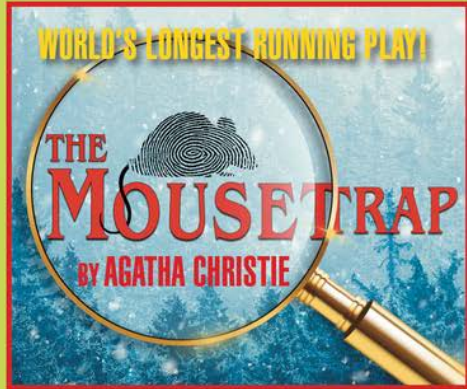


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**2023/2024 SEASON**



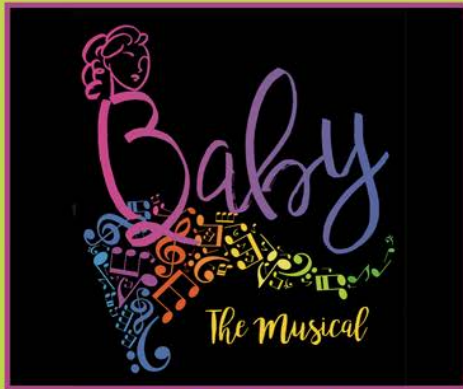
**September 15 to October 15**  
 Directed by **SCOTT WESTERMAN** Written by **AGATHA CHRISTIE**



**November 17 to December 17**  
 Directed by **MATTHEW SILAR** Book by **JOE MASTEROFF**  
 Music by **JERRY BOCK** Lyrics by **SHELDON HARNICK**



**February 16 to March 17**  
 Written by **LAUREN GUNDERSON** Directed by **BETH WOLF**



**April 19 to May 19**  
 Directed by **SCOTT SHALLENBARGER** Book by **SYBILLE PEARSON**  
 Music by **DAVID SHIRE** Lyrics by **RICHARD MALTBY, JR**

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**WRITTEN BY**  
 Denise McGowan Tracy

**MUSIC AND LYRICS BY**  
 Katherine Butler-Duplessis and Denise McGowan Tracy

**MUSICAL ARRANGEMENTS BY**  
 David Fiorello

**DECEMBER 20-31, 2023**

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**Scott Phelps**  
Artistic Director

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**Ellen Phelps**  
Managing Director

presents

## **Eleanor's Very Merry Christmas Wish: The Musical**

WRITTEN BY **Denise McGowan Tracy**

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY **Katherine Butler-Duplessis**  
and **Denise McGowan Tracy**

MUSICAL ARRANGEMENTS BY **David Fiorello**

A holiday musical with heart, humor and eight original songs, Eleanor's Very Merry Christmas Wish - The Musical tells the story of a rag doll who lives in the magical world of the North Pole surrounded by Santa, Mrs. Claus, Clara Claus and the elves Twinkle, Sprinkle and Sparkle. She loves her North Pole family but Eleanor's wish is for a best friend and home of her own.

DECEMBER 20-31, 2023 | CITADEL THEATRE

### MUSICAL NUMBERS

"Magical Place"..... Full Company  
"That's the Way We Wrap It"..... Sprinkle, Sparkle, Eleanor  
"Stuff That We're Made Of"..... Cookie, Eleanor  
"Dear Santa"..... Eleanor, Noelle  
"Christmas is Coming Too Soon"..... Full Company  
"Dear Santa (Reprise)"..... Noelle  
"Packing Up the Sleigh"..... Full Company  
"I'm Not Crying, You're Crying"..... Sparkle & Company  
"Make Your Wish"..... Full Company

## Cast

Mia Abraham.....Sparkle  
Chloe Bassett..... Clara Claus  
Elizabeth Bushell..... Eleanor  
Nico Caputo..... Sprinkle  
Asha Dale Hopman..... Noelle/Shimmer  
Bob Sanders..... Santa Claus  
Kylie Sullivan..... Twinkle  
Angelica Joy Trygar..... Holly/Glimmer  
Ashley Veltman..... Mrs. "Cookie" Claus

## Production Crew

Gregg Dennhardt..... Director/Costume Designer  
Kyra Leigh\*..... Music Director  
Brenda Good..... Choreographer  
Bobby Lee..... Stage Manager/Lighting Designer  
Ellen Phelps\*/Scott Phelps\*..... Production Managers  
Eric Luchen..... Costume Designer  
Alex Trinh..... Sound Designer/Sound Board Operator  
Patrick McGuire..... Properties Designer  
Jason Clark..... Master Carpenter  
Shawn Killackey..... Scenic Charge Artist  
Jesus Ortega..... Scenic Charge Artist  
Bruce Ackerman..... House Manager

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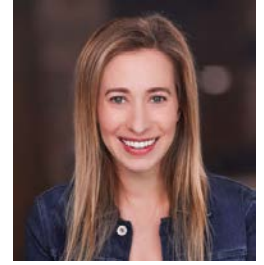
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**Mia Abraham**  
Sparkle



**Chloe Bassett**  
Clara Claus



**Elizabeth Bushell**  
Eleanor



**Nico Caputo**  
Sprinkle



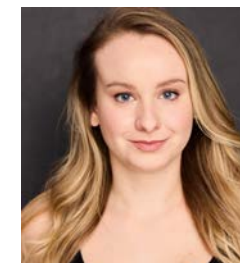
**Asha Dale Hopman**  
Noelle/Shimmer



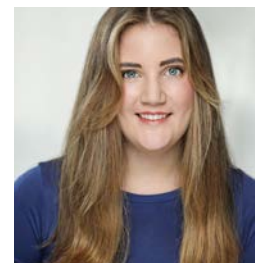
**Bob Sanders**  
Santa Claus



**Kylie Sullivan**  
Twinkle



**Angelica Joy  
Trygar**  
Holly/Glimmer



**Ashley Veltman**  
Mrs. "Cookie" Claus



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### **Denise McGowan Tracy (Author/Playwright)**

A native Chicagoan and recent Southwest Michigan transplant, Denise has been a recognized face and force in Chicago's entertainment and events community—on-stage and behind the scenes—for more than 40 years. She began her career managing and booking the talent for the storied Byfield's nightclub in The Ambassador East Hotel. Denise served as Director of Entertainment for Navy Pier for a decade producing all public programming for millions of visitors. As founder of DMT Entertainment & Events, her full-service entertainment production and event management company, she has produced events for clients including Driehaus Design Initiative, Landmarks Illinois, Lettuce Entertain You, The Better Government Association, The Sarah Siddons Society and The American Bar Association as well as for private clients. With "Eleanor" she began a new chapter in theater as playwright, producer, lyricist and managing director. She was the creator and co-host, with Beckie Menzie, of the popular, long-running impromptu musical showcase Monday Night Live at Petterino's, which celebrated 12 years and their 500th show prior to the pandemic forced final bow. Eleanor's Very Merry Christmas Wish – The Musical is based on the story originally published by Koehler Books in 2015. The second edition was published in 2020.

### **Mia Abraham (Sparkle)**

Mia, currently in 8th grade, loves theater and has been singing and acting locally since she was 6 years old. She has appeared in varying roles, including her latest playing Ms. Trunchbull at the Matilda Jr. show at the Citadel Theatre. She is so excited to play Sparkle in *Eleanor's Very Merry Christmas Wish*. Mia has been an active member of the choral program at Midwest Young Artists Conservatory (MYAC) which has involved several performances at venues such as Ravinia and Northwestern University. She is currently a member of MYAC's Vocal Point Choir. Aside from acting and singing, Mia likes to play tennis and enjoys spending time with her family and friends.

### **Chloe Bassett (Clara Claus)**

Chloe Bassett is so excited to be working with Citadel Theatre for the first time this holiday season! She graduated from Columbia College Chicago this spring with a BFA in acting and a minor in voice over. Previous roles include understudy for Trinculo in Oak Park Festival Theatre's production of "The Tempest," an ensemble member for Technical University Dublin's production of "The Asylum Workshop," and an ensemble member in the extended run of "The Asylum Workshop," Miranda in CenterStage's production of "The Tempest," and Rose in the new interactive theatre horror experience "Terror Roulette."



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### **Elizabeth Bushell (Eleanor)**

Elizabeth Bushell is thrilled to be returning to Citadel where she recently performed in *Snow White: An Original Musical* (Snow White) and *Junior Claus* (Chipper). Elizabeth is a Wilmette-based theatre and on camera actor and graduate of The Academy at Black Box Acting. Other recent theatre credits include *A Chorus Line* (MadKap Productions), *T.G.I.M.*, *TV Land* and *Gigi's Party* (The Yellow Rose Theatre, where she's an ensemble member and finance director) and *The Sound of Music* (Big Noise Theatre). Elizabeth is represented by Dream Team Talent.

### **Nico Caputo (Sprinkle)**

Nico is a freshman at Lake Forest High School and is thrilled to be playing Sprinkle in Eleanor's Very Merry Christmas Wish. Nico discovered his love of theatre at a young age performing in many school and Gorton community center productions. He has previously been seen in *Big Fish*, *Snow White*, and *The Brightest Thing*. Nico is looking forward to Eleanor's Very Merry Christmas Wish and hopes you enjoy the show!

### **Asha Dale Hopman (Noelle/Shimmer)**

Asha Dale Hopman is thrilled to be returning to the Citadel Theatre stage! Previous credits include *Junior Claus* (Citadel Theatre) and *The Sound of Music* (Marriott Theatre and Beverly Arts Center). Asha studies voice at Ovation Academy and dance at Forevermore Dance and Theatre Arts. She is proud to be a cellist in the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra. Love and thanks to Laura Alexander at Talent X, and all of her teachers, friends, and family.

### **Bob Sanders (Santa Claus)**

Bob Sanders has appeared at Citadel in *The Explorers Club* and *The Christians (U/S)*. In 2022, Bob created the role of Chicago Mayor Big Bill Thompson in the world premiere of MPAACT's musical *Red Summer*. Other recent Chicago area appearances include Music Theater Works' 2023 production of *Brigadoon*, *Ragtime*, *Anything Goes*, *Into the Woods*, and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*; Sarah Ruhl's *For Peter Pan on Her 70th Birthday* (US/Shattered Globe); *Funny Girl* and *The Drowsy Chaperone* (MadKap Productions); *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (Blank Theatre Co); and *A Funny Thing Happened On the Way to the Forum* (Metropolis). In New York, Bob was seen in York Theatre Company's *A Little Night Music* and *The Lady's Not for Burning* as well as multiple daytime dramas, including *All My Children* and *One Life to Live*. Regional theatrical appearances include *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, *Deathtrap*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Twelfth Night* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.



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# Donations 9/01/2022 - 12/15/2023

## **Kylie Sullivan (Twinkle)**

Kylie is 17 year old senior in high school. She has been acting since the age of 4 and has done over 40 projects, including film, commercials and theater. Her passion, however, is musical theater. This is her second time taking the stage at Citadel and is so excited to be part of Eleanor's Very Merry Christmas Wish. Some of Kylie's favorite roles were Dasher in Junior Clause here at Citadel. Beth in It's a Wonderful Life the musical at Theater at the Center, Young Violet in The Drama Group's Violet, Dorothy in Wizard of Oz at Emerald City, the young Dolcine in Don Xuichotte at the Lyric Opera, Alice in Alice through the Looking Glass for Arranmore Arts and Ghost of Christmas Past at the Metropolis Center for the Arts. She is looking forward to attending college in the Chicagoland area so she may continue her career here at home. She would like to thank everyone at Citadel Theatre for another amazing opportunity!

## **Angelica Joy Trygar (Holly/Glimmer)**

Angelica Trygar is making her first appearance with Citadel Theatre Company. Other credits include Penny in High Fidelity (Stage Center Theatre), Lucy in Sweeney Todd (ArtReach Chi), and The Wardrobe in Beauty and the Beast (Artreach Chi). She is a recent CMT MA graduate of Northeastern Illinois University and Musical Theatre BA graduate of Columbia College Chicago. She would like to dedicate these upcoming performances to her late mother Halina (Holly) Trygar and teacher Deborah Bulgrin. She would like to thank everyone for their continued support.

## **Ashley Veltman (Mrs. "Cookie" Claus)**

Ashley Veltman is excited to be returning to Citadel after playing Queen Chioptera in SNOW WHITE and Pengy in JUNIOR CLAUS. She has also been recently seen at The Beverly Theatre Guild as ChaCha in GREASE and Three Brothers Theater where she originated the role of Karen in COME UNDONE by Louis Arata. She is a recent graduate of Carthage College where she studied Music Theater. At Carthage, she appeared in EURYDICE (Eurydice), RIDE THE CYCLONE (Constance), SWEET CHARITY (Ursula), PUFFS (Sally), FIGHTING FOR HOME directed by Marcella Kearns, and THE HANDBOOK by Laura Schellhardt.

## **Gregg Dennhardt (Director/Costume Designer)**

Gregg Dennhardt is known as "Doc" for his PhD in Theatre from the University of Illinois. He has directed hundreds of plays and musicals both for children and adults and served as Artistic Director for a Chicago area Equity Theatre for over 30 years. Before that, he taught Theatre at St. Ambrose College, the University of Illinois, the University of Arizona and Northwestern's National High School Institute. For Citadel he has directed TYT productions of *Junior Claus*, *Junie B. Jones*, *Winnie the Pooh* (twice). When not doing theatre, he likes sailing on Lake Michigan and sharing family with wife, Lauren; sons, Joel and Jeff; daughters-in-law, Ashley and Kelsey and grandsons, Sam and Jack.

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## **Kyra Leigh\* (Music Director)**

Kyra Leigh (she/her/hers) is active as a musician and performer in the Chicagoland area. Originally from Louisiana, she's passionate about transvisibility and inclusion in music and theatre. She has music directed and/or composed and arranged for Kokandy Productions, Jedlicka PAC, Theatre of Western Springs, Prop Thtr, Chi Arts, and Music Theater Works (for their production of La Cage Aux Folles starring Ginger Minj). She taught and directed at the Chicago School of Rock (Lakeview) for eight years. Her cabaret experience includes shows at Davenport's, TransVoicesCabaret-Chicago, Rhinofest, and Labyrinth Arts. She's an active church musician as a composer, section leader, and as needed pianist/conductor at North Shore Baptist Church. Her past compositions include commissioned choral pieces for The Chicago Gay Men's Chorus, and La Caccina (a professional women's vocal ensemble); music for Chicago Fringe Opera's Sounds of Pride Series; a series of art songs for acclaimed baritone, Ryan de Ryke; and most recently was the Composer/Artist-in-Residence with Windy City Performing Arts. As an actor, recent credits include Miss Lynch in Grease at Drury Lane, and Sister Mary Hubert in Nunsense at Porchlight Theatre.

## **Brenda Good (Choreographer)**

Brenda Good is a Chicago based choreographer, who also works nationally. Her choreography for the Will Arnett TV show "Hot Date", is streaming on Netflix and Amazon Prime. Brenda danced in and choreographed a SuperBowl 50 spot seen worldwide. She also has her choreography presented at the Auditorium Theatre, Symphony Center, Park West, Harold Washington Library, Navy Pier, and many other venues. Brenda is a Cum Laude graduate of Bowdoin College, attended graduate courses at Northwestern and Columbia University, and is certified in classical ballet from the Cecchetti Council of America.

## **Scott & Ellen Phelps\* (Production Managers)**

Scott & Ellen Phelps are the founders of Citadel Theatre. Scott Phelps is the Artistic Director of the company, while Ellen Phelps serves as the Managing Director. Citadel Theatre, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization & one of Chicagoland's premier live theatres, is in its 22nd season.

## **Bobby Lee (Stage Manager/Lighting Designer)**

Bobby Lee of Libertyville, IL is grateful to be back with the Citadel family for this show. He was the Stage Manager for Junior Claus at the Citadel Theatre last winter and for Merrily We Roll Along with Blank Theatre Company this past April. He is also a Stagehand at the Hemmens Cultural Center in Elgin, IL and also at the James Lumber Center for the Performing Arts in Grayslake, IL.



# Donations (continued)

## Eric Luchen (Scenic Designer)

Eric Luchen is an award-winning scenic and production designer who is thrilled to return to Citadel where he last designed *Airness*. Recent Credits: *The Addams Family* (Metropolis Performing Arts Center), *Elephant and Piggie: We Are in a Play* (Marriott Lincolnshire), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Citadel Theatre), *Gypsy* (Brightside Theatre). Upcoming productions: *Seussical* (Main Street Theatre Co. - Uniontown, PA), *Deathtrap* (Brightside Theatre). You can see more of his work on his website: [www.ericluchen.com](http://www.ericluchen.com) or instagram: ericluchendesigns.

## Alex Trinh (Sound Designer/Sound Board Operator)

Alex Trinh is an Asian-American audio engineer based in Chicago. He would also like to thank Jessica, for being his right hand woman. His recent credits include *She Loves Me* (Citadel), *Personality* (Studebaker), *Damn Yankees* (Marriott).

## Patrick McGuire (Properties Designer)

Patrick McGuire (he/they/any) Recent credits include: *The SpongeBob Musical* (Kokandy Productions), *Addams Family*, *Xanadu*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Cabaret* (Metropolis PAC), *Junior Claus*, *The Christians* (Citadel Theatre). Upcoming productions: *Silent Sky* (Citadel Theatre), *Anything Goes* (Porchlight Music Theatre), and *Xanadu* (Skylight Music Theatre). Patrick has also done freelance design/fabrication work in puppetry, historical millinery, props, and costume crafts/construction for companies including; Florentine Opera, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Music Theater Works, and Gallaudet University, as well as. MA (theatre directing), CCPA at Roosevelt University; MM, Boston University; BME, Illinois State. [www.patrickmcguirearts.com](http://www.patrickmcguirearts.com)

## Jason Clark (Master Carpenter)

Jason is excited to be working with Citadel Theatre and designer Eric Luchen once again. Eric designs some imaginative sets that are always a challenge to build. Jason would like to thank everyone involved in show for a wonderful experience. Sit back and enjoy.

**Special thanks to Bruce Ackerman (House Manager), Shawn Killackey (Scenic Artist) and Jesus Ortega (Scenic Artist)!**

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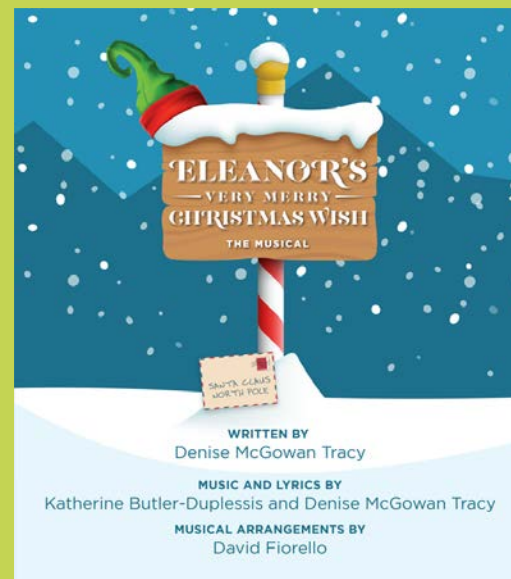


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