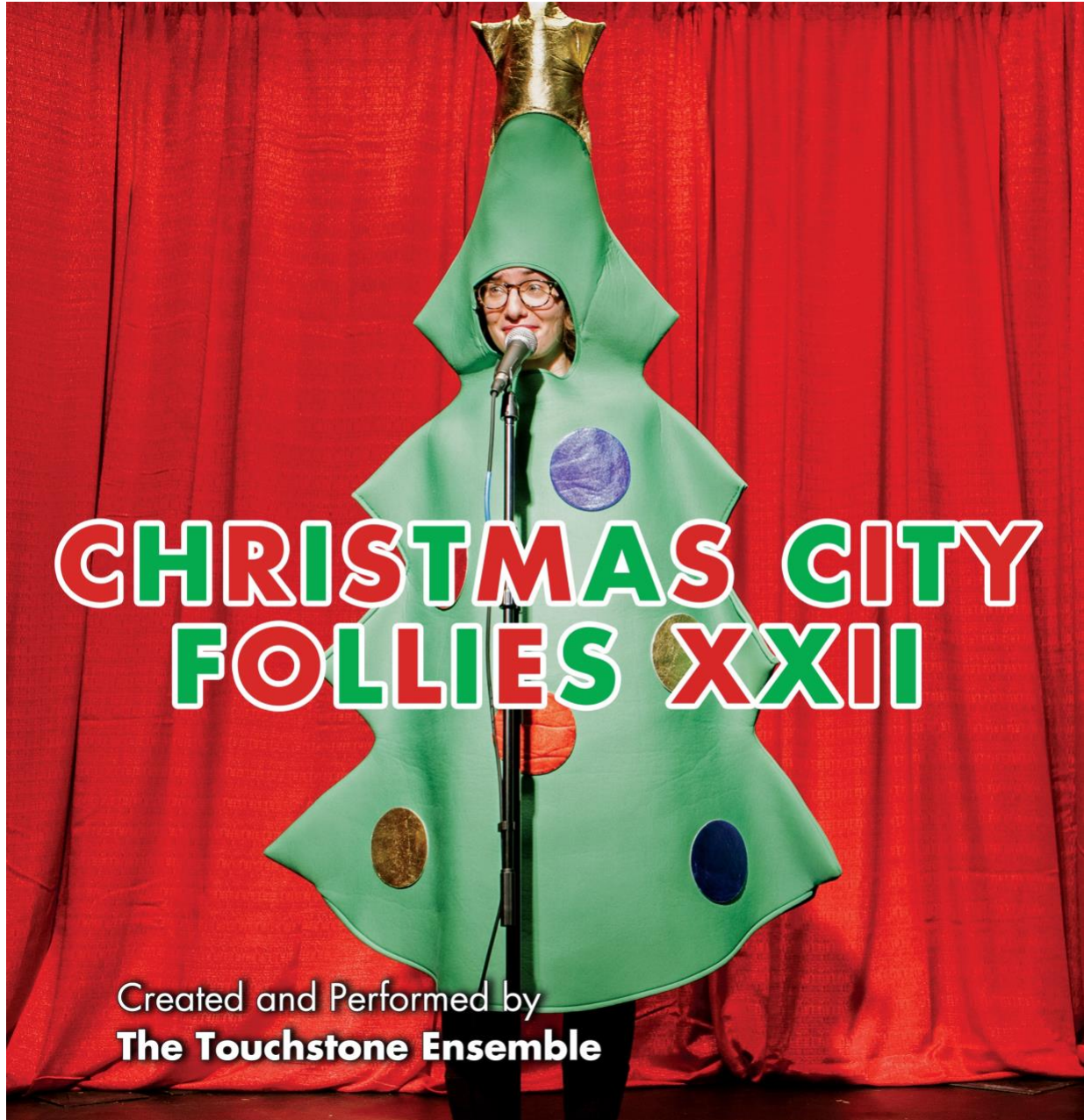




TOUCHSTONE**THEATRE**



Back live and in-person December 2-19, 2021

Production Sponsors:



Season Sponsor: Print and Media Sponsors:



Additional support:



Touchstone Theatre proudly presents
CHRISTMAS CITY FOLLIES XXII

DIRECTED BY

Jp Jordan

CREATED BY

The Touchstone Ensemble

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY

Emma Ackerman
Samantha Beedle
Jessica Boothe
Bill George
Sara Group
Krystal Hall

Abbie-Jean Litman
Robert Mills
Katie Phykitt
Matt Prideaux
Sam Thompson
Mary Wright

Rehearsal Stage Manager

Emma Ackerman

Production Stage Manager

Chris Egging

Booth Operator

Jenny Pacanowski

Costumes and Properties

Lisa Jordan, with Adam Ercolani
and the Cast

Production Design

Chris Egging

Stage Hand

Kyra Zimmerman

With special thanks to...

Steven Barnett, Cristina Byrne, Harper Egging, Meggan Moorhead, Jay Rogers,
Christopher Shorr, The Sugarpills, Susan Werner, St. John's Windish Church, and
Jonathan Wolff ("Wolffcycle" on Spotify)



ORDER OF SCENES

Introduction
Ladies in Turtlenecks
Lenny Spruce
On the Road to Bethlehem
BNSN
Gift Advice
Polarbearlesque
Little Red
When the Christmas Spirit Isn't Enough
Season's Greetings
Hymn for These Times
The Old Guy
Shopping Cart Ballet
Hanukkah Blockbuster
Mitzy Bonet
A Mother's Grace
Christmas Pets
Tommy Apocalypse
To Be There



COMPANY BIOS

Emma Ackerman holds a B.A. from Gettysburg College, where she double majored in English and Theatre Arts with a minor in Classical Studies, and an M.A. in Performance from the University of Chichester. In the last decade-plus at Touchstone, she has enjoyed extensive hands-on involvement in production, with roles including stage management (*The Tempest*, *A Resting Place*, *Young Playwrights' Festival*), lighting design (*The Pan Show*, *The Whitman Piece*, *Mae Swe*), directing (*Starry-Eyed*, *YPP*), and performance (*Follies*, *Journey from the East*, *Holy Stuff*). During the pandemic, her work has expanded to include video editing, digital art, animation, and co-creating the *Letters from Far* mail-based storytelling series. When not immersed in production, Emma assists with marketing, teaches in the arts education classroom, and manages the print and digital design work.

Sam(antha) Beedle is a local performance-based artist. From Shakespeare to *Noises Off* to *Parallel Lives: The Kathy & Mo Show*, Sam specializes in comedy. This is her fourth *Follies*, and she is so excited to have the chance to do it LIVE and IN PERSON this year! When she's not creating content with Touchstone, you can find her doing improv comedy around town with the talented women of Synced Up and the star studded Barn People. She'd like to thank Bob for being the greatest, constant gift of all this and every holiday season. Big thanks this amazing cast and crew, her family and Rhubarb her dog too. Now, let's get to celebrating!

Jessica Boothe has a B.A. in Communication and Theatre from Robert Morris University. She has worked around the Pittsburgh area for most of her career. Jessica is in her second year with Touchstone Theatre and Moravian University's M.F.A in Performance Creation program. She loves Christmas and is so excited to be spreading cheer in the Christmas City, that she now calls home.

Chris Egging is an actor/director/designer originally from Sidney, NE. Chris moved to Bethlehem in 2014 and is very happy to call the Lehigh Valley home. TD & Lighting Design credits include all Touchstone productions since joining as an Ensemble Associate in the fall of 2019, and Technical Director/Master Carpenter for Moravian University productions of *An Enemy of the People* (Spring 2020) and *Antigone* (Fall 2021) – the latter of which he also served as Lighting Designer. Chris has worked professionally as an actor with The Virginia Shakespeare Festival (Williamsburg, VA), NTC Productions (Omaha, NE), Gaslight Dinner Theatre (Dickson, TN), among others. He has been seen as an actor locally with Civic Theatre of Allentown, Between the Lines Studio Theatre, Star of the Day, Global ImpACTors Group, Allentown Public Theatre, and the Pennsylvania Playhouse, and recently making his film debut playing 7 characters in Living Proof Pictures' *The Bitter Taste of Ginger*. He is a working stage director and adjunct professor with Moravian University and Northampton Community College. Directing credits include: *The Mousetrap*, *SubUrbia*, *The Pillowman*, *Waiting for Godot*, and *Man of La Mancha*, among others. Chris received a BFA in Theatre & Dance Performance from the University of Wyoming and an MFA in Acting from the University of Houston Professional Actor Training Program.

Adam Ercolani holds an M.F.A. in Performance Creation from Moravian University and a B.A. in English and B.S. in Business Administration from Misericordia University. Since relocating to the Lehigh Valley in 2019, he has been involved in a number of productions in various capacities including: with Touchstone Theatre, *Christmas City Follies XX* and *XXI*, *Beyond Utopia*, *Pothole*, *ISO/NATION Presents*, *ALOUD*, *An Imagined*

America, and *Is Love So Small a Pain?*; and solo, *Permanent, Permanent*. He currently works as a Marketing & Development Associate and Teaching Artist at Touchstone Theatre and as a substitute teacher for the Bethlehem Area School District and has previously worked at Lehigh University as a Production Manager. Adam is thrilled to be returning to the world of *Follies* for a third year!

Bill George received his B.A. in English Literature from Lehigh University and his M.F.A. in Acting/Directing from the Dallas Theatre Centre of Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas. He studied mime with Paul Curtis of The American Mime Theatre, founded the People's Theatre Company in 1977 and later founded Touchstone Theatre in 1981 with his wife, Bridget, and his creative partner, Lorraine Zeller, where he was Producing Director until 1990. During a hiatus from Touchstone in 1996, Bill created Little Pond Arts Retreat in Nazareth, Pennsylvania with his wife Bridget—a retreat center dedicated to exploring art, spirituality and harmony with Nature—and toured to Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand, Britain, and throughout Canada and the United States with his original dramas: *The Kingfisher's Wing* and *The Marriage of Munirih Khanum*. Bill returned to Touchstone as a full-time Ensemble Member in 2003 where he has won numerous awards over the years—including a Fringe First at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland and a Pennsylvania Solo Theatre Arts Fellowship. Bill has served as a panelist and adjudicator for the National Endowment for the Arts, the Maryland State Arts Council and the Barrymore Awards of Philadelphia.

Sara Group is a theatre artist from Philadelphia with special interests in Shakespeare, clown, and general silliness. She has a BFA from NYU and is now in her second and final year of the Touchstone/Moravian MFA program. As such, this is her second time in *Follies*, but the first time doing it live. While in the program, she created a solo show called *Speak in Starts*, which was a fast-paced journey through some of her favorite Shakespeare characters she's played, including Viola, Cassius, and Titania. She also created an audio piece called *Welcome Home*, which takes you on a tour around your own house with the hope that you will see it in a new (or renewed) light. She is currently working on another audio project for her thesis, which will be a theatricalized audio description of a national park. Thanks to Sean, the Iggies, and that Christmas tree costume.

Krystal Hall is in her first year at Touchstone/Moravian University's MFA program in Performance Creation. She got her undergraduate degree in Theatre with an Acting Concentration as well as a minor in Dance at Muhlenberg College. Hall's previous credits include *Magic*, *Raisin in the Sun*, *Antigone* and *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf*, at Muhlenberg College. Krystal works as the Alumni Director for the M.U.L.E. Community Cabinet and as a Direct Support Staff for Lehigh Valley Community Connections.

James Jordan has called Touchstone Theatre his artistic home for its last sixteen seasons. He has helped produce countless events since arriving and has served in multiple capacities including director, designer, composer, actor, and playwright. Some of James's most notable artistic contributions were serving as Project Director for *Festival Unbound*, *A Resting Place*, *Journey from the East*, and his original series of musical comedies under *The Pan Show* title, which chronicles the misadventures of the Greek God Pan as he is placed into modern day America, co-written with Touchstone Ensemble Affiliate Christopher Shorr. These projects have brought accolades in the form of awards given by Bethlehem's local press; notable amongst these honors were "Producer of the Year" and "Best Original Play." Before coming to Touchstone, James worked at the

Zoellner Arts Center on Lehigh University's campus. During his five-year tenure as Zoellner's Stage Coordinator, he helped in the production of hundreds of events – from lectures to Broadway musicals to some of the best ballets and orchestras in the world. Over the years, James freelanced with many production companies as a sound and lighting technician and designer. James holds a BS in Telecommunications (video production) with minors in both Theatre and Music from Kutztown University, an MA in Performance from the University of Chichester, and an MFA in Creative Practice from Plymouth University's Transart Institute. He currently serves as the Program Director for the Touchstone Theatre/Moravian University MFA in Performance Creation.

Lisa Jordan holds a BA in theatre and minor in music from Kutztown University. After serving as Production/Administrative Intern at Civic Theatre of Allentown for their 2000-01 season, she came to Touchstone to stage manage *Christmas City Follies '01*. This initial experience with ensemble-created work opened her eyes to a whole new world of theatre creation, and Lisa joined the company as Production Manager. In 2005, she joined the Ensemble, and in 2008 became the Managing Director. Though administrative responsibilities are her primary focus, over the last two decades, Lisa has filled many creative roles, including: director, stage manager, lighting designer, props designer, and costume designer. *Follies* costume design holds a special place in her heart thanks to all the quirky characters that annually grace the stage and keep her on her toes.

Abbie-Jean Litman is thrilled to be performing in *Follies* for her second year but her first year live! Abbie-Jean is a second year MFA Performance Creation student at Moravian University with Touchstone Theatre. You may have seen her perform at Touchstone Theatre in *Christmas City Follies 2020*, *Salvage (Fresh Voices)*, *After Everything (Fresh Voices)*, and *Is Love So Small A Pain? (Festival Unbound)*. Her hope is that this holiday season brings you and your loved ones warmth, love, and joy, and that *Christmas City Follies* can do the same for you! Happy Holidays!

Robert Mills is thrilled to be a part of *Christmas City Follies* this year. He is a first year M.F.A. student with Touchstone/Moravian University. Robert holds a B.A. in Theatre from Oklahoma Baptist University and a M.A. in Theatre from Oklahoma State University. Some of his favorite roles include Jerry in *The Zoo Story*, Mr. Frank in *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and his one man show *Plastic Illusions* based on the characters of Tennessee Williams. Robert wishes to send his love to his wife Deborah and their amazing daughter Scarlett Rose. He also wishes to express lots of gratitude to the entire Touchstone family for making the whole *Follies* process such a fun and enjoyable experience.

Jenny Pacanowski is the Founder and Director of Women Veterans Empowered & Thriving, a reintegration program that utilizes writing and performance to empower experiences and facilitate skills to thrive in daily life. Reintegration services through empowerment can be provided any time while serving or any time after leaving the military. While Jenny was in the Army, she deployed to Iraq in 2004 as a combat medic and provided medical support for convoys with the Marines, Air Force, and the Army. She also did shifts in the Navy medical hospital. In Germany, she was part of a medical evacuation company. Jenny is currently pursuing her B.A. for integrated studies with a minor in theatre while interning at Touchstone Theatre.

Katie Anne Phykitt is a director and performer in her first year as a graduate student at Touchstone Theatre/Moravian University. Katie is a graduate of Messiah University's theatre program where she earned her B.F.A. in Musical Theatre in 2021. The same year,

Katie received recognition from the Kennedy Center for her direction of *Antigone*. During her time at Messiah, she participated in over thirty productions on the performance, creative, and technical ends, and was a director and officer for the APO Theatre Honor Society at her school. Additional theatre training includes intensives at Alfred University, Fordham University, and NYU. Thanks to the Touchstone family. 1 Tim 1:15-17.

Matt Prideaux first found his way onto the stage at the age of five and hasn't looked back since. He is currently in his second year as an MFA student at Touchstone in partnership with Moravian University and holds a BA in Theater from The New School. Most recently you might have seen him in last year's *Follies* as well as in *Is Love So Small a Pain?* as Jason, which he co-created with his partner Abbie Jean Litman. Some of his favorite past roles include Leo in *4000 Miles*, Clifford in *Deathtrap*, Pete in *The Groundling*, Elder Thomas in *The Whale* and as a member of the Ensemble in *Burn the End*. In addition to acting, Matt has contributed to many backstage endeavors throughout his career including light and set design, board operation, and directing. His most recent directing credits include *These Shining Lives* and *The Memory of Water* both at Theatre Southwest in Houston, TX, where he is from.

Sam Thompson is a multimedia artist originally from North Pole, Alaska, dabbling in making art in the intersection of their interests in film, theatre, poetry, photography, movement, digital art, music, and animation. Their work in theatrical projections has been recently seen on the stage at the Arena Theatre in Bethlehem in *Is Love So Small a Pain?* and *Antigone*, and they are currently studying as a graduate student in the MFA program in Performance Creation shared between Moravian University and Touchstone Theatre. If you are interested in checking out any of their work, you can find it all online under the names Quirk & Quill (for playwriting, poetry, digital art, and photography prints) or AVI.ARY (for music), or by going to <https://linktr.ee/quirk.and.quill>

Mary Wright is an Ensemble Member who acts (*Follies*, *Dictators 4 Dummies*, *Bhadoo*), writes and directs (*Dream of the Red Pavilion*, *Southside Experience*, *Aesop&Co*), and costumes (*Ulysses Dreams*) in addition to being the Education Director at Touchstone. She will be premiering her third iteration of *Kitchen Chronicles* in February '22 where she will be performing with her daughter, equity actor Katie Willmorth. With over 35 years as an arts-educator and storyteller, Mary has performed for over 5,000 children in multiple states. She is well known for her workshops on Delighted Listening and Story Making. She was awarded the Bethlehem Fine Arts Award for individual contribution to the arts in 2014. In addition to making things and making things happen, Mary loves to bake, garden, and spend time with her family.

Kyra Zimmerman is a high school senior currently attending the Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts as a production arts major. Attending Charter Arts, they have held a number of production roles, the most recent of which include the stage management of *30 Neo-Futurist Plays from Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind*, and the prop design of *Earthland*. They have maintained an internship position at Touchstone Theatre for more than three years, designing for and working backstage in performances, events, and projects such as *Young Playwright's Festival*, *Fresh Voices*, *Festival UnBound*, and *Letters from Far*. They are extremely grateful to be back in the theatre for their fourth run of *Christmas City Follies*, and for each kind-hearted ensemble of theatre artists they have gotten to know throughout their time working on the show!

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Lisa Jordan, Managing Director/Ensemble Member
Emma Ackerman, General Manager/Ensemble Member
Bill George, Co-Founder/Ensemble Member
Christopher Shorr, Ensemble Member
Mary Wright, Education Director/Ensemble Member
Chris Egging, Technical Director/Ensemble Associate
Adam Ercolani, Development and Marketing Associate

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Jessica Boothe
Sara M. Group
Krystal Hall
Abbie-Jean Litman

Robert Mills
Katie Phykitt
Matt Prideaux
Sam Thompson

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Alyssa Lou Ann Allen
Steven Barnett
Samantha Beedle
Erick Black

Shawn Cavanaugh
Michael Duck
Jason Hedrington
Ashley Tait Weller

Interns

Lucia Cinquino
Jenny Pacanowski
Ari Runge
Kyra Zimmerman



TOUCHSTONETHEATRE

Coming up next at Touchstone

Kitchen Chronicles

February 10-20

From the kitchen to the stage; parts one and two of this multi-year project brought us from our own kitchens to a shared kitchen at PBS. Now, join real-life mother and daughter Mary Wright and Katie Willmorth as they explore themes of legacy, magic, the miracle of Cool Whip– you know, pretty much everything and the kitchen sink– and try to figure out why, hungry or not, we always end up in the kitchen.

Shadows in Steam: A Letters from Far Story

February-March – mail-based event

The year is 1906, and the locomotive Progress pulls into station with three passengers dead, a foul smoke puffing from the engine, and no clear explanation for the rash of nightmares amongst the crew. The police officer processing the scene is a by-the-books fellow with no head for this esoteric nonsense and has turned to you for assistance in his investigation. Experience a new pseudo-historical, supernatural mystery that comes to you through the mail; read the official accounts made by the survivors, and begin to uncover the sinister power grasping the Progress.

Stay in touch with Touchstone!

Check out touchstone.org for more info, and while you're there, sign up for our newsletter for regular updates!