



written by Jacques Lamarre

direction and multimedia experience by
Jared Mezzocchi

conceived by Jacques Lamarre,
Jared Mezzocchi and
Rob Ruggiero

APR 16 – MAY 31

THEATER
WORKS
HARTFORD **40**

CIRCUS FIRE

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CIRCUS FIRE

by JACQUES LAMARRE

direction and multimedia experience by
JARED MEZZOCCHI

THE CAST



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BOLAND*



CONSTANTINO
FERNANDEZ*



OLIVIA NICOLE
HOFFMAN*



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JONES*



CAROLINE
KINSOLVING*



ANASTASIA
MAGLARAS



ERIC
ORSINI



STUART
RIDER*



JANELLE ANNE
ROBINSON*



GODFREY L.
SIMMONS, JR.*



MARCO
VERNA*



DAN
WHELTON*

Set Design

Costume Design

Lighting Design

Original Music &
Sound Design

Stage Manager

Assistant Stage Manager

Assistant Stage Manager

BRIAN PRATHER

ARTHUR WILSON[†]

ROB DENTON

LINDSAY JONES

TOM KOSIS*

THERESA STARK*

CAROLINE SALTZ

[†] Supported by Burry Fredrik Foundation Design Fellow Program

*The Actors and Stage Managers appear through an agreement between this theater and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States. United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829 of the IATSE is the union representing Scenic, Costume, Lighting, Sound and Projection Designers in Live Performance.



TheaterWorks Hartford is celebrating its 40th season as a non-profit,
professional theater company. Founded in 1985.

CIRCUS FIRE is the 3rd show of the 2025-2026 Season.
APR 16 – MAY 31, 2026

WHO

MIKE BOLAND returns to TWH having previously appeared in *The Exonerated* in 2006. Broadway: *An Enemy of the People*. National Tours: *Twelve Angry Men*, *West Side Story*. Off Broadway: *The Orphans' Home Cycle*. Regional: Hartford Stage, Long Wharf, Yale Rep, Ivoryton, and around the country. TV: *Sirens*, *FBI*, *The Blacklist* (recurring), *Person of Interest*, *Zero Hour*, *Rubicon*. As a writer, Mike's *Yo Andrea* feature screenplay was crowned the winner at the Miami Screenplay Awards, The Comedy Film Festival (Austin, TX), Milan Indie Film Festival, Southwest Film Festival and others.

CONSTANTINO FERNANDEZ (he/him) is a New Haven-based actor, thrilled to be making his TWH debut! He is a proud graduate of Eastern Connecticut State University and has additionally trained and worked in NY and Los Angeles. His regional theatre credits include Collective Consciousness Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, as well as various voiceover projects. In addition to acting, Constantino is a musician who performs with his band, *moving*. He thanks his family, Olivia, and Nomicat for their constant love and support. For Fi.

OLIVIA NICOLE HOFFMAN is proud to be part of CIRCUS FIRE. Previous TWH credits include *Third* and *The Wolves*. She has appeared in productions throughout Connecticut and across the country, including the West Coast premiere of *In Every Generation*. Television guest star credits include *Blue Bloods*, *The Equalizer*, and *Magnum P.I.*, along with lead roles in multiple Hallmark Channel films. Olivia is the creator of the viral *Titanic Theme Park* series on TikTok (@itsmeolivianicolehoffman), garnering millions of views monthly and earning features in BuzzFeed, CBS, and the Hartford Courant. Love and thanks to her family, reps, and Kevin. olivianicolehoffman.com

REBECKA JONES is making her TWH debut. Regional: *A Christmas Carol*, *The Crucible*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Macbeth* (Hartford Stage); *Incident at Our Lady of Perpetual Help* (Ivoryton Playhouse); *Network* (Florida Studio Theatre); *Sixteen Wounded* (Long Wharf Theatre); *King John*, *A Midsummer Nights Dream* (Shakespeare & Company); *Anton in Show Business*, *Salvage*, *Marion Bridge*, *Private Lies* (Theatre4); *The Tempest*, *Macbeth* (Elm Shakespeare). Education: MFA Ohio University.

CAROLINE KINSOLVING is delighted to be joining the TWH family.
imdb.me/carolinekinsolving
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CarolineKinsolving.com
Founder of Theatre for Good, raising over \$160,000 for charities. Vassar. NYU's RADA, Stella Adler, Steppenwolf, Yale Intensives. Dedicated to circus animals and the lives lost in the Cleveland circus fire.

ANASTASIA MAGLARAS is a senior Acting major at The Hartt School. Her recent credits include *Elephant & Piggie: We Are in a Play* at Playhouse on Park and *The Skin of Our Teeth* at The Hartt School. This is Anastasia's TWH debut. She is deeply grateful for the unwavering support of her family, boyfriend, and friends, and God, of course. She hopes you enjoy the show!

ERIC ORSINI is making his TWH debut. Regional: *A Christmas Carol* (Dick Wilkins/Apparition - Hartford Stage), *Hamlet* (Laertes - BDS). Other Experience: *Bonnie & Clyde* (Clyde Barrow - GUSCO), *The Skin of Our Teeth* (Henry Antrobus - The Hartt School).

STUART RIDER could not be happier about getting his foot through the TheaterWorks door, and in a Jacques Lamarre piece to boot! Working on this important piece of Hartford's history is the kind of experience that drew Stuart to the stage in the first place, and as difficult as this story is, it inspires him to shed light on the humanity, both inspiring and tragic, woven throughout Jacques' sensitively insightful and compelling handling of this devastating chapter of Hartford's history. Breathing life into a moment that should never be forgotten, and to honor the innocent lives lost on that July afternoon.

JANELLE ANNE ROBINSON is thrilled to be making her TWH debut in **CIRCUS FIRE**. Broadway: *Mary Poppins* (original Mrs. Corry), *Oklahoma!*, *Showboat*. 1st National Tours: *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Ms. Flannery), *Showboat* (Queenie). Regional: Virginia Opera, Opera Omaha, Connecticut Opera, Hartford Opera Theater and Opera Company Philadelphia, Papermill Playhouse, North Shore Music Theater, Maine State Music Theater, The Cleveland Playhouse, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Penobscot Theatre, Playhouse on Park & Summer Theater of New Canaan (CT Critics' Circle Award). Trained at The Hartt School, The Juilliard School, The Curtis Institute, and the School for Film and Television in NYC. Currently on the faculty at Hartt and WCSU. Favorite moment: sharing the stage with her daughter and the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. Member AEA, SAG-AFTRA.

GODFREY L. SIMMONS, JR. last appeared at TWH 25 years ago in *The Old Settler*. HartBeat Ensemble: *My Children! My Africa!*, *The Trump Card*, *Possessing Harriet*; Hartford Stage: *It's A Wonderful Life: A Radio Play*, *All My Sons*, *Two Trains Running* (CT Critics' Nom); Chester Theatre: *Mr. Joy* (Berkie Award); Silverthorne Theatre: *Bulrushier*. Off-Broadway: Epic Theatre Ensemble: *A More Perfect Union*, *Widowers' Houses* (co-adapted), *Einstein's Gift*, *MacBeth*; Playwrights Horizons: *Betty's Summer Vacation*; Primary Stages: *The Old Settler* (Audelco Award); Working Theater: *Free Market*. HartBeat Ensemble (Artistic Director); Civic Ensemble (Co-Founder); Epic Theatre Ensemble (former Producing Artist); Ensemble Studio Theatre (Lifetime Member). Teaching: Trinity College (Visiting Lecturer), Cornell, Binghamton, John Jay, Marymount Manhattan, UCONN.

MARCO VERNA is making his TWH debut. Broadway: *A View From The Bridge*. Regional: *Born Yesterday* (Walnut St.), *Rounding Third* (STW). Chicago Theatre: *Not About Nightingales* (Timeline Theatre, Jeff Citation Award, Actor In A Supporting Role), *Blind Tasting* (Live Bait Theatre, Jeff Citation Award, Actor In A Supporting Role), *Death On A Pink Carpet* (Live Bait) *Hairy Ape* (Mary Archie), *Over The River And Through The Woods* (I.T.C). Film: *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*. Television: *Blue Bloods*, *Nurse Jackie*, *The Unusuals*, *Kidnapped*, *Blind Justice*, *Law and Order: Criminal Intent*, *Law and Order: Trial By Jury*. Recurring roles on *Guiding Light* and *All My Children*.

DAN WHELTON was previously seen at TWH in *Take Me Out*. Regional Theater: Hartford Stage (*All My Sons*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Learned Ladies of Park Ave*); Lyric Stage Company of Boston (*The Play That Goes Wrong*, *Anna Christie*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*); Central Square Theater (*Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *Operation: Epsilon*); SpeakEasy Stage Co (*The History Boys*); The Majestic Theater (*Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story*, *Million Dollar Quartet*, *A Long Day's Journey Into Night*); Park Road Playhouse (*I Hate Hamlet*, *Dream House*). Dan partnered with his wife Isabelle on his all time favorite productions, their two amazing children, Lydia and Liam.

JACQUES LAMARRE (Playwright/Conceiver) is a Hartford area-based playwright whose work has been seen on stages across the country. In addition to **CIRCUS FIRE**, TWH has produced the world premieres of his plays *I Loved, I Lost, I Made Spaghetti*, *Raging Skillet* and *Secondo*. He is a contributor to their popular holiday hit, *Christmas on the Rocks*. He has had plays produced in Connecticut at Seven Angels Theatre, Playhouse on Park, Farmington Valley Stage Company, Hole in the Wall, and Theatre4. He also writes for touring drag performers including Varla Jean Merman, Miss Conception, DIVA!, and Sutton Lee Seymour.

JARED MEZZOCCHI (Director/Conceiver/Multimedia Experience) is a two-time Obie Award-winning theater artist, director, multimedia designer, playwright, and actor. Based out of New York, Mezzocchi's work has appeared nationwide at Playwrights Horizons, Geffen Playhouse, En Garde Arts, Vineyard Theater, The Kennedy Center, TWH, Arena Stage, Woolly Mammoth (company member) among others, and been featured in a 2020 profile in the NY Times. 2016 Recipient of the Lucille Lortel and Henry Hewes Award for Qui Nguyen's *Vietgone* at MTC. Previously at TWH: *Russian Troll*

WHO

Farm (Co-Director; NYTimes Critics' Pick, Obie Award), *Someone Else's House* (Director/Performer), *Sandra* (Director). NY: *The Wind and the Rain: A Story About Sunny's Bar* (En Garde Arts), *Nothing Can Take You From the Hand of God* (Playwrights Horizons), and *73 Seconds* (En Garde Arts, coming to TWH in 2027).

ROB RUGGIERO (Conceiver/Artistic Director) is in his 14th season as Artistic Director at TWH. He has directed dozens of premieres and local favorites including *Fever Dreams*, *Fun Home*, *The Legend of Georgia McBride*, *Next to Normal*, *Relativity* (starring Richard Dreyfuss), and *Christmas on the Rocks*, which he also conceived. Broadway: *Looped* (starring Valerie Harper); *High* (starring Kathleen Turner). Rob conceived/directed the musical revue *Make Me a Song: The Music of William Finn* which ran off-Broadway, and conceived/directed the musical *Ella*. His work can be seen across the country at Goodspeed, The Muny, St. Louis Rep, Cincinnati Playhouse, among others.

BRIAN PRATHER (Set Design) is excited to return for his 20th year at TheaterWorks Hartford. Most recent TWH designs: *Mark Twain Tonight!*, *Lizzie*, *Secondo*, *American Son*, *Girlfriend*, *Relativity*, many others. Off-Broadway: *Daniel's Husband* (Primary Stages), *A Christmas Carol* (St. Clement's), *Becoming Dr. Ruth* (Westside), *Freud's Last Session* (New World Stages), many others. International: Chung-mu Art Hall (South Korea). Regional: Asolo Rep, Goodspeed Musicals, Cincinnati Playhouse, Alley Theatre, Barrington Stage, many others. Jeff Award winner (Chicago), Emmy nomination (New England), Berkshire Theatre Critics Award. Associate Artist Barrington Stage Co., Asst. Professor of Theatre Central CT State University. brianprather.com

ARTHUR WILSON (Costume Design) *Gutenberg! The Musical!* and *Elephant & Piggie* (Playhouse on Park), *Mother Play* (Shakespeare & Co), *Notes on Killing Seven Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Board Members* (Yale Rep), *Cactus Queen* and *Uncle Vanya* (Geffen School). Assistant Costume Design: *King Lear* (La Mama), *Rope* (Hartford Stage). Scenic Design: *Hole In The Wall* (LaChat Farms), Associate Set Design: *12th Night* (The Public Theater '25). Assistant Set Design: *Clueless: The Musical* (West End). MFA in Costume & Scenic Design (Yale School of Drama). 2025 Burry Fredrick Fellow arthurwilsondesign.com

ROB DENTON (Lighting Design) TWH: *Lizzie: The Musical*, *Fun Home*. Credits: *Fraggle Rock*, *Back to the Rock: Live* (National Tour), *Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors*, *The Jerusalem Syndrome* (Off Broadway), *Come From Away*, *Dear Evan Hansen*, *Jersey Boys* (The Muny), *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *A Complicated Woman* (Goodspeed Musicals), *The Lehman Trilogy* (Capital Repertory Theatre), *Baskerville* (Alabama Shakespeare Festival), *Disney's Frozen* (Maltz Jupiter Theatre). Upcoming Credits: *Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors* (Arizona Theatre Company), *Come From Away* (Theatre Raleigh), *Hairspray*, *Ain't Too Proud*, *Something Rotten* (The Muny) @rdentexdesign

LINDSAY JONES (Original Music and Sound Design) has designed over 800 shows on Broadway, off-Broadway and in theatres around the world. He has composed music for over 40 films, including the Oscar-winning *A Note Of Triumph* for HBO Films. He has received 2 Tony Award nominations, 7 Jeff Awards, 3 Ovation Awards, and many others for his work in theatre; as well as a Webby Award, an Ambie Award, and three Signal Awards for his work in podcasts. He is the co-chair of Theatrical Sound Designers and Composers Association (TSDCA) and teaches music history at UNCSA. lindsayjones.com

TOM KOSIS (Stage Manager) CIRCUS FIRE marks Tom's 19th production with TWH. Broadway: *Mary Poppins*, *Side Show*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *Flower Drum Song*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, *A Chorus Line*, *Ann*, *My Fair Lady*, *Grand Hotel*, *Nice Work If You Can Get It*. National and International Tours: *Irving Berlin's White Christmas*, *A Chorus Line*, *Song & Dance*, *West Side Story*, *Dreamgirls*. Tom was the Associate Director/Choreographer for The Radio City Music Hall *Christmas Spectacular*. tomkosis.com

THERESA STARK (Assistant Stage Manager) Previous TWH credits: *English*, *Fever Dreams* and *Fun Home*. Some of her past credits include: Long Wharf Theatre, Westchester Broadway Theatre, Summer Theatre of New Canaan, Goodspeed, The Ivoryton Playhouse, The New Paradigm Theatre, Hartford

Stage, Westport Country Playhouse, Music Theatre of CT., Stamford Theatre Works, HartBeat Ensemble, Elm Shakespeare, Barrington Stage, Fairfield Theatre Company, The Eugene O'Neill, Berkshire Theatre, Hangar Theatre, Yale Opera, The Quick Center and The Stamford Symphony. Theresa also works as a dog handler for William Berloni Theatrical Animals, Inc.

FOR THIS PRODUCTION

Projections Content Creation
Andrés Poch

Projections Programmer
Peter Leibold

Props Lead
Lauren Marina

Assistant Lighting Design
Lucas Musgrave

Wardrobe
Llyn Thomas

Scenic Painter/Electrician
Kailey Linden

Scenic Carpenter
Natalie Brown

Facilities
Bill Farquhar

Electricians
Jayne Carlman
Sara Dorinbaum
Sasha Wahl

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Jamie Denman

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Eddie Cintron Santos
Ailee Cobb
Noah LaPlante

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Izzy Gerstein
D Rasmussen

Production Intern
Rory Drummond

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Costume Supervisor
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Kelly Daigneault

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Joshua Demers

Production Manager
Matt Dorman

Audience Services Associate
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 Peter M. and Ellen T. Zeman
 Elliot Zweig and Doreen Fundiller-Zweig
 *deceased

HONORARY GIFTS

In Honor of Michael Albano
Tracy Flater and Tony Falcetti
John Montano

In Honor of Justis Bolding
Ruth Nerken

In Honor of Helena Cardoso
Heather and Philip Dileo

In Honor of Cheryl Chase
Barbara Flynn

In Honor of Josh Demers
Larry and Nancy Nathan

In Honor of Josh Demers and Dina Silva
Helen and Henry Frye

In Honor of Mara Dresner
Carol Ann Gershenson

In Honor of Agent Kitty Gumdrops
Jenny Sternhagen and James Hagen

In Honor of Katherine J. Lambert
Lisa Beers
Michael Lestz
Diane C. MacDonald
Marilyn Stoudt

In Honor of Jacques Lamarre
Paul Broxterman and
Laura R. Soll-Broxterman

In Honor of Gerry Lupacchino
Richard and Marilyn Neumayer

In Honor of Dina Plapler
Tracy Flater and Tony Falcetti

**In Honor of Dina Plapler and
Earl McMahon**
Amy Gallent

In Honor of Amy B. Robinson
Lewis J. Robinson

In Honor of Rob Ruggiero
Humphrey Tonkin and Jane Edwards
Harriet Unger

In Honor of Rob Ruggiero and Staff
Johanna Morrison

In Honor of TWH 40th Anniversary
Paula K. Corrao

MEMORIAL GIFTS

In Memory of Richard G. Broad
Patti Broad

In Memory of Gail Cooper Hecht
Jill Gordon

In Memory of Donna Corcoran
Linda Ryan

In Memory of Michael Dunning
Warren Hollister

**In Memory of Claire and Jerome
Evans**
James N. and Amy Jane Cohen

In Memory of Claire Evans
Jean B. Blair

In Memory of Dr. Albert Geetter
Susannah Landis

In Memory of Beverly G. Himmelstein
Michael J. Moran

In Memory of Joan Hurwitz
Doreen Linton

In Memory of Leta Marks
Robert Duncan and Charles Kinney
Stanley and Susan P. Fellman

In Memory of Lester McBride
Beatrice Sullivan

In Memory of Stephan Niklaus
Christine Fisch

In Memory of Patricia C. Notter
Warren Hollister

**In Memory of Fred and Annabelle
Schwartz, Norman and Gertrude Riback**
Leslie Riback

**In Memory of Our Parents: Bob & Althea
Shirley and Eugene & Jane Perrin**
Adam E. and Alison S. Perrin

In Memory of Rob Sniffin
Eleanor Reppy

In Memory of Francis Spera
Catherine J. Spera

In Memory of Elizabeth Walsh
Karen Murphy

In Memory of Carol and Paul
Christine and Kenneth Arch

SPECIAL THANKS

4Wall, ADI, Agave, Maria Baratta, Vanessa Butler, Susan Fay, Hartford Public Library, Hartford Stage, Rich Hollant, Laboratory for Global Performance & Politics, Martin Audio & TiMax Spatial, Mauricio Miranda, Jared Mezzocchi, Tiffany Topol, Alexander Zeek, and Kevin Ramsey, Debbie Markowitz, and The Hartt School

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As we share Hartford's story, it felt important to find a meaningful way to give back—and to honor those who lived through and were forever impacted by the fire. TheaterWorks Hartford is proud to partner with the Hartford Circus Fire Memorial Fund dedicated to the restoration and ongoing care of the historic site and memorial.

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PLAYWRIGHT THANKS

Mike Skidgell (author of *The Hartford Circus Fire* and webmaster of circusfire1944.com) and Don Massey (author of *A Matter of Degree*) for their immense, invaluable and generous research support of this production.

SOURCE MATERIALS

CIRCUS FIRE, the play, includes historic, public documents and characters, brands, events, and places including quotes and references to court transcripts, speeches, news articles as found in *The Circus Fire* by Stewart O'Nan, *The Hartford Circus Fire* by Mike Skidgell, *A Matter of Degree* by Don Massey & Rick Davey, *Women and Children First* by Donald H. Roy, and *Circus Fire Memories: Survivor Recollections of July 6, 1944* by Don Massey, as well as *Clown* by Emmett Kelly, *The Big Top: My Forty Years with the Greatest Show on Earth* by Fred Bradna, and Circus Magazine's Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey souvenir program for the 1944 tour.

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