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2023-24 SEASON

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**Friday, February 16th**

One-night-only cabaret, starring some of Skylight's favorite performers, Raven Dockery, Shawn Holmes, and Kevin James Sievert along with a live band.

This event will feature songs by Aretha Franklin, Michael Jackson, Earth Wind and Fire, Stevie Wonder, and more

**Tickets: \$35**

Purchase your tickets at [www.skylightmusictheatre.org](http://www.skylightmusictheatre.org)

This is Skylight fundraiser, so \$20 of each ticket purchased will be a tax-deductible contribution in support of Skylight Music Theatre.

Skylight  
music theatre

## An Evening With **Tim Rice**

**Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>**  
**at 7:30 p.m.**

Musical Theatre legend, Tim Rice, will share an evening of stories and songs from his greatest hits. He will be accompanied by many Skylight friends for this unforgettable, once-in-a-lifetime, event/evening.

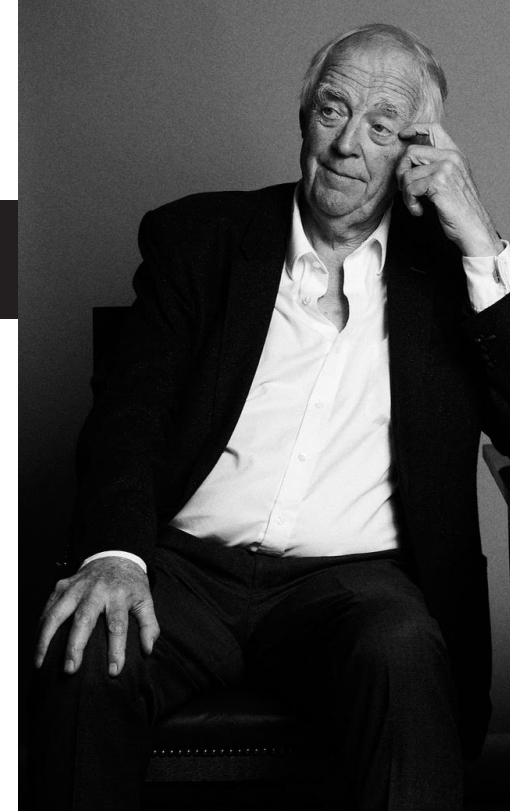
The event benefits Skylight Music Theatre.

Tickets:

**\$75**

**\$125** VIP tickets including  
Meet & Greet with Tim Rice  
& a champagne toast

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**Skylight**  
music theatre

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PRESENT:

**XANADU**

Book by  
**Douglas Carter Beane**  
Music and Lyrics by  
**Jeff Lynne & John Farrar**

Based on the **Universal Pictures** film  
Screenplay by **Richard Danus & Marc Rubel**  
Originally produced on Broadway by **Robert Ahren, Dan Vickery,  
Tara Smith/B. Swibel, Sara Murchison/Dale Smith & Cari Smulyan**

January 26 - February 11, 2024 | Cabot Theatre | Broadway Theatre Center

Director **Doug Clemons**  
Choreographer **Stephanie Staszak**  
Music Director **David Bonofiglio**

Scenic Designer **Shane Cinal**  
Lighting Designer **G. "Max" Maxin IV**  
Costume Designer **Jason Orlenko\*\***  
Sound Designer **Steve Tonar**

Properties Design **Patrick McGuire & Simone Tegge**  
Production Stage Manager **Louis B. Crocco\***  
Resident Assistant Stage Manager **Jordan Ilyssa Angelo**

**XANADU** is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI).  
All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI.  
[www.mtishows.com](http://www.mtishows.com)

Any video and/or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

The 2023-2024 season is sponsored by:

  
This project is sponsored in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board with  
Endowment from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts.



Appearing through an agreement between Skylight Music Theatre and  
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\*\*Member of United Scenic Artists 829

## A NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Variety is the spice of life, and this season we are endeavoring to spice up your theatre-going experience with five titles picked from several columns of the Magnificent Musical Theatre Menu. The third show of our 2023-2024 season comes from the column entitled: respectful spoofs-of-cult-movies-that-skewer-while-celebrating-delightful-stories-with-strong-messages-in-spite-of-all-the-silliness.

The film *Xanadu*, released in 1980, was not a critical success. In fact, it was one of the films that encouraged Los Angeles publicist, John J. B. Wilson, to start the Golden Raspberry Awards to honor the worst films of the year. *Xanadu* was nominated for six "Razzies" but "won" only one, for Worst Director.

The film starred Olivia Newton-John as the roller skating muse, Kira, and Gene Kelly as the clarinetist-turned-mogul, Danny. It was to be Gene Kelly's last film appearance. Regardless of Kelly's comment that, "the concept was marvelous, but it just didn't come off," his dancing in the film is nothing short of remarkable, especially for a 68-year-old hooper.

The music from the film, however, was celebrated and helped it to become an enduring cult hit, beloved by many a leg-warmer-wearing devotee of the era. Douglas Carter Beane, the savvy book-writer who brought this show to Broadway, lovingly reconstructed (smarter), recycled (less cheesy), re-plotted (much better), and re-focused (more comprehensible) the story of how to not give up on your dreams. We sometimes need external forces to remind us of our inner worth.

Nostalgia deserves a warm place on our stage as well as in our hearts and minds. It allows us a loving distance from which to reflect while giving us enough distance to laugh at our foibles, fashion sense, and hairstyles. That distance between the now and a specific then is also how we learn from what came before; either by basking in the warm glow of our personal history or identifying the mistakes not to repeat. *Xanadu* as a film, musical, and message allows us to reflect on all the above.

Even though your leg warmers and roller skates may be covered in forty years of dust, I am confident you will find inspiration in the camp and kitsch before you today. We have all had Sonny-type dreams that we considered abandoning. My hope is that we can find a magic Kira-type muse to remind us to not give up on them. We are the magic for each other if we choose to see and be seen as such.

  
-Michael Unger, Artistic Director

## DIRECTOR NOTE: DOUG CLEMONS



I was raised in a small desert town in Utah. I loved bright colors, loudly singing TV show theme songs, wearing a towel as a wig, and being the center of attention.

Then...puberty hit.

And guess what? I changed! I took all those fabulously bright colors and shoved them out of view. It wasn't until college when I rediscovered them and, more importantly, realized their POWER. Fast forward many years when Susan Varela encouraged me to watch the movie *Xanadu*. My first reaction to the film was "This isn't

good, but it is incredible, WHERE HAS THIS BEEN MY WHOLE LIFE?!"

This musical retelling of the cult classic, although containing fabulous surface-level glitz, is a shining broadcast that all journeys through joyful existence are valid. You are valid. Your joy is valid. So, find your personal muse and pursue it! We can find personal muses all around us. And we ourselves (surprise, surprise) can be a muse for others.

My approach to this piece was simple – have fun! *Xanadu* is about not limiting your own pursuit of joy, especially when the pretentious factors of life tell you the opposite. When casting this show, I looked for artists that not only danced well, but made me want to dance with them. The design elements all needed to "sing" just as loudly as the performers. If things seem out of control – good! They should be – and so should you!

With so many diseases in this world, we often forget that joy is equally as contagious. We hope to spread some joy with this production. If you smile, dance, sing – I hope that you will put a little of that joy in your pocket and give it to someone else.

Thank you to all of the collaborators who made this production possible, the Milwaukee theater audience for giving me purpose, the out and proud queer community that I am honored to be a part of, and the under-credited people of color who invented, defined, and perfected the art of roller skating. Without you, *Xanadu* wouldn't exist.

You have to believe we are magic; I sure as hell do. Now go spread some love!

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# XANADU CAST



**Kira** .....Kaitlin Feely

**Sonny Malone**..... Mitchell Gray

**Danny Maguire**..... Rick Richter

**Melpomene** ..... Molly Rhode\*

**Calliope**.....Rhonda Rae Busch

**Euterpe** .....Samantha Sostarich

**Erato** ..... Rachel Bednarowski

**Terpsicore**.....D Eric Woolweber

**Thalia**..... Rashard (Rai) Hudson

## UNDERSTUDIES

Understudies never substitute for listed players unless a specific notification is made at the time of the performance.

**For Sonny Malone** – Josh Pope, **For Calliope and Melpomene** – Samantha Sostarich,  
**For Kira** – Rachel Bednarowski, **For Danny Maguire** – D Eric Woolweber,  
**For the Muses** – SaraLynn Evenson

# ORCHESTRA

Music Director/Keyboard 1 ..... David Bonofiglio

Keyboard 2 ..... Kurt Cowling

Guitar ..... Chris Newlin

Drums..... Michael (Ding) Lorenz

## PRODUCTION SUPPORT

Director of Production and Facilities..... Matthew Curtis

Assistant Director of Production and  
 Facilities/Resident Assistant Stage Manager.....Jordan Ilyssa Angelo

Technical Director ..... Joseph Piirto

Costume Director .....Jeanne Schrank

Properties Supervisor ..... Simone Tegge

Wardrobe Supervisor ..... Carly Coldren

Scene Shop Supervisor/Fleet Manager..... Islay Reed

Scenic Carpenters..... Austin Hobbs, Nate Pilarsi, and Alberto Lusshesi

Scenic and Properties Painter ..... Talia Last and Amaya Rockett

Muses Costume Builder ..... Catherine Frisch (Mercurious Designs)

Stitchers ..... Carly Coldren, Jamie Mercado

Costume Crafts ..... Lisa Quinn, Lauren Stoner

Lighting Supervisor .....Dovie Hughes

Electricians..... Nate Pilarski, Zoe Lucas, Rollie Layman

Wardrobe ..... Carly Coldren and Lisa Quinn

Keyboard Programmer ..... David Bonofiglio

Graphic Design Support .....Robert “Bebo” Nelson

Communications Consultant .....Susan Heymann

Photographer ..... Mark Frohna

Skating Consultants ..... Roll Train

# MUSICAL NUMBERS

I'm Alive .....	Clio/Kira and the Muses
Magic.....	Kira
Evil Woman.....	Melpomene, Calliope and the Sirens
Suddenly .....	Kira and Sonny
Whenever You're Away From Me.....	Danny and Kira
Dancin' .....	Danny, Sonny and the Muses
Strange Magic.....	Melpomene, Calliope and Kira
All Over the World .....	Sonny, Danny and the Muses
Don't Walk Away.....	Sonny, Danny and the Muses
Fool.....	Kira and the Muses
The Fall .....	Sonny and the Muses
Suspended in Time.....	Kira and Sonny
Have You Never Been Mellow.....	Kira and the Greek gods
I'm Free .....	Kira, Sonny, and Pegasus
Xanadu .....	Kira, Sonny, Danny and the Muses

The show runs approximately 80 minutes with no intermission.

"Xanadu," "All Over the World," "The Fall," "I'm Alive," "Evil Woman," "Don't Walk Away," and "Strange Magic" written by Jeff Lynne, published by EMI Blackwood Music Inc.

"Magic," "Suddenly," "Dancin'," "Suspended in Time," "Whenever You're Away From Me," "Fool," and "Have You Never Been Mellow" written by John Farrar, published by John Farrar Music.



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Unchu Ko, M.D. | David Lucke, M.D. | Rachel Oosterbaan, M.D. | John Sanidas, M.D. | Abraham Varghese, M.D. | James Volberding, M.D. | Carmen Balding, M.D. | Camille Hexsel, M.D.

**ENDOCRINOLOGY**



Amy DeGueme, M.D. | Elaine Drobny, M.D. | Antoni Gofron, M.D. | Usonwanne Ibejewe, M.D. | Brent Jones, M.D. | Kawaljeet Kaur, M.D. | Anne Lent, M.D. | Kristin Schroederus, M.D.

**GASTROENTEROLOGY**



Keely Browning, M.D. | Abdullah Fayyad, M.D. | Gene Kligman, M.D. | Venelin Kouneva, M.D. | Srihari Ramanujam, M.D. | Chad Stepke, M.D.

**DERMATOLOGY**



Amanda Cooper, M.D. | Tracy Donahue, M.D. | Michael Knabel, M.D. | Valerie Lyon, M.D. | Jack Maloney, M.D. | Jason Rosenberg, M.D. | Debra Scarlett, M.D. | Thorstein Skulason, M.D.

**SURGERY**



Heather Wells, M.D. | Richard Cattery, M.D. | Jasna Coralic, M.D. | Alysandra Lal, M.D. | Joseph Regan, M.D. | Craig Siverhus, M.D. | Jake Thayer, M.D.

**UROLOGY**



Kevin Gee, M.D.



Christopher Kearns, M.D.



Jonathan Berkoff, M.D.



Katya Frantskevich, M.D.



Shireen Jayne, D.O.



Jennifer Moralez, M.D.



Nicolette Deveneau, M.D.

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**UROGYNECOLOGY**

**COMPREHENSIVE EYE CARE**



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**PULMONARY**



Dima Adl, M.D. | Jay Balachandran, M.D. | Burak Gurses, M.D.



# WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

# BIOS



Rachel Bednarowski



Rhonda Rae Busch



SaraLynn Evenson



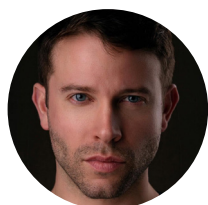
Kaitlin Feely



Mitchell Gray



Rashard (Rai) Hudson



Josh Pope



Rick Richter



Molly Rhode\*



Samantha Sostarich



D Eric Woolweber

**Rachel Bednarowski (Erato)** is ecstatic to be making her Skylight debut! Rachel holds a BFA in Musical Theatre and minors in Dance Performance and Music from UW-Milwaukee. She currently teaches and directs with Shallece Saleen Studios. Rachel's favorite credits include Rosie in *Mamma Mia* at GCT, Charlotte in *Cinderella*, and Betty Jean in *The Marvelous Wonderettes* with Appleton East Players. Thanks to her family, friends, mentors, and especially Gavin for all the unending love and support.

**Rhonda Rae Busch (Calliope)** is excited to be back at the Skylight where her credits include Martha in *White Christmas*, Madame Thernardier in *Les Misérables*, Widow Paroo in *The Music Man*, and Jack's mother in *Into the Woods*. Favorites elsewhere are Mavis in *Church Basement Ladies* at the Marcus Center, Eulalie Mackecknie Shin in *The Music Man*, Ida Straus in *Titanic the Musical*, Stepmother in *Cinderella* at The Fireside, and Miss Hannigan in *Annie* at the Capital Theatre.

**SaraLynn Evenson (Muse Swing)** most recently appeared in *School of Rock* and also played Estelle in *The Full Monty*, Zombina in *Zombies from the Beyond*, and Ensemble in *Oklahoma!* at Skylight. Other Regional: Mom/Queen in *Arthur and Friends Make a Musical*, Velma in *Chicago*, Witch in *Into the Woods*, Pennywise in *Urinetown*, Martha in *The Secret Garden*, Hera in *Hephaestus*, and Elsa in *The Sound of Music*. National Tour: Tessi in *A Christmas Carol*. Love to Derek, Vivienne, and Dominic!

**Kaitlin Feely (Kira)** is absolutely thrilled to be making her debut with Skylight Music Theatre! Her most recent credits include Ilona in *She Loves Me* at Citadel Theatre, Colleen/Woman in *White in Ripcord* at Oil Lamp Theater, and Holly in *The Wedding Singer* at Surging Films & Theatrics. Kaitlin has a BFA in Music Theatre and minor in Mathematics from Illinois Wesleyan University. Many thanks to her wonderful cast, team, and exceptional parents.

**Mitchell Gray (Sonny Malone)** is a New York-based actor, originally from Portage, WI, and PUMPED to be making his Skylight debut with *Xanadu!* Past credits include, Hoffman in *Bat Out of Hell* at Paris Theatre - Las Vegas Strip, Roger in *Rent* at Milton

Theatre, and Sky in *Mamma Mia!* at The Palace Theatre. He would like to thank his incredible mom, family, and friends for all of the love and for supporting the dream. Instagram: @stitchy\_gray.

**Rashard (Rai) Hudson (Thalia)** *American Idols* star Rai Hudson is recognized as an edgy, androgynous, and eccentric musician. He is a recording artist, songwriter, and producer of music for television and film with Warner Chappell/MidCoast Music, as well as works on a variety of solo projects. Additionally, he performs as a drag performer and co-producer for several shows in Wisconsin, including the Vaudeville Vixens Burlesque Show and Caba-Rai.

**Josh Pope (Sonny Understudy)** is a new face to Skylight Music Theatre and is thrilled to be joining this wonderful cast in *Xanadu!* He is a classically trained tenor with a strong choral background performing over the years with the Milwaukee Symphony Chorus, Bel Canto Chorus, and the Milwaukee Chamber Choir. He also has extensive theater experience with recent roles including Frederick Fellows in *Noises Off!* and Bob Cratchit in *Christmas Carol* at Falls Patio Players.

**Rick Richter (Danny Maguire)** is very happy to be working once again at Skylight on such an energized show with an extremely talented cast and crew! His previous roles here have been: Colonel Pickering in *My Fair Lady* and Professor Marvel/Wizard in *The Wizard of Oz*. Some of his other favorite roles in the area were: Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*, King Arthur in *Camelot*, and Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*. Follow Rick at [www.rick-richter.com](http://www.rick-richter.com)

**Molly Rhode\* (Melpomene)** is proud to join friends back at Skylight for this wild ride. She's been on stage here as Ulla in *The Producers*, Sally Bowles in *Cabaret*, as well as in *Pump Boys and Dinettes*, *Chicago*, *Hello, Dolly!* and others. As a director at Skylight, Molly staged and choreographed *Newsies* (with David Roman), *Annie*, *Les Misérables*, and *The Sound of Music*. Molly enjoys making a career in theaters across Wisconsin. She is the Associate Artistic Director of Northern Sky Theater in Door County, WI. See her there this summer in the new musical *Girls on Sand*.

## BIOS CONTINUED

**Samatha Sostarich [she/her] (Euterpe/Mel-pomone & Calliope U.S./Dance Captain)** is thrilled to be back at Skylight Music Theatre after appearing as Paquette and The Governor in *Candide*. National Tour: *Emojiland the Musical*. Regional: *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Rona Lisa Peretti), *Hairspray* (Velma Von Tussle), *Annie* (Lily St. Regis), *Spamalot* (Lady of the Lake), *Matilda* (Mrs. Wormwood), *Fortuna the Timebender vs. The School Girls of Doom* (Fortuna), *Boeing Boeing* (Gretchen), *The Taming* (Katherine), and *Who's Holiday!* (Cindy Lou). [samanthasostarich.com](http://samanthasostarich.com)

**D Eric Woolweber (Terpsicore)** A native of SE Wisconsin, D Eric has performed in the Chicago area with Bailiwick Arts Center, Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre, Theatre at the Center, and Light Opera Works; in Branson with Dolly Parton's Stampede, Silver Dollar City and the Clay Cooper Theatre; in the Milwaukee/Madison area with MKE Rep, First Stage, Forward Theater Co. and now, his Skylight Music Theatre debut! 143 Mum and Galle.

### CREATIVE TEAM

**Doug Clemons (Director)** is honored to be directing this dream show at Skylight. Doug's been a proud sassy n' brassy Wisconsin the-atre-maker at Northern Sky Theatre, First Stage, Milwaukee Opera Theatre, The Florentine Opera, Fireside Theatre, Forward Theater, Children's Theatre of Madison, Third Avenue PlayWorks, and Purse String Productions. Regional/concert credits: NY Musical Theatre Festival, NYC's Cherry Lane Theater, Chicago Musical Theatre Festival, Utah Light Opera, Racine Symphony Orchestra, Norwegian Cruise Line, and backup for Michael Bubl . Love and thanks to Matt (Doug's muse and source of joy). [DougClemons.com](http://DougClemons.com)

**Stephanie Staszak (Choreographer)** is ecstatic to be making her Skylight debut as a choreographer in what will be her 15th Cabot stage production! An extra hint of sentiment is felt working alongside Doug, who was in her first production at Skylight, *Hair*. Stephanie has won three Tommy Awards for her choreography. As a performer, she was very recently seen on this stage as Rosalie Mullins in *School of Rock* and will be in an upcoming Milwaukee production of *Tony n' Tina's Wedding*.

**David Bonofiglio (Music Director)** holds a BFA in piano performance from Cardinal Stritch

University. Selected credits as musical director: *School of Rock*, *Evita*, *Mamma Mia!*, *The Full Monty*, *Little Shop Of Horrors*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, and *Oklahoma!* for Skylight Music Theatre; *Little By Little*, *Scrooge In Rouge*, *A Cudahy Caroler Christmas*, and *Jesus Christ Superstar* for In Tandem Theatre; Sunday In The Park With George for Windfall Theatre. As assistant musical director: *A Christmas Carol* for Milwaukee Repertory Theatre.

**Shane Cinal (Scenic Designer)** is ecstatic to be here at *Xanadu* with all of you. He has a strong background in new and conceptual works for theatre with his work being featured in the national Ukrainian Museum and recently designing the US Emerging Artists exhibit for Prague Quadrennial. Network television credit include Peacock's *Pokerface* and FX's *The Bear*. Shane holds a dual BA in Theatre and History from Indiana University-Bloomington and an MFA in Scenic Design from The Ohio State University. [www.shanecinal.com](http://www.shanecinal.com)

**Jason Orlenko (Costume Designer)** United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829. Previously for Skylight: *Noises Off*, *Mamma Mia*, *Newsies*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *Sweeney Todd*, *The Snow Dragon*, and *Hydrogen Jukebox*. A Milwaukee-based designer, his work has been seen at the Milwaukee Rep, Next Act Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks, Utah Festival Opera, First Stage, Forward Theater, Rep of St. Louis, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Milwaukee Opera Theatre, In Tandem Theatre, and Cardinal Stage. Other credits include the Hangar Theatre, Illinois Shakespeare Festival, the Florentine Opera, and American Players Theatre. Jason currently resides in Milwaukee with his husband Brick, where he is Assistant Professor of Costume Design at UW-Milwaukee. [www.jasonorlenko.com](http://www.jasonorlenko.com)

**G. "Max" Maxim IV [he/him] (Lighting Designer)** Over 250 designs on over 150 professional/educational productions. AWARDS: Lou Award "Lighting," *Into the Woods* (Big Noise); Non-Equity Jeff Award Best Musical "Lighting/Projection Design," *Big Fish* (BoHo); 1 Jeff Nomination & 5 Non-Equity Jeff Nominations. FAVORITE DESIGN PROJECTS @ Kokandy, American Blues, Cincinnati Shakespeare, Mercury, Theatre at the Center, BoHo, Black Button Eyes, Steppenwolf Garage, Northwestern, and DePaul. Teaching Artist/Lighting Designer, CCPA Theatre Conservatory, Roosevelt University, Instructor NEIU 2016-2022 (Instructor Excellence Award, 2019). [www.ivMaxin.com](http://www.ivMaxin.com)

## BIOS CONTINUED

**Steve Tonar (Sound Designer)** is excited to be back designing at Skylight Music Theatre. He was last heard designing sound for Skylight's *School of Rock* and seen designing lights for Skylight's production of *Raisin*. Past favorite sound credits at Skylight include *Oklahoma!* and *Ernest Shackleton Loves Me*. Steve is a freelance lighting designer, sound designer, and photographer based in Milwaukee, as well as Technical Director at Greenfield High School. For Rexxy, Beary, Cleo, and Jordan.

**Patrick McGuire [he/they/any] (Properties/Mythical Creature Designer)** Recent credits include: *The SpongeBob Musical* (Kokandy Productions), *Addams Family*, *Xanadu*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Cabaret* (Metropolis PAC), *Junior Claus*, and *The Christians* (Citadel Theatre). Patrick has done freelance work for companies including, the Florentine Opera, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Music Theater Works, and Gallaudet University, as well as design/fabrication work in puppetry, historical millinery, props, and costume crafts. MA (Theatre Directing), CCPA at Roosevelt University; MM, Boston University; BME, Illinois State. [www.patrickmcguirearts.com](http://www.patrickmcguirearts.com)

**Simone Tegge (Properties Designer)** has been working in the prop shop at Skylight for five years. Her work has also been seen in recent productions at Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks, and American Players Theatre. She would like to thank her parents and Frankie for their constant support!

**Louis B. Crocco (Production Stage Manager)** Off-Broadway: *Just Sex*, *Piggy Nation*, and *Pretenci n*. Tours: *A Soldiers Play* starring Norm Lewis, *All Things Equal - The Life and Trials of Ruth Bader Ginsburg*, and *Menopause the Musical*. When not stage managing, Louis is a podcast host for The Loyal Littles Podcast [www.loyallittlespod.com](http://www.loyallittlespod.com) and is also an accomplished Actor / Musician / Director who has been involved in over 100 productions including 15 National and International tours as a drummer / conductor. Favorites include *Disney's High School Musical*, *Rent* (Tokyo Cast), *Irving Berlin's White Christmas*, and *Cheek to Cheek* (Off-Broadway). Louis earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Music/Theatre Education from Hartwick College in Oneonta, NY.

**Douglas Carter Beane (Book)** is a highly acclaimed playwright and screenwriter known for his successful works on Broadway and in the

West End. His play, *The Nance*, starring Nathan Lane, received five Tony nominations and won three. It was also filmed for PBS and shown in movie theaters. Another notable play, *The Little Dog Laughed*, was nominated for a Tony and won for Julie White. It later opened in the West End and received an Olivier nomination. Beane has written several other plays, including *Fairycakes*, *Shows for Days*, *The Country Club*, *Mr. & Mrs. Fitch*, *Music From a Sparkling Planet*, *As Bees in Honey Drown*, and *Advice from a Caterpillar*. He also wrote the script for the film *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar*.

In the world of musical theater, Beane's adaptation of *Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella* ran on Broadway for two years and was nominated for Tonys. His musical stage version of *Xanadu* ran on Broadway for two years and received a Tony nomination. His new book for the musical *Sister Act* ran on Broadway for two years and opened in London with Jennifer Saunders. He also wrote the book for the musical *Lysistrata Jones*.

Additionally, Beane wrote the book for the stage adaptation of MGM's *The Bandwagon* and has written for the Rockettes and Radio City Music Hall. His libretto for *Die Fledermaus* debuted at the Metropolitan Opera. Beane is married to composer Lewis Flinn, and they have two children named Cooper and Gabrielle.

**Jeff Lynn (Composer and Lyricist)** Jeff Lynne formed the Electric Light Orchestra, or E.L.O., in the 1970s. The group gradually developed from cult favorites into one of the 70s' leading recording acts, scoring international success with several platinum-selling albums, including *A New World Record* and *Out of the Blue*. Lynn's dual talents as a composer and producer ensured the group's status but, sensing an artistic sterility, he abandoned his creation in 1986. The artist then assumed an increasingly backroom role, but won praise for his production work with George Harrison (Cloud Nine), Randy Newman (Land Of Dreams), and Roy Orbison (Mystery Girl) and he has also contributed his distinctive production qualities to much of Tom Pettys recent output. Lynne's work with Orbison coincided with his position as 'Otis Wilbury' in the Traveling Wilburys, an informal 'supergroup' completed by Orbison, Harrison, Tom Petty, and Bob Dylan. This particularly prolific period was also marked by his work with Brian Wilson on the ex-Beach Boys'

## BIOS CONTINUED

first long-awaited solo album. In recent years, Lynne has produced the Beatles' lost tapes, notably *Free as a Bird* and *Real Love*. He co-produced Paul McCartney's *Flaming Pie* in 1997.

**John Farrar (Composer and Lyricist)** John Farrar left Australia in 1970 at the invitation of the legendary English group The Shadows; they recorded six albums together. During a break he began working with Olivia Newton-John. He went on to produce 14 albums for her. After winning a Grammy (Record of the Year) for "I Honestly Love You," he moved to L.A. where he wrote and produced many of her hits: "Have You Never Been Mellow?," "Hopelessly Devoted to You" (Academy Award nom.), "You're the One That I Want" (Golden Globe nom.), "Don't Stop Believin'," "A Little More Love," "Magic," "Suddenly," "Sam," "Make a Move on Me." He also produced the mega-hit "Physical." In 1995 he co-wrote with Tim Rice the songs for the Cliff Richard musical *Heathcliff*. He co-wrote with Francis Ford Coppola the songs for a new musical, *Gidget*.

**Michael Unger (Artistic Director)** For *Skylight*, Michael has directed Dennis DeYoung's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (nine Broadway-World Awards - including Best Director and Best Musical), *School of Rock*, *Noises Off*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *A Jolly Holiday: Celebrating Disney's Broadway Hits*, as well as *Me, Myself and I* for *Skylight's* Education program. Amongst many virtual offerings, he directed *Skylight's* Broadway World Award-winning *Being Earnest*, now available worldwide online. He was previously the Associate Artistic Director of Off-Broadway's York Theatre; credits there included *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown* and *Big*. For nine years, he was the Producing Artistic Director of NewArts, started with a local father in response to the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy, directing 17 productions working with over 650 area-children. Other selected directing credits include *A Christmas Carol* (McCarter Theatre for 18 years), *2.0* (NY Times Critics' Pick), *Time Stands Still* (Cape Cod Chronicle Best 2015), *My Sister in This House* (Deaf West, Ovation Recommended), and new versions of *The Happy Time* and *The Rink*. World premieres include *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Caligula*, and *A ROCKIN' Midsummer Night's Dream* (featured in the award-winning documentary film "Midsummer in Newtown"). He has directed 14 operas plus benefit concerts honoring Susan Stroman, André DeShields, Maltby and Shire, and Leslie Uggams, as well as for the communities of Sandy Hook, CT and Parkland, FL.

20 *Skylight* 2023-2024 Season

**Susan Varela (Executive Director)** Originally from Milwaukee and a graduate of UW-Stevens Point, her professional career as a performer has taken her from the Broadway stage (*Les Misérables*) to the Skylight stage (*Les Misérables*, *Into the Woods*, *Wizard of Oz*, *Sweeney Todd*). She has performed at the Denver Center Theatre (Tony Award-winning season) and the Yale Repertory Theatre, among others. She has produced, directed, performed, and written for the stage and television alongside her husband, actor Andrew Varela. Susan was previously the Director of Artistic Operations for *Skylight*.

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