

Buffalo State Theater
presents

Book, Music & Lyrics by Jacob Richmond and Brooke Maxwell



March 13, 14, 15, at 7:30pm March 15 and 16 at 1:00pm

Direction: Sabrina Kahwaty. Musical Direction: Karen Saxon. Choreography: Naila Ansari Catilo.

Flexible Theatre in Donald Savage Building, Buffalo State Campus

Tickets can be purchased at the Rockwell Hall Box Office (Tues. - Fri. 9-5) or online.

Please note that online tickets require extra fees.

2024/2025 SEASON

C O -SPONSOR : CASTING HALL PRODUCTIONS

Funded by USG through the mandatory student activity fee

Casting Hall Productions General Interest Meetings

First Tuesday of Each Month, During Bengal Pause
Flexible Theatre, Donald Savage Building



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Director's Note

"The meaning of life is to give life meaning." -Viktor E. Frankl

When I first encountered *Ride the Cyclone*, I didn't know what to make of it. It was hilarious yet heart wrenching; outlandish yet truthful; and at times, just plain weird—but with compellingly endearing characters and music I couldn't stop humming.

As I delved further into this world, I realized this piece demands prioritizing feelings over thoughts. My brain might not have known what to make of the appearance of sexy cat women in "Space Age Bachelor Man," the fortune-telling "machine" that seems to have real feelings, or the decapitated girl with a matching doll, but my heart was never confused about the emotions this show evokes or the questions it explores. What defines our time on earth? What constitutes a life well-lived? What makes a "good" person? Is death when we take our final breath—or when there is no one left to remember us?

Cyclone poses these questions through the humor and heartbreak of vibrant, flawed characters seeking closure before the inevitable occurs. I have so enjoyed investigating these ideas with this incredibly talented group of students. Just as in life, not all of these characters "win" in the conventional sense, but find victory in getting what they need.

When you leave, I invite you to do something kind for someone. Take a moment to appreciate something small. Tell your people you love them. Whether you came here today seeking catharsis, truth, connection, or a fun evening out, I hope you find it aboard our *Cyclone*.

Thank you for riding with us,

Sabrina Kahwaty



Runtime: 90 minutes (no intermission)

Synopsis:

Ride the Cyclone is the second piece of media in the *Uranium Teen Scream Trilogy*. The musical follows six teenagers whose lives are cut short by a freak roller coaster accident. When they awake in limbo, a mechanical fortune teller named Karnak invites each to compete for the ultimate prize—the chance to return to life.

Please be aware of exits in all four corners of the theatre. All cell phones should be turned off or silenced, as they may be a distraction to actors.

Content warning: strong language, mature themes, depictions of death and grief, dark humor, brief violence, and sexual references.

Originally Produced by Kevin McCollum and Morris Berchard
Ride the Cyclone is presented by special arrangement with Broadway Licensing Global. (www.broadwaylicensing.com)

NOTE TO AUDIENCE: The videotaping or audio and/or visual recording of this production is a violation of United States Copyright Law and an actionable federal offense.

Letter from the Chair

Welcome to Buffalo State Theater!

I personally invite you to get to know Buffalo State Theater – our educational team, our students, our productions, and our programs. We are a community of individuals brought together by an understanding of the power of live theater and the tangible benefits of theater training for a career in any industry.

Our productions explore what it means to be part of a team pursuing a singular goal. Our faculty and staff train students in rehearsals, scene and costume shops, during technical and dress rehearsals, and throughout performances. These contact hours with students are in addition to coursework and serve to deepen the examination of the responsibility and dexterity required of theater artists and practitioners. Students also have an opportunity to take on leadership positions in audience services, publicity, marketing, purchasing and budgeting, through the student-run USG organization, Casting Hall Productions.

Auditions for this show happened this past October, rehearsals began in November, and each student performer has trained for more than 175 hours with faculty, staff, and local professionals. They improved acting skills, expanded vocal training, and developed movement techniques to create the show you see today.

Our student assistant stage managers began in January and will log more than 100 hours of work by the final performance. Some of our student technicians started in January, training in the scene and costume shops, while others joined in February as board operators, wardrobe crew, and deck crew. These backstage positions fulfill 1-credit practicum requirements for the major. Each student puts in between 60 and 75 hours of work, mentored and trained by faculty and staff throughout the process.

Our student stage manager puts in the most hours of all, attending all rehearsals, design and production meetings, creating daily reports for the design and production teams and rehearsal reports for the actors. They arrive first, leave last, and are responsible for calling all the cues (and this show has several hundred!) during the live performances. Students who successfully train in this position are prepared for anything. They learn to simultaneously become benevolent leaders, project managers, on-the-spot problem solvers, time management experts, adept communicators, and, above all, to be the person who stays calm (or at least doesn't show signs of stress).

I share this with you so you can appreciate the work you see today in a new way. Theater doesn't just happen; it takes an extraordinary amount of work, dedication, collaboration, and commitment. When I look at the combined total of faculty, staff, and professional contact hours with our students on this production, it equates to more than 700 hours of on-the-job training!

I commend all of the individuals who came together over the past six months to bring this show to life. The responsibility and discipline required all throughout the process extends far beyond this building's four walls. Theater training is life training, and theater skills are transferable everywhere.

Bengal Strong! Theater Engaged!

Respectfully,

Carol Beckley
Theater Department Chair
www.theater.buffalostate.edu



Cast

The Amazing Karnak.....Syed Chowdhury
Ocean O'Connell Rosenberg.....Lexus Hale
Mischa Bachinski.....Richard Foxe
Noel Gruber.....Adrian Morales
Ricky Potts.....Alex Rivas Ayala
Constance Blackwood.....Arianna Morris
Jane Doe.....Emily Cannon

Understudies

The Amazing Karnak.....Myshawn Sikes
Ocean O'Connell Rosenberg...Destinie Morales
Mischa Bachinski.....Adam Rochester Jr.
Ricky Potts.....Rio Wood
Constance Blackwood.....Paige Suarez
Jane Doe.....Sage Lambie

Production Team

Director.....	Sabrina Kahwaty
Musical Director.....	Karen Saxon
Choreographer.....	Naila Ansari Catilo
Scenic Designer.....	Carol Beckley
Lighting Designer.....	Harry Mandris
Costume Designer.....	Kenneth Shaw
Costume Director.....	Erica Fire
Dialect Coach.....	Jennifer Toohey
Intimacy Director.....	Nicolette Navarro
Fight Choreographer.....	Araia Heathcott
Production Manager.....	Ron Schwartz
Stage Manager.....	Anne Gerace
Asst.Stage Manager.....	Myshawn Sikes
Asst.Stage Manager.....	Samantha Griffen
Sound Engineer.....	Dynelis Santana
Light Operator.....	Alvaro Rodriguez
Sound Operator.....	Shailin Paredes
Deck Chief.....	Bryan Harris
Wardrobe Crew.....	Min Zo
Wardrobe Crew.....	Raheim Oates

Casting Hall Productions

Executive Board

President.....Gianna Cotto
Vice President.....Emily Cannon
Treasurer.....Anne Gerace
Vice Treasurer.....Bryan Harris
Secretary.....Syed Chowdhury
PR Manager.....Manny Mejia
Marketing Manager.....Bailey Morawski
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Organization Rep.....Jaiden Morey



Contact us here.

General Interest Meetings held the first Tuesday of every month. Open to all Buffalo State students.

Casting Hall Productions is funded by USG through the mandatory student activity fee.

Bios

(in alphabetical order)

Emily Cannon (She/Her) *Jane Doe*

Emily is a junior majoring in theater and social studies education. This is her fourth production with Buffalo State, and she is thrilled to portray Jane Doe. Some of her favorite past roles include Peter Pan (*Peter Pan*), Narrator (*Joseph*), Fastrada (*Pippin*), and Karen (*Mean Girls*). When she's not on stage, Emily loves choreographing and directing musicals for St. Christopher School. She also serves as the Vice President of Casting Hall Productions. She would like to thank the production team, cast, and crew for their hard work and dedication, as well as her friends and family for their love and support-especially her Gram.

Syed Chowdhury (He/Him) *The Amazing Karnak*

Syed is a junior theater major who has been a student at Buffalo State since 2019, with some gap years in between before returning in 2024. His first production at Buffalo State was *Antigone* where he played Haemon. He is ecstatic to step into the role of Karnak in *Ride the Cyclone* and hopes everyone attending has a wonderful experience! Syed would like to extend a special thank you to his family, the theater department staff, and his friends for their support in helping him grow as both a better actor and a person.

Richard Foxe (Any) *Mischa Bachinski*

Richard is a sophomore and is thrilled to make his college acting debut in Buffalo State's production of *Ride the Cyclone*. He has performed in numerous middle and high school productions, including Ren McCormack in *Footloose*, The Baker in *Into the Woods*, John Darling in *Peter Pan Jr.*, and Mayor Shinn in *The Music Man Jr.* When he's not in the theater, Richard enjoys spending time with his friends, attending classes, playing video games, and seeing his girlfriend. He'd like to thank his friends and family for their continued support through the years. A special thanks to his partner for introducing him to this show and helping him in his theater journey.

Anne Gerace (She/Her) *Stage Manager*

Anne is a sophomore writing and theater major. This is her third production with Buffalo State University, but her first full production as a stage manager! She has previously worked as a stage manager at Shea's Summer Musical Theater Intensive, and she is so excited for this opportunity to expand her skillset beyond stage performance. She wants to thank her friends, department, cast members, and directing team for their constant encouragement and support.

Samantha Griffen (She/Her) *Assistant Stage Manager*

Samantha is a junior theater major also pursuing a minor in dance and the American Sign Language microcredential. This is her first time being an assistant stage manager. She hopes everyone enjoys the Cyclone!

Lexus Hale (She/Her) *Ocean O'Connell Rosenberg*

Lexus Hale is a senior theater major at Buffalo State University and is set to graduate this May. You may have seen her in Buffalo State productions such as *Heathers* (Veronica Sawyer, 2021). She performed *Songs for Sondheim* (2022) at Niagara Falls Proscenium Players. For the past two years, Lexus has been teaching vocal lessons to K-12 students while also directing and music-directing productions for 3rd-8th graders at the Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls. She is excited to take on the role of Ocean O'Connell Rosenberg in Buffalo State's production of *Ride The Cyclone*. Lexus would like to thank her friends, family, and significant other for their unwavering support throughout the years and as she continues her career.

Sabrina Kahwaty (She/Her) Director

Sabrina is thrilled to be back for *Ride the Cyclone* after directing Buffalo State's production of *TEACH* by Donna Hoke in 2024. Directing credits: *Brilliant Works of Art*, Bellissima Productions; *The Way It Is*, Buffalo Infringement Festival; "Fighting Mr. Right" and *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*, Niagara University; *A Kid Like Jake* (reading); Second Generation Theatre. Assistant directing credits: *The Curious Case of the Watson Intelligence*, Road Less Traveled; *Titanic*, Starring Buffalo. As an actor, Sabrina has appeared with Alleyway, Irish Classical, RLTP, Theatre of Youth, Shakespeare in Delaware Park, Second Generation, MusicalFare, and Ujima. Thanks to the entire *Cyclone* team; friends, family, and Alex for their endless love and support.

Sage Lambie (She/Her) Jane Doe Understudy

Sage is a junior biology major at Buffalo State University and has been involved in musical theater since sixth grade, taking voice lessons since the age of nine. She has participated in numerous productions, including *Aladdin Jr.* (Iago), *The Secret Garden* (Colin Craven), *Seussical the Musical* (The Cat in the Hat), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Audrey Understudy / Ensemble), and *Anastasia* (Dowager Empress). She is incredibly grateful to be understudying the role of Jane Doe and would like to thank her family, friends, and vocal instructors for their support.

Adrian Morales (He/Him) Noel Gruber

Adrian is a freshman music education major. This is his first production with Buffalo State, and he is incredibly grateful to be playing the role of Noel Gruber. This experience has taught him many valuable lessons, and he is thankful to have been a part of it. His past credits include *Into The Woods* (Rapunzel's Prince/Wolf), *The Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon* (The Devil and Johanas), and *Once Upon a Mattress* (ensemble). Adrian would like to give a special thanks to his loving family and his best friends Jasmin, Jaime, and Ashden, for all the support and encouragement that they have given him.

Destinie Morales (She/Her) *Ocean O'Connell Rosenberg Understudy*

Destinie is thrilled to be making her Buffalo State debut! Previously, she has performed at the Music Academy of Western New York in *Rent* (Mimi Marquez), *Chicago* (Matron Mama Morton), *Heathers* (Veronica's Mom), *Legally Blonde* (Delta Nu), *Les Misérables* (Ensemble). In her free time, she enjoys directing elementary-aged musicals including, *Finding Nemo Kids!*, *101 Dalmatian Kids!*, and *Moana Kids!*. She can't wait for everyone to experience Buffalo State's *Ride the Cyclone*!

Arianna Morris (She/Her) *Constance Blackwood*

Arianna is a senior theater arts student, playing Constance Blackwood in Buffalo State's production of *Ride the Cyclone*! She has been involved in recent seasons, portraying roles such as "Chorus" in *Antigone*, as well as Chiffon and the understudy for Audrey II in the 2024 production of *Little Shop of Horrors*. She is overwhelmed with gratitude and excitement at the opportunity to portray such an interesting and complex character. She thanks her friends and family for their support, especially her grandfather, Papi, who has been riding the cyclone with her since she was first cast. She encourages all viewers to buckle up and enjoy the ride!

Alex Rivas Ayala (He/Him) *Ricky Potts*

Alex is a third-year music education student at Buffalo State University. This is his second production at Buffalo State. His past credits include *Little Shop of Horrors* (Orin Scrivello), *SpongeBob the Musical* (Perch Perkins), and *A Bronx Tale* (Jesse). He aspires to become a music educator in the future, and is grateful for the support of his friends and family.

Adam Rochester Jr. (He/Him) *Mischa Bachinski Understudy/
Dance Captain*

Adam is thrilled to be making his college debut as a freshman with such an amazing cast. He has cherished the opportunity to grow and improve throughout this experience. He would like to thank his parents and family for their support and encouragement in pursuing his acting career.

Myshawwn Sikes (He/Him) Assistant Stage Manager/*The Amazing Karnak Understudy*

Myshawwn is a junior theater major. He has performed in several productions, including *Antigone* (Messenger/Guard 1 understudy), *On The Verge* (Grover, Troll, Yeti) and *Teach* (Male Emerson). He is grateful to be a part of such diverse and exciting productions during his time at Buffalo State University. Passionate about learning and gaining new experiences, he eagerly looks forward to what the future holds.

Paige Suarez (She/Her) *Constance Blackwood Understudy*

Paige is a senior theater major with a dance minor at Buffalo State University, and she is thrilled to be working on *Ride the Cyclone* as the understudy for Constance. This marks her second production at Buffalo State, following last year's *Little Shop of Horrors* (Ronette), and she couldn't be more excited to portray Constance! The rehearsal process has been an incredible experience, and she is grateful to be working with such a fantastic group of people. She hopes you enjoy this fun and unique show! Finally, Paige would like to extend her thanks to her family, friends and professors for their constant encouragement and support - you are truly appreciated.

Rio Wood *Ricky Potts Understudy*

Rio is a sophomore English education major, making their Buffalo State debut in *Ride the Cyclone* as the understudy for Ricky Potts. They are thrilled to be part of this production. Some of Rio's favorite past credits include *Into the Woods* (Little Red Riding Hood), *Once Upon a Mattress* (Queen Aggravain), and *Curtains* (Ensemble). Rio would like to extend heartfelt thanks to Abi for all the laughter and unwavering support, Jessi for her kindness and generosity, Oliver for his boundless creativity, and Canyon for always bringing humor into any situation. Special thanks to Dad for his immeasurable devotion and support, especially in music. Above all, Rio is deeply grateful to Mom for her unconditional love through both the good and difficult times, for never letting Rio's spark fade, and for always lighting the way. Rio wants to thank the casting and directing team for this incredible opportunity and cannot wait to be on the stage again. Finally, special thanks to the cast for being supportive and kind for their first performance; Rio is glad to call you all their friend.

Apply to the Buffalo State Theater Program

As one of only two programs accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) in Western New York, Buffalo State offers students in-depth, hands-on training. In addition to our award-winning faculty, our students are paired with local theater professionals for mentoring and are active in Buffalo's thriving theater scene. A Buffalo State theater graduate is prepared with professional experience and the skills necessary for rewarding careers in theater

Scan for
Admissions info



CASTING HALL

P R O D U C T I O N S



The Theater Department focuses on the practice and study of theater and dance to educate our students, collaborate across campus, and contribute to the health of our community. Our students engage their physical, intellectual, and emotional resources during their liberal arts careers to inspire adaptability, creative thinking, and innovative solutions.

Studying theater or dance helps students develop a number of valuable skills, including communication, critical thinking, public speaking, and teamwork. It also helps them understand different perspectives and develop empathy for others.

The Theater Department Fund encompasses all endeavors—artistic, scholarly, and exploratory. Your generosity will support the next generation of theater artists. Help us make a difference for our Theater students this Day of Giving.

We thank you for your consideration. Bengal Strong! Theater Engaged!



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