



Starlight opens with local 'Godspell' production

"Godspell" opens Starlight's 2021 season after a year's hiatus caused by COVID; and, in producing the show, Starlight returns to its past in producing local shows.

For this show, the story-line follows the "Gospel of Matthew" as told by playwright John Michael Teblak. The show, that wowed audiences with its Biblical re-telling of the first book of The Bible contains uplifting music as it re-tells some of the parables of the original text.

"Godspell is an uplifting and celebratory retelling of the Gospel of Matthew from playwright that has taken the world by storm. Celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, this fun, sensational musical is the perfect production for today. It spreads inspiring messages of hope and love, all to the tune of chart-topping songs by Grammy and Academy Award® winner Stephen Schwartz, such as "Day by Day," "All Good Gifts," "Turn Back, O Man," "By My Side," and more," Starlight said.

The show centers on a small group of people helping Jesus Christ tell different parables by using a wide variety of games, storytelling techniques and hefty doses of comic timing.

"This modern, fresh adaptation is produced by Starlight and brought to life with an entirely local creative team. Starlight is excited to reunite director and choreographer

Jerry Jay Cranford with music director Anthony T. Edwards. They last worked on the Starlight's 2018 production of "Hairspray.

"Godspell" is an uplifting and celebratory retelling of the Gospel of Matthew from playwright John- Michael Tebelak that has taken the world by storm. Celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, this fun, sensational musical is the perfect production for today. It spreads inspiring messages of hope and love, all to the tune of chart-topping songs by Grammy and Academy Award® winner Stephen Schwartz, such as "Day by Day," "All Good Gifts," "Turn Back, O Man," "By My Side," and more. The show is about a small group of people helping Jesus Christ tell different parables by using a wide variety of games, storytelling techniques and hefty doses of comic timing. An eclectic blend of songs, ranging in style from pop to vaudeville, is employed as the story of Jesus's life dances across the stage. Dissolving hauntingly into the Last Supper and the Crucifixion, Jesus's messages of kindness, tolerance and love come vibrantly to life.

Jerry Jay Cranford (Director/Choreographer) happily returns to Starlight for this 50th Anniversary celebration of Godspell where he also directed and choreographed Starlight's Hairspray in 2018 as well as Aladdin and Peter Cottontail III for Starlight at the Kauffman. As a professional actor, singer and dancer, Mr. Cranford has performed on Broadway (Les Misérables), international and national tours (Les Misérables, Evita European Company, Singing in the Rain as Don, Anything Goes as Billy). He spent 3 years as the Genie in Disneyland's stage musical Aladdin, performed as a principal with the acclaimed Kansas City Lyric Opera in their production of Turandot and performed for the MUNY Theatre of St. Louis in Shrek the Musical and Les Misérables serving as the dance captain. He has worked with Broadway stars John Tartaglia, Julia Murney, Norm Lewis, Denis Jones, Hugh Panaro, Sutton Foster, Colm Wilkinson, Lea Salonga, Andrea McArdle, Michael

James Scott, Laurie Beechman, Brad Oscar and Roger Bart. As a director/choreographer, he helmed the world premiere of Madagascar: A Musical Adventure and A Year with Frog and Toad for the Coterie Theatre, the regional premiere of Everyday Rapture working with original star Sherie Renee Scott and librettist Dick Scanlan, The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee and Les Misérables for the Merry Go Round Theater in New York and received two Ovation Nominations for his production of The Marvelous Wonderettes in Vancouver, BC. In 2019, Jerry Jay was selected Best Director of a Professional Musical by Broadway World Kansas City for his production of Newsies. He also won the Omaha Arts and Entertainment Council for Best Director of a Musical for his production of Newsies at the beautiful Rose Theatre. Professor Cranford teaches theatre at Kansas State and has been a proud member of Actors Equity for over 30 years but none of the above credits compare to the joy of being a husband and father to two beautiful daughters.

Anthony T. Edwards (Music Directs while simultaneously playing keypards, and conducting. Prior Starlight work includes: The Wizard of Oz, The Music Man, Anything Goes, Cinderella, Xanadu, The Producers, Aida, Footloose, The Sound of Music, Mary Poppins, Grease, Hairspray. Local: Resident Musical Director for Starlight Theatre, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Coterie Theatre, Unicorn Theatre, Eventology Unicorn Theatre, Eventology and All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church. Additional Local: New Theatre,, Quality Hill Playhouse, Theatre in the Park, Late Night Theatre, Musical Theatre Heritage. Regional: Denver Center for the Performing Arts (Denver, CO) Red Barn Theatre (Key West, FL), The American Theatre (Rockford, IL) Waterfront Playhouse (Key West, FL). New York: New Victory Theatre. Edwards is an Endorsed Kurzweil Artist, and is Adjunct Faculty for UMKC. He happily serves on the Board of Directors as Secretary for The AIDS Service Foundation of Greater Kansas City.

Daniel Doss (Asst. Music Director/Rehearsal Pianist) is a native of Kansas City, Missouri, and a graduate of the UMKC Conservatory of Music with a degree in Composition. Previous productions at Starlight include *The King & I*, *Cinderella*, *Xanadu*, *Aida*, *The Sound of Music* and Disney's *Little Mermaid*. Over the past 17 years, Daniel has established himself as a Music Director, Conductor, Composer and Collaborative Pianist in over 80 musical theatre productions across the globe, including the National Tours of *The Color Purple*, *The Addams Family* and *Ragtime*. Daniel's composition credits include *Nelly Don: The Musical*, *Wild and Willful Women: A Musical Tale of Love, Lust and Witchcraft*, selected for the 2014 TRU Musical Reading Series in New York City; *Edgar Allen Poe's Red Death*, awarded 'Best of the Kansas City Fringe Festival' in 2014; and premiering later in 2021, *Truman & Pendergast: The Musical*. danieldoss.com

Christina Burton (Associate Choreographer/Dance Captain/Female Understudy) is a member of Actors Equity Association and holds a BFA in Dance and Musical Theatre from the UMKC Conservatory. She is no stranger to Starlight, having appeared in *Cinderella*, *Mary Poppins*, and others, as well as serving as Assistant Choreographer for *Hairspray*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and Choreographer for *Aladdin*. She is also the director and choreographer for Starlight's educational program *The Starlight Stars*. Christina teaches for the Kansas City Ballet School and continues to choreograph and perform in productions all over Kansas City.

Sean Glass (Lighting Designer) is always excited to return to Starlight, but especially in this moment to help bring live theatre back to Kansas City. As a KC native, Sean has collaborated with several area organizations including *New Theatre & Restaurant*, *Harvest Productions*, *Heartland Men's Chorus*, *Spinning Tree Theatre*, and upcoming with the *Unicorn Theatre*. As a consultant, he has collaborated on several area renovations and installations, notably including the United

Methodist Church of the Resurrection's cathedral sanctuary where he is also the long-time resident lighting designer of the annual Christmas at Resurrection. Additionally, he has taught and mentored many up and coming professionals at institutions including JCCC, Avila University and Stephens College in Columbia, MO. Outside of the theatre, Sean serves as Principal Production Designer and Lead Lighting Consultant with EDGE Productions, an internationally recognized corporate production company. Previous Starlight credits include Grease, Cinderella, Aladdin, Wizard of Oz, Hairspray, Footloose and Mary Poppins.

Sam Levey (Sound Designer) is a doctoral student in Economics, who sheds his equations and chalk during the summer months to return to his roots in the theatre. Before previously working at Starlight on the Wizard of Oz, he has worked with regional theatre like the Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma, and South Coast Repertory in California, where he's mixed musicals including Mamma Mia!, Freaky Friday, Beauty and the Beast, Peter Pan, A Year With Frog and Toad, The Light Princess, Pinocchio, and Mr. Popper's Penguins. He spent a year at Disney World, working on The Hoop-Dee-Do Revue, Mickey's Backyard BBQ, and the Festival of the Lion King. And he did a stint as mixer and consultant for the Beverly Hills school district, where he mixed The Wiz and Guys and Dolls, and designed for Spamalot. His miscellaneous other gigs have included mixing front-of-house for the jazz summer concert series at the LA County Museum of Art, lighting programmer for KCRW events at the Moss Theatre in Santa Monica and pyrotechnician at the Hollywood Bowl. He is also the founder of Deficit Owls and gives talks on Modern Monetary Theory (MMT).

KC Costume (Costume and Wardrobe Services) was established in the 1920's to serve the needs of local and regional theatre companies. Today the company works with arts organizations and theatres from New York to San Francisco, Seattle to Toronto. Its nationally recognized designers and craftsmen remain

dedicated to excellence and quality. www.kccostume.com

Mary R. Honour (Production Stage Manager) is pleased to return to Starlight for her eleventh production, having previously served as Production Stage Manager for Hairspray, Mary Poppins and The Sound of Music, and served as Assistant Stage Manager on Xanadu, The Producers, Music Man, Grease, Hello Dolly, Jesus Christ Superstar and Footloose. Mary's regional credits include Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, La Jolla Playhouse, Shakespeare Santa Cruz and Arizona Theatre Company. Mary is happy to be making theatre magic again under the stars at Starlight!

Sadie Desantis (1st Assistant Stage Manager) currently serves as the Director of Production and Head of the Stage Management program at the University of Missouri – Kansas City. She is also a freelance stage manager and has production experience in concerts, ballet, opera, musical theatre, outdoor production, and corporate galas. After attending the University of Pittsburgh–Johnstown where she obtained a BA in Theatre Arts, she earned her MFA in Theatre Design and Technology (Stage Management) from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. She has worked for numerous companies including Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Kansas City Ballet, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Coterie Theatre, Starlight Theatre, Mountain Playhouse, Hope Summer Repertory Theatre, New Theatre Restaurant, and Des Moines Metro Opera. Most recently, Ms. DeSantis was the stage manager for A Christmas Carol at the Kansas City Repertory Theatre. In 2018, Ms. DeSantis co-founded Opera 180 in Kansas City. She is a member of the Stage Managers Association where she is the Regional Representative for the Kansas City Area and Co-Interim Central Regional Director. A Proud Member of Actor's Equity Association, Ms. DeSantis is the Kansas City Liaison Convention Delegate, part of several committees and the Secretary of the Kansas City Liaison Committee.

Emily White (2nd Assistant Stage Manager) has worked on five

National Tours including The SpongeBob Musical (Production Supervisor), Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (Production Supervisor), The King and I (PSM), A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder (PSM), and Beauty and the Beast (ASM). While on the road she has done over 700 performances in 41 states. Some select NYC and Regional credits include Best of TheaterWorks! (Working Theater, ASM), Assassins, Shipwrecked! and Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill (Spinning Tree Theatre, SM), Here Lies Joyland (KC Fringe, SM), A Moon for the Misbegotten (KCAT, ASM).

Emily holds a bachelor's degree in Theatre with a minor in Business from Kansas State University. www.emilywhitewinter.com

The Starlight "Godspell" cast is:

Chioma Anyanwu is immeasurably grateful for the opportunity to return to live theatre with such a talented creative team. She was last seen at Starlight in Hairspray (2018). She has had the pleasure of working with the Unicorn Theatre, Coterie Theatre, KC Rep, Musical Theatre Heritage, Theatre for Young America, Kansas City Actor's Theatre, Egads Theatre Company, and This Happy Breed (at the Arts Asylum). BFA: Theatre Arts (Stephens College); MFA: Acting/Directing (UMKC).

Darrington Clark gratefully returns to Starlight since last in Hairspray! Regional: Lyric Opera, Unicorn Theatre, Milwaukee Rep, First Stage, Children's Theatre of Madison, Musical Theatre Heritage, Coterie. Thanks to Ethan for more than can be expressed, to Jay for always leading with love, to friends, to family and to YOU. Welcome back!

Tyler Fromson is thrilled to be making his Starlight debut! He was last seen in Music of the Night (MTH) and recently played Ross in the North American tour of Friends! The Musical Parody. Other credits: Saturday Night Fever (Royal Caribbean), Newsies (Moonlight Stage), Urinetown (MTH). BA Theatre/Music, Pepperdine University. Check out his music: @itsbreonbay

Eric Geil (Jesus) is very excited to return to Starlight for the fourth time! Other appearances include The Sound of Music, Grease, and Hairspray. Credits include the national tour of The Book of Mormon – BFA from University of Cincinnati, and over 20 high school productions at CYT Kansas City. All my love and gratitude to my family and friends who've kept me going over this last year.

Allison Jones has performed in Fun Home, School Girls; or The African Mean Girls Play, A Christmas Carol (KC REP); Ragtime, My Fair Lady (Musical Theatre Heritage); Baseball; A Musical Love Letter (Lyric Opera Kansas City); Emotional Creature, Once On This Island (Spinning Tree Theatre); A Charlie Brown Christmas (The Coterie Theatre); Sister Act (The Barn Players Theatre).

Katie Karel is thankful to be performing again with such a beloved show. Karel last appeared at Starlight in Hairspray as Penny Pingleton. Off Broadway – New Victory Theatre. Regional – Max and Louie Productions, North Coast Repertory Theatre, Okoboji Summer Theatre. Local – Unicorn Theatre, New Theatre, Kansas City Rep, Quality Hill Playhouse, Musical Theatre Heritage, The Coterie, Egads Productions. [www. katiekarel.com](http://www.katiekarel.com)

Patrick Lewallen (Judas) is overjoyed to be part of theater's triumphant return in KC. Favorite roles include Lonny in Rock of Ages (1st National), Judas/Jesus in Jesus Christ Superstar, Jekyll/Hyde in Jekyll & Hyde, Huey in Memphis and Valjean in Les Misérables. Patrick's greatest roles are hubby to a rock-star wife and Daddy to Maggie and Lucy. Love to my whole incredible family.

Noah Lindquist is overjoyed to be back in KC, making his Starlight debut. Just before the pandemic hit, he performed in Fun Home at KC Rep. Other KC credits include Ragtime (MTH), Joseph (New Theatre), and Newsies (Coterie/White Theatre). All the love and thanks to his family, friends, and mentors.

Shon Ruffin received her B.A. in Theater Performance from K-State. Regional productions include Elephant and Piggie & Charlie Brown Christmas (The Coterie); West Side Story (Spinning Tree); Hairspray (New Theatre Restaurant); Heathers (Unicorn Theater); Dreamgirls in Concert (Black Rep Theater); Chasing Dem Blues (Milwaukee Rep Theatre). You can find her singing with one of KC's locally recognized bands 2Proud2Beg.

Special thanks to her supportive family and friends!

Erik Sobbe (Male Understudy) is native to Kansas City and delighted to be returning to Starlight. Training includes UMKC Conservatory. Credits include Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Hairspray, Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story, Mamma Mia! (New Theater Restaurant), Aladdin (Starlight), Zombie Prom (Egads Theater), A Spectacular Christmas (MTH), Quality Hill Playhouse, Princess and Crystal Cruises.

Bri Woods is a cultural creative. NEW YORK: Floyd Collins (Lenfest Center for the Arts.) REGIONAL: KCRep: A Christmas Carol, A Raisin in the Sun, School girls; or, the African Mean Girls Play, Welcome to Fear City, Between the Lines. The Unicorn: Who's Your Baghdaddy, or how I started the Iraq War. Living Room Theatre: Lefty and Crabbe. The Coterie: Garfield: A Musical with Cattitude. Musical Theatre Heritage: Big River. Kansas Classical Theatre: Harvey, Angel Street. Awards: Recipient of the Jon T. Eicholtz and Barbara Eden Full-Ride Performance Scholarship. Training: Yale Summer Acting Conservatory 2018. Education: University of Kansas 2018. Currently a Member of Kansas City Actors Theater, Serving on the board, the artistic committee, strategic planning committee, and co-chair of the equity, diversity, and inclusion committee. AEA Member The

"Godspell:" band is: Music Director/ Conductor/ Keyboard 1 – Anthony T. Edwards, Assistant Music Director/ Rehearsal Pianist – Daniel Doss, Guitar 1 – Electric, Acoustic, &

Mandolin – Cindy Egger, Guitar 2 – Electric & Acoustic – Je Freling, Guitar, 3 – Electric, Acoustic & Keyboards – Mike MacFarland, Bass – Je Harshbarger, Drums & Percussion – Tod Barnard.

For tickets, contact Starlight Theatre's box office.

(All biographical information provided by Starlight Theatre.)