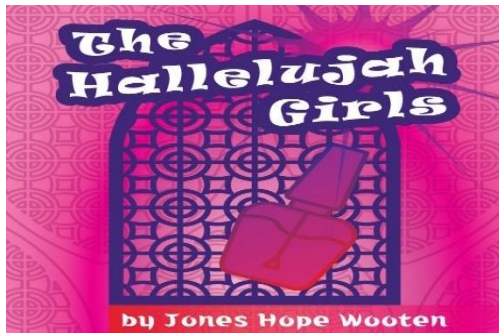


# THE BACKSTAGE PASS

## PLAYERS WORKSHOP WELCOMES 2025 WITH COMEDY



Welcome to the SPA-DEE-DAH! in Eden Falls, Georgia, “a place where women can come and shed their worries, refocus their lives, and walk out feeling like they’re on top of the world. . . .,” as Players Workshop opens 2025 with *The Hallelujah Girls*, another great farce by Jessie Jones, Nicholas Hope, & Jamie Wooten.

Located in what was an old church, the SPA-DE-DAH! is a day spa owned by Sugar Lee Tompkins, the essential “ideal of a southern woman,” the proverbial steel magnolia. When Sugar Lee is threatened with losing the day spa, her fellow southern “belles” rally round to overcome the obstacles, resulting in a “side-splitting comedy that will make you laugh out loud and shout ‘Hallelujah!’”

The cast for *The Hallelujah Girls* is as follows: Richar’ Abel plays Sugar Lee; Joni Brainard plays the no-nonsense Carlene Travis, a three-times married woman branded the “Black Widow of Eden Falls, GA;” Jody Ellison is the ever-optimistic Nita Mooney, a simple country girl who lives vicariously through romance novels; next is Anna Short as kind-hearted Mavis Flowers, married for 40 years but longing for romance and attention; Amy Ford plays loveable Crystal Hart, a daffy extrovert; Kathy Wolfskill portrays Bunny Sutherland, Sugar Lee’s archrival and the self-proclaimed “social arbiter of Eden Falls;” Ty Clute portrays construction worker Bobby Dwayne Dillahunt, Sugar Lee’s old high school beau; and Robert Wiley is good hearted Porter Badgett, a gregarious blowhard who doesn’t know when to shut up!

*The Hallelujah Girls* is being directed by Libba Flores, assisted by Nikki Critser. Carol Hinkle will serve as producer.

Shows will be Feb. 21-23, 27-28, and March 1-2 at the Workshop, 1431 Grove St., beginning at 7:30 p.m., except for 2:00 p.m. matinees on Feb. 23 and March 2.

For more information, call the Workshop at 319-753-6623, go to the PW Facebook page, or go the PW website [www.playersworkshoptheater.com](http://www.playersworkshoptheater.com).

*The Hallelujah Girls* is presented with permission of Dramatist’s Play Service, NY.

## PW “FLASH MOB” AT THE HOSPITAL GALA



Attendees at the Great River Health Foundation’s annual fundraising gala, “Night of Dreams,” which was held on November 16, 2024, found themselves humming along and tapping their toes as six singers from Players Workshop provided an opening “flash mob” rendition of “Sweet Caroline,” to get the party started. Representing the Workshop (and pictured above) were Steve Poling, Lee Franklin, Nancy Roed, Dave Roed, Tim Noll, and Olivia Keller. According to Kent Lewis, the performance was very “well received.” – A great PR moment for PW.

## PLAYERS WORKSHOP KIDS PERFORM AT LIVING WINDOWS

Twelve PW youth participated in downtown Burlington’s 2024 Living Windows Christmas display on Dec. 5, with a skit where 2 young actors portrayed children playing with marionettes and 2 other young actors played the marionettes, who came to life.

The 5-6 p.m. shift was handled by Zach Joyce, Sean Hanson, Seth Hanson (sailor), and Sarah Hanson (mouse).



Olivia Maracle, Liam Wiseman, Stella Wiseman (red dress), and Willow Wiseman (Raggedy Ann) took over from 6-7 p.m.



Closing out the evening from 7-8 p.m. were Courtney Copeland, Lauren Johnson, Aurora Critser (ballerina), and Regina Critser (cat).



Players Workshop would like to thank Pete Vinovich for allowing them to use the PTV Accounting office's window.

Also, a big thank you to the PW "grown-ups" who helped with this success: Christine Claeys, Jeff Rodrigues, Nikki Critser, and Carol Hinkle—thanks to all who came "to play" and promote PW.

### PW EXTENDS THANKS

To cast, crew, production staff—and any others who gave their time and talent to present 2024's holiday offering



Also, a big thanks to the audience, for their attendance, applause, and sharing the holiday season with PW and this heartwarming show.

### PW'S 7<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL ART RAFFLE WINNER ANNOUNCED!



Congratulations to Dave Roed, who is the winner of the Players Workshop annual art raffle, the Jim Spring limited edition called *Owls in Spring*.

Thanks to the generosity of Players Workshop patrons, the organization raised just over \$2000 selling raffle tickets during *Little Shop of Horrors* and *On the Farce Day of Christmas*.

This money will be going toward new commercial grade flooring in the lobby. The current vinyl flooring is well over 20 years old. Proceeds from PW's garage sales have also been earmarked for the new floor, and, with over \$5000 in the garage sale account, PW is very close to being able to replace the entire floor.

Pres. Mary Fox stated, "Players Workshop is grateful to all who have contributed to the success of this



fundraising drive. We are humbled by the generosity of our patrons and neighbors in the Burlington area.”

## FROM THE COSTUME CREW

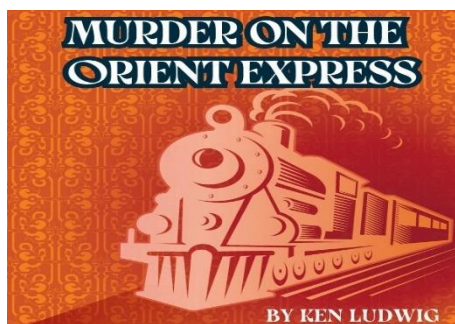


Players Workshop has been lucky to have a hardworking crew of women dedicated to the clean-up, sorting, and organizing of all the current clothing, fabric, shoes, etc., which has filled the theater’s costume area to the brim! To date they have "put in over 130 man hours on the project, and, according to Cyndy Fabel, “we’ve hardly made a dent in our goal and vision for the costume area!”

In addition, this has left them absolutely no time to sort through new donations; **THEREFORE, until further notice, any items left on the stairs or carried up to the costume room will be immediately put into the dumpster.** If you do not want your items discarded in this manner, the costume crew asks that you take it to Hopefully Yours, Goodwill, a similar facility, or store it at your home until such time as they are ready (and have the space), to sort through it and hang it up.

On behalf of the costume closet crew, thank you for your understanding.

# Auditions!



Director Steve Poling has announced that he will hold auditions for Agatha Christie’s *Murder on the Orient Express* at the Workshop, 1431 Grove St., on Sun.-Mon., March 2-3, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

Adapted by Ken Ludwig from the famous novel and set in 1934, *Murder on the Orient Express* follows the attempts of Belgian detective Hercule Poirot to solve a baffling crime on the famous train that runs from Istanbul to western Europe.

Parts are available for 5 men—aged 50-60 (1); aged 40-50 (1); age 20-30 (3)—and 5 women—aged 60’s (1); aged 30’s (4).

The play is presented through special arrangements with Samuel French, Inc.

Email the director at [spoling1952@gmail.com](mailto:spoling1952@gmail.com) or text to 319-750-0335; or go to the Facebook page or to [www.playersworkshoptheater.com](http://www.playersworkshoptheater.com) for more information.

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, contact Mary Weinand ([mary.weinand@yahoo.com](mailto:mary.weinand@yahoo.com) or 319-750-4651) to have your name removed from the mailing list. (Prefer an email version? Contact [pw6623@gmail.com](mailto:pw6623@gmail.com), to have the newsletter converted to electronic format.)

## PW SUPPORTING CAST 2024-2025



Players Workshop invites you to join the Supporting Cast for 2024-2025 season.

This one-time financial donation to runs for the theatrical season, contributing significantly to the financial stability of PW.

Donations may be made in one of the following categories:

<b>Usher \$25-\$99</b>	<b>Stage Crew \$100-\$249</b>
<b>Supporting Actor \$250-\$499</b>	<b>Star \$500-\$999</b>
<b>Director \$1000-\$2499</b>	<b>Producer \$2500+</b>

Names of all those who have joined since the last newsletter are listed in bold face type. Won’t you join them?

**Director**  
**Barbara Bonnett**

**Star**  
Tim & Tonja Binder  
BNSF Railway Foundation  
(matching Kevin Liles’ donation)  
Mary Fox  
Kevin Liles

**Lillian Rubin**  
Carole Theesfeld  
**Supporting Actor**  
Sandra Allgood  
David Beckman  
Carolyn Dorting  
Bonnie Downes  
Eva Ann Elmer  
Jon Hart  
Wayne & Colleen Heibner  
Nathan & Stephanie Heubner

Marlene Holsteen  
**Judith Johnson**  
Russ Leuck  
Chip & Dana Readinger  
Tim Roberts  
Fred & Martha Wetzel  
Kimberly Wittkamp

**Stage Crew**

Barb & David Acord  
Allan G. Allsup  
Cindy & Darrell Bachtell  
Connie Bowen  
**Joni Brainerd**  
Dan & Kathleen Cahill  
Jim & Sandy Carter  
Lois A. Close  
Carol Copeland  
Barbara Drodz (in memory of Jim Drodz)  
Mary & Bill Fortin  
Becky Foy  
Roger & Lori Griswald  
**Dr. Amy Groeltz – Smile Shoppe**  
Robert Haines  
Carole Halicki  
**Kaye Hanna & Tim Hutchins**  
Carol Janosik  
Denise Johnson  
**Gerhardt & Carmen Lachnitt**  
Cynthia M. Leonard (in memory of Mark T. Leonard)  
Tammy Lohmann  
Mary Marsh  
**Ronald Marshall**  
Linda Messer  
John & Lisa Pomberg  
Milton & Laurie Paule  
Carol J. Reed  
Rheinschmidt's Flooring America  
John & Kathy Schneider  
Teresa, Mark, & Pat Shaffer  
Sara Sink  
Pauline Spees & Jim Raudabaugh  
Nancy StClair  
Wayne & Nancy Tolander  
**Keith Turrill**  
Peggy & Earl Stott  
**Kathy Wolfskill**  
Renee Zaiser – Razzle Travel

**Usher**

Judy Bartachek  
Russell Benischek  
Chad & Sally Bird  
Lynne Carter  
Lois Close (in memory of Sandra Nolte)  
Joyce & Paul Dennison

Jaquelyn Edwards  
**Sharon Eisenmayer**  
Mary Fickel  
Lori Fry  
Russ Fry  
Susan Geren  
Lyle & Janice Gibson  
Barbara Hahn  
Linda & Harry Hoenig  
Katherine M. Hoth  
Dean Hurliman  
Char M. L. James  
Dee & Wayne Johnson  
Dorothy Leazer  
Pat Mayle  
**Mary McManis**  
Lucinda Milder  
**Ryan Nagrocki**  
Kendra Robertson  
Kathleen Schier  
Keith Schultz, Sr.  
Bev & Duane Sherbondy  
Brett Shollenbarger  
Jyll & Paul Sly  
Laura Sly  
Anita Stapleton  
David Teater  
Larry & Linda Turley  
**Henry Villareal**  
Christine Williamson  
Kay Wilson  
Eunice Winters

All those who join will have their names listed in each play program and newsletter, as well as on the PW website, for 2024-25. Thank you in advance for your support. You may join the Honorary Supporting Cast by filling out the form at the end of this newsletter or the form in your play program.

**Also,** Players Workshop thanks these additional patrons for their financial donations to Players Workshop: **James Stuart, Ava Arnold.**

**MEET YOUR BOARD MEMBERS**



Meet Burlington's Anika (that's with one 'n') Morton, one of the younger board members, who was

appointed in 2024 to complete an unexpired 2-year term, and her enthusiasm and love for theater has been most welcome. She accepted the position because she likes learning about and being involved in this community and encouraging the youth to continue pursuing the arts.

Anika currently serves on 3 committees. She works with the marketing committee, lending her expertise with social media; a lot of the Facebook postings, particularly those with photos, come courtesy of Anika. She is also part of that costume crew (see earlier article) that is currently cleaning, reorganizing, and revamping the costume area, “working towards a better, easier-to-use space.” One of her biggest loves is the youth committee—she has been the stage manager for the last couple of youth plays, and says, “It’s nice to know I’ve made a positive impact on these young minds, they always ask if I’ll be back to help again.”

She hopes that PW can continue to thrive and grow, and “I hope that the youth involvement and interest continues to gain traction and expand.”

In her spare time, she embraces a passion for music. She grew up in a musical family and feels very lucky to have been able to explore her interests and dabble in different instruments over the years. She says that currently that instrument is her voice; she has had classical training and is expanding into musical theatre through *Mamma Mia!* and *Sister Act*.

Another major pastime for Anika is baking—something she originally did with her grandma and, as she grew up, it came to be something she loves to do by herself. “I love to find and test new recipes and techniques, and now I get to share that joy with my 3 yo ‘nephew’ (my best friend’s kid).”

Obviously, Anika’s love for and ability to work with youth is something very welcome at PW, and her future is bright!



Meet Jeffrey Rodriguez, one of the most recent additions to the PW Board of Directors. Jeff is originally from Montclair, CA, and became a board member as a result of a nomination from the floor at the 2024 PW general membership meeting last May. Most unusual, Jeff nominated himself because he “wanted to make a positive impact and usher the Players Workshop into the new era by modernizing and rejuvenating the community’s passion for the Performing Arts.” His fellow workshop members agreed, and here he is.

Jeff is the chair of the fundraising committee, which he describes as being “tasked with the responsibility of forming ideas which promote community engagement while generating potential revenue.” He is also a member of the strategic planning committee, which works on projections of the future of PW and how it operates, to ensure “advantageous longevity.”—in other words, ways to make sure it continues to develop and move forward so that it is still here for future generations.

Jeff enjoys the “wonderful relationships” he has developed with his fellow board members. He said those who have been on the board a long time have made the transition to membership easy and they are always there to give guidance and support.

A content creator and filmmaker, he is also affiliated with 1/3 of the Southeast Iowa Arts Collective, and, as a lover of the performing arts, Jeff says, “My hope for the future of Players Workshop is for it to continue to thrive, meet a community’s need in regard to the performing arts and continue to inspire.”

Although his avocation is theatre/film arts, Jeff’s occupation is working in child services. When not occupied there, he enjoys filmmaking, networking, “giving back to my community through various charitable organizations and the ongoing pursuit of knowledge.”

Jeff states that “I live my life by quotes as I enjoy making people laugh as we ride this rock through this human experience.”

## PLAYERS WORKSHOP WISHES ALL FELLOW THEATER LOVERS



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### ***HONORARY SUPPORTING CAST DONATION FORM***

Join the **Honorary Supporting Cast** and make a one-time donation for the 2024-2025 season.

**Six Donor Levels Available:**

Usher \$25-\$99	Stage Crew \$100-\$249	Supporting Actor \$250-\$499	Star
\$500-\$999	Director \$1000-\$2499	Producer \$2500 +	

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email** \_\_\_\_\_

Donation Amount \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer my gift remain anonymous. \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to make a donation but do not wish to be listed in the Honorary Supporting Cast. \_\_\_\_\_

**Send completed form to Players Workshop, PO Box 793, Burlington, IA 52601**

You may also contribute by clicking on the DONATE button at the top of the PW website  
([playersworkshoptheater.com](http://playersworkshoptheater.com)) or using the link on the PW Facebook page.

Players Workshop is a 501(c)3 organization.