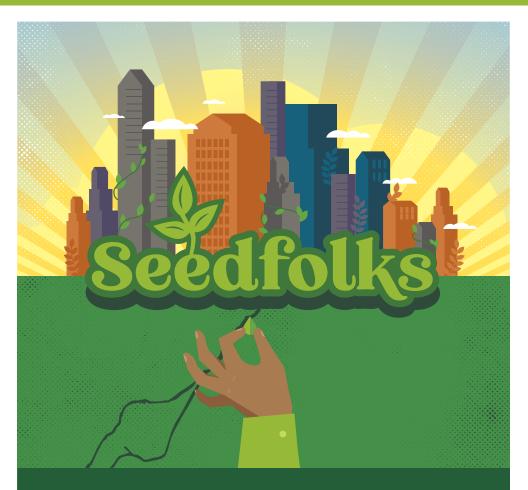
2022/2023 50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON ST. LOUIS' PREMIER THEATER FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES



October 9 – November 6, 2022

Adapted from the book by Newbery Medal-winning author Paul Fleischman

PRODUCED BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH PLAYSCRIPTS, INC. DIRECTED BY JESS SHOEMAKER

LIVE AT THE Grandel Theatre | STREAMING AT METROPLAYS.ORG



Welcome to Seedfolks, THE FIRST MAINSTAGE PRODUCTION OF METRO THEATER COMPANY'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON.

This is a story of community - of how it can grow through faith, respect, and trust in one child's vision and potential. In a way, Seedfolks is a metaphor for MTC - but in our case, the inspiration comes not from one child, but from all young people.

With this production, and throughout this year, we celebrate the many communities who have worked side-by-side to make this 50th anniversary milestone possible:

- The generations of parents who have shared the magic of live performances first with their children, then with their grandchildren.
- The tens of thousands of educators who have opened new worlds for their students through MTC programs.
- The artists, staff, administrators, teaching artists, technicians, volunteers, and more whose talents and care earned MTC an international reputation for excellence.
- The community leaders from MTC's board and generous philanthropists who have shaped and sustained the past, present, and future of the company through their vision and dedication.
- And, most critically, the young people who have experienced an MTC program – nearly two and a half million of you! You are the source of MTC's inspiration, and it is your joy that gives our work purpose.

As we celebrate the power of community through this story on stage, we celebrate each of you.

Thank you – and enjoy!



JULIA FLOOD ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



JOE GFALLER MANAGING DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

66 That's how everybody's grown up: with a little hardship, with a little pain, and a little hope, and a little joy. The problem is we don't know each other, we don't let each other in. It is hard to hate up close.
– MICHELLE OBAMA

This is a gentle story, and a hopeful one. It has lots of hidden treasures. Some of them are onstage today. Others are ones for you to find later...

At home and in your neighborhood, On the way to school and in the humans that you meet, At your fingertips and just beneath the soil...

It ends with community: the kind that is a refuge in a sometimes-scary world. We hope this play is like that: a new friend, a familiar face, an unexpected connection. And the chance to imagine something beautiful...



JESS SHOEMAKER DIRECTOR

seedfolkst

THE CAST

(in alphabetical order)

JOSHUA MAYFIELD

MICHAEL THANH TRAN

TYLER WHITE

DESIGN & PRODUCTION TEAM

DIRECTOR Jess Shoemaker

STAGE MANAGER Jimmy Bernatowicz

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER Journee Carter SCENIC DESIGNERS Margery and Peter Spack

SCENIC ARTIST Cristie Johnston

PROPS MASTER Katie Orr

LIGHTING DESIGNER Jayson M. Lawshee SOUND DESIGNER AhSa-Ti Nu Tyehimba-Ford

COSTUME DESIGNER Delena Bradley

COSTUME ASSISTANT Jazmin Moore

DIALECT COACH Leah Gabriel

METRO THEATER COMPANY PRODUCTION STAFF

PRODUCTION MANAGER Jimmy Bernatowicz ARTISTIC ADMINISTRATION COORDINATOR Julia Hogan Laurenson

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR Erik Kuhn

The video or audio recording of this performance by any means is strictly prohibited.

FRONT OF HOUSE STAFF

HOUSE MANAGEMENT Cameron Tyler Teresa West



CAST BIOGRAPHIES



JOSHUA MAYFIELD (HE/HIM) ENSEMBLE

is very excited to collaborate with Metro Theater Company. Josh started acting as a sophomore in high school landing the role of Frank Jr. in *Catch Me If You Can*. Since then, he has known his passion for the arts was ever-growing, and his journey with acting was just getting started, which led him to take part in several theater productions both in high school and in college. Although he graduated from college with a B.A. in psychology, his desire to pursue acting remains unfazed. He is thrilled to work with Metro Theater Company to help ensure the successful storytelling of *Seedfolks*.



MICHAEL THANH TRAN (HE/HIM) ENSEMBLE

is thrilled to return to Metro Theater Company for his onstage debut, having previously served as the animator for Metro Theater Company's production of Idris Goodwin's *Jacked!* He is an actor, director, and producer based in St. Louis. Regionally, he has performed with St. Louis Shakespeare Festival for three seasons, the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, The Muny, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Arrow Rock Lyceum Theatre, and COCA. His TV and film credits include *Four Day Delay* and *90s Baby*. Michael received a B.F.A. from the Sargent Conservatory for Theatre Arts at Webster University. To learn more about Michael and his work, visit **michaelthanhtran.com**.

INSTAGRAM @michael.thanh.tran #UnapologeticallyAsian

CAST BIOGRAPHIES



TYLER WHITE (SHE/HER) ENSEMBLE

is a native of St. Louis and full-time artist who is elated to continue her work with Metro Theater Company! She graduated from Southeast Missouri State University with a Bachelor of Science in human environmental science. Tyler is granted the duty of serving her role as theater artist both on and off the stage. Her credits on stage include Teaspoon in Sarafina, Talisha in Milk Like Sugar, Yolanda in Crowns, Ensemble in Black Nativity, Lillie Mae in The Me Nobody Knows, Ensemble in Don't Bother Me -I Can't Cope (The Black Rep), Ermina in Crumbs from the Table of Joy (Mustard Seed Theatre), Woman in Yellow in for colored airls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf (Washington University), and Knight/ Ensemble in King Lear (St. Louis Shakespeare Festival), Mr. Dennis/Ensemble in Last Stop on Market Street (Metro Theater Company), and Mrs. Wormwood in Matilda The Musical (COCA). Stage manager credits include The Barber of Seville (Union Avenue Opera) and Hairspray, JR. (COCA). Assistant stage manager credits include Canfield Drive, Two Trains Running, and Nina Simone: Four Women (The Black Rep).





JESS SHOEMAKER (SHE/HER) | DIRECTOR

is a freelance director, playwright, and educator who has spent the last decade working in classical theater and new play development. In addition to directing Seedfolks for Metro Theater Company, her adaptation of The Odyssey, Looking for Ithaca: An Odyssey, will premiere at Asolo Repertory Theatre this fall. Jess recently served as curriculum consultant and contributor for the Hadestown Education Initiative. She also spent five years at the helm of the Great River Shakespeare Festival Professional Training Program, where she developed her own curriculum for training skilled, authentic voices in the performance of classical and heightened texts. Additional directing credits include Sueño (upcoming, Sargent Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Webster University), Little Women and A Midsummer Night's Dream (Grandstreet Theatre), Loverboy, Flora Circular, 12 Ophelias, and Tjipeter: A Search History (University of Texas at Austin). Her plays include Looking for Ithaca: An Odyssey, The Book of Orpah, (& Medea), and 50 Shades of Shakespeare. Jess holds a B.F.A. in acting from Sargent Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Webster University and a M.F.A. in directing from the University of Texas at Austin. When not in rehearsals, Jess can often be found playing endless games of fetch with her dog, Obe Mayhem, INSTAGRAM @chester.marie.shoemaker



JOURNEE CARTER (SHE/HER) | ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

holds a Master of Music from Shenandoah Conservatory at Shenandoah University and a Bachelor of Music from Webster University-both specializing in vocal performance, specifically opera. Since completing the master's program, she has been actively participating in St. Louis-based productions both on and off stage. INSTAGRAM @journeecarter96





MARGERY SPACK (SHE/THEY) & PETER SPACK (HE/HIM) SCENIC DESIGNERS

are scenery and video designers. Recently they designed scenery for The Play That Goes Wrong, Heisenberg, and Safe House at the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis; Home and Two Trains Running at The Black Rep; Brighton Beach Memoirs (2020 Theatre Circle Award Winner) and Intimate Apparel (2018 Theatre Circle Award Winner) at the New Jewish Theatre; and Circus Flora. As Studio Spack Environment Design, Margery and Peter also design corporate theater, product reveals, broadcast news, trade show environments, and private events. They both have Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees from Sargent Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Webster University and reside in their hometown of St. Louis.



KATIE ORR (SHE/HER) | PROPS MASTER

is a designer, painter, theater-marketing aficionado, and graduate of Stephens College. As a theater advocate and native St. Louisan, it's her passion to highlight local theater. She believes there are many incredible unsung companies, which is why she came back to St. Louis to further her mission as a committed designer, artist, and advocate in the St. Louis community. Credits include *Laughter on the 23rd Floor* (New Jewish Theatre Company), *Dress the Part* (The Q Brothers - St. Louis Shakespeare Festival), *Digging Up Dessa* (Metro Theater Company), *Proof* (Moonstone Theatre Company), and *Forgottonia* (Fly North Theatricals). **katiemicorr.com** INSTAGRAM @katiemicorr





JAYSON M. LAWSHEE (HE/HIM) | LIGHTING DESIGNER

is a St. Louis-based lighting and scenic designer, electrician, programmer, and technical director whose experiences includes musical theater, opera, new work, and dance. An alumnus of the Sargent Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Webster University, Jayson holds a B.F.A. in lighting design. Jayson has designed for Metro Theater Company and COCA (Center of Creative Arts) as well as Lyric Rep. St. Louis Shakespeare Festival, and various other companies throughout the area and beyond. Some lighting design credits include Billy Elliot, wUNDERland, and Four Little Girls (COCA), Last Stop on Market Street and Ghost (Metro Theater Company), and Love at the River's Edge (St. Louis Shakespeare Festival). He has additionally served as the assistant lighting designer on the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis' production of Pride and Prejudice. He was the lighting programmer for St. Louis Shakespeare Festival's production of King Lear. He has interned at Wolf Trap Opera Company in Washington D.C. and served as assistant master electrician at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Jayson often refers to the tech table as his "home" and is passionate about making theater in all forms accessible to all people.



AHSA-TI NU TYEHIMBA-FORD (SHE/HER/THEY/THEM) SOUND DESIGNER

is very excited to be a part of Seedfolks with the Metro Theater Company. AhSa-Ti Nu has worked on Kaleidoscope Crown, Big Machine (fka The Butterfly Room), and Billy Elliot with COCA, Peter Pan Jr. with Ignite Theatre, and the 8th Annual San Francisco Son Jarocho Festival, So Soul San Francisco Black Art Salon Series, and Mighty Real: A Fabulous Sylvester Musical with Brava Theater Center in San Francisco. She also recently composed, produced, and directed the film Overlooked Giants: Stories of Queer Women of Color in the Arts. AhSa-Ti Nu holds a Bachelor of Science in sound arts from SAE Expression College for Digital Arts in Emeryville, California. AhSa-Ti Nu is a member of the Recording Academy and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. Learn more about AhSa-Ti Nu at ahsatinu.com. INSTAGRAM @ahsati_nu FACEBOOK @ahsatinumusic





DELENA BRADLEY (SHE/HER) | COSTUME DESIGNER

is a costume and scenic designer currently based out of Chicago, Illinois. Recent credits include costume design for the National High School Institute Theatre Arts Division 2022 program, associate costume designer for *Fences* with American Blues Theater (Chicago), costume design for *Much Ado About Nothing* at Asolo Repertory Theatre/FSU (Sarasota), costume and scenic design for *The Infinite Energy of Ada Lovelace* with Third Eye Theatre Ensemble (Chicago), costume design for *Alcina, Lucio Silla*, and *Albert Herring* at Chicago Summer Opera, and production and costume design for *Addict Named Hal*, a feature film by Lane Stanley (Austin, Texas). Delena received a M.F.A. from the University of Texas at Austin in 2020, and a bachelor's degree in theatre technology and design from Ball State University. INSTAGRAM @delenamakesartsometimes FACEBOOK @delena.bradley



LEAH GABRIEL (SHE/HER) | DIALECT COACH

is an actor, producer, and dialect coach originally from Australia. Previous dialect coaching credits include *Great Expectations* (Great River Shakespeare Festival), *Oliver!* (Quintessence Theatre Group), *The Clearing* (Theater 808 / 59E59 Theaters), *Underland* (terraNOVA Collective / 59E59 Theaters), *Barnum* (Skyline Theatre Company), *Shipwrecked! An Entertainment* and *Sherlock Holmes and the West End Horror* (Cortland Repertory Theatre), and *Cosi* (Australian Made Entertainment). Learn more about Leah at leahgabrielactor.com.

METRO THEATER COMPANY PRODUCTION STAFF

STAGE MANAGER, SEEDFOLKS PRODUCTION MANAGER Jimmy Bernatowicz TECHNICAL DIRECTOR Erik Kuhn ARTISTIC ADMINISTRATION COORDINATOR Julia Hogan Laurenson

MEET THE PLAYWRIGHT

PAUL FLEISCHMAN

Paul Fleischman's books for children and young adults are known for bridging the page and performance. *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices* has been rendered onstage by Word for Word in San Francisco and won the 1989 Newbery Medal. His novels, *Bull Run* and *Seedfolks*, use monologues from multiple vantages to describe battle and the birth of a Cleveland community garden respectively. *Breakout*, a mix of novel and



one-woman show based on an all-day Los Angeles traffic jam, was a finalist for the National Book Award. Using 52 voices to tell a high school senior's story, *Seek* was performed at the Kennedy Center in 2006.

His plays include the one-act *Mind's Eye* and the seven-plays-in-one parody of theatrical warhorses, *Zap.* His work for adults has been published in *The New Yorker* and includes the play *Logomaniacs*, an intellectual freak show exhibiting 26 real life word-obsessives. In 2012, Paul Fleischman was the United States nominee for the international Hans Christian Andersen Award.

ABOUT PLAYSCRIPTS, INC.

Playscripts, Inc. is an independent publisher of new plays and musicals, established in 1998 by brothers and playwrights Doug and Jonathan Rand. The independent theatrical agency represents a great diversity of playwrights, composers, and lyricists. Its commitment to representing artists through innovative channels with a specific focus on creating opportunities for audiences to connect with their great work has spanned two decades and has expanded into representing over 1,000 of the live theater industries' most notable contributors. Playscripts is an imprint of Broadway Licensing, a full-service theatrical licensing and producorial group. Playscripts, Inc. strives to curate a catalog of plays that meets the needs of theater makers and exceeds the expectations of audiences. It's at the forefront of play publishing, providing a unique and extensive suite of services for playwrights and customers alike. Using technology, innovation, and creativity, Playscripts, Inc. forges connections between playwrights and new audiences. Learn more at playscripts.com/about-us.



METRO THEATER COMPANY LEADERSHIP





has directed Digging Up Dessa, The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show, It's a Wonderful Life, The Girl Who Swallowed a Cactus, The Hundred Dresses, Frida Libre, Bud, Not Buddy, Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates, The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane, And In This Corner: Cassius Clay, Out of the Box, Talkin' Trash. Afflicted: Daughters of Salem. Unsorted, and Sav Something. Do Something! for Metro Theater Company since she moved to St. Louis to become artistic director in February 2014. Previously, Julia spent 16 years as artistic director of Eckerd Theater Company in Clearwater, Florida where she commissioned such plays as Vote?, by Eric Coble, provoked by Florida's role in the 2000 presidential election, and Battledrum by Doug Cooney with Lee Ahlin, a musical about the effects of war on young people through the lens of Civil War drummer boys, subsequently produced at Metro Theater Company. A graduate of Northwestern University, Julia spent seven years as a resident member of the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble in Pennsylvania, a unique artist-led ensemble founded under the guidance of legendary acting teacher Alvina Krause, before following a freelance career as actor/director/playwright/ teacher. Julia served on the national board of directors of Theatre for Young Audiences/USA from 2011 to 2019, and brings more than 40 years of experience to her role as artistic director of Metro Theater Company.



JOE GFALLER (HE/HIS) | MANAGING DIRECTOR

joined the Metro Theater Company team in 2019. During his tenure to date, Metro Theater Company has seen dramatic growth in both its audience base and its donor base. In partnership with Artistic Director Julia Flood, he has co-led the company through its recent evolutions during the COVID-19 pandemic, from its virtual programming to its safe return to live performances. Prior to joining the MTC team, Joe received national recognition for his work in building young, diverse, and national audiences for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis during his tenure as director of marketing and public relations - and for expanding OTSL's civic footprint as the producer of the company's Opera Tastings series, through artist community tours, and the creation and growth of its Engagement + Inclusion Task Force. His career has also included roles with the American Repertory Theater, the Alliance Theater, and 7 Stages, and consulting projects for the National Blues Museum, the Utah Symphony, and the documentary film Flint: The Poisoning of an American City. He has directed over two dozen professional or university productions, including regional premieres by David Mamet, Caryl Churchill, and others. A graduate of Harvard University, he also serves as adjunct faculty at Webster University in the Arts Management and Leadership MFA program.

Seedfolks

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We are grateful for the generous support of so many in our community. Without you, Metro Theater Company's work would not be possible. We include a list of all supporters who have made contributions or pledges between July 1, 2021 and September 15, 2022.

We regret any inadvertent omissions from this list. If you made a pledge or a gift and do not see your name listed here, please contact Managing Director Joe Gfaller at joe@metroplays.org.

тне Carol North Nicholas Kryah

SOCIETY

The Carol North and Nicholas Kryah Benefactor Society was established to honor four decades of leadership by Artistic Director Carol North and Resident Artist Nicholas Kryah.

Members of the Benefactor Society contribute a minimum of \$1000 annually to ensure that Carol and Nicholas' legacy of meaningful artistic work for young audiences continues to grow.

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MISSION STATEMENT

Inspired by the intelligence and emotional wisdom of young people, we create professional theater, foster inclusive community, and nurture meaningful learning through the arts.

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Metro Theater Company is St. Louis' premier professional theater for youth and families and St. Louis' third-oldest professional theater company. Since 1973, Metro Theater Company has been creating productions that respect young people's intelligence, tell compelling stories, stimulate curiosity and provoke thoughtful reflection. The Company has reached a total audience of more than two million and has a national reputation for excellence in the field of professional theater for young audiences. Metro Theater Company has received major honors and awards, both locally and nationally. The Company is not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization and is a proud member of the Theatre Communications Group (the national service organization for non-profit professional theaters), Theatre for Young Audiences/USA (the U.S. chapter of the international association of theaters for young people), and Missouri Citizens for the Arts.



SHARE YOUR MTC MEMORIES — METRO THEATER COMPANY IS 50! —

To help celebrate, we are collecting oral histories from anyone who has been part of our past.

- Were you a child who saw a MTC production years ago?
- An artist who performed with us?
- A parent of a summer arts program or camp participant?
- A teacher whose classroom we visited?
- A caregiver who enjoyed sharing a MTC production with a young person?
- A former staff member, board member, or volunteer who made the impossible... possible?
- A supporter who believed in the Metro Theater magic from the early days?

Your story may appear in our video series, lobby displays, or even a commemorative book that will help others learn about MTC's impact over the last 50 years.

PLEASE VISIT METROPLAYS.ORG/HAPPY-BIRTHDAY-MTC TO LEARN HOW TO PARTICIPATE!



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



THESE QUESTIONS ARE GREAT TO USE ON THE RIDE HOME OR ANY TIME AFTER YOU HAVE WATCHED THE PERFORMANCE!

- 1. The characters in *Seedfolks* learn from one another about gardening. Have you ever learned about something from a neighbor?
- 2. If you had the chance to plant something in a garden, what would you plant?
- 3. There are many characters in *Seedfolks*. Which character did you connect with the most?
- 4. During the play, lots of the neighbors make assumptions about one another and those assumptions turn out to be wrong. Have you ever made an assumption about someone and learned you were wrong?
- 5. What is a change you could make in your community?
- 6. Why do you think they chose to have three actors play so many different characters?
- 7. What did the actors do to make their characters different from one another?
- 8. The characters in *Seedfolks* find different ways to help one another. When have you helped someone else or when has someone helped you?



SAVE THESE DATES!



Let the celebration begin!

BE A PART OF OUR 2022/2023 50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

SEP 9 - OCT 16: Bold, Brave, Curious! WORLD PREMIERE School Tour & The Sun Theater

WE ARE

OCT 9 - NOV 6: Seedfolks The Grandel Theatre FEB 5 - MAR 5: Spells of the Sea WORLD PREMIERE The Grandel Theatre

> APR 2-16: Go, Dog. Go! The Big Top