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Presents

**OKLAHOMA!** 

by Rodgers and Hammerstein

Stage & Music Director Matt Nesmith

Scenic & Lighting Designer Corey Shelsta

Sound Designer Malia Lukomski Stage Manager Erika Waxdahl

Properties Artisan Jake Cox

Costume, Hair, & Makeup Designer **Brittney Lewis**  Choreographer Rachel Smith

#### RIGHTS

*OKLAHOMA!* is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of The Rodgers & Hammerstein Organization.

Music by **RICHARD RODGERS** 

Book and Lyrics by **OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II** Based on the play "Green Grow the Lilacs" by Lynn Riggs Original Choreography by Agnes de Mille

#### WARNINGS

Please be aware that this production contains the use of adult themes and flashing lights.

#### DIGITAL COPY OF PROGRAM







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## THE PREMIERE PLAYHOUSE

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## Managing Artistic Director's Note

Hey y'all! Welcome to The Premiere Playhouse's production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* – an iconic musical that marked the first of nine Broadway shows written by composer Richard Rodgers and librettist Oscar Hammerstein II, who would go on to become the most successful team in musical theatre history. It also single-handedly revived the art form, being the first stage production to fully integrate music, story and dance to advance the narrative of the production. This big step forward would be a hallmark of the Rodgers and Hammerstein partnership and an advance in the genre of the American musical. At The Premiere Playhouse, we are all about learning and this show seemed like the perfect fit for that objective: the opportunity to learn more about the bountiful history of musical theatre and its creation then proceeding to enrich our audiences' minds with historical context and offerings of empathy through performance. That is what we are here for!

This historic musical theatre landmark is brought to the historic Orpheum stage through the generous support of our season sponsor, First Premier Bank + Premier Bank Card as well as our Oklahoma! Building Community Sponsors: Tammi & Jon Haverly and Mackenzie River. This production is also made possible through partnership with South Dakota State University's School of Performing Arts/Prairie Repertory Theatre, Augustana Theatre Company, J. Rieck Music, and Schmitt Music who all donated time and resources to help us bring this production to life. It is the support of individuals, corporations and institutions like this that keep the magic of community-based theatre alive in the Sioux Empire. Harnessing that magic and serving it on a silver platter to our audiences are our talented actors. our steadfast crew members, our consummate musicians, and our uniquely skilled production team. These folks have worked tirelessly to bring this special story to the local stage with our audience's experience as their first priority. I am incredibly proud of and thankful for their committed work in serving our community's arts enrichment needs. Thank you to everyone involved in making this production possible - we seriously couldn't do it without you!

If you are positively impacted by your experience with us and want to help our nonprofit organization continue to bring your community quality, thought provoking entertainment and education, I encourage you to tell a friend or family member about us, come volunteer in whatever capacity you can, make a tax-deductible donation, and/or subscribe to our 22nd season of mainstage and/or educational productions. If you have enjoyed this season's performances, just get ready for next season – after our Season 21 finale *Hair* of course! Your patronage of our organization is greatly appreciated and we can't wait to see you at the theatre again soon.

Enjoy the show, y'all!

### **Oliver Mayes** Managing Artistic Director



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## Director's Note



I am overjoyed that my fifth production as director for The Premiere Playhouse is the inspiring, complex, and ultimately life and loveaffirming classic of American musical theater, *Oklahomal* Set in the early 1900s in the Oklahoma Territory, our production tells the story of the cowboys and farmers, men, women, and children, as they navigate love, rivalry, and the pursuit of the American dream. As powerful and entertaining as this pursuit is in the musical *Oklahomal*, we must acknowledge that the real-life American settlers of the Oklahoma Territory, most of whom were of White European descent, pursued their dream at the expense and expulsion of the indigenous peoples and nations who had lived on this land for countless generations. While this musical doesn't tell their story, it is critically important that we remember and honor them.

Based on the play *Green Grow the Lilacs* by Lynn Riggs and originally premiering on Broadway in 1943, *Oklahoma!* was a groundbreaking production that revolutionized the musical theater landscape. With its integrated use of dance, music, dialogue and design elements all serving equal roles in the overall telling of the story, this first collaboration between composer Richard Rodgers and librettist Oscar Hammerstein III set a new standard for the genre and paved the way for future generations of musical theater creators. In our production, we aim to honor the legacy of *Oklahoma!* while exploring fresh interpretations of gender dynamics, musical expression and style, and visual design aesthetics that speak to the belief that the light and love of community ultimately overcomes the dark of mistrust and resentment.

## **Matt Nesmith**

Stage Director

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# Cast

Aunt Eller	Abby Kustak
Jud Fry	Adrian Johnson
Kate	Alexis Kulm
Aggie	Ann Henkhaus
Laurey	Betty Kay Merkle
Ike Skidmore	Bob Nelson
Cord Elam, Curly U/S	Caleb Ritchie
Ali Hakim	Casey Kustak
Ado Annie	Ceil Stoll
Chalmers	Charlie Ellingson
Slim	Christian Heiberger
Will Parker	Connor Klimek
Joe	lan Ward
Sylvie, Laurey U/S	Kjersti Olson
Ellen, Ado Annie U/S	Liyah White
Mike	Logan Leavitt
Sam	Madeline Borgmeier
Gertie Cummings	Madison Gerhart
Andrew Carnes	Mike Dinsmore
Armina	Mo Plastow
Curly	Patrick Simonsen
Fred, Will Parker U/S	Samuel Scarson

## Cast



#### **Youth Ensemble**

Beckett Kustak Collin Tebben Laura Sheppard Nathan Sheppard Penny Kustak Sophia Fette



<b>Production Manager</b>	Alex Newcomb Weiland
Charge Scenic Artist	Alexondrea Thong Vanh
Costume, Hair, & Makeup Designer, Costume Shop Manager	Brittney Lewis
Assistant Stage Manager	Carlie Terrall
Scenic & Lighting Designer	Corey Shelsta
Stage Manager	Erika Waxdahl
<b>Properties Artisan</b>	Jake Cox
Sound Designer	Malia Lukomski
Stage & Music Director	Matt Nesmith
Producer & Casting Director	Oliver Mayes
<b>Technical Director</b>	Pierce Humke
Choreographer	Rachel Smith
Assistant Choreographer	Patrick Simonsen



Μ



Hair & Wig Up Crew	Anna (Cindy) Crawford
<b>Flyrail Operators</b>	Elizabeth Wintering Kevin Wintering
Light Board Operator	Ellie Roskamp
Wardrobe Crew	Hope Humphrey Jamie Bowden Violet Eastman
ic Wranger, Sound Board Operator	Jim McLain
Deck Crew	Audrey Simmons Jackson Heiberger Paul Wingert
Build Crew	Ellie Roskamp Shannon Dancler Corbin Hansel Adam Carpenter



## Band/Musicians

Actor/Guitar	Ceil Stoll
Bass	Colin Flynn
<b>Drums/Percussion</b>	Gene LeVasseur
<b>Pianist/Conductor</b>	Grace Gasperich
Violin 2	Hanalei Barrett
Guitar/Mandolin	Jacob Moeller
Actor/Viola	Madison Gerhart
Violin 1	Marian Casey Elisabeth Gustafson
Banjo/Banjitar	Mike VanDeWiele



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## Meet The Cast



#### Abby Kustak / Aunt Eller

Abby has grown a heart of gold since playing the wicked Madam in TPP's *Cinderella*. You may have also seen Abby in TPP's *The Little Mermaid* (Windward) and *A Christmas Carol* (Kitty). Abby is excited to share the stage again with her Huband and two kids. Ya'll have a good time... or else...



### **Adrian Johnson** / Jud Fry

Adrian is thrilled to be returning to the stage and honored to be included in such a talented cast/crew. His previous roles with TPP were in *The Little Mermaid* (Pilot, Tritan U/S), in *Cinderella* (Lord Pinkleton), and in *Young Frankenstein* (Ensemble, Victor U/S). Many tanks go out to my family for the support, and especially my daughter India for pushing me onto the stage. Enjoy sweepin' down the plains, with the farmers & ranchers!



#### Alexis Kulm / Kate

Alexis is excited to make her debut performance on TPP's stage! She would like to thank her family and friends for supporting her, she says she couldn't be here without the support of her friends Amanda and Reggie. TPP's community has been so kind and welcoming, so a very special thank you to the cast. *Oklahoma!* has been such a fun show and Alexis hopes you enjoy it too!



#### Ann Henkhaus / Aggie

Ann fell in love with musical theatre 35 years ago when she was cast as Laurie in her high school's production of *Oklahoma!* She is delighted to get the opportunity to sing and dance and relive so many wonderful memories as a member of the ensemble. She wants all of you to know it is never too late to do the things that bring you joy! She especially thanks her husband and 4 children for their loving support.



#### Beckett Kustak / Youth Ensemble

Beckett (they/them) is back for *Oklahoma!* after being in *The Little Mermaid*. Beckett will be playing a male part in this performance. You might have seen them in *Sherk Jr., Annie, Cinderella*, and more. They hope that you like *Oklahoma!* 

## Meet The Cast

#### Betty Kay Merkle / Laurey

Fresh off the heels of *The Premiere Premieres*, Betty Kay is thrilled to return to The Premiere Playhouse stage in *Oklahoma!* Betty graduated with her BFA in Musical Theater from Stephens College in 2022, before moving here to Sioux Falls and jumping into the vibrant theater community. Betty thanks this beautiful cast and crew for making this show unforgettable. Special thanks to her family and friends for their love and support- it means everything. Enjoy the show, y'all!

### Bob Nelson / Ike Skidmore

Bob Nelson is a founding member of Sioux Empire Community Theatre and has worked on or been in shows with The Sioux Falls Community Playhouse, Olde Towne Theatre, The Barn Theater and Ephemeral Productions. Bob has been honored to receive The Lifetime Achievement Award for volunteering from The Premiere Playhouse and a Special Distinction Award from The Sioux Falls Stage Awards. Some of his most memorable were *The Philadelphia Story*, You Can't Take It With you, Mary Poppins, H.M.S Pinafore, A View From The Bridge, Evita, Les Miserables, Arsenic and Old Lace, and now Oklahoma! Thank you to all of the Cast and Crew for putting together the production.

### Caleb Ritchie / Cord Elam, Curly U/S

Returning for his second Sioux Falls stage appearance, Caleb Ritchie is excited for another fun and fantastic show with TPP. He was born in Texas so he looks forward to telling a story close to home. The love and support of the found family in this community is greatly appreciated. We hope y'all are ready to hoot and holler for this awesome cast. The show boots are making a special appearance for this one!

### Casey Kustak / Ali Hakim

Casey makes a return to the TPP stage fresh off his performances in You're Not Reading This Bio, How To Tie a Tie a YouTube Tutorial, Space Jam a True Movie Musical Radio Show, Your Mom's House, Don't Go In There: A Dramatic Retelling of the Bathroom Incident. This show is for his amazingly talented wife, Abby and 2 Children, Beckett and Penelope (all on stage). Enjoy the show, unless you are Steve, You know what you can go and do.

### Ceil Stoll / Ado Annie

Ceil (they/them) couldn't say no to making a return to the Premiere Playhouse stage to steal hearts as Ado Annie! Previous roles of theirs include Dance Ensemble/Mersister Understudy in The Premiere Playhouse's *The Little Mermaid* and Hercule Poirot in Augustana University's Murder on the Orient *Express.* Ceil would like to wholeheartedly thank their partner, Ian, as well as their parents and sisters, both biological and bonus, for their love and support.













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Meet The Cast



#### Charlie Ellingson / Chalmers

Charlie is making his Premiere Playhouse debut as a part of the wonderful ensemble cast in *Oklahomal*. Stepping onto the TPP stage as Chalmers, a farmer with a fighting spirit. He would like to thank the rest of this wonderful cast for bringing this show to life, and to his parents and friends for their support! Enjoy the show!



### Christian Heiberger / Slim

"If I had a nickel for every time I've performed as a singing, dancing cowboy, I'd have two nickels. Which isn't a lot, but it's weird that it happened twice, right?" Christian gives three cheers as Slim in his 16th show since 2019. 5 years with the community theatre has given him many amazing friends, opportunities, and a new appreciation for life. Special thanks to Jackson and Lindsay for all their unwavering love and support.



#### Collin Tebben / Youth Ensemble

Oh, what a beautiful feeling it is to be back on stage with The Premiere Playhouse! Collin Tebben is thrilled to return to the stage after playing Lord Farquaad in Shrek Jr. And other TPP performances in *Mary Poppins, A Christmas Carol*, and *Singing in the Rain Jr*. Collin wishes the best of luck to his farmer and cowman cast mates in The Premiere Playhouse Rodgers and Hammerstein's *OKLAHOMA!* 



#### Connor Klimek / Will Parker

Connor has returned to The Premiere Playhouse to tell you about the wonders of the modern world as Will Parker! You last saw him in this season's *The Little Mermaid* as Prince Eric, and before that in last season's *Grease* as Doody. He says thank you to the cast for reminding him he's not that funny and also to his family for reminding him he's really not that funny. He's giving his all fer this show, so tip your hat to this cast!



#### lan Ward / Joe

lan is making his Premier Playhouse debut as farmer and saddle enthusiast Joe. He would like to thank his wonderful roommates and amazingly talented partner, Ceil, for their continuous support. He sincerely hopes that everyone enjoys the show, except for Steve, who knows what he did and is cordially invited to put his program where the winds don't sweep.

## Meet The Cast

#### Kjersti Olson / Sylvie, Laurey U/S

After making fairytales come true in Cinderella (ensemble), and The Little Mermaid (Andrina/Princess), Kjersti is excited to be down to earth in this fresh production of a classic. Oklahoma! was her first musical credit in high school (Gertie), and she's thrilled to be revisiting the plains to hoedown and throwdown in the historic west as Sylvie. This farmer would like to thank her family for always supporting her theatre dreams and her roommates for joining her on the stage for this delightful show!

### Laura Sheppard / Youth Ensemble

Laura has taken a great leap from the wild Jungle of Nool, to the wild west in her third production on the Orpheum stage. Her previous role had been the Sour Kangaroo, and now she hopes to bring her next character to life in the youth ensemble. She has had so much fun being part of this crew, and hopes that you all enjoy watching the show as much as everyone has had putting it together!

#### Liyah White / Ellen, Ado Annie U/S

Joining us again to the stage is Liyah White! This would be Liyah's second show here at The Premiere Playhouse, her first show being Cinderella last year! Liyah is ecstatic to show you her dramatic character Ellen DeGeneres! She's had a blast, singing and dancing with her playhouse family, and is looking forward to share this amazing Oklahoma story with all of you!

### Logan Leavitt / Mike

Logan is making his Premiere Playhouse debut as Mike! When he takes off the cowboy boots, you can find him as the Vice President of the Mighty Corson Art Players Community Theatre and a preschool teacher at Kids R Kids Academy. "To say this has been a great experience would be a major understatement." Logan would like to give a special thanks to his wife. Autumn and daughter. Eloise for always supporting his passion in theatre.

### Madeline Borgmeier / Sam

This is Madeline's first production with The Premiere Playhouse! She is excited to be dancing and singing on stage with all of her amazing castmates. Madeline is supported by her family, friends, and her boyfriend, Ted. She appreciates all of you for helping her see that maybe life was calling for something bigger than just singing in her shower ;) She hopes you all have a wonderful night enjoying the world of Oklahoma!













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Suits are comprised of four dynamic gentlemen performing four genres of hit music across four decades. The group fuses smooth choreography and tight harmonies with exciting showmanship and fun audience interaction, and takes audiences on a journey from the 50s through the 80s. Their repertoire features recognizable hits like "Oh What A Night," "My Girl," Signed, Sealed, Delivered," and more!

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Meet The Cast



#### Madison Gerhart / Gertie Cummings

Swapping fins for sass, Mads dazzled as Ariel in *The Little Mermaid* and now brings her bubbly charm to Gertie Cummings, turning *Oklahoma!* into *"Oklahahaha!"* with her side-splitting chuckles. She extends heartfelt thanks to her family, especially her mom, for their unwavering support, and eagerly anticipates her future with The Premiere Playhouse, where her dedication shines as brightly as her laughter.



#### Mike Dinsmore / Andrew Carnes

Mike is making his Premiere Playhouse debut as the "salty" Andrew Carnes. He returns to the stage after a brief 47 year recess from his High School performance as The General in *Little Mary Sunshine*. Shout out to ALL my cast mates and crew who helped me get through this amazing experience. Mike gives a special thanks to his wife Brenda, whose encouragement and support gave him the push to go "sweeping down the plains."



#### Mo Plastow / Armina

Mo is jazzed to be a part of this production! She leads a life full of excitement as the Teaching Team Lead at The Effervescent Voice Academy. She is also involved with Simply Ever After Entertainment, being a real-life princess! To balance out her already busy schedule, she gets to perform with The Sioux Falls Dinner Detective. When she can find a spare MOment, she likes to have a glass of wine to relax.



#### Nathan Sheppard / Youth Ensemble

Nate Sheppard is happy to be back on the same stage that he was on when he was just 5 years old in *Joseph and The Amazing Technicolored Dream Coat* and last year with *Suessical Jr*. He is excited to be in this amazing show and excited for you to see all the other amazing, talented actors and actresses on the stage. He is ready to put on a show!



#### Patrick Simonsen / Curly

Patrick makes his return to The Premiere Playhouse after performing as Eugene/Teen Angel in *Grease*, Prince Topher in R&H's *Cinderella*, and the Emcee in *Cabaret*! Other notable roles include Captain Von Trapp in Vermillion Community Theatre's *The Sound of Music* and King Phillip in USD Theatre's *The Lion in Winter*. Patrick has a deep love for Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals and is extremely humbled and honored to be with this amazing team!

## Meet The Cast

#### Penelope Kustak / Youth Ensemble

Penelope (Penny) is making her way back onto the stage after playing in The Little Mermaid as youth ensemble, Penelope is excited to be back on stage and performing for everyone again. Penelope loves to draw and act in her free time. She hopes you all sit back, relax, and enjoy the show!

#### Samuel Scarson / Fred, Will U/S

Sam is taking to the stage for his Premier Playhouse debut! He will be joining the story as Fred, a member of the magical ensemble for Oklahoma! He is excited to share this experience with the amazing team of actors and directors who have worked so hard to make this an incredible performance! Sam would like to give a special thanks to his parents for their constant support and encouragement to pursue his dreams.

#### Sophia Fette / Youth Ensemble

Oklahoma! will mark Sophia's sixth performance with TPP! Her most recent casting was in The Little Mermaid as part of the youth ensemble and Flounder (u/s). Sophia's other TPP performances include Shrek the Musical. Cinderella. Beauty and the Beast, and A Christmas Carol. She has also been seen in several DAPA performances over the years. For Sophia, theater is life! Enjoy the show! We know Oklahoma! is MORE than OK!

## Land Acknowledgement

The Premiere Playhouse acknowledges the land it occupies in South Dakota is the ancestral, traditional and contemporary lands of the Oceti Sakowin (oh-CHEH-tee shaw-KOH-we) meaning Seven Council Fires, which is the proper name for the people referred to as Sioux. We acknowledge that before this site was named the Orpheum Theater, it was called home by people of American Indian Nations indigenous to this region. The tribal alliance made up of individual bands of the Seven Council Fires is based on kinship, location and dialects: Santee-Dakota, Yankton-Nakota and Teton-Lakota. We acknowledge the sovereignty of the nine federally recognized Native Nations in South Dakota: Cheyenne River, Crow Creek, Flandreau Santee, Lower Brule, Oglala, Rosebud, Sisseton-Wahpeton, Standing Rock and Yankton Sioux Tribes. As a community-based non-profit organization, we are committed to building respectful and positive relationships with indigenous communities through partnerships, historical recognition, programming and recruitment efforts.









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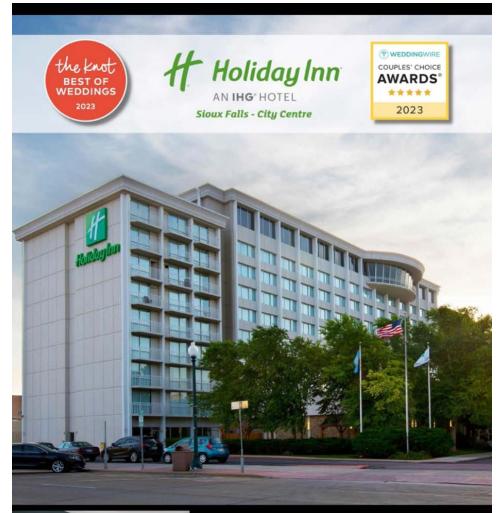
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## Alex Newcomb Weiland / Production Manager

Alex (She/Her) works as the Production Specialist & Education Coordinator at The Premiere Playhouse. She graduated from The University of South Dakota with a BFA in Musical Theatre/Dance Minor. Alex has worked with companies such as Bare Bodkins, Good Night Theatre Collective and The Black Hills Playhouse. She directed *Footloose* in Season 18 & *Cinderella* in Season 20 at The Premiere Playhouse as well as *Stop Kiss* with Monstrous Little Theatre Company. She wants to thank her partner, Nathan, her friends, family, TPP staff, production team & cast for their continued love & support. This is truly a community of giving! Enjoy the show!

## Alexondrea Thong Vanh / Charge Scenic Artist

Alexondrea cain't say no to this production! Alex graduated from American Musical Dramatic Academy New York and University of South Dakota (Bachelor of Fine Arts Theatre/Acting). She is a local theatre/commercial actor, singer, and Scenic Artist for both The Premiere Playhouse and Good Night Theatre Collective. All the love and laughs to Andy, Reveo, and Richard. **www.alexondreadi.com @alexondreadi** 

#### Carlie Terrall / Assistant Stage Manager

Carlie (she/her) makes her long awaited return to The Orpheum (back)stage for her sixth show with The Premiere Playhouse after working with the talented folks of *Shrek Jr* and *Seussical Jr* last summer. When she is not at TPP, Carlie works backstage for productions at Augustana University where she will graduate with her degree in theatre this May. Carlie would like to thank her family and supporters and Augustana for their love and encouragement.

### Erika Waxdahl / Stage Manager

Erika has returned for her third Premiere Playhouse production, stage managing *Grease* last season and fresh off of *The Premiere Premieres* just two months ago! She is continuing the Waxdahl family legacy of putting on *Oklahoma!* as her dad played Carnes in Flandreau High School's 1987 production. She would like to thank him and his friends for saving her a headache by NOT auditioning and her mom for always supporting her in the pursuit of her career.

## Jake Cox / Properties Artisan

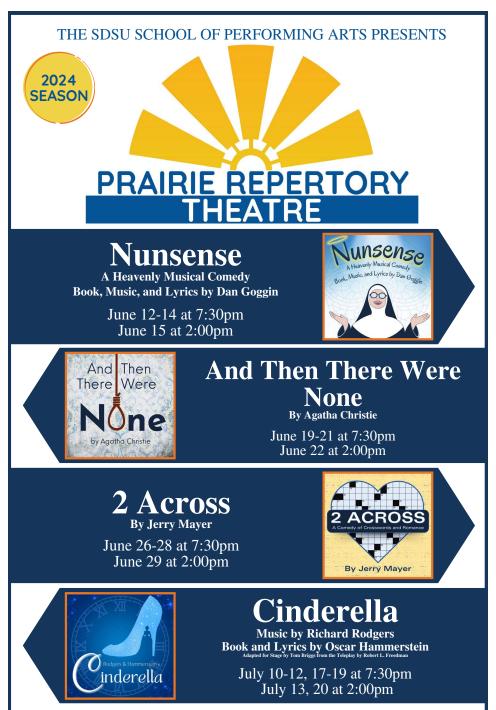
Father, entrepreneur, actor, and guy who makes stuff, Jacob "Jake" Cox can often be found lurking backstage muttering "Is that your prop?" at unwary passersby. Did you know Jake is the Uber of wedding officiants? Summon him from the internet at *SiouxFallsWeddingOfficiant.com* He also wrote a vampire novel his mom said was "surprisingly good," Mr. Smith Isn't Afraid of the Dark, available at *tinyurl.com/MrSmithNovel* 

#### Matt Nesmith / Stage Director

Matt is excited to direct his 5th production at the The Premiere Playhouse, having previously directed *The 39 Steps, Rock of Ages, Avenue* Q, and *A Christmas Carol.* Matt is an associate professor and Coordinator of the B.F.A. Musical Theatre program at the University of South Dakota. He also performs and directs at theatres across the region, with stage/musical directing credits include tic...tic... *Boom!, Brigadoon, The Sound of Music, Spring Awakening, [title of show], Les Misérables* and *To Kill a Mockingbird.* Recent performance credits include Norbert in *The Great American Trailer Park Musical,* Black Stache in *Peter and the Starcatcher,* Bert in *Mary Poppins,* Archibald in *The Secret Garden,* and Sweeney Todd in *Sweeney Todd.* 

#### Oliver Mayes / Producer & Casting Director

Oliver is a theatre & media artist whose work has been showcased in several states throughout the U.S. including Arkansas, California, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, South Dakota, and Virginia. With a background in acting, directing, producing, movement choreography, writing, and teaching, his credits span various mediums and genres. He is the recipient of several honors, including the Kennedy Center's 2020 Stage Directors & Choreographers Society Fellowship. Oliver is a scholarship alumnus of the Kennedy Center Directing Intensive and an associate member of the Stage Directors & Choreographers Society and choreographers. He holds an MFA in Theatre Directing from University of South Dakota and a BFA in Music Theatre from AMDA College of the Performing Arts.



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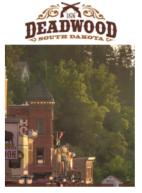


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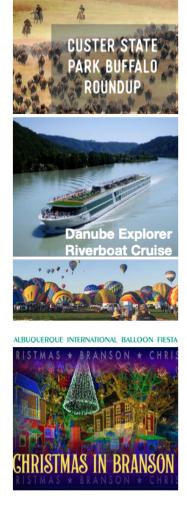
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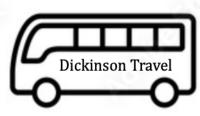
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## The Premiere Playhouse Team

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Production Specialist & Education Coordinator	Alex Newcomb Weiland
<b>Technical Specialist</b>	Pierce Humke
<b>Development Officer</b>	Pam Cole
Finance & Office Administrator	Amber Sumner
Web & Media Developer	Chris Berke
<b>Education Assistant</b>	Abby Kustak
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