

STUDIO

FRIENDS,



In recent months, many of the issues raised in this play played out just five miles from here, in the town of Brentwood, MD. That small community was rocked by controversy when its part-time mayor agreed to hire a man named Eric Reyes as a public maintenance laborer—to mow grass, sweep litter, and trim trees. The problem: Eric Reyes had participated in a violent gang rape when he was 17. The mayor believed that after 16 ½ years behind bars, he deserved a second chance. She spoke of forgiveness, understanding, and growth. To put it mildly, others in Brentwood disagreed strenuously.

Like David Auburn, who wrote *Summer, 1976*, Bruce Norris is a well-known American playwright being produced this season at Studio for the first time. Bruce is known as a provocateur. A flame-thrower. A rascal. With an instinctive aversion to orthodoxy, Bruce tends to put his finger on cultural sore spots and apply pressure.

In some respects, *Downstate* fits the Bruce Norris mold. But I think it also represents a significant departure for him. I contend that in the Bruce Norris catalog, this play is uniquely and especially humane. Its core question: can you, can our society, and can our system of justice consider extending compassion, empathy, or forgiveness to the most loathed among us?

Vengeance versus forgiveness. Mercy versus punishment. This debate has animated drama since its birth. In our current political and cultural moment, I find these concerns to be as resonant as they have ever been. These days, I'm especially grateful to work in the theatre, which is particularly good at complicating simplistic narratives and humanizing the easily dismissed.

Its content isn't the only thing that makes *Downstate* so notable. It's also a mature, well-built drama, with expertly delineated characters, sizzling dialogue, masterful tone shifts, and a wicked sense of humor that deliberately makes it difficult to find your moral footing.

An accomplished group of theatre artists have come together to produce this play, a mix of Studio veterans and debutants. We've had a remarkably good time, all things considered. I'm pleased that you're here to witness the fruits of our labor, and I hope that this is the kind of play that stays with you after you leave.

Yours.

For a note from the dramaturg and more background information on Downstate



studiotheatre.org/downstate

David Muse Artistic Director

STUDIO THEATRE

DAVID MUSE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR **REBECCA ENDE LICHTENBERG** EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PRESENTS

DOWNSTATE

BRUCE NORRIS

DIRECTED BY **DAVID MUSE**

Downstate is presented through special arrangement with TRW PLAYS, 1180 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 640, New York, NY 10036, www.trwplavs.com

Playwrights Horizons, Inc., New York City, produced the New York Premiere of Downstate in 2022

Downstate was co-commissioned and its World Premiere was presented by Steppenwolf Theatre Company (Anna Shapiro, Artistic Director: David Schmitz. Executive Producer) and The National Theatre, London (Rufus Norris, Artistic Director; Lisa Burger, Executive Director)

The Director and/or Choreographer is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union.

The scenic, costume, lighting and sound designers in LORT Theatres are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA829 of the IATSE.

SET DESIGNER **ALEXANDER WOODWARD**

COSTUME DESIGNER **DANIELLE PRESTON**

LIGHTING DESIGNER STACEY DEROSIER

SOUND DESIGNER **KENNY NEAL**

FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER ROBB HUNTER

INTIMACY DIRECTOR SIERRA YOUNG

DRAMATURG CHAD DEXTER KINSMAN

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER JOHN KEITH HALL

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER **DELANEY DUNSTER**

TAKEOVER ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER KACIE PIMENTEL'

DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION JEFFERY MARTIN

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR **RHIANNON SANDERS**

CASTING MCCORKLE CASTING

UNDERWRITTEN BY SUSAN AND DIXON BUTLER SARI HORNSTEIN



ANDY TIM GETMAN*



FELIX RICHARD RUIZ HENRY*



EΜ **EMILY KESTER***



KELLI BLACKWELL*



FRED DAN DAILY*



EFFIE IRENE HAMILTON



DEE STEPHEN **CONRAD MOORE***



NEIL DAWSON*



GIO **JAYSEN WRIGHT***



COP LENNY MENDEZ

UNDERSTUDIES

ANDY, DEE, GIO **NEIL DAWSON***

EM, IVY, EFFIE **LENNY MENDEZ**

FELIX AND COPS
HANSEL RAMIREZ

FRED NICK TORRES

SETTING: A group home for sex offenders, downstate Illinois

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, EQUITY the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

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PLAYWRIGHT



BRUCE NORRIS

is the author of Downstate, which received the 2024 Obie Award for Playwriting. Other plays include Clybourne Park, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama (2011) and the Olivier Award and was nominated for an Evening Standard Theatre Award and three Tony Awards. He also wrote The Low Road, The Qualms, Domesticated, A Parallelogram, The Unmentionables, The Pain and the Itch, and Purple Heart.

DIRECTOR



DAVID MUSE is in his fifteenth season as Artistic Director of Studio Theatre, where he has directed Love, Love, Love; Fun Home; People, Places & Things; Cock (the in-person and digital productions); The Children; The Remains; The Effect; The Father; Constellations; Chimerica; Murder Ballad; Belleville; Tribes; The Real Thing; An Iliad; Dirt; Bachelorette; The Habit of Art; Venus in Fur; Circle Mirror Transformation; reasons to be pretty; Blackbird; Frozen; and The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow. As Studio's Artistic Director, he has produced 116 productions; established Studio R&D, its new work incubator; significantly increased artist compensation; created The Cabinet, an artist advisory board; and overseen Open Studio, a \$20M expansion and upgrade of Studio's four-theatre complex. Previously, he was Associate Artistic Director of the Shakespeare Theatre Company, where he has directed nine productions, including Richard III, Henry V, Coriolanus, and King Charles III (a co-production with American Conservatory Theater and Seattle Rep). Other directing projects include Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune at Arena Stage, The Bluest Eye at Theatre Alliance, and Patrick Page's Swansong at the New York Summer Play Festival. He has helped to develop new work at numerous theatres, including New York Theatre Workshop, Geva Theatre Center, Arena Stage, New Dramatists. and The Kennedy Center. David has taught acting and directing at Georgetown, Yale, and the Shakespeare Theatre Company's Academy of Classical Acting. A nine-time Helen Hayes Award nominee for Outstanding Direction, he is a recipient of the DC Mayor's Arts Award for Outstanding Emerging Artist and the National Theatre Conference Emerging Artist Award. David is a graduate of Yale University and the Yale School of Drama.

2024-2025

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- In collaboration with the Theatre Lab School of Dramatic Arts, we provide training for early career DC professional theatre technicians from disadvantaged circumstances, in some cases later employing those students in our productions.
- Studio participates in Howard University's stage management program, in which the Howard drama department recommends students to cover small technical roles and then graduate to full crew and stage management positions.
- Studio's newly launched Fellows-in-Residence program is one of the nation's most robust, offering aspiring theatre professionals unparalleled experience and training, while providing full-employment including benefits and housing.

ACTORS

TIM GETMAN (Andv) returns to Studio following four seasons at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival where he appeared in The Tempest, Romeo and Juliet, Much Ado About Nothing, and Jane Eyre. At Studio, he has been seen in The Real Thing, Water by the Spoonful, and Hand to God (Helen Haves nomination Best Ensemble). Over 25 years, Tim worked with most professional theatres in the DC area and has been a company member at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company and Everyman Theatre. Some favorites at Woolly were The Unmentionables (also by Bruce Norris), Gruesome Playground Injuries, Detroit, The Arsonists, and Describe the Night. His work at Everyman includes God of Carnage, Outside Mullingar, and Dancing at Lughnasa. Tim has a B.A. from Macalester College and Trinity College Dublin and a Masters in Natural Resources from Virginia Tech.

EMILY KESTER (Em) is an actor based in Washington, DC. Her previous Studio credits include At the Wedding. The Hard Problem. and Edgar & Annabel. Her regional theatre credits include The Trip to Bountiful, Silent Skv. and A Christmas Carol at Ford's Theatre: Maz and Bricks at Solas Nua: Detroit '67 at Signature Theatre; Labor of Love at Olnev Theatre Center: The Last Schwartz at Theater J: Noises Off and The Revolutionists at Everyman Theatre; Equus at Constellation Theatre Company; Miss Nelson is Missing!, The BFG, and The Little Mermaid at Imagination Stage; and Eurydice at Next-Stop Theatre Company. She is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and has a BFA in Acting. On social media at @emkester (Instagram).

DAN DAILY's (Fred) Broadway credits include Steppenwolf Theatre Company's production of The Minutes, and The Tenth Man at Lincoln Center Theater. His Off Broadway credits include The Cake at Manhattan Theatre Club, Sin: A Cardinal Deposed at The New Group, Days to Come at Mint Theater Company, and The Dining Room at the Keen Company (Drama Desk Award). Dan was a company member of The Pearl Theatre for 18 seasons and over 50 productions. Film credits include The Kitchen, Duplicity, Seabiscuit, Blood and Wine, Daylight, and Things Seen and Heard. TV credits include Law & Order (NBC). Boardwalk Empire (HBO), House Of Cards (Netflix), and City On A Hill (Showtime).

He has a B.A. from the University of Notre Dame and an MFA from the University of Washington, Professional Actor Training Program, Robert L. Hobbs, director.

STEPHEN CONRAD MOORE (Dee) is a Kansas City native and longtime denizen of NYC. Some theatre credits include *Uncle Vanya* at Lincoln Center Theater on Broadway and August Wilson's one-man show How I Learned What I Learned at The Geva Theatre. Stephen has appeared on numerous other theatrical stages in New York City and across the country, including The Vineyard Theatre, The Guthrie Theatre, The McCarter Theatre Center, American Theatre Company, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Yale Repertory Theatre. Selected television credits include Empire. The Path, The Good Fight, Better Call Saul, and five seasons of The Bold Type. He is a graduate of the University of Missouri – Kansas City and The Yale School of Drama.

JAYSEN WRIGHT (Gio) returns to Studio after performances in Choir Boy, Wig Out!, Richard O'Brien's The Rocky Horror Show, and I Hate it Here. He is a company member at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, appearing recently in Macbeth, Born with Teeth, Twelfth Night, and The Three Musketeers. Other credits include Smart People and Jubilee at Arena Stage. Beauty and the Beast at The 5th Avenue Theatre, The Royale co-production at Olney Theatre Center and 1st Stage, The Till Trilogy at Mosaic Theater Company, The Importance of Being Earnest at Everyman Theatre, Take Me Out at 1st Stage, Actually at Theater J, Macbeth at the Folger Theatre, and The Wiz at Ford's Theatre. He holds an MFA from Indiana University, jaysenwright.com On social media at @thejayceface (Instagram).

RICHARD RUIZ HENRY (Felix) is making his Studio Theatre debut. His theatre credits include Two Gentlemen of Verona at The Public Theater, Drift at New World Stages, The Streets of New York at the Irish Repertory Theatre, and Fiorello! at New York City Center. Regional theater credits include Two Gentlemen of Verona at The Old Globe, Cyrano and The Winter's Tale at Folger Theatre, Twelfth Night at Pig Iron Theatre Company, and The Hunchback of Notre Dame at La Jolla Playhouse and Paper Mill Playhouse (as well as the cast recording).

ACTORS

National tours include *Urinetown, Sweet*Charity, Man of La Mancha and Jesus Christ
Superstar. Richard's television work includes
Search Party and The Other Two (HBOMax),
Younger (Paramount+), Bupkis (Peacock),
The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel (Amazon Prime),
Girls5Eva (Netflix), and Law & Order (NBC).

KELLI BLACKWELL (Ivy) is an actor, teaching artist, and self-published children's author. Her theatre credits include The Colored Museum and Fat Ham at Studio Theatre: Shout Sister Shout! at Ford's Theatre; Beauty and the Beast and A.D. 16 at Olnev Theatre Center; Nine Night at Round House Theatre; Crowns and Thunder Knocking on the Door at Creative Cauldron; A Streetcar Named Desire and By the Way, Meet Vera Stark at Everyman Theatre; The Wiz, Smokey Joe's Cafe, and Next to Normal at ArtsCentric; Ain't Misbehavin', Dreamgirls, and Grease at Toby's Dinner Theatre; Hairspray at Sharon Playhouse: Once on This Island at Cortland Repertory Theatre; and the national tours of Chicago and Amazing Grace. Kelli serves on the senior leadership team and as the Director of Arts Education with Baltimore-based theatre company, ArtsCentric. kellimblackwell.com.

IRENE HAMILTON (Effie) is a DC-based actor making her Studio debut. Her local credits include Merrily We Roll Along and Webster's Bitch at The Keegan Theatre; Agreste (Drylands) at Spooky Action Theater; Macbeth at Taffety Punk Theatre Company; The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show/La Oruga Muy Hambrienta Espectáculo at Imagination Stage; The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe (Helen Hayes Nomination) and Sing Down the Moon at Adventure Theatre MTC; and Angel Number Nine at Rorschach Theatre. She is a company member at Arts on the Horizon and Synetic Theater. On social media at @irene h44 (Instagram).

NEIL DAWSON (Cop, u/s Andy, Dee, Gio) is an New York-based actor originally from the Bronx, NY. Theatre credits include *Westphalia* at Luna Stage, *The Blacks* at Classic Stage Company, *Ain't Supposed to Die...* at The Classical Theatre of Harlem, *The Mountaintop* at Weston Playhouse, Waiting for Giovanni at The Flea Theater, Fires in the Mirror at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Stick Fly at Majestic Theater, Intimate Apparel at Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theater, 365 Days/365 Plays at The Public Theater, and Black Man Rising (AUDELCO Award Winner) at National Black Theatre Festival. TV credits include FBI, Godfather of Harlem, New Amsterdam, Law & Order, and The Today Show, as well as numerous national commercials, voice-overs and industrials. He holds an MFA from the University of Washington Professional Actor Training Program.

LENNY MENDEZ (Cop; u/s Em, Ivy, Effie) is a Latina artist and is thrilled to be back at Studio Theatre, where she understudied Espejos: Clean. Other DC-area theatre credits include Prom Night, Jardín Salvaie, and Picasso at GALA Hispanic Theatre; Laughs in Spanish at 1st Stage; and Chicks in Heaven, Ichabod: The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, Audrey: The New Musical, Madeline's Christmas, Monarch: A Mexican-American Musical, The Christmas Angel, The Snow Queen, Pinocchio, The Princess and the Pea, and Alice in Wonderland at Creative Cauldron. She has also appeared at The Kennedy Center, Mosaic Theater Company, Workhouse Arts Center, and The Alden Theatre. She received her BFA in Theatre (Acting and Directing) from the University of George Mason and is a Circle in the Square Theatre School alumna. On social media @lennyyy_mendez (Instagram).

PRODUCTION

ALEXANDER WOODWARD (Set Designer) Alexander Woodward is a New York based designer, organizer, and artist focused in scenic and costume design for live performance. Credits include White Noise and Love, Love, Love at Studio Theatre, The Sound Inside on Broadway, and the ballet Their Eves Were Watching God at Collage Dance Collective. Alexander is the Area Head of the BFA & MFA Design and Technical Theatre program at the University of Connecticut, and serves on the faculty of the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale University. As a designer and educator. Alexander is an avid proponent for advancing arts advocacy. In recent years, Alexander has served on the executive board for Wingspace, a non-profit organization that promotes conversation on design, our community, and furthers activism within the industry. MFA Yale, USA 829. alexanderwoodward.com on social media @alexanderwoodwarddesign (Instagram).

DANIELLE PRESTON (Costume Designer) is a costume designer based in Washington, DC. Studio Theatre credits include Fat Ham, Clyde's, and P.Y.G. or the Mis-Edumacation of Dorian Belle. Recent regional credits include Blues for an Alabama Sky at Barrington Stage Company, The Sensational Sea Mink-ettes at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Passing Strange and Penelope at Signature Theatre, A Nice Indian Boy at Olney Theatre Center, Locomotion at Children's Theatre Company, School Girls; or, The African Mean Girls Play and The REALNESS at the Hangar Theatre. and Quamino's Map at Chicago Opera Theater. Danielle received the 2022 OPERA America Tobin Director-Designer Prize, the William R. Kenan Jr. Fellowship in Costume Design with The Kennedy Center, and the A.J. Fletcher Opera Institute Fellowship in Costume Design. She holds an MFA in Costume Design from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. She is a proud member of United Scenic Artists Local 829. daniellepreston.com On social media @danielleprestondesign (Instagram).

STACEY DEROSIER (Lighting Designer) previous credits include La Cage Aux Folles at Pasadena Playhouse, Teeth at New World Stages and Playwrights Horizons, The Counter and The Refuge Plays at Roundabout

Theatre Company, The Welkin at Atlantic Theater Company, The Animal Kingdom at the Connelly Theater Upstairs, Daphne at Lincoln Center Theater. All the Devils Are Here at DR2 Theatre, The Half God of Rainfall and How to Defend Yourself at New York Theatre Workshop, *Uncle Vanya* at OHenry Productions, On Set with Theda Bara at the Exponential Festival, Where the Mountain Meets the Sea at the Manhattan Theatre Club. This Beautiful Future at Cherry Lane Theatre, Wedding Band at Theatre for a New Audience, sandblasted at Vinevard Theatre/Women's Project Theater, and Lewiston/Clarkston at Rattlestick Theater. She is a 2018 Lilly Award Daryl Roth Prize recipient.

KENNY NEAL (Sound Designer) is a Helen Hayes Award-winning sound designer and composer. Credits include English, Straight White Men. Jumpers for Goalposts, and Choir Boy at Studio Theatre: Soiourners and The Seafarer at Round House Theatre; The Moors at Faction of Fools: She A Gem and Digging Up Dessa at The Kennedy Center; Job, The Upstairs Department, Daphne's Dive, Heisenberg, John, and The Gulf at Signature Theatre; A Nice Indian Boy, Dance Nation, The Royale, and Oil at Olney Theatre Center; The Last Match, Airness, columbinus, Jesus Hopped the 'A' Train, Well, Floyd Collins, Old Wicked Songs, and Bat Boy at 1st Stage; English at Barrington Stage Company; and Becoming Dr. Ruth at Theater J, Cleveland Play House, Village Theatre, and Maltz Jupiter Theatre.

ROBB HUNTER (Fight Choreographer) has directed violence for more than 25 Studio productions including White Noise, Vietgone, The Effect, Hand to God, reasons to be pretty. Invisible Man. Superior Donuts. American Buffalo, Red Speedo (Helen Hayes [HH] nomination), and The Walworth Farce (HH nomination). He also directs movement/ violence for Shakespeare Theatre Company, including for King Lear, Richard III (HH nomination), A Comedy of Errors and others; as well as Arena Stage, Folger Theatre, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company (HH award for Hir and nomination for An Octoroon). Signature Theatre (DC), Ford's Theatre, and others. He is a member of SDC, AEA, SAG/AFTRA, and one of only 21 Fight Masters recognized by the

PRODUCTION

Society of American Fight Directors. He is the combat instructor at the Shakespeare Theatre Company Academy, Fight Choreographer in Residence at American University, and teaching artist for The Studio Theatre Acting Conservatory. Robbhunter.org On social media @DCFightDirector (Instagram).

SIERRA YOUNG (Intimacy Director; she/ her) is a multi-hyphenate artist in the DC/ Baltimore area. Sierra is an active member of the Society of American Fight Directors. Intimacy Directors & Coordinators, SDC, and serves as the resident fight and intimacy director for Mosaic Theater Company, Recent Studio credits include Exception to the Rule and The Colored Museum. Recent DC choreography credits include Jaia's African Hair Braiding and POTUS at Arena Stage; Little Shop of Horrors at Ford's Theatre; Spring Awakening (HH nominated) at Monumental Theatre Company; King Lear (HH nominated) at Shakespeare Theatre Company; and Prayer for the French Republic at Theater J. Upcoming projects include Hand to God at Keegan Theatre, Paradise Blue at Studio Theatre, Waitress at Olney Theatre Center, Sister Act at Ford's Theatre, and Porgy and Bess at the Washington National Opera. sierrayoung.org On social media @syoungfights (Instagram).

CHAD DEXTER KINSMAN (Dramaturg) is a theater maker, writer, and arts administrator. His theatre credits include An Enemy of the People at Yale Repertory Theatre, Much Ado About Nothing at Island Shakespeare Festival, There Is a Happiness That Morning Is at inD Theatre, Everything That Never Happened at Yale School of Drama, and The Ugly One at Yale Cabaret. He is a regular writer for DC Theater Arts and Washington City Paper, and created and hosts Theater District Podcast. On social media at @dexturgy (Instagram).

JOHN KEITH HALL (Production Stage Manager) has stage managed many productions at Studio including Summer, 1976; Exception to the Rule; The Colored Museum; At the Wedding; Espejos: Clean; Fun Home; English; Bad Jews; Choir Boy; Cock; Water by the Spoonful; Tribes; The Habit of Art; Torch Song Trilogy; 4000 Miles; In the Red and Brown Water; The History Boys; and The Road to Mecca. Other DC area credits include Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Olney Theatre Center, Signature Theatre, and The Kennedy Center. His regional credits include over 40 productions as Resident Stage Manager at the Barter Theatre as well as Shadowlands Stage, Virginia Musical Theatre, and Contemporary American Theatre Festival.

DELANEY DUNSTER's (Assistant Stage Manager: she/her) recent productions include Exception to the Rule; Love, Love, Love; Fat Ham; Good Bones; English; and People, Places & Things (ASM for all) at Studio Theatre; Prayer for the French Republic (PSM replacement) and Hester Street (ASM) at Theater J; Moriarty (ASM) at Arrow Rock Lyceum Theatre; Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, American Mariachi, and The Marvelous Wonderettes (ASM for all) at Alabama Shakespeare Festival; and Happy, Proof, Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill, and Four Seasons (PSM) at Centre Stage. She received her BFA in Stage Management from Webster University. takefiveopportunities.org. On social media @delaneyclaredunster (Instagram).

KACIE PIMENTEL (Takeover Assistant Stage Manager) is a stage manager in the DMV area. Her theatre credits include The Hot Wing King, John Proctor is the Villain, and White Noise at Studio Theatre; The Winter's Tale at Folger Theatre; and Water for Elephants, The Hot Wing King, The Boy Who Kissed the Sky, and Everybody at Alliance Theatre. She has previously worked in stage management at Casa Mañana, Chautauqua Theater Company, and SeaWorld San Antonio. She graduated from the University of Houston, where she received her BFA in Theatre Stage Management.

MCCORKLE CASTING (Casting) has strived for inclusivity and social awareness over its 35-year history in casting and is pleased to be associated with this production. Broadway: more than 50 productions including *On the Town, Amazing Grace, End of the Rainbow, A*

Few Good Men. among others. Off Broadway: more than 60 productions, including Tribes, Our Town, and Driving Miss Daisy, Regional Theatres: Guthrie Theater, Barrington Stage Company, George Street Playhouse, the Contemporary American Theater Festival and hundreds of regional theatres throughout the country. Feature films: Currently casting six

films for theatrical release. Previous project highlights: Premium Rush, Ghost Town, The Thomas Crown Affair. Die Hard with a Vengeance, among others. Television: three new films for Hallmark, Twisted, Sesame Street, Californication (Emmy Nomination). Chappelle's Show, Strangers with Candy etc. mccorklecasting.com

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ASSOCIATE COSTUME DESIGNER CODY VON RUDEN

ASSISTANT LIGHTING DESIGNER TYLER DUBUC

SCENIC CHARGE **MEG ZETTELL**

LIGHT AND SOUND OPERATOR ARTHUR KOHN

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Studio Theatre would like to thank Dr. James Fleming for his help on this production.



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The Studio Fellows-in-Residence program prepares future artists and administrators for a successful career in the arts through a rigorous, hands-on training experience over the course of a full theatrical season.

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2024-25 **FELLOWS**

BLAKE BERGGREN

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