

The background is a dense, multi-layered abstract painting. A large, textured purple pyramid dominates the center, appearing to be constructed from stone blocks. To the right, a vertical structure resembling a building or tower is visible, with a grid of colorful squares and a small window. The overall palette is rich and varied, including blues, greens, yellows, and reds, creating a sense of depth and complexity.

IRON CROW THEATRE

# RENT

BOOK, MUSIC & LYRICS BY  
JONATHAN LARSON

FEBRUARY 16 - 18, 2024

**DIRECTED BY SEAN ELIAS**  
NOW AT THE M&T BANK EXCHANGE

# IRON CROW THEATRE

DANIEL AIBEL & DAVID PITTMAN PRESENT

# RENT

BOOK, MUSIC, AND LYRICS BY JONATHAN LARSON

MUSICAL ARRANGEMENTS BY STEVE SKINNER

ORIGINAL CONCEPT & ADDITIONAL LYRICS BY BILLY ARONSON

MUSIC SUPERVISION & ADDITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS BY TIM WEIL

DRAMATURG LYNN THOMSON

DIRECTED BY SEAN ELIAS\*\*

WITH

LANDON BLACK, RACHEL CAHOON, TERRELL CHAMBERS,  
JEREMY ALLEN CRAWFORD, CARTER CROSBY, NATALIA FYFE,  
NICHOLAS MILES\*, JESSICA RAMON, BREANNE SENSENIG,  
ANWAR THOMAS, SAM SLOTTOW, TYLER WHITE, AND TEDDY WRIGHT

ASST. DIR. / CHOREOGRAPHER  
**QUAE SIMPSON\*\***

MUSIC DIRECTOR  
**RACHEL SANDLER**

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR  
**BRUCE KAPPLIN\***

STAGE MANAGER  
**MONIQUE CHAMBERS-SLEDJESKI**

ASST. STAGE MANAGER  
**EMILY COCCOVIZZO**

COSTUME DESIGN  
**CAMILLE LERNER**

LIGHTING DESIGN  
**THOMAS P. GARDNER\***

SCENIC DESIGN  
**THOMAS JENKELEIT**

AUDIO ENGINEER  
**JJ NICHOLS**

ASST. COSTUME DESIGN  
**APRIL FORRER\***

INTIMACY DIRECTION  
**SHAWNA POTTER\***

\* Member, Actors' Equity Association, the union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

+ Iron Crow Theatre Resident Artist

*RENT* was originally produced in New York by New York Theatre Workshop and on Broadway by Jeffrey Seller, Kevin McCollum, Allan S. Gordon and New York Theatre Workshop.

*RENT* is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. [www.mtishows.com](http://www.mtishows.com)



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EXCHANGE



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# FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

**"...urges our audience to confront uncomfortable truths while inspiring all of us to be agents of change in our own communities."**

*- Sean Elias, Artistic Director*

It's an honor and a privilege to welcome you to the new M&T Bank Exchange as one of the first theatrical audiences in this space, and to welcome you back for the extended run (and historic transfer) of our critically acclaimed, sold-out, and award-winning production of *RENT*!

Today, *RENT* carries a sense of deep history, nostalgia, and sometimes rigid expectations. Most revivals largely adhere to the musical's original Broadway staging from 1996. For me, these staging conventions often overshadow the musical's intent to exist as a form of agitational propaganda. *RENT* was created as a vehicle to highlight the socio-political upheaval of the late 1980s and early 1990s, the devastation of the early days of the AIDS epidemic, and to serve as a warning of what happens when we lose sight of our shared humanity. It also serves as a testament to the ways that love and living in community can defy great odds.

What always struck me about *RENT* was the true depths of despair in which these characters are living - both emotionally and physically. The photos projected pre-show served as my dramaturgical inspiration. I hope it helps you see, as it did our cast and creative team, the harsh reality in which this story takes place.

It was important for me to re-envision this piece in a way that would allow what gets lost in the production's "baggage" to be experienced anew. What emerged was a staging and theatrical language that resists the allure of nostalgia, and urges our audiences to confront uncomfortable truths while inspiring us all to be agents of change in our own communities.

Without you, our audience and supporters, Iron Crow Theatre, could not exist. Thank you for supporting queer theatre and small professional theatre here in Baltimore. I promise you that it means so much to so many here in Maryland and across the country, both those we love and those we've lost.

With such gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sean Elias', written in a cursive style.

Sean Elias, M.A., B.F.A.  
Artistic Director, Iron Crow Theatre

# FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

**"The story of this production is a Baltimore story—  
produced *by* Baltimore, *for* Baltimore..."**

*- Natka Bianchini, Managing Director*

Welcome to our encore run of Jonathan Larson's *RENT* at the gorgeous new M&T Bank Exchange! We are so honored to be partnering with the France-Merrick Performing Arts Center on this extension, and to be welcoming you as the very first audiences to this spectacular theatre and event space. The Exchange opened in the fall of 2023 after an extensive capital campaign and multi-million dollar renovation and Iron Crow Theatre's production of *RENT* is the very first theatrical production in this space.

This collaboration represents the first of what I am certain will be many instances of cooperation between the Exchange and local Baltimore arts organizations as it becomes a hub for artistic and cultural events here in Charm City, rooted in their belief that "Live Theatre is For Everyone." The story of this production is a Baltimore story—produced *by* Baltimore, *for* Baltimore, and staffed by an incredible team of Baltimore-based artists and creatives. It is a testament to the wealth of talent we have in this region, and to the opportunities being created for artists right here in their backyards.

Of course, we would not be here were it not for you, our beloved audience members and supporters. It is because of you: your belief in the power of live theatre, your passion for witnessing queer stories, your enthusiasm for Jonathan Larson's powerful work, that we were able to make this extended run and transfer happen. I am honored to stand in community with you.

Live theatre is incredibly resource and labor intensive. This production and transfer represents literally thousands of hours of labor on behalf of scores of individuals. Thank you again for joining us this weekend as we make history, and for sharing with others that there is a small professional theatre here in Baltimore fighting to ensure that queer theatre remains alive; celebrating the renegade and unorthodox in all of us.

No day but today!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Natka Bianchini". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Natka Bianchini, Ph.D.  
Managing Director, Iron Crow Theatre

# DRAMATURGY

The early years of the HIV/AIDS epidemic were marked by uncertainty, false information, and fear about the cause and transmission of the disease. Though it is likely that IV drug users were dying of AIDS in New York City in the 1970s from what was then known as “junkie pneumonia”, (Pneumocystis), AIDS came to medical attention in the United States in 1981 when otherwise healthy gay men in New York and San Francisco contracted Kaposi’s sarcoma, an unusual form of skin cancer that caused purple skin lesions. Although evidence showed that others exhibited the same symptoms as gay men, scientists termed the syndrome Gay-Related Immune Deficiency (GRID), leading to the linkage of the disease with homosexuality and dramatically increasing the stigma surrounding it.

Homophobia, along with rising economic inequality, shaped public responses to the unfolding epidemic. Frightened parents tried to keep kids with AIDS out of public schools, while city officials closed bathhouses and other meeting places for gay men. People with AIDS suffered from social isolation, including the loss of homes, jobs, and relationships with partners or family members. Despite having roughly half of the country’s reported cases, New York City did not mount a systematic response to the emerging epidemic. Patients experienced stigma and neglect in the city’s health care system. Some private hospitals, overwhelmed by the rapidly increasing numbers of patients, and sensitive to the general public’s fears of the spread of the disease, began refusing to admit AIDS patients; hospitals that did admit them, especially public institutions, had too few resources to care for them properly. AIDS activist Keith Cylar recalled, “New York City literally had hospital gridlock and that was when they were keeping people out on hospital gurneys in the hallways. That was when people were not being fed, bathed or touched. It was horrendous.” Volunteer groups such as the Gay Men’s Health Crisis (formed in 1982) took on caring for and housing AIDS patients.

The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP), a direct-action group founded in 1987 after a fiery speech by playwright Larry Kramer, used stunning visual art, spectacular street theater, and civil disobedience to draw attention to government inaction and the need for effective treatment and prevention to end the AIDS epidemic. The organization targeted both medical and public health authorities, the pharmaceutical sector, and the financial industry, demanding faster drug development and testing, and more affordable drug pricing. ACT UP also targeted the media for their inaccurate portrayal of the epidemic and who was at risk, luxury real estate developers like Donald Trump for exacerbating homelessness, and city hall for its failed response to the epidemic.

ACT UP’s membership included artists and designers, some of whom had extensive experience in marketing, and they created iconographic images including the Silence = Death Project, which urged viewers to “turn anger, fear, grief into action” on AIDS. Other members were veterans of prior

# DRAMATURGY

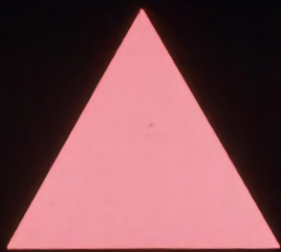
social movements including the civil rights and feminist peace movements, and orchestrated elaborate civil disobedience actions, such as disrupting trading on Wall Street and occupying the Food and Drug Administration headquarters. Photographer Thomas McGovern recalled covering ACT UP protests, and the ways in which they were strategically planned to ensure they would be documented and disseminated to a much broader audience via the media. Like ACT UP itself, McGovern hoped to change the public's perception of people with AIDS through his portraiture, "showing the horrors of what people with AIDS suffered through politically and medically," but also, "celebrating people's strengths and the indomitable human spirit."

ACT UP's legacy includes many tangible policy accomplishments, including making experimental drugs more widely accessible at a time when no effective drug treatments for HIV/AIDS had been approved (and would not be until the mid-1990s). The group also brought together formerly isolated gay men and allies and provided life-affirming support at a critical time. Perhaps the group's most consequential accomplishment of all, though, was indeed changing the public's perception of HIV/AIDS. No longer sinners deserving of their fate, as some conservative religious leaders had suggested, the public came to see instead that "All People With AIDS Are Innocent." Like McGovern's photographs, Johathan Larson's *Rent* shared in that worthy effort.

Dr. Tamar Carroll, Ph.D.  
Rochester Institute of Technology

This essay is adapted from Tamar W. Carroll, *Mobilizing New York: AIDS, Antipoverty, and Feminist Activism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015) and [www.whosestreets.photo](http://www.whosestreets.photo). See also <https://actuporalhistory.org/>.

Next Page: Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library. "Silence = Death [Poster]" The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1986. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e4-1035-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>



# SILENCE = DEATH

Why is Reagan silent about AIDS? What is really going on at the Center for Disease Control, the Federal Drug Administration, and the Vatican?  
Gays and lesbians are not expendable...Use your power...Vote...Boycott...Defend yourselves...Turn anger, fear, grief into action.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## **A NOTE ON PRODUCTION SAFETY**

All cast and creative team members received Safer Spaces training to ensure a professional harassment-free workplace, and an Intimacy Director has been utilized for each scene requiring intimacy. All actors have given their consent to portray their characters as blocked, designed, and choreographed. Regarding COVID-19, Iron Crow Theatre requires all actors and creative team members to be fully vaccinated, boosted, and agreeable to ongoing testing and mandatory masking when necessary.

## **CONTENT WARNINGS**

The production includes sexual themes, jokes, and undertones, kissing, simulated intercourse, violence, and highlights both verbally and visually themes of addiction and suicide. The production design includes the use of loud sound effects, haze, and bright, strobing, reflective lighting.

## **SPECIAL THANKS**

Asia-Lige Arnold<sup>+</sup>, Atomic Music, Chuck Atwell, Big Crunch Amplifier Service & Design, Brooks Harlan, Dr. Tamar Carroll, Hana Clarice<sup>+</sup>, Brian Daughash<sup>+</sup>, Billy D'Eugenio, Delegate Kris Fair, April Forrer, Ethan Forrer, France-Merrick Performing Arts Center, Free State Justice, Frank Golom, River Hansen<sup>+</sup>, Robert Hayes, Jericho Stage, Heather Johnston, Kyle Klein, Jess Lanzillotti, Ron Legler, Chris Mahan, Joel Medina, John McAfee, Josh Melzter, Mickey Moulder, M&T Bank Exchange, Loyola University of Maryland Department of Visual & Performing Arts, Chapel 1503, The National AIDS Memorial (Brian Holman), Chris Pfingsten, Rochester Institute of Technology, Shawna Potter, Camile Reynolds-Dominquez, Andrew Springer, Bekah Walsh, Work Printing & Graphics, and Zion Church of the City of Baltimore

## **THE NATIONAL AIDS MEMORIAL**

Iron Crow Theatre is honored to have received special permission to display a block of the National AIDS Quilt in our lobby and to be a supporter of the National AIDS Memorial's efforts to bring the Quilt to communities across the United States to raise greater awareness and education about HIV/AIDS and to remember those lost to the AIDS pandemic.



# CAST & CREATIVE

## CAST

ROGER DAVIS, ROGER'S MOM.....	Carter Crosby
MIMI MARQUEZ, MIMI'S MOM.....	Natalia Fyfe
MARK COHEN, MRS. COHEN.....	Jeremy Allen Crawford
TOM COLLINS.....	Terrell Chambers
ANGEL DUMOTT SCHUNARD.....	Nicholas Miles <sup>+</sup>
MAUREEN JOHNSON.....	Rachel Cahoon
JOANNE JEFFERSON, MRS. JEFFERSON.....	Breanne Sensenig
BENJAMIN COFFIN, III.....	Anwar Thomas
PASTOR, ENSEMBLE.....	Landon Black
ALEXI DARLING, ENSEMBLE.....	Jessica Ramon
GORDON, ENSEMBLE.....	Sam Slottow
PAUL, MR. JEFFERSON, ENSEMBLE.....	Tyler White
BLANKET PERSON, ENSEMBLE.....	Teddy Wright

## UNDERSTUDIES

Understudies never substitute for listed players unless a specific announcement for the appearance is made.

ROGER DAVIS.....	Landon Black
MIMI MARQUEZ.....	Jessica Ramon
MARK COHEN.....	Sam Slottow
BENJAMIN COFFIN III, TOM COLLINS.....	Tyler White
MAUREEN JOHNSON, JOANNE JEFFERSON.....	Teddy Wright

## CREATIVE

Director.....	Sean Elias <sup>+</sup> *
Asst. Director, Choreographer.....	Quae Simpson <sup>+</sup> *
Music Director.....	Rachel Sandler
Stage Manager.....	Monique Chambers-Sledjeski
Asst. Stage Manager.....	Emily Coccovizzo
Intimacy Director & Safer Spaces Training.....	Shawna Potter <sup>+</sup>
Technical Director.....	Bruce Kapplin <sup>+</sup>
Costume Design.....	Camille Lerner
Set Design.....	Thomas Jenkeleit
Lighting Design.....	Thomas P. Gardner <sup>+</sup>
Audio Engineer.....	JJ Nichols
Asst. Costume Design.....	April Forrer <sup>+</sup>
Marketing.....	Mickey Moulder

\* Iron Crow Theatre Resident Artist

\* Member, Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional Actors and Stage Managers.

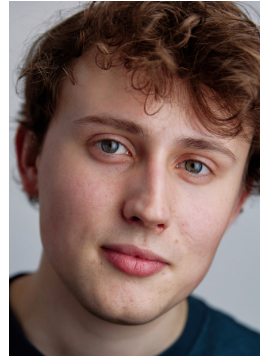
# CAST



CARTER CROSBY



NATALIA FYFE



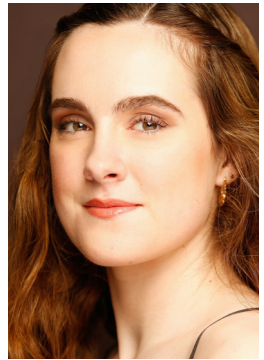
JEREMEY ALLEN  
CRAWFORD



TERRELL CHAMBERS



NICHOLAS MILES<sup>+</sup>



RACHEL CAHOON



BREANNE SENSENIG



ANWAR THOMAS

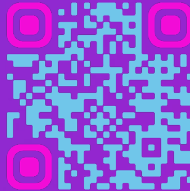
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# CAST



LANDON BLACK



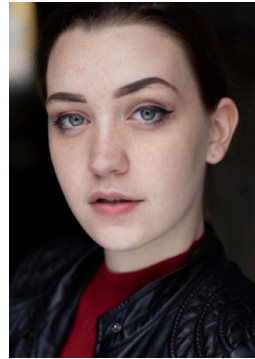
JESSICA RAMON



SAM SLOTTOW



TYLER WHITE



TEDDY WRIGHT

# BAND

Conductor, Keys 1.....Stephanie Baird, Catina McLagan  
Guitar 1.....Nick Jewett  
Guitar 2, Keys 2.....Jamie Williams  
Drums.....Jack Naden, Brett Schatz  
Bass.....Jared Davis, Nathan Royer

# MUSICAL NUMBERS

## ACT 1

Tune Up/Voice Mail #1.....	Mark, Roger, Mrs. Cohen, Collins, Benny Rent.....	Company
You Okay Honey?.....	Angel, Collins	
One Song Glory.....	Roger	
Light My Candle.....	Roger, Mimi	
Voice Mail #2.....	Mr. & Mrs. Jefferson	
Today 4 U.....	Angel	
You'll See.....	Benny, Mark, Collins, Roger, Angel	
Tango: Maureen.....	Mark, Joanne	
Life Support.....	Paul, Gordon, Mark, Company	
Out Tonight.....	Mimi	
Another Day.....	Roger, Mimi, Company	
Will I.....	Company	
On the Street.....	Company	
Sante Fe.....	Collins, Company	
We're Okay.....	Joanne	
I'll Cover You.....	Angel, Collins	
Christmas Bells.....	Blanket Person, Company	
Over the Moon.....	Maureen, Company	
La Vie Boheme/I Should Tell You*.....	Company	

\*Additional Lyrics by Billy Aronson

## ACT 2

Seasons of Love.....	Company
Happy New Year/Voice Mail #3.....	Company
Take Me or Leave Me.....	Maureen, Joanne
Without You.....	Roger, Mimi
Voice Mail #4.....	Alexi Darling
Contact.....	Angel, Company
I'll Cover You: Reprise.....	Collins, Company
Halloween.....	Mark
Goodbye, Love.....	Mark, Mimi, Roger, Maureen, Joanne, Collins, Benny
What You Own.....	Pastor, Mark, Collins, Benny, Roger
Voice Mail #5.....	Roger's Mom, Mimi's Mom, Mr. Jefferson, Mrs. Cohen
Finale/Your Eyes.....	Roger, Company



IRON CROW THEATRE

JUNE 14 - 30

EVERYBODY'S  
TALKING ABOUT  
**JAMIE**

Join us for **one of the first productions in the country of the hit new queer musical** about the true story of a boy who dreamed of becoming a drag queen!

# SEASONS OF LOVE

**Following each performance at the new M&T Bank Exchange, join us for a Seasons of Love Sing-A-Long! Music and Lyrics by Jonathan Larson.**

Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes  
Five hundred twenty-five thousand moments so dear  
Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes  
How do you measure, measure a year?

In daylights, in sunsets  
In midnights, in cups of coffee  
In inches, in miles, in laughter, in strife  
In five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes  
How do you measure, a year in the life?

How about love?  
How about love?  
How about love?  
Measure in love

Seasons of love  
Seasons of love

Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes  
Five hundred twenty-five thousand journeys to plan  
Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes  
How do you measure the life of a woman or a man?

In truths that she learned  
Or in times that he cried  
In bridges he burned  
Or the way that she died

It's time now, to sing out  
Though the story never ends  
Let's celebrate  
Remember a year in the life of friends

Remember the love (oh, you got to, you got to remember the love)  
Remember the love (you know that love is a gift from up above)  
Remember the love (share love, give love, spread love)  
Measure in love (measure, measure your life in love)

Seasons of love (love)  
Seasons of love (measure your life, measure your life in love)

# BIOGRAPHIES

**LANDON BLACK** (*PASTOR, ENSEMBLE, ROGER U/S*): Iron Crow Theatre debut! A soon-to-be graduate of Baltimore School for the Arts' high school theatre program, previous credits include *Romeo and Juliet* (Players on Air, Inc.), *Noises Off*, *Birdbath*, and *Carrie* (BSFA). He is incredibly grateful for the support he has received from friends and family and honored to be surrounded by an incredible cast and crew! @landona\_black

**RACHEL CAHOON** (*MAUREEN JOHNSON, DANCE CAPTAIN*): Iron Crow Theatre debut! Rachel is a proud NOVA native and has a B.F.A. in Musical Theatre from Point Park University. Most recently, she has been seen in *Ride the Cyclone* (NextStop Theatre), *Bonnie and Clyde* (Media Theatre), *Gypsy* (Gretna Theatre), and performed as a lead vocalist onboard *Serenade of the Seas* with Royal Caribbean. Much love to her friends and the Cahoon family for their endless support. She also wants to give a huge shout out to the amazing cast and crew of *RENT*, who she could not imagine doing this show without. Representation: Fire Starter Entertainment. @rachelcahoon

**TERRELL CHAMBERS** (*TOM COLLINS*): Iron Crow Theatre debut! Previous credits include *Aida*, *Sweet Charity*, *Don't Bother Me I Can't Cope*, *Hamlet*, *Working*, *Kill, Move Paradise*, and *Barbecue*. Terrell would like to thank his family & friends, this amazing cast & crew, the incredible musicians, and his director. @Terrellchambersofficial

**JEREMY ALLEN CRAWFORD** (*MARK COHEN, MRS. COHEN*): Iron Crow Theatre debut! Recent credits include *Atlantis* and *Treasure Quest* (English Musicals Korea), *Lucky Stiff* and *Little Women* (Nextstop Theatre), and *Shakespeare in Love* (Keegan Theatre). Training: B.M. Musical Theatre, The Catholic University.

**CARTER CROSBY** (*ROGER DAVIS, ROGER'S MOM*): Iron Crow Theatre debut! Carter Crosby is a Virginia-born actor, writer, musician. Previous credits: *Ride the Cyclone* (Next Stop Theatre), *Million Dollar Quartet* (Wohlfahrt Haus Theatre). Some of his other favorite credits include *Once* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Training: Theatre B.A., James Madison University. [www.cartercrosby.com](http://www.cartercrosby.com). @carterjcroby

**NATALIA FYFE** (*MIMI MARQUEZ, MIMI'S MOM*): Iron Crow Theatre debut! Recent D.C. area credits: *Look Both Ways* (Kennedy Center TYA + Theater Alliance Co-Production), *In The Heights* (NextStop Theatre Company), *This Girl Laughs*, *This Girl Cries*, *This Girl Does Nothing* (Theater Alliance), *La Llamada de Sylvia Méndez: Separate is Never Equal* (GALA Hispanic Theatre), *21 Days to Save a Life* (Prince William Little Theatre), and MetroStage + Quintango's workshop of *VOLVER*. TRAINING: B.F.A., George Mason University. Gracias a mi gente por todo y pa'lante! @nataliafyfe



# BIOGRAPHIES

**NICHOLAS MILES** (*ANGEL DUMOTT SCHUNARD*): Iron Crow Theatre Resident Artist! Nicholas is delighted to return after previously starring in Iron Crow Theatre's award-winning and critically acclaimed productions of *Mankind* (OBGYN), *A New Brain* (Nurse), *The Laramie Project* (Various), and the theatre's annual production of *The Rocky Horror Show* (3x Dr. Frank 'N' Furter, 1x Narrator). Previous other credits include *Beehive*, *Mr. Burns: A Post Electric Play*, *The Secret Garden*, and *Titanic*. Nicholas is a 2016 graduate of the Honors Acting Conservatory at the esteemed Theatre Lab in Washington, D.C., and is a proud member of Iron Crow Theatre's Board of Directors. [www.nicholasallenmiles.com](http://www.nicholasallenmiles.com).

**JESSICA RAMON** (*ALEXI DARLING, ENSEMBLE, MIMI U/S*): Iron Crow Theatre debut! Born and raised in Maryland, Jess has had a passion and love for musical theatre since she was a little girl. Previous credits include *In the Heights* and *Swingtime Canteen*. She is honored to be a part of such a special musical and hopes you enjoy every part of it!

**BREANNE SENSENIG** (*JOANNE JEFFERSON, MRS. JEFFERSON*): Iron Crow Theatre debut! Breanne is a professional performer and singer from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Some of Breanne's singing credits include *American Idol* (Season 18 on ABC), *Rocktopia* (NYC—Broadway), and *Amateur Night Finalist* (Apollo Theater, Harlem, NYC). Theater credits include *Hair*, *Seussical*, and *Ragtime*. Breanne wants to thank Sean and the rest of the casting team for giving her this amazing opportunity!

**SAM SLOTTOW** (*GORDON, ENSEMBLE, MARK U/S*): Previous Iron Crow Theatre credits include the award-winning and critically acclaimed productions of *Bare: A Pop Opera* and *The Rocky Horror Show*. Sam (he/they) is a Baltimore-based actor with a passion for creating meaningful representation for queer and trans people. He is honored to return to Iron Crow Theatre in this production of *RENT*. Other favorite stage credits include *Avenue Q* (Farmers Alley Theatre), *Rock of Ages* (Kalamazoo Civic Theatre), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Kindleberger Arts), and *Gay Deceivers* (Queer Theatre Kalamazoo).

**ANWAR THOMAS** (*BENJAMIN COFFIN, III*): Iron Crow Theatre debut! Past theater credits include *Ragtime*, *The Wiz*, *Urinetown*, and *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*. When he's not performing on stage, Anwar is behind the scenes choreographing and teaching musical theater, jazz, and hip hop. In 2012, he received his first Helen Hayes nomination for Best Choreography (*The Color Purple* at Toby's Dinner Theatre). Anwar would like to thank Sean, Quae, Rachel, Monique and the rest of the production team and staff at Iron Crow Theatre.

# BIOGRAPHIES

**TYLER WHITE** (*PAUL, MR. JEFFERSON, ENSEMBLE, ANGEL/BENNY U/S*): Iron Crow Theatre debut! Previous credits include Booker T. Washington in *Ragtime* (Maryland Theatre Collective), *SpongeBob the Musical* (Tidewater Players), *A Chorus Line* (Dundalk Community Theatre) and *Fugitive Songs* (Towson University). Training: B.F.A., Towson University. Thanks to everyone for supporting live theater! Breeze.

**TEDDY WRIGHT** (*BLANKET PERSON, ENSEMBLE, MAUREEN/JOANNE U/S*): Iron Crow Theatre debut! Teddy Wright is thrilled to be back in their hometown of Baltimore creating theatre once more. Previous credits: *Twelfth Night*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Spring Awakening*, and *Little Shop of Horrors*. Teddy would also like to give a huge shoutout to her family and friends, whose unwavering support is truly inspiring. Training: B.A. in Acting/Musical Theatre, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in London. @teddywr1ght

**MONIQUE CHAMBERS-SLEDJESKI** (*STAGE MANAGER*): Iron Crow Theatre debut! Monique graduated early from The University of the Arts in Philadelphia with a degree in Stage Management. Over the past year Monique has toured with *The Bridgerton Experience* as Front of House Manager, and works as a stage manager and mentor at Duke Ellington School of Arts in Washington, DC. Monique is thrilled to have worked with such a talented cast and creative team on this brilliant project. Monique would like to give a huge shout out to her husband for 7 years of constant love and support!

**EMILY COCCOVIZZO** (*ASST. STAGE MANAGER*): Iron Crow Theatre debut! Emily is a junior at Loyola University Maryland pursuing a bachelor's degree in Theatre and Forensic Studies. She is very excited to work on this production of *RENT*! Over the course of her college career, she's worked as an assistant lighting designer, costume designer, stage manager, co-director, and more! Emily would like to thank Natka Bianchini for the opportunity, as well as Sean Elias, Monique Chambers, and the rest of the cast and crew for welcoming her. Special shoutout to Nez Blaho.

**NATKA BIANCHINI** (*MANAGING DIRECTOR*): Iron Crow Theatre Resident Artist! Natka is the newly appointed Managing Director of Iron Crow Theatre having previously served on the theatre's board of directors and having directed the critically acclaimed and award-winning productions of *Hurricane Diane*, *Collective Rage: A Play in 5 Betties*, *The Mystery of Love and Sex*, and *Cloud 9*. Natka is a Baltimore-based director, scholar, and theatre educator with more than 40 directing credits including plays, musicals, devised pieces, and new work. Previous credits include *Us/Them* (Sisters Freehold), *God of Vengeance* (Gordon Center for the Performing Arts), *The Thanksgiving Play*, *The Wolves*, *Spring Awakening*, *Waiting for Godot* (Loyola University), *A Delicate Balance* (Tufts University), among many others. She is the author of two

# BIOGRAPHIES

books and numerous reviews and articles on theatre and performance. The current head of the theatre program at Loyola University Maryland, Natka teaches directing, theatre history, and queer theatre and film. She is an affiliate with the Center for International Theatre Development (CITD) and a graduate of the HERS leadership institute for women in higher education. Natka holds a B.A. in sociology from Wellesley College and an M.A. and a Ph.D. in drama from Tufts University. [www.natkabianchini.com](http://www.natkabianchini.com)

**SEAN ELIAS** (*ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, DIRECTOR*): Iron Crow Theatre Resident Artist! A Tony Award-nominated educator and an award-winning Equity actor and director, Sean currently serves as Artistic Director of Baltimore's award-winning, professional queer theatre, Iron Crow Theatre. Under his leadership, Iron Crow Theatre has experienced its largest phase of growth in history, breaking every record the theatre previously held and was named Best Breakout Theatre in Baltimore Magazine's 2017 Best of Baltimore, as well as Best Professional Theatre in the 2016 MD Theatre Guides Reader's Choice Awards. For Iron Crow Theatre, Sean has directed numerous award-winning, record-breaking and critically acclaimed productions. As an actor, Sean has worked on tour and in Equity theatres across the northeast including The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and played Off-Broadway at The New Victory Theatre in Times Square, New York. By day, Sean serves as the newly appointed Executive Director of The DC Arts Center in Washington, D.C. having just completed a historic renovation of the organization's gallery and theatre spaces in just his second year of tenure. Previously, Sean served as the Founding Chair of the internationally award-winning Department of Performing Arts at the Jemicy School, Upper School, a private school serving students with dyslexia and other language-based learning differences. Sean has also served as the Chapter Director for Maryland Thespians, an affiliate of the Educational Theatre Association, and as a teaching artist with Baltimore Center Stage and a variety of other public and private colleges, universities, schools and community outreach programs. Sean has also served on the Maryland State Arts Council Theatre Review Board. Sean has been honored by Baltimore Magazine, as one of Baltimore's 30 Visionaries for his work with Iron Crow Theatre, and its impact on the greater Baltimore region as well as being named Voyage Baltimore's 2021 Rising Star, amongst other awards and recognition. B.F.A., Musical Theatre Performance, The University of the Arts. M.A., Theatre Education, Emerson College. [www.sean-elias.com](http://www.sean-elias.com)

**APRIL FORRER** (*ASSISTANT COSTUME DESIGNER*): Iron Crow Theatre Resident Artist! April is thrilled to be working on *RENT* after serving as Props Designer for Iron Crow Theatre's critically acclaimed production of *Head Over Heels*. April has been costume designing for over 14 years and some of her favorite shows include *The Rocky Horror Show*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Peter Pan*. April also serves as Iron Crow Theatre's General Manager and as the Executive Director of the Children's Theatre of Annapolis. She would like

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to thank her parents, David and her three wonderful children, Ethan, Quintin and Lillian for their support.

**THOMAS P. GARDNER** (*LIGHTING DESIGN*): Iron Crow Theatre Resident Artist! Thomas is a theatrical lighting designer and technical director based in Baltimore having designed over 40 shows, including five here at Iron Crow Theatre. Other credits include: Phoenix Festival Theater, Cockpit in Court, Single Carrot, Annapolis Summer Garden Theater, Tidewater Players, Fells Point Corner Theater, Silhouette Stages, Stevenson University, Towson University, and Heritage Players. Thomas is the newly appointed Assistant Technical Director and Lighting Director at Towson University having previously served as the Technical Director and Design Teacher for the internationally recognized Performing Arts Department at The Jemicy School. [www.thomaspgardner.com](http://www.thomaspgardner.com)

**THOMAS JENKELEIT** (*SET DESIGN*): Thomas (he/they) is thrilled to return to Iron Crow Theatre after serving as the Set Designer for their award-winning and critically acclaimed productions of *Head Over Heels* and *The Rocky Horror Show: Pride Edition*. Thomas is a scenic and prop designer from Queens, New York devoted to creating new, reimagined, and thought provoking work. Recent design/prop artisan credits include: HEREarts, The Bridge Production Group, New Ohio Theatre, Trove, Bay Street Theatre, The New Studio on Broadway NYU Tisch, Columbia University, Ithaca College, New York Film Academy, Iron Crow Theater, Ithaca Shakespeare Company, Hangar Theater Company, Kitchen Theater Company, Williamstown Theater Festival, 15 Street Quarterly Meeting House, State Theater of Ithaca, RWS Entertainment Group, The Cherry Arts. B.F.A. Ithaca College. [www.jenkeleit.com](http://www.jenkeleit.com)

**BRUCE KAPPLIN** (*TECHNICAL DIRECTOR*): Iron Crow Theatre Resident Artist! Bruce is the newly appointed Technical Director for Iron Crow Theatre and brings with him over 35 years of production experience having previously worked on Iron Crow Theatre's award-winning and critically-acclaimed productions of *Mankind*, *Hurricane Diane*, *Head Over Heels*, *BARE*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, and *A New Brain*. Previous other credits include Set Designer for *Perfect Arrangement* and *The Effect* at FPCT and Video Designer for Rapid Lemon's *Variations on Myth*. He started his career as an intern at Baltimore Center Stage. Over the years he has worked with Props and Sets, Baltimore Stage Lighting, Barrons Stage Curtains, Theater Service and Supply and now owns Jericho Stage, Inc., a full service production company providing services to clients such as Bowie State University, DC Jazz Festival, Gilman School, Roland Park Country School, Iron Man Triathlon, The Architect of The Capitol, WBAL TV, Netflix's *House of Cards*, and Women's March on Washington.

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**JONATHAN LARSON** (*BOOK, MUSIC, LYRICS*): Jonathan Larson received the 1996 Pulitzer Prize for Drama for *RENT*. He also won the 1996 Tony Award for Best Musical and the 1994 Richard Rodgers Award for *RENT* and twice received The Gilman & Gonzales-Falla Theatre Foundation's Comendation Award. In 1989 he was granted the Stephen Sondheim Award from American Music Theatre Festival, where he contributed to the musical "*Sitting on the Edge of the Future*". In 1988 he won the Richard Rodgers Development Grant for his rock musical *Superbia*, which was staged at Playwrights Horizon. He composed the score for the musical *J.P. Morgan Saves the Nation*, which was presented by En Garde Arts in 1995. Mr. Larson performed his rock monologue *tick, tick... BOOM!* at Second Stage Theatre, The Village Gate and New York Theatre Workshop. In addition to scoring and song writing for "Sesame Street", he created music for a number of children's book-cassettes, including Steven Spielberg's "An American Tail" and "The Land Before Time". Other film scores include work for Rolling Stone magazine publisher Jann Wenner. He conceived, directed and wrote four original songs for "Away We Go!", a musical video for children. *RENT*, his rock opera based on "La Boheme", had its world premiere on February 13, 1996 at New York Theatre Workshop. Mr. Larson died unexpectedly of an aortic aneurysm on January 25, 1996, ten days before his 36th birthday. His music (including songs cut from his shows) is archived in the Library of Congress.

**CAMILLE LERNER** (*COSTUME DESIGN*): Iron Crow Theatre debut! Camille is a costume designer currently based out of Columbus, OH. She has spent many years traveling, and her designs have been seen across the country, including Massachusetts, Nebraska, Florida, North Carolina, and California. Last year, she graduated with an M.F.A. in costume design, and decided to settle down in Columbus, OH. She would like to thank Sean for giving her the opportunity to work with Iron Crow Theatre, and her family for supporting her journey. She hopes you enjoy the show!

**JJ NICHOLS** (*AUDIO ENGINEER*): Iron Crow Theatre debut! A Washington, DC, based sound designer and engineer, JJ Nichols is a thrilled to be part of the sound team for *RENT* marking their first production in Baltimore. They hold a degree in Theatre Design and Technology from Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. Since moving to Washington, DC, in 2017, they have worked extensively with many companies including Studio Theatre, Constellation Theatre, Round House Theatre, and Arena Stage. With Synetic Theatre they were part of the design team for the Hellen Hayes Award winning production *Host and Guest* in 2022. Their work can be heard on *Host and Guest*, *Dracula*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Cinderella* and *JOY with Maria and Vato*. They are currently employed by American University and the Peabody Institute.

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**SHAWNA POTTER** (*INTIMACY DIRECTOR & SAFER SPACES TRAINING*): Iron Crow Theatre Resident Artist! Shawna is the author of *Making Spaces Safer: A Guide to Giving Harassment the Boot Wherever You Work, Play, and Gather*, co-creator of the Safer Space Program, and a bystander intervention educator. Shawna added Intimacy Director to her resume at the start of the pandemic and has been working non-stop ever since. She is also the front person for punk band War On Women, hosts the podcast *But Her Lyrics*, and repairs tube amps at Big Crunch Amplifier Service & Design.

**RACHEL SANDLER** (*MUSIC DIRECTOR*) Rachel is a Baltimore-based music director and voice teacher. She holds an M.M. in vocal performance and pedagogy from the Peabody Conservatory. Rachel has worked with dozens of community and professional theatres in the Baltimore community, and is the Executive Director of the Maryland Theatre Collective. Up next: *Falsettos* with MTC (Director, Music Director) and *...Spelling Bee* with Compass Rose (Music Director). For lessons & music inquiries, [www.rachelsandlermusic.com](http://www.rachelsandlermusic.com).

**QUAE SIMPSON** (*ASST. DIRECTOR, CHOREOGRAPHER*): Iron Crow Theatre Resident Artist! A Baltimore and New York based artist, Quae has over 30 years experience traveling the globe as an international entertainer, educator, director, choreographer and music director. He is also the CEO/Executive Artistic Director of Q Entertainment, a multifaceted global marketing and entertainment company specializing in the arts. For several years, Quae has had the privilege of being a teaching artist and choreographer at the acclaimed Baltimore School for the Arts and Carver Center for the Arts and Technology and is on the board of directors of the Baltimore Playwrights Festival. Earlier this year, Quae served as the artist in residence at Central State University in Ohio where he directed and choreographed *Dreamgirls*. Following, he choreographed *Forever Plaid* at Priscilla Beach Theatre in Plymouth, MA. Over the last several years, Quae has had the honor of being one the few African Americans to work as a Director/Choreographer at the world renowned and highly acclaimed Stagedoor Manor performing arts training center in New York. Quae would like to thank the entire cast and crew for this wonderful experience and his patient other half, Mark, for all of his love and support.

# ABOUT IRON CROW THEATRE

**IRON CROW THEATRE IS BALTIMORE'S AWARD-WINNING PROFESSIONAL QUEER THEATRE.**

We produce queer theatre for a queer city, celebrating the renegade and unorthodox in all of us. Iron Crow Theatre brings together some of the most innovative, talented and exciting theatrical professionals each season known lovingly as the 'Crows'. Our company consists of both experienced and up-and-coming theatrical leaders.

**WE DEFINE QUEER BROADLY AS THE CELEBRATION OF THE RENEGADE & UNORTHODOX IN ALL OF US.**

We don't seek to define queer for others, but rather hold space for those who identify themselves or their work as being queer or in support of the queer experience. For us, queer can manifest itself through aesthetic, thematic elements, gender identity, sexual orientation, and/or theatrical approach or convention. By developing and producing work that explores and celebrates that which is queer, we in turn begin to engage in a dialogue about what it means to be an American.

**WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT, ATTENDANCE AND/OR CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS, WE COULD NOT EXIST.**

You are how the magic of theatre becomes reality! Iron Crow Theatre is Baltimore's professional queer theatre, dedicated to elevating the voices of the queer community and to supporting queer artists and allies, as queer spaces in Baltimore, and LGBTQ+ rights and acceptance across the country, continue to disappear. We're also on a mission to become Baltimore's next equity theatre, helping to bridge the gap between theatres with a multi-million dollar budget and those with a multi-hundred dollar budget. Your generous donation of time will make it possible for us to remain one of Baltimore's fastest growing theatre companies.

Iron Crow Theatre is a registered 501(c)(3) designated non-profit organization. Your donations are 100% tax deductible and 100% of your donation goes to ensuring that Iron Crow Theatre sustains its presence within the local Baltimore community for seasons to come. Your support directly impacts our ability to serve the residents and artists of Maryland each season.

Learn more at [www.ironcrowtheatre.org](http://www.ironcrowtheatre.org)



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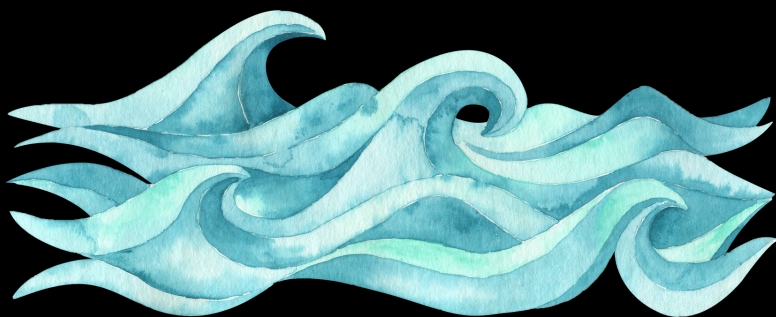
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