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# Spotlight Youth Theatre Proudly Presents

# Playfest 2022-'23

#### I Never Would've Guessed

Written by **Chris Brattin** Directed by **Owen Donsker** 

#### The 7AM Bus

Written by **Max Mendoza** Directed by **Jazlynn Damasco** 

#### **Boarding for Neverland**

Written by **Spencer Wareing** Directed by **Lyda Armistead** 

Stage Manager: **Lyda Armistead** Costume Designer: **Zoey Waller** Set Designers: **Owen Donsker, Jazlynn Damasco, & Lyda Armistead** Sound Designer: **Olivia Martinez** Lighting Designer: **Anthony Rozzen** Properties Artisans: **Vicki Grossman & Kenny Grossman** Light and Sound Board Operator: **Elsie Donsker** Technical Coordinator: **Josh Hontz** 

Special thanks to **Doug Novotny**, the **Spotlight Youth Theatre Board of Directors**, and the **friends & family members** who volunteered to make this show so successful.

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I Never Would've Guessed, The 7AM Bus, and Boarding for Neverland are presented through special arrangement with Brattin, Mendoza, and Wareing. All rights reserved.



Written by Chris Brattin Directed by Owen Donsker

Jamie	Dakota Boyce
Mary Benson	Kate Donick
Mari Benson	Jay Schwab
Charlie	Hunter Schneider
Garrett	Owen Morris
Bruce	Ella Ellis

# **Note From the Director**

Playfest is the first time I have been able to direct a show at Spotlight Theater, and I had an amazing time.

Working with these kids has been so rewarding, and seeing them grow throughout this process from a different perspective has been eye opening for me. There is so much to learn from directing that I can add to my own acting, and I hope they all learned a little from me too!

Seeing three new shows be brought to life is something different than being a part of a usual musical or play put on by other theaters. There's something about being the first group to put your mark on a show that separates this experience from others. Creating characters with no previous inspiration has been a key part of this process for everyone involved, always discussing and asking questions about parts of the script to find details we missed last time. Being able to do this with a room full of talented actors has lifted everyone up together.

I'm so proud of everyone for their work on Playfest this year.

Owen Donsker, Director, I Never Would've Guessed



Written by **Max Mendoza** Directed by **Jazlynn Damasco** 

Bo	Emma Denny
Sage	Jay Schwab
Bus Attendant / Delivery Person	Owen Morris
Piano Player	Bella Cucchetti
Ensemble Ella Ellis, Dakota Boyce,	Hunter Schneider, Kate Donick

# **Note From the Director**

When Kenny asked me if I was interested in directing Playfest, I immediately said yes. However, I was scared out of my mind and I had no idea what to expect.

I am so glad I agreed to do this, as this learning experience has been nothing short of wonderful. I could not have asked for a better cast, crew, and set of directors to do this with. *The 7AM Bus* has been so fun to direct.

The brilliant Max Mendoza has written such an amazing script that encompasses humor mixed with a thought-provoking message at the end. The cast has developed such amazing backstories to make their performance more authentic and I am so proud of them. I have seen so much growth in every single one of these actors on stage and I am so thankful for them for making this experience so amazing.

I hope you all enjoy The 7AM Bus!

Jazlynn Damasco, Director, The 7AM Bus



Written by Spencer Wareing

Directed by Lyda Armistead

Atticus	Owen Morris
Younger Atticus	Ella Ellis
Kylie to Kip	Bella Cucchetti
Younger Kylie	Jay Schwab
Narrator / Parent	Emma Denny
Arthur / Announcer	
Ensemble	Dakota Boyce, Hunter Schneider

# **Note From the Director**

I am so excited for you to see Playfest!

From the first day to now, the actors have grown so much. This experience was a learning experience for all of us, and I couldn't have asked for a better cast to learn with.

*Boarding for Neverland* is a beautifully written show that allowed the cast to grow as actors and me to grow as a director. I am so unbelievably proud of the cast for the depth they achieved when discussing the show and performing. Please feel free to ask the actors about the show afterwards, you will be blown away at the amount of thought and soul they put into the characters.

Thank you to Spencer Wareing for trusting me with the show. Thank you to Kenny and Spotlight for funding this original program that gives teens and kids the opportunity to gain experience in the industry. Finally, thank YOU for coming to support Spotlight Youth Theatre.

Enjoy the show!

Lyda Armistead, Director, Boarding for Neverland



#### Lyda Armistead

#### Director of Boarding for Neverland / Stage Manager / Set Designer

Lyda is elated to be a part of this wonderful experience! Though this is not the first time she has directed, it was a great learning experience for her, and she will move forward in life remembering the lessons she learned and taught. Previous production team credits include What Goes Around, Comes Around, Can You Read Me?; SYT Summer and Fall camps (director); Whatever, Just Wash Your Hands (assistant director); and Hair (assistant director, stage manager, dramaturge). Lyda would like to thank Kenny, Deb, Vicki, and all the people who have made Playfest possible this year! Enjoy!

#### Dakota Boyce Jamie / Ensemble / Ensemble

Dakota is gracious for the opportunity she got to be a part of this production. This is her first show at Spotlight, but she had always been involved in theater. She has been in *You Can't Take it with You* at Centennial High School and she is co-stage managing the spring musical at Centennial. She learned a lot about starting from scratch with characters and how to develop them more, and she is glad she got to do so. Dakota would like to thank the cast and directors for this amazing experience!



#### **Chris Brattin**

#### Playwright of I Never Would've Guessed

Chris is a senior at Centennial High School and is so excited to present his one act play, *I Never Would've Guessed*. Although this is the first production he's ever written, he's also done a lot of acting. He's currently working on *Into the Woods* at his High School as The Baker. Some of his favorite roles in the past were Lord Farquaad in *Shrek*, Wadsworth in *Clue*, and Paul Sycamore in *You Can't Take it with You*. He is a great passion for the stage and loves working with his improv troupe.

# Bella Cucchetti

#### Piano Player / Kylie to Kip

Bella is thrilled to be a part of Playfest at SYT! She is honored to help recreate these original plays on stage and help bring them to life. She is grateful to SYT for giving her the dream role of Lizzie this past fall. Some other favorite past productions include Romeo and Juliet (Greasepaint), Mean Girls (Stagedoor Manor) and Gypsy (Spotlight) among many others. Special thanks to Kenny Grossman for creating this unique opportunity. Thanks to the brilliant writers of these plays, Lyda Armistead for both stage managing and directing, Owen Donsker and Jazlyn Damasco for their unique direction, and my amazing cast that made every rehearsal both fun and memorable.



#### Jazlynn Damasco

## Director for *The 7AM Bus*, Set Designer

Jazlynn is a Sophomore at ASU Barrett. She is so excited to be making her directorial debut for Playfest! Some of her favorite past roles include Emma Borden in *Lizzie* (SYT), #13 in *The Wolves* (SYT), Female Ensemble in *Sister Act* (ABT), and Mulan in *Mulan Jr.* (SYT, NYA and 'Zoni Nom). She would like to thank her family, friends, Lyda, Owen, Olivia, Anthony, Josh, Kenny, and the brilliant cast and crew! Enjoy Playfest!

#### Emma Denny Bo / Narrator/Parent

Emma had acted in a total of 15 shows, teched for five, written two and directed one, her favorite roles being Ariel in *Footloose*, Judy in *A Curious Incident of a Dog in The Nighttime*, and her upcoming ensemble role in Theater Work's *Land of The Dead*. This is her first show at Spotlight, and she could not be more excited to work with these directors and playwrights to envision and originate new shows. She would like to thank all those involved at spotlight, her family and friends, and most importantly, you the audience for seeing this wonderful show!



#### Kate Donick

#### Mary Benson / Ensemble / Arthur/Announcer

Kate is in 8th grade at Paradise Honors. She's excited to be back in Playfest for another year! Recently, Kate played Winnie Foster in *Tuck Everlasting*, Aunt March in *Little Women*, and Harley Quinn in *Superheroes* (AriZoni Nomination for Actress in a Major Role). She'd like to thank Owen, Jazlynn, Lyda, her family, and this amazing cast. Enjoy the show!

#### Owen Donsker

#### Director of I Never Would've Guessed / Set Design

Owen has acted in numerous shows at Spotlight Youth Theater, but this is his first opportunity to direct for them. He hopes the actors he's had the joy of working with these last few weeks have learned as much from him as he has from them. Break a leg actors, and enjoy Playfest!



#### Ella Ellis

#### Bruce / Ensemble / Younger Atticus

Ella is so happy to be a part of Playfest here at Spotlight! This is her second production at Spotlight, having recently performed in *Last Chance Angels*. She also participates Spotlight's performance troupe, Celebration. Thank you, Lyda, Jazzy, and Owen, for picking her!

#### Max Mendoza Playwright of The 7AM Bus

Max is honored and privileged to have his first play, *The 7AM Bus*, selected for Playfest this year! You have likely spotted him onstage at Spotlight in the past as Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or Winston in *Potty Party* or on other stages around the valley as the Teen Angel in *Grease* or as Ito in *Mame*. Currently, he studies at ASU with a Major in Urban Planning and a Minor in Musical Theatre. Thanks to Kenny and Bobby for choosing and believing in this script and to Jazlynn for being the best director anyone could ask for! @ maxmendoza.1



#### **Owen Morris**

#### Garrett / Bus Attendant/Delivery Person / Atticus

Owen is so excited for you all to see these wonderful shows. You might have seen him recently in *Hair* as Hud and in *The Lightning Thief* in the Ensemble. He would like to thank his parents, Ryann, Sam, and Addi for being the coolest people ever. He would also like to thank the entire Playfest team for being super awesome and talented throughout this whole process. Finally, the biggest thanks go to Olivia Martinez for being Owen's best friend and biggest supporter ever. Enjoy the shows!!!

# Hunter Schneider

#### Charlie / Ensemble / Ensemble

Hunter is a Freshman at Thunderbird High School. His most recent role was Hercules in *The Island of Dr. Libris* at Starlight Theatre and his next role will be in *Zombie Prom* at Thunderbird. He also enjoys doing techie work and has done that for Thunderbird HS, Spotlight and Act One Youth Theater. He loves rock &c roll and is learning more all the time on his electric guitar. Hunter would like to thank the directors, cast, and everyone else that is involved in Playfest; he has really enjoyed this production and hopes you do too!



#### Jay Schwab

#### Mari Benson / Sage / Younger Kylie

Jay, 16, is a Junior at Desert Edge High School and is a member of the Varsity Women's Choir, Thespian Honors Spotlight's Society, and Evolution Performance Troupe. They love all things theater and are thrilled to be back for another production with their Spotlight family. Their favorite performances at Spotlight include The Lighting Thief, Hair, and Beat Bugs. Jay is grateful to their family for always supporting their passions and would like to thank the directors and the production team for this amazing opportunity!

#### Spencer Wareing Playwright for *Boarding for Neverland*

Spencer has fallen in love with all aspects of theatre. She is overjoyed and thankful to SYT for bringing Boarding for Neverland to life. Spencer has performed in productions across the valley, notably: Agnes Evans in She Kills Monsters: Young Adventurers Edition, Margot Frank at JET's The Diary of Anne Frank, Wadsworth in Clue: On Stage, and Lucy in The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe! Spencer welcomes each opportunity to see her scripts come to life, having won a Thespy at the International Thespian Festival for Boarding for Neverland, and student-directing her full-length production, Forevermore, this past fall. Spencer treasures every second she spends doing Arizona theatre (she doesn't have that much left!) and prefers "Break a leg" to "Good Luck" any day!

#### Kenny & Vicki Grossman (Artistic Director, Properties Design)

Kenny and Vicki have been with Spotlight Youth Theatre from the very beginning and are excited to be a part of this amazing production. They are looking forward to all of the productions in this incredible season. Kenny still loves eggs. To Jamie and Carly, "We love you and miss you." Thank you to cast, crew, directors, designers, families, volunteers, and board members.

#### Josh Hontz (Technical Coordinator)

Josh Hontz is the Vice President of Spotlight's Board of Directors and has worked as a sound and lighting designer in the Valley since 2014. He has received twenty-two ariZoni Theatre Awards of Excellence for his sound, lighting, and media designs. He is also a pianist and plays for musical theaters around town. Outside of the theatre, Josh enjoys gardening and spending time with his lovely wife, Katie, and his sweet dog, Linda.

#### Olivia Martinez (Sound Designer)

Olivia never would've guessed she'd be able to sound design Playfest after being in the very first one back in 2021! She loves everything Playfest stands for and gets no greater joy than watching these plays come to life for the audience to experience for the first time. Previously, she's designed lights for *Last Chance Angels* and just finished being in *Once* at Spotlight Youth Theater. She'd like to thank Lyda, Jazzy, Owen, Kenny, and Jay Schwab. Most importantly, she's thankful for her mom, T.J, and Josh Hontz. She hopes you enjoy the show – and Happy Aquarius Season! (She's not an Aquarius.)

#### Anthony Rozzen (Lighting Designer)

This is Anthony's second season at Spotlight Youth Theatre and he's excited to see how this season goes!

#### Zoey Waller (Costume Designer)

Zoey is incredibly excited to be a part of this incredible Spotlight tradition. She is so proud of all the young playwrights and directors and is thankful to get to work with such an awesome team. Zoey enjoys participating in any aspect of theater that she can get her hands on. Spotlight has given her incredible opportunities to be a playwright, songwriter, band member, choreographer, actor, and now costume designer. She hopes you enjoy the show and recognize just how incredible youth theater truly is. Thank you Spotlight for all you do.



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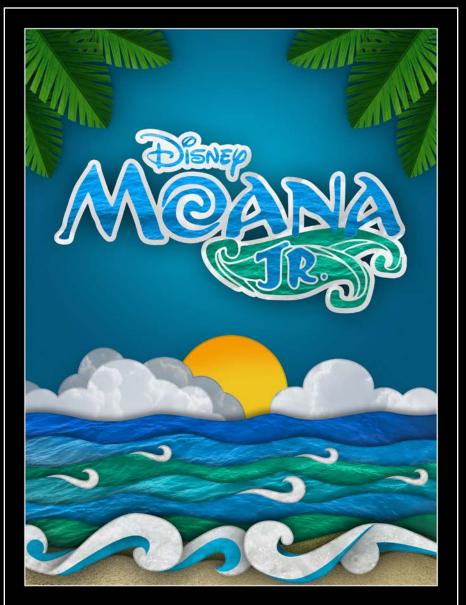
# March 25 6:30 P.M.

An Old Town Wedding–Event Center 8276 W. Monroe Street Peoria, AZ

For tickets and information, please call the SYT Box Office: (602) 843-8318 or visit us on the web: sytaz.org



# Coming Soon to Spotlight Youth Theatre

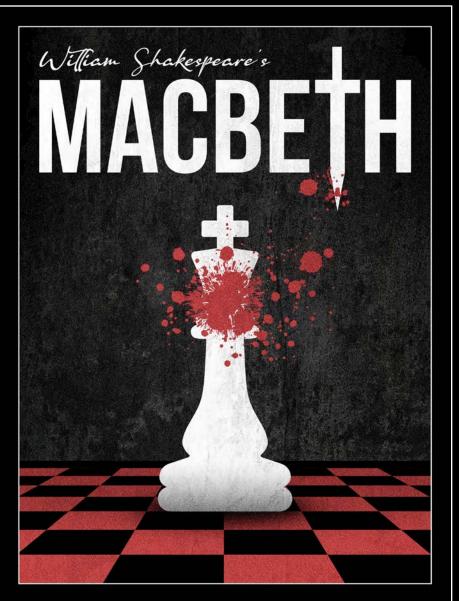


MARCH 3–19, 2023 Fridays & Saturdays at 7PM, Sundays at 2PM additional 2PM matinees on March 4 & 11

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# Coming Soon to Spotlight Youth Theatre



#### APRIL 14–23, 2023 Fridays & Saturdays at 7PM Saturdays and Sundays at 2PM

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# <section-header><section-header>

Spotlight's take on **Macbeth** intends to bring the iconic Scottish Play closer to home. Set just after the Second World War, Macbeth—war veteran and politician conspires to kill the King, and take the crown for himself with the help of Lady Macbeth, his loving wife. As paranoia and guilt begin to consume them both, they must try their best to stay in power and conceal their madness from enemy forces.

#### Ages: 13-19

Audition dates: Sunday, February 19 and Monday, February 20 at 6:00 p.m. Callbacks: Tuesday, February 21, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.

Requirements:

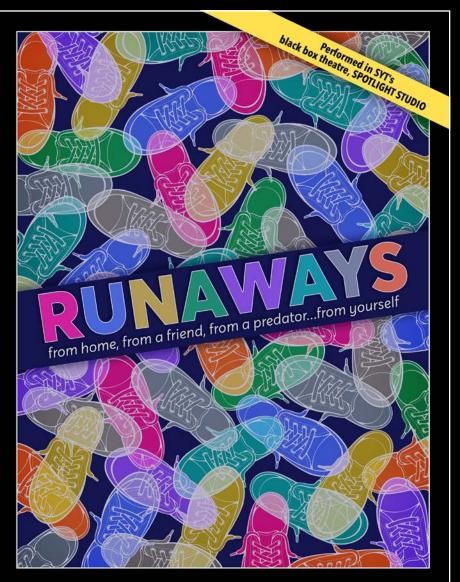
- Complete the online audition form: sytaz.org/audition-form-macbeth
- Come prepared to perform your choice of one of four monologues from the play: sytaz.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Macbeth-Auditions.pdf

Video submssions will also accepted:

- Complete the online audition form.
- Email macbeth@sytaz.org by 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, February 19, 2023.
- Include your name with the video of your audition linked or attached to the email.

Additional information: sytaz.org/macbeth

# Coming Soon to Spotlight Youth Theatre



#### APRIL 28-MAY 7, 2023

Fridays at 7PM Saturdays at 2PM & 7PM Sundays at 2PM



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Spotlight Youth Theatre's mission is to provide youth and their families a safe, welcoming environment where the individual is supported, teamwork is embraced, and creativity is encouraged through high quality performing arts and educational programs that enrich and strengthen our community.

Spotlight Youth Theatre's vision:

- 1. A program grounded in the belief that every child deserves a chance to shine, a place that is safe and free from negativity, and an environment where fun and hard work combine into amazing experiences, both on and off stage.
- 2. A theater program that is as diverse as the community we serve and where all members of the family can join in the endeavor to produce high quality theater productions that amaze and entertain.
- 3. A community theater where the impossible becomes possible through the combined efforts of our families, our sponsors, and most of all, the children who shine onstage.
- 4. A place where a child can be their authentic self, exploring the creative arts without fear, and be embraced and encouraged to grow and flourish.

# ARIZONA

Spotlight Youth Theatre's 2022–2023 season is supported in part by the Arizona Commission on the Arts, which receives support from the State of Arizona and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Partial funding for Spotlight Youth Theatre's 2022–2023 season provided by the Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture through appropriations from the Phoenix City Council.



#### Spotlight Youth Theatre is a 501(c)(3) non-profit Community Youth Theatre

Spotlight Youth Theatre would very much like to thank our community partners and benefactors. Please support the kind and generous people who support SYT by patronizing our sponsors. To learn more about sponsoring or donating to Spotlight Youth Theatre and making a difference in the lives of today's youth, please call (602) 843–8318.

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ONCE **JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 5** 



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