



the

PROM

Book & Lyrics by Chad Beguelin
Book by Bob Martin
Music by Matthew Sklar

OCT 26-NOV 11, 2023

#OutFrontTheProm

Production Sponsors: Jody and Michael Feldman



www.OutFrontTheatre.com

A Note from Paul



We have many rights of passages in our lifetime; some are pleasant, others not, and most stick with us regardless of where they fall on that vast spectrum. Celebrations, misfortunes, milestones, tragedies - they all shape who we are and sometimes we have little control over when they happen and how they impact us.

I went to a total of SEVEN proms when I was in high school and college. Lucky for me, my mother insisted I buy a tuxedo at the beginning of that journey, but I'm sad to report that it has been many years since it has fit. Those seven nights spent dancing with friends hold a special place in my heart. I've lost touch with almost everyone I went to those proms with, but I can recall exactly what everyone was wearing, the songs that were played and the photos we took (none of them are digital since these were all in the last century).

Still, as much fun as those nights were, now that I look back, I realize that I wasn't allowed to be my true self. I didn't come out until I was in college so I can't say that I would have brought a date of the same gender to my proms, but in the 90s that wasn't an option. We had rules regarding dates (opposite gender, and you couldn't go to prom alone) and attire (men in tuxes/suits and women in formal dresses) and if you couldn't adhere then you simply didn't go.

Things are certainly changing; sometimes for the better and sometimes not, and it depends where in this country and world you are. Make no mistake, there are students who can now be their authentic selves in school and at celebrations like a prom, but there are still countless ones who can't. They live in a world of secrets and hope that things will get better. I want to dedicate this show to all of them who are yearning to be themselves free of judgement and fear. And I want to also dedicate this show to all of you who were not able to express yourselves at your prom or whatever other milestone stands out in your mind. This prom is for all of you!



It's time to dance!

Paul Conroy

Founder & Producing Artistic Director
Out Front Theatre Company

the **PROM**

BOOK BY
Bob Martin and Chad Beguelin

MUSIC BY
Matthew Sklar

LYRICS BY
Chad Beguelin

STARRING

Wynne Kelly, Wendy Melkonian*, Robert Hindsman, Tatyana Mack, Chris McKnight, Precious West, Alan Phelps, Vallea E. Woodbury, PJ Mitchell, Will Cole, Gina Delise, Leah Keelan, Lance McDougall, James Patrick, Zuri Petteway, Parker Reeves, Nevaeh Riddle, and Erin North

DIRECTOR

Caty Bergmark

MUSIC DIRECTOR Nick Silvestri **CHOREOGRAPHER** Atarius Armstrong **PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER** Sydney Lee

LIGHTING DESIGNER David Reingold **COSTUME DESIGNER** Jay Reynolds **SCENIC DESIGNERS** Paul Conroy & Sydney Lee

SOUND DESIGNER Brady Brown **PROJECTION DESIGNER** Robby Myles **DRAMATURG** Elliott Folds

The Prom is presented through special arrangement with and all authorized performance materials are supplied by Theatrical Rights Worldwide

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The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.



This program is supported in part by Georgia Council for the Arts through the appropriations of the Georgia General Assembly. Georgia Council for the Arts also receives support from its partner agency - the National Endowment for the Arts. This program is supported in part by the City of Atlanta Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs. Funding for this program is provided by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners.



*Appearing through an Agreement between this theatre, Theatrical Outfit, and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

the PROM

SETTING & TIME: *Indiana, Present Day*
There will be one 15-minute intermission.

Cast & Crew

CAST

Emma Nolan Wynne Kelly
Dee Dee Allen Wendy Melkonian*
Barry Glickman Robert Hindsman
Alyssa Greene Tatyana Mack
Trent Oliver Chris McKnight
Angie Dickinson Precious West
Mr. Hawkins Alan Phelps
Mrs. Greene Vallea E. Woodbury
Sheldon Saperstein PJ Mitchell
Ensemble Will Cole, Gina DeLise,
Leah Keelan, Lance McDougall,
James Patrick, Zuri Petteway,
Parker Reeves, and Nevaeh Riddle
Swing Erin North

PRODUCTION CREW

Director Caty Bergmark
Music Director Nick Silvestri
Choreographer Atarius Armstrong
Production Stage Manager Sydney Lee
Lighting Designer David Reingold
Costume Designer Jay Reynolds
Assistant Costume Designer Alison Hergen

Scenic Designers .. Paul Conroy & Sydney Lee
Sound Designer Brady Brown
Projection Designer Robby Myles
Set Decorator/
Props Designer Dante DeStefano
Dramaturg Elliott Folds
Intimacy Director Laura Hackman
Master Carpenter Zack Georgian
Carpenter English Brackett
Assistant Director Maekaylia Jackson
Assistant Stage Manager Amani Clanton
Assistant Dramaturg Zaria Flanigan
Run Crew Charlotte Edwards
Lighting Assistants Tehila Baneura,
Sommer Bryant, Yutong Yao
Costume Assistants Nadege DeBrosse,
Jalen Major, Zion Malwah, Ethan Paul
Scenic Assistants Jackson Cappins,
Yvonne Smith
Photographers Sydney Lee
& Isaac Brieding
Videographer Saturnblu Productions
Public Relations JMF Communications
Graphic Designer Brandon D Hunt

SPECIAL THANKS

Alliance Theatre, ART Station, 7 Stages, Atlanta Girls School, Lost n Found Youth,
Kyle Hanes, Jeff Allen, Michael Etheridge

We apologize for anyone who may have been accidentally omitted from this program.



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Musical Numbers

ACT ONE

"Changing Lives"	Dee Dee, Barry, Ensemble
"Changing Lives (Mini-Reprise)"	Barry
"Changing Lives (Reprise)"	Dee Dee, Barry, Angie, Trent
"Just Breathe"	Emma
"It's Not About Me"	Dee Dee, Barry, Angie, Trent, Parents, Students
"Dance with You"	Emma, Alyssa
"The Acceptance Song"	Trent, Dee Dee, Barry, Angie, Godspell Cast
"You Happened"	Emma, Alyssa, Kevin, Nick, Students
"We Look to You"	Mr. Hawkins
"Tonight Belongs to You"	Barry, Emma, Mrs. Greene, Shelby, Kaylee, Students
"Tonight Belongs to You (Reprise)"	Emma, Students

ACT TWO

"Zazz"	Angie, Emma
"The Lady's Improving"	Dee Dee
"Love Thy Neighbor"	Trent, Students, Godspell Cast
"Alyssa Greene"	Alyssa
"Barry Is Going to Prom"	Barry
"Unruly Heart"	Emma, LGBTQIA+ Students
"Changing Lives (Reprise #2)"	Barry, Dee Dee, Trent, Angie, Sheldon, Mr. Hawkins
"It's Time to Dance"	Emma, Alyssa, Company

Director's Note



Micah and I were consistent “duo” partners and organized groups together for the reader’s theatre category for our Drama, Debate, and Forensics team. Micah would sing a parody of the Veggie Tales song that now went, “You are my cheese Bergmark, I wait for you-oo” when waiting for me to join them for lunch period. When it was spirit week and the theme was iconic couples, we showed up as Sweeney Todd and Mrs. Lovett, of course. So when Micah asked me to their junior and senior proms, it was both a thrill for me as an underclassman and what seemed to me at the time as a natural continuation of our friendship.

Micah was also the only person I knew at our high school who was “out.” The first time I remember seeing them was at some event before I’d entered high school, and someone pointed out they were wearing a shirt that very proudly proclaimed their queerness. They were not shy about who they were. I loved them. From day one, I loved how much they seemingly didn’t care about the assumptions made by outsiders. They made me proud to be myself, even if I wasn’t out at the time.

But I also wish Micah didn’t have to take their friend to the prom, regardless of how much she loved them. I wish Micah had an abundance of options - to take someone to the prom romantically or go with a group of out queer friends or attend with me, whatever they so chose. I wish Micah had been on prom court in all their glory. When they got to college, Micah was named Miss Gay Alaska and now they’re touring the country in a musical that packs large houses (including Atlanta’s Fox theatre earlier this year)—so yes, it does get better, but what if we could do better by the little Micah’s of the world?

I recently heard someone say that yes “it” gets better, but mostly because you get better. Better at knowing yourself, better at knowing when to work with someone or to walk away, better at navigating life because you have more experiences. What if we took our experiences and hardships and joys that made us better at navigating life and used them to improve the circumstances of our younger generations? What if we could make “it” better for young people before they had to grow up? Being a teenager already means facing a very real world with an incomplete roadmap regardless of who you want to take to prom—so let’s build a prom for **everyone**.

Caty Bergmark
Director, *The Prom*

COMMITMENTS & VALUES

MISSION

Out Front Theatre Company's mission is to tell LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intergender, Asexual) stories.

VISION

Out Front Theatre Company's vision is to strengthen the LGBTQIA+ community in Georgia by exploring and celebrating the universal human experience through the lens of gender and sexuality.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, & INCLUSION COMMITMENT

The staff and board of Out Front Theatre Company want to put the following metrics in place so that we can track them to completion. We want our stakeholders and our patrons to see real results.

- We want to have representative board members from black and brown communities, as well as gender nonconforming representatives and increase that representation by at least 10% every year until we reach a goal of above 50%.
- We want to produce, support, or promote at least 2 shows/events from creatives of color every year and increase that number by at least 20% every year.
- We want to increase our presence in communities of color and in women's communities through intentional outreach. We can do this by creating a communication strategy to expand our patronage. To that end, we will recruit a community outreach intern or staff member to help achieve this goal.
- We want to increase our intersectional involvement by partnering with other socially progressive nonprofit organizations to collaborate on community events. The goal is to have at least one partner event per year with an ultimate goal of three per year.

Please visit
www.OutFrontTheatre.com
to learn more.



LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We are gathered on the unceded land of the Mvskoke (Muscogee/Creek) peoples. We ask you to join us in acknowledging the Mvskoke community, their elders both past and present, as well as future generations. Out Front Theatre Company also acknowledges that it was founded upon exclusions and erasures of many Indigenous peoples, including those on whose land this institution is located.

This acknowledgment demonstrates a commitment to beginning the process of working to dismantle the ongoing legacies of settler colonialism.



THE MUSCOGEE NATION

**For more information on this nation,
as well as how to support to them,
please visit www.muscogeenation.com**

CAST & CREW BIOS

CAST

WYNNE KELLY *She/Her* (Emma Nolan) is so excited to be a part of her second Out Front Theatre production! She is currently a senior at Oglethorpe University completing a BA in Theatre. Some of her previous credits include *Kinky Boots* (Out Front Theatre), *Urinetown* (Actors Express), *Heathers the Musical* (Actors Express), and *Broadway Unplugged* (Oglethorpe University). She would like to thank the wonderful production team at Out Front Theatre for the opportunity to tell such an important story, as well as her mom and dad for their never-ending love and support. Wynne would like to dedicate this performance to Claudi, with love. She hopes that you enjoy the show! Instagram: @wynnekelly

WENDY MELKONIAN *She/Her* (Dee Dee Allen) is thrilled to be back with the amazing gang at Out Front getting to play such a delicious role! Previously, she's been seen on this stage in *Sordid Lives* as Juanita and performing in *Over the Rainbow: A Judy Garland Cabaret*. She's performed all over town for over two decades as well as some out of town gigs and was last seen in *Heathers* and *Skintight*, both with Actor's Express. She's proud to be a part of Atlanta's acting community and a member of Actor's Equity Association. She has a Master of Music degree from The Boston Conservatory and is represented for TV and Film by the wonderful folks at People Store. Love to family - given and chosen. For Mom and Dad.

ROBERT HINDSMAN *He/Him* (Barry Glickman) is grateful to be with these lovely queers at Out Front again. Favorite Atlanta credits include *The Golden Girls: the Lost Episodes - Holiday Edition* (Out Front Theatre Company); *Born For This* (Alliance Theatre); *A Year with Frog and Toad*, *Sense and Sensibility*

(Synchronicity Theatre); *Stupid F***ing Bird* (Actor's Express); Birmingham Southern College Alum. Big thanks to Nick for taking care of our fam while I prance around the stage. @roberthindsman

TATYANA MACK *She/Her* (Alyssa Greene) Out Front Theatre: Debut. Previous Atlanta credits: *Urinetown*, *Prayer for the French Republic* (Actor's Express). Regional: *Heroes in my House* (Fantasy Theatre Factory), *The Polar Express Train Ride* (Warner Bros), *24 Hour Plays: Nationals 2021* (24 Hour Plays). Educational: *In the Red and Brown Water*, *Pippin*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Bullets Over Broadway*, *Parade*, and *Big Fish the Musical* (New World School of the Arts). Education: BFA, Music Theatre, New World School of the Arts. To my family & the love of my life, thank you from the bottom of my heart. I love you all!

CHRIS MCKNIGHT *He/Him* (Trent Oliver) is a graduate of Georgia State University, with a degree in both Film and Vocal Performance. Out Front: Debut. He has performed in the Atlanta theatre community in *Three Little Birds* at Synchronicity Theatre, *Duke Ellington's Cat* at The Center for Puppetry Arts, and several smaller productions at Stone Mountain Park where he got his start. He has also played several theatrical roles in shows with Voices of Note via the Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus. He is very blessed with the support he has received from his family and friends along this rollercoaster journey, and he is super excited to join Out Front for their PROM! Oh, and Chris is single, so hopefully someone brought him a corsage?? ;)

PRECIOUS WEST *She/Her* (Angie Dickinson) is honored to be back on the stage with Out Front. Precious is a choreographer and performer. Professional experience includes Choreography: ACTOR'S EXPRESS: *Hedwig*

CAST & CREW BIOS (CONTINUED)

& the Angry Inch, Urinetown, Heathers The Musical. OUT FRONT THEATRE: *Red: A Crayon's Musical, Christmas Dearest.* Performance: *Desire Under The Elms, The Golden Girls: The Lost Episodes - Holiday Edition, The Color Purple.* REGIONAL: *The Polar Express Train Ride* (Warner Bros./Rail Events). EDUCATION: BFA Musical Theatre, Brenau University (Gainesville Theatre Alliance); MBA Marketing, Brenau University. Follow her theatrical journey: @gangstapresh www.preciouswest.com

ALAN PHELPS *He/Him* (Mr. Hawkins) is thrilled to be returning to the Out Front Theatre stage having previously appeared in *Kinky Boots*. Previous Atlanta credits: *A Prayer for the French Republic* (u/s Actor's Express); *MacBeth* (Folding Chair Classical Theatre); *Good People, Hallelujah Girls* (OnStage Atlanta); *Big River* (Theatre in the Square); *A Few Good Men, Tokens of Affection* (Center Stage Theater); *Assassins* (Next Stage Theater); *Unnecessary Farce* (Stage Door Players); *The Lady from Dubuque* (Epidemic Theatre); *Doubt* (New Depot Players); *Peachtree Battle, A Sunday Afternoon at Loehmann's* (Ansley Park Playhouse). Film & TV includes: *Pitch Perfect 3, Bosses, Dead Silent, Southern Gothic, Fatal Attraction, The Game.* Thanks to friends and family for their support. Alan is represented by Atlanta Models & Talent and can be followed @thealanphelps on Instagram.

PJ MITCHELL *He/Him* (Sheldon Saperstein) is so excited to return to Out Front in *The Prom!* Previous Atlanta credits include *Kinky Boots* (Out Front Theatre Company), *RENT* (ACT3), *tick, tick... BOOM!* (ACT3). Originally from the Washington, DC area, he has studied at Howard Community College (MD) and with The Alliance Theatre (GA). A graduate of The Paul Mitchell School (VA), PJ has served as a hair and makeup designer

for Dominion Stage (VA), where he garnered a Washington Area Theatre (WATCH) award nomination for *Psycho Beach Party*. Much love to the cast, crew, and creative team for all their hard work. Follow him @pjlikepajamas88 on all platforms.

VALLEA E. WOODBURY *She/Her* (Mrs. Greene/Dee Dee u/s) "Vuh LAY uh" is delighted to be back on the OutFront Stage after appearing in *La Cage aux Folles* back before the world changed. Previous Atlanta Credits: *Intimate Apparel* and *The Crucible* (Actors Express), *Bob's Marley's Three Little Birds, Ms. Holmes and Ms. Watson, #2B* (Synchronicity Theatre), *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Stage Door Players), *Simply Simone* (u/s) (Theatrical Outfit), *Abigail/1702* (u/s), *Singles in Agriculture* (Aurora Theatre), *Tell Me My Dream* (Alliance Theatre), *Rent!* (PNO). Regional: *Eubie!, Caroline, or Change* (Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe), *Company* (Studio Theatre Tierra del Sol), *The Color Purple, The Musical, A Christmas Carol* (Milwaukee Repertory Theatre), *Ragtime* (Drury Lane Oakbrook), *The Second City Chicago, The Annoyance.* Education: MFA from the University of Georgia, BS from Northwestern University, The School at Steppenwolf and The Second City Chicago Improv Conservatory. Thanks to God, her family, and YOU for continuing to support live theatre. Instagram: @unfamous_actor; www.vallea.com

WILL COLE *He/Him* (Ensemble/Sheldon u/s) is so excited to make his debut on the Out Front stage! Out Front Theatre: Debut. Previous credits: *Deliverer* (Jennie T. Anderson Theater), *Wilderness* (The Breathe Project, Miami), *The Comeback Cabaret* (The Drama Company, NYC), *The Wild Party* (Next Act), & *9 to 5* (Thespian Troupe 3670). Will thanks his representation Carol Shaginaw, his voice coach Carrie Madsen, and all his family

CAST & CREW BIOS (CONTINUED)

at Drama Inc., the AIMT, and The Bartos Group, as well as his parents & siblings for always being in his corner!

GINA DELISE *She/Her* (Ensemble/Alyssa u/s) Out Front Theatre: Debut. Gina recently moved back to Georgia and is excited to help tell this joyful story; however, she formally apologizes to her new rescue dog, Ziggy, for having to leave the house more often. Previous credits include: u/s Cory/Honor in *Darlin' Cory* (Alliance Theatre), Thea/Frau Gabor in *Spring Awakening* (Univ. of Evansville), and Rose of Sharon in *The Grapes of Wrath* (Univ. of Evansville).

LEAH KEELAN *She/Her* (Ensemble/Angie & Mrs. Greene u/s/Dance Captain) is an Atlanta native. This is her debut show with Out Front Theatre. Her recent credits include *Big City Dreams* (Strand Theatre), *I Love You You're Perfect Now Change* (Marietta Theatre Company), *Andrews Brothers* (Marietta Theatre Company) and *Thank You For the Music* (Aurora Theatre). She is incredibly grateful to be a part of this theatre family, enjoy the show!

LANCE MCDUGALL *He/Him* (Ensemble) is so excited to be making his OutFront debut with *The Prom!* Originally from Denton Texas, Lance graduated from Wichita State University with a BFA in Musical Theatre and is a proud Shocker Alum! Lance is so happy to have the opportunity to share this story of acceptance and perform with this incredible cast and crew. Some of his favorite shows he has been a part of are *The Fantasticks* (Matt), *Xanadu* (Thalia), *James and the Giant Peach* (James), *Grease* (Doody), and *On The Town* (Chip). Lance would like to thank his friends Meredith, Noah, Alex, Preston, Feather and Steve for their support as well as mom and the rest of his family for traveling to see the show! Enjoy *The Prom!*

JAMES PATRICK *He/Him* (Ensemble/Mr. Hawkins u/s) *The Prom* is James' first production with Out Front, but he has performed in many other shows, including *Jukebox Giants* at the Strand Theatre, *Urinetown the Musical*, *The Tempest*, *Legally Blonde the Musical*, *Almost Maine*, and many others. James is currently a student at Oglethorpe University studying to get a B.A. in Theatre and has also worked and trained at the Alliance Theatre. James would like to thank his parents for supporting his dream and sticking with him every step of the way. He also sends love to his brothers for bringing so much joy to his life.

PARKER REEVES *He/Him* (Ensemble/Trent u/s) is so excited to be back at Out Front! Parker is a 2019 graduate of the University of Alabama's Musical Theatre program and has been working professionally in theatre in the Southeast for the past four years. Previous Out Front Theatre credits include: *Red: A Crayon Musical* and *Kinky Boots*. Previous regional credits include: *A Chorus Line* (Virginia Samford Theatre), *Legally Blonde* (Woodstock Arts), *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Riverside Theatre), and *La Cage aux Folles* (Riverside Theatre). He would like to thank his friends and family for their endless love and support of his unruly heart.

NEVAEH RIDDLE *She/Her* (Ensemble/Emma u/s) is thrilled to be on stage with the cast of *The Prom!* Out Front Theatre: Debut. Some of her previous credits include: *John and Jen* (Jennie T. Anderson Theatre) and *No Exit* (Oglethorpe University RRC). Nevaeh is currently studying to earn her B.A. in Theatre from Oglethorpe University in Brookhaven, GA. She would like to thank her family and friends for their endless support, and she hopes you enjoy the show! Follow along with her on Instagram @riddlenevaeh

CAST & CREW BIOS (CONTINUED)

ZURI PETTEWAY *She/Her* (Ensemble) is so excited to make her Out Front debut! After getting her BFA in Theatre Performance at Virginia Commonwealth University she moved to Atlanta in 2019. Recent credits include *How To Bruise Gracefully* and *Hands Up* (Alliance Theatre), *Chill* (webseries), *Single.com* (Webseries), *Hair* (Serenbe Playhouse), *A Chorus Line* (Richmond Triangle Players). She would like to deeply thank her friends and family that have helped her throughout this past, very difficult year without them she wouldn't be on this stage today. Zuri can't wait for everyone to watch this show, IT'S TIME TO DANCE!

PRODUCTION CREW

CATY BERGMARK *She/Her* (Director) is grateful to be back at Out Front. This is her first time directing at Out Front and she's over the moon about the opportunity. Previous performances at Out Front Theatre include: *The Rocky Horror Show*, *The Ethel Merman Disco Christmas Spectacular!*, *Judy's 100th Birthday Celebration Cabaret*, and *Kinky Boots*. Previous Atlanta credits include directing *Baby* and performing in *Urinetown* (Act3), *Love's Labour's Lost* (Zero Circle Theatre Co.), *Love and Money* (ART Station), and others. Lots of love to her husband (our dramaturg), our families, and to her OF family for the Proposal.

NICK SILVESTRI *He/Him* (Music Director) is a Grammy-nominated music director with a flair for fabulousity and a penchant for orchestrating the most spectacular show tunes this side of Broadway! Nick began their musical journey in a crib filled with glittered rattles and baby-sized tap shoes. By the age of five, they were already staging their own one-kid productions of *Les Miserables* with stuffed animals as the cast. But it wasn't until they discovered the dazzling world

of gay musical theatre that Nick's star truly began to shine. Fast forward to today, and he is the toast of the musical theatre scene, having worked on countless productions while also managing to collect more glitter, feather boas, and sequined jackets than anyone in the history of showbiz. When not masterminding the next big showstopper, Nick can be found sipping martinis with a chorus line of flamingos, teaching dance moves to penguins (yes, they moonlight as a choreographer for a penguin dance troupe), and giving pep talks to aspiring divas on the importance of fabulousness. Cheers!

ATARIUS ARMSTRONG *He/Him* (Choreographer) is honored to choreograph a second production with Out Front Theatre. Atarius is a professional dancer and musical theatre choreographer as well as the Artistic Director of ALA Dance, a contemporary dance company. Previous theatrical choreography: *Kinky Boots* (Out Front Theatre), *The Wild Party* (Jennie T. Anderson). Featured concert works: Emory University Performing Arts Studio, Dance Canvas & Georgia Tech First Center for the Arts, Excuse the Art, CDCFest, Georgia Tech & Emory Musician's Network, and Fall for Fall Dance Festival. Previous training includes Pilobolus, Jacob Jonas the Company, David Dorfman Dance, Rioult Chicago, and more. @atariusarmstrong | atariusarmstrong.com

SYDNEY LEE *She/Her* (Production Stage Manager/Co-Scenic Designer) is Zazzed to Build a Prom with this team of incredible people. She is the current Production Manager of Out Front Theatre Company and a multifaceted artist in the Atlanta area. Past Out Front credits include: *Ruthless!*, *Kinky Boots*, *Xanadu*, Paul and Brian's Wedding, *La Cage Aux Folles*, etc. (Stage Manager), *Christmas With The Crawfords* (Prop Designer), *Christmas Dearest* (Co-Scenic/

CAST & CREW BIOS (CONTINUED)

Prop Designer). Past Production Management credits include the Southeast Emmy Award Winning *Georgia High School Musical Theatre Awards* and *Mother of God*. Stage Management credits include *A Christmas Carol* and *Unbossed & Unbowed* (Aurora Theatre), *Ebenezer: A Reconstruction Concert* (Atlanta Musical Theatre Festival), *Songs for a New World* (BUICentennial Productions), *Love's Labour's Lost*, *A New Brain* (Zero Circle Theatre Company). Much love to her family, Nick, and their four cats. Photography Instagram: @sydneywithacamera

DAVID REINGOLD *He/Him* (Lighting Designer) is a proud Penn State graduate and is stoked to be back at Out Front for his second season! Previous Out Front designs include *Kinky Boots*, *Ruthless!*, *I Wanna F***ing Tear You Apart*, and *Bad Romance*. You may have seen his work around Atlanta with other companies including Georgia Ensemble Theatre (*Women in Jeopardy*, *Almost Heaven*), Horizon Theatre (*Support Group for Men*, *Rooted*) and Atlanta Contemporary Dance Company (*Breathe*) among others. Up next David will be designing the world premiere of *Vessels* which will be presented as part of the KSU Fall Dance Concert. "Many thanks to the entire Out Front staff for creating and sustaining such a vibrant community, and to my family for their unending love and support." davidreingold.net.

JAY REYNOLDS *He/Him* (Costume Designer) is thrilled to be designing at Out Front Theatre for *The Prom*. Past favorite Out Front Theatre credits for Costume Design include: *Kinky Boots*, *Ruthless!*, *When Last We Flew*, *All The Natalie Portmans*, *Xanadu*, *La Cage Aux Folles* (Suzi Bass nomination), *The Ethel Merman Christmas Disco Spectacular!*, *The View UpStairs*, *The Rocky Horror Show* (MAT

nominee), *Sordid Lives*, *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert :The Musical* (MAT Award), and *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told* (MAT nominee). He has designed for Actor's Express, The Atlanta Lyric Theatre, The Aurora Theatre and OnStage Atlanta. Reynolds has also designed and constructed costumes for major films, television and concerts. He would like to lovingly thank his husband Michael for loaning him to the theatre. www.houseofwu.com panoply

PAUL CONROY *He/Him* (Co-Scenic Designer) is the Founder and Producing Artistic Director of Out Front Theatre Company, Georgia's LGBTQIA+ focused theatre company. Originally from the Boston area, he holds a BA in English/Writing with a Minor in Theatre from Long Island University in addition to both a MA in Directing from Roosevelt University and a MFA in Directing from the University of Idaho, and as a playwright his original musical, *The Ethel Merman Disco Christmas Spectacular!* (which he also directed) premiered at Out Front Theatre Company in December of 2018. Other select directing credits at Out Front include *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert: The Musical*, *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told*, *The View UpStairs*, *La Cage aux Folles*, *Xanadu*, *Kinky Boots* and most recently *Ruthless!*. Paul teaches courses in Theatre at Georgia State University, sits on OUT Georgia's Board of Directors as Nonprofit Liaison and will soon conclude his six year term as a founding member of the City of Atlanta's LGBTQ+ Advisory Board for which he chairs the Arts, Culture and Entertainment subcommittee. He was named one of Georgia's 100 Most Influential LGBTQ+ people in 2020 and has been featured in The New York Times, The Times of London and numerous other media outlets speaking

CAST & CREW BIOS (CONTINUED)

about the importance of queer centered arts. Paul is also the co-founder of the Queer Theatre Alliance, a national coalition of LGBTQ+ centered theatre companies.

BRADY BROWN *He/Him* (Sound Designer) is positively delighted and tantalized to be back at the sound board for the homecoming of *The Prom*. He is the creator and director of *Judy's 100th Birthday Celebration Cabaret* at Out Front Theatre Company and *Holigays* as a part of 7 Stages' *Curious Holiday Encounters*. Previous design credits include: *Ruthless!*, *I Wanna F***ing Tear You Apart*, *Christmas Dearest*, *Homos*, or *Everyone in America* (Out Front Theatre), and *Sweat* (Atlanta City Theatre). He also serves as the Director of Marketing & Communications on staff at Out Front. Thanks to Mom for all the support. Be prepared to dance! "Give the people what they want and then go have a hamburger." – Judy Garland

ROBBY MYLES *He/Him* (Projection Designer) is ecstatic to be working on this production as the Projection Designer. Previous Out Front Theatre productions include *one in two*, *Xanadu*, *Christmas Dearest*, and *The Santa Closet*. Robby thanks his family and friends for supporting his artistic journey in this thing called life. You can find Robby on all social media platforms at @robbymyles

DANTE DESTEFANO *He/Him* (Set Decorator & Props Designer) is excited to have joined Out Front Theatre this year. Previously, Dante designed sets for *The Mad Hatterpillar and Her Many Heads*. *The Prom* is his second production at Out Front. Along with stage design, Dante decorates sets for film, television, and live events. Recent credits include *The Big Door Prize*, *Will Trent*, and the *Fear Street trilogy*. Art, design and advocacy for trans youth are Dante's

passions. You can see more of his work and follow the adventures of "Atlanta's Trans Decorator" on Instagram @ragbonestudio and www.ragbonestudio.com.

ELLIOTT FOLDS *He/Him* (Dramaturg) is always so happy to be working with Out Front Theatre Company! Previous Out Front Theatre dramaturgy credits include *Ruthless!*, *All the Natalie Portmans*, and *Xanadu*. Previous Atlanta dramaturgy credits include: *The Niceties* (Stage Door Theatre), *Sweat* (Woodstock Arts), *Mac/Beth* (Synchronicity Theatre), *Maybe Happy Ending* (Alliance Theatre), and *53% Of* (Alliance Theatre). As an actor, he has worked at Out Front Theatre Company, Aurora Theatre, Synchronicity Theatre, and Stage Door Theatre. Much love to everyone involved in bringing *The Prom* back to Atlanta, but especially his wife Caty, who makes the whole world melt away every single day.





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A Homecoming for *The Prom*

This production of *The Prom* is something of a homecoming: it marks the first professional production of the musical to play in Atlanta since its world premiere at the Alliance Theatre in August 2016. According to producer Dori Berinstein, Atlanta proved to be an ideal home for the musical because of its “diverse audience”: “We wanted to be in an environment where [the story] might be challenging for some people.” Emphasizing the universality of the story for Atlanta audiences, Susan V. Booth, then the producing Artistic Director of the Alliance, wrote that *The Prom* is “in its way, the story of all of our proms... I simply can’t think of a more primal and evocative moment than that verge-of-adulthood ritual of wanting to dance with someone you love.”

By the time the show opened on Broadway in November 2018, the story resonated differently for many audiences. It had been two years since Donald Trump had been elected president, and *The Prom*’s skewering of both red-state homophobia and blue-state liberal cluelessness felt both more pointed and more urgent. It was no longer just a universal story—it was a universal story that celebrated inclusivity in a fraught political landscape.

In the five years since opening on Broadway, *The Prom* has, unfortunately, only become more relevant. Conservative politicians across the country are lobbying for legislation to censor LGBTQIA+ representation and identification in schools. Censorship in schools is spiking in frequency, especially in theatre, with schools in Florida and Indiana canceling productions due to concerns over queer subject matter.

The Prom speaks directly to this censorship—the inherent cruelty of adults smothering even the tamest embodiments of queerness with “think of the children” rhetoric. Director Katy Bergmark has emphasized the need to give queer youth the space to grow into themselves, saying, “When we create an environment where we celebrate and love these kids for who they are, we all get to share in their joys and possibilities.”

Like the best musical comedies, *The Prom* runs almost exclusively on joy and hope. At their best, musicals can translate that hope into meaningful change for the audience. Beth Leavel, *The Prom*’s original Dee Dee Allen, spoke directly to her experiences working on *The Prom* in a July 2023 speech. “I have been told that *The Prom* changed lives,” she said. “I know *The Prom* changed lives. I know that *The Prom* probably saved lives.”

—Elliott Folds, dramaturg

Note to self: don't be gay in... Mississippi?

Constance McMillen was an average high school senior preparing for prom. What will you wear? How are you going to get there? What are all your friends doing after? These are the questions that flooded the minds of Constance and her fellow classmates at Itawamba County Agricultural High School in Fulton, Mississippi, until Constance was denied permission to attend prom wearing a tuxedo and accompanying her girlfriend.



Constance McMillen

With the support of her mother, Constance decided to speak up and contacted the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and a week later, the school canceled the prom entirely. Following the cancelation, a court ruling was made determining that Constance's first amendment rights had been violated. Therefore, an alternative, private prom was planned, and with school board officials insisting it would be open to all juniors and seniors. By this time, Constance's story had gained national traction, and she even starred in a segment on equality with Ellen DeGeneres.

Things were looking up—April 2, 2010, was the big day, the day that was going to make all the obstacles worth it. That was until Constance and her date arrived at the prom. They walked in to see a room that was supposed to be filled with people, noise, laughter, and memories in the making, only to see just 7 other people. Where were the other students? What monumental disaster occurred for a mistake like this to happen? This event turned out not to be a mistake at all - the other parents proceeded to organize a so-called "decoy" prom for Constance and her date.

Despite the humiliation and trauma of the experience, Constance said she was proud of pushing back against the powers that be: "It was already illegal, really, but since this was in federal court, now it's in black and white that no school can do what they did to me. It is illegal to stop someone from going to prom based on their sexual orientation." Her story still resonates today - she was the direct inspiration for the musical ***The Prom***.

– Zaria Flanigan, assistant dramaturg

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WHO WE ARE

Out Front Theatre Company was established to tell stories of the LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intergender, Asexual) experience and community, giving voice to LGBTQIA+ authors, composers, artists, and creators through the medium of theatre and the performing arts. Out Front plans to develop new works and produce classic pieces of theatre that have communicated these stories of the LGBTQIA+ population to a wider audience over time.

As a non-profit organization with a dedicated focus to better the LGBTQIA+ population, we strive to:

- **Produce** established works and premiere productions created by members of the LGBTQIA+ society,
- **Generate** productions with universal themes which are important to the LGBTQIA+ community,
- **Educate** the populous to LGBTQIA+ history,
- **Work** with local and national LGBTQIA+ organizations to bring awareness of issues facing the LGBTQIA+ to the greater Atlanta area,
- **Create** artistic and educational opportunities for at-risk LGBTQIA+ youths by collaborating with local educational institutions and organizations,
- **Expand** the number of theatrical opportunities for artists who are members of or who support the LGBTQIA+ community.

Out Front hopes to create a narrative that will reach beyond the stage, into the

conversations and minds our audiences and artists. Theatre's power as a catalyst to spur dialogues goes back thousands of years. Out Front lives to continue that grand tradition of bringing the stories of the LGBTQIA+ people into the spotlight.

LGBTQIA+ Definitions

L stands for Lesbian: Term used to describe female identified people attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other female identified people.

G stands for Gay: Term used in some cultural settings to represent male identified people who are attracted to other male identified people in a romantic, erotic and/or emotional sense. Also, a term used to refer to the LGBTQIA+ community as a whole or as an individual identity label for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual.

B stands for Bisexual: A person emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to people of more than one sex and/or gender. This attraction does not have to be equally split between genders and there may be a preference for one gender over others.

T stands for Transgender: A person who lives as a member of a gender other than that expected based on anatomical sex. Sexual orientation varies and is not dependent on gender identity. This term is sometimes used to refer to the gender variant community as a whole.

Q stands for Queer: An umbrella term, which embraces a matrix of sexual preferences, orientations, and habits of the not-exclusively-heterosexual-and-monogamous majority. Queer includes lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transpeople, intersex persons, and many other sexually transgressive explorers. The term is sometimes used as a sexual orientation label instead of 'bisexual' as a way of acknowledging that there are more than two genders to be attracted to, or as a way of stating a non-heterosexual orientation without having to state who they are attracted to.

I stands for Intergender: Intergender people have a gender identity that is in the middle between the binary genders of female and male, and may be a mix of both.

A stands for Asexual: A term describing individuals who do not experience sexual attraction or do not have interest in or desire for sex. Asexuality is different from celibacy, which means abstaining from sex. Asexuality is often viewed as a spectrum – meaning there are varying levels and identities regarding someone's emotional, spiritual and romantic attraction. The best way to refer to the asexual community is to use the umbrella term "ace" or "aces" as in the "ace community," which acknowledges that spectrum.

+ stands for Many Other Identifications including, but not limited to pansexual, genderqueer, polysexual, agender, androsexual, demisexual, and skoliosexual. We strive to be as inclusive as we can and know we can always improve.

Please visit outfronttheatre.com for a more expansive list of identities, sexualities, terms, resources and more

We welcome all humans, regardless of labels, and hope we celebrate and accept everyone regardless of how they identify.



STAFF AND BOARD LIST

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Founder & Producing Artistic Director

Precious West-Allen (*She/Her*) -
General Manager

Justin Kalin (*He/Him*) -
Associate Artistic Director

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Donations made between July 1, 2023 - October 25, 2023.

Out Front Theatre Company is a 501c3 non-profit organization. The health of the company depends on support from patrons just like you! All donations are 100% tax deductible and greatly appreciated! No gift is too small because it truly takes a community to make the arts thrive and grow.

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