# THEATRE WEST PROGRAMME



Things to look forward to at Theatre West!

### COMING SOON!

### CELEBRATION OF LGBTQIA

Friday, June 17 A Brief History of Queer Theatre

### Saturday, June 18

Proud Out Loud Sharing Stories of Coming Out

### WESTFEST FESTIVAL 2022

Festival of fabulous New Works by our writer members, and featuring the talents of our remarkable actors! Comedy. Diversity. Intrigue. LGBTQ+. Family. Drama. Inspiration. Dysfunction. It's all there!

### STORYBOOK THEATRE LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

Classic children's theatre with song and audience interaction that makes it great fun for the whole family.

October 2022

Fall 2022

### A WINTER CABARET

Directed by Victoria Lavan.

Songs, stories, and tales of the glories of winter holidays past, present and future, performed by our gifted musical artists.

Winter 2022

### **MILLENNIUM MAGIC XXI**

Top Magicians from the Magic Castle perform on our stage. Magicians have been thrilling audiences at Theatre West for 20 years! This annual event is suitable for people of all ages.

Fall 2022



# Solopalooza 2.022

→ The Italian In Me with *Dina Morrone* Saturday, May 21 at 8:00 p.m., Sunday, May 22 at 3:00 p.m. *Pages 4 & 5* 

> → She's History with Amy Simon Sunday, June 5 at 3:00 p.m. Pages 6 & 7

→ From a Yardie to a Yankee with Sardia Robinson Saturday, June 11 at 8:00 p.m. Pages 8 & 9

→ Etta Mae Mumphries, and the rest is History with Karen Bankhead Sunday, June 19 at 3:00 p.m. (Celebrating Juneteenth) Pages 10 & 11

→ The Life and Times of A. Einstein with *Kres Mersky* Saturday, June 25 at 8:00 p.m., Sunday, June 26 at 3:00 p.m. *Pages 12 & 13* 

→As Always, Jimmy Stewart with Steve Nevil Saturday, July 9 at 8:00 p.m., Sunday, July 10 at 3:00 p.m. Pages 14 & 15

> → Men, Money, and Madness with *Tessa Bell* Friday, July 15 & Saturday, July 16 at 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, July 17 at 3:00 p.m. Pages 16 & 17

→18 Minutes of Fame with Barbara Minkus

Friday, July 22 & Saturday, July 23 at 8:00 p.m. Sunday, July 24 at 3:00 p.m. *Pages 18 & 19* 

→ Too Old. Too Asian. Too Short with Pamela Najera Friday, July 29 at 8:00 p.m. Pages 20 & 21

→ Versatile with Kevin Neighbors

Saturday, August 6 at 8:00 p.m., Sunday, August 7 at 3:00 p.m. Pages 22 & 23

# What is **Solopalooza 2.0**22

SOLOpalooza 2.022 is the fourth series of solo shows produced at Theatre West. The very first was *The Sunday Night Solo Series*, followed by *Portraits of Humanity, Portraits of Humanity 2*, and now *SOLOpalooza 2.022*. Some of the many artists who have performed solo shows on our stage include Lee Meriwether, Jim Beaver, Bridget Hanley, Leslie Caveny, Abbott Alexander, Kathie Barnes, Ian Ruskin, Kiki Ebsen, Tom Dugan, Maybin Hewes, Anthony Gruppuso, Stephen Spiegel, Leslie A. Jones, James Cox, Paul Dooley, and Chazz Palminteri, who created his award-winning one-man show, A Bronx *Tale*, right here on the Theatre West stage during our Monday night actors workshops and Tuesday night writers workshops!

Solo shows are about the artist wanting and needing to tell their story, share their journey, and reveal their truth. It's a very intimate experience to be all alone on stage, creating a world they inhabit for 60 plus minutes while taking the audience along with them on their ride.

We are very excited about the lineup we have for this series. You will see ten outstanding solo artists who will take you to places you've never been, introduce you to colorful characters you'll be thrilled to meet, and teach you things that are sure to make you roar with laughter, shed a tear, or inspire and lift you up.

Thank you for choosing to spend time with us!



Thank You to the following foundations and government agencies for providing support to Theatre West and its programs.

The Ahmanson Foundation California Arts Council California Venue Operators Grant City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs Comcast NBC Universal James and Deborah Burrows Foundation Kaplan-Loring Foundation Library Foundation of Los Angeles Lloyd E. Rigler-Lawrence E. Deutsch Foundation Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture Los Angeles Unified School District National Endowment for the Arts Peter Glenville Foundation Shuttered Venue Operators Grant

Small Business Administration



DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS City of Los Angeles











### **THE ITALIAN IN ME** written and performed by Dina Morrone

An accelerated, full immersion Italian lesson about Cinema, Sex and Saints... oh, and Federico Fellini too!

Saturday, May 21 at 8:00 p.m. Sunday, May 22 at 3:00 p.m.

#### Synopsis

In The Italian in Me, a doe-eyed aspiring actress - who has been raised on a heaping dose of old fashioned values & Roman Catholic guilt - upends her life by moving from North America to Italy. With her, she brings a suitcase full of unanswered spiritual questions, a tiny bit of cash, and grandiose dreams of working in Italian Cinema. Once in Rome, she learns that things in the Eternal City are not as 'holy' or 'romantic' as she had imagined. When everyday life becomes a sexual obstacle course, she does the only thing she knows how: pray! Her prayers appear to be answered when she meets up with the Maestro, Federico Fellini, Will this encounter turn out to be the 'Dolce Vita' she was searching for?

**DINA MORRONE** is the winner of the Valley Theatre Award for her solo show *The Italian In Me*, based on a chance meeting with the Maestro, Federico Fellini, in Rome, Italy. Mel Brooks said of Dina's performance/show, "One of the truly funniest nights I've spent in the theater." When Dina is not writing self-deprecating comedic solo shows, plays, and short stories, she's the editor/contributing writer for the socially conscious lifestyle magazine, The Eden Magazine, where she has interviewed the likes of Louis Gossett Jr., Gina Lol-

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lobrigida, and Bruce Dern. Or she is doing voiceover on Oscar-nominated films like LUCA, winners like DUNE, or THE BAD GUYS! Dina currently sits on the artistic board of Theatre West as co-chair. Her full-length play MOOSE ON THE LOOSE, a comedy about an Italian family and a Canadian moose, will have a reboot on this stage in April 2023! www.dinamorrone.com

**PETER FLOOD** (Director) directed at the Public Theater (NYC), Mitzi Newhouse at Lincoln Center, Manhattan Theater Club, Playwrights Horizons, Ensemble Studio Theater, and throughout the USA. In Los Angeles: South Coast Rep & the Odyssey Theater. Member of the Actor's Studio Playwrights & Directors Unit NYC & LA, Peter teaches acting in NYC, LA, San Francisco, Paris, Montreal, & Italy.

Peter has also been a story analyst at Walt Disney Studios, Miramax, National Geographic Films, & Universal Pictures. Director: Actors Studio Playwrights & Directors Unit. Peter has directed both The Italian In Me for Dina and also the very successful, crowd-pleasing production of *Moose on the Loose*.

Dina would like to thank Eugene Hutchins, Bonnie Kalisher Dukes. Michael Van Duzer, Ernest McDaniel, Garry Kluger, Rick Simone, Ashley Taylor, David Johnson, Abbey Perez, David Mingrino, Cecil Jennings, Joe Nassi, Doug Haverty, Philip Sokoloff, Teresa Raschilla, Maarten Cornelis, Peter Flood, Debra Lemon, Maryam Morrison (The Eden Magazine), The D.I.V.E. Board Organization, and fellow DIVE, President Alexia Melocchi, Stephen Rivkin, our Volunteers, and ALL OF YOU for coming out to see the show and for supporting Local Intimate Theater.

The Italian In Me is not intended to be a stereotypical depiction of a place, culture, or individuals. I am Italian. I love my Italian heritage and have so much love and respect for the homeland. These are true events that happened to one person in the span of 10 years. It's a story based on actual situations. It's one woman's journey. All the characters portrayed are based on REAL people. Some of their names have been changed to protect the infamous, innocent, or guilty. The scene with Federico Fellini is verbatim and translated from the original Italian conversation which took place at Cinecitta'. His words are exactly what he said to me.

This performance is being performed for your viewing pleasure by using a 100% BOTOX FREE Face! If you see something moving on my face... do not be alarmed... It's just my skin. Enjoy the wrinkles!

"I highly recommend 'The Italian in Me.' Dina Morrone is a gift from above, a brilliant comic talent with echoes of Lucille Ball and Gina Lollobrigida with a touch of Tracey Ullman. I absolutely loved 'The Italian in Me.' Bravo!" —NOHO Arts Magazine

(Highly Recommend)

"Dina is spectacularly funny, original and wonderfully entertaining. Don't miss her. It's the best one woman show I have seen in Los Angeles in the last forty years." —Doris Roberts, Stage, Film & TV Actress

"Her profound scene with Federico Fellini is written and rendered to perfection." —Backstage West



### SHE'S HISTORY \*\*\*

**SHE'S HISTORY** Written and performed by Amy Simon

Sunday, June 5 at 3:00 p.m.

### **Synopsis**

Los Angeles's longest running solo show returns to the stage. Alarmed when her 10-year-old daughter decides to do her women's history report on Cher or Janet Jackson, Mom becomes obsessed with and gets inspiration and strength from our unknown, unheralded and forgotten women in history. Going back and forth from the past to the present, Amy Simon poignantly finds the funny as she chronicles the struggles and accomplishments of our unheralded, unknown and forgotten heroines whose courage and strength inspire her as she raises her two daughters in these funny, enlightening, politically and socially relevant, emotionally charged slices of modern and herstorical life.

AMY SIMON, Playwright, Producer, Actress, Published Writer, and Cultural HERstorian, has been acting since childhood, and writing and producing theater for most of her adult life. Her first play, Cheerios In My Underwear (And Other True Tales Of Motherhood), held the record as the longest-running solo play in Los Angeles until it was broken by SHE'S HISTORY! which debuted in 2010 at The Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles, and has been performed around the country. Amy is a member of SAG-AFTRA, The Dramatists Guild, Los Angeles Female Playwrights Initiative, Association of Los Angeles Playwrights and here at Theatre West where she has been developing SHE IS HISTORY!, a full

cast, all-female version of the solo play. Amy is divorced mother of two daughters - who inspired her playwrighting career - and who can tell you all about the first woman to run for president. www.sheshistory.com

**RICHARD KUHLMAN** (Director) Los Angeles actor and director for the last 30+ years and has directed theatre all around the country. Among the many one person shows he has directed is the Ovation Award nominated *Non Vital Organs* and *Cheerios in My Underwear*, SHE'S HISTORY! and *Pounding Nails in the Floor with My Forehead.* His production of *Regretrosexual* won the *LA Weekly* Award for Best Two Person Play. Richard is currently directing *Murder on the Orient Express* at Santa Paula Theatre Center.

Special thanks to Mark W. Travis who is known internationally for the SOLO shows he has developed and directed.

"With gratitude ... "Gloria Steinem

"Great show Amy – informative, engaging, inspiring!" Paula J. Caplan, Harvard University

"With admiration for a terrific performance..." Elizabeth Holtzman - former New York Congresswoman

"What a beautiful, heartfelt and inspiring show! A gift for all women and our daughters!!" Eliza

"It's all very engaging and informative." Lyle Zimskind LAIUST

"I was so truly impressed with your show tonight. Thank you for answering

the call to educate, entertain and awe your audiences." Ellen Dubois, UCLA History Professor and renowned Women's History author

"I thought it was very inspirational," said California Congresswoman Judy Chu, praising the performance. The audience reaction was a mix of cheers and in some cases, tears. At the end, they showed appreciation with a standing ovation. Nicholas Saul Pasadena City College Courier

"...she was fantastic—we were very pleased. We had an audience of eightynine (a nice mix of teens and adults), and everyone appeared enthralled..." Melissa Elliott – Burbank Library



### 

### FROM A YARDIE TO A YANKEE

Written and performed by Sardia Robinson

Producing a wonderful theater experience with just the right balance of humor and drama.

Saturday, June 11 at 8:00 p.m.

### **Synopsis**

From A Yardie To A Yankee is Sardia's own, personal story of her journey from Jamaica to America. Born into a poverty-stricken Jamaican neighborhood, Sardia had to overcome numerous hurdles in everyday life. Even as a young girl, Sardia dreamed of becoming a Hollywood actress. Then, an unplanned pregnancy added yet more hurdles. Sardia's engaging and unique storytelling style takes audience members on an emotional rollercoaster ride fraught with peril, pain, suffering, but also filled with humor, endearing characters, and the undeterred human spirit to survive.

**SARDIA ROBINSON** is a writer, actress and producer. She is a leader in shifting the narrative for Jamaicans in Hollywood and working steadily to bring diverse, complex, genuine characters to television and film. Sardia immigrated to Chicago and proudly graduated from Columbia College, Chicago, with a BA in Theatre.

Audiences have raved about From a Yardie to a Yankee at New York's United Solo Theatre Festival, The Atlanta Black Theatre Festival, Shakespeare in Paradise (The Bahamas), and the Hollywood Fringe Festival, where Sardia was honored with the festival's prestigious "Innovative Women in Theatre" award. The screenplay for the film version of From a Yardie to a Yankee, also written by Sardia, is currently in pre-production. From LA to New York to London and beyond, Sardia is changing the way the world views the Jamaican experience on stage and screen.

2022 is shaping up to be Sardia's busiest year yet. In February, Sardia performed her show for Black History Month at The University of the Pacific. She just wrapped shooting Just Justice, starring as Amy Jaques Garvey, wife of controversial Black activist Marcus Garvey. You can also catch Sardia starring in House Out of Order, a 2022 hit TV sitcom currently airing and making a splash in the Caribbean. Page 9

Sardia sums up her tenacious pursuit of her goals by saying, "There is no Plan B, so Plan A has to work."

I would like to thank my husband Cliff for believing in me. To JD Mendenhall for always answering my calls when I need him the most. Last but not least, Theater West and Dina Morrone for inviting me to be part of SOLOpalooza 2.022.

"To be in Robinsons presence is to see the face of abject courage and victory in the midst of world-bending tragedy. This is a story we all need to see." — The Tolucan Times.

"Ms. Robinson opens her life to the audience, with no apologies, no fear and no pretense and the effect is mesmerizing."

– NoHoArtsDistrict.com.







**ETTA MAE MUMPHRIES: And the Rest is History!** Written and performed by Karen Bankhead (additional material – Pam Trotter)

Delightful anecdotes about some of your favorite famous folks, from everybody's favorite church mother aka the Black Forrest Gump!

Sunday, June 19 at 3:00 p.m.

Directed by: Karen Bankhead Producer: Free Spirit Productions/Pam Trotter

### Synopsis

Nobody tells stories like Etta Mae Mumphries. And nobody has met and influenced so many important people. You may not have heard of Etta Mae, but surely you know of Josephine Baker, Billie Holiday, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Sammy Davis, Jr., and the list goes on and on. Known sometimes as the "Geriatric Forrest Gump," Miss Etta Mae is a font of biblical wisdom and encourager extraordinaire. Enjoy this joyful and hysterical journey through history, with delightful musical stylings from the actor/singer Pam Trotter.

**KAREN BANKHEAD** is an award winning actress/comedian and has performed locally and off-Broadway, including the Antaeus Theatre, 24th Street Theatre, and Los Angeles Women's Theatre Festival. Winner of NAACP Theatre Award – Best Supporting Actress. Her one woman show, The V-05 Experience, has been featured at the San Francisco Fringe, and Official Selection, United Solo Fest in New York City. Acting credits include: Curb Your

Enthusiasm, Gilmore Girls, I am Sam, Will and Grace, The Parkers, Bernie Mac Show, Franklin & Bash, Reno 911. Writing credits include: contributing screenwriter: Master' Program in Digital Media, National University; Robey Theatre Playwright's Lab; Playwright's Project; Kairos Prize for Screenwriting Semi-Finalist; Short Film Finalist, Broad Humor Festival; Writer's Well Writing Competition Winner; Ira Aldridge Playwriting Award; LA Times Guest Columnist. Spokesperson for AdoptUSKids, Mensa member, UCLA alum. Spokesperson for AdoptUSKids and currently having a ball performing at corporate, church and private events as Etta Mae Mumphries, and all over the internet @ettamaetv www.ettamaemumphries.com



**PAM TROTTER** has become known for her versatility in all aspects of entertainment, from a soul stirring Blues, Gospel, and jazz singer to making a significant mark as an actress, playing character roles in film, television, radio, stage and recording. Originally from St. Louis, MO, now residing in Los Angeles, CA, she has toured across the United States & Canada with the Broadway National Tour of The Color Purple in her dream role as SOFIA. Other stage credits include: An Octoroon, Ain't Misbehavin, Smokey Joe's Café, Big River, Blues in the Night, and numerous others. She can be seen on primetime & streaming shows such as, NCIS LA, Big Shot, As We See It, Tacoma FD, Atypical, Stumptown, Good Trouble, Good Girls, Life In Pieces, Shameless, Superstore, General Hospital and others. Movies include Saving Paradise, Dream Girls, and others.

Special thanks: God almighty for the gift of laughter, Theatre West for this opportunity, dreamboat husband Ken Hitts, Sister Caroline, Mother Rose and Dorothy of the #StayAtHomeChoir, and all the folks who love and support Etta Mae and Friends!

"Hilarious and Heartfelt." - "This show is a hoot!"

"HYSTERICAL!"





## THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A. EINSTEIN

### **THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A. EINSTEIN** Written and performed by

Kres Mersky

A comedy about a day in the life of Einstein as seen through the eyes of his secretary.

Saturday, June 25 at 8:00 p.m. Sunday, June 26 at 3:00 p.m.

### <u>Synopsis</u>

The Life and Times of A. Einstein, written and with Kres Mersky, features one character on stage, and that character is not Albert Einstein himself. It is rather the person of Ellen Shoenhammer, his secretary, but she is much more than that; as her duties include being his chauffeur and his bodyguard (she is handy with a gun). In present-day terms, she might be called a personal assistant, whose duties include being a liaison to the media, protecting his public image from scandal, and generally managing all of his business affairs. As is the case so often, it is a matter of a hard-working woman being markedly responsible for a successful man.

It's Einstein's birthday, there's a press conference for him, and he's been unavoidably detained. So, Ellen is essentially "vamping" for him until he can get there. She addresses the assembled reporters out there (who would physically be where the audience is), talks to them about her beloved boss, and fields questions, evading answers when necessary.

She relates her long association with the Einstein family, how she met the great man and came to work for him, the departure from an ever-more-dangerous Berlin to work at Princeton University, the extraordinary research that changed the way humanity perceives the entire universe. Naturally, someone asks her to explain the Theory of Relativity. She denies that she can, and then proceeds to do exactly that, albeit in hilariously oversimplified laymen's terms.

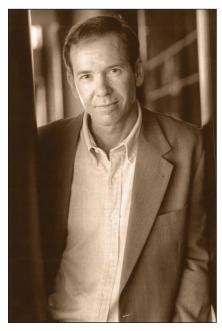
Through the course of the action, the audience is given a substantive insight into one of the most extraordinary lives of the century just past, that of Albert Einstein, the man whose name is synonymous with genius. In the course of a play that is by turns informative, very funny, and occasionally poignant, Albert and Ellen become real people for the audience.

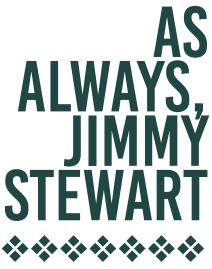
KRES MERSKY (Actress / Writer) hails from Altadena, CA and lives with her husband / director Paul Gersten. As an actress, Kres has performed widely in film, theatre and television, appearing in shows as Charlie's Angels to The Practice. Kres wrote and stars in The Life And Times Of A. Einstein; an offbeat comedy about a day in the life of Einstein as seen through the eyes of his longtime "secretary/watchdog", Ellen. A. Einstein has had several productions in Los Angeles including the Mark Taper Forum. Kres has been nominated by the Mark Taper for The Susan Smith Blackburn Prize in playwriting. Her second full length play, Algerian Romance was work-shopped at the Mark Taper Forum and produced at Primary Stages in New York and also at Theatre West. Kres is a member of Theatre West, the Dramatist's Guild and The Alliance of Los Angeles Playwrights.

**PAUL GERSTEN** (Director) was a successful advertising photographer and commercial director in Los Angeles for 30 years and a 6th grade Math/ Science teacher for 20 yrs. In addition, he has directed Kres in her one woman shows and numerous short plays. Also at Theatre West, Paul directed *Flag Day*, an 11 character comedy about a very off-beat family. He is now touring with Kres with *The Life And Times Of A. Einstein* this year to Washington state, New Mexico and New York. Presently, Paul has retired from teaching and devoting all his efforts to the show.

"A Master Class" Examiner.com

"GO!" LA Weekly





### **AS ALWAYS, JIMMY STEWART** Written and performed by Steve Nevil

Saturday, July 9 at 8:00 p.m., Sunday, July 10 at 3:00 p.m.

Written by Steve Nevil & Ted Snyder, based on the words of Jimmy Stewart and adapted source material

Original Direction by Ted Snyder

### **Synopsis**

It's 2:30 in the morning in the summer of 1994, and Jimmy Stewart can't sleep. As he putters around the den in his house at 918 Roxbury Drive, he begins to reminisce about his wonderful life on and off the screen. Hear one of Hollywood's favorite storytellers share tales of early Hollywood—his film triumphs, his biggest bombs, his youthful misadventures with lifelong pal Henry Fonda, and his amorous exploits with some of movieland's top leading ladies. Find out what it was like behind the scenes with John Wayne, Grace Kelly, Greta Garbo, Alfred Hitchcock, John Ford, and more. And learn about the man behind the movie legend—his boyhood, his family, the personal tragedy, and the real-life heroism that made him not just America's favorite movie star, but one of America's favorite people. Steve Nevil's acclaimed solo show has toured the country (including NY and the Jimmy Stewart Museum in Indiana, PA) and returns to Theatre West (where it was first conceived almost twenty years ago) for two performances only, prior to its engagement at Edinburgh's theatre festival next year.

STEVE NEVIL returns with his piece that first premiered here in 2004 and has toured the country for almost two decades. Steve has played other famous people on stage, most recently Richard Nixon in Mark Wilding's acclaimed Our Man in Santiago, also at Theatre West. He'll reprise that role in New York this fall at the AMT theatre off-Broadway. His other stage roles include The Genius with Mare Winningham, A History of the American Film with Ruben Santiago-Hudson, and the 40th anniversary production of Spoon River Anthology directed by Betty Garrett. Steve's 45 years of film and TV credits can be found on the Imdb website. As a playwright, Steve received the Hollywood Fringe Critics Choice Award for his play Welcome to Heretofor in 2017. His play, The Night Forlorn premiered in 2018 at TW and won the Valley Theatre Award for Best Play of the season.

TED SNYDER (Director and Co-Author) spent much of his life performing on stage as an actor, singer and musician. His credits have included leading roles in The Boys in the Band and Your Own Thing and also touring extensively for the USO. With Jimmy Stewart. Ted added director to his resume as well. Ted lived in Whittier with his wife Terry and their two cats for many years, all the while pursuing "an incoherent array of avocations": political consultant, homeowner's association president, mountain peak-bagger, and photographer. He was the writer-editor for the Santa Ana district of the US Postal Service, where he provided and wrote a management newsletter & website. Ted was also instrumental in navigating Steve's presence as featured performer at the Jimmy Stewart Stamp

Ceremony at Universal Studios back in 2007. Ted passed away from stage four brain cancer in February of 2017. He shared a birthday with Jimmy Stewart (May 20th) and was Steve's close friend for over 40 years.

Steve dedicates this 2022 production to his director and great friend Ted Snyder, to Yancey Dunham--whose artistic presence is sorely missed, and to his first drama professor Jean Korf, a great mentor and friend.

Many thanks to Sheila and Scottmarie and to the Stewart family -- Judy, Michael, and Kelly -- for their support of this play.

"I came to see a movie star and left knowing a human being. Bravo!" — Ray Bradbury

A triumphant transformation that must be seen...Steve Nevil's Stewart displays the unassuming modesty and native wit that made him one of America's favorite stars..." — LA Times



### MEN, MONEY, AND MADNESS \*\*\*

### **MEN, MONEY, AND MADNESS** Written and Performed by Tessa Bell

*Men Money & Madness* is a cabaret show about, wait for it: men, money & the insanity of our world. A show that moves the art form away from sentimental love songs, and plants it squarely in the reality of post covid America.

Friday, July 15 & Saturday, July 16 at 8:00 p.m. Sunday, July 17 at 3:00 p.m.

### <u>Synopsis</u>

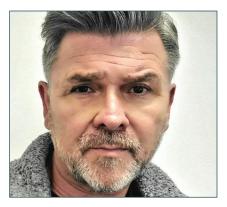
With her nod to the radical origins of the art-form Tessa Bell is a very modern artist who confronts and comments on the world as it is today with humor and compassion, making sense of the chaos that surrounds us by the strength and beauty of her vivid rendition of classic songs.

TESSA BELL began acting as a teenager starring in Ionesco's The Bald Soprano at the Washington Theater Club, and as Sandy in The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie for the Chevy Chase Players before heading off to SUNY Purchase to study Political Economy and Film. After a stint at CBS Sixty Minutes and the CBS Evening News she created Infinity Films & Video, Inc. to produce films for Fortune 500 companies. In the mid-nineties, Tessa wrote and performed four off-Broadway cabaret shows and was nominated for Best Female Debut 2000 by the Manhattan Association of Cabaret and Clubs Awards. Her last show Men Money & Madness premiered in Dec. 2001 at "Judy's" and "Don't Tell Mama." In 2008 Tessa moved to Los Angeles and produced *Life Inside Out*, which won top awards at festivals across the US and was released theatrically. Tessa is a Founding Board member of GreenLight Women.



VICTORIA LAVAN (Director) is a singer, actor, director, and Director of Vocal Health and Principal Voice Faculty at AMDA College and Conservatory for the Performing Arts in Los Angeles. A member of Theatre West, she serves as moderator for the Betty Garrett Musical Comedy Workshop, directing mainstage Cabaret shows. Other directing credits include Ernest Worthing and Hobson's Choice by noted composer, John Biggs. Victoria's own performing career spans 30 years and includes regional opera, symphony, concert, music theatre, cabaret, and theatre credits. Her tribute to the incomparable Barbara Cook Glitter and Be Gay ran for five weeks at the El Portal Theatre in Los Angeles and toured regionally.

Victoria has also served on the voice faculties of Ventura College, Pepperdine University and UCLA Ray Bolger Musical Theatre Program.



**PAUL CADY** (Musical Director) is a graduate of Lamar University with a Bachelor of Music Education in choral conducting degree. He has musically directed numerous cabarets and musical theatre in the LA area. Paul is an actor and singer as well.

"A brilliant performance. Men Money & Madness is a unique cabaret show... Tessa Bell weaves storytelling both serious and humorous into a masterpiece that is deeply thought provoking and wonderfully uplifting."

— The New Sun Newspaper

"An unbelievably great performance. Style, wit, content, and that indescribable quality that identifies a REAL diva. Tessa has the quiet beauty that does not put on airs, just the simple enjoyment of the moment. Her material was stunning... Run, don't walk to Men Money & Madness."

- Nan Selle, Cabaret Hotline



### 18 MINUTES OF FAME \*\*\*\*

### **18 MINUTES OF FAME** Written and performed by Barbara Minkus

While searching for fame, Minkus found the more meaningful things in life.

Friday, July 22 & Saturday, July 23 at 8:00 p.m. Sunday, July 24 at 3:00 p.m.

### <u>Synopsis</u>

Andy Warhol said everyone would have their 15 minutes of fame; Barbara's had a bit more! Join Broadway, film and television star Barbara Minkus as she shares an intimate show of personal moments, funny and poignant songs and her remarkable stories working with luminaries like Danny Kaye, Merv Griffin, Jerry Lewis and Charlotte Rae. While searching for fame, Minkus found the more meaningful things in life. Featuring a variety of show-stopping songs, this one-woman, one-act, 75-minute multimedia musical (with live piano accompaniment) incorporates film, graphics, recordings, and photos to showcase Barbara's exceptional journey of love, life, difficult decisions, family dynamics, and so much more.

**BARBARA MINKUS** (Co-Author; Performer) co-wrote and stars in 18 *Minutes of Fame*. She began her career in NYC in Julius Monk's *Bits and Pieces*, toured as Fanny Brice in *Funny Girl*, played Lucy in the original recording of *You're a Good Man*, *Charlie Brown*, and starred in Broadway's *The Education of Hyman Kaplan*. On TV, she was a regular on Love, American Style for 6 years, played Gittel the Witch on Curiosity Shop, and was the voice of Ms. Pacman. She appeared on The Danny Kaye Show, The Tonight Show, and The Merv Griffin Show. Barbara's stage credits include: *Picon Pie and Saturday Night at Grossinger's*. About Life is her new You-Tube song/story series. Please visit her website at www.barbaraminkus.com.

SUSAN MORGENSTERN (Co-Author; Director) began directing while co-teaching "American Musical Comedy" with Tom Lehrer at UCSC. After directing numerous shows in Los Angeles, Susan met Barbara Minkus at Theatre West, where she directed Saturday Night at Grossinger's with Barbara in the starring role. She directed the hit comedy, The Psychic at the Garry Marshall Theatre, and went on to direct Happy Days, A New Musical at Cabrillo Music Theatre. For the last ten years, she's worked at The Braid, where she directs shows that give voice to diverse, contemporary Jewish stories, and is especially proud to now be its Producing Director.

RON BARNETT (Music Director) is a composer in Los Angeles and serves as Director of Music and Sacred Arts at Saint Mark's Episcopal Church. Representative credits: As Butter Churns To Gold, Around The World In 80 Days, and A Christmas Carol. He scored the world premieres of Lightning Rod, Treasure, The French Lieutenant's Woman, The Turn of the Screw, Cyrano, and more than two dozen shows for children's theatre. His work has been performed at the Kennedy Center Ron is a member of New Musicals Inc., a TCG Awards nominee, and is currently working on a new musical, Last Lists.

"Minkus is brilliant at storytelling and

wraps each segment of her life up with a song that will blow the roof off any theatre." The Tolucan Times

"Her incredible light shines brightly at every moment ... she will live on in our hearts" Broadway World



### TOO OLD. TOO ASIAN. TOO SHORT. \*\*\*

**TOO OLD. TOO ASIAN. TOO SHORT** Written and Performed by Pamela Najera

The Story of an Unlikely Showgirl!

Friday, July 29 at 8:00 p.m.

### <u>Synopsis</u>

Too Old, Too Asian, Too Short is a sto*ry about a girl whose future was already* decided for her. She was an obedient Fil*ipina, destined to be a licensed registered* nurse. Pamela grew up in a household of secrets and lies, mental and emotional abuse, including neglect and bullying. Her family moved from the Philippines and immigrated to America. She grows into adulthood looking for love in all the wrong places. Pamela's already fragmented self-esteem was shattered when her infatuation with a charming singer-songwriter from Georgia abandoned her for his budding music career. An unruly character, Obsession, emerges from her psyche and has her behaving like the 'crazy-ex girlfriend'. Pamela seeks counsel not from a licensed psychiatrist but from an endless number of psychics. Driven by revenge, she's empowered through Dance. Although she was told, 'you're too old, too Asian, and too short', she is catapulted into a long and fulfilling career as a dancer. However, Pamela's inner demons were continuously reminding her that she was a fraud as she struggled to achieve her goals. Will she ever find True Love? Join Pamela, as she takes you on her journey of transformation through song, dance and magic.

PAMELA NAJERA danced professionally with a background in jazz, ballet, and hip-hop for over 20 years. Pamela's show debuted in the 2019 Hollywood Fringe Festival. Her show was one of the official choices in the 2020 Whitefire Theatre-Solofest and the 2021 LA Women's Theatre Festival. This year, she led a workshop called 'Expansion through Movement for the Solo Artist' at the Joshua Tree-Solo Festival April-May 2022. Currently, Pamela enjoys creating with solo-artists as a choreographer and designing a 'uniquely-you' choreography fit for any level of dance or none at all. Pamela is thrilled to be amongst the wonderfully talented solo artists performing in this year's Theatre West SOLOpalooza 2.022! www.Your-SideKik.com



JESSICA LYNN JOHNSON (Director and Developer) is a published playwright, recipient of BEST NATION-AL SOLO ARTIST AWARD, Board Member of the LA Women's Theatre Festival, Director for Whitefire Theatre's SOLOFEST, and Founder & CEO of Soaring Solo LLC. Jessica works as a full time Director & Developer of solo theatre having aided in the development of over 100 solo shows (and still going strong)! As a performer, Jessica has "edu-tained" international audiences touring her own 25 charac-

ter one person shows Ze and Oblivious To Everyone for over 15 years. Over the years, Jessica's projects have taken home awards such as TOP OF FRINGE, HFF ENCORE PRODUCER AWARDS, TVOLUTION BEST SOLO PERFORMANCE, LARRY CORN-WALL AWARD FOR MUSICAL EX-CELLENCE & several other accolades! Jessica was most recently nominated Female Director of Distinction in Theatre by Girl Trip LLC at the 2018 Hollywood Fringe Festival. She is honored to collaborate on this wonderful show! www.JessicaLynnJohnson.com.

I have a long list of wonderful people to acknowledge and thank who are behind the scenes:

I must mention here my director, Jessica Lynn Johnson for her mentorship. She always encouraged me to burn bigger and brighter than I would have ever allowed myself. Peter D Michael my husband, designing the show program / posters / postcards, prop builder, recording voices for characters in my show, editing ALL media in the show. And most importantly, being my rock and shoulder to cry on. Alexander Great for his special appearance, friendship, and continued support in my addiction to jumping out of boxes for him! Dina Morrone and Philip Sokoloff for the opportunity to 'edutain' in this beloved theatre. And to be a part of SOLOpalooza 2.022

"Pamela is brave, hilarious, a gifted dancer and fiercely talented... The magic is wonderful...after a life like Pamela's, something very, very special is almost expected." Samantha Simmonds-Ronceros, NOHO Arts District





VERSATILE Written and Performed by Kevin Neighbors

A modern, strangely Lion Kingesque, journey through intersectionality. Kevin a mixed Black gay man, navigates his life with the help of his African wildlife guides, to find meaning in identity politics.

Saturday, August 6 at 8:00 p.m., Sunday, August 7 at 3:00 p.m.

### <u>Synopsis</u>

Kevin, a mixed-Black, gay person adopted out of foster care, wades through a political existence. With the help of characterized African wildlife, Kevin winds through celebration and despondency, calling out the absurdity of race, racism, and homophobia. The story unfolds through, 20+ characters, digital media and poetry; from police encounters, sexual discovery, systemic racism, shame and pride, Kevin finds meaning in identity politics.

**KEVIN NEIGHBORS** is an LA based theatre/film artist. In 2021 Kevin produced his award winning solo show Versatile receiving rave reviews and awards at three festivals, including the Whitefire Solo Fest, and Kennedy Center College Theatre Festival. He collaborates with a team of artists and producers to cultivate programs that foster the Fringe community and elevate the equitability and representation of the festival as it relates to race, gender, disability/ability, sexual orientation, and more. Kevin also serves as an Executive Board Member and Community Liaison for the Region VII Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, serving the same purpose.

Through his company Neighbors Media he has created, theatre, film and digital media projects with a sharp lens on social justice issues. In 2022 Kevin premiered is second digital media driven solo show #RIPJONATHANXAVI-ER at the Whitefire Theatre, analyzing whether contemporary media and social media serves or hinders the fight for racial equity in America. Kevin employs his voice and experience as a mixed-Black gay man, adopted out of the foster system, to connect with, collaborate and empower artists and peers, young and older, who lack equity in opportunity and choice.

Directed and Developed by Jessica Lynn Johnson and the Soaring Solo Studios. Character development and coaching by Heather Dowling.



JESSICA LYNN JOHNSON (Director and Developer) is a published playwright, recipient of BEST NATION-AL SOLO ARTIST AWARD, Board Member of the LA Women's Theatre Festival, Director for Whitefire Theatre's SOLOFEST, and Founder & CEO of Soaring Solo LLC. Jessica works as a full time Director & Developer of solo theatre having aided in the development of over 100 solo shows (and still going strong)! As a performer, Jessica has "edu-tained" international audiences touring her own 25 character one person shows Ze and Oblivious To Everyone for over 15 years. Over the years, Jessica's projects have taken home awards such as TOP OF FRINGE, HFF ENCORE PRODUCER AWARDS, TVOLUTION BEST SOLO PERFORMANCE, LARRY CORN-WALL AWARD FOR MUSICAL EX-CELLENCE & several other accolades! Jessica was most recently nominated Female Director of Distinction in Theatre by Girl Trip LLC at the 2018 Hollywood Fringe Festival. She is honored to collaborate on this wonderful show! www.JessicaLynnJohnson.com.

I have a long list of wonderful people to acknowledge and thank who are behind the scenes:

Thank you to Jessica Lynn Johnson for her immeasurable support and preparation structure. Thank you to Heather Dowling for her meticulous coaching and creatively empathetic leadership. Thank you to TL Forsberg for her kinship, inspiration, and continuous holding of space in the process. Thank you, to my partner Robert Young who has been my biggest cheer leader with endless encouragement and persistent check ins.

"If you've ever watched any film by Gary Oldman you know the man can play any character and often gets completely lost in the role he plays. The same can be said for the immensely talented young actor, Kevin Neighbors." Dawn Garcia, ATOD MAGAZINE

"The play is mesmerizing, painful, heartbreaking, beautiful, devastating, and unforgettable. Neighbors is a talent I hope to see grace even larger stages, but he's the kind of actor that would ignite the big screen and I hope to see him there soon." Dawn Garcia, ATOD MAGAZINE

### Who'sWhoPalooza

DINA MORRONE (Producer). produced the first ever solo series at Theatre West entitled The Sunday Night Solo Series. She went on to produce Portraits of Humanity 2, a solo series, featuring 14 performers, as well as her awardwinning solo show, The Italian In Me, which she has produced at The Globe Playhouse, The Marilyn Monroe Theatre, and Theatre West. Other shows she produced include, Anthony Gruppuso's musical solo show. The Face Behind The Face Behind The Face, It Happened in L.A., a storytelling event, Who I Am - A celebration of Black History Month. and Moose On The Loose. a comedy about an Italian family and a Canadian moose. Dina currently serves as co-chair of Theatre West's Artistic Board, www. dinamorrone.com

BONNIE **KALISHER** DUKES (Associate Producer) is а proud to be associated with Dina Morrone and SOLOpalooza2.022 at Theatre West. Producing credits include The Italian in Me, A Very Brady Musical, Rockers, Spoon River Anthology, Betty Garrett's 4 Friends in Concert. James Maitland Stewart, An Evening with Jimmv Stewart, and The Writers One-Act Festival at Theatre West, and Gnome for Xmas, a children's dance piece at Cypress Bonnie is currently College. performing in Storybook Theatre's production of GOLDILOCKS THE THREE BEARS at Theatre West every Saturday at 1:00 p.m. through June 4, 2022. Bonnie currently serves as Treasurer on the Artistic Board at Theatre West, She dedicates this performance to her daughter, Michele, and husband, Dave for their love and support.

**DAVID P. JOHNSON (Technical** Director/Sound Designer) has been a member of Theatre West for nearly 20years and has served multiple stints on the Artistic Board in addition to being a driving force behind. A multiple award-winning writer, actor and director, David also runs News of Spite Product ions, a company that provides audio/ video services. A winner of the 2018 Valley TheatreAward for Best Director of a Children's Production (Sleeping Beauty), David's original musical Sally Spectre was also a finalist for the prestigious Richard Rodgers award.

### ABBEY PEREZ (Lighting Designer)

recent theater credits include light design for Theater West's

Love, Actually and assistant stage management for Musical Theatre Guild's productions of How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying and Live, Laugh, Love: A Sondheim Birthday Celebration. When not in the theater, she can be found taking long walks on the beach, working as a Production Assistant, and editing her first feature film.

### DAVID MINGRINO (Stage Manager)

has stage managed in theatres from 45 seats to 2000 seats...he has had the pleasure of working with Charles Nelson Reilly, Hal Linden, Charles Durning, Patti Page and Carol Channing to name a few. Here at Theatre West he stage managed Our Man In Santiago. The Leather Apron Club. Thorn In The Family Paw, Panama Hattie, By Jupiter and numerous West Fests. He has been on stage in more than 100 productions including The Man Who Saved Everything, Verdegris, Picnic. Room Service (which garnered 6 ovation nominations including best ensemble cast) and the critically acclaimed Picasso At The Lapin Agile. He currently has two features streaming on Amazon Prime, Haunted Maze and The Devil Within and streaming on Vimeo the short film The Mind Game. David is currently stage Storybook Theatre's managing touring production of Little Red Riding Hood.

**CECIL JENNINGS (Assistant Stage Manager)** is thrilled to be working SOLOpalooza. He hasn't explored the realm of back stage and is excited Theatre West is giving him the opportunity. Cecil is from Jacksonville Florida (go jags!) and studied acting at Florida State University.

**ERNEST McDANIEL (Technical** Advisor) studied theatrical arts and design at L'Ecole Internationale de Theatre Jacques Lecog and mime at Ecole Internationale de Mimodrame de Paris Marcel Marceau in Paris, France, A member of the Theatre West Artistic Board, he is an actor, mime, director and designer. He has won Best Technical Director Michigan, Best Set Design of for Musical Comedy Murders of 1940 at Theatre West and was nominated for Broadway World Designer of the Decade in both Lighting Design and Audio Design. His performance work and designs have been seen both nationally and internationally. Performance credits Mikhail include: Baryshnikov's Past Forward.

Paris: International Montreaux-Detroit Jazz Festival; the national tour of Raisin; and multiple national tours of his one-man mime show. National Tour Raisin. Additional production credits include: Producer, the Positively Fourth Street Fair Music and Performance Festival, Sally Spectre and Theatre West's world premiere of The Man Who Saved Everything: Art director of Coin Laundry: Property master/ second unit art director for One Half Gone.

GARRY KLUGER (Additional Tech) is an author and awardwinning playwright with three books, 19 plays, two TV pilots and 12 documentaries to his credit. Garry's play, A Thorn In The Family Paw, which premiered at Theatre West, won Best New Play from the Stage Scene L.A. Awards and Best Writer from the Valley Theatre Awards. He won the DFAP International One Act Festival for The Other Half, the Gold Award for Office Hours, the Silver Award for In A Yellow Wood from the World Series Of Screenwriting, won "Highly Recommended" from the Segora Playwrights Festival in France for Prodigal Returns and was twice a finalist from the Sterts Theatre in London for The Other Half and Brotherhood. A member of the Artistic Board at Theatre West, Garry has produced Classic Couples Counselina. Theatre Rocks, Turkey Tales, Love Is A Journey, Family Only, The Man Who Saved Everything and several other shows for Theatre West.

JOE NASSI (Facilities Manager) first trained in the wonderful arts community in Seattle. Joe is the classic theatre 'generalist' having been acting, directing, producing, fight directing, writing and just plain entertaining all up and down the west coast. Joe is familiar to Theatre West audiences. most recently appearing as Macbeth in the original comedy Classic Couples Counseling. Other favorites roles include Hyde in Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde, Edmund in King Lear and Craig - the longest surviving boyfriend in the slasher film Sorority House.

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PHILIP SOKOLOFF (Publicity) has been а Theatre West 1998 and has member since been its Resident Publicist for 20 seasons. He represents over 100 live attractions and several dozen independent feature films annually in Southern California. Also an actor, his appearances Theatre West include the at productions of It's a Wonderful Life, Falling Upward, Drunk and in Charge of a Bicycle, The Petrified Forest, and Pop. 7.

DOUG HAVERTY (Graphics) has designed for theatres and performing arts centers across the U.S. and overseas. He has also created 450plus CD packages (soundtracks, cast albums, jazz, rap and pop) for Universal, Warner Bros., EMI and Sony, among many others. Doug has supplied event graphics for the Los Angeles Jazz Society. American Society of Arrangers and Composers. The Thalians. Associated Television International, Hollywood Christmas Parade, LAPD, LAFD, the Grammvs, baseball cards for a "Weird" AI Yankovic world tour and he co-designed the coffee table book. The Ukulele : A Visual History for Backbeat Books. Doug co-moderates the Writers Workshop with Chris DiGiovanni.

### ANNE LEYDEN (Volunteer Coordinator)

EUGENE HUTCHINS (Theatre West Managing Director) has built a multifaceted career in the arts that has taken him from New York to Los Angeles and several spots in-between. He has held previous arts management positions with Barak Ballet, Los Angeles Master Chorale, MUSE/I QUE, New York City Opera, Chautaugua Opera and the Pearl Theatre Company. Formerly, he was a professional stage director, producer, production stage manager and choreographer for more than a hundred opera, theatre and dance productions across the United States, including engagements with A Noise Within, Lyric Opera San Diego, Odyssey Theatre Ensemble, Opera North, Opera in the Heights, Opera San Luis Obispo, Syracuse Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Theatre 360 and many more. His production of The Boor (Argento after Chekhov) was broadcast on Florida Public Television. He has served on multiple grant review panels for California Arts Council, Los Angeles County Arts & Culture, City of West Hollywood and Arts Council for Long Beach and has written and secured more than \$2M in grants for arts organizations. He has a BA in Dance from UCLA and MM in Opera Production from Florida State University. Visit EugeneH. com for more information.

## THANK YOU!

A very special thank you to our Artistic Board, our Front of House and Box Office staff, our Managing Director, and all our Volunteers who put in countless hours.

> We thank you with all our heart.

#### THEATRE WEST 2021-2022 COMPANY MEMBERS

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#### ABOUT THEATRE WEST

Founded in 1962 by 12 actors looking for a theatrical home in the land of motion pictures, Theatre West is the oldest existing membership company in Los Angeles. Many distinguished artists have called Theatre West their creative home over the years including Carroll O'Connor, Jack Nicholson, Sherwood Schwartz, Ray Bradbury, Bill Blinn, Sally Field, Beau Bridges, Martin Landau, Dick Van Patten, Jim Beaver and Richard Dreyfuss, along with founding member Betty Garrett. And those are just the members with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Theatre West has produced over 300 productions, with two-thirds of the plays being world premieres. The company's workshops have been the crucible for many award-winning original plays and adaptations. "Spoon River Anthology" and "A Bronx Tale," to name only two, have moved from the Theatre West stage to national and international productions. Storybook Theatre, a professional Theatre for Young Audiences, has been delighting children and their parents and grandparents for over three decades.

We welcome you to our theatre and invite you to unplug with us.

#### Theatre West Artistic Board 2021-2022

Michael Van Duzer, *Chairperson* Bonnie Kalisher Dukes, Garry Kluger, Ernest McDaniel, Dina Morrone, Rick Simone-Friedland, Ashley Taylor

Chairpersons Emeritus: Roger Kent Cruz, Betty Garrett, Matthew Hoffman.

#### **Theatre West Workshop Moderators**

Actors Workshop Nick McDow Musleh, Rick Simone-Friedland Playwrights Workshop Chris DiGiovanni, Doug Haverty Betty Garrett Musical Comedy Workshop Victoria Lavan; Paul Cady (Accompanist) Shakespeare Workshop Nick McDow Musleh, Joan Lynch Associates Workshop Laura James

Storybook Theatre Lloyd J. Schwartz, Barbara Mallory Schwartz

### Solopalooza 2.022

Production Staff

Dina Morrone | Producer

Bonnie Kalisher Dukes | Associate Producer

David P. Johnson | Technical Director/Sound Designer

Abbey Perez | Lighting Designer

David Mingrino | Stage Manager

Cecil Jennings | Assistant Stage Manager

Ernest McDaniel | Technical Advisor

Garry Kluger | Additional Tech

Joe Nassi | Facilities Manager

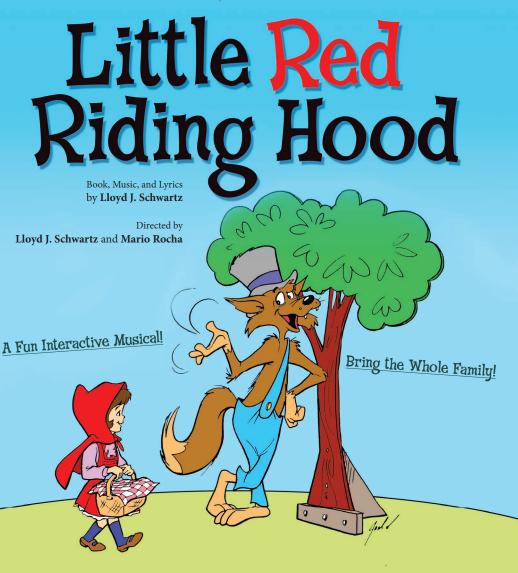
Philip Sokoloff | Publicity

Doug Haverty | Graphics

Anne Leyden | Volunteer Coordinator

Eugene Hutchins | Theatre West Managing Director

Theatre West presents Storybook Theatre's



Opening here at Theatre West in October 2022

Going out on tour in the Summer.



→ www.**TheatreWest**.org ←





For ages 3 to 9





Summer Tour 2022

### Shows in English and Spanish!

Panorama City's Plaza Del Valle

8610 Van Nuys Blvd. Panorama City, CA 91402

June 12, 2022 at 5pm in English and 6:30pm in Spanish Sun Valley's Fernangeles Park

8851 Laurel Canyon Blvd. Sun Valley, CA 91352

June 23, 2022 at 4pm in English and 5:30pm in Spanish La Puente's Community Center Courtyard

501 Glendora Ave. La Puente, CA 91744

June 25, 2022 at 6pm in English and 7:30pm in Spanish El Monte's Tony Arceo Memorial Park Bandshell

> 3125 Tyler Ave. El Monte, CA 91731

July 25, 2022 at 5pm in English and 6:30pm in Spanish

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