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COMMUNITY THEATER
presents

DISASTER!

A 70s DISASTER MOVIE... MUSICAL!



October 12, 13, 14, 2023 - 7:30 pm
October 14, 15, 2023 - 2:00 pm

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33rd Season, 174th Show



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The Verona Area Community Theater
Production of



Written by:

SETH RUDETSKY and JACK PLOTNICK

Concept created by

SETH RUDETSKY and DREW GERACI

Additional Material by

DREW GERACI

Musical Arrangements and Scoring by **JOSEPH JOUBERT**

Song Arrangements by **SETH RUDETSKY**

Vocal Arrangements by **MICHAEL MCELROY**

Dance Arrangements by **DAVID DABBON**

Piano/Vocal Score Arrangements by **STEVE MARZULLO**

Originally Produced on Broadway by

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HUNTER ARNOLD, JAMES WESLEY, CARL DAIKELER, BURBA HAYES**

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Nate Gagnon

Margaret Gailey

Ryan Gailey

Gabriella Gerhardt

Erica Gill

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Tracy Graber

Reilly Grant

Ruth Greiber

Sarah Griffin

Kelly Gullett

Jenni Gumieny

Jaci Haack

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# the production staff

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|                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Co-Director . . . . .                      | Sara Ward-Cassady                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Co-Director/ Choreographer . . . . .       | Kenzie Ford-Merucci                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Producer . . . . .                         | Kim Eckmayer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Music Director . . . . .                   | Dr. J. Adam Shelton                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Costume Design . . . . .                   | Austin Brummett                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Set Design/ Construction . . . . .         | Dusty Smith                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Sound Design . . . . .                     | Dale Nickels                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Lighting design . . . . .                  | Steve Nickels                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Props Master . . . . .                     | Marie Kyle                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Stage Manager . . . . .                    | Noelle Hatleberg                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Assistant Stage Manager . . . . .          | Zander Lowry                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Dance Captain . . . . .                    | Alexa Schaefer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Orchestra Manager / Assistant Sound Design | Tom Blankenheim                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Orchestra Conductor . . . . .              | Bryce Sanville                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Programs . . . . .                         | Sara Pfantz                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Tickets . . . . .                          | Lynn Vilker                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Website/ Publicity . . . . .               | Sara Ward-Cassady                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Costume Assistants . . . . .               | Emma Bartholomew, Paula Blankenheim, Yonu Cha,<br>Nancy Collins, Natalie Coombs, Evelyn Contreras<br>Jessica Contreras, Cassie Derfus, Sarah Emond,<br>Kenzie Ford-Merucci, Gail Gomach, Stefanie Merucci,<br>Sara Pfantz, Nicole Riege, Sage Yort, Pam Ziemlewicz                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Set Building . . . . .                     | Morgan Armbruster, John Beard, Joy Benjauthrit,<br>Alli Buckets, Jonathan Chen, Cal Compe,<br>Garrett Coombs, Natalie Coombs, Penelope Coombs,<br>Cassie Derfus, Lauren Dunn, Lucia Fernandez, BJ Ford,<br>Jane Hatleberg, Luin Hatleberg, Jillian Hepinstall, Bryce Hitchcock,<br>Eric Jansen, Elisa Kaether, Molly Kreuger, Maddie Koski, Emily Lord,<br>Liz McCartney, Brian Mullen, Liz Nickels, Mike Olson, Bill Owens,<br>Lauren Rowe, Omeed Soltaninassab, Chris Telfer, Kinjal Vyas,<br>Meg Westfox, Sage Yort, Ben Ziemann |

Thank you to everyone that helped with costumes, props, sets,  
backstage, ushering and everything else that makes this production possible!

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## Acknowledgements

AGRES - Alan Miller  
McFarland High School  
VACT Board of Directors  
Families of Cast and Staff

# notes from the director

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It has been said that “imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.” While we aren’t sure the makers of the dramatic 70’s disaster movie classics like *The Poseidon Adventure* and *Towering Inferno* thought their films would be imitated in the exaggerated and humorous form that is *Disaster! The Musical*, we are sure that we have had a fantastic time directing this hilarious parody show!

We were first thrown together as directors, unexpectedly, during *Matilda, The Musical*, but what we learned about each other during that experience is that we share a love of theatrical collaboration and a similar sense of humor! When the opportunity to direct as a team again for *Disaster!* arose, we jumped at the chance to embark on our second co-directing project and are so glad we did.

There are many people to thank in bringing this show to fruition. Thank you to our producer Kim who kept the show organized and on track behind the scenes. To Music Director Dr. J. Adam Shelton, we knew that sharing this show with you would be the cherry on top of an already great team and we were right - thank you for sharing in the humor! Costume Director Austin was an absolute superstar in pulling together the look and feel of the 70s and was tireless in searching for the perfect costumes and accessories to achieve just the right look. Set Designer Dusty was a great partner in working with us to create our disaster filled set - how do you create a cruise ship that turns upside down?! Thank you, Dusty, for thinking through the many odd scenes this show called for. Prop Master Marie was on the hunt for the right props from day one and we don’t think we’ve ever talked about the proper size for rats as much as we did with her! Ditto for Stage Manager Noelle, who was always there asking how she could help, including crafting her own set of rats! Lighting Director Steve took on the challenge of designing just the right lights to mimic the many disasters and emergencies this show requires and Sound Director Dale was right there with his full slate of amassed sound effects ready to go. To the rest of our team, Dance Captain, Alexa, Assistant Stage Manager, Zander, Orchestra Manager. Tom, Sara on programs, Lynn on Tickets, and our stupendous Conductor, Bryce, along with our amazing orchestra, thank you for being a part of the team and helping to support this creative and frenetic show!

Finally, thank you to our amazing cast. From the very first day of rehearsal we knew we had put together a special group of people and your willingness to dive into the characters, the humor, and the special effects that make up this show was greatly appreciated. We are so thankful for your dedication, talent, and time.

Rats, earthquakes, tidal waves, fires, detached body parts, piranhas, sharks, two body dummies, and one stuffed dog - we never thought we’d be directing a show with all of these elements, but all of this craziness, along with this incredible cast and staff, is what made this show one of our favorites and we hope you truly enjoy what this group has put together.

Enjoy the show!

Kenzie Ford-Merucci and Sara Ward-Cassady

# the orchestra

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Conductor: BRYCE SANVILLE  
Bass: JOHN DOWLING  
Drums: LAURA SCHRAM  
Guitar: JOE HARRIS  
Keyboard 1: BREANNA CALLAWAY  
Keyboard 2: SUE MIELKE  
Reed: TOM BLANKENHEIM  
Trombone: AARON MAES  
Trumpet: KENNY ELLIS

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# the musical numbers

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## ACT ONE

Hot Stuff  
The Lord's Prayer  
Theme From Mahogany  
Saturday Night  
Do You Wanna Make Love  
Without You  
Torn Between Two Lovers  
I Am Woman  
That's the Way I've Always Heard It Should  
Be  
Mockingbird  
Still the One  
Never Can Say Goodbye  
Feelings  
Feels So Good  
Knock on Wood  
Hawaii 5-O Theme

## ACT TWO

All Right Now  
Three Times a Lady  
Ben  
Baby Hold on to Me  
25 or 6 to 4  
Sky High  
When Will I Be Loved  
Nadia's Theme  
Don't Cry Out Loud  
Come to Me  
I'd Really Love to See You Tonight  
I Will Survive  
Knock Three Times  
A Fifth of Beethoven  
Still the One (Reprise)  
Reunited  
Muskrat Love  
Daybreak  
Hooked on a Feeling

*There will be one 15 minute intermission*

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# the cast

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|                                   |                    |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Chad . . . . .                    | Cal Compe          |
| Marianne . . . . .                | Jillian Hepinstall |
| Ted . . . . .                     | Garrett Coombs     |
| Jackie . . . . .                  | Kelsey Klug        |
| Tony . . . . .                    | John Beard         |
| Ben/Lisa . . . . .                | Elisa Kaether      |
| Sister Mary Downey . . . . .      | Lauren Rowe        |
| Shirley . . . . .                 | Jena Berg          |
| Maury . . . . .                   | Brian Mullen       |
| Levora Verona . . . . .           | Paige Fecteau      |
| Scott . . . . .                   | Noah Fahey         |
| Jake . . . . .                    | Shane Ceniza       |
| Wealthy Woman . . . . .           | Natalie Coombs     |
| Wealthy Husband . . . . .         | Bill Owens         |
| Traci . . . . .                   | Erica de Lacerda   |
| Chef/Victim 1 . . . . .           | Kai DeRubis        |
| Taxi Driver/Victim 2 . . . . .    | Riley Custer       |
| Young Woman 1/Sexy Girl . . . . . | Liz Nickels        |
| Young Woman 2/Victim 3 . . . . .  | Morgan Armbruster  |
| Passenger 1/Couple . . . . .      | Sara Pfantz        |
| Passenger 2/Couple . . . . .      | Chris Telfer       |
| Workman 1 . . . . .               | Gail Gomach        |
| Workman 2/Husband . . . . .       | Eric Jansen        |
| Wife . . . . .                    | Peyton Morgan      |
| Blinded Woman . . . . .           | Amondee Brandt     |

## **I Am Woman Singers**

Emma Bartholomew  
Emma Broback  
Natalie Coombs  
Erica de Lacerda  
Gail Gomach  
Peyton Morgan  
Liz Nickels  
Sara Pfantz  
Alexa Schaefer

## **Ensemble**

Morgan Armbruster, Emma Bartholomew, Joy Benjauthrit, Amondee Brandt, Emma Broback, Alli Buckets, Jessica Contreras, Natalie Coombs, Riley Custer, Shanna Dean, Erica de Lacerda, Cassie Derfus, Kai DeRubis, Lauren Dunn, Sarah Emond, Lucia Fernandez, Nicole Gile, Gail Gomach, Nellie Gonzalez, Rebeca Kubala, Bryce Hitchcock, Antonio Jacobson, Eric Jansen, Kelly Kendricks, Molly Krueger, Emily Lord, Elyse Mancilla, Hayley Mason, Liz McCartney, Stefanie Merucci, Peyton Morgan, Liz Nickels, Mike Olson, Bill Owens, Sara Pfantz, H Rose, Alexa Schaefer, Omeed Soltaninassab, Chris Telfer, Kinjal Vyas, Meg Westfox, Matt White, Megan Wiker, Sage Yort

# the cast

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**JOHN  
BEARD**



**JENA  
BERG**



**SHANE  
CENIZA**



**CAL  
COMPE**



**GARRETT  
COOMBS**



**NOAH  
FAHEY**



**PAIGE  
FECTEAU**



**JILLIAN  
HEPINSTALL**



**ELISA  
KAETHER**



**KELSEY  
KLUG**



**BRIAN  
MULLEN**



**LAUREN  
ROWE**



# who's who in the cast

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**JOHN BEARD** (Tony) John is excited to be a VACT 10, performing in his 10th show with the theater. Past roles include Leo (*The Producers*), Nathan (*Guys and Dolls*), Don Lockwood (*Singin' in the Rain*) and George Bailey (*It's a Wonderful Life the Musical*). He'd like to thank his friends, both old and new, in the cast, as well as the creative team, and his family for suffering his singing of incredibly catchy 70's tunes the past 8 weeks.

**JENA BERG** (Shirley) is honored to be making her VACT debut in this crazy and action-packed show. Though she is new to VACT, Jena is a veteran actor, singer, dancer, choreographer and director. The majority of her work has been in Beaver Dam at BDACT and at BDHS, from which she retired in 2019. Favorite productions include *Anything Goes* (Reno Sweeney), *Guys and Dolls* (Adelaide), *Once On This Island* (Choreographer), and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Choreographer). Jena would like to thank this production staff, BDACT for instilling her passion for performing, her mother for her musicianship, love and patience, and Diane Lutz for her friendship and for teaching her so much about theatre. Enjoy the show!

**SHANE CENIZA** (Jake) is thrilled to participate in his fifth production with VACT! He was most recently seen in VACT's rendition of *The Wizard of Oz*, and portrayed Andrey in *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812* at the Platteville Summer Arts Festival. He feels a never-ending appreciation for the friendships he has formed in the theater.

**CALVIN COMPE** (Chad) is stoked to be returning for his third show with VACT. You may have seen Cal before in *Elf the Musical* (Buddy the Elf) or *The Wizard of Oz* (Winkie, Ensemble). Cal is especially excited for *Disaster!* because of his life-long preference for seventies and eighties hits. Cal would like to thank his parents and Aunt Michelle and Becky for cultivating his love of oldies tunes! Cal would also like to thank Janis Williams for pushing him to try out for theatre in high school and Dr. J Adam Shelton for pushing him to audition at VACT. Without these people, Cal wouldn't be here today.

**GARRETT COOMBS** (Ted Scheider) is keeping it groovy with show #11 at VACT. Recent roles include Tin Man (*The Wizard of Oz*) and Gaston (*Beauty & the Beast*). Offstage, Garrett has been preparing for this nerdy role for years thanks to his love of board games and useless trivia. Thank you to Penelope for sticking it out through rehearsals so Mama and Daddy can play at pretend again.

**NOAH FAHEY** (Scott) is so grateful to be able to participate in his very first production with VACT! He was most recently seen on stage in Middleton Players Theater's rendition of *Avenue Q*, which was his first production since high school. Noah has an avid appreciation for the arts and has most enjoyed making new friends with his fellow cast members. He hopes you enjoy the show & have lots of laughs!

**PAIGE FECTEAU** (Levora Verona) is thrilled to be returning to VACT. Favorite past roles include Nellie (*South Pacific*), Marian (*The Music Man*), Sandra Bloom (*Big Fish*), Rhoda (*A New Brain*), Kate in Andrew Lippa's *The Wild Party*, Edwin Drood (*The Mystery of Edwin Drood*), Smitty (*How to Succeed In Business Without Really Trying*) and Woman (*35MM*). Thanks to my husband Steve for holding down the fort for our boys during this busy time of year! And this performance is dedicated to my father, Ben Hutchison who would have LOVED this ridiculous disco musical. This one's for you Dad!

**JILLIAN HEPINSTALL** (Marianne) is happy to return to the VACT stage for another run. Previous credits with VACT include *Beauty and the Beast* (Belle), *Don't Dress for Dinner* (Jacqueline), Matilda, *Mamma Mia*, and *The Wizard of Oz* (Special FX makeup, and dog handler extraordinaire). Other appearances in the area include Cambridge-Deerfield Players: *Beauty and the Beast* (Les Filles de Ville), Madison Theatre Guild: *Sondheim on Sondheim*, and St. Bernard Players: *Big Fish* (Josephine). Jillian would like to thank her fiance, Brian, for his endless support of her endeavors. She's dedicating this performance to her loving father, Mark, because of his unending fervor for the music of the 70s! That CD changer in the car really helped drill most of these songs into core memories.

## who's who in the cast

**ELISA KAETHER** (Ben/Lisa) is overjoyed to be back on stage after a five year hiatus from theatre. Elisa has played a variety of roles with some of her favorites being Glinda in *The Wizard of Oz*, Edith in *The Pirate of Penzance*, Penny in *You Can't Take it With You* and many ensemble roles in other various shows. Elisa is the Director of Education and a music teacher at Academy of Sound and loves working at a place that supports the arts! This is Elisa's second show with VACT with her first being *Hairspray* in 2018. Elisa invites you to laugh at her in her silliest role yet. She is grateful to have reconnected with the people of VACT and wants to thank her friends that she met in her most recent production of *Beauty and The Beast* for welcoming her back into the world of theatre and encouraging her to stay.

**KELSEY KLUG** (Jackie Noelle) Hey, hey! Kelsey is ecstatic to be returning to the VACT stage with these fantastic people! Favorite past roles include the titular character in *Mary Poppins*, Fiona (*Shrek*), Belle (*Beauty and the Beast*), Kathy Sheldon (*Singin' in the Rain*), Narrator (*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*), Mabel (*Pirates of Penzance*), Woman 2 (*I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*), and Marcy Parks (*25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*). Endless love to T, C & E for their unwavering love and support.

**BRIAN MULLEN** (Maury) is delighted to be back on stage with VACT after serving as Music Director for the *Singin' In The Rain Sr* show. Prior to that, he played Greenway in *Elf the Musical*. Other favorite shows around town have included Cambridge-Deerfield Players: *Mary Poppins* (Bert), Stoughton Village Players: *Titanic* (Etches/Pitman), *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Captain Scott), Oregon Straw Hat Players: *Beauty and the Beast* (Maurice), Sun Prairie Civic Theater: *The Odd Couple* (Roy), *Shrek* (Papa Ogre/Bishop) and *Matilda* (Ensemble). Brian has a Master of Music degree from UW-Madison. Enjoy the show!

**LAUREN ROWE** (Sister Mary Downey) is very excited to once again perform with VACT. You may remember her from previous VACT shows including *Matilda* (Miss Trunchbull), *Beauty and the Beast* (Madame de la Grande Bouche), and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (Baroness Bomburst). She has also appeared with Madison Theatre Guild in *Sondheim on Sondheim* and with the Madison Savoyards in *The Gondoliers* (Gianetta). When she is not appearing on stage, Lauren teaches voice lessons with Maven Vocal Arts. Lauren would like to thank her parents, Jon, and her dog Judy for their love and support. Enjoy the show!

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# who's who in the crew

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**SARA WARD-CASSADY** (Co-Director) is thrilled to be working with the incredible cast and staff of *Disaster!*, particularly getting to co-direct for the second time with Kenzie Ford-Merucci! Sara enjoys being a part of productions both onstage and off, with favorite onstage roles at VACT including Emily Hobbs in *Elf the Musical*, Sandy, in *Four Weddings and an Elvis*, and Mother in *A Christmas Story*, and favorite offstage roles including directing VACT's *The Children's Hour*, *Matilda the Musical*, and *Rock of Ages*, Middle School Edition, as well as producing and stage managing many other VACT productions. Sara is forever thankful to her husband, Colin, and daughter, Erin, for always supporting her in these creative endeavors!

**KENZIE FORD-MERUCCI** (Co-Director/Choreographer) is excited to be staging her second show with Sara Ward-Cassady and VACT (the first being *Matilda*)! You may have seen her on stage in previous VACT productions such as; *Elf the Musical* (Jovie), *Beauty and the Beast* (Babette), *Mamma Mia* (Ali), and *The Little Mermaid* (Ariel). Kenzie has also choreographed previous VACT productions including: *Spongebob*, *Rock of Ages MSE*, *Something Rotten*, *Singin' in the Rain Jr.* and *Matilda*. You may also know Kenzie from productions with Edgewood College Theater (*SHOUT: A Mod Musical*, *Calamity Jane*, *Clue: The Musical*) and Middleton Players Theater (*Avenue Q*, *Parade*). Kenzie would like to thank her husband, BJ, for always supporting her throughout her theatrical journey.

**KIM ECKMAYER** (Producer) is delighted to be producing her 2nd show with VACT and is lucky to be working with a seasoned staff and amazing cast. VACT has brought joy to her family for many years and she is grateful to support the creativity and fun that VACT brings to our community. Kim is thankful for her wonderful family Drew, Emma, & Oliver who support her through it all.

**DR. J. ADAM SHELTON** (Music Director) An opera singer by trade and a country singer by heart, Dr. J. Adam Shelton is at home in multiple genres with career highlights that include operatic roles in English, Italian, French, musicals, drag, tuxedos, and cowboy boots. A graduate from UW-Madison, this DMA in vocal performance

has a killer sweet tea recipe and unique perspective on queer voices in country music. Reviewers and fans alike note his "fine tenor flamboyance" and how he is "effortlessly hilarious... like Harvey Feirstein with pitch."

As a pedagogue, Dr. Shelton teaches at the collegiate level (Edgewood College) and maintains the Shelton Private Voice Studio. He has trained at the CCM Vocal Pedagogy Institute at Shenandoah Conservatory in jazz, pop/rock, country, and gospel and in 2022 launched the digital course *Own The Stage* with Ty Christian for Spectre Digital Academy. His students have gone on to national competitions and awards programs while recording their own albums, podcasts, and gigging. FB: @SPVSLLC IG: sheltonprivatevoice

**ALEXA SCHAEFER** (Dance Captain) is beyond excited to be back on stage, performing with VACT. She is currently a student at UW Madison majoring in Dance. Alexa has performed in VACT shows since she was five years old. Some credits include; Newsie (*Disney's Newsies*), The Acrobat/Big Kid (*Matilda*), Featured Dancer/Dance Captain (*Beauty and the Beast*) with VACT, and Frenchie (*Cabaret*) with Rock River Repertory Theatre. Alexa has also enjoyed working off-stage for many VACT productions, most recently as Dance Captain for *Elf the Musical* and Choreographer for *The Little Mermaid JR* and *Footloose YE*. She was also awarded Best Choreography for her recent work in Monona Grove High Schools' production of *Beauty and the Beast*. Alexa would like to give a Special thanks to her family and friends for always supporting her in everything she does! Enjoy the Show!

**AUSTIN BRUMMETT** (Costume Director) is excited to be a part of yet another groovy show with VACT. You may have seen him on the VACT stage in *Beauty and the Beast* and *Matilda*, or in SPCT's *Rent* as Benny. His previous costuming credits include VACT's *Elf the Musical*, McFarland High School's *Cinderella* and *Legally Blonde* (upcoming). Costuming a show is an entirely different experience than performing in one and Austin would like to thank all of the folks who helped him with this role, especially Nicole! He hopes everyone enjoys the show!

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# who's who in the crew

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**STEVE NICKELS** (Lighting Design) has been designing lights for VACT shows for over 15 years, and can usually be found in the lighting booth. He has also worked backstage as a stage manager, ropes operator, spotlight operator, and producer, and occasionally can even be found on stage, but always manages to be involved with the lights. "May the Light shine on you!"

**DALE NICKELS** (Sound Design) Dale has produced or directed many VACT shows and designed the sound for nearly every show since *The Wizard of Oz* in 1996. From time to time he shows up on stage. Most of the time he lives behind the soundboard, dealing with an increasing number of wireless microphones. His most recent directorial outing was *Elf the Musical*. "Thanks to my lovely wife, Deb, for letting me play."

**DUSTY SMITH** (Set Design and Construction) has enjoyed the fast-paced build schedule and appreciated all the cool cats who helped in the VACT workshop making our sets. A few of his favorite VACT highlights over the years include *Something Rotten* (Stage Manager), *Matilda* (Assistant Stage Manager), *Mama Mia!* (Stage Manager), and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (Assistant Stage Manager). He has also directed Mel Brooks' *Young Frankenstein!* and *The Odd Couple - Female Version*. There are many more that shall be noted but not named! "A big thank you to my family and friends for their love and support!"

**MARIE KYLE** (Prop Master) has been the elementary music teacher at Sugar Creek Elementary School in Verona for over 25 years. She has worked as the music director, and appeared on stage for many VACT shows, as well as directing the teen productions of *Grease*, *Legally Blonde*, *Bye, Bye Birdie* and *The Drowsy Chaperone*. Favorite roles include Narrator in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, Glinda in *The Wizard of Oz*, Betty Haynes in *White Christmas* and Mother Superior in *Sister Act*. Marie loves being in shows with her husband Jim and playing the role of mom to sons Joe and Tom.

**TOM BLANKENHEIM** (Orchestra Manager, Assistant Sound Design) If VACT is producing a musical, you can usually find Tom in the pit with an assortment of clarinets and/or saxophones. Tom's first VACT pit appearance was for *Annie Get Your Gun* (2007). As Orchestra Manager, Tom coordinates musician recruitment, pit setup, and ensures the pit runs smoothly so that Bryce may concentrate on the music. Tom has also been assisting Dale with sound when not wielding a clarinet or sax. It has been a pleasure working with Bryce, Dale, Kim, and all of the talented musicians, cast, and staff to bring this musical to the Verona Community.

**BRYCE SANVILLE** (Orchestra Conductor) This is Bryce's 3rd show in 5 months with VACT. He is absolutely ecstatic to be able to conduct this one and get to be even more hands on. Conducting musicals is Bryce's favorite thing in the world and he feels so incredibly lucky to get to be a part of VACT and their team. He hopes that everyone enjoys the show and has a few laughs. Come on down to the pit to show your appreciation to the musicians and say hi!

**NOELLE HATLEBERG** (Stage Manager) is thrilled to be the Stage Manager for this show. She previously staged managed *Don't Dress for Dinner* and *Elf the Musical* with VACT as well as numerous shows with UW Madison and Madison Theatre Guild. She would like to give a special thanks to her husband Dan, her parents, brother, family and friends for their love and support.

**ZANDER LOWRY** (Assistant Stage Manager) is thrilled to be joining VACT for the first time with *Disaster!* Zander has worked in a variety of roles for different shows at community programs and college, including stage manager for *Bright Star* and *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, assistant stage manager for *Dancing at Lughnasa*, and even virtual reality programming for *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Zander wants to welcome the audience to VACT's production of *Disaster!*



# who's who in the crew

**JACK PLOTNICK** (Writer) has a BFA in musical theatre from Carnegie Mellon. He co-wrote/directed the Sony Pictures feature *Space Station 76*, starring Patrick Wilson, Matt Bomer and Liv Tyler. Jack produced/starred in the awardwinning feature film *Girls Will Be Girls* and the Lifetime TV series *Lovespring International*. As an actor, he's appeared in countless TV shows and features with recurring/regular roles on *The Mentalist*, *Buffy*, *Reno 911*, *Drawn Together*, *Ellen* and *Action*. His film work includes *Meet the Fockers*, *Down With Love* and *Gods and Monsters*. Jack's acting workshops are highly acclaimed, and his free ebook, *New Thoughts for Actors*, is available at [www.JackPlotnick.com](http://www.JackPlotnick.com).

**SETH RUDETSKY** (Writer) is the afternoon Broadway deejay and host of *Seth Speaks* on SiriusXM Radio. He played Sheldon on Broadway in *The Ritz* and starred opposite Sutton Foster in *They're Playing Our Song* for the Actors Fund. He produced/conducted the *Dreamgirls* concert with Audra McDonald (Nonesuch Records) and *Hair* with Jennifer Hudson (Grammy nomination). As a comedy writer, he has three Emmy nominations for *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*. As an author, his newest novel is *The Rise and Fall of a Theater Geek* (Random House).

**MUSIC THEATRE INTERNATIONAL** (MTI) is one of the world's leading theatrical licensing agencies, granting theatres from around the world the rights to perform the greatest selection of musicals from Broadway and beyond. Founded in 1952 by composer Frank Loesser and orchestrator Don Walker, MTI is a driving force in advancing musical theatre as a vibrant and engaging art form.

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# recent VACT Productions

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- 2013 The Producers; Disney's Winnie The Pooh KIDS; Disney's The Little Mermaid Jr.; Legally Blonde, The Musical; Peter Pan; Seven Brides for Seven Brothers; The Best Christmas Pageant Ever
- 2014 Heaven Can Wait; Disney's 101 Dalmatians, KIDS; Encore Jr.; Bye Bye Birdie; The Music Man; How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying; Getting to Know The Sound of Music; White Christmas
- 2015 Singin' In The Rain; Aladdin, KIDS; Hairspray Jr.; The Drowsy Chaperone; Shrek The Musical; Forever Plaid; Elf The Musical Jr.; A Very Merry Hometown Christmas
- 2016 Brighton Beach Memoirs; Dinosaurs Before Dark, KIDS; High School Musical Jr.; Bring It On the Musical; Mary Poppins; Billy Elliot the Musical; A Seussified Christmas Carol; It's A Wonderful Life the Musical
- 2017 South Pacific; The Lion King, KIDS; Guys and Dolls Jr.; West Side Story; The Little Mermaid; Sister Act the Musical; Stone Soup; Godspell Jr.
- 2018 The Hunchback of Notre Dame; Bus Stop; A Race To The Finish; The Jungle Book KIDS; Bye Bye Birdie YPE; Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka; Little Shop of Horrors; Annie KIDS; Legally Blonde Jr.; A Christmas Story
- 2019 The Odd Couple; Three Nanny Goats Gruff; The Aristocats KIDS; 42nd Street YPE; Disney's Newsies; Chitty Chitty Bang Bang; Young Frankenstein; We Are Monsters; Disney's Frozen Jr.
- 2020 Mamma Mia!; 4 Weddings and An Elvis; Chicago High School Edition\*; Getting To Know Footloose The Musical\*; Seussical KIDS\*; Pajama Party\*; VACT Virtual Youth Theater Fall 2020; A Very Virtual Merry Hometown Holiday (\*cancelled due to COVID)
- 2021 The Importance of Being Earnest In a Pandemic; VACT Virtual Youth Theater Spring 2021; The Radio Play Disaster; Seussical KIDS; Singin' In The Rain Jr.; Matilda The Musical
- 2022 Don't Dress for Dinner; Something Rotten!; Pirates Past Noon KIDS; High School Musical 2 Jr.; The Music Man Sr.; Disney Beauty and the Beast; Encore! 2022; Elf The Musical
- 2023 The Children's Hour; The Lion King KIDS; The Little Mermaid JR.; The SpongeBob Musical; The Singin' In The Rain SR.; The Wizard Of Oz

For a complete list of VACT's past productions since 1992, please visit  
[www.vact.org/page-pp](http://www.vact.org/page-pp)

## Verona Area Community Theater, Inc

VACT, Inc. originated in the summer of 1992 and is now producing ten shows a year. From the beginning, our goal has been to offer the people in the Verona Area community opportunities to utilize their talents in all facets of the arts. Our primary goal is to have fun! If you are interested in participating in any way, please contact one of the board members listed below:

### VACT INC., BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### Officers

President: Dale Nickels  
Vice President: Sara Ward-Cassady  
Secretary: Elizabeth Kraemer  
Treasurer: Brian Johnson

#### Additional Members

Tom Arnol, Dee Baldock, Kim Eckmayer, K.B. Kendricks,  
Marie Kyle, Sarah Lederer, Alex Rosenbaum, Lynn Vilker



Thank you so much for attending *Disaster!* Like many arts organizations, the past several years caused many changes for VACT. Our regular operations were greatly disrupted and for the first time in VACT's almost 30 year history we were forced to cancel productions and stop operations. We are thrilled that this season we are finally back to our full season, bringing 10 live shows to the stage! We are so grateful for all of the support we received during the last several years. Every kind message, donation, and show of support has meant the world to us. VACT will always work to reach new theatrical heights alongside members of the greater Verona area and surrounding communities. We will also work to make our programs accessible to anyone with an interest in any of our programs or productions. Please consider making a donation to VACT and help us continue to bring theater and arts programming to the community.

Visit [www.vact.org/donate-now](http://www.vact.org/donate-now) to make your donation today!





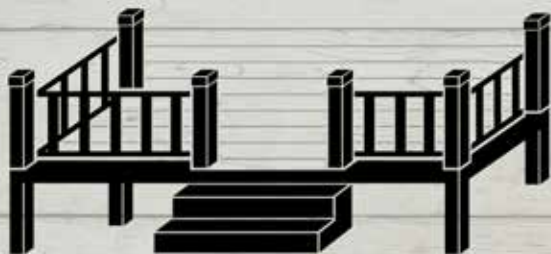
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## **“THAT’S THE WAY I’VE ALWAYS HEARD IT SHOULD BE”**

Written by Carly Simon and Jacob Brackman.  
Used with permission of BMG Chrysalis.

## **“A FIFTH OF BEETHOVEN”**

Written by Walter Murphy.  
Used by permission of RFT Music Publishing Corp (BMI).

## **“MUSKRAT LOVE”**

Written by Willis Alan Ramsey  
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## **“FEELS SO GOOD”**

Written by Chuck Mangione.  
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## **“WITHOUT YOU”**

Written by Peter Ham.  
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## **“I’D REALLY LOVE TO SEE YOU TONIGHT”**

Written by Dan England and John Ford Coley.  
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## **“THE LORD’S PRAYER”**

Composed by Albert Hay Malotte.  
Used by permission of Music Sales.

## **“TORN BETWEEN TWO LOVERS”**

Written by Phillip Jarrell and Peter Yarrow.  
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## **“WHEN WILL I BE LOVED”**

Written by Phil Everly.  
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## **“THREE TIMES A LADY”**

Written by Lionel Richie.  
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## **“HAWAII 5-O THEME”**

Written by Morton Stevens.  
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## **“THEME FROM MAHOGANY”**

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## **“STILL THE ONE”**

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## **“SATURDAY NIGHT”**

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## **“NEVER CAN SAY GOODBYE”**

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## **“NADIA’S THEME”**

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# the musical credits

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## **“MOCKINGBIRD”**

Written by Charlie Foxx Publishing

## **“KNOCK THREE TIMES”**

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## **“HOOKED ON A FEELING”**

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## **“BEN”**

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## **“COME TO ME”**

Written by Tony Green

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## **“25 OR 6 TO 4”**

Written by Robert Lamm.

## **“SKY HIGH”**

Words and music by Desmond Dyer, Clive Kenneth Scott.

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## **“REUNITED”**

Words and music by Dino Fekaris, Frederick J. Perren.

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## **“KNOCK ON WOOD”**

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## **“I WILL SURVIVE”**

Written by Freddie Perren and Dino Fekaris.

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## **“DO YOU WANNA MAKE LOVE”**

Written by Peter McCann.

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## **“DAYBREAK”**

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## **“BABY HOLD ON TO ME”**

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## **“WE DON’T CRY OUT LOUD”**

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## **“I AM WOMAN”**

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## **“HOT STUFF”**

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# The Disaster Film Craze of the 1970s

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*Anna Miles; Sacramento Theatre Company Disaster! Study Guide; 2019*

Disaster-themed films have existed throughout film history, but the smash box-office success of the film *Airport* in 1970 exploded the genre into new heights of popularity. The following is a brief look at some of the more popular disaster films that directly inspired *Disaster!* (the musical):

***Airport* (1970):** When a suicidal bomber plots to blow up a Boeing 707 mid-flight during a snowstorm, an airport manager must deal with the situation as well as the operations of the airport. *Airport* established the disaster-movie trope of multiple plotlines and characters, bolstered by an all-star cast, playing out against the backdrop of a disaster. The film grossed over \$100 million against a \$10 million budget and was nominated for ten Academy Awards, including Best Picture, and won one for Best Supporting Actress for Helen Hayes. The success of *Airport* kicked off the golden-age of disaster films, including the sequels *Airport 1975*, *Airport '77*, and *The Concorde...Airport '79*, the first two of which were well-received commercially and critically and all of which followed the same blueprint set by the first film

***The Poseidon Adventure* (1972):** The SS Poseidon, an aged luxury liner, is on her last voyage from New York City to Athens when a New Year's Eve tsunami overturns her, trapping the passengers and crew inside. *The Poseidon Adventure* was another box office hit and featured no less than five Oscar winners in its ensemble cast. A sequel followed seven years later but was a failure, and the film was remade twice for television and as a feature in 2006. The events of this film are directly referenced in *Disaster!*, both in its setting aboard a ship and in the flipping upside-down of the ship at the midway point of the musical.

***The Towering Inferno* (1974):** During the dedication ceremony of the world's tallest building, a fire starts due to shoddy electrical engineering and spreads throughout the building, trapping people inside. This was yet another critical and commercial success, grossing \$140 million and racking up eight Oscar nominations and winning three, and the all-star cast was led by Paul Newman and Steve McQueen, two of the era's biggest stars. The concept of shady construction practices and cutting corners to save money leading to a nightmarish disaster is directly referenced in *Disaster!*, namely in the character of Tony Delvecchio and his shoddy casino plans.

***Earthquake* (1974):** A disparate group of people struggles to survive in the aftermath of a devastating earthquake in Los Angeles. The cast was led by Charlton Heston and Ava Gardner and was yet another huge commercial success for the disaster film genre, as well breaking new ground in visual and sound effects. The inciting incident, including the well-meaning scientist attempting to warn the public of impending catastrophe, are both replicated in *Disaster!*.

The disaster film genre continued well into the decade, but few films could replicate the success of the above four. The genre ultimately went dormant until the 1990s, when advances in visual technology, including the use of CGI, allowed filmmakers to more fully and accurately realize disasters on the big screen. Films like *Twister* (1996), *Independence Day* (1996), dueling volcano films *Dante's Peak* and *Volcano* (both 1997), and dueling asteroid pictures *Deep Impact* and *Armageddon* (both 1998) successfully revived the genre and culminated in the critical and commercial hit *Titanic* (1997) which swept the Oscars and is one of the highest-grossing films in history.

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