STAGES

PRESENTS

Spamilton

An American Parody

WRITTEN BY
GERARD ALESSANDRINI

DIRECTED BY
VALERIE RACHELLE WITH
DEREK CHARLES LIVINGSTON

CHOREOGRAPHED BY
VALERIE RACHELLE

with

21 Chump Street

THE MUSICAL

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY
LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA

DIRECTED AND CHOREOGRAPHED BY
MONICA JOSETTE

PRODUCERS
DEBRA AND MICHAEL DISHBERGER

SUBSCRIPTION PACKAGES NOW AVAILABLE!

Whether you're a casual theater-goer or attend as many shows as possible, subscriptions are the best way to enjoy your Stages experience. With value savings over single tickets and priority access in mind, select from our all-in package or mix-and-match six shows to build your perfect season.

26 27 SEASON

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2026–27 SEASON PERFORMANCE CALENDAR:

7.9–7.26, 2026

Broadway and Beyond:
Celebrating 30 Shows with

HOLLAND VAVRA

8.4–8.16, 2026

Late Nite Catechism Las Vegas:

SISTER ROLLS THE DICE

9.18–10.11, 2026

COME FROM AWAY

10.22–11.15, 2026

THE ROOMMATE

11.4–11.8, 2026

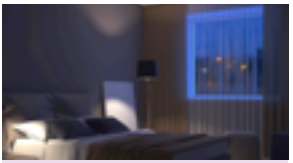
SIGNING THE SONG

11.20–12.27, 2026

The Great American

TRAILER PARK

Christmas Musical



2.5–2.28, 2027

THE MOUNTAINTOP

2.23–3.21, 2027

Sister's Irish Catechism:

SAINTS, SNAKES, AND GREEN MILKSHAKES

3.12–4.4, 2027

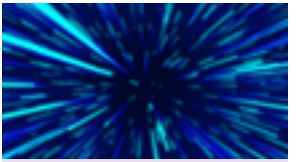
LATIN HISTORY FOR MORONS

5.28–6.20, 2027

ONCE ON THIS ISLAND

6.18–7.11, 2027

SILENT SKY



7.20–7.25, 2027

ONE MAN STAR WARS TRILOGY

FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

"You want a revolution. I want a revelation."
—Hamilton, lyrics by Lin-Manuel Miranda

Stages presents *Spamilton: An American Parody* to celebrate the tenth anniversary of *Hamilton*'s Tony Award sweep on Broadway. The show's use of hip hop's and rap's inherent co-mingling of storytelling and beat to create a Broadway musical, seems, prima facie, obvious but nonetheless has proved revolutionary. Similarly, *Spamilton* uses the music from the groundbreaking show—with altered lyrics and storyline—to recount a fictional Lin-Manuel Miranda seeking to revolutionize and revitalize Broadway with his biographical musical about an American revolutionist. The fact that, ten years later, we are paying homage to Manuel's world-renowned sensation is a testament that he did just that!

Spamilton grew from the mind of Gerard Alessandrini who, for over forty years through *Forbidden Broadway*, a series of off-Broadway revues, has been celebrating Broadway with a twist…or twistedly celebrating it. Using musical theater tunes, Alessandrini skewers Broadway shows, numbers, and stars by transforming musical theater songs into side-splitting parodies. (Please see page 12 in this program for more information.) Rather than denigrate the art form, the decades-long song collection is targeted right at the hearts and funny bones of musical theater fans. To laugh, you have to "get it." And if you "get it," it's because you love "IT"!

And there's more to celebrate. Last year marked the 30th Anniversary of National Public Radio's *This American Life*. Every week the innovative radio program picks a theme and presents a series of stories or an hour-long story on that theme. In 2014, the program commissioned pre-*Hamilton* (post-*In the Heights*), Lin-Manuel Miranda to transform one of the program's stories into a musical. Thus "21 Chump Street," the radio story, became *21 Chump Street: The Musical*. The title's sly reference to the late 80s/early 90s TV show *21 Jump Street*, about undercover cops infiltrating high schools and colleges, hints at the subject of the original story. What has evolved is a non-stop, eighteen minute, dance infused, hip hop musical. Despite it being an undisputed artful Miranda composition, *21 Chump Street*'s brevity means it is rarely produced. So you're getting a treat: a fully produced version of the mini-musical masterpiece as a bonus to *Spamilton*.

In choosing to add *21 Chump Street* to a bill featuring *Spamilton*, these Stages productions are a way to celebrate Lin-Manuel Miranda himself. In addition to *Hamilton* and *Chump*, his Broadway debut, *In the Heights*, a groundbreaking showcasing of a Latin community written by a Latino, stands as a testament to his talent. From Broadway successes, Miranda has gone on to score (pun intended) renown as a film songwriter, including contributions to the animated films *Moana* and *Encanto*. The latter launched the international song hit "We Don't Talk About Bruno," but, thanks to his immense abilities, we sure sing about Miranda.

Salut *Hamilton*! Salut, Alessandrini and *Forbidden Broadway*! Salut *This American Life*! And most of all, Salut, the revolutionary revelation, Lin-Manuel Miranda!

Yours,

Derek Charles Livingston
Artistic Director

OUR MISSION

Stages makes plays and tells stories that invite everyone to live more deeply and love more boldly. We hold up a mirror to our community in order to crack open the question:
"WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HUMAN?"

OUR CORE VALUES

COURAGE
GENEROSITY
INCLUSION
INTIMACY
TENACITY

PEOPLE MAKE THEATER.

OUR LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Stages sits on the unceded traditional land of the Atakapa-Ishak, Caddo, Coahuiltecan, Karankawa, and Tonkawa peoples. The name "Texas" comes from the Caddo word táysha which means "friend". We honor, with gratitude, the Alabama-Coushatta, Aranama, Aztec, Athabaskan, Comanche, Jumano, Kickapoo, Kiowa, Maya, and all Indigenous peoples who have inhabited this place for generations. They continue to remain in relationship with the land and resources through ceremony, culture, and stewardship.

FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

Dear Stages Family,

Welcome, and thank you for being here, as we close our 2025–26 season with a double bill that is pure delight. *Spamilton: An American Parody* is the brainchild of Gerard Alessandrini, the comic mastermind behind the long-running *Forbidden Broadway*, and it is exactly the kind of joyful celebration that reminds us why we all come to the theater. Paired with Lin-Manuel Miranda's rarely performed gem, *21 Chump Street: The Musical*, tonight is a homage to one of the most gifted artists working in musical theater today, a man who has transformed Broadway and inspired a new generation of storytellers. Our extraordinarily talented cast brings both pieces to life with energy, wit, and a whole lot of heart. We hope you leave feeling light from laughter.

At Stages, we believe that a theater is more than a stage. It is a gathering place where our community comes together to laugh, to feel, and to connect. In a world that can feel overwhelming, we are proud to be a place where you can sit beside a neighbor, share a drink at the bar, and let the story take you somewhere wonderful for a few hours. Levity, entertainment, and human connection are not small things. They are essential. And that is what we hope to cultivate here.

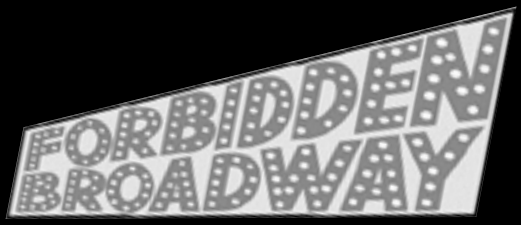
As our season and fiscal year draws to a close at the end of June, I want to extend a heartfelt invitation to those of you who believe in this mission. If a performance here has moved you, made you laugh, started a thought-provoking conversation, or given you a night you will not forget, please consider making an end-of-year gift. More than half of our annual budget comes from donations, and your generosity is what makes it possible for us to continue creating bold, intimate, world-class theater here in Houston. Every gift, of any size, makes a real difference.

And there is so much more ahead! Coming up next, beloved Stages favorite Holland Vavra returns this July for *Broadway and Beyond: Celebrating 30 Shows with Holland Vavra*—an intimate cabaret marking her 30th production with the company. It is a one-of-a-kind evening you will not want to miss, complete with a jazz-lounge vibe. Then, our 2026–27 season brings three spectacular musicals: the Tony Award-winning *Come from Away*, the festive and hilarious *Great American Trailer Park Christmas Musical*, and the gorgeous *Once on This Island*. Season ticket packages—including a musicals-only 4-pack—are available now, just ask someone at the box office or visit our website for more.

Tonight, I hope you enjoy every moment of this special and fun double bill. On behalf of our entire team, welcome. We are so glad you are here.

All my best,

Gwen Watkins
Managing Director



FORTY YEARS OF LOVING BROADWAY BY LAUGHING AT IT

by Derek Charles Livingston

It's a small night club; the pianist starts the familiar, too familiar, opening of "Tomorrow" from *Annie*. It's not a little girl who steps forward, but a jaded, full-grown woman dressed in the iconographic red dress and sporting an exaggerated curly haired Annie wig. She flicks an ash from her cigarette, and, with her nicotine croak sings: *I'm thirty years old, tomorrow/ and I haven't worked since I played Annie/ when I was ten*. Those who laugh and get the joke, but still retain their love for *Annie* and all things musical theater, are the precise targets for Gerard Alessandrini's *Forbidden Broadway* series. For over forty years, Alessandrini's shows have produced "cabaret revue(s) sharply spoofing show tunes, characters, and plots of contemporary and current Broadway musicals." Each edition is a singing political cartoon medley that immediately hones in on the characteristics that musical theater fans know, exaggerates them, and incisively exploits them for humor and truth.

The concept started when Alessandrini, then a young, talented, New York City actor, who, like so many young, talented New York City actors, was working at a restaurant. As he stood at the host station, he wrote parody lyrics to famous Broadway songs to entertain the wait staff (who were also talented young New York actors, so they knew the shows and got the jokes). Soon, to go with his restaurant gig and his summer stock-filled resume, Alessandrini had a portfolio of songs which he and a friend decided to use in a cabaret act showcasing their talent. A supper club owner agreed to let him perform the show if Alessandrini could recruit two more actor-singers so that the show would be more revue than cabaret. The premise was simple: in an evening of songs, take well-loved Broadway numbers, change the lyrics, and from a deep place of love, use the series of rewritten tunes to simultaneously poke fun and celebrate Broadway musicals and its artists.

As Alessandrini relates in a 2004 interview, the first few performances were just on the weekends with audiences largely composed of the actors' friends until Rex Reed, a leading theater reviewer and cultural critic of the time, came to the show. One of the stars mocked in that cabaret was film legend Lauren Bacall, who'd recently appeared in a Broadway show. Reed, reportedly, had a feud with Bacall and loved the show with its plethora of musical theater jokes and its takedown of the Hollywood star. He published a prominent review of the little revue, and *Forbidden Broadway* (to purposely use a cliché) became one of the hottest tickets in town. It ran for over 2,000 performances. Over the years, leading musical theatre stars and creators have come to see the show and enjoy the imitations of themselves. *Forbidden Broadway* has spawned twenty-five editions, thirteen cast albums (this writer owns three), legions of fans, and a forty-year-plus run in New York. In 2006, Gerard Alessandrini was given a special Tony Award for Theatre Excellence.

When the *Hamilton* juggernaut hit Broadway, friends asked Gerard if he was going to put a parody of the Lin-Manuel Miranda hit into *Forbidden Broadway*. But, to Alessandrini, it was clear that *Hamilton*, with its infusion of rap and hip hop, was going to literally change the form that he'd celebrated for thirty years. So he struck upon an idea: put *Forbidden Broadway* inside *Hamilton*. While doing research on the show's creator, Alessandrini entered Miranda's name into his search bar and an explosion of information on Broadway's wunderkind emerged, "Like spam." Alessandrini decided to take *Hamilton*'s music, re-write lyrics, and tell the story of a fictionalized, vainglorious Miranda who was working hard to create a show to revolutionize Broadway by writing a show about revolutionaries. Thus *Spamilton* was born.

Alessandrini states that he was nervous when Miranda came to see *Spamilton*. If he didn't like it, he could shut it down. Fortunately, Miranda loved it! He gave his blessing (along with taking a royalty cut), lent a laudatory quote to the advertisement, and now *Spamilton* has been produced all over the U.S. and on London's West End. Usually led by Alessandrini's producing partner, **the Stages version will be a rare case of a theater producing its own *Spamilton***. The show is in good hands, the directing team definitely understands the wit, wisecracks, and homages of *Forbidden Broadway*.

BROADWAY LEGENDS
IN AND BEYOND *SPAMILTON*

by Derek Charles Livingston

During *Spamilton*, along with references to scores of Broadway shows, the following lyricists, music writers, or lyricists-composers are mentioned by name:

OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN (1896–1960) is best known for his collaborations with composer Richard Rodgers as the duo Rodgers and Hammerstein. Their musicals include *Oklahoma!*, *Carousel*, *South Pacific*, *The King and I, Flower Drum Song*, and *The Sound of Music*. He is credited with the evolution of musical theater songs from generalized lyrics to being reflections of the characters within the show. This innovation started with the landmark *Show Boat*, which he wrote with Jerome Kern, and was solidified when he and Rodgers wrote *Oklahoma!*

ELTON JOHN (b. 1947) is one of the world's best known pop singer/songwriters. In addition to his many international popular songs, he is also a successful musical theater composer and has been represented on Broadway and the West End by *The Lion King, Aida,* and *Billy Elliot: The Musical*.

Photo by: Raph_PH/Wikipedia

JOHNNY MERCER (1909–1976) is mentioned in *Spamilton* when "Burr/Odom" admonishes Miranda to be "terser in your verse, Sir/you're no Johnny Mercer." Mercer is better known for his contribution, as a lyricist, to songs from films "Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive," "Days of Wine and Roses" and "Moon River," for which he won one of his four songwriting Oscars.

RICHARD RODGERS (1902–1979) is the composer half of TWO well known musical theater composing duos: Rodgers & Hart and Rodgers & Hammerstein, although in *Spamilton* his name is cited singularly. With Lorenz Hart, he composed *Pal Joey* and *Babes in Arms* among others.

Photo by: Fred R. Conrad/New York Times Co./Getty Images

STEPHEN SONDHEIM (1930–2021) is perhaps the best regarded Broadway composer, known for complex music and lyrics that were alternatively, "simply dazzling, or dazzlingly simple." A multi-Tony Award winner, Sondheim wrote the lyrics for *West Side Story*, and the music and lyrics for several musicals including *Company, Sweeney Todd, Sunday in the Park with George,* and *Into the Woods*.

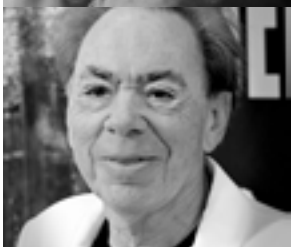


Photo by: Philip Romano/Wikipedia

ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER (b. 1948) is one of the most financially successful musical theater composers; he is chiefly known for writing music and has partnered with others who pen lyrics. Famous musicals include *Jesus Christ Superstar, Evita, Cats, School of Rock*, and *The Phantom of the Opera.*

And, of course…

LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA (b. 1980) is best known for writing (music, book and lyrics) *Hamilton*, in which he also originated the title character. He made his Broadway debut with *In the Heights*, serving as composer, lyricist, and lead actor. Miranda is also known for his song contributions to Disney films such as *Moana* and *Encanto*.

Photo by Gage Skidmore/Wikipedia

Though not mentioned in *Spamilton*, here are just a few artists reflecting an even greater diversity of Broadway musical history:

- **Lynn Ahrens** is the lyricist half of the composing team Ahrens and Flaherty; their work includes *Ragtime* and *Once on this Island*, which Stages will produce in our 2026–27 Season.
- **Betty Comden** was part of a 60 year songwriting team (with Adolph Green) for film and theater, best known for *Singing in the Rain* and *The Will Rogers Follies*.
- **Hue Pak** with Will Aronson wrote the current Broadway hit *Maybe Happy Ending*.
- **Mary Rodgers** was composer of *Once Upon A Mattress* and novelist of *Freaky Friday* (yep, daughter of Richard, and mother of Broadway composer Adam Guettel, who wrote *The Light in the Piazza)*.
- **Charlie Smalls** was one of the few African American Broadway composers, he won a Tony for *The Wiz*.
- **Jeanine Tesori** is arguably Broadway's most successful female composer (*Caroline, or Change*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Violet*, *Shrek The Musical*, *Kimberly Akimbo*). Her collaboration with Lisa Kron on *Fun Home* made them the first female composing duo to win Best Score Tony Awards.
- **Fats Waller** was a jazz and blues composer, but *Ain't Misbehavin'* featured his songs and was a groundbreaking achievement for celebrating a Black composer on Broadway.

Spamilton: AN AMERICAN PARODY

WRITTEN BY **GERARD ALESSANDRINI**

DIRECTED BY **VALERIE RACHELLE** WITH **DEREK CHARLES LIVINGSTON**

CHOREOGRAPHED BY **VALERIE RACHELLE**

ORIGINAL DIRECTION AND CHOREOGRAPHY BY **GERRY McINTYRE**

with

21 Chump Street: THE MUSICAL

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY **LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA**

Based on the story by Robbie Brown which originally appeared on WBEZ's "This American Life."

DIRECTED AND CHOREOGRAPHED BY **MONICA JOSETTE**

MUSIC DIRECTOR FOR BOTH SHOWS **JOHN L. CORNELIUS II**

featuring

DIANA ALCARAZ **MARIAH BAILLIE** **JAYLON BOLDEN**

RICARDO ENRIQUE **TRISTAN FLORES** **BRANDON LOZANO** **JALEN TINSLEY**

SCENIC DESIGNER
LIZ FREESE

SPAMILTON COSTUME DESIGNER
LEAH SMITH

LIGHTING DESIGNER
JANESSA A. HARRIS

SOUND DESIGNER
EDWARD RYAN THORNTON

PROPERTIES DESIGNER
JODI BOBROVSKY

21 CHUMP STREET COSTUME DESIGNER
PRECIOSA AIVLES

21 CHUMP STREET TRACKS CREATOR
KARL IVERSON

SPAMILTON ASSOCIATE CHOREOGRAPHER
MONICA JOSETTE

STAGE MANAGER
RYAN AMIE

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
CARLOS CANTU

PRODUCERS **DEBRA AND MICHAEL DISHBERGER**

Costumes created in the Myrtle Jones Wig and Costume Shop
Properties created in the Jo and Jim Furr Prop Shop
The piano for this performance is generously provided through the support of Jo Dee and Cliff Wright

ON THE STERLING STAGE MAY 29–JUN. 21, 2026

SPAMILTON is presented by arrangement with John Freedson and David Zippel.
21 CHUMP STREET is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals. www.concordtheatricals.com.

Stages is funded in part by grants from the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance.
This project is generously funded by the Houston Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs and Mid-America Arts Alliance.

CAST LIST

SPAMILTON

MARIAH BAILLIE* ..... Renee Elise Goldsberry/Phillipa Soo/Jasmine Jones/Ensemble
JAYLON BOLDEN ..... Leslie Odom Jr./Aaron Burr/Ensemble
RICARDO ENRIQUE* ..... Lin-Manuel Miranda
TRISTAN FLORES ..... King George/Dance Captain/Ensemble
BRANDON LOZANO ..... Christopher Jackson/George Washington/Ensemble
JALEN TINSLEY* ..... Daveed Diggs/Marquis de Lafayette/Thomas Jefferson/Ensemble

UNDERSTUDIES

DIANA ALCARAZ ..... Renée Elise Goldsberry/Ensemble
TRISTAN FLORES ..... Lin-Manuel Miranda/Christopher Jackson
BRANDON LOZANO ..... Leslie Odom Jr./Daveed Diggs

21 CHUMP STREET

DIANA ALCARAZ ..... Naomi
JAYLON BOLDEN ..... Ensemble
RICARDO ENRIQUE* ..... Narrator
TRISTAN FLORES ..... Justin
BRANDON LOZANO ..... Ensemble
JALEN TINSLEY* ..... Ensemble

UNDERSTUDIES

MARIAH BAILLIE* ..... Narrator/Naomi/Ensemble
RICARDO ENRIQUE* ..... Justin

PRODUCTION

SHOW CONTROL	A1	A2	WARDROBE SUPERVISOR
EDEN BISKEY	**LAUREN SMITH**	**GABRIEL MULLEN**	**KARINA KAMYSHIN**
WARDROBE CREW	DECK CREW	DECK CREW	DECK CREW
DANIE TRUJILLO	**ANTHONY SANTOPETRO**	**DEMARCUS DILLARD**	**KALEB ADAMS**

TIME AND PLACE

SPAMILTON
Place: Lin-Manuel's creative struggle to save Broadway from itself
Time: Between *In the Heights* and the opening of *Hamilton*

21 CHUMP STREET
Place: Park Vista Community High School
Time: 2011

SPAMILTON RUNS FOR 75 MINUTES AND *21 CHUMP STREET* RUNS FOR 20 MINUTES.
THERE WILL BE AN INTERMISSION BETWEEN PRODUCTIONS.

*Appearing through an agreement between Stages and Actors' Equity Association, The Union Of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

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SONG LIST

SPAMILTON

"LIN-MANUEL AS HAMILTON" ..... All
"AARON BURR, SIR" ..... Lin-Manuel Miranda, Leslie Odom Jr.
"MY SHOT" ..... Lin-Manuel, Marquis de Lafayette, Christopher Washington, Leslie
"THE SCHUYLER SISTERS" ..... All
"LIN-MANUEL'S QUEST" ..... Lin-Manuel
"BEGGAR WOMAN #1" ..... Lin-Manuel, Beggar Woman, Leslie
"STRAIGHT GUYS' WINTER PROM" ..... All
"STRAIGHT IS BACK" ..... King George
"INTRO" & "WHAT'D I MISS?" ..... All
"SONDHEIM" & "LIN-MANUEL" ..... Lin-Manuel, Ben Sondheim Franklin, Renée
"FRESH PRINCE OF BIG HAIR" ..... Daveed, Renée, Lin-Manuel, Leslie
"RAP CONTEST" ..... Renée, Daveed, Lin-Manuel, Christopher
"BEGGAR WOMAN" ..... Beggar Woman, Lin-Manuel
"DOWN WITH RAP" ..... Beggar Woman, Boys
"EYES ON YOU-MARY POPPINS" ..... All
"IN THE HYPE" ..... All
"NON-STOP" & "BOOK OF MORMON" ..... Leslie, Lin-Manuel, Elder 1, Elder 2
"ASSASSINS" ..... All
"DUEL" & "WHO LIVES WHO DIES" ..... All
"N. Y. C." ..... Annie and Company
"THE FILM WHEN IT HAPPENS" ..... All
"FINALE" ..... All

21 CHUMP STREET

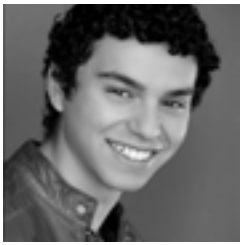
"WHAT THE HECK I GOTTA DO?" ..... All
"ONE SCHOOL AT A TIME" ..... All
"EVERYBODY'S GOT A COUSIN" ..... All
"THE MONEY" ..... All
"EPILOGUE" ..... All

WHO'S WHO

RICARDO ENRIQUE* is back for yet another show at Stages. Ricardo is a multi-disciplinary artist, eco-philosopher, and educator. Select credits include: TheatreSquared, Stages, TEATRX, Alley Theatre, HERE Arts Center, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Yale Repertory Theatre, and others. Television credits include: *Dietland* (AMC), *New Amsterdam* (NBC), *Chicago P.D.* (NBC), *Alternatino with Arturo Castro* (Comedy Central), and others. They are a 2025 Houston Arts Alliance grant recipient, which they're using to produce their first short film, *Cloud Maker*, a story about grief and air inequality in Houston. Ricardo has been awarded as a finalist for the Eugene O'Neill Playwriting Conference (2024 and 2025) and is the 2025 winner of the Kernodle New Play Award. Their work and practice is dedicated to climate activism, dismantling the myth of human exceptionalism, and curating experiences of ecological atonement.

MARIAH BAILLIE* is excited to return to Stages in the production of **Spamilton/21 Chump Street**! Stages: **Mud Row**; Streatham Space Project; London & Edinburgh Fringe Festival Underbelly Cowgate: **Tomorrow Is Not Promised**; Heinen Theater: **Ain't Misbehavin'**. Houston born and bred, Mariah is a "reformed" geophysicist who started her acting career on stage at University of Houston Downtown and further enhanced her theatre studies and credentials during a three-year period in London. Mariah wants to thank her hubby "Ducky", Mom, friends, family for their never-ending support. A big thank you as well to the Houston theater community for so warmly welcoming her back home. "Whit's fur ye'll no go by ye"—A Scottish proverb.

JAYLON BOLDEN is a multi-faceted artist whose disciplines include acting (for stage & screen), voice acting, singing-songwriting, filmmaking, and education. After beginning his acting career in Houston in 2022, Jaylon has recently returned from The UK where he studied at The London Academy of Music & Dramatic Arts receiving his MFA in Acting (2023-25). Moving forward, Jaylon is hoping to reenter education while continuing to perfect his craft. He desires to tell radical stories of hope, restoration, revolution, and most of all love! You can follow his journey on Instagram @jaylon_x



TRISTAN FLORES is elated to be making his Stages debut! Select credits include: A.D. Players: **A Midnight Society** (G.K. Chesterton), **The Gift of the Magi** (Swing); TEATRX: **The Legend of Julio Star** (Toribio); Main Street Theater: **The Wind in the Willows** (Swing), **The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs** (Maxwell), **Diary of a Wimpy Kid** (Duane); Zoom Shakespeare Productions: **Twelfth Night** (Feste); Sam Houston State University: **Sweeney Todd** (Tobias Ragg), **Marisol** (Lenny), **Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead** (The Player). In addition to acting, Tristan is a freelance wig stylist, musician, and visual artist. Originally from Harlingen, TX, he now resides here in Houston with his partner Jake and their dog, Gia. IG: @tristan.a.flores

BRANDON LOZANO is very excited to be making his debut with Stages. Select credits include: AD Players: **Kingdom Undone** (John), **Gift of the Magi** (Sanderson); Impact Arts ATX: **In the Heights** (Kevin Rosario); SHSU: **Fade** (Abel), **Memphis** (Delray), **Hands on a Hardbody** (Ronald), **Once on This Island** (Agwe) and **Antigone** (Creon). Brandon received a BFA in Musical Theater from Sam Houston State University, currently residing in the Houston area. All the love to my mother and Johanna!

JALEN TINSLEY* is thrilled to be returning to Stages! Originally from Tyler, TX, Jalen is a 2025 graduate of Sam Houston State University (SHSU), where he earned his BFA in Musical Theatre. Select credits include: Stages: **Panto Pinocchio** (Gameboy/Mouse); A.D. Players: **Narnia: The Musical** (Fenris Ulf), **Midnight Society** staged reading (Mayor/Ensemble), **Beasts and Cakes** staged reading (Nathaniel Wheatley), **Brother Andrew** (Act 1) staged reading (Kees/Ensemble); SHSU: **Carrie: The Musical** (Tommy Ross), **Uncle Vanya** (Astrov), **Songs for a New World** (Man 1), **American Idiot** (Favorite Son/Ensemble), **Detroit '67** (Lank). Jalen would like to thank his circle of friends and family for their continued love and support as he continues to pursue his passion of performing! Represented by The Mine. IG: @jalentinsley

DIANA ALCARAZ is thrilled to return to Stages! You may remember her from **Panto: Alicia in Wonderland** (Dina, Tweedledum, March Hare), Sin Muros Festival: **Los Pecados de Iberia** (Carlota), **Escobar's Hippo** (Mayor), **619 Hendricks** (Tía Carolina); Alley Theatre: **A Christmas Carol** (Female Principal US), **American Mariachi** (Isabel); ZACH Theatre: **Zapata** (Albondiga/ Amparo); TEATRX: **La Planchada** (La Planchada), **Sexo y Tortillas** (Eli); Main Street Theater: **Cinderella** (Grace); **Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus** (Little Old Lady), **Pete the Cat** (Mom). You may also recognize her from Film work in *Cloud Maker* (Estefania); Healthy Texas Kids Program: *The Adventures of Zobey* (Paleontologist); Univision: *La Banda* (Contestant); Her commercial endeavors with Walmart, HCC, Paysend, METRO, others! When Diana is not on stage or behind the camera, you can find her loving on her furry kitties, taking them on walks, cooking for the sake of fun, and learning ASL! BFA: Sam Houston State University. Find more at: dianaalcaraz.com. Eternally grateful to my amigues and familia for their unwavering support and unconditional love! To our lovely audiences, Gracias por estar aquí!—Diana @dianaalcarazvilla

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GERARD ALESSANDRINI (SPAMILTON Book and Lyrics) is the creator/writer/director of the international hit **Spamilton**, the acclaimed parody of **Hamilton**. **Spamilton** enjoyed successful runs in New York, London, Chicago, Los Angeles and all around the world. Gerard is also well known for writing and directing all the editions of **Forbidden Broadway** and **Forbidden Hollywood** in New York, London, L.A. Tokyo, etc. Gerard is from Needham, MA. and the Boston area, where he graduated from the Boston Conservatory of Music in 1977. In 1982, he created and wrote **Forbidden Broadway**, which has spawned 25 editions, 13 Cast Albums and a 38-year run in New York. Gerard was also a member of the original cast of **Forbidden Broadway**. Television & recording credits include writing Comedy Specials for Bob Hope and Angela Lansbury on NBC, Carol Burnett on CBS, Special lyrics for Barbra Streisand's album *Duets Encore*. For PBS he wrote and directed *Masterpiece Tonight*, a satirical revue saluting Masterpiece Theater's 20th Anniversary. As a performer, he can be heard on four of the thirteen **Forbidden Broadway** cast albums, on the soundtracks of Disney's animated classics *Aladdin* and *Pocahontas*. The best-selling cast album of *Spamilton* is currently available on DRG CDs and Vinyl. Directing credits include a new production of Maury Yeston's musical **In the Beginning** and, most recently, **Anything Can Happen in the Theater**, a new revue of the music & lyrics of Maury Yeston. Off Broadway he re-wrote and co-directed a revival of Irving Berlin's last musical **Mr. President**, which Gerard also updated and "politically corrected." That same year he also directed an evening of his original theatrical songs entitled "Tonight We Sing". For NYMPF he co-wrote and directed a musical version of **Madame X**. Other recent musicals include **The Nutcracker Musical** (George Street Playhouse) and the lyrics for a musical version of Paul Mazursky's **Moon Over Parador**. In May 2018 he presented and directed a reading of his latest musical **Bla Bla Land** at The Lincoln Center Library for The Performing Arts. In 2019 Gerard directed The York Theatre's Production of Maury Yeston's **Anything Can Happen In The Theater**. In 2020 He wrote and directed a new and acclaimed version of **Forbidden Broadway: The Next Generation**, which enjoyed a very successful run at The York Theater. Gerard is currently contributing numerous feature articles on classic films and musicals for the online movie site Cineluxe. Gerard is the recipient of an Obie Award, an Outer Critics Circle Award, two Lucille Lortel Awards and seven Drama Desk Awards for **Forbidden Broadway**, and a lifetime achievement award from the Drama League. In 2006 he received A Special Tony Award Honor for "Excellence In Theater."

LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA (21 CHUMP STREET Music and Lyrics) is a Pulitzer Prize, Grammy, Emmy and Tony award-winning songwriter, actor, director and producer. He is the creator and original star of Broadway's Tony-winning **Hamilton** and **In the Heights**, and the co-writer of *Warriors*, a new concept album with Eisa Davis, based on the 1979 film. Additional Broadway: **All In, New York, New York, Freestyle Love Supreme, Bring It On: The Musical** and **West Side**

Story (2009 revival, Spanish translations). Miranda is the recipient of the 2015 MacArthur Foundation Award, the 2018 Kennedy Center Honors and the 2019 Portrait of a Nation Prize. He has received stars on both the Puerto Rico Walk of Fame and the Hollywood Walk of Fame. TV/Film: *Mufasa: The Lion King, tick, tick… BOOM!, Vivo, In the Heights, Hamilton* (Emmy Award), *Percy Jackson & The Olympians, His Dark Materials, Fosse/Verdon, Brooklyn Nine-Nine, Curb Your Enthusiasm* (Emmy nomination), *Saturday Night Live* (Emmy nomination), *Bluey, DuckTales, Big Mouth, Mary Poppins Returns, The Little Mermaid* (live action), *Moana* (Oscar nomination; Grammy Award) and *Encanto* (Oscar nomination; two Grammy Awards). Miranda, and The Miranda Family, are active supporters of initiatives that increase the representation of people of color throughout the arts and government, ensure access to women's reproductive health, and promote resilience in Puerto Rico. He lives with his family in New York. www.linmanuel.com

DEREK CHARLES LIVINGSTON (Artistic Director/ SPAMILTON Co-Director) is in his second season as Artistic Director. For Stages he has directed **Let. Her. Rip.**, **The Lehman Trilogy**, and **It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play**. At the Utah Shakespeare Festival, he served four seasons at the Utah Shakespeare Festival as the Director of New Play Development and two seasons simultaneously as the Interim Artistic Director, acted in **Thurgood** (the one person play about Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall), and directed lauded productions of **A Raisin in the Sun** and **Henry VIII**. His new play development work at San Diego's Playwrights Project saw him lead four different new play development processes in partnership with other theaters. Prior to San Diego, Derek was a Los Angeles theatre maker, including over four years as the Managing Artistic Director of Celebration Theatre, the second oldest continuously operating LGBT theatre in the United States. Selected work as a director: **Six Degrees of Separation**, **Tru, Sweeney Todd** (LA Scenie Awards – Best Musical, Best Director), **M. Butterfly** (LA Scenie Award – Best Director, LA Weekly Nomination – Best Director), **Shakespeare's R&J** (Ovation Nomination – Best Director), **Hedwig and the Angry Inch** (Ovation Award – Best Musical), **Insurrection: Holding History** (LA Weekly Nomination – Best Director), **Naked Will** (GLAAD/LA Nomination – Best Play), **Jesus Christ Superstar**, **Love!Valour!Compassion!**. As an actor, he's played multiple lawyers: Pridamont (**The Illusion**), Jerome, et al (**Merrily We Roll Along**), Billy Flynn (**Chicago**), and Thurgood Marshall (**Thurgood**– twice!). Some favorites: Simon (**The Whipping Man**), Hoke (**Driving Miss Daisy** – New Hampshire Drama Award – Best Actor), Tupolski (**Pillowman**), Jackson (**Judy at the Stonewall Inn**). He received a BA in Theatre from Brown University and MFA in Filmmaking from UCLA School of Film and Television. His social justice history includes co-chairing the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, & Bi Equal Rights and Liberation–the largest LGBT march on Washington in US History. His portrait, taken at the Million Man March, is featured in the Smithsonian Museum of African American History. He makes his home in Houston's historic Third Ward.

VALERIE RACHELLE (SPAMILTON Co-Director and Choreographer) is thrilled to be Stages's Associate Artistic Director. Valerie comes to Stages from Southern Oregon where she was previously the Artistic Director at the Oregon Cabaret Theatre in Ashland, OR for 11 years. Valerie is a Director/Choreographer and has worked at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Utah Shakespeare Festival, South Coast Rep, NYU Steinhardt, Sierra Repertory Theatre, Syracuse Opera, Utah Festival Opera and Musical Theatre, PCPA Theatrefest and many more. She has worked extensively on new works and spent 14 years fostering over 20 new productions as the founding General Director of Lucid By Proxy. Her most recent new work, **Mouth of the South**, inspired by the life of Martha Mitchell, had its premiere in January and is headed to Los Angeles in August. Valerie is also the founder and President of SOCAA, a non-profit whose mission is to bring access services to cultural arts organizations for patrons and creators alike. Valerie's next adventure will be Directing the musical **Chicago** for the Oregon Cabaret Theatre.

MONICA JOSETTE (21 CHUMP STREET Director and Choreographer/SPAMILTON Associate Choreographer) is thrilled to be working again at Stages! She was the 2025 director and choreographer of Stages **Panto Pinocchio**. Monica is a proud member of the Stage Directors and Choreographer's Union and delighted to lead as the Program Director of Summer Theater Arts Repertory at The Edison Arts Foundation. Some of Monica's recent credits include: The Ensemble Theatre: **The Tap Dance Kid** (Choreographer); TUTS: **Little Shop of Horrors** (Choreographer), **Cinderella** (Choreographer), **Rent** (Choreographer), **Beautiful: The Carole King Musical** (Associate); JeCaryous Johnson Productions: **The Greatest Love Singer** (Director). Monica is beyond grateful to bring **21 Chump Street** to life here at Stages!

GERARD MCINTYRE (Original SPAMILTON Choreographer) has won widespread acclaim for choreographing the Berkshire Theatre Group's production of **Godspell** (the first equity sanctioned musical to be done during the pandemic). He just won a Drama Desk for best musical revue with **Forbidden Broadway: Merrily We Stole A Song**. New York credits include: **Lucky Stiff**, **The Goodbye Girl, Soon of the Morning**, **Hallelujah Baby** and the international hit **Spamilton** (Ovation nomination). He has directed and choreographed **Ragtime** and **The Color Purple**. Choreographed **The Wiz**, **Cinderella**, **Sunset Boulevard** and **Jersey Boys** at Broadway Sacramento. **Young Frankenstein** won Broadway World award best director and choreographer. **My Fair Lady**, **Songs For a New World**, **A Chorus Line**, **Nina Simone: Four Women**, **White Christmas** and **The Mousetrap**. Berkshire

Theater Group: **Chicago**, **9 to 5**, **Priscilla** and the **Cher Show.** Ogunqit Playhouse: **Kinky Boots**, **Once On This Island** and **Spamilton** at Pittsburgh CLO. **Ain't Misbehavin**, **Once On This Island**, **Putting It Together**, **Bonnie And Clyde** and **Beautiful** at Pioneer Theatre Company. **Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat** at La Mirada and the Lyric. **Dreamgirls** at Walnut Street. gerrymcintyre.net

JOHN L. CORNELIUS II (Music Director) ASCAP and AFofM (Local 65-699). His many works for the lyric theater including **Garfield: The Musical with Cattitude**, **Bob Marley's Three Little Birds**, **Mirandy and Brother Wind**, and **The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars** and **Motor Kings**. Recent concert works include song cycles, cantatas and *What Wings They Were* (chamber opera), *Sweet Freedom's Song: a Fantasia on the hymn-tune America, The River* (MFA-Boston), *Colored Carnegie* Dance Suite, for Urban Souls Dance Company and PAX, for The Apollo Chamber Players. Dr. Cornelius is a Professor of Music at Prairie View A&M University.

LIZ FREESE (Scenic Designer) Stages: **Let. Her. Rip.**, **The Hispanic Latino Latina Latinx Latine Vote**, **Houston for the Holidays**, **Panto Little Mermaid**, **Panto Star Force**, **Life Could Be A Dream**, **Wonderettes**, **Honky Tonk Angels**, **Honky Tonk Christmas, Gideon's Knot, Wittenberg**, **Four Places, The Andrews Sisters**, **Rounding Third**, **Rabbit Hole**; Houston Grand Opera: **The Refuge**, **The Little Mermaid**, **New Arrivals**, **Nanita Learns to Make a Flan**, **Hansel and Gretel**, **Cinderella**, **A Way Home**, **The Magic Flute**, **The Princess and the Pea**, **Romeo and Juliet**, **Courtside**; Alley Theatre: **I, Barbara Jordan**;. American Players Theatre: **Molly Sweeney**, **American Buffalo**; Williamstown Theatre Festival: **Spring Awakening**. Over 100 other Houston-based scenic and costume designs for AD Players, Main Street Theatre, Main Street Youth Theatre, Unity Theatre, The Ensemble Theatre, Classical Theatre Company among others. International credits include Gianni Schicchi for Dnipropetrovsk Opera and Ballet Theatre, Ukraine and The Caucasian Chalk Circle, Company, **The Architect**, **Oh! What A Lovely War**, **The Weavers** for Judy Dench Theatre, London. Her designs have been published in Opera America, New York Times, and PBS.MFA: University of Missouri, Kansas City. Assistant Professor of Technical Theatre at San Jacinto College.

LEAH SMITH (SPAMILTON Costume Designer) received her MFA in Costume Design from the University of Houston. Leah received her BFA from Western Michigan University. Previous costume design credits at Stages: **It's a Wonderful Life**, **Let. Her. Rip.**, **Panto Pinocchio**, **Switzerland**, **POTUS**, **Panto Snow White**; Catastrophic: **Frozen Section**, **They Do Not Move**; 4th Wall: **The Counter**, **Vonya, Sonya, Masha And Spike**, **Sense and Sensibility**, **The Pavilion**, **Fairview**, **The Glass Menagerie**, **Disgraced**, **Much Ado About Nothing**, and **True West**; A.D. Players: **Wizard of Oz**, **Fiddler on the Roof**, **Play That Goes Wrong**, **The Sound of Music**. Rec Room: **Angels In America**, **Spring Awakening**, **King James**, **Heroes of the Fourth Turning**, **Wolf Play**; Classical Theatre Company: **Electra**, **Dracula**, **War of The Worlds**, **Marriage of Figaro**, **Nevermore**, **Peer Gynt**; Houston Shakespeare Festival: **Romeo and Juliet**, **Macbeth**, **Julius Caesar**, **Twelfth Night**, **Richard III**, **Henry V**; Mildred's Umbrella: **The Hunchback of Seville**; Queensbury: **Charlie Brown Christmas**; Opera Orlando (Associate Design): **The Secret River**; Titan Theatre: **Medea, Richard III**; University of Houston: **Animal Farm**, **Dancing at Lughnasa**, **She Kills Monsters**, **Three Sisters**, **The Miser, The Liar**; Western Michigan University: **Bengal Tiger at The Baghdad Zoo**, **Macbeth**; Cityscape Kalamazoo: **Tony & Tina's Wedding**. She previously served as Production Manager for Terrible Enfants Theater Company and is now the Costume Shop Manager at Stages.

JANESSA A. HARRIS (Lighting Designer) is a native of Houma, LA. After voyaging with Norwegian Cruise Line, she cultivated roots in Houston as a freelance lighting designer in 2020. She holds a Bachelors from Louisiana State University and a Master of Fine Arts from Southern Illinois University (SIU) in theatre. She is delighted to be back at Stages again to help create another world for you to experience. Lighting Design Credits include Stages Houston: **Honky Tonk Laundry**, **Othello: The Remix**, **Always…Patsy Cline**, **cullud wattah**, **Houston for the Holidays**, **Dream: The Music of the Everly Brothers (ALD)**, **Song of Me**, **Sunrise Coven**, **Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill**, **Stages Studio Sessions (SSS) with Raven Troupe**, **Button's Sleeping Beauty**, **SSS with Teresa Zimmerman**, **and SSS with Anna Maria Morris**; The Broadway Rose: **Ain't Misbehavin'**; The Ensemble Theatre: **Motown Christmas** and **Clyde's**; Rec Room: **Is God Is**; HITS Theatre: **Descendants the Musical**, **Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat**, **Aida**, **Head Over Heels**, **Les Misérables**, **Matilda**, **Finding Nemo Jr.**, **Carrie the Musical**, and **James and the Giant Peach**; San Jacinto College South: **Eurydice**, **Henry V**; Main Street Theater: **The Watsons go to Birmingham–1963**; Alleyway Theatre: **The Magnolia Ballet**; Norwegian Cruise Line: **Burn the Floor: Farewell Show, Norwegian Getaway Christmas Show**; Mcleod Summer Playhouse: **Pinkalicious the Musical**; Southern Illinois University: **Spring Awakening the Musical, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe**, and **Peter and the Starcatcher**. She sends all her love and appreciation to Stages, her family, and friends. Love y'all! #staylit | janessaaharris.com | @janessa.a.harris.

EDWARD RYAN THORNTON (Sound Designer) is thrilled to be back with **Spamilton** and **21 Chump Street** at Stages. Select credits include: A.D. Players: **Brother Andrew** (Assistant Sound Designer); Stages: **Das Barbecü** (Sound Designer); and St. John's School: **The Cursed Child** (Sound Designer). Ryan loves to be a part of the way Stages does theatre and to be a part of fun new ways to explore telling stories musically.

WHO'S WHO

JODI BOBROVSKY (Properties Designer) has been a staff designer at Stages for 25 seasons. Recent prop designs include: **The Chinese Lady**, **The Bride, It's a Wonderful Life: A Radio Play**, **The Heart Sellers**, **Das Barbecü** and **Honky Tonk Laundry.** Favorite scenic designs include: **Plumshuga**, **Yankee Tavern**, **A Picasso**, **An Infinite Ache**, and **The Whipping Man**, which won the Houston Press 2014 Best Scenic Design award. Freelance work in Houston includes scenic designs for Opera in the Heights: **La Boheme**; Generations Theater: **Sweeney Todd**; **Bloody**, **Bloody Andrew Jackson**; **Spring Awakening**; Mildred's Umbrella: **The Drowning Girls**; 4th Wall Theater: **Sanctuary City**; Main Street Theater: **Dog Act**, **The Coast of Utopia**; University of Houston Moores Opera, 20 seasons as prop designer including: **Cold Sassy Tree**, **Il Postino**, **Salsipuedes**; Houston Grand Opera: Props for: **Jenufa**, **Julius Caesar**, **The Little Prince** (World Premiere); Rice University Opera: **Eugene Onegin**. She was the Houston Properties Designer for the world premiere of Stanton Welch's **The Nutcracker** for Houston Ballet. She has also designed sets, props, or costumes for: The Ensemble Theatre, Unity Theater Brenham, The Catastrophic Theater, Infernal Bridegroom Productions, Classical Theatre Company, Prague Shakespeare, Hope Stone Dance, Musiqa and Main Street Youth Theater. Her scenic design models have been exhibited at the American Institute of Architecture. She was featured in Houston Press's Top 100 Creatives column.

PRECIOSA AIVLES (21 CHUMP STREET Costume Designer and SPAMILTON Assistant Costume Designer) is thrilled to be back at Stages. Her previous credits include: Stages: **Panto Pinocchio** (Asst. Costume Designer), **Let. Her. Rip.**, and **Mud Row** (Wardrobe Supervisor); Rec Room Arts: **Angels in America Pt 1 & 2** (Asst. Costume Designer), **Toros** (Costume Designer); Alley Theatre: **Christmas Carol** (Wardrobe), **English** (Wardrobe); University of Houston: **Safe at Home** (Costume Designer), **Fefu and Her Friends** (Costume Designer), and **The 10 Minute Play Festival** (Costume Designer), Marisol (Asst. Costume Designer), **Big Love** (Asst. Costume Designer), **All's Well That Ends Well** (Asst. Costume Designer), and **The Moors** (Asst. Costume Designer). Preciosa has also spent four seasons with the Houston Shakespeare Festival as an Asst. Costume Designer and Wardrobe Supervisor, contributing to productions including **Henry V, As You Like It, Romeo & Juliet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Much Ado About Nothing, Macbeth, Cymbeline**, and **King Lear**. She is a recent graduate of the University of Houston where she earned her BFA in Costume Design & Technology. With a passion for storytelling through costume, Preciosa is honored to bring her creative vision and collaborative spirit to this production. @preciosasdesigns: https://www.preciosaaivles.com/

KARL IVERSON (21 CHUMP STREET Tracks Creator) is excited to be working with Stages for the first time. He has worked as an accompanist and music director in Southern Oregon for several decades. His recent shows include **Gutenburg, The Musical!**, **Legally Blonde**, **Little Shop of Horrors**, and many original spotlight works. Karl holds a bachelor's degree in Music and lives in Ashland, Oregon with his wife and many animals on his farm.

RYAN AMIE (Stage Manager) is honored to be working again with Stages. Select credits include: Stages: **Mud Row** (Stage Manager); The Ensemble Theatre: **Choir Boy** (Stage Manager), **Hero: The Boy from Troy** (John Lewis/Jayden), **The Tap Dance Kid** (Stage Manager), **Flex** (Stage Manager), **Twelve Ways of Christmas** (Stage Manager), **Beatbox: A Raparetta** (Stage Manager), **Jack and The Beanstalk Hip Hop** (Old Traveler/ Rapping Giant); Thunderclap Productions: **The Chosen Ones** (Stage Manager). He is a proud Houstonian and alumnus of HSPVA as well as CALARTS. During his time away from Theatre he enjoys DJing, reading, and discovering all the things Houston's food scene has to offer. He proudly dons the badge as designated "foodie" amongst his family and friends.

CARLOS CANTU (Assistant Stage Manager) is excited to make a return to Stages! His other Stage Management credits include: **Panto Alicia in Wonderland, Laughs in Spanish** (Co-Production w/ TheatreSquared), **It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play, The Chinese Lady** and now **Spamilton/21 Chump Street**. Carlos would like to thank his partner, as well as his family and friends for always supporting him. @carl0scantu.

GWEN WATKINS (Managing Director) is a native Houstonian who has been working in Houston's vibrant cultural sector for more than 15 years and possesses a passion to connect the community's diverse audiences through the arts. She joined the Stages team last Season as Managing Director, overseeing the fundraising, marketing, finance, and operations teams. She holds a bachelor's degree in English from Texas A&M University and an MBA from Rice University. Prior to joining Stages, she served as the Houston Symphony's Chief Marketing & External Relations Officer. During her time with the Houston Symphony, Watkins spearheaded transformation within the marketing department, oversaw community engagement and education initiatives, and was a part of the leadership team that saw the organization through the pandemic. Before her time at the Symphony, Watkins served as Associate Head of Marketing & Communications at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH) where she managed marketing initiatives in support of the many facets of the institution including its hundreds of thousands of square feet of gallery space, tens of thousands of art objects, art school, art house film program, cafes, shops, and more, as well as serving a key role in the communications and marketing plans for their $450M capital campaign project. Earlier in her career, Gwen held marketing roles at the Houston Zoo and the Houston Galleria.

FROM RADIO WAVES TO DANCE BREAKS:

HOW *21 CHUMP STREET* CAME TO BE

by Domenico Leona

The company of *21 Chump Street: The Musical* in rehearsal

The year is 2011. Across three high schools in Palm Beach County, Florida, a cluster of young, fresh-faced police officers commence Operation D Minus, when they're sent undercover as high school students to investigate drugs being sold on campus. They attended classes, took standardized tests, and, at Park Vista Community High School, an honor roll student smitten by one of the undercover police officers, makes a grave error with significant legal consequences. This is the true story of "What I Did For Love." Thus is the basis for Lin-Manuel Miranda's *21 Chump Street: The Musical*.

First reported by journalist Robbie Brown for the esteemed weekly radio program (*This American Life*), the brief segment detailed the actions of Justin Laboy, a student from New York who became infatuated with a police officer using the name "Naomi Rodriguez." Laboy goes into detail on how he was drawn to Rodriguez, noting her backstory of also being from New York, their supposed conversations about family troubles, and even how she used to sleep during class. Then, of course, their conversations shifted to how Laboy could provide her with drugs.

Laboy claimed he told Rodriguez he didn't do drugs, but wanting to impress her, offered to provide marijuana for her. After obtaining the marijuana from an acquaintance and bringing it to Rodriguez, he then claimed he refused money for the drugs multiple times before politely conceding, sealing his fate as having committed a felony. In a police sweep at the end of the school year, Justin alongside 30 other students, was arrested for selling drugs. In an interview with Rodriguez, who refused to provide her real name, she stated that he brought up the drugs first and that he took the money without argument. Her statement, alongside text messages from Justin agreeing to get her marijuana, were enough to convince Laboy to take a plea deal after spending a week in jail. He served three years of probation in exchange for pleading guilty to the felony charge, and Operation D Minus was a success.

Twelve hundred miles up the east coast in New York, Lin-Manuel Miranda, then best known for his Tony-winning musical *In The Heights*, sat and listened to this same story. Moved by the segment's rhythm, structure, and Laboy's youthful sincerity, Miranda was inspired to write *21 Chump Street*. Choosing to approach the show more as a musical translation of the radio segment rather than an interpretation, many of the quotes from the segment appear in the songs verbatim, with Miranda's signature fusion of contemporary music and hip hop imbuing the situation with scathing humor and heart, bringing us closer to Justin's perspective and the childlike infatuation that leads him to this irreversible decision.

In 18 blaze-paced minutes, *21 Chump Street* acts as a twisted love story, a critique of the war on drugs, and an exploration of how impressionable and naïve young men can be when it comes to matters of the heart. We're entertained, yes, but also asked to reflect on the actions of a real young man whose life was affected by these events, systems, and his emotions. Young men like Laboy make errant choices every day, but *21 Chump Street* forces us to consider what environments truly shape them.

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Opportunity to reserve a named wine locker				✓	✓
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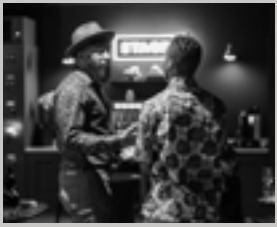

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