

James River THEATRE
COMPANY™

At Firehouse 4 Venue

Love From A Stranger

BY AGATHA CHRISTIE & FRANK VOSPER

DIRECTED BY ALEX MITCHELL



Agatha Christie's Love From a Stranger

Written by
Agatha Christie & Frank Vosper

Starring

Thomas Bell Melanie Ernst
Evelyn McLane Maggie Quick Caleb Towns
Melissa Knapp James McLane

Director

Alex Mitchell

Stage Manager

Jude Rodriguez

Producer

Christina Crouch

Prop Master

Christina Crouch

Running Crew

Taryn England

Costume Designer

Alex Mitchell

Substitute Stage Manager

Jonathan Brennan

This show was made possible by

JolAnn Davis
1938 - 2021



My grandma always encouraged me to grow and to enjoy life, whether that was when I was little taking dance classes, travelling all over the world as a teen, or most recently, founding my own theatre company. She and Papa were always excited about my next adventure and I know they'd be so proud of what we've accomplished over the past year. Thanks to my their forethought and generosity, we have been able to book exciting venues, afford more costumes and quality set pieces, and hire new talent. We go forward into a new season with their memory in our hearts.

I like to think both of them are so pleased we're performing in an old firehouse.

-Christina Crouch, Producer of LFAS & Co-Founder of James River Theatre

Note From the Director

The True-Crime genre has exploded in popularity in recent years. Shows like *Making of a Murderer* and *Amanda Knox* and podcasts like *My Favorite Murder* are all the rage-- with millions of people engaging with these harrowing stories. There seems to be a fascination with the depths of human depravity-- of how and why normal people could commit such heinous acts. And all this immersion darkness cannot help but lead the viewer to the question: could it happen to me? *Love From A Stranger* taps into that human yearning to challenge the ordinary and explores the tension behind these deadly scenarios. Though based on an Agatha Christie story, *Philomel Cottage*, the play deviates from Christie's traditional whodunnit fare. Rather than making the audience question who the culprit will be, the play instead provides a suspect



up front and forces the audience to instead ask when and how the murder will take place. This change in formula allows for a heightened experience of tension and excitement akin to that found in an Alfred Hitchcock film such as *Rear Window*.

It is my hope that audiences walk away from our production having been, yes, served a night of fun and excitement, but also inspired to listen to their gut instincts, and lean on the trust of those they love.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex Mitchell".

Alex Mitchell

Director

James River Theatre Company, LLC





**James Enoch,
ASSOCIATE BROKER**

ABR®, e-PRO, AHWD
(434) 851-7061
James@JamesPEnoch.com



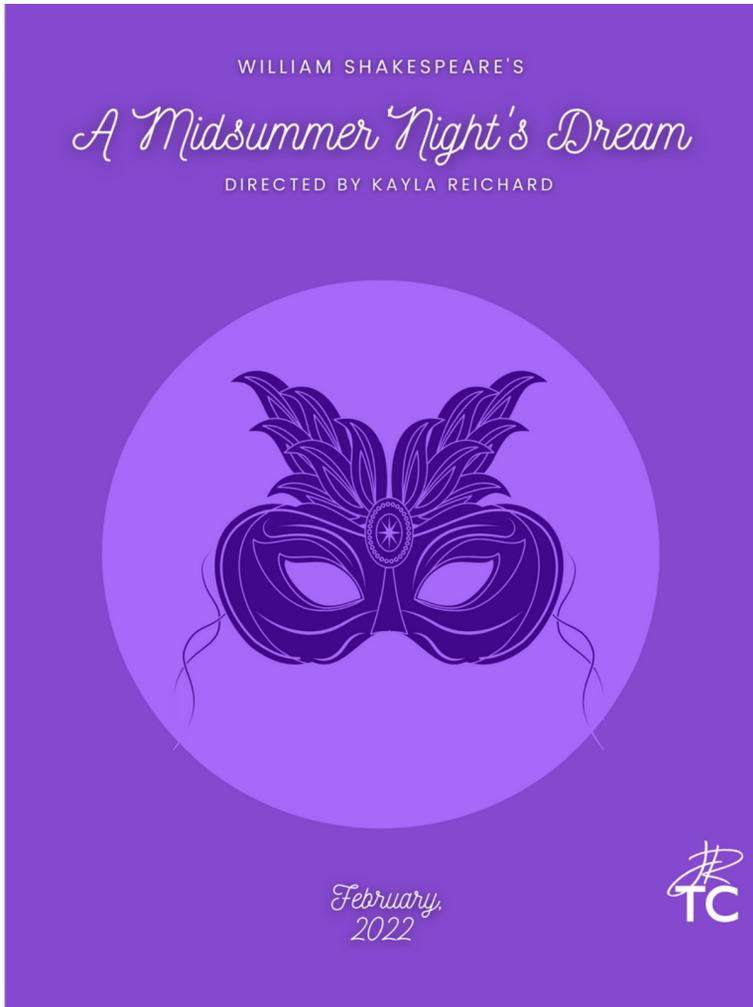
*Making your Real
Estate Dreams a
Reality!*



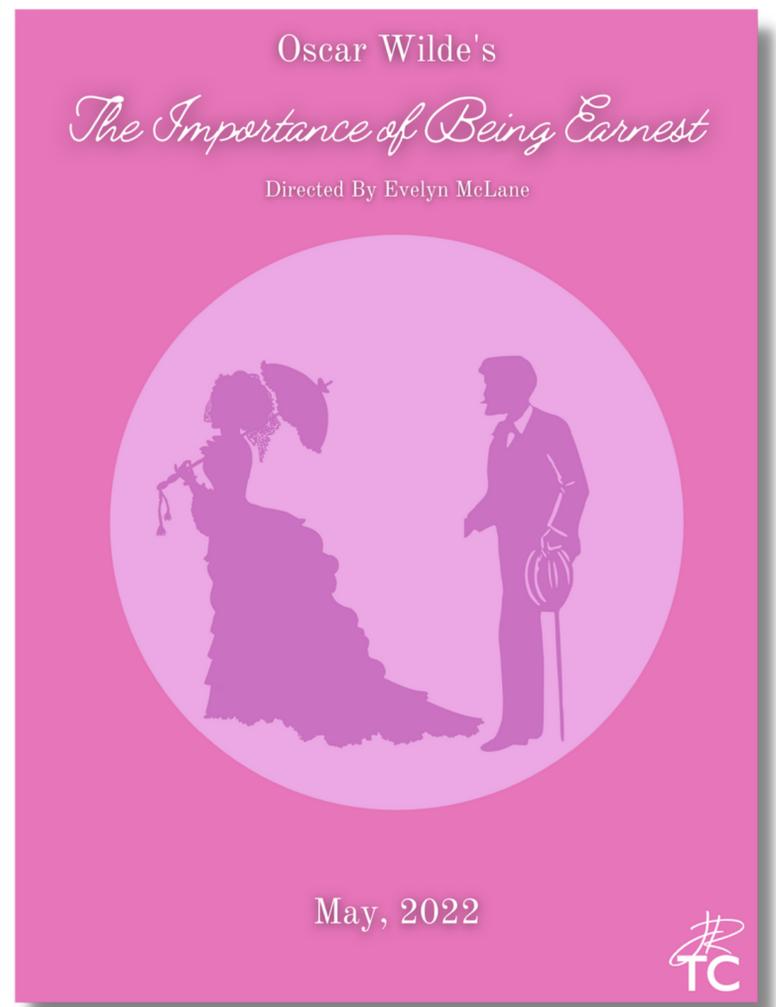
**BERKSHIRE
HATHAWAY**
HomeServices

Dawson Ford Garbee
& Co., REALTORS®

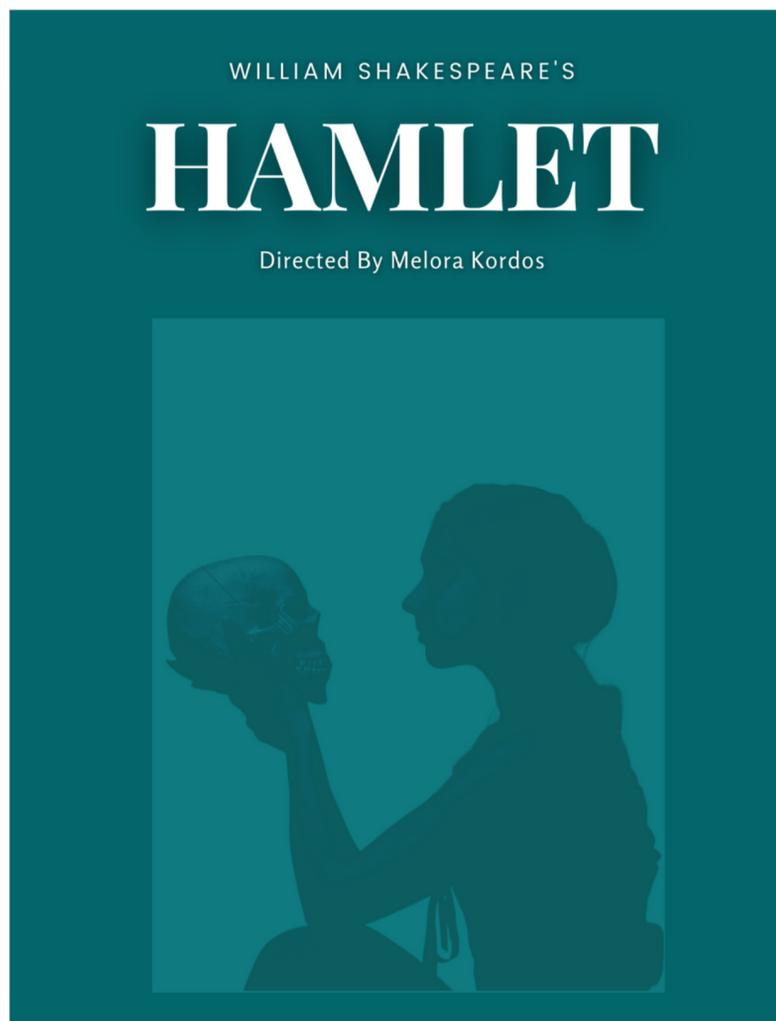
2021-2022 Season Lineup



A Midsummer Night's Dream
February 11-27
LA VIDA Coffee + Market



The Importance of Being Earnest
May 13 - 29
Longacre Inn



Hamlet
July 15 - 31
Humankind



LAW OFFICES
JESTER & JESTER

1022 COURT STREET
COURT STREET AT ELEVENTH
LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA 24504

**Serving Lynchburg &
Surrounding Counties
since 1908**

Royston Jester, IV

Family owned and operated since 1908, Jester & Jester has been passed down from father to son bringing excellent service and high quality lawyering to the community of Lynchburg City and the surrounding areas. With customer friendly service, attention to detail and thorough in-house title work, Jester & Jester assures your real estate experience will be a pleasant one!

CAST

Bruce Lovell.....Thomas Bell

Cecily Harrington.....Melanie Ernst

Nigel Lawrence/Dr. Gribble.....Caleb Towns

Mavis Wilson.....Maggie Quick

Louise Garrard.....Evelyn McLane

Hodgson.....James McLane

Ethel.....Melissa Knapp

This production of *Love From a Stranger* is presented as originally created. The script of *Love From a Stranger*, adapted by Agatha Christie and Frank Vosper, contains racial stereotypes and outdated cultural depictions of marginalized people groups. The views and opinions expressed by characters in this play do not reflect the opinions of James River Theatre Company, LLC, the actors, director, management team, or crew of this production, or any affiliate companies with which the program participants are affiliated.

**THE VIDEOTAPING OR MAKING OF ELECTRONIC OR OTHER AUDIO AND/OR VISUAL RECORDINGS OF THIS PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTING RECORDINGS OR STREAMS IN ANY MEDIUM, INCLUDING THE INTERNET, IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED, A VIOLATION OF THE AUTHOR(S)'S RIGHTS AND ACTIONABLE UNDER UNITED STATES COPYRIGHT LAW. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT:
<https://concordtheatricals.com/resources/protecting-artists>**

CDC protocols regarding COVID-19 have been followed in the rehearsal and performance of this production. All actors had their temperatures taken upon their arrival at the venue before the start of this performance.

Production Team

Director.....Alex Mitchell

Producer.....Christina Crouch

Stage Manager.....Jude Rodriguez

Substitue Stage Manager.....Jonathan Brennan

Props Master.....Christina Crouch

Lighting Design.....Maggie Quick

Running Crew.....Taryn England

Production Designer.....Alex Mitchell

Fight Choreographer/Accent Coach.....Caleb Towns

Setting

Act 1.....Cecily and Mavis's flat in Bayswater

Act 2.....The Cottage, six weeks later

Intermission

Act 3.....The Cottage, September

Act 4.....The Cottage, a fortnight later

There will be fifteen minute intermission between Acts 2 & 3

'Love from a Stranger'
© 1936 Agatha Christie Limited
All rights reserved.

'AGATHA CHRISTIE' and the Agatha Christie Signature Mark are
trademarks of Agatha Christie Ltd. All rights reserved.
The rights to this play are controlled by Agatha Christie Ltd.

For further information about this play, others by Agatha Christie and about other stage adaptations of her stories, please visit:
<http://www.agathachristie.com>

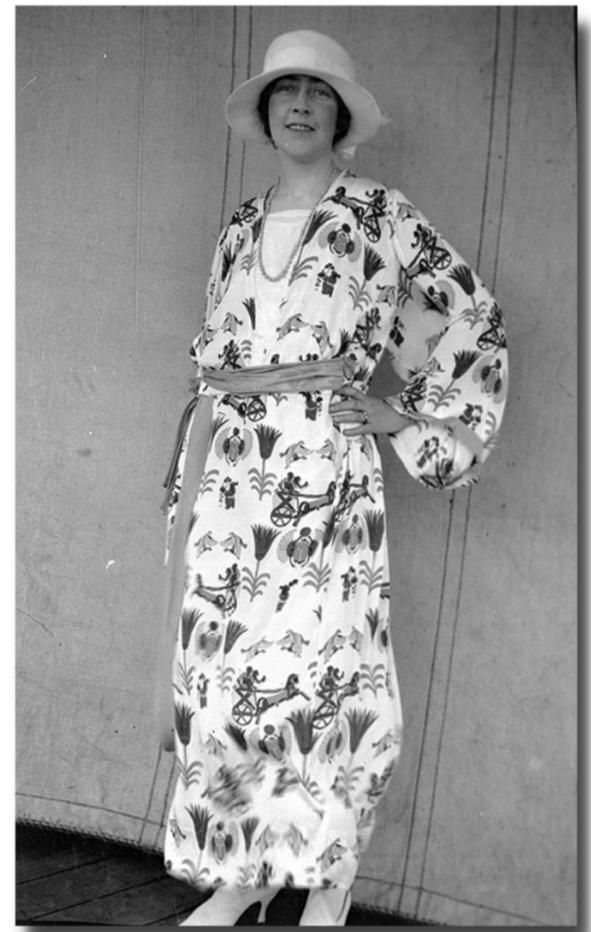
About Agatha Christie

Agatha Mary Clarissa Miller was born on 15 September 1890 in Torquay, Devon, South West England. Agatha loved to read English poetry and began writing poems when she was a child.

In 1912 Agatha met Archie Christie, a qualified aviator who had applied to join the Royal Flying Corps, they soon married. It was war time and Agatha became a nurse at the Red Cross Hospital in Torquay. When the Hospital opened a dispensary, she accepted an offer to work there and completed the examination of the Society of Apothecaries. Thus began her life long interest in the use of poisons. From this came her first novel *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*. The method of death in this novel is poison and was so well described that Agatha received an unprecedented honour for a writer of fiction - a review in the *Pharmaceutical Journal*.

During the First World War there were Belgian refugees in most parts of the English countryside, Torquay being no exception.

Although he was not based on any particular person, Agatha thought that a Belgian refugee, a former great Belgian policeman, would make an excellent detective for *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*. Hercule Poirot was born.



Agatha Christie in 1922 © The Christie Archive Trust

1919 was a momentous year for Agatha. With the end of the war, Archie had found a job in the City and they had just enough to rent a flat in London and later that year on the 5th August, Agatha gave birth to their daughter, Rosalind. Also that year the publisher, John Lane, who had liked *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* contracted Agatha to produce five more books. She went on to be one of the first authors Penguin ever published, with fantastic results.

Following the war Agatha continued to write and to travel with Archie, though sadly they were later to divorce and Agatha would remarry, Max Mallowan, the world famous archaeologist - a marriage that would last forty-six years.

By 1930, having written several novels and short stories, Agatha created a new character to act as sleuth. Miss Jane Marple was an amalgam of several old ladies Agatha used to meet in villages she visited as a kid. When she created Miss Marple, Agatha did not expect her to become Poirot's rival, but with *The Murder at the Vicarage*, Miss Marple's first full-length outing, it appeared she had produced another popular and enduring character.

One of Agatha's lifelong ambitions had been to travel on the Orient Express; her first journey took place in 1928. The atmosphere of the Middle East was not lost on Agatha, as can be recognised in books such as *Murder on the Orient Express*, *Death on the Nile*, *Murder in Mesopotamia*, *Appointment With Death* and *They Came to Baghdad* as well as many short stories.

After a hugely successful career and a very happy life Agatha died peacefully on 12 January 1976.

Agatha Christie Limited (ACL) has been managing the literary and media rights to Agatha Christie's works around the world since 1955, working with the best talents in film, television, publishing, stage and on digital platforms to ensure that Christie's work continues to reach new audiences in innovative ways and to the highest standard. The company is managed by Christie's great grandson James Prichard.

LEXIE & LEE

a curated boutique

Clothing ~ Vintage ~ Artisanal Goods



1220 MAIN ST.
LYNCHBURG, VA



WWW.LEXIEANDLEE.COM

Who's Who



Thomas Bell

Thomas is over the moon to be back on the River! A native of North Texas, and BFA Theatre graduate of VCU, Thomas has appeared in various productions in the area, from *The Bluest Water* with Endstation, to *Murder on the Orient Express* with Wolfbane, to *Much Ado About Nothing* with James River. An avid gamer, an average runner, and an amateur jeans model (he wears jeans on occasion), Thomas is thankful for his supportive family and friends, and to James River for the opportunity to play a blonde for the first time!



Melanie Ernst

Melanie is a native of Tampa, Florida and enjoys theatre from all angles! Her previous theatre experience includes being onstage, backstage, in the booth, and behind the page. When not performing or calling cues from the booth, Melanie is probably sitting on her couch in her living room writing a new play. Some of Melanie's previous work includes performing as Hattie in a new work she helped write, called *Decipher: An Unpenned Story of the Civil War*, Assistant Stage Managing the musical *Parade*, and directing and producing her own play, *Profile*. She is thrilled to perform in her first show with JRTC and wants to thank those who have believed in her and give all glory to her Savior.



Caleb Towns

Caleb Towns is a Lynchburg actor who has performed in many local productions such as Claudius in *Hamlet*, Puck in *A Midsummer Nights Dream* for Rogue Productions and Leonato in James River Theater Company's *Much Ado About Nothing*. When not performing he loves spending as much time as possible with his family and friends.

Who's Who



Maggie Quick

Maggie Quick is a professional actress in Central Virginia with credits in Roanoke and Richmond. She recently starred in Quill Theatre's *Pride & Prejudice* as Jane Bennet, James River Theatre's *Much Ado* as Beatrice and *The Seagull* as Nina, Alluvion Stage Company's *Fiddler on the Roof*, and Rogue Production's *Romeo & Juliet* as Juliet. When not on stage she's watching true crime documentaries with her husband and two doodle puppies.



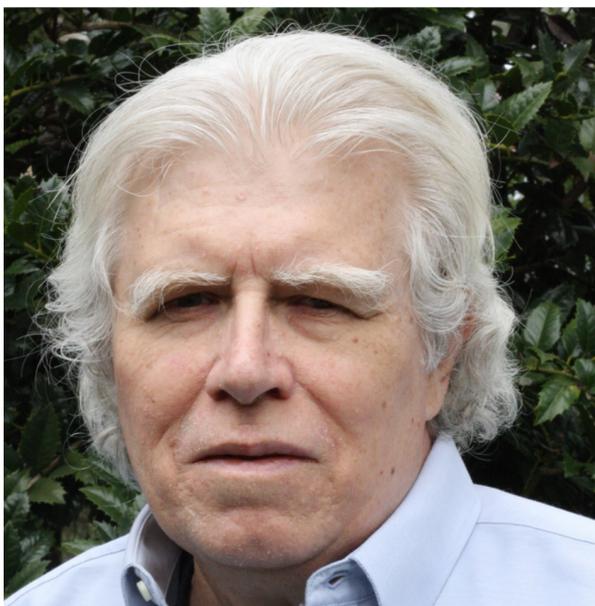
Evelyn McLane

Evelyn McLane has been performing, writing, storytelling, and directing since she could walk, talk, and imagine. Acting credits include *The Imaginary Invalid*, *Love Letters*, *Blithe Spirit*, and *Last of the Red Hot Lovers*. She directed productions like *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern are Dead*, *Plaza Suite*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, and soon with James River, *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Evelyn is a professional storyteller, performing and teaching across the country, as well as co-producing the 10-year run of a regional storytelling festival in Texas. She is also thrilled to see pieces of her collection of vintage hats and jewelry back in circulation.



Melissa Knapp

Melissa Knapp is a senior at Liberty University, studying to receive a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting, and a minor in Vocal Performance. She is excited to be making her professional debut onstage with James River Theatre. When not onstage or in class, Melissa is most likely off writing poetry somewhere, or at the gym rock climbing.



James McLane

James has been performing in theatres around the country for over 50 years. This is his first production with James River Theatre Company. His most recent roles have been Marley in *A Christmas Carol* in Denver, Colorado, Clown 1 in *The 39 Steps* and Psuedolus in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, both in Tyler, Texas. James would like to dedicate his performance to his mother, Betty, who will turn 92 during the run of this show.



916 Main Street
Suite 400
Lynchburg, Virginia 24504
(434) 846-1300 Phone
(434) 846-7670 Fax

Caskie Giles
Mortgage Broker

Community Oriented

Blue Ridge Mortgage is a locally owned and operated residential mortgage company. Since June of 1998, we have been dedicated to helping members of our community acquire home mortgages.

Competitive

We specialize in purchase loans, rate and term refinance, and debt consolidation.

Personalized Service

Please contact us to discuss your situation with one of our Personal Loan Officers.



Who's Who



Alex Mitchell

Alex Mitchell is a director, actor, teacher, and scholar in the Central Virginia area. She holds a BA in English from Grove City College and an MA in Theatre Arts from Villanova University. Alex was previously seen onstage as Hero in James River's production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, and her notable directing credits include *The Seagull*, *Other Desert Cities*, *The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley*, and *Red* (a selection). She strives to create work that is intellectually grounded and culturally engaged by delving into what is true, beautiful, and human. Alex would like to thank James River for this opportunity and her family and friends for their support.



Jude Rodriguez

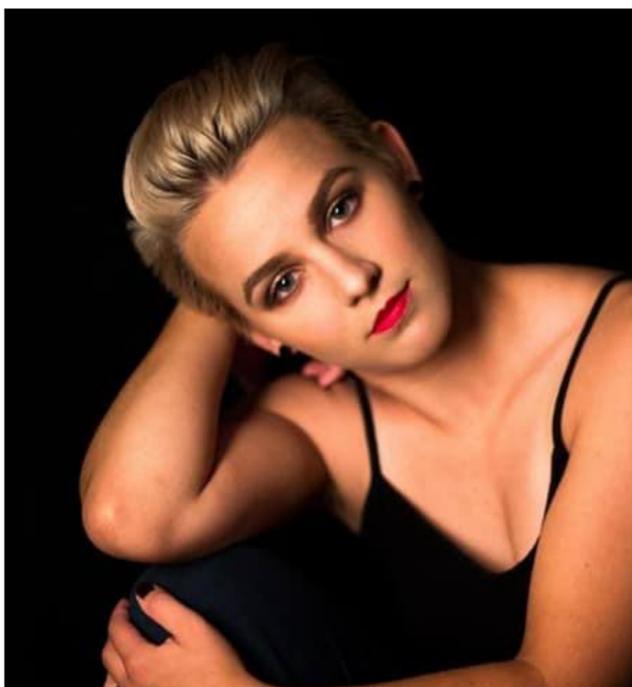
Jude is a freelance stage manager and theatre technician. He is originally from Sterling, Virginia, and graduated from JMU with a BA in Architectural Design. After college, he moved to the DC area and worked extensively as a technician and stage manager. Jude relocated to Lynchburg in 2019, and when he's not backstage, he works as an interior design assistant and spends as much time as possible with his dog and partner. Credits include: Signature Theatre: *Billy Elliot*, *Crazy for You*, *The Scottsboro Boys*, *A Little Night Music*, and others; Studio Theatre: *Translations*, *If I Forget*, *Kings*, *Admissions*; Synetic Theatre: *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Peter Pan*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*; Roundhouse Theatre: *Caroline, Or Change*; The Heifetz International Music Institute in Staunton, VA.

Who's Who



Christina Crouch

Besides being Co-Founder and Treasurer of James River Theatre Company, Christina has served in almost all positions in theatre crew, including running crew, costumer, props master, and stage manager, and enjoys using her attention to detail and analytical thinking to propel James River to the next level. She started in community theatre with *Julius Caesar* and continued with *Romeo & Juliet* and Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap* before her professional debut with JRTC as Stage Manager and Costumer for *Much Ado About Nothing*. Most recently, Christina was Assistant Stage Manager for Alluvion Stage Company's production of *Fiddler on the Roof*.



Taryn England

Originally from East Brunswick, New Jersey, Taryn has been both an actor and crew member for several shows in the area over the years ranging from Shakespeare to musicals. In her spare time, she enjoys playing piano and spontaneous adventure! She is so excited to make her debut with James River Theatre Company.

Who's Who



Jonathan Brennan

Jonathan Brennan is a senior Interdisciplinary Studies: Religion & Theatre Arts major at Liberty University, originally from Scott Depot, West Virginia. He recently served as stage manager James River Theatre's *The Seagull* and for Liberty University's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. His original work *Mary & Martha* was performed in the fall as part of the university's student-directed play festival. After graduation, he plans to pursue a master's degree in Christian Counseling and looks forward to seeing how theatre continues to play a role in the rest of his life.

Special Thanks

To Our Individual Donors

Terri Proffitt, Consensus Real Estate,
Laura Webb, John Stewart Walker
De'Lexis Brown, BHHS Dawson Ford Garbee,
Daniele Mason, Blickenstaff & Company,
Erin McWane, Blickenstaff & Company,
Victoria Bartholomew, Flint Property Group
& Billy Flint, Flint Property Group

Special Thanks To Our Venues & Partners

Firehouse 4 Venue
Legacy at Linden Park Apartments
Alluvion Stage Company's Props Department
Lexi & Lee

**Please locate your nearest emergency exit.
Please turn off all cell phones and
electronic devices during the performance.**

Thank you for your cooperation!

THANK YOU 2021 SPONSORS



LAW OFFICES
JESTER & JESTER

1022 COURT STREET
COURT STREET AT ELEVENTH
LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA 24504



**BERKSHIRE
HATHAWAY**
HomeServices

Dawson Ford Garbee
& Co., REALTORS®

