

VACT

VERONA AREA  
COMMUNITY THEATER  
presents

A

ANASTASIA

April 25, 26, 27, 2024 - 7:30 pm

April 28, 2024 - 2:00 pm

Badger Ridge Middle School Performing Arts Center  
(300 Richard Street, Verona)

33rd Season, 181st Show



Enjoy the night of  
entertainment with  
Verona Area  
Community Theater



The Verona Area Community Theater  
Production of

# ANASTASIA

Book by

**TERRENCE MCNALLY**

Music by

**STEPHEN FLAHERTY**

Music by

**LYNN AHRENS**

Inspired by the Twentieth Century Fox Motion Pictures  
by special arrangement with Buena Vista Theatrical  
From the play by Marcelle Maurette as adapted by Guy Bolton.

*ANASTASIA*

is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals.

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Please enjoy all refreshments in the lobby only and remember to turn off all audible  
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The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

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# acknowledgements

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# the production staff

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|                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Director . . . . .                | Emma Vogel                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Producer . . . . .                | Sara Ward-Cassady                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Music Director . . . . .          | Kelsey Klug                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Choreographer . . . . .           | Kenzie Ford-Merucci                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Costume Director . . . . .        | Claire Johnson                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Stage Manager . . . . .           | Maddie Koski                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Assistant Stage Manager . . . . . | Zander Lowry                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Lighting Design . . . . .         | Steve Nickels                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Sound Design . . . . .            | Dale Nickels                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Set Design . . . . .              | Dusty Smith                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Scenic Painter . . . . .          | Elisa Kaether                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Scenic Painter . . . . .          | Kristin Davis                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Orchestra Manager . . . . .       | Tom Blankenheim                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Program . . . . .                 | Sara Pfantz                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Tickets . . . . .                 | Lynn Vilker                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Publicity . . . . .               | Marsha Heuer & Sara Ward-Cassady                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Website . . . . .                 | Sara Ward-Cassady                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Spotlights . . . . .              | Rex Hmielewski, Evan Lederer, Kei Turner                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Set Build . . . . .               | Owen Almy, Kellyn Ash, Bob Ash, Jen Bartell,<br>Jeremy Bartell, Brooks Bartell, Evans Bartell, Jonathan Chen,<br>Alex Christy, Dan Christy, Karl Dahlen, Maddie Dahlen,<br>Andy Davis, Heath Davis, Anna Delaporte, Joe Delaporte,<br>Aria Johnson, Mark Ketilson, Abby Ketilson, Alex Kiefert,<br>Brie Kiefert, Maddie Koski, Dalaney Lange, Rustie Lange,<br>Ellie Leibold, Bob Leibold, Gwen Leibold, Chrissy Leszczynski,<br>Tirza Leszczynski, Kenneth Ligaray, Vita Ligaray, Maddi Moll,<br>Kent Mullen, Brian Mullen, Amanda Mullen, Bill Owens,<br>Lily Palmer, Josie Petroff, Kyla Pilliod, Sophia Ramseier,<br>Wes Ray, Christine Ray, Sydney Ray, Amara Rea, Mira Roffers,<br>Mark Roffers, Liev Schiffman, Anya Schoolmeesters,<br>Shannon Schoolmeesters, Nora Schoolmeesters, Ryan Schoolmeesters,<br>Izzy Texidor, Brent Valentine, Jessa Valentine, Aela Valentine,<br>Clara Valentine, Erek Weis, Ben Wilkinson, Kate Wilkinson,<br>Chris Woller, Ben Ziemann |
| Costume Assistance . . . . .      | Chris Kiefert, Christine Ray, Jane Orosco, Jen Bartell,<br>Julia Hopp, Kari Faber, Kristen Hanson, Ava Hanson,<br>Sue Dahlen, Tonya Benz, Juliana Van Eck, Kedzie Johnson                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

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

# notes from the director

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The tragic story of the Romanov family is cemented in the fabric of history. Putting the captivating “*rumors, legends and mysteries*” of the imagined secret life of the “missing princess” to music led to the incredibly successful 1997 20th Century Fox animated film *Anastasia*. I know this film is a nostalgic favorite of many, myself included! 20 years later, in 2017, it was turned into a Broadway musical with 16 new songs and some revamped plot points and characters, which is the show you are about to see on our stage today.

When thinking about what musical I wanted to do with our high school actors this season, I knew I wanted to skew towards the dramatic so we could flex some different muscles as a cast and production team. *Anastasia* couldn't have been a more perfect fit. I am thankful for the opportunity I had as a director to take a deep dive into history to learn more about the Romanov family, and to connect my actors to the reality of the story we were telling. Though much of our musical is steeped in fantasy, it is still grounded in the tragic history of the Romanov family and the historical life and times of Russia and Paris in the 1920s, which we worked hard to portray onstage.

I can't express how thankful I am for the team of people who have been working on this beautiful production with me. **Sara:** Thank you for all you do for our production as our producer that we DO see and especially all that you do that we DON'T see. **Kenzie:** I particularly enjoyed our collaboration on this show - you captured the emotion and heart behind each song through dance and I'm thankful to have gotten to partner with you on this one. **Kelsey:** This score is beautiful and challenging, and you taught our teens how to navigate each number so skillfully. **Claire:** Thank you again for saying “yes” and for costuming our actors with such organization, love, and skill. **Dusty, Kristen and Elisa:** Thank you for bringing our set to life in such a beautiful way onstage. **Maddie and Zander:** Thank you for managing our backstage chaos with energy and positivity. **Marie:** Thank you for finding, creating, and organizing all the props we needed. **Steve and Dale:** Your work on lights and sound is always excellent and always incredibly appreciated. To everyone else who volunteered their time and energy to work with us backstage and behind the scenes, we truly couldn't do this without you! Thank you, families, for supporting your actors and encouraging them to participate at VACT.

To my cast - closing the door on this show hurts more than normal. I loved working with you each week and watching you learn to work together as a team. You all rose to the occasion of everything that was required of you in this show. Thank you for bringing your talent and hearts to the stage. I hope you look back on this show fondly. I know I will.

This musical is a tragedy, a romance, a family drama, a heist, a cat and mouse chase, and a mystery all rolled into one compelling story that I'm thrilled to be able to share with you today. My hope as you watch our teens perform is that you are captivated by it all and fall in love with it just like I did. Enjoy this *Journey to the Past!*

~ Emma Vogel - Director

# the orchestra

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Conductor: PATTY SCHLAFER

Bass: ARLENE SYKORA

Cello: MARTHA MAXWELL

Drums/Percussion: LAURA SCHRAM

Percussion: PRESTON BRAVERMAN

Horn: REBECCA SCHROEDER

Keyboard 1: JEFF INGEBRITSEN

Keyboard 2: MARSHALL ROTH

Reed 1: KATI SEITER

Reed 2: TOM BLANKENHEIM

Reed 2 (Flute): BECCA BURNETT

Reed 3: DION MILLS

Trombone: KATIE KRETSCHMAN

Trumpet: ANDY SGRIGNOLI

Violin 1: JENNIFER MCFARLAND

Violin 2: BRYCE SANVILLE



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# the scenes and musical numbers

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## ACT ONE

|                                                 |                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Opening Fanfare and Opening Scene . . . . .     | Ensemble                                      |
| <i>Once Upon a December</i> . . . . .           | Dowager Empress & Young Anastasia             |
| <i>The Last Dance of the Romanovs</i> . . . . . | Ensemble                                      |
| <i>A Rumor in St. Petersburg</i> . . . . .      | Dmitry, Vlad & Ensemble                       |
| <i>In My Dreams</i> . . . . .                   | Anya & Offstage Female Chorus                 |
| <i>The Rumors Never End</i> . . . . .           | Gleb & Ensemble                               |
| <i>Learn To Do It</i> . . . . .                 | Vlad, Dmitry & Anya                           |
| <i>Learn To Do It (Reprise)</i> . . . . .       | Anya                                          |
| <i>The Neva Flows</i> . . . . .                 | Gleb & Anya                                   |
| <i>The Neva Flows (Reprise)</i> . . . . .       | Drunks                                        |
| <i>My Petersburg</i> . . . . .                  | Dmitry & Anya                                 |
| <i>Once Upon a December</i> . . . . .           | Anya & Ensemble                               |
| <i>A Secret She Kept</i> . . . . .              | Anya                                          |
| <i>Stay, I Pray You</i> . . . . .               | Count Ipolitov, Anya, Dmitry, Vlad & Ensemble |
| <i>We'll Go From There</i> . . . . .            | Anya, Dmitry, Vlad & Ensemble                 |
| <i>Traveling Sequence/Still</i> . . . . .       | Gleb, Gorklinsky, Anya, Vlad & Dmitry         |
| <i>Journey to the Past</i> . . . . .            | Anya                                          |

*There will be one 15 minute intermission*

## ACT TWO

|                                                                      |                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Paris Holds the Key (To Your Heart)</i> . . . . .                 | Vlad, Anya, Dmitry & Ensemble                  |
| <i>Paris Holds the Key (Reprise)</i> . . . . .                       | Anya                                           |
| <i>Close the Door</i> . . . . .                                      | Dowager Empress                                |
| <i>Land of Yesterday</i> . . . . .                                   | Lily, Leopold & Ensemble                       |
| <i>The Countess and the Common Man</i> . . . . .                     | Vlad & Lily                                    |
| Reprises: <i>The Countess</i> and <i>Land of Yesterday</i> . . . . . | Lily, Vlad & Gleb                              |
| <i>A Nightmare</i> . . . . .                                         | Romanov Children, Tsar, Tsarina & Anya         |
| <i>In a Crowd of Thousands</i> . . . . .                             | Dmitry & Anya                                  |
| Arriving at the Ballet/ <i>Meant to Be</i> . . . . .                 | Vlad                                           |
| <i>Quartet at the Ballet</i> . . . . .                               | Anya, Dmitry, Dowager Empress, Gleb & Ensemble |
| <i>Everything to Win</i> . . . . .                                   | Dmitry                                         |
| <i>Once Upon a December (Reprise)</i> . . . . .                      | Anya & Dowager Empress                         |
| <i>The Press Conference</i> . . . . .                                | Lily, Vlad & Ensemble                          |
| <i>Everything To Win (Reprise)</i> . . . . .                         | Anya, Gleb                                     |
| <i>Still/The Neva Flows (Reprise)</i> . . . . .                      | Gleb & Ensemble                                |
| <i>Finale: Once Upon a December</i> . . . . .                        | Company                                        |

# the cast

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|                                                         |                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Anya . . . . .                                          | Sydney Ray*                                                                  |
| Dmitry . . . . .                                        | Alex Kiefert*                                                                |
| Vlad . . . . .                                          | Nik Swiggum*                                                                 |
| Gleb . . . . .                                          | Heath Davis*                                                                 |
| Lily . . . . .                                          | Dalaney Lange*                                                               |
| Dowager Empress . . . . .                               | Maizy Auger                                                                  |
| Little Anastasia (Youth Role) . . . . .                 | Ruby Busse                                                                   |
| Tsarina . . . . .                                       | Aria Johnson                                                                 |
| Tsar . . . . .                                          | Coen Faber                                                                   |
| Three Romanov Sisters . . . . .                         | Vania Ligaray, Madison Melrose, Maddi Moll                                   |
| Alexi Romanov (Youth Role) . . . . .                    | Brooks Bartell                                                               |
| Count Ipolitov . . . . .                                | Lucas Gonzalez*                                                              |
| Count Leopold/Policeman #2 . . . . .                    | Alex Christy*                                                                |
| Marfa / Reporter . . . . .                              | Aimika Ketilson                                                              |
| Paulina / Reporter . . . . .                            | Josie Petroff*                                                               |
| Dunya / Reporter . . . . .                              | Ava Kietzman                                                                 |
| Gorkinski . . . . .                                     | Liev Schiffman                                                               |
| Secretaries and Comrades . . . . .                      | Tirza Leszczynski, Kent Mullen,<br>Aela Valentine, Sydney Weiss, Devin Xiong |
| Comrade 3 . . . . .                                     | Aiden Braverman*                                                             |
| Drunk #1 / Sergei / Black Marketeer #1 . . . . .        | Owen Sehgal                                                                  |
| Drunk #2 / Smoker . . . . .                             | MJ Thorson                                                                   |
| Drunk #3 / Count Gregory / Black Marketeer #2 . . . . . | Chris Woller*                                                                |
| Drunk #4 / Black Marketeer #3 . . . . .                 | Vivian Neher                                                                 |
| Policeman #1 . . . . .                                  | Amara Rea                                                                    |
| Countess Gregory / Exiled Russian . . . . .             | Ruby Hicks*                                                                  |
| Reporters . . . . .                                     | Lydia Hanson, Lillian Palmer, Mira Roffers                                   |

## Romanov Ensemble

Brooks Bartell, Jordan Betzle, Coen Faber, Dominic Jacobson, Aria Johnson,  
Vania Ligaray, Madison Melrose, Maddi Moll, Hallie Nelson\*, Brooks Wilson\*

## Swan Lake Ballet

Coen Faber, Vania Ligaray, Madison Melrose, Maddi Moll,  
Hallie Nelson\*, Brooks Wilson\*



# the cast

## Ensemble

Kellyn Ash, Aiden Braverman\*, Colin Best, Lex Cardoso Reyes\*, Erin Cassady, Alex Christy\*, Maddie Dahlen, Anna Delaporte\*, Kat Dikavitski, Cameron Frey\*, Lucas Gonzalez\*, Lydia Hanson, Lailah Hensler, Ruby Hicks\*, Sophia Hopp, Ava Kietzman, Aimika Ketilson, Brie Kiefert, Ellie Leibold, Tirza Leszczynski, Vaira McMahan, Savannah Meland\*, Rachel Miller, Kent Mullen, Mia Muncy, Vivian Neher, Miguel Orosco, Lillian Palmer, Josie Petroff\*, Nico Postiglione, Sophia Ramseier, Amara Rea, Mira Roffers, Anya Schoolmeesters, Owen Sehgal, Liev Schiffman, Sofia Suazo, Izzy Texidor, MJ Thorson, Aela Valentine, Hailey Van Eck, Josie Vandervest, Georgia Volkman, Devon Wells, Sydney Weiss, Kate Wilkinson, Lia Wochenske, Chris Woller\*, Devin Xiong

(\*) = Cast members who are Seniors

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# who's who in the cast

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**MAIZY AUGER** (Dowager Empress) Maizy Auger, a junior at VAHS, is incredibly excited to be playing the Dowager Empress in VACT's *Anastasia!* She got her start with theater at the age of five at 'First Act Children's Theater' and has been involved with her high school theater program since her freshman year and with VACT since 2017. Some of her previous favorite roles include Marie (Roger and Hammerstein's *Cinderella*), Veruca Salt (*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*), and Euterpe (*Xanadu*). She absolutely adored working on *Anastasia* and has had a fantastic time working with this incredible cast.

**HEATH DAVIS** (Gleb) is very jived to be playing this role! His past roles include Krabs in *The Spongebob Musical*, Lucas in *The Addams Family*, Flounder in *The Little Mermaid*, and many more! Do you wanna hear a joke? I ate a sock yesterday, it was very time consuming! HA.... classic.

**LUCAS GONZALEZ** (Count Ipolitov) is thrilled to be in this production of *Anastasia* with VACT. Some of his favorite past roles are Ren McKormack (*GTK Footloose*, VACT), Ensemble (*Beauty and the Beast*, VACT), and Gomez Addams (*The Addams Family*, Mount Horeb High School). Lucas would like to thank his parents and younger brother for their constant support, as well as his fellow cast members for making his last teen show an amazing experience. Enjoy the show!

**ALEX KIEFERT** (Dmitry) is beyond grateful to have been chosen to play Dmitry out of "a crowd of thousands". *Anastasia* will be the 23rd show Alex has performed in with VACT since getting his start in 2013. It will also be his final show as part of the youth/teen program as he will be attending the University of New Mexico in the fall. Some of his favorite roles include: Brother Jeremiah (*Something Rotten*), Emmett (*Legally Blonde Jr.*), Hans (*Frozen Jr.*) and Michael Banks (*Mary Poppins*). Alex would like to thank Emma for giving him this amazing opportunity, Adam (Shelton Private Voice Studio), and Kelsey for helping him with his vocals, Terry and Alyssa Dvorak for giving him an outlet for his love of theater and his family for their continued support. Alex's advice for anyone interested in theater is "if I can learn to do it, you can learn to do it too!"

**DALANEY LANGE** (Lily) is a senior at DeForest Area High School. She is currently a third-year member of The Overture Center's Southern Wisconsin Jerry Ensemble. Her favorite past credits include Velma Kelly *Chicago: Teen Edition* with DAHS, Janis Skarskin *Mean Girls: High School Version* with BDACT, and Portia *Something Rotten!* with VACT. Dalaney is excited to attend Shenandoah University Conservatory in the fall majoring in Musical Theater. Thanks to everyone at VACT!

**SYDNEY RAY** (Anya) is thrilled to play Anya in VACT's production of *Anastasia!* She is a senior at Waunakee High School, and started VACT in 8th grade where she met some of her favorite people in theater. Her favorite roles during high school have been Liesl in *The Sound of Music* at Waunakee, Henrietta Levitt in *Silent Sky* at VACT, and frequently being in the tap dance ensemble at VACT. She plans to attend University of Iowa for Therapeutic Recreation on the Child Life track, with a minor in American Sign Language. Syd thanks her parents Christine and Wes, vocal coach Mateja Schuck, the entire production team, the cast, and her best friend Madison for all their support and encouragement. Mateja Schuck, the entire production team, the cast, and her best friend Madison for all their support and encouragement.

**NIK SWIGGUM** (Vlad) *Anastasia* is Nik's first production with VACT and he could not be more excited to present this amazing show. From the people putting it on and the story itself, *Anastasia* has become one of Nik's favorite productions to be a part of. Nik is a senior at Dodgeville High School and plans to attend UW Platteville to study music education and theater with plans to become a theater and choir teacher. His favorite memory from the show is when he did the optional ballet call at the audition and had to try and do the moves with very little ballet experience. Needless to say that it did not look very graceful, but it was a lot of fun! Overall, Nik could not have had a better time working on the production, and he really hopes that you enjoy the show!





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# who's who in the crew

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**EMMA VOGEL** (Director) Emma is so thankful to be directing her 5th VACT production! Previously, she directed *The SpongeBob Musical*, *Something Rotten*, *GTK Footloose and Singin' in the Rain Jr.* You may have also seen her around VACT as the Education/Summer Camp Director or on the VACT stage as Miss Honey in *Matilda* and Truly Scrumptious in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. This whole production has taken a village and been a labor of love, and she is thankful to have everyone on the production team by her side as teammates through it all. To M, L and little "R" - you are my "home, love, family" and I couldn't be more thankful for you.

**SARA WARD-CASSADY** (Producer) is thrilled to be working again with the amazing team behind this production. 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 *Disaster! The Musical*, *The Children's Hour*, *Matilda*, and *Footloose, 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!

**KELSEY KLUG** (Music Director) grew up watching the *Anastasia* movie, so being able to music direct the music that has been in her life for so long has been a very meaningful and special experience. Past MD credits with VACT include: *Sponge-Bob The Musical*, *Something Rotten*, *Chicago: High School Edition*, *Newsies*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Hairspray*, *West Side Story*, and *Bring It On: The Musical*. You also may have seen her on the VACT stage as Mary Poppins (*Mary Poppins*), Fiona (*Shrek the Musical*), Kathy Seldon (*Singin' In The Rain*), or most recently as Jackie Noelle in *Disaster! The Musical*. Kelsey is so thankful for her three loves - T, C, and E - and for their continued support. Thank you for coming and enjoy the show!

**KENZIE FORD-MERUCCI** (Choreographer) is excited to choreograph her third VACT Teen production! Previous VACT choreography credits include: *Disaster! The Musical*, *The Spongebob Musical*, *Rock of Ages MSE*, *Something Rotten*, *Singin' in the Rain Jr.* and *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). You may also know Kenzie from productions with Edge-wood College Theater (*SHOUT: A Mod Musical*, *Calamity Jane*, *Clue: The Musical*) and Middleton Players Theater (*Avenue Q*, *Parade*). She would like to thank her husband, BJ, for always supporting her throughout her theatrical journey.

**CLAIRE JOHNSON** (Costume Designer) started as a volunteer for VACT when her children started on stage when her passion for storytelling found a match in costume design. With this production marking her 17th show as Costume Designer, Claire feels deeply honored to lend her time and talents to help the kids shine on stage. Collaborating and creating with such a rockin' Costume Crew is also such a gift - which made multi-hour work sessions during rehearsals on Sunday evenings full of fun and laughter. Claire extends her heartfelt gratitude to her husband Brian and children Mulu, Aaliyah, Aria, and Kedzie, whose unwavering support reflects their shared belief in the greatness of VACT.

**MADDIE KOSKI** (Stage Manager) is excited to work with VACT. After college, a pandemic, a 2-year teaching stint, and a cat adoption, she's excited to dive back into the backstage theater world. She is so grateful to find such a kind and welcoming community in VACT and looks forward to being a part of the group for a long time to come. She has worked in many school and community productions in Minnesota, and with VACT on productions of *Magic Tree House: Pirates Past Noon*, *High School Musical 2 Jr.*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Spongebob Musical*, set builds for various other shows, and now *Anastasia* - which holds a special place in her heart as the first Broadway show she ever saw.

**ZANDER LOWRY** (Assistant Stage Manager) is thrilled to be joining VACT for the second time with *Anastasia!* 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 *Anastasia*.



# who's who in the crew

**STEVE NICKELS** (Lighting Design) Steve 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."

**PATTY SCHLAFER** (Conductor) Patty has played horn or directed the orchestra on and off with VACT long enough to remember VACT's production of *Fiddler on Roof* in the high school before air conditioning! A special thanks to the folks at VACT who keep asking me back to the pit to make music I love with people I love!

**DUSTY SMITH** (Set Design/Scenic Carpenter) Dusty is returning as set design and construction for the high school production. He has been with VACT for a number of years enjoying his many varied backstage roles. He is especially appreciative of all the help the cast and their families gave creating the set for this show. "A big thank you to my family and friends for their love and support!"

**ELISA KAETHER** (Scenic Painter) is happy to help behind the scenes for another VACT show after her experience playing Ben and Lisa in *Disaster! The Musical*. 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! When Elisa is not on stage, she's usually being creative in some other way. Painting is one of her favorite creative outlets.

**KRISTIN DAVIS** (Scenic Artist) After spending a decade designing and creating sets for the 8th grade musicals at the middle school where she used to teach, and working on the sets of *The*

*SpongeBob Musical* in 2023, Kristin is thrilled to be back working at VACT! She is ever so grateful for all the people who helped with sets, particularly her husband Andy who did some incredible work. We are so proud of the hard work that the cast and crew and production team has put into this show, particularly our very favorite villain Gleb! We love you buddy!

**TOM BLANKENHEIM** (Orchestra Manager) 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 Patty 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 to work with Patty, Dale, Emma, Sara, and all of the talented musicians to bring this musical to the Verona Community.

**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.



# 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; Hairspray; Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka; Little Shop of Horrors; Annie KIDS; Legally Blonde Jr.; A Christmas Story
- 2019 The Odd Couple; The Giver; 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; Willy Wonka KIDS; Rock of Ages MSE; 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; Disaster! the Musical; Frozen KIDS; Footloose: Youth Edition
- 2024 The Wedding Singer; The Red Flags; Finding Nemo KIDS; Matilda JR

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

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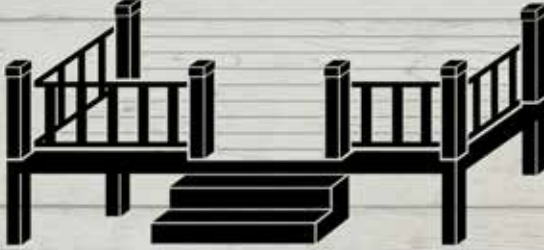
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