

The
Contemporary
Theatre of Ohio

SEPT
12-29

RIFFE CENTER
STUDIO ONE



Big Fish

MUSIC & LYRICS BY
ANDREW LIPPA

BOOK BY
JOHN AUGUST

DIRECTED BY
LEDA HOFFMANN

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The
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LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We seek to inspire a community of empathy and have a responsibility to recognize the ways in which we benefit from colonization, both historical and ongoing. A Land Acknowledgement is a formal statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of this land and celebrates the resilience and strength that all Indigenous people have shown worldwide.

We acknowledge that in Central Ohio, we are on the traditional homelands of the Shawnee, Potawatomi, Delaware, Miami, Peoria, Seneca, Wyandotte, Ojibwe, and Cherokee Indigenous nations who have strong ties to these lands. Today, individuals from a broad range of Indigenous backgrounds call Columbus and central Ohio home.

We recognize generations who contributed their traditions, hopes, and spirit to make the history that led to this moment. While some have lived on this land for more generations than can be counted, others arrived here hoping for a better life, while others were forcibly taken and brought here against their will. Acknowledging the truth of these realities is critical to building mutual respect and connection.



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A photograph of a man and a woman in conversation. The man, on the left, has a beard and is wearing a red and white checkered shirt. The woman, on the right, is smiling and looking towards him. She is wearing a green top and a white and red bracelet. The background is blurred, suggesting an indoor setting with other people.

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A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

We all know a great storyteller, whether it's a parent, a grandparent, a child, or a friend. Stories—the people who tell them and the legacies they continue—are the core of how we make meaning and find joy in our lives.

When we make theatre, we share stories. At The Contemporary, we work every day to bring you stories that spark joy, inspire empathy, and build connections. From intimate, two person stories to larger-than-life stories like *Big Fish*, the power of theatre allows us to share and learn more about who we are as people.

With storytelling at the heart of our theatre, we begin our 40th anniversary season with *Big Fish*, an epic, magical tale. We hope you'll join us for more incredible stories this season, and for the next 40 years. If this is your first time, welcome! If you've been with us since back in the day at the Park St. Theatre, or when we moved into the Riffe Center, or you've joined us in the last few years, thank you for being with us.

We'd love to hear your stories. From 40 years ago or from today, we want to hear your favorite memories from The Contemporary and CATCO over the years. Send us an email at stories@thecontemporaryohio.org or leave a note in the lobby.

Enjoy the wonderful world of *Big Fish*! We're so glad you're a part of our story.

Leda and Christy

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Leda Hoffmann'.

Leda Hoffmann
Artistic Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Christy L. Farnbauch'.

Christy Farnbauch
Executive Director



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**The
Contemporary
Theatre** of Ohio

presents

Leda Hoffmann
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Christy Farnbauch
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Big Fish

**Music &
Lyrics by
Andrew Lippa**

**Book by
John August**

**Directed by
Leda Hoffmann**

Lori Kay Harvey
MUSIC DIRECTOR

Dan Gray
SCENIC DESIGNER

Kelsey Gallagher
LIGHTING DESIGNER

Katherine Simon
PROPS DESIGNER

Jaclyn Benedict*
STAGE MANAGER

Myles Lawson
CHOREOGRAPHER

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Jessica Morgan
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Garrett Ratliff*
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

CAST

EDWARD



BRIAN C. GRAY he/they

WILL



WADE ELKINS* he/him

SANDRA



ALEXA BAKER she/her

JOSEPHINE



GABRIELA ARISMENDY she/her

KARL



CALEB JEFFRIES he/him

AMOS



JUSTIN KING he/him

MERMAID



WINNONA MADDREY she/her

WITCH



JO MICHELLE SHAFER they/them

DON



HUNTER MINOR he/him

ZACKY



WILLIAM HARRINGTON he/him

JENNY HILL



KELSEY HOPKINS she/her

YOUNG WILL



PAXTON LONGORIA he/him

MUSICIANS

Lori Kay Harvey **PIANO**, Karl Wohlwend **GUITAR**, Mathew Kinnear **VIOLIN**, Tomasz Jarzecki **PERCUSSION**, Eric Stratton **BASS**, Chuck Junkin **CELLO**

ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION STAFF

Tony Koehler
PRODUCTION MANAGER

Mark Coldiron
LEAD ELECTRICIAN

Tabitha Abney
WARDROBE

Jesse Charles
ASSOCIATE SOUND DESIGNER



*Actors and Stage
Managers appear
courtesy of the Actors'
Equity Association.

Set Built by CCT Scenic

CAST BIOS

BRIAN C. GRAY [HE/THEY] (EDWARD) is a singer/actor/director living on the East Side of Columbus. Brian carries two music degrees: a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from Otterbein University, and a Master of Music in Music Theatre from Oklahoma City University. Post graduating Brian performed with various theatre companies including Playhouse on the Square in Memphis, TN, Lexington Children's Theatre in Lexington, KY, and the Springer Opera House in Columbus, GA. Locally, Brian has performed in numerous theatre productions with several companies, including: The Contemporary (previously CATCO), Columbus Children's Theatre, Available Light Theatre, Short North Stage, and more. Brian also directs the OutLoud BIPOC Theatre Collective at Olentangy Orange High School in central Ohio.

WADE ELKINS* [HE/HIM] (WILL) has performed as a Blue Man in Blue Man Group for the past 12 years. Other theatre credits include *Wonderful Town* (Frank Lippencott), *Gay Bride of Frankenstein* (Harry – Spotlight Award Nomination), *Twelfth Night* (Malvolio), *Altar Boyz* (Abraham), *9 to 5* (Franklin Hart), *Forever Plaid* (Francis), and *Into the Woods* (Rapunzel's Prince) among many others and a plethora of readings and workshops of new works. Film credits include *Bert and Arnie's Guide to Friendship* and *Kabukicho* (Cannes Film Festival); TV: *Chicago Fire* (NBC). Wade holds an MFA from Ohio University, MM from Northwestern University, & BM from UNC-Greensboro. www.wadeelkins.com

*Denotes member of Actor's Equity Association

ALEXA BAKER [SHE/HER] (SANDRA) is a Columbus-based theatre artist. Favorite credits include *Ghost Quartet* (Quartet, Available Light Theatre), *Disney's Newsies* (Katherine, CCT), *A Tale of Two Cities* (Lucie, Actors' Theatre of Columbus), *Everybody* (Usher/God, Available Light). She is a teaching artist with Actor's Theatre and is on faculty at Ohio Dominican University and Red School of Music. Baker holds her BMus in Voice from Gettysburg College and her MMus in Classical Voice from Manhattan School of Music. Huge thanks to Leda, Christy, Tony, and the entire *Big Fish* cast, crew, and creative team and love to her family and incredible partner in all adventures, Chad. IG: @alexalynne23

GABRIELA ARISMENDY [SHE/HER] (JOSEPHINE) is so grateful and excited to be making her debut with The Contemporary Theater of Ohio! A graduate from AMDA with a BFA in Performing Arts, she is a native to Columbus and has performed in numerous productions around the city. Previous credits include *Hunchback of Notre Dame* with the Columbus Children's Theater, *Beauty and the Beast* with the Butterfly Guild, and *Newsies* (CCT). When not on stage, Gabby can be found exploring local restaurants and cafes around the city with her sister. She would like to wish the cast, crew, and creative team all the best and congratulations on a fantastic show!

CAST BIOS (CONT'D)

JUSTIN KING [HE/HIM] (**AMOS**) is so excited to be working with another dream team at The Contemporary! He was last seen in their staged world premiere of *The Worries of Wesley* as Papa & Wesley's Brain. Earlier this year, Justin debuted an original play, *Waiting for Laura*, which he co-wrote & starred in at the Cincinnati Fringe Festival - hopefully the first of many more festivals! An Ohio native, Justin received his BFA in Acting from Wright State University and has performed on stages all across the Midwest. Many thanks to his family, friends, & the Columbus theatre community for their support! @jkaaaaang @benandjustinpresent

WINNONA MADDREY [SHE/HER] (**MERMAID**) is so excited to be a part of her first production at The Contemporary! She has been acting in Columbus for almost ten years, recently seen in productions such as *Beauty and the Beast* (Actor's Theatre of Columbus), *The Color Purple* (Short North Stage), and *The SpongeBob Musical* (Columbus Children's Theater). Her choreography work has been seen in *Matilda* (Worthington Community Theater, Big Walnut HS), and *Footloose* (Big Walnut HS). Off of the stage, Winnona runs a preschool program in Worthington. She would like to thank everyone who made this production possible!

HUNTER MINOR [HE/HIM] (**DON**) is thrilled to join the cast of *Big Fish* at The Contemporary! Hunter is a theatre professional here in Columbus where he works as an Education Coordinator and Goldsmith Artist in Residence for Columbus Children's Theatre. When not involved with a production, Hunter can be found assembling charcuterie boards, caring for his house plants, binge-watching anime, or having an adventure with his family and fiancé, Dylan. Hunter sends love to his entire cast, crew, and you, reader, for prioritizing Columbus theatre.

WILLIAM HARRINGTON [HE/HIM] (**ZACKY**) is an actor based in Columbus, Ohio. This is his first regional show and he couldn't be more excited for the opportunity. Some previous roles include Grover in *The Lightning Thief*, Man 2 in *Songs for a New World*, Stosh/ Understudy in *Island Song*, and The Baker in *Into The Woods*. He would like to thank his family for their continual love and support!

JO MICHELLE SHAFER [THEY/THEM] (**WITCH**) is a non-binary actor based in Columbus, Ohio and they are happy to be working with The Contemporary again! You may recognize them from previous shows, *Head Over Heels* (Pamela) and *The Wolves* (#17), or more recently in *Ghost Quartet* with Available Light Theatre. Much love to the cast and crew of this magical story! @jomichelleschafer

KELSEY HOPKINS [SHE/HER] **JENNY HILL** is thrilled to be back this season with The Contemporary after appearing in *9 to 5 The Musical* as Margaret and *POTUS* as Stephanie. Favorite Regional credits include: *The Taming, Heathers, As You Like It, Dracula, Pete the Cat, August Osage County, Into the Woods*. Receiving her BFA in Acting (Musical Theatre) from Wright State University, backed by the Tom Hanks Scholarship, Kelsey went on to live and work in NYC and traveled nationwide as an actor before returning to her hometown of Columbus where she works as an acting coach and local theatre artist. Lots of love and thanks to her amazing community of friends, Mom & Dad, and her fiancé, Sam, for their unending support! KCHopkins.com

CALEB JEFFRIES [HE/HIM] **(KARL)** is so PUMPED to be apart of this amazing production of *Big Fish*. Some of his recent credits include *RENT* (Short North Stage), *Ragtime* (CCT), *Beauty and the Beast* (Butterfly Guild), *The Cat in the Hat* (CCT), and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (CCT). He is grateful to be able to share his storytelling talents and wants to thank his Friends and Family for the support and The Contemporary Theatre of Ohio for the opportunity. Caleb hopes you all enjoy the show! @calebljeffries

PAXTON LONGORIA [HE/HIM] **(YOUNG WILL)** is delighted to make his Contemporary debut in *Big Fish*! Some favorite past credits include *Artful Dodger* in *Oliver!*, *Billy* in *School of Rock*, and *Young Scrooge* in *A Christmas Carol*. Paxton is an 8th grader and enjoys playing piano, reading, and traveling with his family in his free time. He'd like to thank the incredible creative team, cast and crew at The Contemporary, especially Leda, for embracing and encouraging him. Love to mom, dad, Ryder, Henley and Monroe.

PRODUCTION STAFF BIOS

LEDA HOFFMANN [SHE/HER] (**DIRECTOR** and **ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**) is in her fifth season as The Contemporary's Artistic Director. The Contemporary directing credits include *Ride the Cyclone*, *A Christmas Carol*, *POTUS*, *9 to 5 The Musical*, *Indecent*, *Head Over Heels*, *Mr Burns: a post-electric play*, *An Iliad*, the reading of *George and the Hidden Dragon*, and the virtual production of *A Columbus Christmas Carol*. Previously, Leda was Artistic Director at Strawdog Theatre Company in Chicago. Before that, Leda served on Milwaukee Rep's artistic staff for seven years, working in the Education and Literary departments and founding Milwaukee Rep's Community Engagement Department. Also in Milwaukee, as the Artistic Director of Luminous Theatre, Leda produced and directed site-specific productions of *Mr. Burns: a post-electric play* and *The Penelopiad*. Leda's work as a director has been seen across the country at Milwaukee Rep, Provincetown Theater, Illinois Shakespeare Festival, Texas Shakespeare Festival, Door Shakespeare, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks, Jedlicka Performing Arts Center, Northbrook Theatre, The Alchemist Theatre, Max and Louie Productions, Riverside Theater Iowa City, Case Western, Ohio State, and University of Miami. Leda has also been a teaching artist for over ten years, directing youth and teaching with Hartford Stage, Milwaukee Rep, Mudlark Theater, Northbrook Park District, and Skyline Studios. Leda is a proud graduate of Grinnell College, a former Milwaukee Rep directing resident, Hartford Stage apprentice, SDCF Observer and a member of Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab. www.ledahoffmann.com

LORI KAY HARVEY [SHE/HER] (**Music Director**) is an Associate Professor of music at Otterbein University. She has music directed over 40 shows in central Ohio and throughout the US and has performed extensively as an actor/singer/dancer on both national and international tours and in numerous regional theatres. Recent Otterbein credits include *9 to 5*, *Bright Star*, *A Little Night Music*, *Something Rotten*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, *Into A Lamplit Room*, *The Theory of Relativity*, *Chicago*, *Singin' in the Rain*, and *Big Fish*. Tour credits: *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Grease*. Regional: *Next to Normal*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Jekyll and Hyde*, *The Toffetas*, *Camelot*, *The Who's Tommy*, *Damn Yankees*, *Brigadoon*, *Carousel*, *The Desert Song* and *The Good War*. Concert credits: Soprano soloist with Westerville Symphony, Springfield Symphony and Newark-Granville Symphony, Columbus Dance Theatre, Mozart's *Requiem* with The National Chorale (Avery Fisher Hall), *Puttin' On the Ritz* with Erich Kunzel and the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra (Carnegie Hall and recorded on TELARC label), and *The Magical Music of Disney* (Cincinnati Music Hall and Circle Theatre, IN, recorded on TELARC label and GRAMMY-nominated). Television credits: *Sex in the City*, *Guiding Light*, *Mel Torme's Christmas Special*, and various commercials and industrials. Education: BS in Voice Performance and Theatre from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. Member of Actor's Equity Association. Many thanks to Leda Hoffmann, Andrew Lipka, and the entire creative team, cast, crew, and orchestra for all their hard work on this joyful production.

PRODUCTION STAFF BIOS (CONT'D)

MYLES LAWSON [HE/HIM] (Choreographer) began choreographing within the city of Columbus and working professionally as a dancer at the age of 16. In the past as an Irish dance competitor, Myles placed top three at the Mid-America Regionals, top 10 at the North American Irish Dance Championships, and 17th at the World Championships. Some of his favorite roles/tours: lead role of The Priest in *Romeo & Juliet* touring China; choreographer and lead role of Aidan in *A Celtic Christmas Story*, debut in NYC; dance captain and lead role of The Prince in *Rhythm In The Night*, touring North America. Most recently, Myles has been honored with nominations through BroadwayWorld Columbus for Best Choreography for his work on various regional musical productions. "I am thrilled to be leading an education and mentorship in the excellence in dance performance, and so honored to be able to give a piece of passion, creativity and inspiration that grows within me back to all those who also have a love for this amazing artform and sport. Thank you for coming to our production, and hope you find magic in your experience."

DAN GRAY [HE/HIM] (Set Designer) is thrilled to be part of another season at The Contemporary and this production of *Big Fish*. Other recent designs at The Contemporary include *POTUS*, *Indecent*, *Head Over Heels*, *Life Sucks*, *Educating Rita*, *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*, *The Seafarer*, *The Secret Garden*, and *The Pillowman*. Dan's other regional theatre credits include numerous designs for The George Street Playhouse, Capital Rep, Players Theatre Columbus, the Delaware Theatre Company, and The Human Race Theatre Company (Dayton, OH). He also designs for many Central Ohio companies, including BalletMet, Opera Columbus, The Dayton Ballet, and The Columbus Symphony. Dan recently retired from the OSU Department of Theatre, Film and Media Arts where he was an Associate Professor and the Resident Scenic Designer.

MARY YAW MCMULLEN [SHE/HER] (Costume Designer) is honored to be working with The Contemporary Theatre of Ohio as Costume Designer for *Big Fish*. She works as a freelance Costume Designer, Director, and Educator. Mary is currently teaching as Adjunct Faculty at Otterbein University's Department of Theatre and Dance for Fall '24. Some of her more recent costume design work has been *Mamma Mia* and *Footloose* with Grandstreet Theatre in Helena, Montana, *School of Rock* and *The Sleepwalker of Holstenwall* with Columbus Children's Theatre, *Luchadora*, *Indecent*, and *Skeleton Crew* with The Contemporary, and *The Old Man and The Old Moon* and *As You Like It* with Door Shakespeare in Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin. Mary holds a B.A. in Theatre and M.F.A in Theatrical Design and Production from The Ohio State University. She thanks her parents, husband, Kyle, and children, Cora and Brek, for their support and excitement for all things theatre.

PRODUCTION STAFF BIOS (CONT'D)

KELSEY GALLAGHER [SHE/HER] (**Lighting Designer**) is a local lighting designer out of Dayton Ohio, she originally from Kansas City has worked in theatres all over the United States. At The Contemporary, Kelsey has designed *Good Grief*, *Skeleton Crew*, and *Ride the Cyclone* (associate designer). She currently spends her days designing exhibit lighting at the National Museum of the United States Air Force.

DAVE WALLINGFORD [HE/HIM] (**Sound Designer**) is a freelance sound designer, audio engineer, and founding company member of Available Light Theatre. When not in a theatre, he can be found either running sound in a TV production truck at a professional sports arena for the likes of Fox Sports, CBS, NBC, Bally Sports, Red Bull, ESPN, and Apple TV; or in a race car. Some shows he has designed at The Contemporary include *Ride the Cyclone*, *9 to 5*, *Head Over Heels*, *Five Guys Named Moe*, *Avenue Q*, *Story of My Life*, *Evil Dead: The Musical*, and *The Last Smoker in America*.

KATHERINE SIMON [SHE/THEY] (**Props Designer**) is a designer currently working on her MFA in Scenic Design at OSU. Previous props design work includes *Ride the Cyclone* (The Contemporary), *Ragtime* (CCT), *Head Over Heels* (The Contemporary), and *Mr. Burns* (Luminous Theatre). Katherine's scenic designs have been seen at The Contemporary (*Good Grief*), Available Light (*You Will Get Sick*), and OSU (*She Kills Monsters*). Katherine has been on staff at theatres such as Milwaukee Rep, Shattered Globe Theatre in Chicago, and Waukesha Civic Theatre. In addition to her design work, Katherine enjoys her time as an educator. Katherine is a proud alumna of Vassar College. Upcoming set design: *The Moors* (OSU), *Fat Ham* (The Contemporary). katherinesimondesign.com

JESSICA MORGAN [SHE/HER] (**Intimacy/Violence Designer**) is thrilled to be in her fourth season with The Contemporary having previously worked on *Indecent*, *Head Over Heels*, *9 to 5: The Musical*, *POTUS: Or, Behind Every Great Dumbass are Seven Women Trying to Keep Him Alive*, and *Ride the Cyclone*. She is a central Ohio native and has a BA in Theatre from Kent State and an MFA in Acting from Ohio State. Jessica is now based in Morgantown, West Virginia where she is the Head of Graduate Acting and Associate Professor of Stage Movement for the BFA/MFA Acting programs at West Virginia University. Additional professional work includes The Contemporary American Theatre Festival (CATF), Cumberland Theatre Company, and she is the Resident Intimacy Director for Vintage Theatre Company. In addition to her production work, she teaches workshops on consent and intimacy practices for theatre training programs and companies. Jessica has trained with the Society of American Fight Directors (SAFD), is a Certified Intimacy Director with Intimacy Directors and Coordinators (IDC), and is a member of Actors' Equity Association (AEA).

PRODUCTION STAFF BIOS (CONT'D)

JACLYN BENEDICT* [SHE/HER] (**Stage Manager**) is excited to be a part of The Contemporary Theatre of Ohio's *Big Fish*. Recent stage management credits include *Ride the Cyclone* (The Contemporary), *Beauty and the Beast* (Butterfly Guild), *The Sleepwalker of Holstenwall* (Columbus Children's Theatre), *A Christmas Carol* (The Contemporary), *POTUS* (The Contemporary), *The Wolves* (The Contemporary), *Sound of Music* (Butterfly Guild), *Prima Donna* (The Contemporary), and *Cinderella* (Butterfly Guild).

GARRETT RATLIFF* [HE/HIM] (**Assistant Stage Manager**) is ecstatic to be working with the Contemporary for the second time on *Big Fish*. He had previously Stage Managed their production of *The Day the Music Came Back* this past June. Additionally, Garrett has worked with Ohio State's Department of Theatre, Film, and Media Arts on their productions of The 25th Annual Putnam County *Spelling Bee*, *Blood Wedding*, and *Wilderness*. He hopes you enjoy this fantastic show!

MUSICIANS

CHUCK JUNKIN [HE/HIM] (Cello) has been playing the cello for 45 years, bringing his passion for music to life through performances with various orchestras, chamber ensembles, and pit orchestras. In addition to performing, Chuck is dedicated to teaching string music lessons, helping to nurture the next generation of musicians. When not making music, Chuck enjoys life with his husband, their beloved dog, and their eight cats.

MATHEW KINNEAR [HE/HIM] (Violin) is excited to be returning to The Contemporary Theatre of Ohio. Previously he was seen playing violin in the role of Moriz Godowsky for *Indecent*. Mathew regularly plays violin in the pit for productions around downtown Columbus, and this season you can catch him in Short North Stage's *Nine the Musical*, CCT's *Next to Normal*, CCT's *Titanic*, as well as several high school regional premieres of *Hadestown*. By day, Mathew is a middle and high school orchestra teacher in Gahanna-Jefferson schools.

ERIC STRATTON [HE/HIM] (Bass) is a bassist and guitarist from Westerville, Ohio. He attended Otterbein University, where he earned his Bachelor of Music in Bass Performance, and a Bachelor of Arts in Music, with an emphasis in jazz studies. Eric happily performs many styles of music, ranging from classical and jazz, to rock and metal. Musical theatre is one of his favorite performing opportunities, and his credits include Short North Stage, Columbus Children's Theatre, and Otterbein University. Eric is also an active piano tuner and technician in Central Ohio.

KARL WOHLWEND [HE/HIM] (Guitar) has performed across North America, Europe, and Asia, playing guitar in various styles and settings. He holds a master's degree in classical guitar performance from the Cleveland Institute of Music where he studied with John Holmquist. He earned his Bachelor of Music degree at the University of South Carolina, where he studied with Christopher Berg. Wohlwend currently serves on the faculty of The Ohio State University, and has also taught at Capital University, Otterbein University, and Ohio Wesleyan University. He coordinated the jazz/improvisation program for the Chamber Music Connection, and served on the faculty of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music's Classical Guitar Workshop for twenty years.

ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION BIOS

TABITHA ABNEY [SHE/HER] (**Costume Designer**) Passionate and innovative theatre costume designer, Tabitha "Tabi" Abney weaves enchanting tales through fabric and color. With a flair for storytelling, she transforms characters into living works of art, from classical to avant-garde. Armed with an acute understanding of character psychology, she collaborates seamlessly with directors and actors to bring narratives to life. Adept at balancing tradition and modernity, Tabi infuses productions with visually stunning and emotionally resonant costumes, leaving an indelible mark on the stage.

JESSE CHARLES [HE/HIM] (**Associate Sound Designer**) Born from a love of music, Jesse developed an interest in audio production. In high school, Jesse experimented with and learned how to use the school's audio equipment. Following an internship at WOSU, Jesse earned a certificate from The Recording Workshop in Chillicothe, OH. Since then, he has freelanced all over Columbus, Ohio. Working for Vaud Villities, Imagine Productions, Actor's Theater (Shakespeare In The Park), and The Kings Avenue Players, CCT, The Contemporary Theatre of Ohio, and Red Herring Productions.

THE CONTEMPORARY STAFF BIOS

CHRISTY FARNBAUCH [SHE/HER] (**Executive Director**) became The Contemporary's executive director in April 2020. She is a highly respected leader in central Ohio's arts and cultural sector, as well as nationwide. Her professional journey has included managing funding and programs for the Ohio Arts Council, building community partnerships for Hilliard City Schools, managing a first-of-its-kind national study of jazz audiences, and serving as executive director of an association for women business owners. She founded her consulting business in 2006 to support nonprofits and small businesses through strategic planning, board development, and fundraising. Her entrepreneurial and innovative mindset has led to the creative transformation of organizations while strengthening their governance structures. Christy holds degrees from Otterbein University in music performance and business administration.

STEVE HILLER [HE/HIM] (**Education Director**) became The Contemporary's education director in April 2023. He has over 15 years experience working in non-profit with a focus on youth and family programming and development, training and leadership and fostering community partnerships. Steve has chaired and served on different advisory boards and currently serves as a board member for a Columbus non-profit organization. He also has over 10 years of experience working in secondary and post-secondary education. Steve was born in Seoul, Korea and has lived most of his life in Ohio. He has a bachelor's degree in education from Ohio State and is a buckeye for life. In his free time, Steve enjoys playing piano and acoustic guitar, various outdoor activities, trying new foods and spending time with family and friends.

TONY KOEHLER [HE/HIM] (**Director**) is a director and designer, who recently directed *The Day the Music Came Back* here at The Contemporary. Formerly in Washington D.C., Tony served in several roles including production manager at GALA Hispanic Theatre, resident props designer at The Folger Shakespeare Theatre, and teaching artist at The Theatre Lab School of Dramatic Arts. Tony has designed props for Otterbein University, Opera Columbus, Constellation Theatre Company, and Rainbow Theater Project in Washington, D.C., and Piven Theatre Workshop, Redmoon Theatre, and Northwestern University in Chicago. A graduate of the University of Kentucky with a BA in theatre, he has received numerous awards including a 2019 Helen Hayes Award for Best Musical and Broadway World's 2019 regional award for Best Musical for *FAME: The Musical*, and a 2017 Helen Hayes Award for the Spanish language premiere of *In the Heights*.

THE CONTEMPORARY STAFF BIOS *(CON'TD)*

ALEXA BAKER [SHE/HER] (**Wardrobe**) is a Columbus-based theatre artist. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Voice from Gettysburg College and a Masters in Classical Voice from the Manhattan School of Music. She is currently on faculty at Ohio Dominican University, teaching theatre and acting, and is a teaching artist in the Columbus-area. Prior to moving to Columbus, Alexa was the Associate Director of Youth Programs at Steps on Broadway dance studio in New York, NY. In addition to her arts background, she has been the Events Coordinator for two-Michelin Starred restaurant Aquavit and has managed social media for brands that include Zaftig Brewing Company and The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.

JOY HEINO [SHE/HER] (**Education Coordinator**) is a highly skilled artist educator, with more than five years' experience facilitating after-school learning, pre-school, and early age childcare programs. Additionally, she works in various elementary and middle schools in central Ohio as the director of their school musicals. Joy has worked in the Columbus theatre scene with companies such as CCT, The Actor's Theatre of Columbus, and Short North Stage. She is a member of the Actor's Equity Association as a Stage Manager and Assistant Stage Manager. Prior to joining The Contemporary as Education Coordinator, Joy has worked as a sound designer on recent productions. Joy also serves as the Founder and Producing Director of Free Range Productions, whose mission is to educate and introduce young people living in rural communities to the arts. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Wittenberg University in Theatre, Technical Theatre, and Music.

LESLIE WRIGHT [SHE/HER] (**House Manager**) joins The Contemporary Theatre of Ohio team with previous experience in customer service and hospitality. She is the Owner and Creative Director for Whimsical Designs, a bakery and custom event decor shop in Reynoldsburg, Ohio. Leslie holds a Bachelor's degree in Graphic Design from Southern New Hampshire University and a Culinary Arts Degree specializing in pastry arts. She is a Columbus native, currently residing in Reynoldsburg with her husband, seven children, and two fur babies. Being an active member of various organizations helped shape and develop her passion for working with others.

The
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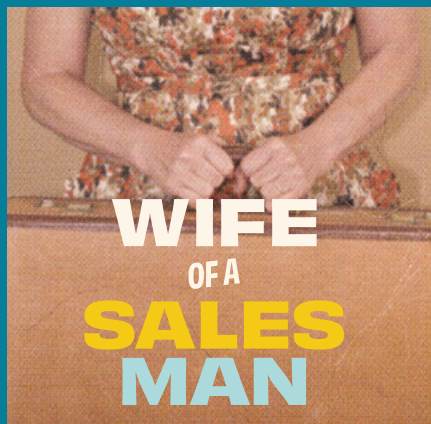
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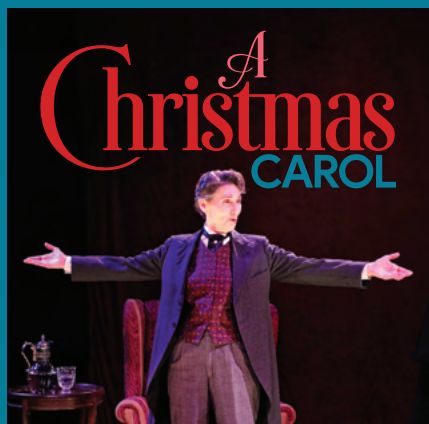
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