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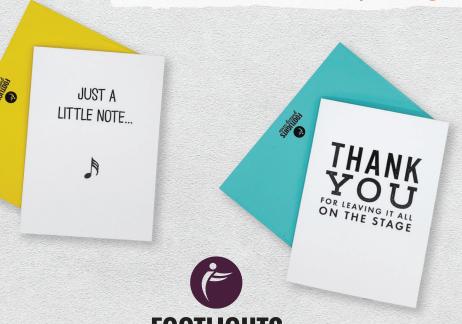




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Producing a TRU Story: A Musical by David Gosz & Leo Fotos

By Amanda Finn

David Gosz and Leo Fotos knew each other for three weeks before deciding to write a musical. And not just any run-of-the-mill musical either. They wanted to write something that *mattered*. Something that could do what great art does—change hearts and minds.

"It has been a conscious effort of ours," Gosz said. "When we first got together we knew we wanted to tackle something or some subject matter that, at the time, made people uncomfortable. We both believe that one of the main purposes of art is to challenge what society thinks about society. [Fundamentally, art] can be a driver of progressivism. Leo and I wanted to tell a story that makes an impact."

And that's how *TRU*, the not quite true story but a story based on truth, was born.

The musical centers largely around Truman, a young man in a toxic relationship with his mental illness. His illness, referred to as "Her" in the show, grows throughout the show giving him more hurdles to overcome. *TRU* focuses on his journey with Her and the ways it affects those around him.

According to Gosz the concept of the toxic relationship reflects the difficult nature of

mental illness. You never know what is going to happen next. You're no longer in control of how you're going to feel or what the illness is going to do.

"If I have a high anxiety day that wasn't my choice I can't make that go away I just have to accept that," he said. "There are other lower anxiety days that I don't mind it that much. I do love my anxiety. I rely on it to know things are wrong before I know they're wrong. That's not talked about [and] I believe it's important to show. It's not always bad all the time. There are moments where you can rely on it or benefit from it."

TRU is the culmination of Gosz and Fotos' stories along with those they've encountered along the way. The duo also reached out to NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) to ensure that they approached the subjects as gracefully and informed as possible. The many people Gosz and Fotos have encountered since 2013 when they first "put pen to paper" on their show have made TRU as true as possible without being a true story.

When it first premiered in 2018 at the Chicago Musical Theatre Festival it won Best Music. And now, set to open at Stage 773 with previews in late October, the show has grown even stronger.

The fact that a new musical is able to morph as new sets of artists are introduced to it is part of the beauty of new work, according to Fotos.

"It's constantly changing," he said. "We're always telling people that it's so fun and different than other shows because it's alive. It's still living and

"It's really just two people on parallel paths both defining what family means to them." - Leo Fotos breathing. If you don't like something in a Sondheim show [for example] you can't really change it—you have to go with it. If there is something we don't like we scrap it and go again."

While TRU is usually equated to Next to Normal, a 2008 musical that went on to win a Tony and a Pulitzer, the two don't share much more than a common theme of mental illness. Gosz appreciates that a show that became so mainstream tackled mental illness in a way that people could relate to.

Fotos explained that with Next to Normal the audience is witnessing how the protagonist's life is altered by her illness and the havoc it can wreak on those around her. Whereas with TRU the mental illness is actually represented on stage.

"Our show takes the symptoms and uses a literary device to show how the symptoms feel," he added. "In our show you see someone who most people wouldn't see [Her] but Her is the embodiment of the protagonist's symptoms."

On top of all of that *TRU* also addresses the sides of mental illness that "no one really talks about," Fotos said. The show intersects mental illness with toxic masculinity as it relates to communities of color. Truman and his estranged father have to cope with Truman's mother's suicide. It is the "type of story that everyone knows all it but no one ever really talks about."

Gosz added that they knew from the beginning that they would address important issues head on. It's not an issue play, but the play deals with issues. They hope that now, as mental illness is talked about a little bit more openly, these stories can overcome their stigmas. That opening up to the people you love about what you're going through moves from being a "brave" act to being a normal one.

Although it sounds complicated, Gosz and Fotos crafted a musical meant to entertain. Ideally the duo hopes that the show entertains while also instilling hope in its audiences.

As they prepare to open their show once again to Chicago audiences Gosz and Fotos are hopeful that their work will continue to thrive and grow in its new environment. It's still molding itself into the best piece of musical theater that it can be.

"The only way this show can continue to grow is to learn from new people as they add their heart and soul to the script," Gosz said.

TRU runs November 1 - 24 at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont, 773-327-5252. \$35.

"TRU is a story about humanity and the importance of finding your community. While it does focus around a man struggling with his mental illness there is so much more going on in the world besides his story... It's a story of how a rising tide raises all ships." - David Gosz



How would you like a seat at Steppenwolf Theatre, Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Joffrey Ballet, Writers Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre, the Chicago Sinfonietta, the Black Ensemble or the Old Town School of Folk Music for only \$5.00? Well, you can't get it — unless you are between 13 and 19 years old.



OK, so that's not you. But if you have a teenager in your house, the best gift you might give them this holiday season is the new Teen Arts Pass, or TAP, recently introduced by Urban Gateways. It's a card and app which is absolutely free to any city or suburban adolescent with a state and/or school ID card. Once teens have it, they can purchase tickets for just \$5.00 to any performance which isn't sold out. It might be a balcony

seat or the best seat in the house, depending on what's available. TAP holders are encouraged to call the venue the day of the performance, or check online, to find out if seats are available.

TAP is better than student discounts or even student rush tickets for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Harris Music & Dance Theater, Goodman Theatre, Steep Theatre Company, Victory Gardens Theater and the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts. For details, a complete list of performances and to sign up go to: teenartspass.urbangateways.org.

Urban Gateways is a unique Chicago social service and educational agency which, since 1961, has bridged the gap between Chicago youth and real-time experiences with the performing and visual arts, after recognizing the vanishing role of arts education in Chicago's public schools.

TAP is a wonderful new program which is open to non-Chicago teens as well.



The Raven Theatre in Edgewater (6157 N. Clark Street at Granville) has remodeled and improved the smaller of its two theaters, installing new seating and updated technical equipment. Formerly called simply the West Stage, it's now The Sally & Mark Schwartz Stage in honor of the generous donors who underwrote the work. Currently playing the Schwartz Stage is Hoodoo Love, the dramatic romance with songs by Katori Hall, set in the Depression Era south. It's directed by Wardell Julius Clark with music direction by Ricky Harris, and runs through Dec. 15. Tickets: raventheatre.com

A Destination Not to Be

Destinos, the 3rd Chicago International Latino Theater Festival, which ended Oct. 27, had to cancel the Sept. 26-29 appearance by Mexico's Once Once Producciones when the U.S. Department of Citizenship Immigration Services denied touring visas for the cast and crew. The troupe was scheduled to present La Tía Mariela at the National Museum of Mexican Art in the Pilsen neighborhood. The Chicago Latino Theater Alliance (CLATA), which presents Destinos, had begun the application process months earlier, submitting more than

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100 pages of supporting documents with assistance from a legal team, CLATA board members and even the intervention of U.S. Senator Richard Durbin's office.

Under the Trump administration, the inconsistent and ever-changing application of visa rules and guidelines has thrown cold water on bringing international cultural attractions to the United States (this isn't the first example here in Chicago). To underscore the point, Destinos successfully presented theater troupes and artists from Ecuador, Chile, Cuba and Mexico itself. So why not Once Once Producciones?



Living on Last Year's Dime

As the deadline for this issue passed, the U.S. Congress still had not completed a Fiscal 2020 budget, meaning Federal funding for the arts remains in limbo (see Sept.-Oct. Chicago Footnotes), although arts advocates have reason to be hopeful. Meantime (as most tax-payers and voters know) the government runs on so-called sustaining resolutions, by which Congress funds everything at the levels of the previous fiscal year. For Fiscal 2019—which ended on Sept. 30—funding for the National Endowment for the Arts was \$155 million, with the same amount allotted for the National Endowment for the Humanities.

FYI: the Performing Arts Alliance, a national advocacy group, points out that every congressional district in the nation has received an NEA grant, and that such

grants typically have a high return on investment: every \$1 of NEA grant funding is matched by almost \$9 of private or other non-federal support. Approximately 40% of the NEA's program funds are distributed directly to state arts agencies, such as the Illinois Arts Council.

Jonathan Abarbanel reviews theater for the Windy City Times and is one of "The Dueling Critics," along with Kerry Reid, heard every Sunday morning on "The Arts Section" on WDCB public radio 90.9FM. He's a past Chairperson of the American Theatre Critics Association and helped organize the October IATC visit to Chicago.

THE GREENHOUSE THEATER CENTER

DMT ENTERTAINMENT, DENISE McGOWAN TRACY and ROXBURY ROAD CREATIVE

Present

ELEANOR'S VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS WISH -THE MUSICAL!

A new play by **DENISE McGOWAN TRACY**

Music and Lyrics by

KATHLEEN BUTLER-DUPLESSIS

and

DENISE McGOWAN TRACY

Directed and Choreographed by **Zachary L. Gray**Musical Direction and Musical Arrangements by **David Fiorello**

Set Design by **Kehoe Designs**Costume Design by **Tatjana Radisic**Production Manager and Stage Manager - **Cody Westgaard**Lighting Design by **John Kelly**Sound Design by **Keegan Bradac**Make Up Design by **Khaki Pixley**General Management by Criterion Productions, **Aaron Shapiro**

JOHN MICHAEL DOWNS

This musical is based on the book written and published by Denise McGowan Tracy in 2015. Artist John Michael Downs read the book, picked up pen and brush, went to work and a few weeks later we had a glorious collection of illustrations.

The first public display was at the initial reading of "Eleanor" in December, 2018. John was in the audience and was able to hear the thunderous applause when he and his illustrations were acknowledged from the stage. For that we are grateful.

Our Eleanor world was shaken with news of John's passing in October, 2019. His hope was to provide more illustrations but, alas, it did not come to fruition.

It is our hope that a second edition – based on the musical - will be published in 2020. It will spotlight illustrations created by our friend John. Until then, here is just a small collection of some of our favorites.

Rest in peace, friend. And, thank you for bringing Eleanor's story to life with such whimsy, charm and talent.









FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT/PRODUCER

Welcome to The North Pole!

Thank you for joining us to see Eleanor's wish come true. Eleanor's is not the only wish coming true this holiday season. I'm excited, thrilled and humbled that we debut just 13 short months after Kathleen Butler-Duplessis and I sat across a table over lattes and said, "So, wanna do a show?" and a mere 12 months after our initial reading.

The story began about 20 years ago at Navy Pier when I was observing children visiting with Santa. One little girl was very specific stating, "And DON'T bring me anything purple." I recall turning to the woman next to me and saying, "How would you like to be the toy that gets that kid?" That idea stuck with me and months later I began jotting down the notes that became Eleanor's story.

We were hesitant to do the show this year due to so many unexpected delays. Yet, we persisted. With great support from Megan Bueschel we tackled the obstacles and formed a stellar production team to make this happen. I am lucky to call her my friend.

I dedicate this production to my late mother Diane who always believed in me. She would be especially proud of this. As a single mother who raised 6 of us – 5 boys and me – I think she would love the connection between Holly and Noelle. Thanks Mom. I know you are here in spirit leading the cheers! (Yes, this is what I'm wearing.)

I couldn't do anything I do – not this show, not events, not Monday Night Live, not leading the life I lead of fabulous family, friends and fun – without my husband Ed Tracy. He encouraged me to get Eleanor out of my computer and into book form and walked with me every step of the journey to take it from the page to the stage.

There were doubters. "It can't be done, not this year." But I kept saying – THIS year is the year when Eleanor is needed most. There is so little magic and kindness in our everyday world. Children are spending time in school not at recess but doing active shooter drills - worried less about grades and more about bullying. How did we get here?

I hope Eleanor provides them – and their grown-ups – with a reminder of the magic of the holidays, the value of families – whatever they look like - the foundation of friendship and the importance of believing that wishes do come true.

Now, Make YOUR Wish!



SONGS

All songs were written especially for "Eleanor's Very Merry Christmas Wish – The Musical" as a creative collaboration by Ms. Butler-Duplessis and Ms. McGowan Tracy.

The North Pole is a Magical Place	Music and Lyrics by Kathleen Butler-Duplessis
The Wrap It Rap	Music and Lyrics by Kathleen Butler-Duplessis
The Stuff That We're Made Of	Music and Lyrics by Kathleen Butler-Duplessis
Dear Santa	Music and Lyrics by Kathleen Butler-Duplessis
Christmas is Coming Too Soon	Music and Lyrics by Kathleen Butler-Duplessis
I'm Not Crying, You're Crying	Music and Lyrics by Denise McGowan Tracy
The Packing Song	Lyrics by Denise McGowan Tracy
	Music by Butler-Duplessis and Denise McGowan Tracy
Make Your Wish	Music and Lyrics by Kathleen Butler-Duplessis

SETTING

Traditional Christmas North Pole Time: The Present

Scene 1Twinkle's Desk, Eleanor's Room Scene 4......Cookie's Kitchen Scene 5 Eleanor's Room Scene 6......By the Fire Scene 9Twinkle's Desk Scene 10......By the Fire Scene 11......Twinkle's Desk Scene 13......Noelle's Home Scene 14......Twinkle's Desk

> The show running time is approximately 65 minutes and is performed without intermission.

> > Stay after the show for your Selfie with Santa!

CAST (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

TWINKLE	LINDSEY JANE BULLEN
ELEANOR	SAMANTHA BONZI
MRS. "COOKIE" CLAUS	ERIN PARKER*
SPRINKLE	SCOTT GRYDER
	JOHN MARSHALL, JR.
SPARKLE	KIM GREEN
CLARA/HOLLY	EMILY ROHM*
SANTA	DAVID TURRENTINE*
NOELLE	SYDNEY SWANSON
SHIMMER (U/S ELEANOR, COOKIE, CLARA, AND HOLLY	Y) CLAIRE LATOURETTE
GLIMMER (U/S, SPRINKLE, SPARKLE, TWINKLE AND N	OELLE)CARA CHUMBLEY

Please note: The role of "Sprinkle" is being shared during this premiere season by Scott Gryder and John Marshall, Jr.

PRODUCTION

Playwright/Producer	Denise McGowan Tracy
Composer	Kathleen Butler-Duplessis
Director/Choreographer	Zachary L. Gray
Musical Direction	David Fiorello
Costume Design	Tatjana Radisic
Costume Management	Caryn Klein
Set Design	Kehoe Designs
Sound Design	Keegan Bradac
Lighting Design	John Kelly
Production Manager/	
Stage Manager	Cody Westgaard*
Make Up Design	Khaki Pixley
Wig Master/Milliner	Kevin Barthel
Wardrobe Supervisor	Meagan Beattie
Assistant Music Director	Nick Graffigna
Assistant Stage Manager	Adrienne Lineback

^{*}Please Note: The Actor appears through the courtesy of the Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.



CAST AND CHARACTERS



SAMANTHA BONZI

(Eleanor)
Samantha is super excited to be sharing the magic of her favorite time of the year with you! Recent credits include: Nancy, Oliver (Nordlof Center,) Ursula, The Little Mermaid

(Clinton Area Showboat,) Nettie Fowler, Carousel (Timber Lake Playhouse,) and Mrs. Brill, Mary Poppins (Timber Lake Playhouse.) She would like to thank her wonderful parents and family for supporting her, the amazing cast and production team, and of course, the lovely Denise for without whom we would not be able to share this magical story! Enjoy the show, and Happy Holidays!!



LINDSEY JANE BULLEN

(Twinkle)
Lindsey Jane Bullen is
thrilled to be making
her return to the stage
with the cast and crew
of *Eleanor*. She recently
returned from Los
Angeles where she was

working in commercial music, releasing her EP 1'm For You' as a singer-songwriter. Currently working on her first solo album 'Turn Me Up' with Lakeshore Records, Lindsey is excited to be getting back into the musical theatre community right here in Chicago, and so glad to be adding some magic to the holiday season for everyone who is here to share Eleanor's story.



CARA CHUMBLEY

(Glimmer, U/S, Sprinkle, Sparkle, Twinkle and Noelle) Cara is a Chicago based actress and teaching artist. Originally from Moline, Cara has been performing in Chicago with Chicago

Kids Company for 5 years in shows such as Rapunzel, Jack and the Beanstalk, Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty, etc. She has been a teaching artist and director for Chicago Kids Company, Emerald City, and the Beverly Arts Center. This past summer Cara performed in productions of Sister Act, Disasterl, and Sweeney Todd at Rocky Mountain Repertory Theater in Grand Lake, Colorado. Cara would like to say thank you to her friends, family, Patrick, and her 20 lb. cat, Guinness- for all their love and support! Happy Holidays!



CLAIRE LATOURETTE

(Shimmer, U/S Eleanor, Cookie, Clara and Holly) Claire is thrilled to be spreading some holiday cheer this season! Favorite Chicago credits include You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown (Drury

Lane Theatre), New Faces Sing Broadway 1964 (Porchlight Music Theatre), Spring Awakening (Blank Theatre Company), The Addam's Family and All Shook Up (Williams Street Rep). BFA in Musical Theatre from the conservatory at Roosevelt University. Cofounder/company member of Blank Theatre Company. Proudly represented by Stewart Talent. Love to her real & chosen family. www.clairelatourette.com.



KIM GREEN

(Sparkle)
Kim is ecstatic to be
spending the Holiday
Season with Eleanor's...
Wish! Favorite Chicago
credits: Amy in Little
Women (BPBCo.); Bye Bye
Birdie, White Christmas

(Drury Lane); Mack & Mabel, City of Angels (Porchlight); Anything Goes (MTW); Mary Poppins (Mercury Theater); 42nd Street (TATC); Sweet Smell of Success (Kokandy); Wicked City (CTW); The Producers, Victor/ Victoria, Spamalot! (NightBlue); Legally Blonde (Big Noise). Regional credits: A Chorus Line (McLeod) and High School Musical (Broadway in the Dells). A huge thank you to the production team! Love to her family and friends, especially Brian, Leo and Senna for their endless support. www.GreenKim.com



SCOTT GRYDER (Sprinkle, sharing role with John Marshall, Jr.) Scott has been seen on stages throughout Chicagoland, with recent appearances in the Jeff-Nominated *Buyer & Cellar* (Pride Films & Plays), *Jesus Christ*

Superstar (Lyric Opera Chicago), and The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (Drury Lane Water Tower). He has performed in a multitude of cabarets, including Simply Scotty (with Nick Sula), Woz: A Rock Cabaret, and Life Is A Cabaret - The Music & Words of Kander & Ebb. Gryder has a B.A. in Theater from Texas Tech University. MeTV's Green Screen Adventures earned him Daytime Emmy Awards in 2012, 2014, and 2015 for Outstanding Achievement in Makeup. www.thescottgryder.com.

CAST AND CHARACTERS CONT.



JOHN MARSHALL JR. (Sprinkle, sharing role with Scott Gryder)
John is thrilled to be a part of this show for the Holidays! You might also currently see him on stage at the Mercury
Theater in Spamalot.

He was nominated for a Jeff Award for his supporting role in YANK! A WWII Love Story (Pride Films and Plays). Other favorites include: Mamma Mia and Madagascar (Marriott Theatre); Hairspray (Paramount Theatre); West Side Story (Drury Lane Theatre); Big Fish, All Shook Up and Nice Work. (Theatre at the Center); Side Show, Memphis and A Chorus Line (Porchlight Music Theatre) and Annie (Fireside Theatre). Thanks to KaCee at DDO Artist Agency and love to Patrick! @john_marshall_jr



ERIN PARKER*

(Mrs. "Cookie" Claus) Erin is so excited to bring Eleanor's story to Chicago audiences! Select Credits: And Then There Were None (Drury Lane), Mary Poppins (Mercury Theater), Ring

of Fire (1st National Tour), Martina McBride's Joy of Christmas Tour. A Southern Illinois native, University of Evansville graduate, and former Resident Company Member at Barter Theatre in Virginia, Erin received the Tennessee Arts Commission Individual Artists Fellowship Grant in Theatre and is a founding member of MAS Nashville (www.masnashville.com) and www.erin-parker.com. Much appreciation to DDO Chicago and her favorite human, Matt Crowle.



EMILY ROHM*

(Holly/Clara) was last seen as Glinda/ Aunt Em in *The Wizard of Oz* at Chicago Shakespeare Theater. She originated the role of Jane Doe in *Ride the Cyclone*, and has

performed that role off-Broadway at MCC Theatre (Lucille Lortel Award Nomination) as well as Chicago Shakespeare Theater, ACT Theatre/5th Avenue Theatre in Seattle, and Alliance Theatre in Atlanta. Other favorite roles include *Mary Poppins* (Paramount Theatre), Arminy in *Carousel* (Lyric Opera), Marian Paroo in *The Music Man*, Jane Ashton in *Brigadoon* (Goodman

Theatre), Belle in Disney's Beauty and the Beast (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), Johanna in Sweeney Todd (Drury Lane Oakbrook), and Beggar Woman in Sweeney Todd (Paramount Theatre). TV: Chicago Fire. She earned her B.A. in Music Theatre from Lawrence University in Wisconsin. Emily is also the owner of Röhm, a clothing design label that specializes in handmade bridal garments. Follow her @emilyrohm on Twitter and Instagram for updates and dark humor.



SYDNEY SWANSON

(Noelle)
Fresh out of high school,
"Eleanor" marks Sydney's
professional theatre
debut. She is no stranger
to the stage having
performed in a host of
community productions

over the years including West Side Story, Almost Maine, and Legally Blonde. She is filled with gratitude and excitement as she and the rest of the 'Eleanor' family bring this story to life. She thanks her family and friends for their unwavering support and the 'Eleanor' team for giving her this opportunity. She hopes the show will send holiday cheer into the hearts of many. Make Your Wish!



DAVID TURRENTINE*

(Santa)
David has been seen at
Chicago Shakespeare
Theater in Elizabeth Rex,
As You Like It, Hamlet,
Henry IV Parts 1 and 2, The
Merchant of Venice, Love's
Labour's Lost, Richard

II, Antony and Cleopatra, The Tempest, Pericles, and Much Ado About Nothing.
Other Chicago credits include Hamlet, She Loves Me, Arms and The Man and The Seagull at Writers Theatre. Regional credits include Richard III, Hamlet, Cymbeline, The Importance of Being Earnest, Pygmalion, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Love's Labour's Lost at the Michigan Shakespeare Festival. Mr. Turrentine received his MFA in acting from the University of California, San Diego.

PRODUCTION BIOS

Denise McGowan Tracy (Creator/ Playwright) A native Chicagoan, Denise McGowan Tracy has been a recognized face and force in Chicago's entertainment community - both on-stage and behind the scenes – for 35+ years. She began her career managing and booking the talent for the storied Byfield's nightclub, and is currently the creator and co-host, with Beckie Menzie, of the long-running impromptu musical showcase Monday Night Live at Petterino's, which recently celebrated its 500th show. McGowan Tracv served as Director of Entertainment for Navy Pier for a decade producing all public programming for millions of visitors. As current founder of DMT Entertainment, her full-service entertainment production and event management company, she has produced events for clients including Landmarks Illinois, Lettuce Entertain You, The Sarah Siddons Society, and The ABA. With this production, she begins a new chapter in musical theater as creator, playwright, and producer.

Kathleen Butler-Duplessis (Composer/ Lyricist) Kathleen Butler-Duplessis works as a music director at the Second City Training Center in addition to working as an AEA actor and freelance musician in Chicago. As an actor, her favorite theaters include: Theatre at The Center, Peninsula Players, Rocky Mountain Repertory Theatre, and the Royal George. She also plays guitar for toddlers with Stomp and Shout Chicago. She holds a B.M. from DePaul University and is a graduate of the Second City Conservatory.

Zachary L. Gray (Director) Zachary L. Gray recently directed *Run for Your Wife* at the Palace Theater (WI). Other directing credits include *Footloose* (Grandstreet Theatre), *Mary Poppins, Peter Pan*, and *A Funny Thing... Forum* (Timber Lake Playhouse), *Shrek the Musical* (Associate Director/ Choreographer, Chicago Shakespeare), *Fugitive Songs* (BoHo), *Legally Blonde* (Big Noise), and *Route 66* (Metropolis). Choreography credits include *West Side Story, Gypsy, Hairspray* (Timber Lake

Playhouse), *Dogfight* (Associate, BoHo), *Grease* (The Little Theatre on the Square) with other favorites including *Ride the Cyclone* ACT/5th Ave), *Joseph...Dreamcoat* (Ravinia), as well as several productions with The Performer's School at Skokie Theatre. A proud AEA member, as an actor he has appeared at Marriott Lincolnshire Theatre, Drury Lane Oakbrook, Victory Gardens, and Radio City Music Hall. He received a B.A. in Musical Theater Performance from Columbia College Chicago and an M.F.A. in Arts Leadership from Seattle University.

David Fiorello (Music Director) David Fiorello is a director, music director, performer, orchestrator, and playwright who's had his work performed across the globe. Recently, he served as Music Director for Gypsy at Porchlight Music Theatre, starring seven-time Jeff Award Winner E. Faye Butler. He's currently Music Directing A Man of No Importance at Columbia College Chicago, where he is also on faculty. He's toured internationally with John Doyle's re-imagined Sweeney Todd and served as Music Director for the Off-Broadway hit Danny & Sylvia: The Danny Kaye Story. His musical The Language or The Kiss, which he conceived, arranged and starred in, featuring the music of The Indigo Girls, received several Off-Broadway industry readings. An indemand vocal coach, he currently serves as Founder and CEO of Fiorello Studios and Fiorello Worldwide.

Tatjana Radisic (Costume Design) Tatjana Radisic's designs for theater, dance, and opera productions are marked by a synthesis of her European training and her own whimsical imagination. Her work has been seen on stages throughout the country, internationally, and on screen. Radisic holds a double B.A. from Belgrade University in Fine and Applied Arts, and an M.F.A. from Belgrade University in Costume Design. Her work includes groundbreaking experiments in costuming via collaborations with Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Steppenwolf

PRODUCTION BIOS CONT.

Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Court Theatre, Writers Theatre, Redmoon Theater, Drury Lane Water Tower Place, Drury Lane Oakbrook Terrace, Blair Thomas and Co., 500 Clown, Hedwig Dances, Victory Gardens Theater, Northlight Theatre, Live Bait Theatre, American Theater Company, UMA Productions, Apple Tree Theatre, The Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival South Band, and Crede Repertory Theatre Company, among others.

Caryn Klein (Costume Manager) has enjoyed working in Chicago Theaters for 35 years. She owned and operated Costume Exchange in 1994. Costume Exchange built custom costumes for theater, dance and opera. In 2002 Costume Exchange merged with Steppenwolf Theatre. Caryn Klein was the costume director for Steppenwolf for 17 years. She left Steppenwolf in August 2019 to pursue freelance projects.

Kehoe Designs (Set Designer) Kehoe Designs is a full-service event décor and design company that has built a reputation for innovative designs, strategically aligned concepts, and brand experiences for social and corporate events.

Keegan Bradac (Sound Designer) is a designer and engineer originally from Denver. Favorite Chicago Theatre projects include *Fun Home* (A1, Victory Gardens), *Holiday Inn* (A1, Marriott Lincolnshire), Chicago Shakespeare's Summer Parks Tour 2018 (A2), and *Miracle the Musical* (A1, Royal George). Additionally, he has worked with Drury Lane, Porchlight, Kokandy, Griffin, Apollo Chicago, and American Blues Theaters, among others.

John Kelly (Lighting Designer) John is very excited to work on Eleanor's Very Merry Christmas Wish. In the past he has worked with The Second City, About Face Theatre, Strawdog Theatre, Lifeline Theatre Company, The Gift Theatre, The Neo-Futurists, Oracle Productions, Redtwist Theatre and Eclipse Theatre Company. Additionally, John is the

Electrics Supervisor for Blue Man Group Chicago where he designs for corporate appearances and events. He is also an ensemble member at Strawdog Theatre Company. www.johnkellydesigns.com

Cody Westgaard* (Production Manager & Stage Manager) is thrilled to be working with Denise and the Eleanor team. He is currently the Production Manager at Peninsula Players in Door County Wisconsin. Assistant Stage Manager for 42nd Street, White Christmas, Saturday Night Fever and Hazel at Drury Lane Theatre, Mamma Mia! at Paramount Theater, and The Joseph Jefferson Awards (2006 - 2018). His other credits include Assistant Production Manager (APM) at NYU Tisch School of the Arts Department of Drama (2011 - 2015), APM at Williamstown Theatre Festival (2009 -2011), PM at Noble Fool Theatricals (2007) 2008). Cody earned a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre at Loyola University Chicago and Master of Fine Arts in Production Technology and Management at Carnegie Mellon University. He is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association.

Kevin Barthel (Wig Designer/Milliner) A Wisconsin native, Kevin moved to Chicago to be an actor. Along the way wigs began to find him. He has been onstage with many of his creations, working in and on the stages of Drury Lane Oak Brook, The Marriott Theatre, The Fireside Dinner Theatre, Theater at the Center, Porchlight Music Theatre, The Mercury, Six Flags Great America and many others. He is celebrating his 20th year as Theatre at the Center's Resident Wig Designer in 2019.

Khaki Pixley (Make-Up Design) has been doing headshot, film, print, commercial and theatrical makeup for the past nine years in the Chicago area. She is honored to be a part of this lovely holiday show and to be working alongside such a wonderful team! Check out more of her work on instagram @khakipixley. Happy Holidays and enjoy being transported to the North Pole!

PRODUCTION BIOS CONT.

Aaron Shapiro (General Manager) **Aaron represents Criterion Productions** as the General Manager for Eleanor. He recently worked as lead General Manager with Criterion for Miracle the Musical at the Royal George Theatre. He currently serves as the Production Manager for Emerald City Theatre. Aaron also served as Production Manager at Victory Gardens for two seasons: Hand to God. Fun Home, Native Gardens. Other credits include Disenchanted and Unspeakable at the Broadway Playhouse, commercial productions of Splintered Soul and Twisted Knots with the Chicago Commercial Collective, Jeff nominated productions of Heathers and Tomorrow Morning with Kokandy Productions, Jeff nominated productions of *The Rainmaker* and the award winning Buddy - The Buddy Holly Musical with American Blues Theatre, Stupid F***ing Bird and Caught with Sideshow Theatre, Memphis, In The Heights, Far From Heaven, Sweeney Todd, Funny Thing Happened, Side Show, and Jeff Awards winning productions of

Dreamairls, Ain't MisBehavin' and Sondheim on Sondheim with Porchlight Music Theatre where he is an Artistic Associate, Aaron was the founding Artistic Director for Oracle Theatre where he served for 4 years. He is also the co-founder of Studio BE/MCL Chicago in Lakeview where he served as Executive Director for 5 years and was a lead producer on Jersey Shore the Musical. Aaron is extremely grateful to be working with the talented artists who have made Eleanor come to life!

Adrienne Lineback (Company Manager) Currently works as an event coordinator at DMT Entertainment. Adrienne has been with Eleanor since the very first and she is thrilled to see this joyful musical make its official debut. She does a variety of theatrical freelance work in the ChicagoLand area. Some of her previous theater credits include: Heathers (MVCC). Flight (Beverly Arts Theater Center), Joseph Jefferson Awards (Drury Lane Oakbrook) and Young Frankenstein (Star Plaza Theater).

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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Instagram: eleanorswish Twitter: @eleanorswishCHI

Interested in Eleanor's original story? The first edition book "Eleanor" the book is available at www.amazon.com/Eleanors-Very-Merry-Christmas-Wish

ADMINISTRATION

General Management	Criterion Productions
· ·	Geoff Miller, Matt Marsden
General Manager	Aaron Shapiro
Company Manager	Adrienne Lineback
Marketing Consultant	Megan Bueschel
Media Relations	The Silverman Group
Social Media Manager	
Graphic Design	Ty Ziniel
Production Photographer	Matt Ferguson/ExecPIX.com
Production Videographer	Steve Wright
Production Legal Counsel	Linda Mensch
Production Accounting Services	Carolyn Kitty, CPA

DMT Entertainment (Producer) Founded by Denise McGowan Tracy, is a full-service event and entertainment production and management firm that produces a variety of highprofile, often private events. More information at www.dmtentertainment.com.

Criterion Productions is a production & management company for live performances and large-scale special events. Since 2007, Criterion has provided management and production services for a wide range of family entertainment; legitimate theatre, musicals, performance art, concerts, haunted houses, street festivals, cultural events, fashion shows and more. We're thrilled to be involved with *Eleanor* this year and to help bring a great show to life!

Megan Bueschel (Marketing and Communication Consultant) Growing up in a household with a father who ran an advertising agency and avid reader mother who majored in English. Megan Bueschel's career in Marketing Communications was all but pre-destined. After stints with advertising and public relations agencies, Megan found her niche heading up Marketing Communications departments for well-known Chicago businesses including Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises Inc., Public Relations for Tribune Broadcasting and most recently as CMO of Mario Tricoci Hair Salons and Day Spas. Now working again with her friend Denise McGowan Tracy from their early days together at Lettuce Entertain You. Megan has found "Eleanor" brings together all of her wishes for meaningful work with highly creative professionals on a project that brings delight and satisfaction to others.

THE SILVERMAN GROUP Now in its 20th year, The Silverman Group (TSG) is a highly respected Chicago-centric public relations boutique specializing in the arts and leisure fields. Under the direction of its President and Founder Beth Silverman, TSG is a collective of committed and passionate senior-level professionals who provide expert media relations and promotional assistance, not to mention valuable one-on-one counsel. Among its clientele are Cirque du Soleil, The Joffrey Ballet, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago Children's Choir and the Old Town School of Music. The Silverman Group is proud to be making this journey along with the entire *Eleanor's Wish* team!

"THE NICE LIST"

Santas aka Founding Producers \$15,000 and beyond

Barbara LaSpesa and Seymour Zitomersky

Chief Elves aka Producing Partners \$10,000 to \$14,999

Kelly and Dan McGowan Martha and Richard Melman

Santa's Helpers aka Producers \$5000 - \$9999

Leslie and Bill McGowan

The "Nice List" aka Producers \$2500-\$4999

Sharon and Geoffrey S. Miller

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John Sirek and Colleen Loughlin David Cameron and Jane Markham Kathy Brown

Stocking Stuffers aka Supporters \$500 - \$999

Don Conover and Denise Tomasello
Michelle and Steven Cucchiaro
Judith R. Freeman
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Irene Michaels Granat
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Andrea Schwartz and Dr. Steve Stryker

Stocking Stuffers aka Supporters Up to \$499

Stefanie Akwa and Cynthia Philbin

Victoria Alspach Steven Biossat Suzanne Brown Philipe Carvalho Sandee and Michael Cohen Joan Curto Leonora Dickson Dolores and Raymond Greabe Maud Jannin
Patricia Jessie
Polly Kortlander
Tom Michael and Jay Clark
James OBrien
Judy Rossignuolo-Rice and Bernard Rice
Allen Shechtman
Tamara and Jason (Jay) Sims

List current as of 10/29/19

WE ARE GRATEFUL

Denise is grateful to everyone listed in this program book for making this production a reality. She and the members of the production team extend a VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU to the following people:

The casts of both readings and our cocktail gathering: Elya Bottiger, Kayla Boye, Emily Goldberg, Jenna Coker-Jones, Ron Keaton, Kimberly Lawson, Cheryl Szucsits, Leryn Turlington, Laura Sportiello and Megan Elk accompanied by Andrew Blendermann.

Megan Bueschel is a brilliant marketing strategist and consultant and so much more. Her friendship, belief in and support of this project have been instrumental in the debut production.

Geoff Miller and Matt Marsden (Criterion) jumped into the deep end feet first at the initial meeting and have provided great counsel and support throughout.

Keeping Denise grounded are her long-time friend and CPA, Carolyn Kitty as well as legal counsel, Linda Mensch.

Friends who offered support along the way include Rob Lindley who introduced Denise to Kathleen, Beth Dudney, Rob Spengler, Tom Kehoe, Joey Berman, Jim Jensen, Jen Kripas, Michael Weber, Trent Snyder, Mirar Productions, Karen Vock, Andrea Liss, Laura Matalon, Suzanne Santos, Steve Wright, John Koehler, L. Walter Stearns and Eugene Dizon from Venus Cabaret/Mercury Theater, Maureen and Marc Schulman and Eli's Cheesecake, and our new friends at The Dime.

None of this could have happened without the day in and day out efforts of Adrienne Lineback who has served as administrative support, assistant stage manager and so much more in addition to her official role as Company Manager. She is a Star!

GREENHOUSE THEATER CENTER STAFF AND BOARD

Board of Directors

Bill Spatz - President / Executive Director Wendy Spatz - Executive Vice President

Administrative Staff

Derek Van Tassel - General Manager Ron Rude - Production Manager Katy Traxler - Box Office Manager Maddy Moderhack - Front of House Manager Elyse Balogh - Bar Manager David Rosenberg - Publicist James Heppler - Facilities

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DROP-IN PLAY, CAMPS, CLASSES, EVENTS, PARTIES











CHRISTMAS BINGO

Late Nite Catechism

Get into the Christmas spirit – it's a ho-ho-holy night! Play for actual prizes as you brush up on wacky myths, outrageous facts, and other Yuletide trivia. Ongoing Royal George Theatre (312) 988-9000



A DOLL'S HOUSE

Writers Theatre

This one-act adaptation of the Henrik Ibsen classic reinvigorates the story of the vibrant young Nora Helmer, deeply devoted to her husband.

Through December 15 Writers Theatre (847) 242-6000



HOODOO LOVE

Raven Theatre Company

After escaping the cotton fields of Mississippi, a young woman named Toulou arrives in depression-era Memphis with dreams of becoming a blues singer.

Through December 15 Raven Theatre East Stage (773) 338-2177



THE SUFFRAGE PLAYS

Artemisia Theatre

Celebrate Women's Suffrage with three brilliant historic one-act comedies that examine the impact of "one person - one vote" on contemporary politics.

November 1 – 24 The Den Theatre (773) 697-3830



KEELY AND DU

Intrinsic Theatre Co.

Du, a right to life activist, and Keely, a pregnant rape victim she is confining, transcend their circumstances and the ideological issues that separate them.

November 1 – 24
The Frontier Theater
Intrinsictheatrecompany.com



THE STEADFAST TIN SOLDIER

Lookingglass Theatre Company
Hans Christian Andersen's story about a little
tin soldier who never gives up comes back to
Lookingglass for a winter-time curtain call.

November 1 – January 26 Lookingglass Theatre (312) 337-0665







DEAD MAN WALKING

Lyric Opera of Chicago
Heggie and McNally's award-winning opera,
based on the New York Times bestseller.

November 2 – 22 The Lyric Opera House LyricOpera.org



THE PLANETS

Northshore Concert Band

Look beyond our own world to the celestial unknown. The Planets, features selections from Gustav Holst's masterwork of the same name.

November 3 Pick-Staiger Concert Hall (847) 432-2263



THE NICETIES

Writers Theatre

A professor holds office hours with a student to discuss her thesis: if history is written by the victors, who tells the story of the oppressed?

November 6 -December 8 Writers Theatre (847) 242-6000



RUTHERFORD AND SON

TimeLine Theatre Company

Written in 1912, this family drama about class, gender, and generational warfare was named one of the "100 plays of the century."

November 6 – January 12 TimeLine Theatre (773) 281-8463 x6



OEDIPUS REX

Court Theatre

Oedipus seeks to cure his city of a mysterious plague by discovering the murderer of the former king. November 7 – December 8 Court Theatre (773) 753-4472



THE WICKHAMS: CHRISTMAS AT PEMBERLEY

Northlight Theatre

While the Bennets and Darcys are celebrating, the servants find themselves in the midst of a holiday scandal.

November 7 – December 15 Northlight Theatre (847) 673-6300



FUN HOME

Northwestern University

An enchanting and harrowing coming of age story about confronting the past. Winner of the 2015 Tony Award for Best Musical.

November 8 – 24 Ethel M. Barber Theater (847) 491-7282



IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE: LIVE IN CHICAGO

American Blues Theater

A recreation of the entire town of Bedford Falls with sound effects, an original score, and holiday carols.

November 13 – January 4 Stage 773 (773) 654-3103



DON GIOVANNI

Lyric Opera of Chicago
Mozart's famous tale of lust, greed, and retribution.

November 14 – December 8 The Lyric Opera House LyricOpera.org



WHITE CHRISTMAS

Theatre at the Center

Celebrate the holidays with this heartwarming stage adaptation of the film, which starred Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Rosemary Clooney and Vera-Ellen.

November 14 – December 22 Theatre at the Center (219) 836-3255



OPERA WORKSHOP SCENE RECITAL

Northeastern Illinois University

An evening of scenes from different operas,
operettas and musical theatre standard repertoire,
accompanied by piano.

November 15 – 16 NEIU Auditorium (773) 442-4630



THE FIRST DEEP BREATH

Victory Gardens Theater

When a Pastor's son returns home from prison, he is forced to confront long-buried secrets all while planning (773) 871-3000 a special church service to honor his late daughter.

November 15 – December 22 Zacek McVay Theatre 3 (773) 871-3000



TARZAN THE MUSICAL

Skokie Park – Devonshire Playhouse
The Devonshire Playhouse Teen Performers present
Tarzan, based on the Disney Film.

November 16 – 24 Devonshire Cultural Center (847) 674-1500



A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Goodman Theatre

The must-see Chicago holiday tradition of Ebenezer Scrooge's discovery of kindness, compassion and redemption.

November 16 – December 29 170 N Dearborn (312) 443-3800



ALWAYS, PATSY CLINE

Firebrand Theatre Company

Based on a true story about Patsy Cline's friendship with a fan from Houston named Louise Seger, who befriended the star in a Texas honky-tonk in 1961.

November 16 – January 4 The Den Theatre Firebrandtheatre.org



ANNIE

Citadel Theatre

Citadel Theatre presents *Annie*, the perfect familyfriendly musical! November 20 -December 22 Citadel Theatre (847) 735-8554

Dinner and a Show



ECSTATIC EARTH

Loyola University

The Dance program and Chamber Choir unite to present Missa Gaia/Earth Mass as a celebration of earth's great beauty and the mystery of its life-giving force.

November 21 - 24 Newhart Family Theater (773) 508-7510



AMERICAN TRIBUTE

Skokie Valley Symphony Orchestra Piano Concerto, F major by George Gershwin, and Symphony No. 9, op. 95, E minor (From the New World) by Antonín Dvorák. November 24 North Shore CPA (847) 673-6300



IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

Oil Lamp Theater

A 1946 radio play — complete with sound effects — that tells the story of George Bailey, a young man whose troubles lead him to wish he'd never been born

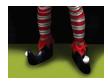
November 27 – December 29 Oil Lamp Theater (847) 834-0738



HOLIDAY INN

Overshadowed Theatrical Productions
Jim leaves the bright lights of show business behind
to settle down on his farmhouse in Connecticut... but
life just isn't the same without a bit of song and dance.

November 29 – December 21 Jubilee Bible Church 900 Foster Ave, Medinah (630) 634-2100



SANTALAND DIARIES

Goodman Theatre

In this "sweetly snarky holiday treat" (Daily Herald), a struggling actor takes a job at Macy's Santaland. For mature audiences November 29 – December 29 170 N Dearborn (312) 443-3800



A XMAS CUENTO REMIX

16th Street Theater

Celebrating Latinx culture and modern music, this is an exciting and joyous Christmas Carol for today.

November 29 – December 29 16th Street Theater (708) 795-6704



AMERICA'S BEST MISFIT TOY

Pride Films and Plays

This play imagines what later happened to the misfit toys rescued by Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.

November 29 – December 29 Pride Arts Center (866) 811-4111



AMAHL AND THE NIGHT VISITORS

Chamber Opera Chicago

The 14th annual production of this treasured Chicago holiday tradition, perfect for all ages! Sung in English with orchestra and Ensemble Español dancers.

November 30 – December 1 The Athenaeum Theatre 773-935-6875

SOUNDS GOOD!

SOUNDS OF THE SEASON

Sounds Good! Choir

A celebration of the holiday season with Sounds Good! Choir, which provides choral singing opportunities for older adults (55+) in the Chicago area. December 1 – 28 Various Locations (630) 441-5157



WONDERFUL CRAZY NIGHT -A NEW ELTON JOHN TRIBUTE

Apollo Theater

Colte Julian stars in an electrifying tribute with a live band and dazzling costumes.

December 6 & 7 Apollo Theater (773) 935-6100



HOLIDISCO

Chicago Gay Men's Chorus

Shiny disco balls and bell bottoms kick off a festive season with disco renditions of your beloved holiday favorites.

December 6 – 8 Various Locations (773) 296-0541



HOLIDAYS A CAPPELLA

Chicago a cappella

This beautiful musical tradition continues with a new collection of familiar and unusual songs for the holiday season.

December 6 – 15 Various Locations (773) 281-7820



COLD TOWN / HOTLINE

Raven Theatre Company

Five volunteers have come together to answer calls for a hotline created to help fellow Chicagoans cope with the holiday blues.

December 6 – 22 Raven Theatre East Stage (773) 338-2177



WORKING

Theo Ubique Theatre Company

Based on Studs Terkel's best-selling book of interviews, Working paints a vivid portrait of the men and women that the world so often takes for granted.

December 6 – January 26 Howard Street Theatre (773) 347-1109



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THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD

THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD

Blank Theatre Company

This Tony-winning Best Musical adapts Charles Dickens' unfinished murder-mystery novel as a comedy in the music hall tradition.

December 7 –
December 29
The Edge Theater
BlankTheatreCompany.org



THE NUTCRACKER

Ballet Chicago

The Nutcracker takes us on a journey with young Marie as she travels on Christmas Eve to the Kingdom of Snow and the Land of the Sweets.

December 13 – 22 The Athenaeum Theatre (773) 935-6875

Dinner and a Show



















ELEANOR'S VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS WISH - THE MUSICAL

DMT Entertainment

Eleanor has lived in the North Pole for years but has just one wish - for a home and best friend of her own.

HOLIDAY CONCERT / COPNCIERTO NACIDENO

Ensemble Español

A concert feauting Flamenco, Folkloric, Classical and Contemporary Dance and Music of Spain.

JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAM COAT

Music Theater Works

A Pharaoh who looks like Elvis, 12 singing brothers, a remarkable narrator and Joseph himself.

THIRST

Strawdog Theatre Company

After a devastating water shortage and war, Samira and Greta have made a life for themselves and their son Kalil in a clearing in the woods.

THE MOUSETRAP

Court Theatre

The Ralstons' house becomes lethal when four guests are snowed in amidst reports of a woman's murder.

BROOKLYN BRIDGE

Theatre School at DePaul University

Follow Sasha as she ventures outside the boundaries her immigrant mother has set for her and into the maze of her Brooklyn apartment building.

BUG

Steppenwolf Theatre

Steppenwolf Theatre presents Tracy Letts's mindbending cult classic, Bug.

JULIUS CAESAR

Northwestern University

Shakespeare's tragedy of a group of people who will go to extremes to remove a leader with devastating consequences.

LEGALLY BLONDE

Northwestern University

Based on the popular movie, Elle Woods takes on Harvard and aims to impress the love of her life.

November 19 -December 29 Greenhouse Theater Center (773) 404-7336

December 14 – 15 NEIU Auditorium (773) 442-5975

December 21 – 31 Cahn Auditorium (847) 920-5358

January 9 – February 15 Strawdog Theatre (773) 644-1380

January 16 – February 16 Court Theatre (773) 753-4472

January 16 – February 22 Merle Reskin Theatre (312) 922-1999

January 23 – March 8 (312) 335-1650

January 31 – February 9 Ethel M. Barber Theater (847) 491-7282

February 14 – March 1 Ethel M. Barber Theater (847) 491-7282 GREAT MUSIC. GREAT THEATER. THE WORKS.

