PHILADELPHIA THEATRE COMPANY
at the Suzanne Roberts Theatre

PLAYWISE
SPRING 2023

EmpathitRaX

By Ana Nogueira
Directed by Nell Bang-Jensen

Art by Paul E. Jeffrey
PROUD SUPPORTER OF THE
PHILADELPHIA THEATRE COMPANY
AT THE
SUZANNE ROBERTS THEATRE

Creative, collaborative &
dependable video production

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Hello, and welcome to the second production of Philadelphia Theatre Company’s 48th Season, Empathitrax, written by the multi-talented hometown hero Ana Nogueira, and directed by one of Philadelphia’s brightest young artistic leaders, Nell Bang-Jensen. (Nell, in addition to helming this show, is also the artistic director of Theatre Horizon, located in Norristown, PA – check ‘em out!). Beyond grateful that these two fantastic artists are the primary drivers behind this production, and we can’t wait for you to experience what they’ve made.

A bit about the show: in the world of the play, Empathitrax is a pharmaceutical miracle break-through drug which allows users to touch someone else and feel exactly what the other person is feeling – love, lust, guilt, depression, happiness, you name it. In essence, it solves one of humankind’s most pressing but seemingly impossible questions: how can we completely know another person? Empathitrax, the play, centers around a thirty-something couple whose ten-year relationship has run into some fairly relatable trouble – their romance has lost momentum and vitality, and they aren’t connected like they used to be. Then BOOM: along comes Empathitrax, the wonder drug that will solve all their problems and kick-start their relationship.

Empathitrax is a darkly funny, futuristic little gem of a play that profoundly reflects what it’s like to be in a long-term relationship with another person, and explores the fundamental human desire to be truly understood by someone else with grace, compassion, and wit. And it must be said: it’s a heck of a showcase for actors. Perhaps because Ana, the playwright, is an actor herself (she had a recurring role on the television series “The Vampire Diaries” a few years ago, and helped to originate the role of Eliza while the musical Hamilton was in development), the play provides exceptional opportunities for talented performers, and PTC is lucky to have a fantastic cast filled with some local Philly favorites: Makoto Hirano, Claire Inie-Richards and Matteo Scammell. Complete with a top-tier design team who has brought this play to life with artistry and vividness, we think you’re in for a real treat.

Thank you as always for coming to PTC, for donating to PTC, and for supporting Philly theatre and Philly artists. We couldn’t do it without you!

Taibi & Tyler

PS: Be on the lookout for PTC’s season announcement – our first season as artistic directors! Can’t wait to show you what we have planned for next year!
We know what art can do — how it can change perspectives, and even change lives. That’s why the PNC Foundation developed PNC Arts Alive, a multi-year, multi-million-dollar initiative that supports the arts in local communities. Through this initiative, we continue to challenge visual and performing arts organizations to put forth their best, most original thinking while expanding audience participation and engagement. Because when art thrives, everybody benefits.

To learn more, go to pncartsalive.com
On behalf of the PTC Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to welcome you to Empathitrax, a timely pharmacological story that is sure to amuse as much as unsettle. We have gathered a cast and creative team of top-tier local talent to breathe life into this work by playwright and Philadelphia native Ana Nogueira, and it is a joy to bring it to the stage tonight.

As the name suggests, Empathitrax is about empathy; specifically, how empathy can bring us closer together during difficult times. Over the past few years, we have all become familiar with the feelings of isolation experienced by the characters in Empathitrax. During these moments when we are most vulnerable, most alone, what brings us back in community with others is the power of empathy – our ability to understand and be understood.

And what is theatre if not an exercise in this very sensation? The act of watching a play or musical, and becoming engrossed in the stories of characters that we will never meet, serves us far beyond the purpose of entertainment. We leave the theatre changed – our hearts a little more open. It is for precisely this reason that the art of theatre has endured for centuries and that it remains more important than ever.

And here at PTC, we are committed to creating theatre that captures the spirit of the times and draws on the dynamism of Philadelphia. There are a lot of exciting things coming to PTC, including our spring 2023 performance of Lady Day at Emerson’s Bar and Grill, directed by Broadway veteran and PTC Resident Artist Jeffrey Page, the revival of our education program, and the impending announcement of our 2023-24 Season. However, none of this would be possible without you – our audience and patrons. Your support of PTC helps ensure that we can keep producing theatre at the highest level while continuing to deepen our relationship with the community.

We are pleased to offer you Empathitrax as a fantastical tale and a cautionary parable. Even more thrilling is the opportunity to bring so many Philadelphia artists and creatives together to share this play with all of you – to share this deeply human experience with you. Thank you for being here; enjoy Empathitrax.

Sincerely,
Gary A. Deutsch

Managing Chief Counsel, PNC Bank
Chair, Philadelphia Theatre Company
My 19-month old daughter is learning the names of colors. We spend a lot of time pointing: “blue,” “yellow,” “green.” She repeats the words – sometimes even says them first. I know my daughter better than I’ve ever known another person, but as I watch her begin to identify things and put them into words, I feel the separation between us as well. I can’t help but return to the age-old question: “Does she see ‘blue’ the way I see ‘blue’? Is her ‘blue’ the same as mine?”

I will never know what my daughter sees when she sees blue, let alone how exactly “sad,” “mad,” “love” or “surprise” manifest in her body and brain. Even with someone we are inextricably connected to, in DNA, or even just time and proximity, we can never be sure exactly what they are feeling.

The drug, Empathitrax, tries to change that. This play asks us to consider what it would mean if we could feel exactly what another person feels, and if this could be a tool for closeness between people. Think of what could change, societally, and globally, if we could all feel what it meant to experience what someone else was going through as we moved through our days – how we might be kinder, wiser, and more thoughtful to each other.

Magical as it would be, I think this play also asks us to consider if there is something to be lost in making it that easy. A fundamental part of empathy is perspective-taking. It is an action, an effort, to hear it from another side, to listen, to look someone in the eye. Perhaps there is a reason why this perspective-taking is not as easy as popping a pill. What I think Empathitrax asks us to consider is: is it important to feel exactly what another person is feeling? Or is connection based on the effort of trying and (possibly) failing to?

I will never know how my daughter sees “blue,” but maybe what’s more important is our mutual decision to call it that, rather than the exact understanding of what the other sees. All I can do is to listen as she describes what “blue” is to her – how she sees it, how it feels, and to try and fail to understand her, time and time again.

Nell Bang-Jensen

Director, Empathitrax
PHILADELPHIA THEATRE COMPANY
at the Suzanne Roberts Theatre
Taibi Magar & Tyler Dobrowsky
Artistic Directors
Emily Zeck
Managing Director

Present

Empathit RaX

By
ANA NOGUEIRA

Makoto Hirano | Claire Inie-Richards | Matteo Scammell

Scenic Designer
CHRI$ HAIG
Costume Designer
JILLIAN KEYS
Lighting Designer
LILY FOSSNER

Sound Designer
JORDAN MCCREE
Stage Manager
LESLIE ANN BOYDEN

Directed by
NELL BANG-JENSEN

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EMPATHITRAX

This production will be performed with no intermission. Photos may be taken in the theatre before the performance and following the performance. If you share photos, please credit the designers and tag @philatheatreco. Please remember to silence your mobile devices.

CAST

HIM............................................................................................................. Makoto Hirano
HER................................................................................................... Claire Inie-Richards*
JOE/MATTY D....................................................................................... Matteo Scammell*

STAGE MANAGEMENT

Stage Manager..................................................................................... Leslie Ann Boyden*
Stage Management Production Assistant......................................................... Triston Haq

PRODUCTION AND DESIGN SUPPORT

Associate Scenic Designer............................................................................Shane Dreher
Associate Lighting Designer........................................................................ Heather Pynne
Scene Shop............................................................................................Scenery First, Inc.
Intimacy Coordinator................................................................................. Abby Weissman

* Members of Actors’ Equity Association, The Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

The Philadelphia Theatre Company (PTC) operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) and Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage managers in the United States, and the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers (SDC), an independent national labor union. PTC is a member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre, and is a member of LORT, National Alliance for Musical Theatre (NAMT), Philadelphia Cultural Alliance (GPCA), The Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, and Theatre Philadelphia.

The scenic, costume, lighting and sound designers in LORT Theatres are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829, of the IATSE. Production employees are represented by The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts of the United States, ITS Territories and Canada, Local 8.

Photos, videotaping, or other video or audio recording during the production is strictly prohibited, is a violation of United States Copyright Law, and is an actionable Federal Offense.
We recognize and acknowledge that the Suzanne Roberts Theatre stands on the Indigenous territory known as “Lenapehoking,” the traditional homelands of the Lenape, also called Lenni-Lenape or Delaware Indians. These are the people who, during the 1680s, negotiated with William Penn to facilitate the founding of the colony of Pennsylvania. The Lenape diaspora includes five federally recognized nations in Oklahoma, Wisconsin, and Ontario. Pennsylvania is one of only a few Eastern states that does not recognize any native tribes.

Here is a local organization you can support: wearethesefeed.org
Learn more by visiting The Lenape Nation of PA Cultural Center in Easton, PA.

SPECIAL THANKS

Jennifer Bullock
Bill Coffey
Maiko Matsushima
Lee Minora
Maria Shaplin
Paige Price
Justin Rose
Theatre Horizon

Additional support for Empathitrax provided by
Gary Deutsch & Susan Dornstein
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CAST BIOS

Makoto Hirano | Him is delighted to return to PTC! As a Philadelphia-based choreographer, Hirano’s award-winning projects have been presented nationally in numerous venues and festivals. As a collaborating performer, Hirano has originated over 25 roles with highlights that include projects with Bill Irwin (The Happiness Lecture at PTC), Pig Iron, and Nichole Canuso Dance Company. Hirano is a founding member of the collective PAPA (Philly Asian Performing Artists), co-founder of the installation art-duo Gatto+Hirano, and co-founder of Team Sunshine Performace. A former U.S. Marine, Hirano earned his BFA in dance at Temple University. Thank you Danielle for all the love and immeasurable support!

Claire Inie-Richards | Her is excited to be making her PTC debut. Other work includes; The Vinegar Tree, Project Dawn, I And You, Sense and Sensibility, and The Cherry Orchard (People’s Light); Measure for Measure (Lantern Theatre); Completeness (Theatre Exile); The Revolutionists (Theatre Horizon); Two Gentlemen of Verona (Shakespeare in Clark Park); A Christmas Carol (Delaware Theatre Company); and Mercury 13 (BBC Radio4). She is a company member of People’s Light, and holds an MFA from the Academy for Classical Acting at George Washington University.

Matteo Scammell | Joe/Matty D is a Barrymore award-winning artist based in Philadelphia. Empathitrax marks his 4th production with PTC (Detroit, Hand to God, Sweat). A company-member of New Paradise Laboratories, contributing to 6 original works. He is also a member of Wilma Theater’s Acting ensemble, HotHouse. Matteo has performed in over 35 theatrical productions. He appears in music videos, feature-films, short-films, and commercial work. Matteo loves playing guitar. 2017 Barrymore Award for Best Performance of Male Actor in Lead Role for The Legend of Georgia McBride. 2020 Independence Fellowship Recipient. Love and gratitude to Lee and our families. BFA - University of the Arts.

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Ana Nogueira | Playwright is a writer and actress based in Brooklyn. Her most recent play *Which Way to the Stage* had its world premiere production at MCC Theater in New York City in May 2022, immediately followed by its regional premiere at Signature Theatre in Virginia. The play was chosen for the 2019 Kilroy’s List and the Pacific Playwrights Festival at South Coast Rep, where Ana was the recipient of the Elizabeth George Emerging Playwright Commission. In 2016, *Empathitrax* premiered Off-Broadway at Here Arts Center with the critically-acclaimed theater company Colt Coeur, where she is a company member. Her work has been developed at Second Stage, The New Group, SPACE on Ryder Farm and Barrington Stage. Ana co-wrote and starred in the short film *We Win*, which premiered at the 2018 SXSW Film Festival and won Best Screenplay at the Rhode Island Film Festival. Her acting credits include *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice* (The New Group); *Engagements, Mala Hierba* (both at Second Stage); *Bump* (Ensemble Studio Theater); *Knives and Other Sharp Objects* (The Public/LAByrinth); and three seasons on the Starz series “Hightown.” She is a proud alumni of the Obie Award-winning playwriting group Youngblood at Ensemble Studio Theater.

Nell Bang-Jensen | Director has been directing and creating theater in Philadelphia for the past ten years. She has created five original works, in addition to producing and directing for Philadelphia’s major theater institutions including FringeArts, People’s Light, Theatre Horizon, Philadelphia Theatre Company, the Wilma, Pig Iron, and the Painted Bride. Nell currently serves as Artistic Director of Theatre Horizon in Norristown, PA. She is passionate about work that helps arts organizations align with community-held values and creating plays with people who do not identify as professional artists. Recent productions include *Town* (Theatre Horizon), *The Wolves* (Philadelphia Theatre Company), and *Boy Project* (FringeArts). Nell is the recipient of a 2019 Map Fund grant, a Next Stage Director’s Fellowship from the Drama League (2019), and a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship (2011). In 2016, Nell was a participant in Theatre Communication Group’s Leadership U: One-on-One program; a national fellowship given to eight individuals who TCG believes are the core and future of theater. A graduate of Swarthmore College, Nell is also passionate about Education and is a Senior Lecturer at the University of the Arts and the Pig Iron School for Advanced Performance Training.

Chris Haig | Scenic Designer (he/him) PTC Debut! A University of the Arts alum and teacher, Chris has designed throughout Philly for over 20 years and enjoyed ten seasons as the Props Supervisor at Arden Theatre Company. He has designed sets for the Arden, Theatre Horizon, InterAct, People’s Light, 1812 Productions, Bristol Riverside Theatre, Delaware Theatre Company, Inis Nua, University of the Arts, Arcadia University, Shakespeare in Clark Park, Tribe of Fools, Delaware Shakespeare Festival, and Simpatico Theater, including their production of R. Eric Thomas’ *Time Is On Our Side* for which he received a Barrymore nomination for Best Scenic Design. Local USA 829 member. www.chrishaigdesigns.com

Jillian Keys | Costume Designer is stoked to be with this team making her design debut for PTC! She is a UAarts graduate (2011), and a three time Barrymore Award Nominee for her whimsical childrens’ theater costumes at The Arden. She is a maker of all sorts and not only has designed over 50 shows for many companies in town, but also designs spaces and installs like the summer beer garden at Eakins Oval, and holiday bars ‘Blitzen’ (Wilmington DE/Scranton PA) and ‘Tinsel’. For other fun facts please visit: www.jilliankeys.com

Jordan McCree | Sound Designer is a percussionist, producer, composer, sound designer, and teaching artist in Philadelphia. His most recent works and collaborations include: *TOWN* (Theatre Horizon), *This Is The Week That Is* (1812 Productions), *Backing Track* (Arden Theatre Company), *Citizen* (New Light Theatre), *Peril’s Island* (Shakespeare in Clark Park), *Fat Ham* (The Wilma Theater), *My General Tubman* (Arden Theatre Company). Recently, he has become one of the grant recipients to the 1/52 Project. He is also a member of Philly-based hip hop collective, ILL DOOTS. Their music is available now on Spotify, Apple Music, Tidal, and more! #ILLMOVEMENT | ILLDOOTS.COM

Leslie Ann Boyden | Stage Manager (she/her) is a freelance stage manager in the Philadelphia area. In the past she has worked with Theatre Horizon, The Wilma Theater, Pig Iron Theatre Company, Azuka Theatre, Simpatico Theatre, Shakespeare in Clark Park, Revolution Shakespeare, Tribe of Fools, Act II Playhouse, Arden Theatre Company, Millbrook Playhouse, and Hedgerow Theatre. She graduated from Indiana University Bloomington in 2014 with a B.A. in Theatre and Drama.

Triston Haq | Production Assistant has been working in theatrical spaces for the past 8 years, and has been given the opportunity to work alongside many wonderful creators, some especially wonderful creators being the Empathitrax team. He is a recent graduate of Stephen F. Austin State University, and has had the pleasure of working on other productions like *Curse of the Starving Class* (EgoPo Classic Theater, Assistant Stage Manager), *Cabaret* (Baytown Little Theater, Assistant Stage Manager), and *Peter Pan* (Baytown Little Theater, Production Assistant) to name a few.

Abby Weissman | Intimacy Coordinator (she/her) is a director, consent educator, arts administrator (and more!) based in Philadelphia, PA. She is a company member of Revolution Shakespeare, and a proud alumnus of Northwestern University and the Arden Professional Apprentice Program. Most recently, she has spent her time talking about sex and relationships at colleges across the country with Speak About It, directing light opera with Penn Singers and the Vocal Academy of Opera in Bodrum, Turkey, and coordinating free teen performing arts programming with Opera Philadelphia. Training: Theatrical Intimacy Education, Intimacy Directors and Coordinators, and Intimacy Coordinators of Color. Love to the BLGS.
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Saturday, March 4 @ 2:00pm
For audience members who are blind or have low vision. Through provided assisted listening devices, a trained audio describer fills in the visual details and action on stage while it is performed live.

For audience members who are d/Deaf, hard-of-hearing or hearing impaired. A large LED captioning screen, positioned beside the stage, scrolls text of the lyrics/dialogue in tandem with the lyrics/dialogue of the performance.

**ASSISTED LISTENING DEVICES**
Assisted listening headsets that wirelessly deliver all dialogue, music, and sound from the show at a personally adjustable volume are available for free at every PTC performance through the House Manager or concessionaire.

If you would like to discuss accommodations and accessibility in our facilities, please reach out to Patron Services Supervisor, Angel Chasco at achasco@philatheatreco.org.

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If you are interested in becoming a volunteer usher, reach out to Patron Services Supervisor Angel Chasco at achasco@philatheatreco.org.

**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**
The Suzanne Roberts Theatre is located at SEPTA Bus Stop ID# 15190 for Bus routes 4, 27, & 32 (on the southbound side of Broad Street). You can also access the theatre from the BSL at the Lombard/South Station by exiting towards Lombard. PATCO stations at 12/13th and 15/16th are approximately 0.4 miles from the theatre. SEPTA Suburban and Jefferson Regional Rail stations are approximately 1 mile from the theatre.

**PARKING**
Parking is available at the Symphony House Garage by reserving ahead of time. Additional parking can be found across the street at 417 S Broad Street; or at the Parkway Avenue of the Arts parking garage. Please note: there is limited street parking available near the theatre, and is not guaranteed.

**RESTROOMS, ELEVATOR, WATER FOUNTAINS**
RESTROOMS are located on the orchestra level of the theatre and are ADA compliant. The ELEVATOR is located to the left of the concession stand which may be used to reach the mezzanine level. WATER FOUNTAINS are located outside the restrooms.

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In memory of
Donald Stanley Wilf
Dr. Peter Arger
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SCAN TO DONATE
Philadelphia Theatre Company is honored to name its home after Suzanne Roberts—actress, playwright, director, educator, producer, and philanthropist. For over 40 years, Suzanne was a leading champion of the Philadelphia theater community. Suzanne engaged as an artist in meaningful public service with projects as diverse as performing in dramas to inspiring the purchase of war bonds during World War II to national appearances in plays discouraging racism and alcoholism. She performed on many stages in plays from Shakespeare to A.R. Gurney and in a variety of media including radio and television. Suzanne is known to audiences as the creator and host of Emmy Award-Winning Seeking Solutions with Suzanne. One of her lifelong passions was using theater to improve the lives of young people. Through the Suzanne Roberts Cultural Development Fund, she supported the outreach work of theater and dance companies in sharing their creativity with school children and young adults. (Photo by Alan Kole.)

The Suzanne Roberts Theatre, designed by Kieran Timberlake Associates, is owned and operated by Philadelphia Theatre Company. The space is contemporary, elegant, and urbane, and features a 160’ double-height glass facade on the Avenue of the Arts. The interior is defined by a uniquely warm and sculptural, 365-seat main stage auditorium with a spacious and contemporary mezzanine and a planned 100-seat, flexible second stage for new play development, intimate performances, and educational programming. Our stage house significantly enhances our ability to respond to the most imaginative visions of our creative teams with its spacious wings, soaring fly gallery, and trapped stage. The Theatre offers a full range of public amenities with an on-site box office, public restrooms, a concession stand, and multiple lobbies designed for patron comfort and engagement. The Theatre's contemporary design makes it one of the country’s most accessible performing arts venues and supports one of PTC’s core values to ensure that our artistry is accessible to everyone in our community.
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PTC LEADERSHIP

Tyler Dobrowsky | Co-Artistic Director previously worked at Trinity Rep as their Associate Artistic Director, and while there he commissioned a number of writers, such as George Brant, Jackie Sibblies Drury, Miranda Rose Hall, James Ijames, Whitney White, and Lauren Yee, co-founded YASI, Trinity's summer camp for young people, and, working with Rhode Island Latino Arts, developed a free, bilingual, mobile theater program, Teatro en el Verano. Favorite directing credits include: A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Little Shop of Horrors, Into The Breeches at Trinity, Macbeth in Stride at A.R.T.; The Big Meal and Morality Play at the Gamm; Capsule for The Public. He has taught at BU, Brown, NYU, Rhode Island College, and a number of other universities.

Taibi Magar | Co-Artistic Director is a graduate of the Brown MFA program. NY credits include: Help (The Shed), Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992 (Signature Theatre, Lortel-winning) Capsule by Whitney White and Peter Mark Kendall (The Public Theater) Blue Ridge starring Marin Ireland and The Great Leap starring BD Wong (Atlantic Theater); Is God Is (Soho Rep, 2018 Obie Award;) and Underground Railroad Game (Ars Nova). She premiered the new musicals Macbeth In Stride and We Live In Cairo at A.R.T.. She is developing the commercial theatrical adaptation of Wonder by Jill Furman (book by Bess Wohl, music and lyrics by A Great Big World). Regional: CTG, Woolly Mammoth, Alley Theatre, The Guthrie, and Seattle Rep, among others. International: Hamburg Festival, Edinburgh Festival, Malthouse Theatre (Melbourne), and Soho Theatre (London). She received an Obie Award in 2018 and the SDC Breakout Award in 2019. Taibi has taught at University of the Arts, Juilliard, NYU and Brown.

Emily Zeck | Managing Director joined PTC as Managing Director in 2017. She began her theatre management career by producing Off-Off-Broadway, and subsequently joined Theatre Aspen as their Managing Director. She has held management positions at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, a Broadway general management company, and New York Stage and Film. She is currently serving as Treasurer of Theatre Philadelphia and teaches theatre management at University of the Arts. Emily holds an MA and an MBA from Southern Methodist University.
### LEADERSHIP

**Artistic Directors** ............................................................. Taibi Magar & Tyler Dobrowsky

**Managing Director** ............................................................. Emily Zeck

### ARTISTIC & PRODUCTION

**Resident Artist** ........................................................................................... Jeffrey L. Page

**Literary Intern** ............................................................................................ Rachel Kessler

**Production Manager** .................................................................................. Jacob Gilbert

**Associate Production Manager** ................................................................ Sydney Justice

**Head Carpenter** ........................................................................................... Daniel Barland

**Assistant Carpenter** .................................................................................. Patrick Dougherty

**Wardrobe Supervisor** .................................................................................. Danielle Joh

**Wardrobe Assistant** ...................................................................................... Sabrina Reichert

**Interim Lighting Supervisor** ....................................................................... Heather Pynne

**Lighting Supervisor** .................................................................................... Colin Lang

**Assistant Lighting Supervisor** ....................................................................... Jeremy Hugo

**Sound Supervisor** ....................................................................................... Dakota Erickson

**Assistant Sound Supervisor** .......................................................................... Olivia Denison

**Video Supervisor** .......................................................................................... Brian Morsberger

**Props Artisan** ............................................................................................... Alicia Crosby

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**Tessitura Manager** .................................................................................... Amy Wilson

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**Co-Manager of Audience Services** ......................................................... Jonathan Wallace

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**Management Associate** ........................................................................ Matt Demetrides
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