

PORCHLIGHT MUSIC THEATRE PRESENTS



The Irish

...AND HOW THEY GOT THAT WAY

**PORCHLIGHT
MUSIC THEATRE**

25 | 26

PORCHLIGHT IN CONCERT

FOLLIES

APRIL 25 & 26, 2026

STUDEBAKER
THEATER



FINE ARTS
BUILDING

Studebaker Theater | 410 S. Michigan Ave. | 312.753.3210

PORCHLIGHT MUSIC THEATRE

PORCHLIGHTMUSICTHEATRE.ORG

PORCHLIGHT MUSIC THEATRE

MICHAEL WEBER
Artistic Director

JENNA DEJA
Interim Executive Director

presents

The Irish ...AND HOW THEY GOT THAT WAY

by
FRANK McCOURT

Music & Lyrics by
VARIOUS ARTISTS

Original Musical Arrangements by
RUSTY MAGEE

Directed by
DAVID GIROLMO

Music Direction and Additional Musical
Arrangements by
DAVID FIORELLO

**Porchlight Music Theatre's 31st
Season is generously sponsored
by Brenda & Jim Grusecki**

Porchlight Music Theatre is partially supported by generous contributions from Arlen and Elaine Cohen Rubin Charitable Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Kansas City; Bayless Family Foundation; Bukiety Floral; Chicago Free for All Fund; Crowdstrike; Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; James P. and Brenda S. Grusecki Family Foundation; Mesirow Financial; Carol Oppenheim & Jerome Lamet Charitable Fund; the Pritzker Traubert Foundation; Ryan and Spaeth, Inc.; Daniel and Genevieve Ratner Foundation; The Saints; Dr. Scholl Foundation; Service Club of Chicago, The Shubert Foundation and Uvae Kitchen & Wine Bar

The season program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency, a state agency.



* = Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers



All musicians are members of the Chicago Federation of Musicians, Local 10-208.

The Irish ... And How They Got That Way is presented by special agreement with The Irish Repertory Theatre Company, Inc.

COMPANY



MICHAEL MAHLER*
Man #1



LEAH MORROW*
Woman #1



EMILY GOLDBERG
Woman #2



LUKE NOWAKOWSKI
Man #2



DAVID FIORELLO
Conductor/The Pianist



ELLEON DOBIAS
The Violinist



CAROLINE LYELL
Woman #1 & #2 u/s



KEVIN WEBB
Man #1 & #2 u/s

PRODUCTION TEAM

Scenic Designer
Costume Designer
Lighting/Media/Digital Designer
Props Designer
Sound Designer
Production Stage Manager
Assistant Stage Manager
Scenic Supervisor
Paint Charge
Costume/Wardrobe Supervisor
Wardrobe Assistant
Lighting Supervisor
AV Supervisor
Audio Engineer (A#1)
Audio Engineer (A2)
Production Supervisor
Company Manager/Music Supervisor
Photo in Production Artwork

TIANXUAN CHEN
ALEXIS J. ROSTON
G. MAX MAXIN IV
ELLEN MARKUS
MATTHEW R. CHASE
DREW DONNELLY*
CARLI SHAPIRO
NICK ZABEL
JOSE ALEXANDER
ALI WESTENDORF
ALIX BURKHARDT
RILEY WOODS
ROYCE PATARAS
JAY BLACK
ALTHEA PEARSON
RACHEL WEST
LINDA MADONIA
JBERN PHOTO

MUSICAL SYNOPSIS

The play is in two acts with a 15 minute intermission.

ACT I

"The Butterfly"	The Violinist
"The Rose of Tralee"	Woman #2, Woman #1
"Those Endearing Young Charms"	Man #2
"The Holy Ground"	Man #1
"Galway Bay"	Woman #2
"Carrickfergus"	Woman #1
"I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen"	Man #2
"If You're Irish"	Man #1, Ensemble
"Come Back, Paddy Reilly"	Ensemble
"Mrs. McGrath"	Man #1
"Mother Machree"	Man #2
"The Rare Old Times"	Man #2
"The Fields of Athenry"	Woman #2
"Skibbereen"	Man #2
"Shores of Amerikay"	Ensemble
"The Anchor's Away"	Woman #2, Man #2
"No Irish Need Apply"	Ensemble
"The Irish Washerwoman"	Woman #1, Woman #2
"The Erie Canal"	Ensemble

INTERMISSION

ACT II

Entr'acte

"Give My Regards to Broadway"	Ensemble
"Rings on Her Fingers"	Woman #1
"Has Anybody Here Seen Kelly?"	Woman #2
"I've Been Working on the Railway"	Ensemble
"The Moonshiner"	Ensemble
"Danny Boy"	The Pianist
"Who Threw the Overalls	Man #1, Man #2
in Mrs. Murphy's Chowder?"	
"Finnegan's Wake"	Woman #1, Ensemble
"Ireland Boys Hurray"	Ensemble
"Molly Maguire"	Man #1, Ensemble
"You're a Grand Old Flag"	Ensemble
"Over There"	Ensemble
"Yankee Doodle"	Man #2
"Johnny, I Hardly Knew Ye"	Ensemble
"I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For"	Ensemble

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

My association with *The Irish* began almost 30 years ago here in Chicago. I was a part of the original Chicago production of *The Irish... and How They Got That Way* that premiered at the Mercury Theater. Directed by Charlotte Moore, from the Irish Rep (where the show originated), and with plenty of help from author Frank McCourt, the production was a smash and ran for more than a year. I've subsequently (and very recently) revisited the show in a vastly different, but equally successful revision (set in a pub) and directed by dear friend and bona fide genius Marc Robin. When Michael Weber (another genuine genius – how lucky am I to be surrounded by brilliant, dear friends?) asked me to be a part of this production for Porchlight, I jumped at the chance.

Having the opportunity to rethink this beautiful, funny, poignant show – at this time in our nation's history – is a dream come true. While the show is specifically about the Irish experience, it is, in a larger sense, the story of all our immigrant ancestors. Certainly, my Italian grandparents who emigrated to America in 1907 faced many of the same obstacles the Irish did. Maybe yours did too? Maybe there's a story in your history that needs to be told or is easily recognized while watching our Irish story?

I believe this show is about all of us, as Americans. It's about how much we have in common, how closely our stories connect us. I hope you feel, as I do, that our America needs that connection more than ever.

Thanks for sharing this story with us.



David Girolmo

DAVID GIROLMO

Director, *The Irish... and How They Got That Way*

CAST



MICHAEL MAHLER* (*Man #1*) is thrilled to return to Porchlight, where he once played The Balladeer in Michael Weber's production of *Assassins*. Most recently he served as music director/arrangement adaptor of *As You Like It* (Writers). Recent

acting credits include *The Flying Lovers of Vitебск* (Northlight), *The Last Wide Open and It's a Wonderful Life: Live in Chicago* (American Blues), *The Music Man* (Marriott) and *Into the Woods* (Writers). Michael is the composer/lyricist of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, *The Secret of My Success*, *October Sky*, *Hero*, *The Man who Murdered Sherlock Holmes*, *Wonderland: Alice's Rock & Roll Adventure*, *My Little Pony: A New Generation* and others. He made his Broadway debut penning additional lyrics for Cameron Mackintosh's most recent revival of *Miss Saigon*. Michael is a company member of American Blues Theatre and a proud husband to Dara Cameron and father to Ezra Mahler.



LEAH MORROW* (*Woman #1*) Last seen on the Porchlight stage in the Porchlight Revisits production of *The Apple Tree*, Leah Morrow is delighted to share in a bit of explanation about the Irish! Most recently, she has been swimming around the Marriott Theatre as "Dory" in their production of *Finding Nemo*. Other credits include productions at: Drury Lane Theater, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Mercury Theater Chicago, Paramount Theatre, Venus Cabaret Theater and Emmet Otter's *Jug Band Christmas* at The Studebaker Theater. TV: "Somebody Somewhere" (HBO), "neXt" (FOX); FILM: "The Doula" and various commercials. Union Proud, repped by DDO! Thank you to the whole PMT team, to the Davids and to YOU for supporting the arts! God bless you! For my family, especially my Da. Love you, Dad! Sláinte!



EMILY GOLDBERG (*Woman #2*) It is grand craic to be acting the maggot with this deadly team! Emily Goldberg previously performed with

Porchlight Music Theatre in *A Gentleman's Guide...* (Jeff Nom-Performer), *City of Angels* and the New Faces series. Other select credits include: *Beautiful* at Drury Lane; *Emma, Nell Gwynn* at Chicago Shakespeare; *You're A Good Man...* at Marriott; *Into The Woods* at Writers; *Sweeney Todd* at Paramount; *Into The Woods* (Jeff Award-Ensemble), *Loving Repeating* (Jeff Nom-Performer) at Kokandy; *Songs for A New World* at The Ubique; *Dogfight* (Jeff Nom-Performer) at Boho; *The Spitfire Grill* (Jeff Nom-Performer) at Refuge; *South Pacific* in Concert at The Orpheum, *Guys & Dolls* at Williams Street; *Schoolhouse Rock* at The Broadway Playhouse; *Into The Woods* at Reagle Music Theatre. Emily is represented by Big Mouth Talent.



LUKE NOWAKOWSKI (*Man #2*) is over the moon to be telling stories and singing tunes back at Porchlight. CHICAGO: "Bobby Strong" in *Urinetown* (Theo); *42 Balloons, Lord of the Rings, A Musical Tale* (Chicago Shakespeare), *Titanique* (Porchlight Music

Theatre/Broadway in Chicago); *Anything Goes* (Porchlight Music Theatre), *Fun Home*, *The Sound of Music*, *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* (Paramount Theatre). REGIONAL: *Dear Jack*, *Dear Louise*, *Little Women* (Peninsula Players). INTERNATIONAL: *Lord of the Rings, A Musical Tale* (The Civic, Auckland, NZ). Luke has also performed at Ravinia and with The Beautiful City Project. He was a national finalist in the NATS Musical Theater Competition in New York City. Luke studied vocal performance at Elmhurst University with minors in theatre and dance and is represented by Gray Talent. Beyond performing, Luke is an active writer, director and podcaster—stay tuned for new work this spring. Endless love to my constants! IG: @_LukeNowakowski_



DAVID FIORELLO** (*Music Director/Additional Musical Arrangements/The Pianist*) is an Equity Jeff award-winning music director, director, performer, orchestrator and playwright that's had his work featured across the globe. His most recent

Porchlight credits include serving as music director for *Porchlight in Concert: Sunday in the Park With George*, *Blues in the Night* (starring Tony-Nominee Felicia P. Fields), *Gypsy* (starring E. Faye Butler), *Woman of the Year*, *Do Re Mi*, *The Apple Tree*, the New Faces Sing Broadway series, as well as several editions of Chicago Sings, and the upcoming mainstage production of *The Irish ... and How They Got That Way*. He served as music director for the John Doyle *Sweeney Todd* national tour, as well as Off-Broadway's *Danny & Sylvia: The Danny Kaye Musical*. Internationally, he's the head of the Musical Theatre Program as part of the International Lyric Academy in Vicenza, Italy. Fiorello is also the founder of The Beautiful City Project and CEO of Fiorello Studios. He is continually inspired by the love of his life.



ELLEON DOBIAS** (*The Violinist*)

Originally from Colorado, Elleon's career as an actor, musician and writer has kept her traveling for a handful of years. She is especially fond of collaborative and developmental works, with many of her proudest projects centered in

instrumental improvisation. She is always humbled by the opportunity to engage her background in music with her passion for stories and how we choose to tell them. Aside from performing, Elleon is a lover of long walks, fountain pens, backpacking, anything homemade and everything spread on toast.

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers

**Members of the Chicago Federation of Musicians, Local 10-208

UNDERSTUDIES



CAROLINE LYELL (Woman #1 u/s, Woman #2 u/s) is a Chicago based actor. Favorite credits include *Titanique* (Broadway in Chicago and Porchlight Music Theatre); *Disney's The Little Mermaid, Ragtime* (Music Theatre Works); *Waistwatchers: The Musical* (Royal George Theater); *In to America* (Griffin Theatre); *Atlantic* (AMTP/Edinburgh Fringe Festival). Previously at Porchlight: *Titanique, New Faces Sing Broadway NOW* (2025). Repped by Shirley Hamilton. Much love to all of her friends and family for their support throughout the years. Sláinte!



KEVIN WEBB (Man #1 u/s, Man #2 u/s) has previously been seen with Porchlight as "Pirelli" in *Sweeney Todd*. Chicago Credits: *Titanic the Musical* (Marriott Theatre); *Sweeney Todd - Jeff Award/Principal, Into the Woods* and *Jekyll & Hyde* (Kokandy Productions);

Mother Courage and her Children, The Killer, The Pragmatists and The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui (Trap Door Theatre); *The Secret Garden* (Court Theatre); *Shockheaded Peter, Mary Rose and Coraline* (Black Button Eyes Productions); *A Little Night Music* and *Sweeney Todd* (Theo); *Marie Christine and Myths & Hymns* (BoHo Theatre); *The Pitchfork Disney* (Interrobang Theatre Project); *WOZ* (Victory Gardens); *The View UpStairs* (Circle Theatre); *Songs from an Unmade Bed, Angry Fags, Design for Living and Under A Rainbow Flag* (PrideArts); *Stupid Fucking Bird* (Sideshow Theatre Company) and *Assassins* (The Viaduct). Previously at Porchlight: *Porchlight Sings the Season, Gypsy, Porchlight in Concert Sunday in the Park with George, Porchlight Revisits* and others.

ARTISTIC/PRODUCTION STAFF

DAVID GIROLMO (Director) is a veteran of hundreds of productions here in Chicago and around the United States and Canada. He made his Broadway debut in *Candide* directed by Hal Prince and was recently seen on Broadway in *War Paint* starring Patti LuPone and Christine Ebersole, directed by Michael Greif. He is a multiple Jeff nominee and Jeff Award winner and a multiple Broadway World Award winner. Among his TV and Film credits are: "Crisis" (Congressman Langston Wirth), "Chicago P.D." (Jim Varney), "Empire" (Dr. Sirak), "Chicago Fire" (Chief Crimes), "E.R." (Officer Gaines), "Death of a President" (Hospital Spokesperson Dr. Peralto). He is married to Heidi Kettenring, who hung the moon and stars.

TIANXUAN CHEN (XUAN) (Scenic Designer) is a Chicago-based scenic and lighting designer with an MFA in stage design from Northwestern University. She's honored to work with Porchlight Music Theatre for the first time! Recent design credits include: *Veal* (A Red Orchid Theatre, set and lighting); *Jesus Hopped The "A" Train* (Citylit, scenic); *The Tender Trap* (Blue in the Right Way, set and lighting); *Neighborhood Watch* (Jackalope, scenic); *The Love Object* (The Story Theatre, scenic); *2 Pianos 4 Hands* (Northlight, scenic). Xuan is the winner of the 2024 USITT Scenic Design Award and the co-designer of PQ2027 emerging exhibition.

ALEXIS J. ROSTON (Costume Designer) is a Chicago native and proud member of Congo Square Theatre Ensemble. She naturally gravitates toward the world of costume being a lover of a 'lewk'. She credits Rueben D Echols for mentoring her and Black Ensemble Theater for granting the playground to learn in. It was there she assisted on many main stage and theatre for young audiences shows including two of her faves, *Women Of Soul* and *Last Dancer Standing*. But her awakening was being able to take the lead as designer on "The Sex

and The City Summer Series" production of *Divine Destiny*. The bug had bitten. Her design credits go on to include several episodes of the WTTW series "Chicago Stories: The Race To Reverse The River," "Pullman and the Railroad Rebellion" and "The Rise And Fall Of The Mail Order Giants," "Denise Jones' Beyond The Door" and Alexis was also wardrobe supervisor on *Collaboration's* NBC televised "The Lost Story Of Emmett Till: Trial In The Delta," which won a Regional Emmy for Outstanding Achievement in Human Interest - Long Form.

G. "MAX" MAXIN IV (Lighting & Media/Digital Designer) After over a decade in Chicago, G. "Max" Maxin IV has created more than 300 designs on over 200 professional and educational productions. He is a teaching artist/resident lighting designer for the Theatre Conservatory at Roosevelt University's Chicago College of Performing Arts and was an instructor at Northeastern Illinois University for seven years (Instructor Excellence Award, 2019). Max won a Lou Award for lighting on *Into the Woods* (Big Noise), has three Equity and eight Non-Equity Jeff nominations and designed one Equity and four Non-Equity Jeff Award winning best musicals. A founding member of Another Door Theatre Project, he worked for three years as head of production/resident scenographer. Max spent two summers designing lighting for the touring opera company La Musica Lirica (Novafeltria, Italy). Favorite projects at Porchlight Music Theatre, Kokandy, Invictus, Paramount, Black Ensemble Theater, American Blues, Handbag, Cincinnati Shakespeare, Mercury Theater Chicago, TATC, Black Button Eyes, BoHo, Steppenwolf Garage, City Lit, ADTP, CCPA, NEIU, Northwestern and DePaul. W: ivMaxin.com

ARTISTIC/PRODUCTION STAFF (CONT.)

ELLEN MARKUS (*Props Designer*) is thrilled to be making her Porchlight debut. Her recent credits include *Miracle on South Division St*, *Jukebox* for the *Algonquin* (Citadel); *Caslight*, *Lifespan of a Fact*, *Complete Works of William Shakespeare Abridged*, *First Date*, *Cry It Out*, *Gift of the magi*, *Ripcord*, *Rooted*, *The Revolutionists*, *Now and Then*, *Murder on the Nile*, *Tally's Folly* (Oil Lamp Theater); Midwest premiere of *Diana*, *Secret Garden* (Theo); *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Pippin*, *Ragtime*, *The Little Mermaid* (Music Theater Works); the world premiere of *Gods and Monsters* (Theater Wit) and *Young Frankenstein* (Mercury Theater Chicago). Enjoy the show!

MATTHEW R. CHASE (*Sound Designer*)

REGIONAL/SOUND DESIGN: *Assassins* (Capital City Theatre); *Strangers On A Train* (Meadow Brook Theatre). CHICAGO/SOUND DESIGN: *Diana*, *Tell Me On A Sunday*, *The Secret Garden*, *Never Better*, *The Sondheim Tribute Revue*, *Assassins*, *Baked: A New Musical!* (Theo); *Rock of Ages* (Metropolis Performing Arts Centre); *Fun Home*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Anything Goes*, *Ernest Shackleton Loves Me*, *Cabaret*, *Rent*, *Spring Awakening* (Porchlight Music Theatre); *Legally Blonde: The Musical*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Shrek the Musical*, *Mel Brooks' The Producers*, *Pippin* (Music Theater Works); *Who's Holiday* (Theater Wit); *The House Without a Christmas Tree* (Griffin Theatre Company); *Elephant And Piggie's We Are in a Play* (Marriott Theatre). CHICAGO/PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT: *The House Without a Christmas Tree*, *Marys Seacole*, *Heisenberg* (Griffin Theatre Company); *The Secret Garden*, *Never Better*, *A Little Night Music*, *The Sondheim Tribute Revue*, *Assassins*, *Baked!*: *A New Musical*, *Passing Strange*, *The Threepenny Opera* (Theo); *Inanimate*, *Who's Holiday!*, *Household Spirits*, *The Whistleblower*, *Hurricane Diane*, *Mr. Burns a post electric play* (Theater Wit); *Spring Awakening* (Porchlight Music Theatre). W: MatthewRChaseDesign.com

DREW DONNELLY* (*Production Stage Manager*) has previously had the pleasure of working on Porchlight's *Titanique* (with Broadway In Chicago), *Fun Home*, *Cabaret*, *Anything Goes* and *Porchlight in Concert Sunday in the Park with George*. Originally from the panhandle of Texas, Drew got his Chicago start with Mary-Archie Theatre Company where work included *The Glass Menagerie* and *Superior Donuts*. Recent work includes *The Lord of the Rings: A Musical Tale*, *Islander*, *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater) and *The Lehman Trilogy* (TimeLine Theatre Company).

CARLI SHAPIRO (*Assistant Stage Manager*) is thrilled to be returning to Porchlight after ASMing last season's *Fun Home!* Originally from New York and a graduate of Elon University, Carli is a proud Chicago based stage manager. Recent credits include *Dial M for Murder* (Drury Lane); *Little Shop of Horrors* (Music Theater Works) and select productions with The Factory Theater and Refracted Theatre Company. IG: CarliXTheatre

NICK ZABEL (*Scenic Supervisor*)

JOSE ALEXANDER (*Paint Charge*)

ALI WESTENDORF (*Costume/Wardrobe Supervisor*) is thrilled to return for their third season with Porchlight Music Theatre as costume/wardrobe supervisor on *The Irish...*. Previous Chicago credits include *Coronation* with Refracted Theatre Company (Wig and Wardrobe Crew), *Jersey Boys* with Mercury Theatre (Wardrobe) and *Anything Goes* with Porchlight (Wardrobe Supervisor). Before moving to Chicago, Ali worked with the Utah Shakespeare Festival as Wardrobe on *Timon of Athens*, *Coriolanus*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Greenshow*. A graduate of Northern Illinois University, they are excited to share this production with you and hope you enjoy the show!

ALIX BURKHARDT (*Wardrobe Assistant*)

RILEY WOODS (*Lighting Supervisor*) is excited to be working with Porchlight again, normally as an electrician, but this time as assistant lighting director. Riley's favorite job to have is lighting designer and their favorite designs include: *The Last Five Years*, *Fun Home*, *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Godspell* from Art 4; *Elixir of Love*, *Chance the Snapper* and *Fabulation* from Temple University; *Kindertransport* and *Julius Caesar* from Goshen College. Riley has an MFA in lighting and projection design from Temple University and has been living in Chicago for the past four years. W: RileyWoods.net

ROYCE PATARAS (*AV Supervisor*) is excited to join the crew for his PMT debut! He is a graduate from Northern Illinois University, specialized in recording arts and media technology under the teachings of Kerri-Ann Chandler. He is also a freelance audio engineer with experience in video production. He's thankful for the support of his friends and family. W: RoycePataras.com

JAY BLACK (*Audio Engineer (A1)*)

ALTHEA PEARSON (*Audio Engineer (A2)*)

RACHEL WEST (*Production Supervisor*) is proud to be joining Porchlight again where she has been the lighting supervisor for Porchlight since 2016. She designed *Fun Home*, *Porchlight in Concert: Sunday in the Park with George* as well as many past Revisits productions including *I Am A Camera*, *Passing Strange* and *Nonsense*. Other recent designs include *Waitress* with Skylight Music Theatre and *The Reclamation of Madison Hemings* with American Blues Theater where she is an artistic affiliate. Rachel is the lighting supervisor for The Black Ensemble Theater and a graduate of the Boston University School of Theatre.

LINDA MADONIA (*Company Manager*) is currently the company manager for Porchlight Music Theatre. She also has music directed the ICONS Gala Celebrating Leslie Uggams and previously worked on Broadway in your Backyard, *Anything Goes*, *Cabaret* and *A Chorus Line*, all with Porchlight. Other projects

ARTISTIC/PRODUCTION STAFF (CONT.)

include Annie, Guys and Dolls, Legally Blonde: The Musical, Shrek the Musical, Mamma Mia! and Camelot at Music Theater Works and Jersey Boys, Rock of Ages and Sister Act at Mercury Theater Chicago. Linda is the vocal coach for the master's degree program in music theatre pedagogy at Carthage College and owns American Eagle Productions, which has been at the forefront of theatre education in the Chicago area for the past 35 years in Chicago.

MICHAEL WEBER (*Artistic Director*) is a nationally recognized, award-winning director, producer, actor and educator. He currently serves as artistic director of Chicago's Porchlight Music Theatre where he recently directed *Sunday in the Park with George* starring Broadway's Kathy Voytko and Tony Award-nominee Sean Allan Krill and he was resident director of the Chicago premiere of *Titanique*. He recently directed the Off-Broadway and European premieres of *Call Me Elizabeth* written by and starring Kayla Boye as "Elizabeth Taylor." Under his artistic leadership, Porchlight Music Theatre was awarded Chicago's Jeff Award for "Best Production" six times. He previously served as artistic director for the inaugural season of Chicago's Drury Lane Theatre Water Tower Place (now Broadway in Chicago's Broadway Playhouse) and at Theatre at the Center in Munster, Indiana. The recipient of two Joseph Jefferson Awards, he has been nominated for nine awards and he wrote and directed 14 Joseph Jefferson Awards ceremonies (2006-2018). Weber's regional acting credits include *The Merry Widow* (starring Renée Fleming) at Lyric Opera, *Annie Get Your Gun* and *Gypsy* (both starring Patti LuPone) at Ravinia Festival, *The Winter's Tale* and *Henry V* at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre and more. He is author

of the play *WAR of the WELLES* (about Orson Welles' infamous radio broadcast) and he is a longtime pledge host for PBS station WTTW channel 11.

JENNA DEJA (*Interim Executive Director*) is thrilled to join Porchlight Music Theatre adding to her 25+ year career focused on creating pathways for talented teams to bring beautiful and impactful stories to life on stage and beyond. She most recently served as vice president of Arts Consulting Group (ACG), a full-service consulting firm working solely in the arts and culture sector. At ACG, Jenna specialized in interim management, organizational leadership and strategic planning. Her clients at ACG included Americans for the Arts, Guthrie Theatre, Banff Centre for Arts, Long Wharf Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Mosaic Theatre, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley and many others. Jenna has a lifelong love of theatre and a successful track record of artistic innovation, leadership and excellence. Prior to her time at Arts Consulting Group, she served as managing producer for The Second City for 12 years. She led the Touring and Theatricals division, producing with partners including La Jolla Playhouse, Goodman Theatre, Center Theatre Group, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company and Hubbard Street Dance. Her achievements center around developing diverse programs, increasing earned and contributed revenue and fostering collaborative relationships with artists, board members, staff, volunteers and community members. Jenna lives in Oak Park with her adored husband Tom and spoiled dogs Hazel and Ramona.



Hopsmith Tavern is a high-energy restaurant and bar located in the heart of Gold Coast. We're open for lunch and dinner 7 days a week till the early morning hours. At Hopsmith, you'll find tasty American fare, 30 rotating taps poured from our iconic Volkswagen bus and a lively ambience to keep the party going. Our 2-story tavern is features fully-opening street level windows, a 2nd floor retractable roof, and plenty of TVs – perfect for catching a game, hosting a party or meeting, or just because it's Friday!



THE CHRISTOPHER N. TISONE LEGACY PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGEMENT FUND



CARLI SHAPIRO
Assistant Stage Manager

Through the generosity of the Tisone family, this fund established in 2019 supports and celebrates these essential team members in any theatre production: stage management with underwriting their positions in Porchlight productions. Stage managers coordinate and support the people and processes that bring a show to life. This fund supports both seasoned stage managers as well as stage managers newer in their careers who are working on Porchlight productions in a given year.

If you would like to contribute to The Christopher N. Tisone Legacy Production Stage Manager Fund or underwrite future artists in the technical fields, please reach out to **Pam Klier** at Pam@PorchlightMusicTheatre.org.

PORCHLIGHTMUSICTHEATRE.ORG/SUPPORT



ABOUT PORCHLIGHT

Porchlight Music Theatre, entering its 31st season, is the award-winning center for music theatre in Chicago. Through live performance, youth education and community outreach, we impact thousands of lives each season, bringing the magic of musicals to our theatre home at the Ruth Page Center for the Arts in the Gold Coast and to neighborhoods across the city. Porchlight has built a national reputation for boldly reimagining classic musicals, supporting new works and young performers, and showcasing Chicago's most notable music theatre artists, all through the intimate and powerful theatrical lens of the "Chicago Style."

Porchlight's history over nearly three decades includes more than 70 mainstage works with 15 Chicago premieres and five world premieres.

Porchlight's education and outreach programs serve schools, youth of all ages and skill levels and community organizations. Porchlight annually awards dozens of full scholarships and hundreds of free tickets to ensure accessibility and real engagement with this uniquely American art form.

The company's many honors include 178 Joseph Jefferson Award (Jeff) nominations and 50 Jeff awards, as well as 44 Black Theatre Alliance (BTA) nominations and 15 BTA awards. In 2019, Porchlight graduated to the Large Theatre tier of the Equity Jeff Awards and has been honored with seven awards in this tier to date including Best Ensemble for *Duke Ellington's Sophisticated Ladies* (2019) and Best Production-Revue for *Blues in the Night* (2022).

Through the global pandemic, Porchlight emerged as one of Chicago's leaders in virtual programming, quickly launching a host of free offerings like Sondheim @ 90 Roundtables, Movie Musical Mondays, Porchlight by Request: Command Performances and WPMT: Classic Musicals from the Golden Age of Radio. In 2021, Porchlight launched its annual summer series, *Broadway in your Backyard*, performing at parks and venues throughout the city.

LAND RECOGNITION

Porchlight recognizes the history of oppression and injustice that has resulted in ongoing disparities for those who were brought here against their will or migrated from their homeland, as well as for those who have lived on this land for centuries. Truth and acknowledgment are critical in building mutual respect and authentic connections across all barriers of heritage and difference. This statement is one small step in acknowledging the history that brought us to this place and time, and to help us seek understanding of our place within that history:

"With humility and respect for the original caretakers of the land, we recognize that at its performance home at The Ruth Page Center for the Arts, Porchlight Music Theatre inhabits the land of the Council of the Three Fires: the Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi Nations, and many other tribes such as the Miami, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sac and Fox who also call this land their home. We honor the sacred lands of all indigenous American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and First Nations peoples."

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Porchlight believes Black Lives Matter and stands with others in denouncing racism, bigotry, hate and intolerance, and in reaffirming our total commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and access (EDI) as we advance our mission both on and off the stage. We are dedicated to the education and work necessary to make positive change within our organization and in our industry. In 2020, using the "We See You White American Theatre" as our guide, we completed an audit of all company materials, practices, policies and procedures to identify ways we can be a more equitable and inclusive company. The result is a multi-year EDI action plan and EDI learning for staff and board. We encourage you to follow our goals and progress at PorchlightMusicTheatre.org.

PMT LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Brandon Harrington, *Chair*
Joseph Higgins, *Vice Chair*
Nate Groonwald, *Secretary*
Todd Arp, *Co-Treasurer*
Sue Suchy, *Co-Treasurer*

Michelle Cucchiaro
Brenda Didier
Rhona Frazin
William Gilmer
Charles Laff
Mike Lowenthal
Robin Simon
Tamara Sims
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Ex Officio
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† Denotes deceased individuals

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SUMMER CAMP 2026

CALLING ALL BROADWAY-LOVING SINGERS, ACTORS, DANCERS AND WRITERS!

Join Porchlight center stage this summer to build confidence and grow in creativity and connection! Our offerings for actors aged 4 - 17 include skill-based classes to stretch their creative muscles and grow in their music theatre goals in acting, dancing and singing! Actors aged 4 - 13 create their own musical or rehearse *Willy Wonka, JR* for ages 7 - 13. High school actors join us for **PMTeens** - a one of a kind opportunity for 16 actors to receive professional theatre training in our rehearsal space.

NEW

This year's Summer Camp (except for PMTeens) will be held at Abraham Lincoln Elementary School (615 W. Kemper Pl. Chicago, IL 60614) and before and aftercare is available.

★ Mini Musicals (4-6 years old)

Age 4 - 6 years, 1 week
Offered weekly, June 15 - Aug 7
Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm

Join us for a week of songs, games and exploring an environment through music.

★ Broadway Basics (7-10 years old)

Age 7-10 years, 2 weeks
Villains & Sidekicks - June 22 - July 3
Majesties & Magicians - July 27 - August 7
Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm

A two-week entrance to creating characters through music, drama, dance, writing & more!

Intermediate Ensemble (11-13 years old)

Ages 11 - 13 years, 2 weeks
Golden Age Classics - June 22 - July 3
Modern Masterpieces - July 27 - August 7
Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm

Middle school actors join us for two weeks to grow their theatre skills and create their own musical revue!

Willy Wonka, JR. (7-13 years old)

Ages 7 - 13 years, 3 weeks
July 6 - 24
Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm

Actors will work with a pre-professional script and stage, rehearse & perform a full musical with heightened design on the last day of camp with family & friends!

PMTeens (14-17 years old)

Ages 14 - 17 years, 2 weeks
July 6 - 17
Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm

Porchlight is looking for 16 high school aged actors to join us for an immersive music theatre experience. The next generation of Chicago talent will learn from Chicago's music theatre experts and perform on a Porchlight stage.

This camp meets at Porchlight Studios - 4200 W. Diversey Ave



Scholarships, financial aid and payment plans are available!

Learn more at PorchlightMusicTheatre.org

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Porchlight Music Theatre gratefully acknowledges the following individuals, corporations and foundations who generously gave gifts of \$100 or more to The Annual Fund, The Rachel Rockwell Memorial Fund for Fierce Women Behind the Table, The George K. Sargent III Cash Reserve Fund and The Christopher N. Tisone Memorial Stage Management Fund during the period: December 15, 2024 to December 15, 2025. For a full list of all contributions for FY25, please consult our website at PorchlightMusicTheatre.org/Our-Contributors.

For information about the multiple ways of supporting Porchlight or to update any information on the following donor list, please contact **Pam Klier** at pam@porchlightmusictheatre.org.

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Government Support

Porchlight Music Theatre acknowledges support from the Illinois Arts Council Agency. This project is partially supported by a CityArts Grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events.



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