RIVERSIDE THEATRE

## BACKSTAGEPASS

BEHIND THE SCENES AT RIVERSIDE THEATRE



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Live in the Loop

**WINTER 2024** 

# made in VERO BEACH

What you experience at Riverside Theatre is created here in Vero Beach, by us, specifically for our stages and you. We employ talented professionals in directing, choreography, costumes, music, sound, lighting, set design and so much more to create Broadway quality productions.





Staff from our Props and Paint Departments, along with our General Technicians, carved pool noodles to create the colorful coral used in the Winterfest production of Finding Nemo JR.



Austin Peer stringing lights on a tree on the Waxlax Stage for Winterfest.



Jack Frost was designed by Jon Moses, Managing Director/COO and produced out of foam by our Scene Shop.





A last minute puppet creation of Teacher Stingray for *Finding Nemo JR*. was built in three days by Makenna Riggle, general tech with a props focus.



Cast of Million Dollar Quartet (2023)

## Thank You to our 2023-2024 Presenting Sponsors!

Everything associated with our shows, from casting the talent in New York, to designing and constructing the sets, costumes, props, lighting, sound, music, and more, is conceived and executed within this facility. Productions are original, amazing, and of the highest quality, thanks in part to the financial support from these individuals and organizations.

- Bill & Eva Gurley
- Ron Hunt & Lisa Amorosa
- The O'Haire Group-Merrill Lynch Wealth Management
- Bobbie Olsen
- Constance Pitcher



#### Interested in becoming a sponsor?

Visit www.riversidetheatre.com/sponsorships or contact Kate Gill, Development Director 772.410.0481 • kateg@riversidetheatre.com

#### BACKSTAGE**PASS**

WINTER 2023

Contact Us info@riversidetheatre.com 772-231-6990 3250 Riverside Park Drive Vero Beach, FL 32963

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By Alice Johnson

### The BOBBIE OLSEN Series on The Waxlax Stage Presents:



## Morning After Grace is a heartwarming romantic comedy about love, loss, aging and societal judgments.

The setting is a Florida retirement community, and the play begins with a hilarious morning after scene. Chris Clavelli, resident director of the Florida Repertory Theatre and director for Riverside's production, had the following observations about the play:

"I believe we go to the theatre to laugh, to learn, to cry and to find comfort in the knowledge that we are all on this planet together trying to make the best of it.

"Author Carey Crim writes plays that we can all relate to. Her characters interest us and make us want to spend an evening with them. While the play has serious moments, it's also very funny. We laugh with her characters because we have all been there. We have made fools of ourselves for love, and made big mistakes along the way."

In Morning After Grace, Ms. Crim explores the lives of three people in their sixties and seventies. When they are thrown together, they wrestle with new relationships, shocking discoveries, great disappointments, and a list of things to do before they kick the bucket.







#### The play asks the questions

- What happens when we run out of second chances?
- Is it only over when we say it's over?
- Yes, staying in the game is challenging, but don't we owe it to ourselves to keep connecting?

"In Morning After Grace something wonderful does come to each of the characters, said Mr. Clavelli. "True romantic love means that our players win in the end, and Carey's play captures that. So yes, our audiences will laugh, cry and know themselves better after a night with Morning After Grace."

Ms. Crim was commissioned to write a play starring the television actor, Randy Mantooth. She had admired him in her youth and was amazed to see how attractive and vibrant he still was in his seventies. She borrowed some of the dialogue from visits with her parents at their Florida retirement community.

She hopes that the audience will take away the hope that there is healing after grief; that joy and love can be found again; and that it's never too late to start over.







#### **BACKSTAGETOURS**

Get an entertaining, story-filled tour backstage and see the set designs and props up close. Meet some of the talented people that make it all happen. Learn more about how the shows are created and brought to life on stage. The tours cost \$5 and last roughly one hour.

#### **BOOK YOUR TOUR TODAY!**

www.riversidetheatre.com/backstage-tours

RIVERSIDE THEATRE

## Upcoming Tour Dates + What's on Stage

10:00AM or 2:00PM

February 2 - Morning After Grace

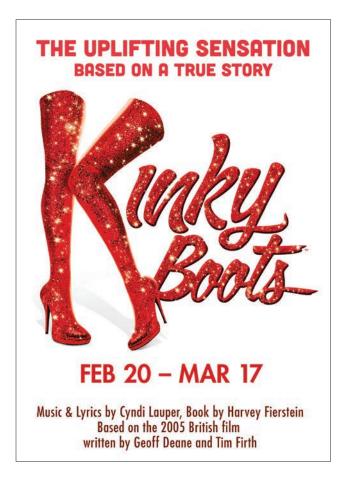
March 1 - Kinky Boots

April 5 - Yankee Tavern

May 3 - On Your Feet



By Barbara Yoresh



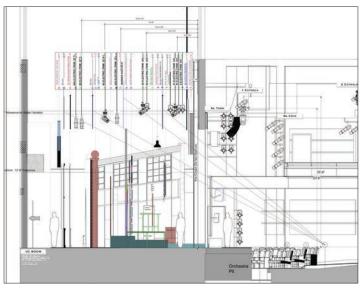
In so many words, Plato once opined "necessity is the mother of invention." So, when a multi-generational but somewhat stodgy shoe factory teetered on bankruptcy, the scion of the family business discovers ways to make lemonade out of lemons and, in the process, discover his true self as well as how to see and appreciate people for who they really are.

The musical *Kinky Boots* is a cleverly adapted tale of a true documentary account of Steve Pateman and generations of his family's shoe factory in England which for years made quality footwear for men. But changing times and fashion trends made the sturdy brogans obsolete.

The rebirth of a family business and metamorphosis of human minds and hearts are all featured in the rollicking Tony and Grammy Award-winning *Kinky Boots* which takes to Riverside Theatre's Stark Stage February 20 – March 17.



Price and Son Sign rendering for Act 1 and Act 2 by CLIFF SIMON



Lighting design by YAEL LUBETZKY

THANK YOU TO OUR PRESENTING SPONSORS: Bobbie Olsen and The O'Haire Group - Merrill Lynch Wealth Management

## A pop music star/MTV video queen collaborates with a Broadway legend

While it may be that "girls just wanna have fun," according to pop singer Cyndi Lauper in her iconic 1983 musical video/hit song that featured her own mother and professional wrestling star "Captain" Lou Albano as her disapproving parents, Ms. Lauper's talents and genius extend far beyond her vocal range and beloved kookiness.

Lauper wrote the music and lyrics for *Kinky Boots* and collaborated on the musical project with friend and Tony award-winning actor/writer Harvey Fierstein who wrote the book of the musical.

According to Lauper, her interest in the project was piqued by Fierstein's urging her to see the movie version plus her personal views on parental expectations, belief in acceptance and diversity, and love of drag queens.



Scenic garage door rendering by CLIFF SIMON

"You can write all the songs you want, but without heart and something you believe in, it kinda leaves an empty feeling for me. So, this was a subject matter that I could roll my sleeves up in and stick with for years. And I learned so much. I'm just better than I was because of this," Lauper said.

Besides, she wanted to work with Fierstein and admitted to her predilection for shoes of which she owns many.

Fierstein focused on the human element of the musical's fictionalized characters. The contrast between shoe factory heir Charlie Price and drag queen Lola – as well as their shared angst with respective father/son conflicts – would spotlight ways in which friendship, collaboration, empathy and acceptance could blossom and thrive.



Cyndi Lauper



All I want people to understand is when you have a child, you have to help them be who they are and who they want to be."

- Cyndi Lauper



### A smashing success worldwide

From the show's opening in October 2012 until the present, Kinky Boots has played to enthusiastic crowds on nearly every continent. The musical's treatment of diversity, acceptance and friendship apparently transcends any particular ethnic or national barriers. The winner of six Tony Awards – including Best Musical and Best Original Score earned by Lauper – Kinky Boots productions have played in most European countries as well as in Asia, Australia, South America and even onboard a cruise ship.

Jerry Mitchell, the show's original choreographer noted "The show is accepted around the world the same way it is in New York" in testament to its universally resonant theme.

#### A fateful meeting

Charlie Price plans to live in London and marry social climber Nicola when his father unexpectedly dies leaving the family shoe factory in peril of closing. Back at home for the funeral, Charlie learns that the factory is teetering on the edge of bankruptcy unless something quickly changes because the heretofore well-regarded shoes have become unfashionable and the orders for them have dried up.

Charlie really isn't interested in running the family business. But familial legacy and a duty to long-time employees dictate that he finds an equitable solution.

In London while leaving a pub, Charlie sees a woman being harassed by two men and when he intervenes, he is struck unconscious when the lady whips off her boot to throw at the pair and instead connects with Charlie's chin. He wakens in a dingy nightclub called the Blue Angel Club where the woman he tried to save is revealed to be the club's drag queen star Lola who performs with fellow drag dancers.

#### But madam - uh, sir - we don't have stiletto, thighhigh boots in size 11

With his keen eye for footwear, Charlie notices that Lola and her entourage wear high-heeled boots which were never designed for men, despite being an essential element in their costuming.

Returning to the shoe factory to lay off workers, Charlie is read the riot act by worker Lauren who notes that other factories have survived by finding a "niche" market.

The lambasting prompts an idea and Charlie invites Lola to visit the factory to help design a women's boot suitable for drag performers. Lola and her troupe of "angels" arrive to find that the prototype is as stodgy as the shoes the factory had been making. Apparently, "the sex is in the heel" and it must be of soaring stiletto proportions.

Charlie asks Lola to stay on until they can produce boots to debut at an important footwear show in Milan in three weeks.



Harvey Fierstein & Cyndi Lauper Photo Credit: David Buchan





SL Unit - SR Unit Designed by CLIFF SIMON

#### Getting to know you

When Lola comes to work in men's clothing, she is taunted and adjourns to the restroom where Charlie intervenes. Lola explains that her name is actually Simon and that her father trained (him) her to box but subsequently disowned her for dressing in women's clothing. Charlie shares his own angst regarding his father's expectations of him to carry on the family business.

Radically changing the factory's product line to drag queen flamboyance rankles some of the workers resulting in a challenge between Lola and Don, a regular factory worker, try to prove which of them is the better man. Don challenges Lola to box with him - oblivious to Lola's boxing background. Lola lets Don win the match to spare him humiliation and issues a challenge to Don to accept people for who they are. The seeds of acceptance and empathy are sown.

#### When one door closes, another opens

Nicola and her boss arrive and tell Charlie that his late father had agreed to their plan to shut the factory, sell it and convert it into condos. But when Charlie refuses, Nicola ends their engagement.

#### If the boot fits...

The time comes to ramp up production of the new line of "kinky boots," Charlie promotes Lauren whose idea it was to find a "niche" market, but the boots still aren't quite right. With the Milan show just a few days away, patience ebbs and tempers flare.

Don and his crew offer to work without pay to get the job done. Lola, meanwhile, is performing at a nursing

> home in her hometown and reunites with her wheelchair-bound father to tell him she loves him.

Charlie and Lauren fly to Milan without Lola, but Charlie leaves Lola a message of sincere apology and acknowledges her grit and determination.

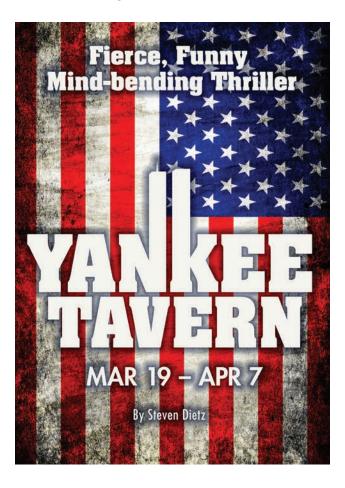
Lola and her angels fly in to the rescue, take to the runway and make "kinky boots" the hit of the show, all the while extolling the virtues of an individual's empowerment to be just who they are while loving and valuing the same in others.





By Barbara Yoresh

### The BOBBIE OLSEN Series on The Waxlax Stage Presents:



Sometimes it's the truth right in front of us that is harder to believe than wild conjecture or conspiracy theories. Or so it seems in a thought-provoking, somewhat kooky and mystifying thriller piece called *Yankee Tavern* by playwright Steven Dietz which plays with people's heads and taps into their willingness to consider – if not downright embrace – conspiracy theories regarding the 9/11 attacks on America.

This must-see mystery performs March 19 through April 7 on Riverside Theatre's Waxlax Stage and is directed by Riverside Theatre Producing Artistic Director/CEO Allen D. Cornell.

#### Believe it...or not

Following a comprehensive study of conspiracy theorists by researchers in the United States, United Kingdom, and Poland, lead psychologist Shauna Bowes concluded that they "are not all likely to be simple-minded, mentally unwell folks but instead may turn to conspiracy theories to fulfill deprived motivational needs and make sense of distress and impairment." Apparently, even the most rational and educated among us can, at times, exhibit a bit of paranoia amid the desire and need to feel safe in the aftermath of highly dramatic and traumatic events.

Not surprisingly, the researchers also concluded that people with more antisocial traits, anger issues, impulsiveness and tendencies to paranoia were more susceptible to believing conspiracies

How one's mind can take flight down one rabbit hole after another in something of a negative hallucination is explored in this drama/thriller that tauntingly may pose more questions than it answers.

## Another day that will live in infamy

The "Yankee Tavern" is a run-down, slated for demolition bar in Manhattan not far from the World Trade Center Twin Towers disaster. In the aftermath of his father's death, the tavern is run by a master's degree student Adam who is engaged to Janet. A self-described "itinerant homesteader" named Ray - who was his father's eccentric friend - is a squatter in the upstairs, abandoned Yankee Hotel and is a tavern regular who offers unending commentaries on wildly diverse conspiracies.

In the genre of (alleged) flying saucers and aliens in 1947-era Roswell, New Mexico and the John F. Kennedy assassination gunman/gunmen theories, Ray casts a dim eye on conventional mass media and commissioned reports, finds abstruse meaning in the Starbucks coffee "pagan" mermaid logo ("cult in a

cup") and asserts that American astronauts landed on a moon other than the one we see.

Ray is kooky enough with his unique views of the world at large and his propensity to talk to ghosts including Adam's late father Vince. However, amid Ray's stream-of-consciousness ramblings are provocative assertions regarding major news events with just enough believability to cast more than a scintilla of doubt about more conventionally "official" explanations.

But Ray isn't the only character to scratch one's head over. Adam's master's thesis and an expected career in international relations are subjects he avoids. And the dozens of save-the-date notices for his and Janet's wedding he has sent to his friends are mostly returned unopened due to "addressee unknown." What gives?

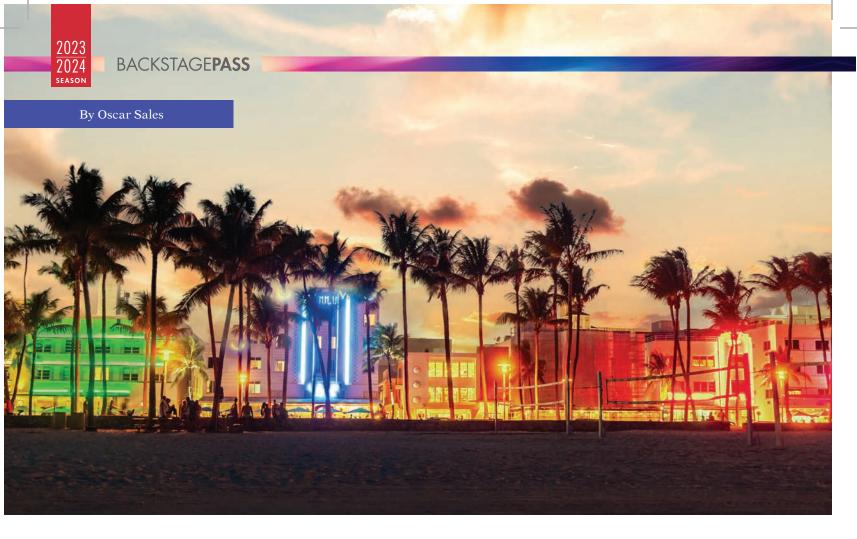
And then there is the stranger named Palmer who comes into the bar and basically says nothing during the play's first half, orders two bottles of Rolling Rock beer leaving the second for an unseen "friend" and then reveals his secret role on 9/11 as well as provocative information about Adam, a trip he makes to Washington, D.C. and his relationship to his former female professor. Like Alice noted about Wonderland, things become "curiouser and curiouser." Are official commission reports about 9/11 true or concocted explanations to cover-up the truth about the worst attack in American history?

#### ...now I'm a believer

By play's end – with Adam missing for five months – more questions remain than are answered as Janet and Ray keep the tavern open amid a demolition reprieve and Janet's belief that Adam will return. Will he?

As Palmer notes from Adam's own thesis, "people will believe anything they have not been given a reason to disbelieve." What do you believe? And why do you believe it?







#### **Miami Connection**

The lives and careers of Emilio and Gloria Estefan are well documented. Articles, books and documentaries have chronicled their immigrant story, and the drive and dedication they possessed to achieve international stardom.

The musical On Your Feet! shares with audiences a glimpse into their trials and triumphs as they climbed the charts to reach the pinnacle of acclaim in the music industry. Filled with almost two dozen well-known hits from Gloria's catalog, the show chronicles the passion they had for each other, for their music, and for the people in their lives.

What might not be as well known, is the affection they hold for a city that supported and took pride in their accomplishments – Miami.

In my mind, the resurgence of Miami is intertwined with the success of the Miami Sound Machine. At that time, I was growing up in the city and enjoying the spotlight Gloria and the group were putting on Miami. It was exciting.

THANK YOU TO OUR PRESENTING SPONSOR:
Constance Pitcher

#### The Magic City

You've probably guessed, but I love Miami! I love the city's energy. I love its multiculturalism, natural and man-made beauty, the flavorful foods, and I especially enjoy the vibrant art and music scene.

I moved to the city as a child, growing up in the 70's as Miami was taking its first steps onto the international stage. In the United Stages, it had always been a destination, but now, Miami was garnering attention from Central and South America, and even Europe was taking notice. It was exhilarating. But with growth comes difficulties that must be overcome, and Miami was at a crossroads: discard the past and look to the future, or salvage the past to build for the future?

From the late 1890's when Henry Flagler extended his railroad to the city, Miami experienced many ups and downs in its development. The 1920's brought a land boom and the population swelled fourfold in a matter of years. Then disaster struck: in 1926, a hurricane hit Miami, and the Great Depression followed on its heels. The development of the past few decades came to a standstill.

The 1930's brought a bevy of Art Deco hotels with their sleek designs to the lower end of Miami Beach. Over the next two decades, Miami continued to grow in popularity with travelers from the northeast who took advantage of the beautiful beaches, temperate climate, luxurious developments and the swankiest of nightclubs. But for many tourists, Miami was just a stop on the way to Havana. In Cuba, every convenience was available, the American dollar was easily accepted, and more exotic pleasures loomed.

Things changed in the 60s when Cuban refugees, looking for a safe haven after Cuba's political upheaval, took to Miami, which offered the perfect spot for relocation. While many opened their arms to the influx of new neighbors, cultural and language barriers were at first a challenge. However, in the minds of many older refugees, Miami was only a temporary stay before they returned home.







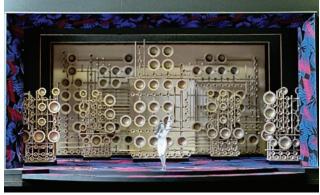
#### **A New Generation**

In the 70's, the younger generation started blending traditional Hispanic and American cultures. This created a new dynamic, which influenced everything from food to fashion to music, forming the basis of the Latin fusion aesthetics that Miami is known for.

During that time, the Miami Sound Machine caught my attention. Not only was the name promoting the city I loved, but the music was a mixture of R & B, Latin, and dance rhythms: it was truly the sound of the city. Their unique syncopated sound was not only a hit in the clubs, but their Spanish language recordings were garnering major attention in Hispanic markets worldwide. While they were selling out stadiums in South America, in the United States they were relatively unknown – except for their fans in Miami. I remember driving the streets of Miami with my friends and waiting for their song, "Regresa A Mi," to play on the Spanish radio stations and when it did, singing at the top of our lungs.

Prior to becoming the Miami Sound Machine, the band, which did not yet include Gloria, was known as The Miami Latin Boys. On a few occasions, The Miami Latin Boys played my high school dances.

That's when I first heard Emilio and his impeccable musical instincts. When the "Boys" added Gloria and Mercedes Navarro (Gloria's cousin) as vocalists, the name was changed to the Miami Sound Machine.



On Your Feet set model by MICHAEL SCHWEIKARDT.



#### Miami Sound Machine

In 1983, "Dr. Beat" became a big hit for the band in England and American producers and disc jockeys picked up the beat, spinning the tracks on their stations. "Conga," with its infectious beat and strong horn section, was the perfect anthem to introduce the band to the rest of America, and in essence the energy emanating from the city itself. Miami was in the world's spotlight and Hollywood was paying attention. Iconic films and television shows such as *Scarface*, "Miami Vice," and "The Golden Girls," used Miami as a backdrop, and while there could have been a confluence of factors that made Miami a "hot" locale, in my opinion, it was the music, and Miami Sound Machine, that made that spotlight shine brighter.

What followed was a successive string of Latin-infused hits in both English and Spanish showcasing Gloria's silky smooth voice. And while their records were topping the music charts, their live performances were selling out major stadiums and concert halls.

Miamians were thrilled with their success. Emilio, Gloria, and every member of the band were homegrown heroes that not only gave back to their community, but inspired every resident, no matter their place of origin, to strive for the American Dream.



Juan Marcos Avila, Enrique "Kiki" Garcia, Gloria Estefan, & Emilio Estefan

Then, tragedy! On a snowy road outside of Scranton, Pennsylvania in March 1990, a semi-truck plowed into the band's touring bus critically injuring Gloria and leaving her with a fractured spine. She underwent surgery and her spine was stabilized with two titanium rods, but doctors questioned if she would be able to walk again.

I remember watching the news about the accident, and it was filled with grim reports. We were shocked and many Cubans, who are predominantly Catholic, ran to their churches to light candles and pray. If any other world event had happened that day, it would have gotten only a minute or two of our attention in the half hour newscast.

After a year of intensive physical therapy, Gloria walked out on stage at the American Music Awards in January 1991 to thunderous applause and a standing ovation. I remember seeing the telecast with some friends in my apartment in Connecticut and watching through tears in our eyes. Our star was going to be all right.

#### Working on the Set



**JENNA HOUCK** 



HAL JAMEISON



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#### **Beyond the Music**

In the decades since, Emilio and Gloria continue to inspire and support countless others with their music, their love of food through their restaurants, and their hospitality through their hotels – namely among them, Costa d'Este in Vero Beach.

Filled with buoyant music and stunning dance numbers, On Your Feet! is a loving tribute to the enduring love Emilio and Gloria share, and a celebration of joy that audiences won't want to miss!

And while we've frequented many of the same places, our paths have yet to cross. However, I feel connected to the Estefans not only by our heritage, but by our passion for the city that allowed us to dream.



Gloria Estefan, & Emilio Estefan Photo credit: Jesús Carrero



**Education Sponsor: The Minotty Family** 

### Learn. Play. Grow.

#### **Free Family Fun Performances**

11:00 AM Saturday | 20-30 minute runtime

Playtime in the Park is FREE dance and theatre offerings from our education programs twice a month at 11:00 am on Saturdays on the outdoor Loop Stage. These offerings are ideal for kids aged 2-5, but entertaining for parents and the whole family!

#### January

13: DANCE - Dance Along With Mia

20: THEATRE – James and the Giant Peach ITF Celebration

#### **February**

10: THEATRE – Valentine's Treat

17: DANCE - Leaping Into Literacy

#### March

9: THEATRE - Spring Tales

16: DANCE – Leaping Into Literacy



## 2024 Youth Early Bird Summer Auditions are Open!!

Audition for our summer programs from December through February 1, 2024. More auditions may be opened after that date, but those who submit before February 1 will receive special consideration!

This summer we are excited to once again offer three separate shows for a wide range of ages. We are continuing our successful Performance Academy format we've been doing for many summers! Our summer will be split into our Junior Academy for our older kids in early June, our Kids Academy at the end of June for our youngest performers (for the first time this summer!), and our Advanced Academy in July of a more challenging show for our most experienced performers. Each Academy culminates in a final performance of a different show on the Stark Stage!





#### **Riverside Dance Festival**

#### Student Workshop: July 22 - August 3, 2024

The Riverside Dance Festival is a unique experience in Intensive Summer Study presented by Riverside Theatre and Ballet Vero Beach. Accepted students will experience day-to-day life with Pigeonwing Dance. Students will have the opportunity to take daily technique classes in ballet and contemporary dance forms from Pigeonwing and Riverside's own distinguished faculty. They will also participate in master classes, open rehearsals, and work towards the creation of their own work to be performed alongside Pigeonwing in a mixed repertory concert to culminate the festival.

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Part Lecture.
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Part Discussion.

Love theatre? Want to learn more about the shows being produced at Riverside Theatre? Register for BACKSTAGE EDUCATION classes, and get special access to behind-the-scenes information and discussions about our productions.

#### **Producing Theatre Class**

THURSDAYS, 10AM-12PM JANUARY 11, 18, FEBRUARY 29 & MARCH 7, 2024

Producing Theatre, taught by Jon Moses, Managing Director/COO, will give a comprehensive overview of what it takes to run all aspects of a regional theatre, like Riverside Theatre, and will cover topics such as producing a season of shows, budgets, casting process, contracts, and more.



#### **Show Classes**

THURSDAYS, 10AM-12PM

Day 1: History of the show

**Day 2:** Exploration of the designs, and potential peek at a rehearsal. Chats with directors, designers, cast members, and staff when possible.

**Day 3:** Chats with directors, designers, cast members, and staff when possible. (for mainstage productions only)

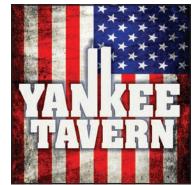


**Kinky Boots** FEBRUARY 8, 15, & 22, 2024

Yankee Tavern MARCH 14 & 21, 2024

On Your Feet MARCH 28, APRIL 4 & 11, 2024











# 

Alex MacWilliam, Jr.
Alex "Buzz" MacWilliam, III
Alex "AMAC" MacWilliam, IV

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### 2024 Featured Speakers



January 15, 2024 4 & 6 p.m. WALTER ISAACSON Elon Musk



February 5, 2024
4 & 6 p.m.

AMBASSADOR JON
HUNTSMAN, JR.

China and Russia



March 4, 2024 4 & 6 p.m. KARL ROVE Presidential Election



April 15, 2024 4 & 6 p.m. LAWRENCE H. SUMMERS The Economy



April 22, 2024 4 & 6 p.m. SHANNON BREAM Supreme Court





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Classic Rock to Motown to R&B to Smooth Jazz.



#### **Riptide**

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Chemistry

The Decade of Decadence, Music from the 80s!



**Reckless Shots** 

Rock'n Blues



**Johnny Nicks Band** 

British Invasion Music from the Fab Four!



The Real Deal

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Luna Pearl

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#### LIVE IN THE LOOP CLOSES AT 8PM



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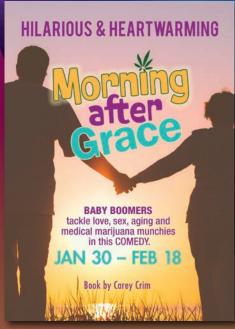
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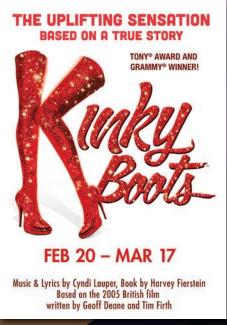


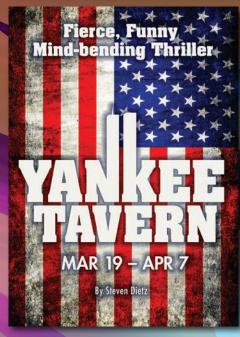


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