

HOW TO DANCE IN OHIO



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PRESENTS

HOW TO DANCE IN OHIO

BOOK AND LYRICS BY

MUSIC BY

Rebekah Greer Melocik Jacob Yandura

A NEW MUSICAL BASED ON THE DOCUMENTARY FILM BY

Alexandra Shiva

DIRECTED BY

Sammi Cannold

.....
In loving memory of Harold Prince.
.....

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Lily Ling

MUSIC SUPERVISOR/ORCHESTRATOR

Matt Gallagher

CHOREOGRAPHER

Mayte Natalio

PRODUCED IN ASSOCIATION WITH

Ben Holtzman, Sammy Lopez, and Fiona Howe Rudin

SCENIC DESIGN

Robert Brill

COSTUME DESIGN

Sarafina Bush

LIGHTING DESIGN

Bradley King

SOUND DESIGN

Connor Wang

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER

Scott Rowen*

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Laura Jane Collins*

CASTING

Stewart/Whitley

ARRANGEMENTS

Matt Gallagher
and Jacob Yandura

Robert Hupp

Artistic Director

Jill A. Anderson

Managing Director

Melissa Crespo

Associate Artistic Director

Kyle Bass

Resident Playwright

2022 World Premiere Produced by Syracuse Stage, Robert M. Hupp, Artistic Director
Jill A. Anderson, Managing Director. This production was rehearsed at The Pershing Square Signature
Center, 480 West 42nd Street, NY, NY 10036, www.signaturetheatre.org

September 21 – October 9, 2022

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Robert M Hupp
Artistic Director

Melissa Crespo
Associate Artistic Director

Jill Anderson
Managing Director

Joann Yarrow
Director of Community Engagement &
Education

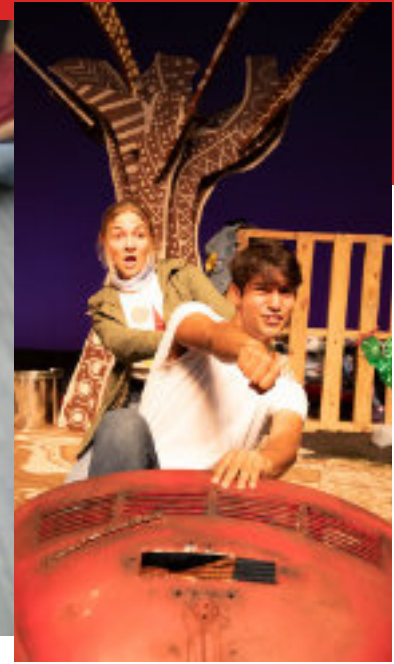
Kate Laissle
Associate Director of Education

Theorri London
Community Engagement & Education
Coordinator

Tracey White
Audience Development Manager

Talia Shenandoah
Audience Development Assistant

Box Office
(315) 443-3275



Dear Educators,

The best way of learning is learning while you're having fun. Theatre provides the opportunity for us to connect with more than just our own story, it allows us to find ourselves in other people's lives and grow beyond our own boundaries. While times are different, we are still excited to share with you new theatrical pieces through live and/or pre-recorded means. We're the only species on the planet who make stories. It is the stories that we leave behind that define us. Giving students the power to watch stories and create their own is part of our lasting impact on the world. And the stories we choose to hear and learn from now are even more vital. Stories bring us together, even when we must stay apart. Stories are our connection to the world and each other. We invite you and your students to engage with the stories we tell as a starting point for you and them to create their own.

Sincerely,
Joann Yarrow, Kate Laissle, and Theorri London

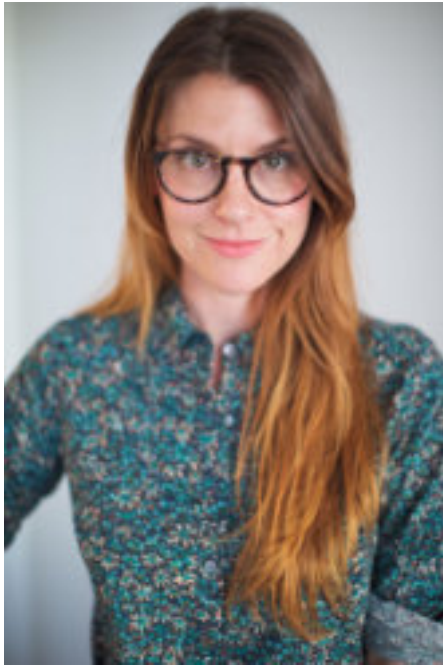
2022/2023 Educational Outreach Sponsors

Syracuse Stage is committed to providing students with rich theatre experiences that explore and examine what it is to be human. Research shows that children who participate in or are exposed to the arts show higher academic achievement, stronger self esteem, and improved ability to plan and work toward a future goal.

Many students in our community have their first taste of live theatre through Syracuse Stage's outreach programs. Last season more than 21,000 students from across New York attended or participated in the Bank of America Children's Tour, artsEmerging, the Young Playwrights Festival, Backstory, Young Adult Council, and/or our Student Matinee Program.

We gratefully acknowledge the corporations and foundations who support our commitment to in-depth arts education for our community.

The logo for Wegmans, featuring the word "Wegmans" in a large, elegant, black cursive script.The logo for Tompkins Financial Advisors. It features the word "TOMPKINS" in a large, bold, black serif font, with a small crest to its right. Below "TOMPKINS" is the word "FINANCIAL ADVISORS" in a smaller, bold, black serif font. At the bottom, the phrase "Wealth Managers Since 1891" is written in a black serif font.



Meet the Writing Team

Jacob Yandura (he/him) (Music) and Rebekah Greer Melocik (she/her) (Book and Lyrics) are a New York City-based songwriting team. Most recently, Jacob and Rebekah are at work on a musical adaptation of the 2015 Peabody Award-winning documentary *How to Dance in Ohio* (directed by Sammi Cannold; supported by the Prince Fellowship and the Shubert Organization's Artistic Circle). Their other projects include *The Last Queen of Canaan* (book by Harrison David Rivers), *The Coup*, and *Wringer*, a commission by New York City Children's Theater, based on the novel by Jerry Spinelli (Off-Broadway; New York City Center Stage II; directed by Stephen Brackett). Recognitions include: SPACE on Ryder Farm residency, Jonathan Larson Grant finalists, NAMT Festival of New Musicals (*The Last Queen of Canaan*), Ars Nova's UNCHARTED residency (*The Coup*), the Johnny Mercer Writers Grove at Goodspeed Musicals, the York Theatre's NEO residency, the Yale Institute for Music Theatre (*The Last Queen of Canaan*), the Dramatists Guild fellowship, the Johnny Mercer Songwriters Project, Rhinebeck Writers Retreat, Cap21's Writers Residency, and Ars Nova's ANT Fest. Jacob holds a B.A. in music composition from Kenyon College. Rebekah holds a B.A. in poetry from University of Southern California. They each earned an M.F.A from New York University's Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program in 2011.

Photos from melocik.com and jacobyandura.com



Meet the Director

Sammi Cannold is a director who is one of Forbes Magazine's 30 Under 30 in Hollywood & Entertainment, class of 2019 and has worked on and off Broadway as well as for CBS, Nickelodeon, Paramount+, Cirque du Soleil, and TikTok -- and at some of the world's most prestigious venues, including The Kennedy Center, Royal Albert Hall, Radio City Music Hall, and Lincoln Center. Recent theater credits include *Evita* (New York City Center), *Endlings* (New York Theatre Workshop, A.R.T.), *Ragtime on Ellis Island*, *The Unofficial Bridgerton Musical* (Kennedy Center, Royal Albert Hall), *Violet on a moving bus* (A.R.T.), and *Allegory* (La Jolla Playhouse WOW). This past summer, Sammi's first documentary feature film premiered at Broadway's Majestic Theatre and was just released worldwide on AppleTV. Upcoming projects include several new musicals, revivals, feature films, and an opera. Associate director credits include the Broadway production of *Natasha, Pierre...* (dir. Rachel Chavkin). Sammi has also served as an Artistic Fellow at the A.R.T., a member of Cirque du Soleil's Creative Cognoscenti, and a Sundance Institute Fellow and has worked in the live television space for White Cherry Entertainment, CBS, and Paramount+. Outside of her work in theater, film, and TV, Sammi currently serves as Chief of Staff for Human First Coalition, an organization dedicated to providing humanitarian aid in Afghanistan. Sammi holds a B. A. from Stanford University and an M.A. from Harvard University.

Bio from sammicannold.com

How to Dance in Ohio follows the experiences of a group of autistic young adults. The audience is given a glimpse into their lives, their ups and downs, and how these particular characters see the world. The statement below from the Autistic Self Advocacy Network provides some context on autism and how it differently affects the lives of autistic people.

Autism is a developmental disability that affects how we experience the world around us. Autistic people are an important part of the world. Autism is a normal part of life, and makes us who we are.

Autism has always existed. Autistic people are born autistic and we will be autistic our whole lives. Autism can be diagnosed by a doctor, but you can be autistic even if you don't have a formal diagnosis. Because of myths about autism, it can be harder for autistic adults, autistic girls, and autistic people of color to get a diagnosis. But anyone can be autistic, regardless of race, gender, or age.

Autistic people are in every community, and we always have been. Autistic people are people of color. Autistic people are immigrants. Autistic people are a part of every religion, every income level, and every age group. Autistic people are women. Autistic people are queer, and autistic people are trans. Autistic people are often many of these things at once. The communities we are a part of and the ways we are treated shape what autism is like for us.

There is no one way to be autistic. Some autistic people can speak, and some autistic people need to communicate in other ways. Some autistic people also have intellectual disabilities, and some autistic people don't. Some autistic people need a lot of help in their day-to-day lives, and some autistic people only need a little help. All of these people are autistic, because there is no right or wrong way to be autistic. All of us experience autism differently, but we all contribute to the world in meaningful ways. We all deserve understanding and acceptance.- Autistic Self Advocacy Network

If you would like to read the rest of this statement or learn more about the Autistic Self Advocacy Network, please visit autisticadvocacy.org or follow the QR code below.



autisticadvocacy.org

Character Descriptions

Dr. Emilio Amigo (he/him)-a 50 year old clinical psychologist and founder of the center

Drew (he/him)- an 18 year old who is great at math and wants to be an engineer

Marideth (she/her) -a 16 year old who loves facts and seems uninterested in socializing

Caroline (she/her)-a 19 year old who attends community college and has a boyfriend

Jessica (she/her)-a 22 year old who wants to live on her own and is a dog mama to a Yorkie named Maximus

Melissa (she/her)-a 24 year old who is into self help and mindfulness

Remy (he/him)-a 22 year old that loves to dress up in costumes

Tommy (he/him)- a 24 year old who loves the Buckeyes football team and candy

Ashley Amigo (she/her)-Dr. Emilio's daughter who is working for him while recovering from a dance injury

Amy (she/her)-Drew's mother

Kurt (he/him)-Drew's father

Michael (he/him)-Marideth's father

Johanna (she/her)-Caroline's mother

Teresa (she/her)-Jessica's mother

Shauna (she/her)-a reporter Dr. Emilio admires

Rick (he/him)-a reporter

Synopsis

Based on the 2015 documentary, *How to Dance in Ohio* follows a group of autistic young adults and Dr. Emilio, a clinical psychologist who runs a center that focuses on working with autistic people. He decides to arrange a spring formal to help facilitate a new experience for one of his groups. The group has mixed feelings about the spring formal, but Dr. Emilio forges ahead. Remy loves to dress up and sees the spring formal as a chance to put together a new fancy outfit. Caroline is eager to bring her boyfriend to the dance, and she and Jessica have a great time while going dress shopping. Tommy and Jessica both have someone they would like to ask to the dance and are excited and nervous about the task. Drew is nervous about the dance and dealing with other new challenges as well as he makes his college decision and develops a new crush on Marideth. Marideth seems unsure and uninterested in the dance.

When the surrounding community hears about the spring formal, local newspapers and other media outlets try to interview Dr. Emilio about the formal, but Dr. Emilio does not want to expose his patients and their families to media attention. However, after meeting Shauna, a reporter he admires, he agrees to do a solo interview that will run after the dance has concluded. He decides it may be good for the group to see that the surrounding community supports them.

However, as Dr. Emilio and the group get closer to the dance, things start to fall apart. Caroline and her boyfriend break up, which leaves her heartbroken and too distraught to go to the dance. Jessica asks Tommy to the dance and is rejected, leaving her too distraught to attend. Tommy crashes his brother's truck and cannot go to the dance. One of the reporters runs the interview Dr. Emilio did too early, and Remy sees it, discouraging him from attending the dance. All of the group members decline to attend the dance one by one, except for Drew.

Drew shows up to the spring formal with no one there but Dr. Emilio. Dr. Emilio tells Drew the bad news, but Drew refuses to give up. He decides they should host a new dance at the center and organizes the whole thing. The spring formal is saved, and the group enjoys the night of new experiences.

Pre-Show Discussion Questions

Have you ever been to a social and/or formal dance? What emotions did you experience before or after the dance?

Does doing new things make you nervous? How do you face that fear?

Have you ever anticipated an experience would be one way, but it ended up being another?

Do you like shopping for new clothes? Why or why not?

What is identity? How do you identify?

Post-Show Discussion Questions

Did you relate to any character's specific experience? Who and why?

Do you think the character's identities affected their experience or how they attended the dance? Would your identity affect how attended a dance or social event?

What was your favorite moment in the play?

Were the actors believable? What performers were most successful in their roles? What made them successful?

Did there seem to be a unifying idea behind the production? What is that idea? How was it conveyed to you through the production?

What was your opinion of the set? How did it contribute to the performance?

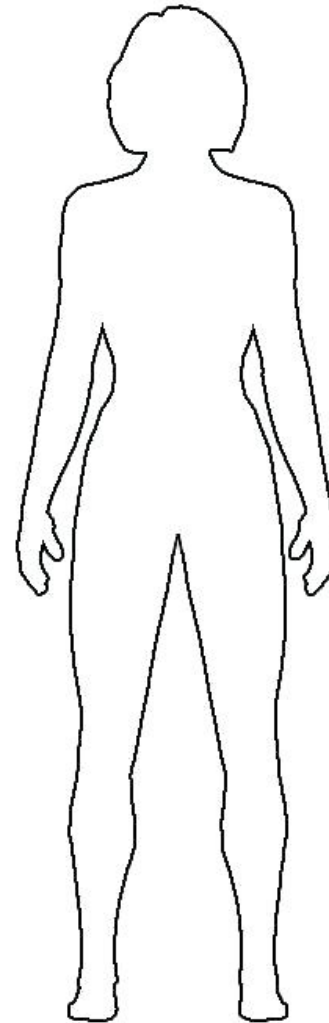
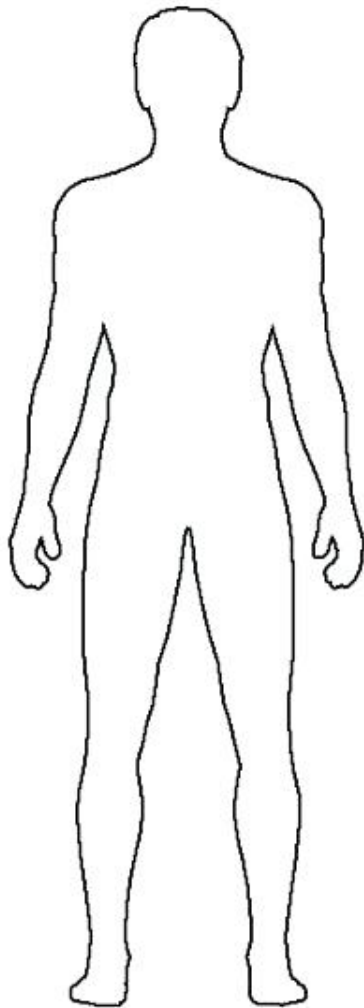
What was your opinion of the costumes? What information did the costumes tell you about the play and characters?

How did the lighting affect the mood of the performance? Were there any moments of interesting lighting design?

Did this play have any observations about people, society, relationships, or anything else?

Would you recommend someone else to see this play? Why or why not?

Design Your Own Spring Formal Outfit!



elements of drama

PLOT

What is the story line? What happened before the play started? What does each character want? What do they do to achieve their goals? What do they stand to gain/lose?

THEME

What ideas are wrestled with in the play? What questions does the play pose? Does it present an opinion?

CHARACTER

Who are the people in the story? What are their relationships? Why do they do what they do? How does age/status/etc. affect them?

LANGUAGE

What do the characters say? How do they say it? When do they say it?

MUSIC

How do music and sound help to tell the story?

SPECTACLE

How do the elements come together to create the whole performance?

Any piece of theatre comprises multiple art forms. As you explore this production with your students, examine the use of:

WRITING

VISUAL ART/DESIGN

MUSIC/SOUND

DANCE/MOVEMENT

INQUIRY

How are each of these art forms used in this production? Why are they used?

How do they help to tell the story?

ACTIVITY

At its core, drama is about characters working toward goals and overcoming obstacles. Ask students to use their bodies and voices to create characters who are: very old, very young, very strong, very weak, very tired, very energetic, very cold, very warm. Have their characters interact with others. Give them an objective to fulfill despite environmental obstacles. Later, recap by asking how these obstacles affected their characters and the pursuit of their objectives.

elements of design

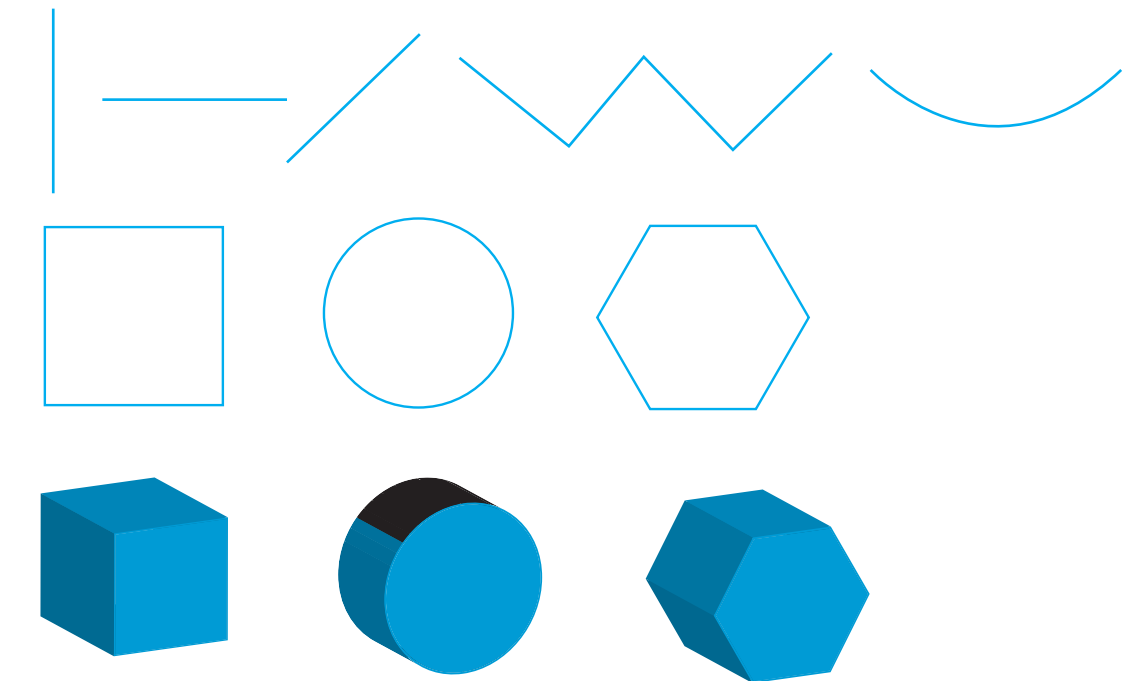
LINE can have length, width, texture, direction and curve. There are 5 basic varieties: vertical, horizontal, diagonal, zig-zag, and curved.

SHAPE is two-dimensional and encloses space. It can be geometric (e.g. squares and circles), man-made, or free-form.

FORM is three-dimensional. It encloses space and fills space. It can be geometric (e.g. cubes and cylinders), man-made, or free-form.

COLOR has three basic properties:

HUE is the name of the color (e.g. red, blue, green), **INTENSITY** is the strength of the color (bright or dull), **VALUE** is the range of lightness to darkness.



TEXTURE refers to the “feel” of an object’s surface. It can be smooth, rough, soft, etc. Textures may be **ACTUAL** (able to be felt) or **IMPLIED** (suggested visually through the artist’s technique).

SPACE is defined and determined by shapes and forms. Positive space is enclosed by shapes and forms, while negative space exists around them.



Young Adult Council (YAC)

The Young Adult Council is a place for teens to meet other CNY students with an interest in theatre, have a voice in the programming designed for them, and explore how theatre impacts their lives. The program focuses on peer led discussion and events in addition to advocating for theatre and arts participation to fellow students. YAC members also get a free ticket to each show in the current Syracuse Stage season.

Find out more at syracusestage.org



Young Playwrights Festival

Every year Syracuse Stage invites Central New York high school students to write original ten-minute plays and other performance pieces for entry into our annual Young Playwrights Festival contest. Our panel of theatre and literary professionals evaluates each student's play. Semifinalists are invited to attend a writing workshop with Syracuse Stage where their plays will be read and critiqued. Finalists will see their plays performed as staged readings by Syracuse University Drama Students.

Find out more at syracusestage.org

Additional Resources

Goodreads List-*Books by Actually Autistic Authors*-This list contains over 300 books by autistic authors.



How to Dance in Ohio-The 2015 documentary, which the musical is based on, follows the lives of a group of autistic young adults preparing for their Spring Formal. (Available on HBO Max)



Sources

"About." Jacob Yandura, www.jacobyandura.com/new-page.

"About." [Www.sammicannold.com](http://www.sammicannold.com), www.sammicannold.com/.

Autistic Self Advocacy Network. "About Autism." Autistic Self Advocacy Network, 2009, autisticadvocacy.org/about-asan/about-autism/.

"Bio." Rebekah Greer Melocik, melocik.com/bio.

22/23



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WORLD PREMIERE MUSICAL
SEPT 21 – OCT 9

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

NOV 25 – JAN 8

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
CO-PRODUCED WITH THE SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA

EAST COAST PREMIERE
FEB 15 – MAR 5

CLEAN: ESPEJOS

BY CHRISTINE QUINTANA
SPANISH TRANSLATION AND ADAPTATION BY PAULA ZELAYA CERVANTES
DIRECTED BY MELISSA CRESPO

MAR 29 – APR 16

OUR TOWN

BY THORNTON WILDER
DIRECTED BY ROBERT HUPP

WORLD PREMIERE
MAY 3 – 21

TENDER RAIN

BY KYLE BASS
DIRECTED BY RODNEY HUDSON

JUNE 7 - 25

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

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