

# PLAYBILL

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2024 SEASON



A FUNNY THING  
HAPPENED

ON THE WAY  
TO THE



AUDITION



**Congratulations to the Cast & Crew  
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Way to The Audition"**



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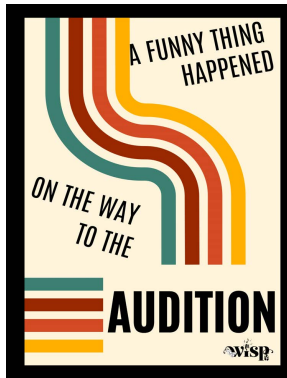
**WAGNER IOVANNA STUDIO PERFORMANCES  
PROUDLY PRESENTS**

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**A FUNNY THING HAPPENED  
ON THE WAY TO THE AUDITION**



**Director: Martin Marchitto  
Producer: Karen Iovanna**

Vocal Director:  
Robert Iovanna

Musical Director:  
James Teti

Sound Designer:  
Robert Iovanna

Property Manager:  
Heidi Manley

August 9-11, 2024  
The Old Stone Church  
East Haven, Connecticut  
*WISP is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization*

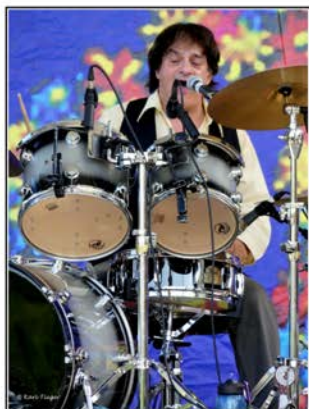
## DEDICATION

### **Michael Streeto**

WISP Performances dedicates "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to The Audition" to the memory of our dear friend Michael Streeto, "An East Haven Legend". Mike is well known throughout the East Haven Community for his good works and by his fans as our own "Ringo Star". He even brought the Hofner's (his Beatles Tribute Band) to the Old Stone Church for a fundraising performance to benefit the Church Steeple Fund.

Some of you may remember him as the drummer for The Clear Lake Band, (Buddy Holly Tribute) and Hey Tonight, (CCR Tribute) as well as The Sands (Top 40/show group) and Ish & O. Mike also was in an Elvis Tribute Show with Louie D, and played across the country as Ringo with a number of Big Beatles Tribute shows. He wrote for a couple of Beatles Fan magazines and had his own local TV access show.

He was an ardent supporter of the arts and never missed one of our productions. Mike was always there to cheer us on and help out. He was not only an amazing musician but a wonderful friend and father. Mike has been a strong voice in advocating the arts. He has touched so many lives through his kindness and generosity of spirit. Michael, you are the best and will be greatly missed! We love you!



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# ABOUT OUR SHOW

Award-winning director Martin Marchitto infuses his unique comedic flair into a madcap musical cabaret, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Audition*.

Join us for an unforgettable show where talented singers and opera professionals bring to life the trials and triumphs of the audition process. Through a vibrant selection of songs from the worlds of opera, operetta, and musical theatre, the performers recount their experiences of audition mishaps, chaos, and unexpected triumphs.

From the nerve-wracking first auditions to the exhilarating callbacks, you're invited on a journey behind the curtain to witness the often unseen, yet always entertaining, side of casting. Each song and story is a testament to the resilience, humor, and passion of performers striving to achieve their dreams.

Adding to the immersive experience, the action unfolds not just on stage but amongst the audience as well. This unique setup ensures that every attendee is a part of the show, blurring the lines between spectator and performer.

Prepare for laughter, music, and theatrical magic as Martin Marchitto's directorial genius and the exceptional talent of our cast create an insider's view of the audition process that is both heartfelt and hilariously entertaining.

**Break A Leg to the Cast of** 🎵  
**“A Funny Thing Happened on The Way to The Audition”**



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aka The Old Stone Church

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# THE CAST



ALLISON BRADSHAW



MICHELE CLAY



MICHAEL COCCHI



GINA CONSIGLIO



BRAYDEN ESLER



RUBY IOVANNA



BRITTANY KAMMERER



LEXI KINNIBURGH



ART LONGLEY



AMANDA MAGUIRE



HEIDI MANLEY



MARISSA SALAZAR NASSAR

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# THE CAST



VICTORIA REID



ARIANA SIMO



ERICH SIMO



KATE SIMPSON



JOHN STEEVES



ALAN WAGNER



derek simpson.....goldsmith

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# ACT ONE

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

Invocation	Michael Cocchi, Heidi Manley
Much More	Ariana Simo
Shy	Lexi Kinniburgh
Audition Sequence	Brittany Kammerer
Art Is Calling	Victoria Reid
Falling In Love With Love	Brayden Esler
Alto's Lament	Allison Bradshaw
Whistle A Happy Tune	Ruby Iovanna, Kate Simpson
I Have Confidence	Kate Simpson
Who's Your Daddy	Art Longley
What Do You Do With Your Arms	Amanda Maguire
Gesticulate	Michael Cocchi
My New Philosophy	Amanda Maguire
Whatever Happened To My Part (Diva's Lament)	Marissa Salazar Nassar
Santa Lucia	Erich Simo
Funiculi Funicula	Erich Simo
When You're Good to Mama	Michele Clay
Broadway Here I Come	Allison Bradshaw, Michele Clay, Brayden Esler, Brittany Kammerer, Lexi Kinniburgh, Amanda Maguire, Marissa Salazar Nasar, Ariana Simo, Kate Simpson



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# ACT TWO

## MUSICAL NUMBERS:

Impossible Dream	Michael Cocchi
One Kiss	Victoria Reid
I Hate Men	Brittany Kammerer
Vanilla Ice Cream	Marissa Salazar Nassar
If I Were A Rich Man	Alan Wagner
Glitter and Be Gay	Ariana Simo
O Sole Mio	Gina Consiglio, Erich Simo
Chi' Bel Sogno	Gina Consiglio
And This Is My Beloved	Allison Bradshaw, Brayden Esler
Sull' Aria	Marissa Salazar Nassar, Victoria Reid
Make Them Hear You	Michele Clay
Champagne	Full Cast



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# WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

**ALLISON BRADSHAW** is delighted to be performing with WISP once again! She was most recently seen in the ensemble of *Sweeney Todd* and *Bright Star* at the University of Texas at Arlington, and just finished Musik Theater Bavaria, a month-long musical theater intensive in Germany. Some of her favorite roles include Elle Woods, (*Legally Blonde*), Eponine (*Les Miserable*) and Velma Kelly, (*Chicago*). Much love to Karen and Rob for everything they do!

**MICHELE CLAY** is a Connecticut native from Middletown. She has performed in numerous theatrical productions. Some of her favorite roles include The Lady in Green (*For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enough*), Deloris Van Cartier (*Sister Act*), and Miss Sophia (*The Color Purple*) for which she received rave reviews from Broadway World Connecticut describing her portrayal as "bold, brash and brilliant as she belts and bellows each of her signature songs... from a comedic standpoint she was the highlight of the evening prompting raucous laughter from

the audience." Michele also played the supporting role of Jamila in the sitcom pilot *Long Distance*. She has performed in comedy shows and was a member of the R&B/Neo-Soul Band *Beans & Greens*. Michele is the Director of the Performance Arts Ministry at Cross Street A.M.E. Zion Church. Last but not least, she plays the leading role of a lifetime as mother to her 20 year-old handsome son, Terrence Lamont Jackson, Jr., who plays Division II College Football.

**MICHAEL COCCHI** is excited to make his WISP debut. Mike is a board member of the New Haven Oratorio Society and has emceed their annual cabaret fundraiser since 2014. He previously performed with Wallingford Community Theatre in their productions of *1776* (Rutledge) and *Matilda* (Rudolpho). Mike is the Director of Content Rights Management at ESPN and is the recipient of a *Sports Emmy* and *Peabody Award* as part of the Sports Century Project. He was also awarded a patent for advances in footage reporting technology in 2017. Mike thanks WISP for this opportunity and his wife Zorayda for every day of the last 29 years.

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# WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

**GINA CONSIGLIO** is so grateful to be part of the WISP family. She began her operatic singing endeavors at the historic renowned Amato Opera in NYC. Some of her credits include appearances with Hartt Opera, DiCapo Opera, Mannes Opera as well as performances abroad in Orvieto, Italy. With an affinity for the Neapolitan repertoire, she was also a frequent guest soloist at various Italian festivals in her native *Little Italy* of New Haven. Her biggest thanks to husband Erich and daughter Ariana with whom she gets to share life and music with every day.

**BRAYDEN ESLER** is a rising sophomore at Trinity College pursuing a major in theater & dance and psychology. Some favorite roles include Mark Cohen (*Rent*), Marius (*Les Misérables*) and Ren McCormack (*Footloose*). He is very excited to perform with this incredible cast. He is also very thankful to Rob and Karen for this special opportunity. Enjoy the show!

**RUBY IOVANNA** is a fifth-grader at Baldwin Middle School in Guilford. She made her stage

debut at the age of three in *Scrooged, The Musical*. Past shows include *Legally Blonde We The People, Shrek, Spongebob The Musical, Annie, and Dear Edwina, Jr.* She is currently playing the role of Chloe in *Stand Up and Speak Out, The Musical* at The Katherine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center. Ruby has performed in many WISP cabarets and has been a soloist at the East Haven Tree Lighting and the Branford Festival. Special thanks to her family and friends for their support, and especially to Marty and Jim for this amazing opportunity and Nouveaux Talent Management.

**BRITTANY KAMMERER** has been performing for many years in musical theater. She has appeared in shows such as *Little Shop of Horrors, Les Miserables, Chicago, West Side Story, Dear Evan Hansen, Mamma Mia,* and many more. She currently holds her master's degree from Quinnipiac University (Go Bobcats!!) and is a 3rd grade teacher. She would like to thank her family and friends for their never-ending support as well as Karen and Rob.

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# WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

**LEXI KINNIBURGH** is a junior at Morgan High School in Clinton, CT. She is very excited for her first WISP production! She has been performing in musical theatre for the past ten years and has studied dance for 13 years. Some of her favorite roles include Regina George (*Mean Girls*), Mary Poppins (*Mary Poppins*). Lexi would like to major in musical theatre and pursue a career in the performing arts.

**ART LONGLEY** has been entertaining through song, dance, and theater for over 30 years. His true passion is making people forget the outside world for a while and giving them a smile to take with them.! He is forever grateful for the gifts he has been given and plans to give back as long and as much as possible. Thank you all for the love and support you have given me, especially to my amazing family and friends. Love you all.

**AMANDA MAGUIRE** is a New Jersey native transplanted to Connecticut in 2013. She was a featured performer in her high school with roles in *Anything Goes*, *The King & I*, *Mame*, and

*Sweet Charity*. Amanda pursued a drama studies program at SUNY Purchase College. Although she eventually switched her major to Psychology, she remained active in the arts, performing in several original student productions as well as in the plays *America* and *Beirut*. In 2023, Amanda was cast in a production of *The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. Since then she has been pursuing opportunities to share her talents. This is her first production with WISP and is excited for what comes next! Thank you to the cast for a wonderful production and for being such a joy to work with.

**HEIDI MANLEY** was born and raised in East Haven. She is a lifelong parishioner of the Old Stone Church. Brought up in the church choir, she is accustomed to singing those old familiar hymns. She's performed in church variety shows and is also the Office Manager for the Old Stone Church. Heidi is thrilled to be making her WISP debut!

**MARISSA SALAZAR NASSAR** Classically trained, she has studied with Karen and Rob intermittently for the past 12

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# WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

years. She studied Classical Voice at Boston Conservatory under the training of Monique Phinney Billingsley. She finished her undergraduate studies at Southern Connecticut State University and has pursued a career in Mental Health while continuing to keep music on her list of passions. "I am beyond grateful to be performing Opera again with these incredibly talented musicians. Thank you for putting the music back in my heart."

**VICTORIA REID** is delighted to be appearing in her first production with WISP! Victoria has performed with The Little Theatre of Manchester (CT), Troupers Light Opera (CT), the Connecticut Gilbert & Sullivan Society, the Pennsylvania Players, MIS G&S (MA), University of Pennsylvania G&S, and the International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival (UK). Past credits include Adele (*Die Fledermaus*), Mabel (*Pirates of Penzance*), Belinda (*Dido & Aeneas*), Iolanthe (*Iolanthe*), Fiamette (*Gondoliers*), Princess of Monte Carlo (*Grand Duke*), Kate (*Gilbert & Sullivan on Wall Street*). Victoria resides in Cheshire with

her two rescued tuxedo cats, Rose and Maestro. She works as a communications professor at Quinnipiac University.

**ARIANA SIMO** is thrilled to return to WISP's Summer Show! Most recently, Ariana was a soloist with the Hamden Symphony Orchestra for their *4th of July Pops Concert*. Notable roles include: *Rent* (Maureen and Mimi), *West Side Story* (Maria), and *Les Miserables* (Cosette). Ariana also performs with Daniel Hand High School's show choir VIBE. Other stage credits include: *Into the Woods*, *Shrek Jr*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Beauty & the Beast* and *Elf Jr*. She has worked under the direction of Wayne Cilento (Broadway's *A Chorus Line* and *Wicked*) as a soloist at NYC's Symphony Space in *Love Cures: A Benefit for the Abused Child's Soul*.

**ERICH SIMO** is thrilled to return to WISP, where he has been seen performing as Phantom in *Phantom Of The Opera* and Jean Valjean in *Les Miserables*. Other engagements have included appearances with New York City Opera, Opera Orchestra of New York, Bel Canto at Caramoor,

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# WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

Sarasota Opera and others. His biggest credit to date is his 16-year-old daughter, Ariana (also performing tonight), who keeps him on beat and on pitch.

**JOHN STEEVES** is thrilled to be making his WISP debut! He has been a member of the Old Stone Players, has performed his *Buddy Holly Show* throughout Connecticut, and has played guitar and sang with many shoreline based bands. John is a lifelong member of The Old Stone Church where he sings in the choir.

**ALAN WAGNER** began his theatre career in the fourth grade when he was cast as Tinker Bell in *Peter Pan*. Since then he has been acting and directing for over 50 years. His directing credits includes *South Pacific*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *You Can't Take It With You*, *Hello Dolly*, *Legally Blonde*, and many others. Alan also produced the first seven productions at Branford High School and directed the Spring musicals for 17 years at Walsh Intermediate School. He also directed *He's History* for Orange

Players' Acting Up Originals Festival. His many acting credits include *Hello Dolly*, *12 Angry Men*, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *Guys & Dolls*, *You Can't Take It With You*, and *You Haven't Changed A Bit* for the Orange Players Acting Up Originals Festival. Alan is a founding member of WISP. Off-stage Alan teaches audition preparation and monologue workshops. His students have been or are currently appearing in regional theater, on television, and Broadway.

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# THE CREATIVE TEAM



**MARTIN SCOTT MARCHITTO** (Director) is very excited and honored to be joining the WISP Performances Team in the role of Co-Artistic Director! He is looking forward to helping WISP grow by inspiring and helping to cultivate performers and audiences both locally and internationally.

Marty is a freelance theatre artist whose experience includes, but is not limited to designing, directing, and acting for theatre, opera, and musicals throughout the country. His experience includes serving as Players Director for Manhattan College Where he also taught courses for the Visual and Performing Arts Department and directed and designed productions of Present Laughter, Into the Woods, Rumors, Legally Blonde, The Musical, 12 Angry Jurors, Little Woman, Little Shop of Horrors, The Shadow Box, and The Dining Room.

Additional directing experience includes Peter Pan, Re-imagined for The New Paradigm Theatre; Noises Off, Moon Over Buffalo, Rumors, The Wayside Motor Inn for the Saybrook Stage Company; Guys and Dolls, Titanic the Musical, Cinderella for the Barrow Civic Theatre, Children of Eden, Little Mary Sunshine, Pippin, Once Upon a Mattress for the Academy Theatre; I Hate Hamlet, Anything Goes, Almost, Maine, Crazy for You! for Center Stage Theatre and more.

Martin's extensive design career includes serving as the resident set designer for the Blue Barn Theatre in Omaha, NE from 2008-2017 as well as a regular designer for The Ivoryton Playhouse, The Academy Theatre, The Playshop Theatre, Opera Omaha, Omaha Theatre Ballet, New Haven Ballet, Opera North, The Barrow Civic Theatre, The Illinois Repertory Theatre, and many more. Off-Broadway Martin designed the set for Mack the Knife, the Life and Times of Bobby Darin.

Favorite Roles include The Lecturer in Reefer Madness: The Musical, King Arthur in Camelot, Georg Von Trapp in The Sound of Music, Noah in Children of Eden, and Jesus in Godspell.

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# THE CREATIVE TEAM

Martin also participated in the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, where he served as respondent and selector for Regions I, II, and IV. As a respondent and selector, Martin has attended over one hundred college productions and provided feedback to the students regarding their work. This responsibility also includes selecting the best productions to move forward to the national competition.

Martin has also served on the faculty of Allegheny College, Iowa Western Community College, and Northwest Catholic High School. Martin holds a BA from Albertus Magnus College, an MFA from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and a certificate in drama from Yale School of Drama.



**KAREN WAGNER-IOVANNA** (Producer) a Boston Conservatory alumnus, is a professional singer/actress. Some of Karen's favorite professional theatrical credits include Eva Peron in *Evita*, Rowena in *Biloxi Blues*, Lady Thiang in *The King and I* and Leisl in *The Sound of Music*. Her passion for the theatre has inspired her to

develop and perform her one-woman show, *Karen Wagner's Broadway Cabaret Experience*. Karen has been teaching voice, acting and vocal directing for over 30 years, owning studios in both Connecticut and Boston. Many of her students have gone on to careers in the Music Industry, Broadway/National Tours and in Film/TV. She has adjudicated many local, national and international talent competitions as well as teaching vocal and acting seminars internationally. In addition, Karen teaches grades 5-8 music at the East Shoreline Catholic Academy in Branford where she also serves as the Director for the school musicals. Both Karen and her husband have established and run WISP Performances, a pre-professional, nonprofit theater education company where she serves as Associate Artistic Director in addition to writing original works. Karen also works for Nouveaux Talent Management in NYC and is always on the lookout for new talent.



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# THE CREATIVE TEAM



## **ROBERT IOVANNA** (Vocal Director and Sound Designer)

Classical tenor and vocal instructor Robert Iovanna started his singing career at the age of seven with his father, a professional pianist/singer. Rob went on to play drums and sing with the touring rock band, "American Dream". Tiring of the rock star life, Rob decided to continue his vocal studies with various classical instructors in NYC. While excelling in his performance career Rob also chose to pursue a career in law enforcement and has earned the title of *The Singing Cop*. He has performed with the USO and military events throughout the United States. Rob and his wife Karen perform Veteran's salutes and Broadway cabarets throughout the tri-state area. As co-founder of Wagner Iovanna Studio Productions, Rob specializes in teaching Bel Canto and advanced Appoggio vocal techniques. In addition, Rob lectures and teaches vocal seminars internationally. In his "free time" Rob enjoys doing voice overs for various radio and commercial spots. He can be heard singing on Broadway Sirius Radio and performs at various cabaret venues in NYC with stars from Broadway and the Metropolitan Opera. He is currently cast as Marco in the Off-Broadway show *Something Holy* which starts NYC Previews June of 2024. Many of Rob's past and present students can be seen on Broadway, American Idol, commercials, film & TV. His students are regularly accepted and receive scholarships to the top conservatories and theater programs both in the United States and internationally. In addition, Rob is Vice President of WISP Performances, a non-profit pre-professional theater company.



**JAMES "JIM" TETI** (Musical Director) - Jim Teti has been music directing shows and pit bands throughout Connecticut for decades. He's a household name with many regional theater groups. Jim can also be seen conducting choirs and playing the organ for church services. Jim is also an accompanist for the New Haven Ballet Company.

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# THE CREW

Producer: Karen Wagner-Iovanna  
Director: Martin Marchitto  
Vocal Director: Robert Iovanna  
Musical Director: James Teti  
Property Master: Heidi Manley  
Sound Designer: Robert Iovanna  
Spotlight Operator: Joseph Wells  
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Playbill: Dora Onorati  
Concession Crew: Margaret Kammerer, Sharon Berndt

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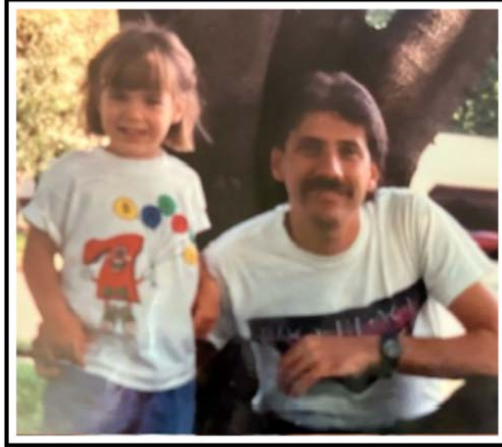
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All Our Love!  
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# CONGRATULATIONS

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