Young Artists Initiative Presents

2021
A Virtual Performance
Reflecting on 2020 and Moving Toward The Future!

youngartistsmn.org
2021: A Virtual Performance Online E-Program

**Episode 1:** Saturday March 20th, 2021 @ 2:00pm

**Episode 2:** Saturday March 20th, 2021 @ 4:00pm

**Episode 3:** Saturday March 20th, 2021 @ 6:00pm

**Episode 3:** Sunday March 21st, 2021 @ 2:00pm

**Episode 2:** Sunday March 21st, 2021 @ 4:00pm

**Episode 1:** Sunday March 21st, 2021 @ 6:00pm

**Episode 1 Solo Piece Performers:**

**Episode 2 Solo Piece Performers:**
Julia Dobbins, Joe Hoffman, Charlotte Morgan, Madelynn Morgan, Scarlett Okonek, Katy Olson, Adaija Torres-McClain, Aria Trifilio.

**Episode 3 Solo Piece Performers:**
Aisling Baker, Maeve Baker, Emiliano Espinosa, Jeffrey Keenan, Maggie Narveson, Clara Nerbonne, Danny Stanley, Natalie Stanley, Mae Wrigley.
Welcome To YAI!

Happy 2020-2021 Season! Thank you for spending your time with us at YAI today. Just by supporting this production, you officially become part of the YAI Village! Your support of the show means you care about the performing arts and all the artists who make this community work possible. This is instantly something to celebrate, and I thank you for that — welcome!

As Artistic Director, I get to see so many kids from all walks of life come into this theatre environment, mature both as performers and more importantly as good people, and eventually venture off to wherever life takes them, helping establish new and better communities there. Not only does it take a lot of effort behind the scenes to put on a show like YAI’s 2021: A Virtual Performance — rehearsing, designing and building — but it also takes a village to lay the foundation.

Please consider making a donation toward YAI’s continued sustainability and future growth. YAI is a 501(c)(3) non-profit arts organization. We receive a special charitable status because we are recognized for the public good and the benefit we provide to our community. With your support, we are able to continue keeping ticket prices, programs, and all events affordable and accessible.

Thank you for your support and consideration because life teaches us —

Teamwork makes the dream work!

Matt Berdahl

2021: A Virtual Performance Stage Manager / YAI Artistic Director
This year with in-person performances and rehearsals not being a possibility due to safety restrictions, YAI adjusted and adapted to instead produce a virtual showcase entitled “2021: A Virtual Performance”. This experience was open to any child between the ages of 8 and 18 to participate in and was aimed to provide high-quality and educational theatre experiences through a creative digital platform. This process included five full weeks of “Zoom” rehearsals with opportunities to participate in both solo and group experiences. Each child had the opportunity to work with the directors to explore which talents they would like to share with their community, then identifying and selecting their individual monologue, song, or artistic piece, and finally rehearsing their work with several artistic staff to gain confidence in their performance! In addition to each youth’s individually crafted performance, this showcase also includes three group songs which were creatively arranged and rehearsed through our digital platform. It was a unique and rewarding experience for everyone involved and we are so excited to share it with you!

Demand for a creative outlet and opportunity to connect was high and thankfully we had a large amount of youth interested in being part of this unique experience! We were excited to have several seasoned YAI alumni return and thrilled to see many new faces amongst our artists as well. Therefore, due to the high number of participants involved and our desire to give each youth an opportunity to fully showcase their work, we have broken down the production into three distinct “Episodes”. Each Episode will contain the all group numbers and will feature select solo artists to perform their individual pieces. Please refer to the Solo Piece List to know which Episode your young artist will be featured in! Watch one or watch them all - each of the youth involved has poured themselves and their creative energy to this production and are so proud to share them with you!
Episode #1 Run List

- Raise You Up From Kinky Boots.................... Katy Olson, Julia Dobbins, Mae Wrigley, Ella Kozak, Aria Trifilio, Max Beck
- Into The Unknown From Frozen 2...................... Jeeyun Woo
- Scared Silly-Play......................................................... Neenah Mork
- Piano............................................................................... Yugyeong Jung
- A Million Dreams From The Greatest Showman.................. Violet Mork
- Monologue From Say Anything (movie)............................ Anders Mork
- Seize The Day From Newies............................... Scarlett Okonek, Maddie Morgan, Jeffrey Keenan, Natalie Stanley, Maeve Baker, Aisling Baker, Charlotte Morgan, Joe Hoffman, Danny Stanley, Adajia Torres

10 Minute Intermission

- Puck’s Monologue From A Midsummer Night’s Dream ................. Max Beck
- My Party Dress From Henry and Mudge ................................................ Ella Kozak
- Try Anything From Zootopia.......................................................... Yeaji Son
- Seasons Of Love From Rent................................. Yeaji Son, Maggie Narveson, Yugyeong Jung, Mae Wrigley, Ella Kozak, Julia Dobbins, Neenah Mork, Violet Mork, Clara Nerbonne

Individual performer talkbacks to follow their solo performance.
Artistic staff talkbacks to follow the end of each episode.
Approx. Episode Runtime: 1hr 45min.
Episode #2 Run List

- Raise You Up From Kinky Boots……… Kady Olson, Julia Dobbins, Mae Wrigley, Ella Kozak, Aria Trifilio, Max Beck
- We Look To You- The Prom……………………………………………….. Katy Olson
- Original Poems……………………………………………………..... Scarlett Okonek
- You'll Be Back-Hamilton…………………………………………….. Charlotte Morgan
- Comedy Set………………………………………………………………. Joe Hoffman
- Seize The Day From Newsies…………… Scarlett Okonek, Maddie Morgan, Jeffrey Keenan, Natalie Stanley, Maeve Baker, Aisling Baker, Charlotte Morgan, Joe Hoffman, Danny Stanley, Adajia Torres

10 Minute Intermission

- Pulled From The Adams Family……………………………………………..Julia Dobbins
- Dance—Lovely by Billie Eilish…………………………………………….Madelynn Morgan
- Hey There Delilah From Plain White Tees……………………………..Aria Trifilio
- American Sign Language Interpretation—Count On Me By Bruno Mars…………….Adajia Torres
- Seasons Of Love from Rent…………………….. Yeaji Son, Maggie Narveson, Yugyeong Jung, Mae Wrigley, Ella Kozak, Julia Dobbins, Neenah Mork, Violet Mork, Clara Nerbonne

Individual performer talkbacks to follow their solo performance.
Artistic staff talkbacks to follow the end of each episode.
Approx. Episode Runtime: 1hr 45min.
Episode #3 Run List

- Raise You Up From Kinky Boots………………… Katy Olson, Julia Dobbins, Mae Wrigley, Ella Kozak, Aria Trifilio, Max Beck
- A Million Dreams From The Greatest Showman……………………. Jeffrey Keenan
- Shel Silverstein and Original Poems…………………………………. Maeve Baker
- Original Painting……………………………………………………….. Emiliano Espinosa
- Untitled (Monologue) - Christopher Poindexter……………… Maggie Narveson
- Another Day of Sun From La La Land…………………………… Clara Nerbonne
- Seize The Day From Newsies…………………………………….. Scarlett Okonek, Maddie Morgan, Jeffrey Keenan, Natalie Stanley, Maeve Baker, Aisling Baker, Charlotte Morgan, Joe Hoffman, Danny Stanley, Adajia Torres

10 Minute Intermission

- Life Uncommon by Jewel…………………………………….. Natalie Stanley
- Monologue-Utitled………………………………………………… Aisling Baker
- Original Movie…………………………………………………….. Danny Stanley
- Ribbons Down My Back-Hello Dolly…………………………….. Mae Wrigley
- Seasons Of Love From Rent…………………………………….. Yeaji Son, Maggie Narveson, Yugyeong Jung, Mae Wrigley, Ella Kozak, Julia Dobbins, Neenah Mork, Violet Mork, Clara Nerbonne

Individual performer talkbacks to follow their solo performance.
Artistic staff talkbacks to follow the end of each episode.
Approx. Episode Runtime: 1hr 45min.
Matthew Berdahl. Artistic Director/Stage Manager
Clara Kennedy. Director
Erica Hoops. Production Manager
Wendy Unger. Music Director
Sarah Kraning. Assistant Manager
Becky Wagner. Assistant Director/ Piano Accompaniment
Abby Narveson. Assistant Stage Manager
Welsey Frye. Collaborative Pianist
Robyn Berdahl. Program Designer

Young Artists Initiative
YAI Artistic Director. Matthew Berdahl
YAI Board of Directors. Miriam Ackerman, Matt Berdahl, Robyn Berdahl, Katherine Carlson, Michael Carlson, Ben Eng, Jared Gray, Barry Inman, Paige Kamke, Clara Kennedy, Sarah Kraning, Tommy Lang, Mollie Miller, Timothy Moy, Jim Noggle, Melissa Noggle, Becky Wagner

Special Thanks:
Robyn, Dudley, Murphy, and Archie Berdahl; Bill and Diane Hane; David Wheeler; David and Wanda Berdahl; Shelly Mahre Conlin and Stephen McCombs; Marcus Kuboy; Wesley and Marissa Frye; Open Window Theatre; Wendell and Stockwell Family; Dale Bachmeier; First Lutheran Church; SnapPrint; All of our community partners; the YAI Board of Directors; and finally cast members’ families and friends for their incredible help and support on this production!
Matt Berdahl, YAI Artistic Director/ Stage Manager, (He/ Him), is a Minnesota-born and raised theatre professional who has performed, directed, and traveled the country working with various theaters connected with many strong communities, including musical theatre, Shakespeare, National Touring Children’s Theatre, commercial work, and various other professional mediums. Upon receiving his Bachelor of Arts from the Minnesota State University, Moorhead, Matt launched his career as an actor, performing with some of the Twin Cities theater’s staple directors and theater companies with strong ties to their respective communities. Following a stint in Michigan, Matt made his career move back to the Twin Cities in 2015 to focus on directing for youth as his primary task. He artistically participated in YAI productions: Matilda (Director), Seussical (Director), Disney’s Mary Poppins (Director) and Disney’s The Little Mermaid (Director), and Shrek Jr (Sound Designer). Matt was selected to be YAI’s Artistic Director in 2017, bringing his professional journey full circle: sharing the positive world of theater with Twin Cities youth and working to grow our great YAI community!

Clara Kennedy, YAI Director and Board Member, (She/ her), is from a small town in Wisconsin where she grew up singing, dancing and acting in her local children’s theatres and dance studio. In college, she studied acting and dance and moved to Chicago right after graduation. There, she worked and lived as an actor before making the move to Minneapolis in 2019 after getting signed with a modeling and talent agency. Since then she has been involved in Shakespeare productions and has been signed to an additional modeling agency in St. Paul. Her credits include: “Elaine” Arsenic and Old Lace (The Theatre Lab Chicago), “Bunny” Feed Your Head (Sparkle Theatricals St. Paul) and “Helena” in A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Classical Actors Ensemble-Minneapolis) Acting is her first love, but she has a strong passion for working with kids and she is very excited for this virtual show. She would like to thank her partner, Will for all his support.
**Erica Hoops, YAI Music Director**, (They/Them), is a graduate of St. Olaf College, holding degrees in Vocal Performance and Theatre with an emphasis in Women’s and Gender Studies. Erica is excited to return for their fourth production with YAI, having directed music for *Seussical*, *Matilda*, and acting with the company over a decade ago! When Erica isn’t working with YAI, they manage a store in downtown Saint Paul—working with animals every day has been a lovely way to keep them smiling! Erica also teaches voice lessons to students of any age, performs with Journey North Opera Company, and has made their professional orchestral debut with Hisham Bravo and the Buffalo Community Orchestra!

**Sarah Kraning, Asst. Director**, (She/Her), is a new addition to the YAI family! A Twin Cities native, Sarah has twelve years of experience performing in local theatres, with local credits including *Hansel and Gretel* (Gretel), *Guys and Dolls* (Adelaide), *Blithe Spirit* (Elvira), *A Christmas Carol* (Martha Cratchit), and others. Sarah has also been fortunate to perform in a variety of original cast productions, including *By Candlelight* (Lanie), and *A Class Divided* (Sarah). She graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a degree in Speech-Language Pathology, and has used her love of communication and self expression to help both adults and children improve their speech, vocal health, and social communication capabilities. Sarah has also conducted various types of academic research, including an exploration of the positive health benefits of exposure to the arts, as well as a study exploring the components of “charismatic communication.” When she isn’t working, Sarah loves visiting art museums and hiking through Minnesota’s beautiful state parks. Sarah is thrilled to return to her creative roots as part of YAI’s beautiful state parks.

**Becky Wagner, Asst. Director and Production Accompanist**, (She/Her), is just a small-town girl, living in the Minneapolis world. She discovered a love for the performing arts at a young age through theater and piano, participating in a variety of productions including *Picnic* (Madge), *Grease* (Orchestra – keyboard), *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (Mrs. Beauregarde), *The Wizard of Oz* (Cowardly Lion), *The Golden Goose* (Princess Cry Baby), *Sindibad: Artist & Outlaw* (staff member) and *The Haunted Carousel* (Hippie). The University of Minnesota brought her to Minneapolis where she studied English, interned at Interact Center, and taught beginner piano lessons. When she’s not working as a Program Manager in Fintech, Becky and her husband enjoy traveling, attending concerts, spending time with family and renovating their home. She is excited to reconnect with her creative side on this production at YAI!
Abby Narveson, Asst. Stage Manager, (She/ Her), is a rising senior at Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa, where she studies and plans to get a degree in stage management. This is her second show with YAI, and she worked on their production of Seussical! in 2019 as the Assistant Stage Manager. Her recent credits include The Drowning at Red Rock (SM 2020), Spitfire Grill (ASM 2020), Boundless: A Cabaret (SM 2019) and Marry Me a Little (ASM 2019) at Cornell College. Abby wants to thank her parents, family, and friends for their constant support and love. On with the show!

Wendy Unger, Production Manager, (She/ Her), is a Production Manager, Stage Manager, Designer, and Theatrical Technician from Minneapolis, Minnesota, currently residing in Daejeon, South Korea. Recent works include Much Ado About Nothing and Unrehearsed: Macbeth with North Dakota Shakespeare, and a handful of productions with YAI. This is her fifth production with YAI, following Mulan Jr., Seussical the Musical, Frozen Jr., and Matilda. Although she is teaching English in South Korea, she is glad to support the wonderful YAI community from abroad! Break a leg everyone!

Wesley Frye, Production Accompanist, (He/ Him), is a classically trained operatic tenor. However, his vocal prowess doesn’t end there. He also specializes in musical theater, jazz, and pop, and offers vocal coaching for each of these genres. In addition to being well-known as a singer, Wesley has also made a name for himself as a collaborative pianist, having worked extensively with many age levels, from elementary school to professional ensembles and soloists. Check out Wesley’s resume, hear recordings, and learn more about him on his website www.fryemusicduo.com!

Want to join the YAI Artistic Team for a future production?

We are always seeking passionate professional theatre artists for various productions and headshots and resumes are always being accepted. We offer Youth Internship options as well for both collegiate and highschool.

To be considered for YAI productions and other potential opportunities please email your headshots and resumes to matthew@youngartistsmn.org
Aisling Baker is 12 years old and is homeschooled. She has been in YAI’s *Frozen, Jr.*, and *Matilda the Musical*. She loves YAI and enjoys making new friends during the productions. This is her first virtual show, and she is excited to see how it turns out!

Maeve Baker is 8 years old and is homeschooled. This is her debut theatrical performance. She has loved attending YAI shows and has enjoyed helping at load-in and strike. Inspired by the poetry of Shel Silverstein, Maeve is excited to bring her talents to the (virtual) stage!

Maximilian Beck is 18 years old and happy to be working with YAI. Some recent theatre credits include the role of Jesus in *Godspell* with Miller Park Summer Theatre, John Webster in *Shakespeare in Love* with the Illinois Shakespeare Festival, and The Boy in *For The Loyal* with Heartland Theatre. Max enjoys playing D&D, video games, and dance.

Julia Dobbins is 14 years old, in 8th grade and attends St. John the Baptist in New Brighton. She has been in several school productions, her favorite role was Pollyana. She was in MVCT’s *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, Ashland Productions *James and the Giant Peach Jr*, Steppingstone Theater *The Lion King Jr.* and YAI's *Matilda!* Julia is involved in soccer, piano and a Merry Minstrel Morris singing group. This is her second production with YAI and is excited for you to see the show!

Emiliano Espinosa is 11 years old and he goes to Little Canada Elementary School. He recently started skiing with EU (endurance united) Skiwerx. He is interested in learning how to become an editor. Emiliano likes to paint pictures in art class and likes to play piano at home.

Joseph Hoffman is 9 years old and in 4th grade of homeschool. He has always wanted to be involved with theatre. He has taken one acting class, participated in one filmmaking project, and is currently studying costume design. At home, he loves to give concerts and perform mini-plays. He's been playing violin since he was 4.
Yugyeong Jung is 14 years old and attends middle school in South Korea. Yugyeong learned about YAI through an English camp led by YAI Production Alumni Wendy Unger and is very excited to participate! She is interested in K-pop and her favorite group is BTS.

Jeffrey Keenan Jr. is an 11 year old bilingual in Spanish and he attends Highland Middle School Spanish Immersion. Jeffrey has been dancing since the age of two and competed in tap, jazz, hip hop and ballet from age five to nine. He decided at age nine to pursue his dream of being in musicals and has been studying at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts at the children’s theater for the last year and a half developing his singing and acting skills, and was in his first one hour production Lyle the Crocodile Summer 2019. He also spent Summer of 2018 at Songs of Hope camp singing with 100 plus children from all over the world for two months. This is Jeffrey’s third YAI production after performing in Frozen Jr. and Matilda. He is very passionate about his work with YAI and feels like he is “at home” with the cast and crew.

Ella Kozak is 16 and excited to be back at YAI for this awesome online performance. She most recently appeared on YAI's stage in Seussical (2019) and Mulan (2018). Being on the virtual stage has been a challenge but she is thankful for the amazing cast and staff she has gotten to work with on this show. She hopes you enjoy the show!

Charlotte Morgan is 9 years old and 3rd grader at Royal Oaks Elementary School. This is her first year with YAI. This is her 6th year studying ballet and tap at Woodbury Dance and her 2nd year studying piano. She also enjoyed singing in my church's choir for a year. In her spare time she likes drawing, hanging out with friends, playing video games, and making slime. One of the things she is most proud of is being a Brownie Girl Scout and helping people in her community. She is looking forward to performing with YAI and meeting a lot of new friends.

Maddie Morgan is 11 years old and is in 5th grade at Royal Oaks Elementary in Woodbury. This will be her 6th year studying tap and ballet dance with Woodbury Dance. She also studied piano for 3 years, played violin for a year with her school’s Orchestra, and sang in her school and church’s choir for a year. In her spare time Maddie likes to play Roblox, hang out with friends, paint, swim, and cook. One of the things that she is most proud of is being a Junior Girl Scout and helping out others in her community. She is super excited to perform in The Young Artist Initiative Show this year and meet lots of new friends.
Anders Mork is 16 years old and is a Sophomore at Humboldt High School. This is his 4th performance with YAI after appearing in Matilda last year. Anders likes to play piano and run cross country. He thanks his family for supporting him in the production and is so excited for you to see the show.

Neenah Mork is 13 years old and she is an 8th grader at Humboldt. This will be her third production with YAI. One reason that Neenah keeps doing YAI is that she can make new friends, have fun, and learn more about theatre. In her free time, she loves to bake and go rollerblading.

Violet Mork is 11 years old and a 5th grader at Sejong Academy. This is Violet’s 3rd show with YAI. She likes YAI because she can make new friends and she can also learn about theater. When she has free time Violet likes to play with her siblings, practice gymnastics, read Korean books, dance, read and make slime.

Maggie Narveson is 14 years old and an 8th grader at Nova Classical Academy. She has been in YAI’s Seussical and Frozen Jr. She likes to write, sing show tunes, and spend time with her sister.

Clara Nerbonne is 13 years old and goes to Seward Montessori school, this is Clara’s 5th YAI show and she is so happy to be back! Clara enjoys ice skating, singing, and staring into the empty void of online school. She also hopes you enjoy the show!

Scarlett Okonek is 9 years old and attends Garlough Environmental Magnet School. She loves mythical creatures and gaming. Her dream is to become a Youtuber and she is soon starting her own channel.

Katy Olson is 14 years old and attends Avalon School in St. Paul Minnesota. She has been in 3 YAI shows so far. She played as Bird Girl #1 in Seussical the Musical, Middle Elsa/Troll in Frozen Jr., and Cook/Big Kid Ensemble in Matilda. She would like to thank her mom and grandmother for help setting this up.

Yeaji Son is 13 years old and attends school in South Korea. Yeaji is still learning English and signed up for this activity to learn more! In her free time she plays guitar and piano.

Daniel Stanley is 13 years old and is homeschooled. He previously participated in Black Dirt Theater’s productions of Guys and Dolls and Wizard of Oz. His interests include architecture and designing structures of his own. This is his first YAI production.
Natalie Stanley is 9 years old and is homeschooled. Her other acting experience was with Black Dirt Theater's production of *Wizard of Oz*. She loves caring for her cat and trying out new fashions. This is her first YAI production.

Adajia Torres-McClain is 18 years old and she loves being in YAI. This is Adajia's 6th year with them. She enjoys doing shows with YAI and she is very thankful for all the hard work that YAI has done for her. She hopes she can do more shows with YAI with them even if she won't be performing in them. She would like to thank Matt and Robyn Berdahl for helping her through.

Aria Trifilio is 13 years old and attends Global Arts Plus Middle School. They love singing and performing with people. They have been passionate about acting ever since they got to play the part of the Interrupting Chicken in their kindergarten class play! They sing with the choir at St. Paul Conservatory every week during the school year.

Jeeyun Woo is 13 years old and attends school in South Korea. Jeeyun applied to participate in YAI after learning about it in English camp at her school workshop led by YAI Production Alumni Wendy Unger. At first she was nervous communicating in English, but she made friends, had fun and learned a lot. Jeeyun likes to do monologues and play performances with her friends. This was a good opportunity to learn about theatre and virtual performance for everyone involved. Thank you!

Mae Wrigley is 16 years old and attends Open World Learning, who is thrilled to be back at YAI for her 5th show! Mae participates in theater at school, history day and swim team. She’s grateful for YAI’s resilience and to have a chance to be a part of some virtual theater. Enjoy the show!

**Do you want to be part of an upcoming YAI production as a Youth Participant on or off stage?**

What are you waiting for! Get connected and get involved! All of our programming is designed for all youth ages 8-18 years old. Beyond just performing opportunities we offer Youth Internship options as well for artistic team positions. There is a spot for everyone to be able to do anything. Just ask!

To learn more about YAI productions and other events be sure to Like/ Follow Us on all social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) and stay connected to our website www.youngartistsmn.org.
Thank you to everyone who participated in this production. I am so proud of each and every one of you. This was quite the process and you all should be very proud of all your hard work. Seeing you grow in your craft each week was so fulfilling and I sincerely hope I get the privilege to work with each of you again. To the artistic staff, thank you for your hard work and dedication to this production. This kind of work is so important and we made a great team. Finally, Thank you to my partner Wil, and my best friends Sarah and Alex for their support.

— Clara Kennedy, 2021: A Virtual Performance Director

Welcome to the YAI 2021 Virtual Performance! I am so glad that you are all able to join us. Since the beginning of 2020 I have been living in South Korea, working as an English teacher at a middle school, but also missing involvement in the arts, and especially missing the fantastic YAI community. I was thrilled when I heard that this 2021 virtual performance was in the works. It has been an amazing creative opportunity for everyone involved as we explored new rehearsal and performance options remotely from our different locations across the world. Although most performers and staff are located in Minnesota, some are in other states, and a handful of my students in South Korea were able to join us as well! It has been amazing to see how much their English ability has improved! Family and friends often travel great distances to see what YAI has to offer, and we look forward to seeing your smiling faces again in future, but for now, I am so glad that we can all come together from wherever we are. Well wishes, and enjoy the show!

— Wendy Unger, 2021: A Virtual Performance Production Manager
I would not be who I am today without my sister, Maggie, My parents, My family, My best friends Sam and Georgia, and the community at YAI. Thank you all so much for believing in me and giving me the strength I needed to keep pushing forward.

— Abby Narveson, 2021: A Virtual Performance Assistant Stage Manager

Congratulations to everyone involved in this production! The cast did an amazing job in a very tricky circumstance and I am so proud of everyone for their accomplishments! Seeing the growth from week to week was such a joy, and I hope that everyone feels that they learned something/reached a goal they had during this process!

To the artistic staff, thank you all so much for your hard work, flexibility, and dedication to our young artists. Matt and Robyn—this is an important outlet for kids, and it is so rewarding to be a part of it.

Thank you to my family, my housemates, and my friends who have all supported me throughout all of my endeavors. Special shout-out to Daniel (and Gus) for being so caring and comforting. And a huge thank you to my dear friend Wes and his wife Marissa for their musical support during this project—please check out the Frye Music Duo on Instagram for information on their studios and schedule!

If you or anyone you know is interested in voice lessons, please email ericachoops@gmail.com! I would love to work with you every week to reach your goals.

Stay safe, and support your communities!

— Erica C. Hoops, 2021: A Virtual Performance Music Director
I am going use these notes today to give thanks more than anything. Thank you very much to the Artistic Team for their hard work and dedication to this show and more importantly these kids. Let’s get started... The Young Artists (Cast, Crew, Etc.) – Thank you for all of your growth. Whether we have worked together for 5 years or just this show, I have such a huge respect for you and I celebrate you. We have talked about it through the rehearsal process how you are surrounded by people that care about you and love seeing you succeed. As the show opens, the only thing that changes is now even more people will celebrate you and watch you succeed! Clara (The Director) – Thank you for having such a genuine heart that any kid or adult could feel the positivity during this process.

Erica (The Music Director) – Thank you for educating and performing with a sense of passion and creating healthy habits that these young adults will take with them into adulthood. Abby (The Stage Manager) – Thank you for your commitment and ability to step in to a very tough job and doing so with positivity and critical thinking. This is a rare quality and I am excited to work with you in the future productions. Nailed it! Sarah and Becky (The Assistants Directors) – Thank you for all your teamwork that you brought to this project. You have helped evolve the YAI machine going into the future and for that I thank you very much. Wendy (The Production Manager) – Thank you for our growing friendship both professionally and personally. The kids celebrate you of you and all the hard work you all put in. The YAI Board of Director (The rockstars behind the curtain) – Thank you for your dedication and time, YAI would not exist without you. Robyn (MY WIFE!) – Thank you for the love and support you bring to me. You fuel me and help steer my drive and passion for this program in a way that I admire. With your help I am able to guide this community and share my passion for theater with our community.

Young Artist Initiative is a village – it is a community – and you are now officially part of that community – so to the audience I THANK YOU! Today, do me a favor, give thanks and support to these young adults and artistic staff by praising them and giving them a space full of love and support they will never forget.

— Matt Berdahl, 2021: A Virtual Performance Stage Manager / YAI Artistic Director
Congrats to everyone who worked on this awesome show! I’ve enjoyed every single second of this experience and am incredibly grateful to my husband, Greg, for his support of my passions, along with all our staff members and talented performers. We are all thrilled to have contributed to YAI!

— Becky Wagner, 2021: A Virtual Performance Asst. Director and Piano Accompanist

I’m so impressed with everyone who participated in this show! Congratulations to the cast for creating an incredible virtual performance. It has been a joy to watch each of you work hard, express yourselves, and support one another! To the artistic staff, it was a fantastic experience working with all of you and I’m so glad that we had the opportunity to collaborate on this together. Special thanks to Matt and Robyn for providing such a wonderful creative outlet for this community.

— Sarah Kraning, 2021: A Virtual Performance Assistant Director

Become a YAI Sponsor Today!

WHY YOU SHOULD SUPPORT?
• Get your business infront of people
• Help make positive memories
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• Support these awesome kids
• YAI wouldn’t exist without you!

Make it happen by emailing Matthew@youngartistsmn.org
It is through your support, and the continued commitment from the foundations and grants we are honored to be recognized by, that YAI can offer these high-quality and educational theatre experiences to our communities young artists. Now more than ever we understand the importance of sustaining a place for youth to explore their creative talents, connect with friends, and foster a sense of belonging. Please consider a donation to support YAI in fulfilling our mission to transform the lives of these young artists for years to come!!

Option 1 - GiveMN: Young Artists Initiative - Children's Theatre

Click Link Here: https://www.givemn.org/organization/Young-Artists-Initiative-1

Option 2 - Square: Young Artists Initiative: Home

Click Link Here: https://www.young-artists-initiative.square.site/

Option 3 - Mail a donation to our YAI Offices

Young Artists Initiative Offices:

463 Maria Ave East, Suite 211, Saint Paul, MN. 55106

Option 4 - Employer Support

Many employers support employee giving by generously matching contributions to nonprofits. Check with your employer to see if they match donations to double your contribution to support Young Artists Initiative!

Option 5 - Connect with Matt!

Contact matthew@youngartistsmn.org for alternate methods (to arrange via phone for example)
Donor List:


If you donated to YAI after Sept 2021 and your name does not appear on this list, please contact matthew@youngartistsmn.org to be added as soon as possible.
As another way of honoring the work and mission of YAI - consider sponsorship!! If you are interested in supporting YAI as a sponsor or know someone who might be, please contact matthew@youngartistsmn.org

Thousands of people follow YAI on social media and attend our productions! We’d love to feature your organization’s name and promote your mission alongside our own on social media, in our playbill, and other materials.

What’s more, YAI’s participant families and community members tend to come back for more, as they value the growth, community-building and fun of being involved with our shows. Sponsors have a unique opportunity to share their message with this loyal community!

Special Thanks to McNeely Foundation!

Without their support this YAI production would not have been possible.
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Coaching with Clara Kennedy (clarajkennedy5@gmail.com)

Theatre/Musical Theatre Audition
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All coachings will be via Zoom during this time until further notice.

Contact Clara at: clarajkennedy5@gmail.com for details, openings, and coaching times.

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Stay up-to-date with the latest events and announcements by following YAI on social media. Like, share, and comment on posts as a way to celebrate the work YAI is doing and all of the energy and passion our young artists bring to our community! It is also an amazing opportunity to help increase our visibility and bring awareness of our programming to new youth and families so they might have a chance to participate in a future experience!!

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