



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

SPILLS OF the Sea

A NEW MUSICAL



FeBbruary 5 - March 5, 2023
GRANDEL THEATRE

World Premiere by special arrangement
with Megan Ann Rasmussen Productions

Book, music, and lyrics by **Guinevere Govea**
with additional creative contributions by **Anna Pickett**

Based on the podcast created by Guinevere Govea

Directed by Julia Flood

Music Direction by Deborah Wicks La Puma

LIVE AT THE GRANDEL THEATRE | STREAMING AT METROPLAYS.ORG



SPeLLS of the Sea^o

A NEW MUSICAL



WeLcOMe

By joining us at *Spells of the Sea*, you are part of an undeniably exciting moment in Metro Theater Company's history. Not only is this our 50th anniversary season - a landmark only two other professional theaters in St. Louis have reached - but with this production, MTC is proud to produce our first project with commercial producing partners.

With thanks to a partnership with Megan Ann Rasmussen Productions, *Spells of the Sea* is a bigger musical than you've seen MTC produce before - including artists on stage and off from here in St. Louis and several other corners of the country. We can't say yet where *Spells of the Sea* will head after its St. Louis world premiere, but we can say that there will certainly be more exciting places to see this beautiful musical in the US in the years ahead.

Thank you for being with us to see it **first** here in our own backyard. You are seeing the birth of something very special at the Grandel Theatre, and in years to come, we hope you'll be able to look back on this moment remembering this music, this story, and the joy you shared with your family in seeing it here.

Spells of the Sea is a perfect production to be the centerpiece of our 50th season, as it speaks deeply to MTC's commitment since its earliest years to create new work that responds to the needs of young people with courage, respect, and joy. Gwenny Govea is a radiant young talent in musical theater - and so just as we encourage young people in our audience, so too do we seek to further their careers as artists on stage and off...or in Gwenny's case, both on stage *and* off.

We sincerely hope you'll join in this wonderful celebration - of MTC, of this production, and of the potential for the future of this vibrant art form - through seeing *Spells of the Sea*. Please tell your friends about the show - and join us again this season at *Go, Dog. Go!* under the Big Top (April 2-16), at our 50th anniversary gala *After Dark* (April 22), or both!



JOE GFALLER
MANAGING DIRECTOR





JULIA FLOOD
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

At the end of a new play development workshop on *Spells of the Sea* last fall, the team was discussing the key takeaways of the story. What are the important themes and plot points for the audience to understand?

At this work session, in addition to actors, musicians, designers, playwrights, and staff, were two teenaged girls. The two talked about how real Finley's dilemma felt to them, and how the play captured feelings they, too, had experienced over the last few years. A staff member later shared about the play, "sometimes trusting yourself is the biggest act of courage."

This conversation was about a play with pirates and princesses, mermaids, and monsters.

This season, Metro Theater Company reflects on 50 years of producing new work inspired by the intelligence and emotional wisdom of the young people we serve.

Creating a new play is an act of courage by the playwright, and by the producers, artists, and audience who say YES to going on the journey with them.

Guinevere "Gweny" Govea spent much of her senior year as a theater student at UT Austin stuck in a room. When the world shut down in 2020, she, like all of us, struggled to find ways to get outside of herself, to create, to connect, to grow. Fortunately, the imagination can take us anywhere. As Gweny's world got smaller, she began to imagine something big, something epic, a fantastical musical journey. With her friend, director, and later co-writer Anna Pickett, these imaginings evolved into a five-part podcast about the adventures of a teenager named Finley and an old lighthouse keeper called H.S. Crank. Now, *Spells of the Sea* brings that adventure onto the MTC stage in this world premiere musical.

Where would any of us have been during the darkest moments of the pandemic without the creative voices of others – in books, films, on television, websites and podcasts – to help us envision future possibilities beyond the four walls of our quarantine?

Spells of the Sea takes us on a journey first imagined in darkness and isolation and brings us together to envision a future filled with light, hope, joy, and new-found family.

Exploring new work and encouraging new voices for the theater has been core to the work of Metro Theater Company for five decades. I am reminded of the dozens of new plays that first premiered on our stages and of the importance of championing those fresh voices. I dream of the plays that will be written in the decades to come by the children in our audience today. As we watch *Spells of the Sea* together, I celebrate all those who came before and I cannot wait for the future that is yet to be!



SPELLS of the Sea^o

A NEW MUSICAL

THE CAST

(in alphabetical order)

PRINCESS AND OTHERS
Molly Burris

TEACHER AND OTHERS
Syreha Conaway

**PEARL,
FINLEY FRANKFURTER
(UNDERSTUDY), AND OTHERS**
Hannah Geisz

H.S. CRANK
Jon Gentry

**FINLEY
FRANKFURTER**
Guinevere Govea

**ASSISTANT PIRATE
CAPTAIN AND OTHERS**
Mitchell Manar

**FERRIS FRANKFURTER
AND OTHERS**
Colin McLaughlin

**PIRATE CAPTAIN
AND OTHERS**
Noah Laster

**MERMAID, SHOPKEEPER,
AND MONSTER**
Tyler White

DESIGN & PRODUCTION TEAM

DIRECTOR
Julia Flood

MUSIC DIRECTOR
Deborah Wicks La Puma

DRAMATURG
Dr. Megan Alrutz

STAGE MANAGER
Jimmy Bernatowicz

SCENIC DESIGNERS
Margery and Peter Spack

COSTUME DESIGNER
Cynthia Nordstrom

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Jayson M. Lawshee

SOUND DESIGNER
Rusty Wandall

**ASSOCIATE
MUSIC DIRECTOR,
ORCHESTRATOR,
AND COPYIST**
Fernanda Douglas

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
AND CO-WRITER**
Anna Pickett

CHOREOGRAPHER
Tyler White

PROPS ARTISAN
Katie Orr

SCENIC ARTIST
Cristie Johnston

COSTUME ASSISTANT
Nathan Lessly

OLFACTORY DESIGN
Pura: Mara Dumski &
Hope Freeman

Scent Marketing Inc.:
Caroline & Alex Fabrigas
**Takasago International
Corporation**

**COSTUME DESIGN
STUDIO ASSISTANTS**
Juliette Roy
Matthew Solomon

METRO THEATER COMPANY PRODUCTION STAFF

**PRODUCTION
MANAGER**
Jimmy Bernatowicz

**TECHNICAL
DIRECTOR**
Erik Kuhn

**ARTISTIC
ADMINISTRATION
COORDINATOR**
Julia Hogan Laurenson

FRONT OF HOUSE STAFF

**HOUSE
MANAGEMENT**
Teresa West
Cameron Tyler

CAST BIOGRAPHIES



MOLLY BURRIS (SHE/HER) PRINCESS AND OTHERS

is originally from Austin, Texas and holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in musical theatre from the Sargent Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Webster University. Molly was recently seen at the New Jewish Theatre as Louise Rabiner in *Dear Jack, Dear Louise* and in the ensemble of *Jerry's Girls*. Other recent credits include Dromia of Red Cross in *Winds of Change* (St. Louis Shakespeare Festival's 9th Shakespeare in the Streets), Olivia in *Twelfth Night* (Piknik Theatre), and Mary Debenham in *Murder on the Orient Express* (Charleston Stage Company). She is also MTC's admin and operations associate.

INSTAGRAM @mollyburris



SYRHEA CONAWAY (SHE/HER) TEACHER AND OTHERS

is a teaching artist, multi-instrumentalist, composer, producer, and music instructor in St. Louis. She has performed and spoken for TEDx Gateway Arch, the Arts and Education Council of St. Louis, moderated conversations with Damon Davis for USDAC and RAC's Culture/Shift 2016 as well as St. Louis Blues Society's Race and Blues series. She's produced live sound design for the Peabody Award-winning podcast *To the Best of Our Knowledge*. Conaway, the DJ-in-residence of 2019 at the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, has returned to Metro Theater Company after making her acting debut in MTC's production of *Wonderland: Alice's Rock & Roll Adventure* followed by MTC's production of *In My Granny's Garden*. Currently, she composes original music for nonprofit organizations such as Chamber Project St. Louis and the National Blues Museum, local theater companies, and performs regularly in the region as Syna So Pro. SOCIAL MEDIA @synasopro



HANNAH GEISZ (SHE/HER) PEARL, FINLEY FRANKFURTER (UNDERSTUDY), AND OTHERS

is ecstatic to work with this truly fantastic team of artists! Previous credits include *Winds of Change* (St. Louis Shakespeare Festival's 9th Shakespeare in the Streets), *Othello* (St. Louis Shakespeare Festival), *Cymbeline* (St. Louis Shakespeare Festival), *The Tunemith* (Bluff City Theatre), *The Lonesome West* (West End Players Guild), *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* (Cats Cradle Theatre), *Tonya and the Totes in Subterrastrata* (SATE's Aphra Behn Festival), and *Into the Woods* (The Muny). 1 Cor. 1:31 | Hannahgeisz.com



CAST BIOGRAPHIES



JON GENTRY (HE/HIM)

H.S. CRANK

makes his Metro Theater Company debut in *Spells of the Sea*. Previous TYA roles include Elephant in *Elephant and Piggie's "We Are in a Play!"*, Templeton in *Charlotte's Web*, Toad in *A Year with Frog and Toad*, Ollie in *Rock, Paper, Scissors* and its Dutch incarnation

Stein, Papier, Schaar with Speeltheater Holland. Jon originated the role of Benjamin in *The Yellow Boat*. Other productions include roles in *Anything Goes*, *Angels in America*, *The Pillowman*, *The Producers*, and *Around the World in 80 Days*. He has a 40-year connection to Childsplay Theatre Company in Arizona. In 2009, Jon was awarded a Lunt-Fontanne Fellowship, making him one of 10 original artists to receive the fellowship. [INSTAGRAM](#) / [FACEBOOK](#) @jongentry

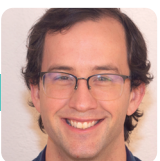


GUINEVERE GOVEA (SHE/HER)

FINLEY FRANKFURTER & PLAYWRIGHT AND COMPOSER

is an award-winning actress, writer, and composer from Austin, Texas. She is a recent graduate from the University of Texas at Austin, where she received a Bachelor of Arts in theatre and dance as well

as a bachelor's degree in journalism. Guinevere's first musical, *Trash! The Musical*, was a semi-finalist for the O'Neil National Musical Theatre Conference in 2021. Her second, *Spells of the Sea*, won Best Original Script at the B. Iden Payne Awards in Austin. Recent acting credits include Seph in the short film *Summa Culpa Laude* (director Echo Nguyen), for which she won Best Actress at the ATX Short Film Festival, Anne Steele in *Sense and Sensibility* (UT Theatre and Dance), and multiple roles in network television and commercials. Guinevere currently works as a marketing and communications consultant for The Alchemy Theatre in Austin.



MITCHELL MANAR (HE/THEY)

ASSISTANT PIRATE CAPTAIN AND OTHERS

is an actor-creator and musician currently residing in St. Louis. He is interested in work that centers movement, music, play, community, and the body. He trained in theater at Washington University in St. Louis and at the Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theatre in Blue

Lake, California. While *Spells of the Sea* is his first major performance role since the pandemic, he has stayed busy doing experiments with puppets and masks, attending an Alexander Technique teacher training program at Soma Studios in Minneapolis, and co-teaching a clown class to an integrated group of disabled and nondisabled adults.

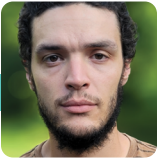


CAST BIOGRAPHIES



COLIN McLAUGHLIN (HE/HIS) **FERRIS FRANKFURTER AND OTHERS**

is a St. Louis-based actor, musician, playwright, and teaching artist, who has worked with Bread and Roses Missouri, St. Louis Shakespeare Festival, A Call to Conscience: Interactive Theater for Social Change (C2C), Intersect Arts Center, and COCA. Last spring, he was on stage as Charles Kettering in *Big Machine* at COCA and musician and ensemble in Metro Theater Company's production of *In My Granny's Garden*. In the fall of 2022, he portrayed Andrej in RS Theatrics' production of *Once*. Colin comes from a family of musicians and is an experienced songwriter well-versed in the traditions of jazz, blues, and folk music. He wrote the original jazz score for *Mrs. Palmer's Honey*, an 8-part audio play produced by Bread and Roses Missouri premiering later this year. Colin is a resident teaching artist with St. Louis Shakespeare Festival at Summer High School and a project assistant at CHIPs Health and Wellness Center. He is also a founding member of The Action Art Collaborative. He received his Bachelor of Science in social work from Saint Louis University in 2018.



NOAH LASTER (HE/HIS) **PIRATE CAPTAIN AND OTHERS**

is an actor, musician, writer, and filmmaker who has been a part of several St. Louis theater productions, including *The Worker's Opera* (Bread and Roses Missouri), *Jailbird* (Bread and Roses Missouri), and *Winds of Change* (St. Louis Shakespeare Festival's 9th Shakespeare in the Streets). Noah graduated with a bachelor's degree in film production in 2017 from Webster University and has spent the last several years honing his crafts. He is currently working on several original projects, including his first album of original music to be released next year.

SOCIAL MEDIA @noahqaboah



TYLER WHITE (SHE/HER) **MERMAID, SHOPKEEPER, AND MONSTER & CHOREOGRAPHER**

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. She is Metro Theater Company's bookkeeper. 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 girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf* (Washington University), Knight/Ensemble in *King Lear* (St. Louis Shakespeare Festival), Mr. Dennis/Ensemble in *Last Stop on Market Street* (Metro Theater Company), Ensemble in *Seedfolks* (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).

DESIGN & PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES



DEBORAH WICKS LA PUMA (SHE/HER) MUSIC DIRECTOR is one of the most produced Theatre for Young Audiences artists working today. Some of her most popular musicals include *Ella Enchanted: The Musical* (based on the book by Gail Carson Levine), *Frida Libre*, and *Einstein is a Dummy* with playwright Karen Zacarias, and the Off-Broadway hit *She Persisted: The Musical* (based on the book by Chelsea Clinton) with playwright Adam Tobin. She has created multiple shows with bestselling children's author Mo Willems: *Elephant and Piggie's "We Are in a Play!"*, *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Rock Experience*, and *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!: The Musical*. The screen adaptation of *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Underground Rock Experience* was released on HBO Max in 2022, and she is currently writing for the upcoming animated series *Unlimited Squirrels!*, soon appearing on Cartoon Network. As a music director and orchestrator, she has worked with major regional theater companies across the country, including the Guthrie Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, South Coast Repertory, La Jolla Playhouse, and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. She received her M.F.A. from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and her bachelor's degree from Stanford University. Her honors include an Off-Broadway Alliance Award for Best Family Musical, the Jane Chambers Playwriting Award, an NEA New American Works Grant, two Parents' Choice Awards, and a Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Musical Adaptation. A proud Mexican American and "Navy brat" who grew up in Brazil, Portugal, and California, La Puma is a member of TYA/USA, ASCAP and The Dramatists Guild. Mother to three daughters and Mimi the Cat, La Puma lives in Southern California with her PR agent and loving husband, Chris.



DR. MEGAN ALRUTZ (SHE/HER) DRAMATURG is interim chair for the Department of Theatre and Dance at the University of Texas at Austin, where she teaches in the Drama and Theatre for Youth and Communities area. Her research and practice focus on creating new and interdisciplinary performance, storytelling (live and digital), and drama-based pedagogy. A graduate of Arizona State University and Rutgers University, Megan works nationally and internationally as a performance-maker, director, and dramaturg. She creates and directs visually dynamic and poetic theater for the very young and works as the executive producer and dramaturg for award-winning author/illustrator, playwright, and screenwriter Mo Willems. Megan recently devised and directed an original theater for the very young production called *Gimme Please!* (with Sam Provenzano and UT Austin students, premiered at the Alliance Theatre in partnership with the Paperboats Platform) and is co-creating a new TVY piece called *Sea of Stars* with UT grads. Megan is co-founder of the Performing Justice Project and the Center for Imagining and Performing Justice. Her work has premiered at the Alliance Theatre, Arts on the Horizon, Metro Theater Company, Orlando Repertory Theatre, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and presenting houses throughout the US.

DESIGN & PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES



MARGERY SPACK (SHE/THEY) AND PETER SPACK (HE/HIM)

SCENIC DESIGNERS are scenery and video designers. Recently they designed scenery for *Seedfolks* at Metro Theater Company; *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.



CYNTHIA NORDSTROM (SHE/HER) COSTUME DESIGNER is a fashion design-based costume designer based in New York City. She has been designing costumes and creatures for family-based shows and tours for more than 20 years with Disney, Universal Studios, Illuminations, Sanrio, Nintendo, and Moonbug. She is delighted to be working with MTC on this new regional production. Off-Broadway credits include *Sistas: The Musical*, *Jewtopia*, *Silent Laughter*, and *Evil Dead: The Musical*. Regional credit: *That Championship Season*. Broadway credit: *Rocktopia*. cynthianordstrom.com

INSTAGRAM [@cynthianordstromdesigner](https://www.instagram.com/cynthianordstromdesigner)



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); *Seedfolks*, *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.

DESIGN & PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES



RUSTY WANDALL (HE/HIM) SOUND DESIGNER is excited to return for his twelfth year working with Metro Theater Company. He is currently an AV systems engineer at TSI Global and previously served as the head of sound design at the Sargent Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Webster University and the sound supervisor at the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis. Rusty has also had the pleasure of working with companies such as St. Louis Shakespeare Festival, Shooting Star Productions, Variety Theatre, and other regional theaters across the country. Rusty is the vice commissioner for conference operations for the United States Institute of Theatre Technology and a member of the Theatrical Sound Designers and Composers Association.



ANNA PICKETT (SHE/HER) ASSISTANT DIRECTOR AND CO-WRITER is thrilled to be working with Metro Theater Company for this production! After directing the original podcast version of *Spells of the Sea*, she is excited to help bring the piece to life onstage. She is a theater-maker and educator originally from Dallas, Texas. Her focus involves creating immersive and impactful experiences for children and families, both in theatrical and museum settings. She holds a Bachelor of Science in applied learning and development from the University of Texas at Austin.



KATIE ORR (SHE/HER) PROPS ARTISAN 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. Technical credits include *The Bee Play* (New Jewish Theatre Company), *Seedfolks* (Metro Theater Company), *Proof* (Moonstone Theatre Company), *Annie* (Gateway Center for Performing Arts), and *Forgottonia* (Fly North Theatricals). katiemicorr.com | [INSTAGRAM @katiemicorr](https://www.instagram.com/katiemicorr)



FERNANDA DOUGLAS (SHE/THEY) ASSOCIATE MUSIC DIRECTOR, ORCHESTRATOR, AND COPYIST is an New York City-based composer and music director from Santa Barbara, California. TYA commissions include *The Hobbit* (upcoming; First Stage, WI); *Sweet Tooth and Scouts!* (Brooklyn Children's Theatre, NY). New York City production credits include *Jolie Rouge* (workshop, Columbia University); *From Russia, With Love* (Midtown International Theatre Festival); *Plath*. (NY Fringe Festival). She was the associate music director and rehearsal piano for *Moulin Rouge* (Broadway); *The Unknown Soldier* (Playwright's Horizons); *Monsoon Wedding* (with Mira Nair; Doha, Qatar). Fernanda is an active member of the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop and an alumna of Columbia University. [INSTAGRAM @bananderfone](https://www.instagram.com/bananderfone)

DESIGN & PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES



NATHAN LESSLY (HE/THEY) COSTUME ASSISTANT is a recent St. Louis transplant and is excited to be returning to Metro Theater Company after serving as the costume designer for *Bold, Brave, Curious!* and costume assistant for *Last Stop on Market Street* and *In My Granny's Garden*. He spent his childhood in Spearfish, South Dakota, where he was involved in multiple productions at the historic Matthews Opera House, including *Clue: The Musical*, *Red*, and *Deadeye's Wild West*. He went on to study costuming and musical theatre at the University of Central Oklahoma, where he worked on *The Pirates of Penzance* and (appropriately) *Meet Me in St. Louis*. Currently, he utilizes his sewing skills by stitching for local clients and designers and sewing clothes for himself. Nathan's designs focus on sustainability, using recycled materials, and giving new life to second-hand pieces.

METRO THEATER COMPANY PRODUCTION STAFF

**STAGE MANAGER,
SPELLS OF THE SEA
PRODUCTION MANAGER**
Jimmy Bernatowicz



**TECHNICAL
DIRECTOR**
Erik Kuhn



**ARTISTIC ADMINISTRATION
COORDINATOR**
Julia Hogan Laurenson



ADDITIONAL MARKETING SUPPORT FOR THIS PRODUCTION

**COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT LEAD**
Mara Herman



**COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**
Deanna Knudsen



DIGITAL CONTENT
Caroline Tattersfield

**DIGITAL ADVERTISING
CONSULTANT**
Monica Hammond
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SPeLLS OF the Sea^o

A NEW MUSICAL

Meet the PRoDUcing PaRtner



MEGAN ANN RASMUSSEN PRODUCTIONS

MEGAN ANN RASMUSSEN (SHE/HER) is the president of MAR Productions. For more than 20 years she has served as an award-winning producer, director, and educator, creating theater that uplifts and strengthens. She is thrilled to help bring *Spells of the Sea* to life and celebrate the voices of Gwenny Govea and Anna Pickett.

Megan Ann's Broadway credits include *A Beautiful Noise: The Neil Diamond Musical* (INVESTOR) and *Joy: The Musical* (CO-PRODUCER), a new show with Tony award-winning producer Ken Davenport. Additional credits include Barry Manilow's *Harmony* (INVESTOR), *The Griswold's Broadway Vacation* (INVESTOR), *Kinky Boots* (Off-Broadway | INVESTOR), *True North* (regional | INVESTOR), and *Heaven Come Home* (regional | PRODUCER). Her directing credits include *Senora Tortuga* and *Cinderella Eats Rice and Beans: A Salsa Fairy Tale*.

Megan Ann served as president of Theater for Young Audiences/USA and delegate to the International Association of Theater for Children and Young People. She taught theater at three universities in Utah and was founder and producing artistic director of The Firehouse Theatre for Youth. Megan Ann's articles and photos can be seen in *Stage of the Art* and *TYA Today*. She is the founder of the new podcast *Bit by Bit*, Broadway's only podcast dedicated to the producer/investor relationship.

Megan Ann expresses many thanks to Julia, Joe, Megan, Debbie, and Fernanda. Love to #DavidManOfMyDreams.

Learn more at MeganAnnRasmussen.com

METRO THEATER COMPANY LEADERSHIP



JULIA FLOOD (SHE/HER) | ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

SPELLS OF THE SEA DIRECTOR 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 *Say 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.



SPELLS OF THE SEA

A NEW MUSICAL

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Brian Macke
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 Emily Valencia
 Vandy Wood

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**CAROL NORTH
NICHOLAS KRYAH**
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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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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.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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

1. What character in *Spells of the Sea* do you relate to the most and why?
2. The playwright, Gwenny Govea, created *Spells of the Sea* in the spring of 2020 during the COVID-19 outbreak. Did you try any new hobbies or skills during that time? If so, what were they?
3. Many people help Finley during her quest for the Elixir of Life. Can you think of a time someone else helped you solve a problem? How did they help? Have you ever helped someone else solve a problem?
4. In *Spells of the Sea*, the pirates take other people's feelings because they have a hard time feeling their own feelings. Have you ever had a hard time expressing how you feel? How did you work through that?
5. Crank has a difficult time coping after the loss of his daughter, Pearl. Have you ever had to let go of something? What was that experience like? What are some ways that can help with processing loss?
6. Do you think H.S. Crank and Finley could be considered family?
7. Is there someone in your life who isn't blood-related that you consider family? What do you admire about that person?
8. How is the town different at the end of the play when compared to the start of the play?



MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

Finley goes on an adventure and learns about the power of believing in herself. Sometimes it helps to remind ourselves that we are capable of greatness!

Write a message to yourself and open it at the end of the school year. You may use the questions and prompts below to help you get started!

1. What is one thing you'd like to accomplish this year?
2. Describe how you feel right now and what you enjoy doing.
3. What are you most proud of in your life so far? What do you want to be proud of at the end of this school year?
4. Write 3 things you like about yourself. What are your strengths?
5. Give your future self some encouragement and love!

FOLD





★
**BOOK YOUR
CAMP SESSION
TODAY!**



**Grand Theater Camp
MIDDLE SCHOOL
Intro to Acting**

June 5-9: Mon-Fri 9am-4pm
June 12-16: Mon-Fri 9am-4pm
Beginner campers entering grades 6-8
LOCATION: SLU, Midtown

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June 20-30: Tue-Fri, 9am-4pm
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LOCATION: SLU, Midtown

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July 10-14: Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm
Campers entering 9th grade through recent grads
LOCATION: SLU, Midtown



Creative Arts Camp

July 24-28: Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm
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Campers entering Pre-K*-5th grade
LOCATION: New City School, Central West End
*Campers must be age 4 by July 24, 2023 to enroll

REGISTER ONLINE AT metroplays.org



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](https://metroplays.org/happy-birthday-mtc)
TO LEARN HOW TO PARTICIPATE!



SAVE THE DATE

Metro

**THEATER
COMPANY**

1973 **50** YEARS 2023



JOIN US TO CELEBRATE

**METRO THEATER COMPANY'S
50TH ANNIVERSARY**

APRIL 22 2023

THE BIG TOP

**IN GRAND CENTER
AT 6:30PM**

Join us as we harken back to our roots and our original name, Metro Theater Circus, for a joyful evening of music, memories, and magic.



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WE ARE

50

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

FEB 5 - MAR 5:

Spells of the Sea

WORLD PREMIERE

The Grandel Theatre

OCT 9 - NOV 6:

Seedfolks

The Grandel Theatre

APR 2-16:

Go, Dog. Go!

The Big Top