

Northwestern | WIRTZ CENTER CHICAGO



AIRNESS

JULY 19-21, 2024

Northwestern University's
Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts
proudly presents

AIRNESS

By CHELSEA MARCANTEL

Director
ERICKA RATCLIFF

Scenic Designer
CHRIS WYCH

Costume Designer
LIA WALLFISH

Lighting Designer
DYLAN REYNO

Sound Designer
MAYA RETER

Air Guitar Consultant
GINA CZARKOWSKI

Stage Manager
JAYCE LEWIS

Assistant Director
GRAYBILL PARTINGTON

Production Manager
VALERIE TU

AIRNESS runs approximately 1 hour and 35 minutes, no intermission.

AIRNESS is presented by special arrangement with Broadway Licensing, LLC, servicing the Dramatists Play Service collection.
(www.dramatists.com)

The Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts is a member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American Theatre.

Northwestern University
Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts
10 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston, IL 60208
Box Office Phone: 847-491-7282
wirtz.northwestern.edu

Northwestern
arts circle
The Arts Together



NAMT
NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR
MUSICAL THEATRE

Northwestern
SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are on sacred ground. Northwestern University is on the traditional homelands of the people of the Council of Three Fires—the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Odawa—as well as the Menominee, Miami, and Ho-Chunk nations. Before it was stolen from them through colonization and forced removal, this land was a site of trade, travel, gathering, and healing for more than a dozen other native tribes. The state of Illinois is still home to more than 100,000 tribal members. In the spirit of healing and making amends for the harm that was done, we acknowledge the native and indigenous peoples who called this land home. We pledge ourselves as members of the Northwestern School of Communication to turn our statements into action and build better relationships with native and indigenous communities in Evanston, in Chicago, and throughout the region.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

When I first read *Airness* by Chelsea Marcantel, I thoroughly enjoyed the journey through the quirky and vibrant world of competitive air guitar, which I knew nothing about. Despite my enjoyment, initially I felt unfit to direct it, as I had no concept of this world and doubted my ability to lead it. However, the more time I have spent with the play, and in collaboration with the amazing cast and design team, the more I identified with its unconventional subject matter. I've gained an appreciation for the fresh and entertaining backdrop around traditional themes of self-discovery, identity, and the importance of community and belonging. The endearing characters, whose personal journeys add depth and emotional resonance to the lighthearted premise, mirror what we often seek or long for in our own lives. The play promotes acceptance, the pursuit of one's passions, and the idea that it's never too late to find one's place and purpose. These themes are incredibly inspiring and resonate deeply with my journey as a creative artist.

Whether it's the epic air guitar routines or the nostalgic/culturally keyed-in musical journey through rock music, or the sage truisms shelled out in the most hilarious ways; these elements have been a great access point for positive and empowering messages via the world of professional air guitar. And I can get with that!

More importantly, it has been a pleasure to collaborate with the overwhelmingly talented Northwestern students actors. Their combination of originality, humor, emotional depth, and energetic performances has made every day of this process a joyride. I am thrilled to be part of a production that promises to entertain, inspire, and connect with audiences in such a meaningful way. Rock. On.

Ericka Ratcliff - Director

CAST

Gabe “GOLDENTHUNDER” Patridge.....	Avi Aharoni
Ed “SHREDDY EDDY” Leary.....	Isaiah Alexander
Mark “FACEBENDER” Lender.....	Nic Eastlund
Nina “THE NINA” O’Neal.....	Capri Gehred - O’Connell
Announcer/Sprite Exec/Hooded Figure.....	Sharon Miles
Astrid “CANNIBAL QUEEN” Anderson.....	Jordan Taylor
David “DVICIOUS” Cooper.....	Carlos Washington

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director.....	Erika Ratcliff
Scenic Designer.....	Chris Wych
Costume Designer.....	Lia Wallfish
Lighting Designer.....	Dylan Reyno
Sound Designer.....	Maya Reter
Air Guitar Consultant.....	Gina Czarkowski
Assistant Director.....	Graybill Partington
Stage Manager.....	Jayce Lewis
Production Manager.....	Valerie Tu

COMPANY BIOS

AVI AHARONI (Gabe “GOLDEN THUNDER” Patridge, he/him)

Avi Aharoni has been fortunate to work with companies such as: The Guthrie Theater, Park Square Theatre, Six Points Theater, Dark & Stormy Productions, Theater Latté Da, Playwrights’ Center, Pillsbury House Theatre, Theatre L’Homme Dieu, Transatlantic Love Affair, as well as Off-Road Shakespeare in Seattle, The Guild Theater in Tel Aviv, among many others. He has also had three separate productions of his solo show, “My Father’s Son: Searching for Identity” and is currently writing a follow-up piece.

ISAIAH ALEXANDER (Ed “SHREDDY EDDY” Leary, he/him)

Isaiah Alexander is a MFA acting student in his first year at Northwestern University. A Southern California Native, his previous theatrical

credits include Hamlet: A Collision (Northwestern), Nimrod (Theatre of NOTE), and Radioman (Dell Arte International).”

NIC EASTLUND (Mark “FACEBENDER” Lender, he/him)

Nic Eastlund has called Chicago home for the last decade and is currently pursuing his MFA at Northwestern University. Some of his favorite credits include “Hair”, “Altar Boyz”, “It Shoulda Been You”, “Hairspray”, and “Comedy of Tenors”. He received his BFA in Musical Theatre from Ball State University. Nic would like to thank his brilliant, gorgeous, and ever supportive wife, Emma. Much love! Insta:@Nic.Eastlund

CAPRI GEHRED-O’CONNELL (Nina “THE NINA” O’Neal, she/her)

Capri

COMPANY BIOS CONT.

Gehred-O'Connell (she/her) is a Chicago based actress currently pursuing her MFA in Acting at Northwestern University. Recent credits include Hamlet in Hamlet: a collision (Northwestern), Whittaker in Time is a Color and the Color is Blue (Avalanche Theater), Schmamantha in LOVE STORY! (Bramble Theatre Company) and Huldey U/S in The Moors (A Red Orchid Theatre).

JAYCE LEWIS (Stage Manager, he/they) Jayce Lewis is beyond excited to be returning to Wirtz for Airness! Previous Credits Include: The Tempest, Danceworks: Emergence, Everybody (Wirtz), Lyle the Crocodile (ImagineU), La Boheme (Cahn), and 5&Dime (AMTP). Selected Chicago Credits: House of the Exquisite Corpse III (Rough House Theatre), Junie B Jones (YPT Chicago), Same Sects, Rocky Horror Picture Party (Haven), Jungle Jim (CPA Theatricals), and Once Upon A Mattress (Theo Ubique). Love you, Maddison! www.JayceLewisSM.com

SHARON MILES (Announcer/Sprite Exec/Hooded Figure, she/her) Sharon Miles is an actor, writer, and director. Originally from Mississippi, Sharon moved to Chicago to pursue an MFA in Acting at Northwestern University. Theatre credits include: "Little Shop of Horrors" (Audrey 2), "9 to 5 the Musical" (Violet), "Pipeline" (Nya), "All the Way" (Fannie Lou Hamer), "Our Town" (Stage Manager), "Beauty and the Beast" (Mrs. Potts), and "Hairspray" (Motormouth). Sharon seeks to utilize theatre to influence character development, empower young artists, and community engagement.

GRAYBILL PARTINGTON (Assistant Director, she/her) Graybill is a director, producer, and educator entering her senior year at Northwestern, studying

theatre and psychology. She is the current Artistic Director of the student theatre board WAVE Productions and the Head Adventure Guide for Seesaw Theatre, making sensory-friendly, immersive theatre for disabled audiences. She also collaborates with Evanston schools as a theatre/creative drama instructor. Graybill is incredibly grateful to her parents, brother, and friends for supporting and encouraging her as an artist.

ERIKA RATCLIFF (Director, she/her) Ericka Ratcliff is a Baltimore native and serves as the Artistic Director of Congo Square Theatre Company. Additional directing credits include *the Chlorine Sky*, *Steppenwolf*; *White*, *Definition Theater*; *Welcome to Matteson* and *What To Send Up When It Goes Down*, Congo Square Theatre; *Blues For An Alabama Sky*, UIC; *The Wolves*, TAPS; and *Hit The Wall*, NIU. Ericka is also an actor with performance credits with Goodman, Alliance, Mixed Blood, Centerstage, Northlight, Chicago Shakespeare and Second City, among others. Thanks for coming to the show!

MAYA RETER (Sound Designer, she/her) Maya Reter is a sound artist and storyteller currently pursuing her M.A. in Sound Arts and Industries at Northwestern University. Most recently, her work could be heard in NU's production of "The Aliens," and before that in many student productions across campus. Outside of theatre, Maya spends much of her time working on audio fiction and documentary pieces, which often bring her to her favorite place: deep in the woods.

DYLAN REYNO (Lighting Designer, he/him) Dylan Reyno has been working as a lighting designer and technician in Chicago and the surrounding area for

COMPANY BIOS CONT.

the past decade. He is excited to be designing at Northwestern University again for the first time since graduating with a B.A. in Theater in 2018. He has previously worked with other wonderful theater groups from around Chicago including Theatre Above the Law, Collaboraction, Mudlark Theatre, Chicago Dramatists, and Silk Road Rising

JORDAN TAYLOR (Astrid “CANNIBAL QUEEN” Anderson, she/her) Jordan Taylor is a Chicago based actress/dancer and currently an MFA Acting student at Northwestern University. Born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia, she has worked with the Alliance Theatre, The Tiny Theater Company, National Black Theatre, and more. She aims to collaborate with artists who yearn to make meaningful and impactful work, and to give life and power to stories by and for people of color, women, and other oppressed communities.

LIA WALLFISH (Costume Designer, she/her) Lia Wallfish (She/Her/Hers) is a Chicago-based Jewish-Israeli costume designer and visual artist. She has an MFA in Theater from Northwestern University and a B.A. in Theater from the University of California Los Angeles. Her Northwestern credits include *Dracula* (costume designer), *Working* (costume designer), *Indecent* (costume designer), *The Revolutionists* (costume designer), and *Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile* (costume designer). Outside Northwestern credits include *Julius Caesar* (The Independent Shakespeare Company) and *Twelfth Night* (The Independent Shakespeare Company).

CARLOS WASHINGTON (David “D VICIOUS” Cooper, he/him) Carlos Washington is a Chicago-based theatre maker from Toledo, Ohio and a

Northwestern MFA Actor. He’s inspired daily by the power of devised theatre in uplifting stories of/for people searching for meaning in an ever changing world. Theatrical Credits Include: ‘All Quiet on the Western Front’ (Westus), ‘The Flick’ (Avery), ‘20k Leagues Under the Sea’ (Playwright and Prof Aronnax), ‘Hamlet’ (Asst. Dir. and Claudius), ‘Blood At The Root’ (Dir.), ‘Mud’ (Henry).

CHRIS WYCH (Scenic Designer, he/him) Chris brings creativity and passion to each production. Alongside his scenic design work, he has been the Wirtz Center’s Properties Supervisor for the past 16 years. When he isn’t managing the chaos of props, he enjoys working with Magical Starlight Theatre in Naperville, in various roles he has cherished since 1998. His favorite productions include “The Wizard of Oz” (2020, MST), “The Secret Garden” (2010, Wirtz), and any show where he gets to create and build a fun, gadgety prop.

OPENING AUGUST 2ND!



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

We thank our donors who make it possible to develop and sustain the quality of productions at Northwestern University. The following individuals and institutions have made gifts to one or more of the following areas: the Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts, American Music Theatre Project and the Music Theatre Funds. All gifts were made between September 1, 2022 and August 31, 2023.

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