTON.....	SIMON FREDERICK
JOJO.....	MADISON NALLS
GERTRUDE .....	AIDA SHAKARIAN KVIDERA
SOUR KANGAROO .....	ZAINA ALAHMAD
MAYZIE .....	ARIA SOVA

MAYOR .....	EMMETT ECHKO-MCGORY
MRS. MAYOR.....	HARPER RINEHART
YOUNG KANGAROO.....	LILY RISNER
SCHMITZ .....	CHARLIE CEKADA
GRINCH.....	CLAYTON OBERTACZ
YERTLE THE TURTLE .....	MATTIE ADON

BIRD GIRLS.....	MADELINE BOND, MAEVE GIBBS, KENDALL PALLETT, ASCENCION “SUNI” GARCIA PRIGNITZ, MIKA OTTOBRE, & SHALAIRA TYREE
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WICKERSHAMS .....	SELAH BISHEMIER, GRAHAM DAVIES, FINN HASELSWERDT, JACKSON HARDIMAN, COOPER ROCKAS, & TEDDY TAN
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ENSEMBLE.....	MATTIE ADON, MOLLY AUST, EMMA CLARK, MAXINE EADIE, VIVIENNE EADIE, IVY FARNHAM, GUADALUPE GARCIA PRIGNITZ, PARKER PINSON, LILY RISNER, CAROLINE RYCHEL, & LYDIA WHITEHOUSE
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# DIRECTOR'S LETTER

It occurred to me recently that we are halfway through our season of *Owning Our Own Story*. Until now, I hadn't fully considered where the world might be by the time we arrived at *Seussical*, or how deeply this particular story would resonate with the moment we are living in. These are times that ask us to pay attention and choose how we show up.

Most of the young people in this cast were in first or second grade the last time we produced a full mainstage youth production. That means many of them were between the ages of five and nine during the height of the pandemic - just beginning their journeys into school, where children learn how to take up space, build relationships, and find their voices among their peers. Instead, many spent formative years behind screens, separated from one another, unable to fully read faces or practice the everyday human connections that shape confidence and belonging. For many of these young people, the work of learning how to take up space and claim their voice is still ongoing, which makes *Seussical* feel less like a children's story and more like a necessary act of practice.

And that is where *Seussical* meets us. Not as a nostalgic children's tale, but as a story about listening, believing, and standing up for voices that are often overlooked. This story asks us, young and old alike, to slow down, to listen more closely, and to consider what it means to truly see one another.

How does someone learn to own their own story, or find the courage to do so, when they are constantly being told they don't belong, or that their voice doesn't matter? How does someone so young make an impact in a world that can feel overwhelming? What can they do?

I don't pretend to have all the answers. But I do know this: as adults, it is our responsibility to give them space, to model empathy, curiosity, and courage. To live by Horton's truth: "A person's a person, no matter how small."

And "small" can mean so many things.

No matter what you look like.

No matter who you love.

No matter where you come from.

The list goes on.

I am deeply honored to direct the first youth production back on our stage, and I cannot imagine a more appropriate show. *Seussical* asks us to pay attention to what's happening around us, to how our actions affect others, and to how we show up when someone needs us to speak up.

It asks us to care. Because if we don't care, who will? And how do things get better?

I know these are bigger questions than one might expect when attending a youth production inspired by the words of Dr. Seuss. But as many of us know, his work is filled with hidden lessons, often meant as much for adults as for children.

Perhaps it's time that we sit with those lessons again.

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

Trinidad Snider  
Director

# MUSICAL NUMBERS

## ACT I

OH, THE THINKS YOU CAN THINK .....	CAT IN THE HAT, COMPANY
HORTON HEARS A WHO .....	HORTON, BIRD GIRLS, JUNGLE CREATURES
BIGGEST BLAME FOOL .....	SOUR KANGAROO, HORTON, WICKERSHAMS, BIRD GIRLS, CAT, GERTRUDE, MAYZIE, JUNGLE CREATURES
HERE ON WHO .....	MAYOR, MRS. MAYOR, GRINCH, HORTON, WHOS
OH, THE THINKS YOU CAN THINK (REPRISE) .....	CAT
IT'S POSSIBLE .....	JOJO, CAT, FISH
HOW TO RAISE A CHILD .....	MAYOR, MRS. MAYOR
THE MILITARY .....	SCHMITZ, CADETS
ALONE IN THE UNIVERSE .....	HORTON, JOJO
THE ONE FEATHER TAIL OF MISS GERTRUDE .....	GERTRUDE
AMAYZING MAYZIE .....	MAYZIE, BIRD GIRLS, GERTRUDE
AMAYZING GERTRUDE .....	GERTRUDE, BIRD GIRLS
MONKEY AROUND .....	WICKERSHAMS
CHASING THE WHOS .....	SOUR KANGAROO, BIRD GIRLS, HORTON, WICKERSHAMS, JUNGLE CREATURES, WHOS
HOW LUCKY YOU ARE .....	CAT
NOTICE ME, HORTON .....	GERTRUDE, HORTON
HOW LUCKY YOU ARE (REPRISE) .....	MAYZIE, CAT
HORTON SITS ON THE EGG .....	BIRD GIRLS, HORTON
HOW LUCKY YOU ARE (REPRISE 2) ....	HORTON, GERTRUDE, CAT, JOJO, COMPANY

# MUSICAL NUMBERS CONT'D

## ACT II

ENTR'ACTE.....	ORCHESTRA
EGG, NEST, AND TREE.....	SOUR KANGAROO, BIRD GIRLS, WICKERSHAMS, JUNGLE CREATURES
CIRCUS MCGURKUS .....	CAT, CIRCUS MEMBERS
HOW LUCKY YOU ARE (REPRISE 3) .....	HORTON
HOW LUCKY YOU ARE (REPRISE 4) .....	MAYZIE, CAT
AMAYZING HORTON .....	MAYZIE
ALONE IN THE UNIVERSE (REPRISE) .....	HORTON
SOLLA SOLLEW .....	HORTON, JOJO, MAYOR, MRS. MAYOR, & ENSEMBLE
GREEN EGGS AND HAM.....	CADETS, JOJO, SCHMITZ
WHO'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT.....	GRINCH, WHOS
A MESSAGE FROM THE FRONT .....	CADETS, MR. MAYOR, MRS. MAYOR
ALONE IN THE UNIVERSE (REPRISE 2) .....	JOJO
HAVIN' A HUNCH .....	CAT, HUNCHES, JOJO
ALL FOR YOU.....	GERTRUDE, HORTON
THE PEOPLE VERSUS HORTON THE ELEPHANT .....	SOUR KANGAROO, WICKERSHAMS, CAT, JUDGE YERTLE THE TURTLE, BIRD GIRLS, HORTON, GERTRUDE, WHOS
ALONE IN THE UNIVERSE (REPRISE 3) .....	GERTRUDE, HORTON
OH, THE THINKS YOU CAN THINK (REPRISE 2) .....	FULL COMPANY
GREEN EGGS AND HAM (BOWS) .....	FULL COMPANY

# BREAK-A-LEGS

**Dorothy, we are so proud of you! Break a leg. Love, Your Family**

Dear Aida - you are the loveliest bird that we've ever seen!  
Break a leg! Love from Mom, Dad, Rose and Eliza

*Kendall: your light shines brightly--our star! Cheers to you!*  
*Love, Mom, Dad, Ellie, & Teddy*

**VIVI, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE! LOVE YOU, MOM AND DAD**

**THINK AND WONDER AND DREAM, MAX! LOVE, MOM AND DAD**

*Parker Brooklyn Pinson You are AMAZING!!*  
*Love you! Mom*

**Parker congratulations on another performance! Your confidence & talent shine brightly on stage as they do in life. We are proud of you!! Aunt Erin, Lei & Jay**

**You've got this Parker!! Grammy & Pop-Pop**

**YOU ROCK PARKER!!! AUNTIE TIFF, KENZIE & CAM**

**Parker, Remember you can do all things through JESUS who strengthens you.**  
**I am so very proud of you! Daddy**

**Break a leg, Charlie! With Seuss-style fun and flair, go shine on stage;**  
**we're so proud of you tonight!**

**GRAHAM - WE ARE SO PROUD OF YOU. ENJOY THE STAGE! LOVE, YOUR FAM**

*BREAK A WING, ARIA! WE KNOW YOU'LL BE AMAZING.*  
*LOVE YOU 4E, MOMMY, DADDY, & THE BOYS*

**Elise, We love watching you shine. Have fun!**  
**Love, Mom, Dad, Nathan, Grandmas, Grandpas, Aunts & Uncles**

**AMAZING ARIA! BREAK A LEG, KID. SO PROUD OF YOU. LOVE, DAD**



# BREAK-A-LEGS CONT'D

**Oh the thinks you can think! Keep dreaming big Parker.  
We love you!! The Browns**

**ARIA, BE THE BEST MAZIE, YOU CAN BE!; LOVE PAPA**

*Finn- Keep shining like the star you are!*

**JAX, WE ARE SO PROUD OF YOU! KEEP LAUGHING!  
LOVE, MOM AND DAD**

*Go Madison! So proud of you! Love you! Cousin Michelle*

**Madison, we are proud of you! We can't wait to see you on stage!  
Love Mom, Dad & McKenzie**

**I can't believe my baby's the Mayor! We love you Emmett!  
-Mom and Dad**

**CAROLINE, WE'RE SO PROUD OF YOU FOR TRYING SOMETHING NEW.  
BREAK A LEG! LOVE, MOM, DAD, CARTER, AND DAISY**

**BREAK A LEG, PARKER! GUARD THAT CLOVER, TRUST YOUR  
HEART, AND REMEMBER AN ELEPHANT NEVER FORGETS HIS  
LINES! LOVE, THE FAM**

*EMMA, WE LOVE YOU! MOM, DAD, & CHARLIE!*

**BREAK A WING, MAEVE!; LOVE MOM, DAD & GUS**

*MADDIE, SHINE BRIGHT OUR SASSY BIRD GIRL! WE LOVE YOU TO THE MOON  
AND BACK!*

**Suni we are so very proud of you! Break a leg! Love, Mom, Dad, Finn,  
Sonny, Miles, and Mateo**

*Cooper! We love seeing you shine onstage! Congrats on your NWT de-  
but! Love Mom, Dad, Finn, Sonny, Miles, Mateo*

**GUSSIE-BREAK A LEG! WE LOVE YOU! MOM, DAD, FINN, SONNY,  
MILES AND MATEO**

# BREAK-A-LEGS CONT'D

**Simon; ; If you break a leg don't come running to me ; ; Papa Frank**

BREAK A LEG CLAYTON! BE THE GRINCHIEST GRINCH EVER GRINCHED!  
LOVE MOM, DAD, AND ELLIOT.

Break a leg, Sahana! Oh the places you'll go! High and low, you'll  
steal the show!

Addressing the "elephant" in the room - we're so proud of you, Simon!  
Love, Mom & Dad

**Madison continue to let your light shine! We love your determination  
and sweet personality. Your #1 Fans, Granddad and Grandma**

**YOU CHANGED  
A LIFE TODAY.  
THANK YOU!**

Donating to and shopping  
at Goodwill funds our Mission  
programs, changing lives in  
your community.

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# GET TO KNOW THE CAST

**Zaina Alahmad** (*Sour Kangaroo - Jojo Cast*) (She/Her) is very excited to be participating in her first show at Near West Theatre. Although this is her first performance, she had been dancing at Emjaez Dance Studio for years before. She would like to thank Mrs. Kathie for introducing and preparing her for the world of musical theatre. She would also like to thank all her peers at Near West Theatre for their welcoming actions and environment.

**Marceline Amos-Hernandez** (*Ensemble*) (She/Her) is thrilled to be performing in her first production at Near West Theatre. She is a 7th grader at Riverside Elementary School, a proud member of her school's robotics team, and she is extremely excited to be a part of this wonderful production. When Marceline is not on stage, she enjoys sewing, crafting, cooking, and spending time with friends. Marceline would like to thank her family and friends for all their love and support and can't wait for opening night!

**Selah Bisheimer** (*Wickersham*) (She/Her) is extremely excited to be a part of the Seussical production and is a 7th grader at Urban Community School. Her previous credits include *Finding Nemo Jr.* (Dory), *Shrek. Jr* (Captain of the Guards), and *Scrooge* (Children's Ensemble) at Near West Theatre. When Selah is not on stage she enjoys playing basketball, reading, playing games with her family, exploring shops, and thrifting. Selah would like to thank her family for being so supportive and helping her through her different activities as she could not have done this production without their love and support. Enjoy the show!!!

**Maddie Bond** (*Bird Girl*) (She/Her) is very excited to be performing in her first production at Near West Theatre. She is a fifth grader at Chagrin Falls Intermediate School and her favorite subject is math. Her most recent role was Young Nala in the Chagrin Falls School production of *Lion King Jr.*! When Maddie is not on stage she enjoys singing for the Select Choir group at her school and playing basketball, soccer, and softball. Maddie would like to thank her family and friends for all of their support and she is beyond excited for opening night!

**Dorothy Brown** (*Cat in the Hat - Jojo Cast*) is so excited to be in the production of Seussical as Cat in the Hat. Dorothy is a 6th grader at Shaker Heights Middle School and has a love for creativity and the performing arts. Previous performances include *Beauty and the Beast* (Lumiere), *High School Musical* (Ensemble), and *Cinderella* (Ensemble). When not on stage, she enjoys softball, Girls on the Run, and being with her friends. Dorothy would like to thank Near West Theatre for their support and hopes everyone enjoys the show!

# Go!



Near West Theatre's  
Annual Benefit  
Saturday, May 16, 2026  
6pm - 10:30pm

# GET TO KNOW THE CAST CONT'D

**Charlie Cekada** (*General Genghis Kahn Schmitz*) (Ensemble) (She/Her) is so excited to be joining Near West Theatre and having her first show! Charlie is a 7th grader at Urban Community School. She has been wanting and dreaming about joining a show since lots of her friends are part of the loving community. Charlie loves interacting with new people and making others smile. She is so proud of herself for pushing herself into doing something new. Charlie has always loved music and especially musicals, she would always listen to the Hamilton playlist on repeat day and night. She would love to thank all of her family and friends for supporting her!

**Emma Clark** (*Ensemble*) (She/Her) is very excited to be performing in her first production at Near West Theatre. Emma is a 5th grader at Kensington Intermediate School. When she is not on stage she enjoys soccer, tumbling, and hanging with friends. Emma would like to thank her family friends for all their support and cannot wait for opening night!!

**Graham Davies** (*Wickersham*) (He/Him) is excited to be a part of another production at Near West Theatre! He is a 6th grader at Shaker Heights Middle School. Besides theater, Graham loves playing sports such as football, basketball, and baseball, organizing, and collecting Pokémon and sports cards. Good luck to the rest of the cast and enjoy the show!!

**Parker Droste** (*Horton - Horton Cast*) (He/Him) is thrilled for his debut performance at Near West Theatre and is a freshman at Strongsville High School! His most memorable roles include: *Bye, Bye, Birdie* (Albert), *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (Amahl), *13: The Musical* (Malcolm) and will soon be appearing in *Anything Goes* (Captain) at Strongsville High School. When not on stage, you'll find Parker playing bass, tuba, and running cross country. He would like to thank his family and friends for all of their support!

**Maxine Carolina Eadie** (*Ensemble*) (She/Her) is thrilled to be returning to the Near West Theatre stage! Max is a 4th grader, and she enjoys playing the guitar, drawing, cuddles with her dog Roxie, and chatting with her pet frog Hamburger. She previously appeared on stage with her sister as part of the ensemble of *Wizard of Oz* at Near West Theatre. She would like to thank her family and friends for their support.

**Vivienne Eadie** (*Ensemble*) (She/Her) is thrilled to be returning to the Near West Theatre stage! Vivi is a 6th grader, and she enjoys soccer, dancing, and cuddles with her dog Roxie. She previously appeared on stage with her sister as part of the ensemble of *Wizard of Oz* at Near West Theatre. She would like to thank her family and friends for their support.



# GET TO KNOW THE CAST CONT'D

**Emmett Echko-McGory** (*Mayor*) (He/Him) is excited to be returning to Near West Theatre for his second production after finishing *Hairspray* (Ensemble) in December. He is a 4th grader at CMSD's Campus International School and is learning to play the trombone. When he's not on stage, Emmett enjoys reading and playing Fortnite and soccer with his friends. Emmett would like to thank his mom and dad for their love and support!

**Simon Frederick** (*Horton - Jojo Cast*) is a 7th grader at Garfield Middle School in Lakewood and he's thrilled to be making his Near West Theatre debut in this production! He has previously appeared in his school's productions of *Murder Mystery at the Murder Mystery* and *Something's Rotten, Jr!*. When he's not on stage, Simon is a Geometry Dash fanatic, plays the piano, trombone, and violin, and is a proud collector of VHS tapes. He's very excited to be part of the show and hopes you enjoy watching it as much as he enjoys performing!

**Maeve Gibbs** (*Bird Girl*) (She/Her) is so excited to perform in her first Near West Theatre show. Some of her Beck Center for the Arts credits include: *Bringing Down the House* (Uma), *Channeling Grimm* (Princess Madeline and Mama Bear), and *Bugsy Malone* (Yonkers). When Maeve is not on stage she enjoys crafting and playing with her dogs. Maeve would like to thank her family for their support.

**Nora Gupta** (*Mayzie - Horton Cast*) (She/Her) is excited to be performing in her first ever show! In addition to theater, she is also a dancer at Creative Movement Center and a percussionist at school and CYWS. She hopes this is just the beginning of her theater journey. Nora would like to thank her friends and family for their endless support and encouragement!

**Jackson Hardiman** (*Wickersham*) (He/Him) is thrilled to be returning to Near West Theatre and is a 6th grader at Shaker Middle School! His most recent credits include: *Scrooge* (Ensemble) at Near West Theatre, *Beauty and the Beast* (Wolf, Utensil, Book) at Onaway Little Theater, and *Tapestry* at Near West Theatre! When Jackson is not on stage he enjoys playing the drums, basketball, tennis, making movies, and playing games with friends. Jackson would like to thank his family and friends for their support. Enjoy the show!

**Finn Haselswerdt** (*Wickersham*) (He/Him) is very excited to be performing in his first production at Near West Theatre. He is a 5th grader at Bay Middle School. His most recent credits include: *Bringing Down the House* (Dale), *Between the Lines* (Ensemble), *Channeling Grimm* (Rumpelstiltskin), *Monster Bash of Dreadstone Manor* (Mucky), *It's A Madhouse* (Ensemble) at the Beck Center; *A Christmas Carol* (Tiny Tim) at Great Lakes Theater; *Recess* (Fred) and *Happy Birthday Beatrix Potter*, (Benjamin Bunny) at Red Barn Youth Theater. When Finn is not on stage he enjoys tap dancing, and playing drums. Finn would like to thank his family friends for all their support and hope you enjoy the show!





# SUMMER 2026

## NEAR WEST THEATRE SUMMER CAMP

## REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

# GET TO KNOW THE CAST CONT'D

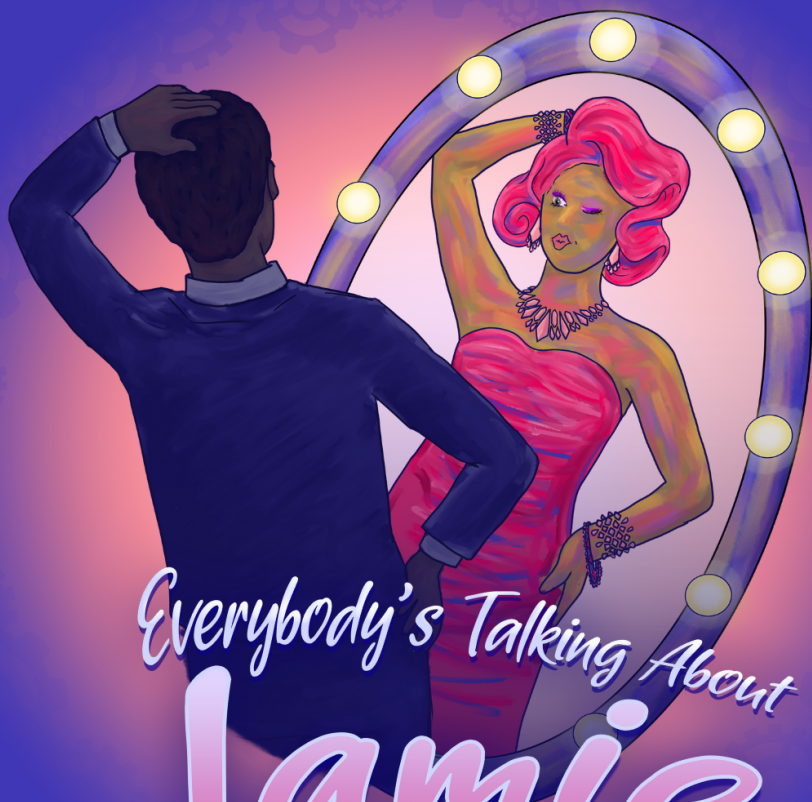
**Madison Nalls** (*Jojo* - Jojo Cast) (She/Her) is so happy and excited to perform again at Near West Theatre. She is in the 6th grade at Campus International. She has been in a lot of plays so far: *Watching Butterflies* (Angie) at the Cleveland Playhouse Square, *Frozen Jr.* (Young Anna) at Near West Theatre, *The Lion King* (Young Nala) at Campus International, and *If These Walls Could Talk* (Principle Role) at Karamu House. When Madison is not on stage she likes to play with her flute, draw, sing, make beats, and spend time with her friends and family. Madison would like to thank her family and friends for all the support. She hopes that you enjoy the show and cannot wait for the opening night! Go Cavs!

**Clayton Obertacz** (*Grinch/Ensemble*)(He/Him) is grateful to be returning to his favorite place, the Near West Theatre stage! Previous theatre credits include *Scrooge!* (Peter Cratchit), *The Wizard of Oz* (Munchkin Mayor) and *The Music Man* (Winthrop) at Near West Theatre, *Madagascar JR* (King Julien) at Cain Park, and *Beauty & the Beast* (Cogsworth) at Onaway Little Theater. Clayton is a 6th grader at Shaker Heights Middle School in Shaker Heights and loves music, dancing and video games. He wishes to thank the cast and production team for making his theatre journey so welcoming and supportive. This performance is dedicated to his family.

**Mikako Ottobre** (*Bird Girl*) (She/her) is an 8th grader at Olmsted Falls Middle School. She is very excited for first show at Near West Theatre and hopes to perform more here. Mika also does theatre club in school and has been in *We Will Rock You* (Gaga Kid/Adult), *Box* (Lane), and *Finding Nemo Jr.* (Pearl's Parent, Shark, Octopus 2). Outside of theatre, Mikako enjoys singing, drawing, and crafts. She would like to thank her parents for supporting her and allowing her to take part in the show.

**Elise Paine** (*Sour Kangaroo* - Horton cast) (She/Her) is excited to be in her first show here at Near West Theater. Seussical is very meaningful to Elise as she started her theater career as the Young Kangaroo at Brunswick High School. This is Elise's eleventh show. Her favorite credit includes *The Little Mermaid* (Ariel) at Brunswick Middle School. She is in 7th grade at Brunswick Middle School. When Elise is not at the theater, you can find her hanging out with friends, crafting, dancing, or singing...always singing.

**Kendall Pallett** (*Bird Girl*) (She/Her) is ecstatic to be back on the Near West Theatre stage! She was previously seen as part of the cast of *Scrooge* (Featured Dancer) and Roger's and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* (Mouse/Town Child) at Near West Theatre, as well as three years running in NWT's *Historic Haunts*. She has also been seen on the stages of Beck Center for the Arts as well as St. Ignatius Harlequins. Kendall is a freshman at Rocky River High School where she is a member of the Rivers Edge show choir. She would like to thank her parents, her sister, her aunt, and her grandpa for all of their love and support. Kendall hopes you enjoy the show and have lots of fun!



*Everybody's Talking About*  
**Jamie**

**AUDITIONS**

**FEBRUARY 10, 11, & 12**

FOR AGES 16±

**REGISTER HERE!**





# GET TO KNOW THE CAST CONT'D

**Margot Payne** (*Gertrude* - Horton Cast) (She/Her) is very excited to be performing in her first production at Near West Theatre. She is a student at Wickliffe City Schools. Margot is a young seasoned performer and has played many roles from Annie (in *Annie*) to Summer Hathaway (in *School of Rock*). When Margot is not on stage she enjoys dancing, singing, and hanging out with her best friend Riley. She would like to thank her family for all their support and cannot wait for opening night so that she can shake a tail feather.

**Parker Pinson** (*Ensemble*) (She/Her) is returning to Near West Theatre in her 3rd performance! Parker is excited to be continuing her acting career in a dual role as a Who & a Fish in this year's performance of *Seussical*. Parker has performed in Near West's RISE program performances of *Frozen Jr* and *Finding Nemo Jr.* (Gurgle). Outside of theatre, Parker is enjoying 4th grade, hanging out with her friends and finding new recipes to try. Parker wants to thank her family and friends for their continued support and love!!

**Harper Rinehart** (*Mrs. Mayor*) (She/Her) is in the fourth grade at Westlake Elementary School. She is a participant in the RISE! program and is very excited to be part of the Near West Theatre family. When she is not on stage, she enjoys attending musicals, playing with her three dogs, and spending time with friends and family.

**Caroline Rychel** (*Ensemble*) (She/Her) is so excited to be a part of her first production at Near West Theatre. She is a 6th grader at Shaker Heights Middle School. Caroline's theatre experience includes *Into the Woods Jr.* (Mysterious Man), *High School Musical* (Alan/Cheerleader) and *Cinderella* (Ensemble) with Playmakers Youth Theater, and *Beauty and the Beast Jr.* (Mrs. Potts) at Onaway Little Theater. When Caroline is not on stage, she loves playing field hockey, running with Heart and Sole, spending time with friends and family, and watching Stranger Things! Caroline would love to thank her friends, family, and the Seussical cast - she's so grateful for everyone she's met!

**Aida Shakarian Kvidera** (*Gertrude* - Jojo Cast, *Vlad* - Horton Cast) (She/Her) is so excited to return to the Near West Theatre stage. She is a 7th grader at CMSD's Campus International School. Aida's past theatre experience include: *Frozen Kids* (Queen Iduna), *Scrooge* (Ensemble) at Near West Theatre, and various NWT summer camps. In addition to theatre, Aida participates in jazz at Dance Arts by Regina, and is in book 3 for Suzuki cello at The Music Settlement. When Aida is not on stage, she enjoys time reading, being with her sisters and being with her close friends. She lives in the neighborhood and is so honored to be part of the Near West Theatre community



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# GET TO KNOW THE CAST CONT'D

**Sahana Skiftenes** (*Cat in the Hat* - Horton Cast) (She/Her) is thrilled to be performing in *Seussical the Musical* at Near West Theatre. A 7th grader at Rocky River Middle School, she loves storytelling, acting, and bringing big, expressive characters to life, especially when she gets to make people laugh! This is Sahana's second production with Near West Theatre; her previous credit includes *It's ok to be a Unicorn* (Cornelius J. Sparklesteed) at NWT's 2025 Summer Camp. When she's not on stage, Sahana enjoys creating art and beading crafts. She is a second-degree black belt in taekwondo, and plays the piano and clarinet. Sahana would like to thank her parents for always supporting her, and the amazing organizers of this production for giving her this incredible opportunity. Enjoy the show!

**Aria Sova** (*Mayzie* - Jojo Cast) (She/Her) is a 6th grader at Rocky River Middle School and super excited to play such a sassy role in her first Near West Theatre production. Her favorite past shows include: *Matilda the Musical* (Matilda) at Happy Ending Lyric Players, *Frankenstein: The Musical* (William Frankenstein) at Blank Canvas Theatre, *A Christmas Carol* (Soloist) at Great Lakes Theater, and *Bugsy Malone* (Lena Marelli) at Beck Center. Aria is a proud member of The Cleveland Orchestra Children's Chorus for the '25-'26 season and recently performed at Radio City Music Hall in NYC. You can follow her onstage adventures on Instagram or YouTube, @ariasovaofficial. Hugest thanks to Ms. Trinidad for the opportunity, and shoutout to the most fun cast and crew!

**Teddy Tan** (*Wickersham*) (He/Him) is very excited to be performing in his third production at Near West Theatre. Teddy's favorite part is that the cast is all kids! He previously appeared in intergenerational productions of *Scrooge* (Ensemble) and *The Wizard of Oz* (Munchkin/Flying Monkey). Teddy is currently a 6th grader at Birchwood School. When not dancing, Teddy is solving math problems or playing basketball and soccer.

**Nyima Turney** (*Jojo* - Jojo Cast) is a very caring and sharing person and recently was surprised with the Caring Award at school, what an honor! Nyima is in 6th grade and goes to Campus International School known for its International Baccalaureate programs and is in partnership with Cleveland State University. Previous Near West Theatre credits include: *Frozen, Jr.* (Olaf) and *Finding Nemo, Jr.* (Nemo). Currently, she is playing the role of Fiona in *Shrek, Jr.* and Jojo in *Seussical*. Nyima likes to draw, sing, and play her violin in her free time. She also likes writing stories and directing little productions from the stories she creates. Nyima enjoys her time at Near West Theatre and is looking forward to all the new and positive things she can learn from her peers.



# GET TO KNOW THE CAST CONT'D

**Shalaira Tyree** (*Bird Girl*) (She/Her) is a 8th grader at University of Cleveland preparatory. She was a former student of Dike school of the Arts K-7. There she worked on her craft of dancing, singing, and performing. She loves taking trips with family and trying new food in her spare time. This will be her second performance at Near West Theatre and she is happy to be back. Her first show was *The Little Mermaid*. Now you can see her as one of "THE BIRD GIRLS" in this production of the *SEUSSICAL*. Shalaira thanks all family, supporters and Near West Theatre staff.

**Lydia Whitehouse** (*Ensemble*) is really happy to be in *Seussical* in the Ensemble with three close friends of hers and other very talented people! The last shows she was in were *Scrooge* and *The Wizard of Oz*. Some of her favorite hobbies are drawing and watching movies. This is her favorite time of year, watching christmas movies, and making cookies! Thanks again for supporting Near West Theatre, and enjoy the show!



# GET TO KNOW THE ARTISTIC TEAM

**Hannah Armenta** (*Props Designer*) (She/Her) is thrilled to be working on props for the very first time and is especially excited that she got to team up with her wife, Sarah. While Hannah is a member of the Near West Theatre staff and sometimes appears on stage, she's grateful for the chance to be part of a production in a whole new way. As a former Mayzie, she feels so lucky to help create the wonderful world of Seuss with people she loves! She would like to thank Trinidad for giving her and Sarah this incredible opportunity and sends so much love to Sarah, the NWT staff, her friends, and her cats! Fun fact: if you're enjoying a beverage tonight, there's a very good chance its cardboard packaging made a cameo in the show! #TPOG #Braincell5ever

**Sarah Armenta** (*Props Designer*) (She/Her) is excited to be working on props for the first time as part of *Seussical*. While she's new to props, she previously painted some scenic elements for Jenny for *The Prom* and *Little Shop of Horrors*. She would like to thank Hannah for pushing her out of her comfort zone, BABEcell, and her two wonderful nanny families, The Crokes and Dolenskys. She is so grateful for this opportunity to make art with friends she loves for a community space that means so much to her.

**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 Wonderettes*, and *The Prom* at Porthouse Theatre in 2023, and *Make Believe* at Dobama Theatre.

**Emily Ferrer** (*Sound Designer*) (She/Her) is so excited to be back for her 10th show at Near West Theatre. Recent NWT Productions include *The Music Man*, *All Shook Up*, *Head Over Heels*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Legally Blonde*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, and *Hairspray*. Other recent productions include: *The Addams Family*, *Richard III*, *Blithe Spirit*, *James and the Giant Peach Jr.*, *Jungle Book Kids*, *Beauty and the Beast Jr.*, and *Frozen Jr. Kids*. When Emily isn't at the theatre, she can be found watching sports and spending time with family.

**Tyree J. Franklin** (*Stage Manager*) (He/Him) is a Cleveland based stage manager and Artist with his BFA in Stage Management from Wright State University. His recent stage management credits includes *Sankofa: An Epic Adventure* at Playhouse Square, *Next to Normal* at Nearwest Theatre, *Jubilee* (Karamu House) *Freak the Mighty* (Cleveland Playhouse) *Much Ado About Nothing* (CWRU/CPH). He would like to thank his family and friends for their continued love and support!

## ARTISTIC TEAM CONT'D

**Heidi Herczeg** (*Music Director*) (She/Her) has been seen music directing all over northeast Ohio for the last 26 years, including at the Beck Center, the Cassidy Theater and Chagrin Valley Little Theater. Heidi holds an 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 continues to music direct and teach music at John Carroll University. Thank you to Trinidad for this opportunity. Seuss!

**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*) graduated from Ohio University with a BFA in Production Design and Technology in 2016 and has been with Near West Theatre 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 Artist*) 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 painted for the Cleveland Playhouse for seven years and now operates under her business name Fresco Scenic Studio. She loves how close the Ohio theater community is and has painted for the 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.

**Russ Miller** (*Asst. Stage Manager*) (He/Him) has been involved with Near West Theatre since his first production (*Carnival!*) back in 2018. Ever since, he has been addicted and will never return to normal life. Rarely onstage (Last spotted in *Big Fish*, 2019 and *Head Over Heels*, 2023), you can typically find him in whatever crew role he's needed most in. After a brief five year hiatus, he is elated to continue his career in Assistant Stage Management. Russell would like to thank his family for their support, Phoebe for her love and patience, and Danny for his support from afar. And finally, he would like to thank YOU (yes, you!!!) for showing up to support exceptional local theatre. Enjoy *Seussical*!!!! YOPPP!!!!

## ARTISTIC TEAM CONT'D

**Kathryn O'Sullivan** (*Costume Designer*) (She/Her) who is typically spending time on stage, in the wings, or behind the concessions stand is unbelievably excited to be taking on her first production role with Near West on the costume team! With a love for crazy homemade halloween costumes, this has been an enjoyable but major creative undertaking. However, she has absolutely loved getting to flex these creative muscles with her co-costume designer and she can't thank Trinidad enough for entrusting her and Sydney with such a fun crazy show. Special shoutout to Jan Snider, Darlene Schmidt, and Michelle O'Sullivan for lending their sewing expertise as needed. Enjoy the show; it's Seuss! #BrainCell5ever

**Todd Plone** (*Scenic Designer*) is a freelance scenic designer and delighted to be returning to Near West. Recent designs of his include Ashland University's *Silent Sky*, Case Western Reserve University's *The Harvest*, French Creek's production of *Merrily We Roll Along* and Ohio Shakespeare's production of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Todd would like to thank the NWT staff for all their help with this show.

**Ava Simon** (*Sound Technician*) (She/Her) is excited to return to Near West after working on *Hairspray*. Previous design credits include *Orlando*, *The Last Five Years*, and *Pippin* with Oberlin Student Theater and various interactive events in the greater Cleveland area. Outside the theater she can be found petting cats or programming, sometimes at the same time.

**Trinidad Snider** (*Artistic Director*) (She/Her) is thrilled to have completed her sixth year as Artistic Director of Near West Theatre. She has had the honor of working both onstage and behind the scenes in theatres throughout the greater Cleveland area for over 40 years, and she remains deeply grateful for the artistic community that has shaped her journey. She is incredibly honored and lucky to work alongside a staff and board who consistently center community, connection, and Near West Theatre's mission and values in all that they do. Trinidad would like to extend heartfelt thanks to her family, Michael, Kirstin, Colin, Dylan, Michaela, Clark, and Ollie, for their patience, love, and understanding of the often-insane schedules that come with this work, and for always reminding her what matters most in life. #TPOG. Solla Sollew George and Kevin. "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."

- Dr. Seuss

**Michael Stein** (*Production Manager*) is in his ninth 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. As always, he thanks and sends love to his wife Carlie.

## ARTISTIC TEAM CONT'D

**Rob Wachala** (*Lighting Designer*) (He/Him) Rob has spent time with many local companies in the Cleveland area over the last two decades working with Tri-C, Near West Theatre, LiveNation, among others. He is excited to collaborate with this talented team on *Seussical*. Recent Credits include *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Legally Blonde* with Near West Theatre. *Secret in the Wings*, *Dracula: A comedy of Terrors*, and many others with Convergence-Continuum, and the recent production of *Somebody's Children* with Tri-C. He would like to thank all those who have supported and mentored him along the way including his parents, family, friends, and his wonderful ever-present and loving wife, Eva!

**Sydney Noelle Warren** (*Asst. Costume Designer*) (She/Her) is super glad to be part of the costuming team for the first time! After being on stage for several years, she is proud to be on the production team for a Near West show. She would like to thank Trinidad Snider for giving her the chance to take on something completely new. She would also like to sincerely thank her partner in crime, Kathryn O'Sullivan. Sydney is extremely grateful for Kathryn, Michelle O'Sullivan, and Darlene Schmidt who made these costumes happen! Also a very special thanks to Jan Snider, what can't she do! Enjoy the show! #BrainCellSever

**Kenya Woods** (*Choreographer*) (She/Her) is a highly respected and sought after choreographer and teaching artist based in Cleveland. She has worked with both the dance and theatrical community for over 20 years. She is a certified Horton Technique teacher and is trained in Classical Ballet. Theatrical Choreography and Director credits include: *A Son Is Given* (The Hanna Theater), *Rent* (Cain Park), *The Bubbly Brown Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin* and *Passing Strange* (Karamu House), *The Little Mermaid*, *Scrooge: The Musical*, *Brooklyn: The Musical* and *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Near West, Co-Director/Choreographer), *Cabaret* (The Maltz/CWRU MFA and Undergraduate Program), *Everybody* (The Helen Theater/CWRU MFA Program), *Blood At the Root* (CWRU Undergraduate Program), *Through Her Eyes*, *The Absolutely Amazing and True Adventures of Miss Joan Southgate* and *Ya Mama!* (Cleveland Public Theater, New York International Fringe and Hollywood Fringe). *Once on This Island* (Playhouse Square, CSA Theater Elite), *Bunnica* (Cleveland Play House), *Through Her Eyes* (Cleveland Public Theater), She is always excited to work and be a part of the Near West Theater community.



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# SEUSSICAL CREDITS

**Lynn Ahrens** (*Book and Lyrics*) won Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards and received two Grammy nominations for Broadway's *Ragtime*. For Twentieth Century Fox's animated feature film *Anastasia*, she was nominated for two Academy Awards and two Golden Globes. She and longtime collaborator Stephen Flaherty received the Oscar Hammerstein Award for Lifetime Achievement, and in 2015 they were inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame. Broadway: *Anastasia*; *Once On This Island* (Olivier Award, Best Musical; Tony nominations, Best Book and Score); *Seussical* (Grammy nomination); *My Favorite Year*; *Chita Rivera: The Dancer's Life*; *Rocky*; Madison Square Garden's *A Christmas Carol*; *Ragtime* (2010 Broadway revival). Off-Broadway and regional: Lincoln Center Theater's *Dessa Rose*, *The Glorious Ones* (both Drama Desk-nominated) and *A Man of No Importance* (Outer Critics Circle Award, Best Musical); *Lucky Stiff*; *Little Dancer* (Kennedy Center world premiere). Film and television credits include *A "Christmas Carol"* (NBC-TV); *Camp* (IFC Films); *"Schoolhouse Rock"* (ABC-TV) and others. (Emmy Award and four Emmy nominations). She is a Council member of the Dramatists Guild of America, a co-founder of the Dramatists Guild Fellows Program, and a Lilly Award winner for Lyrics. [www.ahrensandflaherty.com](http://www.ahrensandflaherty.com)

**Stephen Flaherty** (*Book and Music*) is the composer of the Broadway musicals *Ragtime* (Tony, Drama Desk, OCC Awards, two Grammy nominations), *Seussical* (Grammy, Drama Desk nominations), *Once on This Island* (Tony nomination, Olivier Award, Best Musical) and *Rocky*. Additional Broadway includes *Chita Rivera: The Dancer's Life* (original songs) and Neil Simon's *Proposals* (incidental music). Stephen has also written four musicals at Lincoln Center Theatre: *The Glorious Ones* (OCC, Drama Desk nominations), *Dessa Rose* (OCC, Drama Desk nominations), *A Man of No Importance* (OCC, Best Musical, Drama Desk nomination) and *My Favorite Year*. Other theater includes *In Your Arms* (Old Globe), *Little Dancer* (Kennedy Center), *Lucky Stiff* (Playwrights Horizons) and *Loving Repeating: A Musical of Gertrude Stein* (Chicago's Jefferson Award, Best New Musical.) Film includes *Anastasia* (two Academy Award and two Golden Globe nominations), the documentary *After The Storm* and *Lucky Stiff*. Mr. Flaherty's concert music has premiered at the Hollywood Bowl, Boston's Symphony Hall, Carnegie Hall, the Guggenheim Museum and Symphony Space. This year celebrates Stephen's 32-year collaboration with lyricist-librettist Lynn Ahrens. Stephen and Lynn are members of the Dramatists Guild Council and co-founders of the Dramatists Guild Fellows Program. In 2015 they were inducted into the Theater Hall Of Fame. Upcoming: the stage adaptation of *Anastasia*. [AhrensAndFlaherty.com](http://AhrensAndFlaherty.com).



# SEUSSICAL CREDITS CONT'D

**Eric Idle** (*Co-Concived*) has multi-hyphenated his way through life assiduously avoiding a proper job, from a writer and actor in the legendary "*Monty Python*" TV series and movies, to the creator and director of "*The Rutles*," the pre-fab four, whose legend will last a lunchtime. He has appeared on stage in drag singing rude songs at Carnegie Hall and the Hollywood Bowl as well as performing in two highly successful tours, *Eric Idle Exploits Monty Python* (2000) and *The Greedy Bastard Tour* (2003), for which he journeyed 15,000 miles across North America in a bus. His *Greedy Bastard Diary* of that tour is published by Harper Collins. His play *Pass The Butler* ran for five months in London's West End; he has written two novels, *Hello Sailor* and *The Road To Mars*, a children's book, *The Quite Remarkable Adventures Of The Owl And The Pussycat*, and a bedside companion, *The Rutland Dirty Weekend Book*.

**Theodor Geisel** (Dr. Seuss)



A vibrant promotional graphic for "Veranda's Rainbow Book Club." The background is a deep purple with white geometric patterns like circles, triangles, and zig-zags. A large, multi-colored rainbow arches across the upper right. On the left, a drag queen with voluminous blue hair, a bright green flower in her hair, and a large red nose is shown from the chest up, wearing a polka-dot top and posing with her hands near her face. Overlaid on the right side is a stack of three horizontal banners: a light blue one with "VERANDA'S" in orange, a yellow one with "RAINBOW" in green, and a green one with "BOOK CLUB" in blue. Below these, a pink banner with white text reads "CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO!". In the bottom left corner, there is a logo for "DRAG STORY HOUR Cleveland Chapter" featuring a crown and a book icon.

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