UmbrellaArts

I AND YOU

OCT 11 - NOV 22, 2026

Previews: OCT 9 & 10



Mass Cultural Council

Updated OCT 23

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I AND YOU
DIGITAL PLAYBILL



I AND YOU

By **Lauren Gunderson**

Directed by
Michelle M. Aguillon

APPROXIMATE RUN TIME: 90 Minutes with no intermission

I AND YOU is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Dramatists Play Service. www.ConcordTheatricals.com

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that the land we use for classes and events and the land on which The Umbrella is built is the original homeland of the Nipmuc and Massachusett peoples. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory, and we honor and respect the many diverse Indigenous peoples still connected to this land on which we gather. To learn more about and support the Nipmuc, start with these resources.

SPECIAL THANKS

Adelita, Acqua Sotto Cookies, John Breen, Cambridge Savings Bank, Concord's Colonial Inn, Concord Market / Nosh, Concord Recreation, Concord Visitors' Center, Dance Prism, Ernie Galan, Jim Sabitus, Kira Troilo & Ari Welch, Middlesex Bank, West Village Tavern, Concord Carlisle High School Library, The Concord Bookshop, Boston Conservatory, New England School of Performing Arts, Quannapowitt Players, Sullivan Rep, Walnut Hill School for the Arts, Danielle Domingue Sumi, Reese Stevens, Sophie Legault, Complex Stories

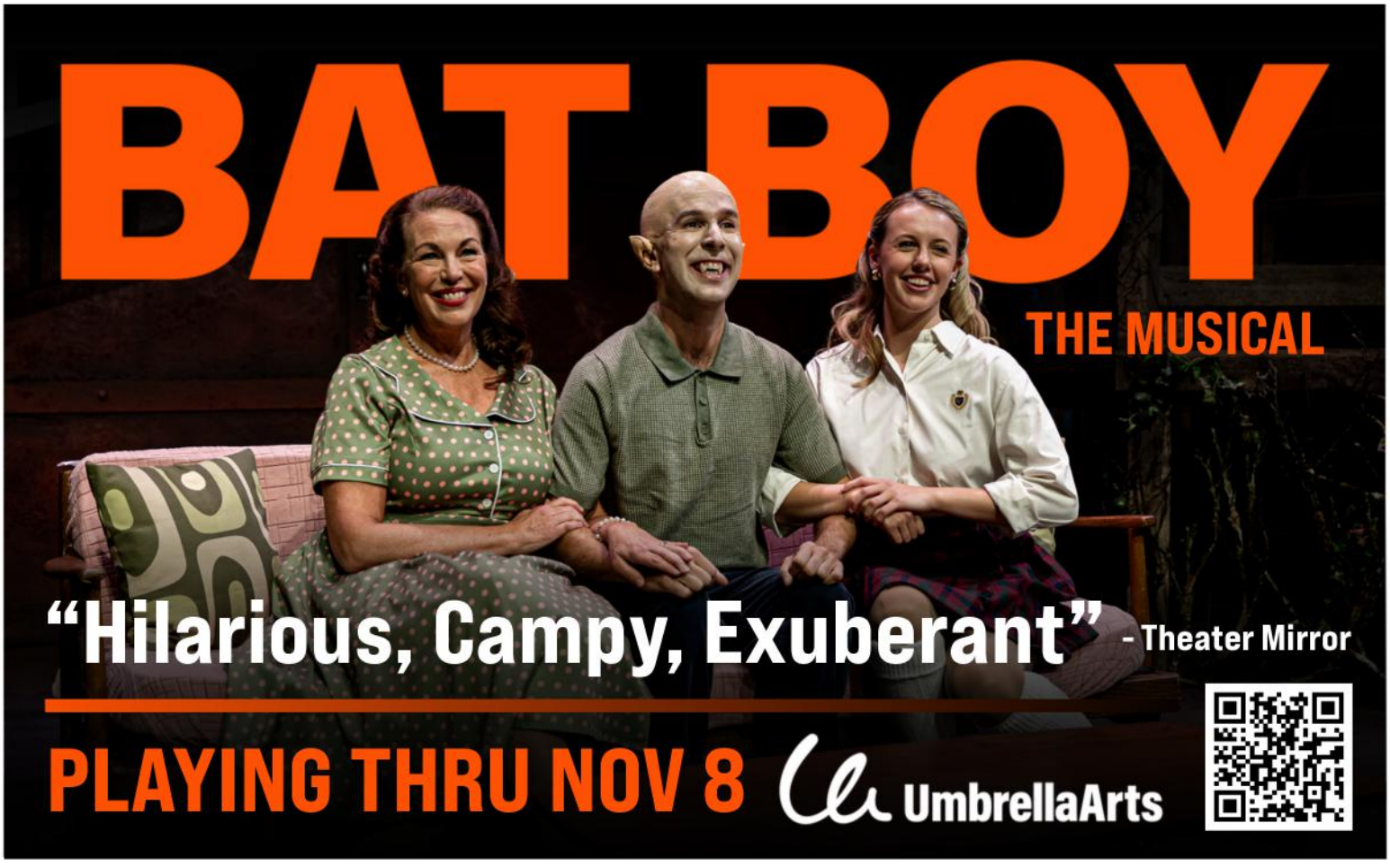
Cover image feat. Matthew Beagan, Mei MaxQuarrie* | *indicates a member of Actors' Equity Association

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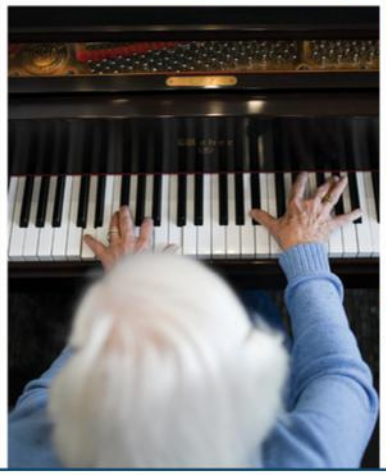


Recommended for mature audiences, teens and up | Photo feat. Amy Barker, Johnny Shea*, Michelle Moran | *Indicates AEA Member*

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CAST
IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Mei MacQuarrie* ..... Caroline
Matthew Beagan ..... Anthony
Ysabel Cardona ..... U/S Caroline
Devyn Berry ..... U/S Anthony

TEAM

Producing Artistic Director ..... Brian Boruta
Director ..... Michelle Aguillon
Assistant Director ..... Jeryl Palana
Technical & Production Manager ..... Carlie Nieman
Stage Manager ..... Kyra Meagher*
Assistant Stage Manager ..... Colleen Tenney
Assistant Stage Manager ..... Miranda Louf
Lighting Designer ..... Greg Wilson
Sound Designer ..... Chris Brousseau
Scenic Designer ..... Justin Lahue+
Costume Designer ..... Kelly Baker
Properties/Set Dressing Designer ..... Julia Wonkka
Intimacy Director ..... Anna Silva
Wardrobe Supervisor ..... Tree Brock
Scenic Charge ..... Page Evett
Executive Director, Umbrella Arts ..... Eileen Williston
EDI Consultant ..... Kira Troilo
EDI Consultant ..... Ariel Welch
Company Manager ..... Cathie Regan

ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION 1913

*Indicates the actors and stage managers as members of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

LOCAL USA 829

+Indicates the scenic and lighting designers represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees.

CAST BIOS

(alphabetical)



Matthew Beagan, he/him (Anthony) is a Boston-based actor and musician, originally from Annapolis, MD, who strives to tell stories that inspire, challenge, and uplift our humanity. He is thrilled to be playing Anthony in this deeply moving play. Thank you to everyone involved in this production. It has been a blessing to be here! Recent Boston stage appearances include *Breaking The Code* (Central Square Theatre), *Senior Year Project* (Lyric Backstage), *Clarkston* (Umbrella Arts), *Waiting...* (Constellations Stage Co.) Next up: *The Lady from the Sea* (Treehouse Collective). Education: BFA Acting, BA Mathematics, Boston University. IG: @MatthewBeagan_ | @SmashUpBurgers



Devyn Berry, he/him (U/S Anthony) is thrilled and deeply honored to be making his Umbrella Arts debut. He graduated from Boston University in 2025 with a BS in Film & Television. Some previous favorite roles include Jason in *Rabbit Hole* (Quannapowitt Players), Biff in *Death of a Salesman* (BU Stage Troupe), Gus in The *Dumb Waiter,* and Orpheus in *Eurydice* (Wandering Minds @ BU). Devyn is also proud to have directed Neil LaBute's *The Shape of Things* with Wandering Minds @ BU. He would like to thank Umbrella Arts for this incredible opportunity, as well as his family, friends, and fellow cast and crew for their continued love and support. IG: @devyn.berry



Ysabel Cardona, she/they (U/S Caroline) is so excited to be making her Umbrella Arts debut! Other stage credits include *Much Ado* (Idle Hands), *Inventing Samanta* (Central Square Theatre), and Lyric First Page Fest (Lyric Stage). She graduated from Suffolk University in 2025 with her BA in Theatre. She would like to thank her friends and family for all their support!



Mei MacQuarrie*, she/her (Caroline) is so excited to make her Umbrella Arts debut! Other stage credits include *Rooted* (WAM Theatre), *Yellow Face* (Lyric Stage Company), and *At the Wedding* (Studio Theatre Worcester). She has worked in various positions with The Huntington, Company One Theatre, Fresh Ink Theatre, CHUANG Stage, and the Providence Performing Arts Center. Many thanks to her family and friends for all of their support! IG: @Mei_Mac

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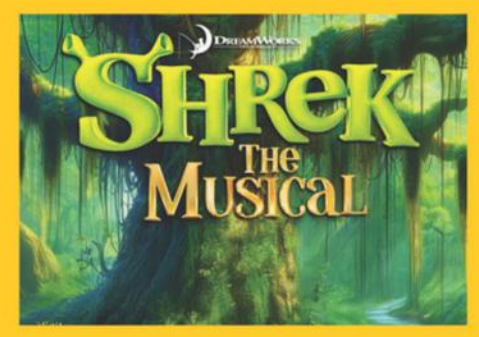
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OCTOBER 23 - NOVEMBER 8

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Anna Slate*

By Weylin Symes
Directed by Weylin Symes and Daniel Begin

GREATER BOSTON STAGE COMPANY

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CREATIVE TEAM BIOS

(alphabetical)

Michelle M. Aguillon, she/her (Director) is excited to be working with the Umbrella Arts again where she directed *True West, Disgraced, The Joy Luck Club, To Kill a Mockingbird, Fences, Dracula,* and *Middleton Heights.* She directed *Exit, Pursued by the Bear* (FSU Asolo Conservatory), *Dance Nation* (Brandeis), *The Kittie Knox Plays* (Plays in Place), *In the Heights* (Firehouse Theatre), *Hold These Truths, Natural Shocks* (Hope Rep), *Vietgone* (Company One), *Elephant Man* (04FXSake Productions), *Passion* (Theatre Uncorked), and *Proof* (Central Square Theater). She produces the Asian American Playwright Collective Playfests (2018-2026). She was the dramaturg/tour director for *Learning How to Read by Moonlight* for Chuang Stage/Company One. Her short plays were produced by Fresh Ink and Chuang Stage for the Boston Theater Marathon. Her new short play, *Unwrapped*, previews this fall at the Lift Every Voice Festival at the Multicultural Arts Center in Cambridge. Next: *When You Trap a Tiger* Wheelock Theater, Feb. 2027.

Kelly Baker (Costume Design) is thrilled to return to The Umbrella Stage Company, her previous designs include *The Spitfire Grill, The Counter,* and *tick, tick... BOOM!* Other companies Kelly has worked with include: The Lyric Stage Company, Greater Boston Stage Company, North Shore Music Theatre, Merrimack Repertory Theatre, Huntington Theatre Company, and The Boston Conservatory at Berklee. Kelly would like to thank Mark, Kat, and her family for their continous support. "Hi, Mama!" | KellyBakerCostumeDesign.com

Brian Boruta (Producer, Director of Performing Arts) is in his 15th season with Umbrella Arts, during which time he has earned multiple Elliot Norton Award Nominations including Outstanding Musical for *The Color Purple* and Outstanding Play for *The Minutes.* Other accolades include Best Production nominations for *Glengarry Glen Ross, Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson, Red, Angels in America, Equus,* and *Bonnie & Clyde;* a DASH Award for Best Play for *True West* and *To Kill A Mockingbird;* and Best Musical for *Parade* and *Big Fish.* His Umbrella Arts directing credits include *Parade* (Dash Award for Best Director of a Musical), *Big Fish* (DASH Nom.), *Hair, Evita, Side Show, Next to Normal,* and *The Rocky Horror Show.* As a designer and educator, Brian has worked with numerous college, high school and community groups including Merrimack College, Goddard College, Framingham State University, The Performing Arts Center of MetroWest, Brookline, Chelsea, and Wellesley Public School. His solo piece, *UnMasqued*, has been workshopped and performed at the Wheeler Theater in Port Townsend, WA. Brian holds a MFA in Interdisciplinary Arts from Goddard College and was named the recipient of the 2014 Framingham State University Young Alumni Achievement Award for his work in the performing arts.

Chris Brousseau, he/him (Sound Designer) is thrilled to be working with Umbrella Arts again! Recent credits include *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Sound Design, Umbrella Arts), *Where We Belong* (Sound Design, Umbrella Stage), *sweet prince* (Technical Director, Junkyard Shakespeare), *Brigadoon* (Sound Design, Concord Players), *Sweat* (Sound/Video Design, Footlight), *Appropriate* (Sound Design, Hovey Theater). Thanks to the whole creative team and Umbrella staff! More at ChrisBrousseau.com.

CREATIVE TEAM BIOS

(alphabetical)

Lauren Gunderson (Playwright) has been one of the most produced playwrights in America since 2015, topping the list thrice including 2022/23. She is a two-time winner of the Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award for *I and You* and T*he Book of Will,* the winner of the winner of the William Inge Distinguished Achievement in Theatre Award, the Lanford Wilson Award, and a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. She is a playwright, screenwriter, musical book writer, and children's author who lives in San Francisco. She graduated from NYU Tisch as a Reynolds Fellow in Social Entrepreneurship. | LaurenGunderson.com

Justin Lahue+ (Scenic Designer) is a Boston based scenic and projections designer making his Umbrella Arts debut. Boston Credits: Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, Speakeasy Stage, Central Square Theater, Company One, Wheelock Family Theater, Hub Theatre Company. NYC: *My Dinner With André* and *Click* (world premiere). Regional: Alleyway Theatre (Katherine Cornell Award - OAK), Harbor Stage, Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theater (BroadwayWorld Award - *Straight White Men*), Seacoast Repertory Theatre (BroadwayWorld Award - *The Wild Party*), Prescott Performing Arts Festival, Opera North, and Westport Country Playhouse. He is a frequent guest artist and speaker for colleges across New England with select credits at Boston Conservatory, Harvard, Northeastern, Suffolk, Brandeis, and College of the Holy Cross. He holds a BA in Theatre from Suffolk University and is a proud member of United Scenic Artists 829. | JustinLahue.com.

Kyra Meagher, she/they (Stage Manager) is thrilled to be here for her first production with Umbrella Arts! Kyra is a recent graduate of UMass Amherst where they majored in Theater with a concentration in Stage and Production Management. Select UMass credits include *Rhinoceros* (PSM), *Next to Normal* (PSM), and *Xanadu* (PSM). Other credits include *Rock of Ages* (North Shore Music Theatre, ASM*), *Mr. Joy* (Chester Theatre Company, ASM), and *A Hundred Words for Snow* (Chester Theatre Company, ASM). Special thanks to Julie and Julie! | @Kyra.NicoleSmith

Carlie Nieman, she/her (Technical & Production Manager) is thrilled to be joining the Umbrella Arts team as the new Technical & Production Manager! Previously, she served as the Production Manager for Chester Theatre Company and the Assistant Production Manager for Five College Dance. She is also a freelance stage manager, lighting designer, and technician. A big shoutout to her parter and family for their endless support!

Jeryl Palana Pilapil-Brown, she/her, (Assistant Director) is a Filipino-American dancer, choreographer, producer, and teaching artist based in the Greater Boston area. A graduate of Dean College with a BA in Dance, she has trained and performed across the United States and internationally in Canada, London, Amsterdam, Barcelona, and Japan, with a focus on contemporary, street styles, and heels. Jeryl serves as Associate Director of the CYDP Dance Company at the Deborah Mason Performing Arts Center in Somerville, MA, and is the founder and Artistic Director of UnEarths, a multidisciplinary dance company through which she independently produces live performances and dance-on-film works. | @JerylPalana_

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CREATIVE TEAM BIOS

(alphabetical)

Kira Troilo, she/her (EDI Consultant) is a Boston-based creative, the CEO and founder of Art & Soul Consulting, and the creator and founder of Inclusive Stages®. A BFA graduate from Emerson College, Kira also holds an HR Essentials certificate from eCornell and is set to be a member of the 2024 ACOM cohort through American Repertory Theatre at Harvard University. She was also recently awarded the distinguished Community Impact Award for SpeakEasy Stage Company's 2024 gala. Kira's groundbreaking EDI work was recently featured in American Theatre Magazine. Kira's consulting work for dozens of organizations has taken her both nationally and internationally. In summer of 2023, she provided tailored support for the world premiere of *Summer Stock: The Musical* at Goodspeed Opera House, starring Corbin Bleu. In the winter of 2024, she provided tailored support for *Something Rotten!* at Stratford Festival in Canada. Kira has also crafted and shared her own, fully-tailored EDI workshop and development sessions with adjudicators, arts educators, theater ushers and volunteers, and boards of directors. In April 2024, Kira launched the first season of her new podcast, "Inclusive Stages", named for her newly crafted framework. With her cohort certification and membership programs, her goal is to standardize the organizational work of EDI for theater and the arts, and to make Inclusion Consultants as common and as crucial as stage managers for productions worldwide.

Ari Welch, she/her (EDI Consultant) is a multihyphenate based in Boston, juggling multiple roles as a top-tier operations leader with over a decade of experience, an EDI consultant, event organizer, producer, and stage manager. She has trained under Kira Troilo since 2023 in the specialized field of EDI consulting for the arts and is now a certified Inclusive STAGES™ consultant. Ari has excelled as both an inclusion consultant and the Programs & Special Events coordinator for Inclusive STAGES™ — providing support in communication and logistics for trainees. Ari boasts a rich theater background (including collaborations with SpeakEasy Stage Company and Company One) and extensive experience in creating immersive events. She plays a pivotal role in the producing team at Weston Drama Workshop, a prominent youth educational theater program. Ari holds a BFA from the Theater School at DePaul University in Chicago.

Julia Wonkka, she/her (Props and Set Dressing Designer), is a Boston-based props and scenic designer who is thrilled to be returning to Umbrella Arts! Previous work includes *The Counter* (Scenic and Props Designer), *Tick, Tick...Boom!, The Spitfire Grill,* and *The Minutes* (Props/Set Dressing). Other credits include Moonbox's *Crime Fiction* (Scenic Designer) and *Guts* (Props Master); Central Square Theater's *The Hound of the Baskervilles, Your Town* (Scenic/Props Designer), *Breaking the Code, The Moderate, Silent Sky, Her Portmanteau, Beyond Words, Machine Learning,* and *Angels in America: Perestroika* (Props Artisan); Spindrift Theater's *My Mama and the Full Scale Invasion* (Scenic Designer); SpeakEasy Stage's *Antiquities* (Props Coordinator), *Primary Trust* (Assoc. Scenic Designer); and Lyric Stage's *Angry, Raucous, and Shamelessly Gorgeous* and *A Sherlock Carol* (Props Artisan).

ABOUT UMBRELLA ARTS

Welcoming nearly 30,000 visitors each year, Umbrella Arts is a cultural leader in MetroWest Boston providing broad and diverse access to a wide range of performing arts, visual arts, and arts education. Annual programming includes four mainstage plays produced by our resident Stage Company; a beloved concert series featuring Grammy-winning icons to emerging artists navigating the beginning of their exciting careers; film series in partnership with The Concord Film Project; year-round gallery exhibits; wide-ranging classroom offerings; and a popular summer camp. In addition, Umbrella Arts is an artistic home for more than 50 studio artists and a growing cohort of Artists-in-Residence.

Our mission is to be an interdisciplinary creative hub where artists, learners, and audiences can connect, innovate, and thrive. Through welcoming spaces, cultural conversations, and opportunities for artistic expression and skill development, we support artists at every stage of their journey, strengthen communities, enrich lives, and shape the future through the arts.

At Umbrella Arts, we believe in nurturing creativity at every stage—whether curious beginners, emerging artists, or established artists. You are part of a vibrant season spanning theater, music, galleries, and classes that reflect the depth of talent in our region and the joy of discovery through the arts.



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THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

We are grateful to all of our supporters, especially the following members of our 2026/27 Leadership Giving Society*.

Annual gifts at these levels have an outsized impact, providing essential operating support and serving as powerful endorsements of the organization.

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ABOUT THE UMBRELLA ARTS STAGE COMPANY

In 2012, Brian Boruta was named Artistic Director of Umbrella Arts' performing arts program (est. 2008). Under his leadership, Umbrella Arts' Stage Company has staked its claim as one of the most well-recognized and award-winning theaters in Greater Boston. Brian has brought thought-provoking, engaging, and socially relevant theater to Concord through the production of cutting edge plays and musicals and with fresh presentations and technology for revivals and classics. This approach has earned Umbrella Arts over 100 award nominations under his tenure including Best Production awards for *True West, Big Fish, To Kill a Mockingbird,* and *Parade.*

The program's team of designers, directors, actors and technicians works out of a new facility which broke ground in 2017 and opened in September of 2019. One of the most exciting additions to the Greater Boston performing arts landscape in the last decade, this new facility houses two venues, a 344-seat main stage and a 100-seat flexible black box space. With state-of-the-art technology, support spaces, and a superior audience experience, we look forward to many more years of bold, daring, and innovative theater in the heart of historic Concord.

RECENT SEASONS

2025/26

- *The Counter*
- *tick, tick... BOOM!*
- *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- *Hairspray: The Musical*
- *An Evening with Megan Hilty*

2024/25

- *The Spitfire Grill*
- *Where We Belong*
- *An Evening with Tituss Burgess*
- *Now. Here. This.*
- *Network*

2023/24

- *The Full Monty*
- *The Minutes*
- *An Evening with Jeremy Jordan*
- *White Rabbit Red Rabbit*
- *Lizzie, The Musical*

FULL 2026/27 SEASON

BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL

Playing thru Nov 8, 2026

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February 26 - March 21, 2027

Once upon a time... Fairy tale characters collide on their journeys toward 'ever after,' sending them soaring into unexpected adventures and discoveries.

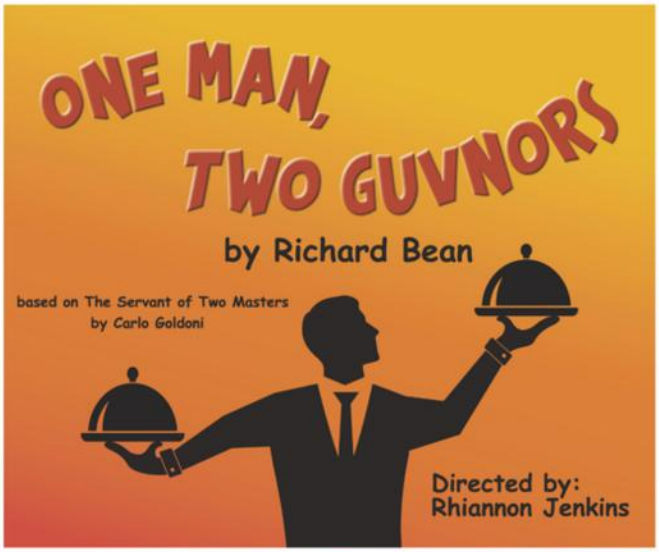
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April 30 - May 23, 2027

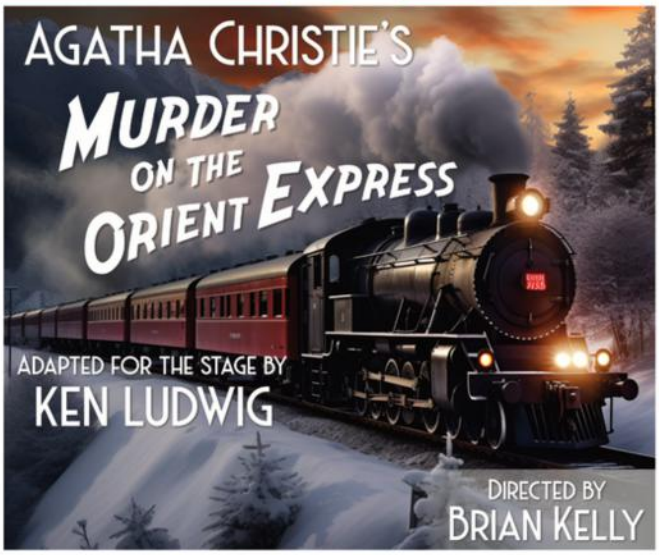
Pulitzer prize-winning playwright Paula Vogel's powerful tale of freedom and art, censorship and resistance.

The Concord Players 2026-2027 Season

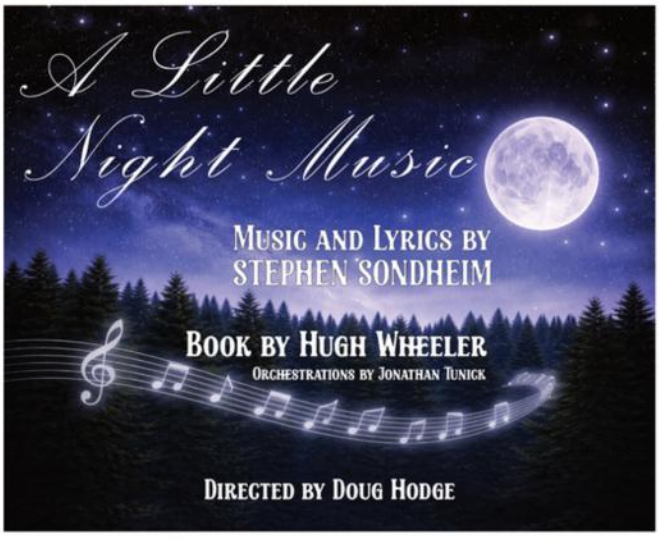
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48 Monument Square, Concord, MA 01742
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Offer: 10% discount off daily room rate with ticket/receipt, pending availability; Meals: 10% off food on day of show with e-ticket; excludes taxes, gratuity, alcohol. Advance reservations recommended.

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UmbrellaArts
presents

"Hilarious, campy exuberant"
- Theatre Mirror

As seen on
WBZ CBS NEWS BOSTON



Johnny Shea, a member of Actors' Equity Association, as Edgar "the Bat Boy"

BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL

thru Nov 8

Story and Book by
Keythe Farley & Brian Flemming

Music and Lyrics by
Laurence O'Keefe

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Weekly World News





BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Dramatists Play Service.
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UmbrellaArts

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

PREPARED BY STAFF MEMBERS OF UMBRELLA ARTS



I AND YOU

OCT 9 - NOV 22, 2026

PHOTO BY JIM SABITUS. FEAT. MATTHEW BEAGAN, MEI MACQUARRIE*

*INDICATES A MEMBER OF ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION

I AND YOU
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IN THE WORDS OF THE PLAYWRIGHT

Lauren Gunderson provides a foreward to this luminous script:

“I remember during the first rehearsal for the premiere of *I and You* at Marin Theatre Company, our director Sarah Rasmussen used a word to describe this play: a benediction. It struck me at first as a compliment, then as a rather complete description of my entire goal as a theatre-maker. I want to make plays that end with benediction.

Benediction - noun.

1. (religion): the invocation of a blessing, especially the short blessing with which public worship is concluded.
2. something that promotes goodness or well-being, a sacred ceremony.
3. the advantage conferred by blessing; a mercy or benefit.

This is what I want theatre to do. Be a blessing, be a sacred ceremony, be a benefit and a mercy. I want theatre to affect, encourage, challenge, and strengthen you. I think a theatre is a secular/holy place, a spiritual hub for realists, a cauldron for agnostic believers in the simple magic of humanity's greatest strength: storytelling.

In the church I went to as a kid growing up in Decatur, GA, the benediction was the final statement of the service that our pastor made as he walked through the aisle to the back of the sanctuary. "Go in peace," he always said. It was not a closing of the service as much as it was an opening of the doors, an invitation back out into the world, an encouragement to take what you felt and learned inside and go use it outside. That's theatre to me.

I and You contains the biggest benediction of all my plays. Its ending is usually surprising, revelatory, and quite literally poetic. It begs audiences to talk to each other after the play, to think back on what they saw, to re-experience it with new insight. And I hope it asks you, like any good benediction, to take what you experienced back out into the world. To use it.

Theatre is now my church, but at their best they both gather people together in a safe and mystical place, they tell the important stories that give us back our humanity and community, they use the emotional lift of live performance to send us out into the world with more empathy, compassion, id wonder. They ask us to see the world anew and then go back into it afresh and emboldened.

Theatre wants us to take the play outside of the theatre. Go outside. Go in peace. Go in art. Go in poetry. Go. Go.

PRE-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- If you found out that you had a limited amount of time left to live, what would you do or change? Would *how much* time you have left make a difference in your choices?
- In the play, Caroline has a chronic illness that can only be "cured" with an organ transplant. Are you / do you wish to be an organ donor? Why or why not?
- What is your opinion on group projects? What role do you take on in such situations?
- Who are your favorite poets? (Or musicians, speakers, comedians... anyone whose words inspire.) Do they change you, or reflect what you already know to be true?
- Are you familiar with poet Walt Whitman? What do you associate with him?



SPOILER ALERT

From here onward in the Education Guide, the content may quote the characters, reveal plot points, and more. If you like spoilers, carry on... but if you want to be totally surprised, save the rest for after you've seen I AND YOU (For specific content warnings, flip to this guide's final spread).

I AND YOU
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THE ORIGINS OF I AND YOU

I and You came about after I had spent the early part of my career writing a lot of histories, history of science, women's history. My beloved agents were asking, "What's a contemporary story that would mean a lot for you to write?" And I thought about it.

At the time, my father was working at a major hospital in Memphis, TN, specializing in liver, kidney, and pancreas diseases. I met with some of the nurses there, and I also learned about patients waiting on transplant lists. That became part of the character **Caroline**, her illness, her depression, the way we meet her in this state of limbo.

I was really compelled by that world, because it made me think about what it feels like to be waiting, to be hoping for a healthier life, to be dreaming of something just beyond your fingertips. For a young person, that can feel even more heightened. That's when Caroline came into my mind.

Usually when I write, I think in terms of opposites and contrasts. Caroline's opposite became **Anthony**, our dear, sweet Anthony, with all the hope and positivity he represents. And then came the poetry of **Walt Whitman,** which became the bridge between them, from this prickly, angry girl to this optimistic young boy. The poetry allows them to really see each other. **It's one of my favorite stories I've ever written.**

- Lauren Gunderson, BroadwayWorld

PRODUCTION HISTORY

2013: World Premiere (Marin Theatre Co.)
2014: Rolling World Premieres (MD and IN)
2015: Merrimack Repertory Theater production (Lowell, MA)
2016: Off-Broadway transfer of MRT production
2018: UK Premiere
2025: Musical Adaptation premiere (Princeton, NJ)



KIDCARE ACTIVITY

Umbrella Arts' KidCare Program gives parents an opportunity to attend select performances while their child(ren) ages 5-12 engage in art activities inspired by the film or show in one of The Umbrella's classrooms with an experienced teacher. If you'd like to better understand or complete the activity at home, here is your guide!

Activity Steps: "Make Your Own Journal"

1. Get a piece of construction paper and a few pieces of printer paper (8.5 x 11 inches). Fold all of these pages in half. Think about what this journal will be used for and decorate your cover in that theme.
2. Place your folded white paper inside of the folded construction paper. The construction paper will act as the cover of the journal.
3. Use a hole puncher to put two holes along the spine of your journal.
4. Using two pieces of string and a stick or wooden dowel, tie your journal together tightly.
5. Once you have tied your journal togther, you can decorate the cover in whatever style you want.

BOOK KIDCARE

Sun, Oct 18, 2 PM for BAT BOY and 6 PM for I AND YOU

To book KidCare to accompany your tickets to see BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL and/or I AND YOU, simply visit theUmbrellaArts.org/class/kidcare-performances and add the experience to your cart for the appropriate number of young people ages 5-12. Please note that enrollment space is limited and is reserved as first come, first served. For the upcoming productions in our 2026/27 season, KidCare is available March 7 and May 16.

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CHRONICALLY ONLINE

“Hello, this is like my lifeline to like, life.” - Caroline

Throughout the play, the chronically ill character Caroline navigates to her social media accounts. Why is that?

Since Caroline doesn’t go to school regularly and her mom has a job, she spends most of her time alone in her room. Her phone is her way of connecting with the world beyond her bedroom. Online, she might share her interests in photography or even virtually meet people with similar conditions to her.

This pattern is seen today as many people with chronic illnesses find online support systems to help them face their own daily challenges. While people with regular access to in-person social networks may find this unusual, the internet has provided a way to supplement in-person communication for people with chronic illnesses.

While the play was written before the COVID-19 pandemic, those of us who remember that event recognize the power of online connections to sustain us or serve as a substitution for in-person interaction when interacting is unsafe – for example, if someone is **immunocompromised**.

Being **immunocompromised** means your immune system isn’t working as well as it should. This means you can’t fight off infections as well and you could get sick more often or more severely than someone who isn’t immunocompromised. - Cleveland Clinic

SUGGESTED READING

- Social Media and Chronic Illness: An Impact That Transcends a Screen
- Social media and mobile applications in chronic disease prevention and management

IRL (IN REAL LIFE)

“My whole conscious life I have been... prepared to die.” - Caroline, I AND YOU

While Caroline is a fictional character, there are many real young people with terminal illnesses, some of whom have documented their experiences online to spread awareness.



Claire Wineland was a YouTuber and terminal illness patient advocate. She was born with a condition called cystic fibrosis, which causes overactive mucus production in the lungs. Claire documented her journey with chronic illness consistently, and many of her words closely resemble the sentiments that Caroline shares in I AND YOU.

The only known cure for both Claire and Caroline’s conditions is an organ transplant. Sadly, Claire passed away in 2018 at the age of 21 after an unsuccessful lung transplant procedure. Many of Claire’s videos focused on how the world can shift their mindset about people with chronic or terminal illnesses from pity to empowerment. Her story encouraged people all around the globe to live proudly, regardless of how much time they may have left. The book and film, *Five Feet Apart,* were inspired by her story.

“I was having the time of my life... I never understood why people felt so sorry for me all the time.” - Claire Wineland

“I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable, / I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.”
- Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*

SUGGESTED READING

- *Claire’s Story* - Claire's Place Foundation
- *Five Feet Apart* by Rachael Lippincott
- *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green

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ORGAN DONATING AND RECEIVING

"You will hardly know who I am or what I mean, / But I shall be good health to you nevertheless. / And filter and fibre your blood." - Walt Whitman

Organ transplantation is one of the greatest innovations of modern medicine, allowing essential parts of the body to be transplanted from one person (or in some experimental cases, animals) into another. Someone may need an organ from someone else because theirs may be sick or failing. Sometimes a patient receives an organ immediately; in other cases, a patient may be placed on a waiting list, like Caroline. Organ donors may be living (as for kidneys, etc.) or deceased when their donation occurs.

These waiting lists only move forward when people who have chosen to donate their organs pass away in a way that allows the organs to be harvested and used in another person, and the window of time when the organ is still viable for use can be quite narrow.

Transplanted organs are not always accepted by the person's body, whose immune system may recognize the new organ as a foreign body and attack it. This reaction can be managed using medications and medical intervention, but it may lead to sickness or even cause the new organ to fail, returning the organ recipient to waiting for another transplant.

Often, hospitals conduct an "honor walk" to recognize the choice to donate an organ(s). During this ceremony that recognizes a donor's generosity, hospital staff, friends, and family line the walls as the donor (and perhaps recipient, too) processes down a corridor into surgery.

SUGGESTED READING

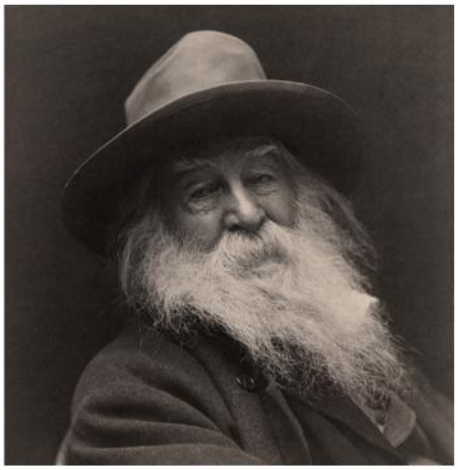
- *About organ donations (general)*
- *About liver transplants*

Learn more about what it means to be an Organ Donor at OrganDonor.gov

WHAT'S WHITMAN GOT TO DO WITH IT?

"Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged / Missing me one place search another / I stop somewhere waiting for you." - Walt Whitman

Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself," a part of his poetry collection *Leaves of Grass,* serves as the cornerstone of I AND YOU. On the surface of the play, Caroline and Anthony must work together, despite their differences, to find the meaning behind Whitman's words for their English class. In reality, their engagement with Whitman's themes of a shared nature and humanity has a much deeper resonance for the characters and the link they share.



Walt Whitman was born on May 31, 1819, in New York. While living in Brooklyn, New York City, Whitman began writing poetry, which transformed into his lifelong career after a fire burned down his printing press shop. Later in his life, when he was in Boston to oversee the printing of the 1881 edition of Leaves of Grass, he visited Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose life and work he much admired. Whitman was ccompanied by his friend Bronson Alcott and his daughter Louisa (of Little Women fame).

While visiting Emerson at his home in Concord, Whitman stopped at the Old Manse, Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, Thoreau's haunt at Walden Pond, the battlefield that marked the start of the Revolutionary War, and the graves of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry David Thoreau... much like modern day visitors to town still do. Whitman is considered a true American original, whose free-wheeling, passionate style and democratic themes are distinct from the European Romantic tradition, but just as deeply feeling.

SUGGESTED READING

- *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman
- A Walt Whitman Reading List - Lapham's Quarterly

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SONG OF MYSELF (EXCERPTS)

How do the bolded quotes resonate with Caroline and Anthony's story and debates?

1

I CELEBRATE myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.
I loafe and invite my soul,
I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass.
My tongue, every atom of my blood, form'd from this soil, this air,
Born here of parents born here from parents the same, and their parents the same,
I, now thirty-seven years old in perfect health begin,
Hoping to cease not till death.
Creeds and schools in abeyance,
Retiring back a while sufficed at what they are, but never forgotten,
I harbor for good or bad, I permit to speak at every hazard,
Nature without check with original energy.

6

A child said What is the grass? fetching it to me with full hands;
How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more than he.
I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff woven.
Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,
A scented gift and remembrancer designedly dropt, to be slighted,
For me the sweet-heart and the old maid, for me mothers and the mothers of mothers,
For me lips that have smiled, eyes that have shed tears,
For me children and the begetters of children.
Undrape! you are not guilty to me, nor stale nor discarded,
I see through the broadcloth and gingham whether or no,
And am around, tenacious, acquisitive, tireless, and cannot be shaken away...

51

The past and present wilt—I have fill'd them, emptied them.
And proceed to fill my next fold of the future.
Listener up there! what have you to confide to me?
Look in my face while I snuff the sidle of evening,
(Talk honestly, no one else hears you, and I stay only a minute longer.)
Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)
I concentrate toward them that are nigh, I wait on the door-slab.
Who has done his day's work? who will soonest be through with his supper?
Who wishes to walk with me?
Will you speak before I am gone? will you prove already too late?

52

The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses me, he complains of my gab and my loitering.
I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable,
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.
The last scud of day holds back for me,
It flings my likeness after the rest and true as any on the shadow'd wilds,
It coaxes me to the vapor and the dusk.
I depart as air, I shake my white locks at the runaway sun,
I effuse my flesh in eddies, and drift it in lacy jags.
I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love,
If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles.
You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,
And filter and fibre your blood.
Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,I stop somewhere waiting for you.

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COMMENTS FROM THE STARS OF I AND YOU
AS FEATURED IN THE CONCORD BRIDGE INTERVIEW WITH TRACE SALZBRENNER

"There are very few characters that, as an actor, I feel completely seen by.... I think most of the time I adopt characters' mannerisms. The way each character is written is so specific." - Matthew Beagan, on relating to the character of Anthony

"It really forces us to be present in a different way. We are paying attention to each other's every move. We are so engaged with each other." - Mei MacQuarrie*, on being in a two-person show

"You'll really get to know us in the room, and it'll feel real. It's not going to feel like a performance... you'll be able to see two real people really trying to connect... [I hope people leave with] a renewed sense of gratitude for each other and for the world and for the small things in life that we get to experience, including connecting with someone." - Matthew Beagan, on what audiences can expect from I AND YOU







Above, L to R: Mei MacQuarrie* and Matthew Beagan in rehearsals for I AND YOU
Photos by Jim Sabitus |*indicates a member of Actors' Equity Association



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POST SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What was your reaction to the play's conclusion? Looking back on the play, what hints or clues were given to the true nature of Caroline and Anthony's relationship?

- Who did you relate to more in the play: Caroline or Anthony? Why?

- Does this play affirm or perhaps make you question your outlook on any big themes?
    - Mortality?
    - Friendship?
    - The meaning of life?

- Have you been or known someone who was impacted by organ donation and/or transplantation?
    - Do you think this play resonates with your/their experience?
    - What more would you like to learn about the science and the social process of organ donation?

- Were you familiar with the work of Walt Whitman before seeing this play? What is your perception of him / his work now? Is there anything you're curious to know more about?

- Is there a quote from Whitman, Caroline, or Anthony that you think best sums up what this show is about?

SPECIFIC CONTENT WARNINGS

I AND YOU is a sharp, funny, deep, and poignant character study about two high school seniors.Umbrella Arts generally recommends I AND YOU for teen audiences, **ages 13+,** as the script features mild adult language.

Themes and realities that the characters deal with include:

- Chronic illness
- Organ donation
- Teen mortality / death

The characters' dialogue also makes **brief allusions** to sexuality.

There is no rating system for live theater. We encourage you to use the resources available from Umbrella Arts and other online resources such as reviews of the previous productions to gauge whether a production is a good fit for any potential audience member.

Do you have further questions? **Please reach out to our Box Office!**

UmbrellaArts

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