

**PRESS RELEASE**

**August 4, 2022**

CONTACT: **Joanna Penalva,**

**Assistant Director of Marketing and Communications**

315-443-2636 or jlpenalv@syr.edu

**Tony Award winning creative team announced as tickets on sale for world premiere musical ‘How to Dance in Ohio’**

Text

Description automatically generated with low confidence

NEW YORK CITY - Producers Ben Holtzman (he/him), Sammy Lopez (he/him), Fiona Howe Rudin (she/her) and Syracuse Stage announce that [tickets](https://syracusestage.secure.force.com/ticket/#/events/a0S1R00000C1mIXUAZ) are now on sale for the world premiere musical “[How to Dance in Ohio.](https://www.syracusestage.org/ohio)” With rehearsals scheduled to begin in Syracuse in August, the full creative team has been finalized.

“How to Dance in Ohio” is inspired by Alexandra Shiva’s Peabody Award-winning documentary of the same name. With book and lyrics by Rebekah Greer Melocik (she/her), music by Jacob Yandura (he/him), choreography by Mayte Natalio (she/her) and direction by Sammi Cannold (she/her), “How to Dance in Ohio” is scheduled as the 2022/2023 season opener at Syracuse Stage and will run Sept. 21 – Oct. 9, 2022. Tickets are available at [www.syraucsestage.org](http://www.syraucsestage.org) or at the Syracuse Stage Box Office (315-443-3275).

The full creative team includes scenic designer Robert Brill (“Cabaret,” “Ain’t Too Proud: The Life and Times of the Temptations,” “Thoughts of a Colored Man”) co-costume designers Sarafina Bush (“For Colored Girls . . .”) and Michael Ryan Andolsek, lighting designer Bradley King (Tony Awards “Hadestown” and “Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812”) and sound designer Connor Wang. Music direction is by Lily Ling (she/her) with music supervision by Matt Gallagher. Scott Rowen (he/him) is the production stage manager and Laura Jane Collins (she/her) the assistant stage manager. Mary McGowan (she/her) is the associate director, Justin Prescott (he/him) the associate choreographer, and Nicole D’Angelo (they/she) the music associate.

The “How to Dance in Ohio” cast includes Tony Award-winning “RENT” star Wilson Jermaine Heredia (he/him), Broadway veterans and seven autistic actors. Heredia leads the cast as Dr. Emilio Amigo, alongside Haven Burton (she/her; “Shrek the Musical,” “Violet”) as Teresa, Darlesia Cearcy (she/her; “Shuffle Along,” “Once On This Island”) as Johanna, Carlos L. Encinias (he/him; “Les Misérables,” “Mamma Mia!”) as Kurt, Desmond Edwards (he/him) as Remy, Amelia Fei (she/her) as Caroline, Nick Gaswirth (he/him; “Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812”) as Michael, Melina Kalomas (she/her) as Amy, Madison Kopec (she/her) as Marideth, Liam Pearce (he/him) as Drew, Marina Pires (she/her; “Aladdin,” “On Your Feet!”) as Ashley Amigo, Imani Russell (they/them) as Melissa, Conor Tague (he/him) as Tommy, and Ashley Wool (she/her) as Jessica. Elana Babbitt (she/her), Corrine Ferrer (she/her), and Zach Simpson (he/him) are the understudies. Imri Leshed (they/he) and Nicole Fazia (they/she) are the swings.

“How to Dance in Ohio” is a heartwarming new musical that explores what it means to belong, the courage it takes to put yourself out in the world, and the universal need to connect. Based on Shiva’s award-winning documentary, produced by HBO in 2015, the musical follows the challenges and exhilarations faced by a group of seven autistic young adults at a counseling center in Columbus, Ohio. With the support of clinical psychologist Dr. Emilio Amigo, the center arranges a spring formal dance, and encourages them as they encounter love, fear, stress, excitement and hope, along the path to human connection.

Through a dedication to authentic autistic representation, the musical’s creators adhere closely to the documentary’s narrative and spirit, offering a visible platform for autistic actors in a way that has never happened before in a new musical, both on and off the stage. Ava Xiao-Lin Rigelhaupt (she/her) serves as the production’s ASD Creative Consultant with Becky Leifman (she/her) as the Director of Community Engagement. Additional administrative support will be provided by associate producer Jeremy Wein (he/him), assistant producer Keara Moon (she/her) and producing intern Pua Tanielu (she/her).

The musical was originally developed with the legendary Broadway director Harold Prince and is dedicated to his instrumental work on the project. The production has received support from the Prince Fellowship and the Shubert Organization’s Artistic Circle. Holtzman, Leifman and Lopez are alumni of Syracuse University.

Subscriptions and single tickets are on sale now for all shows in the Syracuse Stage 2022/2023 season.

**SYRACUSE STAGE 2022/2023 SEASON SHOW DETAILS**

*World Premiere Musical*

**“How to Dance in Ohio”**

Book and Lyrics by Rebekah Greer Melocik

Music by Jacob Yandura

Based on Alexandra Shiva’s documentary film “How to Dance in Ohio”

Directed by Sammi Cannold

Produced in association with Ben Holtzman, Sammy Lopez and Fiona Howe Rudin

Sept. 21 – Oct. 9, 2021

“How to Dance in Ohio” is a heartwarming new musical based on the Peabody Award-winning documentary of the same name that explores what it means to belong, the courage it takes to put yourself out in the world and the universal need to connect. Set at a counseling center on Columbus, “How to Dance in Ohio” follows seven autistic young adults as they come of age and find their ways in the world.

**“Disney’s The Little Mermaid”**

Music by Alan Menken

Lyrics by Howard Ashman and Glenn Slater

Book by Doug Wright

Based on the Hans Christian Andersen story and the Disney film that was produced by Howard Ashman & John Musker and written & directed by John Musker & Ron Clements

Originally produced by Disney Theatrical Productions

Directed by Melissa Rain Anderson

Musical Direction by Brian Cimmet

Choreography by Adam Cates

Co-produced with the Syracuse University Department of Drama

Nov. 25, 2022 – Jan. 8, 2023

Dive into musical family fun with Ariel, Sebastian, and all the watery gang from this beloved tale. With spectacular aerial (what?) acrobatics provided by 2 Ring Circus (“The Wizard of Oz,” 2017), this production promises enough thrills and delights for landlubbers of all ages. Nothing fishy about this holiday treat.

*East Coast Premiere*

**“Clean/Espejos”**

By Christine Quintana

Spanish translation and adaptation by Paula Zelaya Cervantes

Directed by Melissa Crespo

Feb. 15 – March 5, 2023

The lives of two women with vastly different life experiences intersect at a destination wedding in Cancún. Adriana is from a small town not far from the resort where she has worked her way up from maid to floor manager. Sarah, from Vancouver, is the sister of the bride and maid of honor and the self-acknowledged family screw up. A chance encounter during a torrential downpour leads each woman to confront her personal storm and to consider the possibility that, though isolated, she may not be as alone as she believes. Change is hard but possible and hope may be closer than it sometimes seems. An engaging and poignant bi-lingual theatrical experience, “Clean/Espejos” is performed in English and Spanish with supertitles in both languages.

**“Our Town”**

By Thornton Wilder

Directed by Robert Hupp

March 29 – April 16, 2022=3

“The life of a village against the life of the stars” is how Thornton Wilder described his heralded masterpiece “Our Town.” “It is an attempt,” he wrote, “to find a value above all price for the smallest events in our daily life.” He succeeded with this graceful and poetic play—a heartfelt call to cherish every unimportant moment we’re together and to embrace the true wonder and brevity of being alive. Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it? Whether in Grover’s Corners, New Hampshire, at the turn of the 20th century, or Syracuse, New York, in 2023, Wilder’s enduring classic asks us to stop and ponder what truly matters, and to consider that for a great many of us the answers will be the same.

*World Premiere*

**“Tender Rain”**

By Kyle Bass

Directed by Rodney Hudson

May 3 – 21, 2023

“Rain is like sorrow. It exposes our roots.” In this elegiac drama, playwright Kyle Bass introduces Milton Millard, a white banker who lives in a small Southern city with Delores, his wife whom he can hardly see anymore and who endures a vague but nagging trepidation. They are a late-middle-aged childless couple lost in a fog of what cannot be undone. Is there a way forward for either of them? Can Ruthie Mimms, the Black woman who raised and protected Milton in childhood and beyond, rescue him once more? The momentary escape Milton finds in the arms of a younger woman will not spare him the reckoning he must face. Set in the 1950s, “Tender Rain” explores the complexities of race relations and how oppressive society’s pain, violence and suffering leaches insidiously into domestic lives and intimate relationships. A journey through a richly layered emotional landscape from the author of “Possessing Harriet.

**“Clue”**

Based on the screenplay by Jonathan Lynn

Written by Sandy Rustin

Additional material by Hunter Foster and Eric Price

Based on the Paramount Pictures motion picture

Based on the Hasbro board game CLUE

Original music by Michael Holland

Directed by Ben Hanna

June 7 – 25, 2023

Farce meets murder mystery in this hilarious theatrical adaptation of the famed board game and 1985 motion picture. In a remote mansion not far from Washington, D.C., a mysterious and familiar cast of characters—Colonel Mustard, Mrs. White, Mr. Green, Mrs. Peacock, Professor Plum and Miss Scarlet—gather for a dinner party and an evening of murder. Does the sudden demise of their host, Mr. Boddy, have any connection to the ongoing hearings conducted by Senator Joseph McCarthy and the House of Un-American Activities Committee? It’s all fun and games until someone gets clobbered by a candlestick in the library. After that, it’s even more fun.

**Cold Read Festival of New Plays**

Curated by Associate Artistic Director Melissa Crespo

Oct. 18 – 22, 2022

Events to be announced.

ABOUT P3 PRODUCTIONS  
P3 Productions is a Tony Award-winning producing team led by Ben Holtzman (he/him), Sammy Lopez (he/him), and Fiona Howe Rudin (she/her). Upcoming Productions: HOW TO DANCE IN OHIO (World Premiere: Syracuse Stage), GUN & POWDER, MIDSUMMER, BRADICAL, and projects with award-winning artists John Leguizamo and Shakina Nayfack. Select Co-Producing/Investment credits: HAMILTON, MOULIN ROUGE, A CHRISTMAS CAROL, BE MORE CHILL, THE KITE RUNNER, and A STRANGE LOOP (with A Choir Full Productions), and others. Keara Moon (she/her) serves as the company’s assistant producer with Pua Tanielu (she/her) as the producing intern. www.p3.productions

ABOUT SYRACUSE STAGE

Founded in 1974, Syracuse Stage is the non-profit, professional theatre company in residence at Syracuse University. It is nationally recognized for creating stimulating theatrical work that engages Central New York and significantly contributes to the artistic life of Syracuse University, where it is a vital partner in achieving the educational mission of the University’s Department of Drama. Syracuse Stage’s mission is to tell stories that engage, entertain and inspire people to see life beyond their own experience. Each season 70,000 patrons enjoy an adventurous mix of new plays, and bold interpretations of classics and musicals, featuring the finest theatre artists. In addition, Stage maintains a vital educational outreach program that annually serves more than 21,000 students from 16 counties. Syracuse Stage is a constituent of the Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre, and a member of the Arts and Cultural Leadership Alliance (ACLA), the University Hill Corporation and the East Genesee Regent Association. Syracuse Stage is a member of The League of Resident Theatres (LORT), the largest professional theatre association in the country.

###

Syracuse Stage   I   Artistic Director: Robert M. Hupp   I   Managing Director: Jill A. Anderson

820 E. Genesee St.  I   Main: [315-443-4008](tel:315-443-4008)   I   Box Office: [315-443-3275](tel:315-443-3275)   I   [www.SyracuseStage.org](http://www.SyracuseStage.org/)

[](https://www.facebook.com/syracusestage)[](https://twitter.com/syracusestage)[](http://www.youtube.com/user/syracusestage)[](http://www.flickr.com/photos/syracusestage)