

The  
Contemporary  
Theatre of Ohio

(formerly CATCO)

JUNE  
27-30

Riffe Center  
Studio Two

The Day the  
Music Came  
Back



BY ALVARO SAAR RIOS  
DIRECTED BY TONY KOEHLER

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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 Acknowledgment 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 wearing a green top and is smiling broadly, looking towards the man. The background is slightly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting with other people.

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## A NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Welcome to the inaugural production of The Contemporary's Summer Teen Program! Seeing the need for professional, paid opportunities for high school theatre students, The Contemporary launched this pilot program a year ago. All the actors in this production are teenagers and being paid to be professional actors in this production, supported by professional designers, technicians, and creative team. They were selected through a competitive audition process and represent many different high schools and school districts. Throughout the last month, these young people have learned about the craft of acting, taken part in professional development workshops, and met with theatre artists across disciplines to learn about jobs in the theatre.

Thank you to the Ohio Arts Council's ArtsNEXT program for their support of this program in its initial year! If you'd like to help fund the continuation of this program, please reach out to Christy at [cfarnbauch@thecontemporaryohio.org](mailto:cfarnbauch@thecontemporaryohio.org).

If you or someone you know would like to hear about opportunities like this in the future, please join our email list via our website!

Thank you for joining us!

Leda and Christy



Leda Hoffmann  
Artistic Director



Christy Farnbauch  
Executive Director

## **A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR**

Directing *The Day the Music Came Back* had been an absolute thrill. Playwright Alvaro Saar Rios has given us a rare gift of a fully realized play that is written for and features teenage actors. Most Theatre for Young Audiences is written for younger audiences and performed by adult actors. So, for The Contemporary to take on this show is a special experience for all involved, especially the high school aged actors.

This is a story that showcases the perseverance of the human spirit's will to exist. Both for these actors and their characters this is an incredibly brave group of teenagers. 100 years in the future in underground meetings, they gather to discuss something that is central to the human experience, yet outlawed. With danger lurking just outside the door we see these teens bravely crushing authority and dismal consequences so that the human spirit can and will thrive. As Boombox says, "Safety isn't always the best decision. Sometimes you have to take a chance."

On the surface *The Day the Music Came Back* may seem like a familiar dystopian drama, however for the production team and the actors it quickly revealed itself to be a multilayered story and culture that was not an easy world to unpack. The cast is intelligent, engaged and willing to explore, which proved imperative to cracking open this play together. As a director, I'm grateful for the last 4 weeks we spent collaborating and building this play, and I'm so excited we get to share it with Columbus.

Tony Koehler

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## **THE CONTEMPORARY STAFF**

**Leda Hoffmann**  
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**Christy Farnbauch**  
Executive Director

**Steve Hiller**  
Education Director

**Tony Koehler**  
Production Manager

**Alexa Baker**  
Marketing Manager

**Summit J Starr**  
Administrative & Casting Coordinator

**Joy Heino**  
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House Manager

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**The  
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presents

Leda Hoffmann  
**ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

Christy Farnbauch  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

# The Day the Music Came Back

**BY ALVARO SAAR RIOS  
DIRECTED BY TONY KOEHLER**



Noam Denenberg  
**SCENIC DESIGNER**

Tabitha Abney  
**COSTUME DESIGNER**

Kelsey Gallagher  
**LIGHTING DESIGNER**

Jesse Charles  
**SOUND DESIGNER**

Garrett Ratliff  
**STAGE MANAGER**

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



# CAST

## AMFM



**MAHITA  
GADDAM** she/her

## BASS



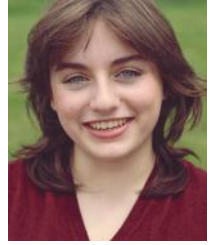
**FINNLEY  
CASEY** he/him

## DISCO



**JARED  
MORISUE-LESSER** he/him

## TREBLE



**COSETTE  
PAYNE** she/they/he

## G MINOR



**VINELLE  
JACKSON** she/her

## VUVUZELA



**VIVIAN RAE  
BOGAN** she/her

## BEATS



**SOPHIA MEI  
CHU** she/her

## BOOMBOX



**AUTUMN  
PARHAM** she/her

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## ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION STAFF

Tony Koehler  
**PRODUCTION MANAGER**

Leo Santucci  
**VIOLENCE DIRECTOR**

Set installed with help from CCT Scenic and Leslie Wright

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## SPECIAL THANKS

Lonelle Yoder, Tasty Dawg

## CAST BIOS

**MAHITA GADDAM [SHE/HER] (AMFM)** is an avid writer and artist and loves to be in the arts. Mahita got her start in acting by being accidentally assigned to a musical theater class in her high-school. Since then, Mahita has been in as many plays as possible to build on her acting experience and hopes to further create her career around acting.

**FINNLEY CASEY [HE/HIM] (BASS)** is so excited to be apart of *The Day the Music Came Back*! Previous roles include, Mr. Depinna (*You Can't Take It with You*), Tom (*Belles on Their Toes*), Tom (*Radium Girls*) and Les (*Newsies*). When not in the theater, Finn can be found painting with his dog.

**JARED MORISUE-LESSER [HE/HIM] (DISCO)** is thrilled to be making his debut at The Contemporary! This fall, he will be attending Otterbein University pursuing a BFA in Musical Theatre. Most recently, Jared played SpongeBob SquarePants in *The SpongeBob Musical* (Bradley Theater) and is currently in a production of *The Prom* (Hilliard Arts Council). Some of his other favorite credits include Leaf Coneybear in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Bradley Theater) and Christopher Wren in *The Mousetrap* (Bradley Theater). He would like to thank his family and friends for dealing with him and supporting him in everything he does.

**COSETTE PAYNE [SHE/THEY/HE] (TREBLE)** is excited to be in her first staged production at The Contemporary after being in the staged reading of this show in 2022! Cosette is returning to studio two after performing in *What the Constitution Means to Me* (Available Light), and has worked with worked with the Actor's Theatre of Columbus in *Queen Margaret* (Joan of Arc), *Robin Hood* (Betty Lettuce/Lord Bailey), and most recently *Beauty and the Beast* (Assistant Director). Cosette has thoroughly enjoyed working with everyone here and has learned so much!

**VINELLE JACKSON [SHE/HER] (G MINOR)** is a 2024 graduate of Fort Hayes Arts & Academic High School and will be attending Wright State University in the fall, majoring in Theater Studies. She most recently portrayed the role of Headmistress in *School Girls; or, The African Mean Girls Play* at Fort Hayes Career Center and is thrilled to return to the stage for her first full production with The Contemporary Theater of Ohio. She enjoys singing, songwriting, and plans to one day perform on Broadway!

## CAST BIOS (CONT'D)

**VIVIAN RAE BOGAN [SHE/HER] (VUVUZELA)** is an actor/artist/musician born and raised in Columbus, Ohio. She is currently a sophomore at a local high school, and although she's been in several school performances, this is her first professional play. Vivian participates in extracurricular activities like choir, podcast, guitar, and theater. She also does voice-over work for her church's announcements. Vivian dreams of being a successful voice actor and owning an art business. Vivian is excited to perform with the The Contemporary Theatre of Ohio and looks forward to learning and growing as an upcoming actor.

**SOPHIA MEI CHU [SHE/HER] (BEATS)** is thrilled to make her debut with The Contemporary Theatre of Ohio. Showcasing her talent in the vibrant Central Ohio theatre scene, her credits include Disney's *Beauty & The Beast* (Ensemble), *The Lightning Thief* (Luke), *Mr. Scrooge* (Ensemble), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Audrey) and *Sweeney Todd* (Beggar Woman/Lucy). A dedicated student at The Arts & College Preparatory Academy, she hones her craft studying voice under Paxton Skinner and acting with Kelsey Hopkins. Grateful for the support of her mentors and community, Sophia eagerly embraces the opportunity to contribute to the excellence of The Contemporary Theatre.

**AUTUMN PARHAM [SHE/HER] (BOOMBOX)** is thrilled to make her Contemporary Theatre debut in this empowering and heartfelt production. Recently, she completed a three-week internship with the theatre MadLab, where she deepened her understanding of the intricacies of theatre and life as a performing artist. During her time there, she helped manage the box office, read and reviewed 30+ scripts for potential plays, and assisted the directors with what was needed for a smoother production experience. Autumn's passion for acting was ignited during her debut performance as Ms. Peacock in *Clue* (2021), an electrifying experience that confirmed her desire to pursue a career in acting. Among her various roles, her most cherished was portraying Donkey in *Shrek The Musical* (2022). Witnessing the joy on the audience's faces was a profound reward that exemplified the essence of acting. When not on stage, Autumn is dedicated to writing stories that she plans to transform into visual pieces and performances. She is eager to further immerse herself in theatre, not only as an actress but also as a professional writer and director.

## PRODUCTION STAFF BIOS

**TONY KOEHLER** [HE/HIM] (**Director**) is a teaching artist, actor, director, and designer who is currently the Production Manager at The Contemporary. Previously, Tony was production manager at GALA Hispanic Theatre in Washington, D.C., and a teaching artist at The Theatre Lab School of Dramatic Arts also in Washington, D.C. Other positions include properties master at The Folger Shakespeare Theatre, and theatre credits at 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 Best Ensemble and Broadway World's 2019 regional award for Best Musical in the Small Professional Theatre Category for *FAME: The Musical*, and a 2017 Helen Hayes Award for the Spanish language premiere of *In the Heights*. In addition to his theatre background, he also has several years of business management experience as an operational manager at JCrew.

**NOAM DENENBERG** [HE/HIM] (**Scenic Designer**) is a graduate in Scenic Design from the College–Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati. Over the past nine years, he has designed and assisted on numerous theatrical productions, earning various awards and recognitions. His recent work includes serving as a Production Assistant in the Art Department for a Warner Bros. film starring Robert De Niro, designing a historical installation for Cincinnati Pride, and freelancing as a painter and graphic designer. Currently, Noam is a Lead Teaching Artist at ArtWorks, curating the new Walnut Hills Gateway Mural and hopes to inspire the next generation of artists to chase their dreams!

**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.

**KELSEY GALLAGHER** [SHE/HER] (**Lighting Designer**) is an Ohio local lighting designer based in Dayton. She went to grad school in Columbus and is always excited to be back working in the city. She is currently the exhibit lighting designer for the National Museum of the United States Air Force.

## **PRODUCTION STAFF BIOS** *(CONT'D)*

**JESSE CHARLES** [HE/HIM] (**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.

**GARRETT RATLIFF** [HE/HIM] (**Stage Manager**) is ecstatic to be working on his first show with The Contemporary. He has previously stage managed productions of Wilderness, Blood Wedding, and The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee with The Ohio State University. He will also be returning for the upcoming production of Big Fish in September as an Assistant Stage Manager.

**LEO SANTUCCI** [HE/HIM] (**Violence Director**) is an actor and fight choreographer in the mid Ohio area, and is pleased to have gotten to work with this talented cast! He is a member of the SAFD, as well as a competitive historical fencer. He hopes you enjoy this stacked cast and stellar show!

## THE CONTEMPORARY STAFF BIOS

**LEDA HOFFMANN [SHE/HER] (Artistic Director)** is in her fourth season as The Contemporary's Artistic Director. Directing credits at The Contemporary include *Ride the Cyclone*, *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, Illinois Shakespeare Festival, Texas Shakespeare Festival, University of Miami, Door Shakespeare, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks, Jedlicka Performing Arts Center, Northbrook Theatre, The Alchemist Theatre, Max and Louie Productions, and Riverside Theater Iowa City. 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.

**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.

## THE CONTEMPORARY STAFF BIOS (CON'TD)

**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.

**ALEXA BAKER [SHE/HER] (Marketing Manager)** 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.

**SUMMIT J STARR [SHE/THEY] (Administrative & Casting Coordinator)** is a Columbus-based artist with a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre & Dance from The College of Wooster. She is the lyricist/vocalist for FOX+RAM and lead singer for the cover bands Boombox Riot & Level Up!. Additionally, she is the COO of Photography for RockDaddyDesign and was previously the Assistant to the Vocal Director at ShadowboxLive. As of 2013, she has been a member of Teatro Travieso/Troublemaker Theatre and has performed internationally with their social justice production *Women of Ciudad Juárez*.

## THE CONTEMPORARY STAFF BIOS *(CON'TD)*

**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.



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