

*A socially distant affair*

# Christmas CanTeen

**Holiday Cabaret**

**at**



**THE BOWL**  
at Sugar Hill

Direction, Choreography,  
& Script Development by  
**David Rossetti**

Music Direction by  
**Ann-Carol Pence**



**DECEMBER 5-6**

**AURORATHEATRE.COM**

**#ATCANTEEN2020**

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THEATRE

*A socially distant affair*

# Christmas Canteen

## Holiday Cabaret at THE BOWL at Sugar Hill

Starring

MICHAEL CRUTE   LAUREN HILL   MAYA QUIÑONES   HADEN RIDER  
INDIA TYREE   JUAN CARLOS UNZUETA

Scenic Design & Technical Director   Lighting Design   Sound Design & Production Manager  
JON SANDMAIER   KEVIN FRAZIER   DANIEL POPE

Costume Design   Wig Stylist   Properties Design  
ALAN YEONG   RACHAEL OTTINGER-KARAS   JUSTIN ANDERSON

Stage Manager & Managing Director  
KATIE PELKEY

Musical Direction by  
ANN-CAROL PENCE

Direction, Choreography,  
& Script Development by  
DAVID ROSSETTI

## Thank You for your support of Aurora Theatre & Christmas Canteen A Holiday Cabaret at The Bowl at Sugar Hill!

Aurora Theatre, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation and receives support through grants and/or membership opportunities from the above organizations.

## PRODUCTION STAFF

Assistant Stage Manager..... RENITA JAMES  
 Assistant Technical Director..... ASHLEY HOGAN  
 Scenic Painter..... SARAH THOMSON  
 Spotlight Operator..... MOLLY HUNTINGTON & JON SANDMAIER

## BAND

Music Director..... ANN-CAROL PENCE  
 Percussion..... MARK BIERING  
 Bass..... DON KLAYMAN  
 Guitar..... BRIAN SMITH



## FROM THE PRODUCERS

**"Keep some room in your heart for the unimaginable." -Mary Oliver**

This has been a year of waiting. This pandemic has sent our county, our nation, our world into a state of waiting....perpetual waiting. As Americans, we have grown incredibly impatient. We want results now. We want healing now. We want salvation now. And while waiting, our minds wander. Minds can wander to the joyful memories of past holidays. Or our minds can drive us crazy with despair as we relive our greatest losses. One day, while I was particularly haunted, I stumbled upon poet Mary Oliver. And I used her poetry as prayer:

**"I believe in kindness. Also in mischief. Also in singing, especially when singing is not necessarily prescribed." -Mary Oliver**

That's what *Christmas Canteen* is: It is **MUSIC**. It is **JOY**. It is **HEALING**.

During each Yuletide season, Aurora Theatre has endeavored to create a unique event that everyone can rejoice in: where every person, of every age, of every faith, of every race, can join together in praise. Whether one person joins in person at The Bowl or not, our staff needed to join together to create a **LIVE, IN-PERSON** event. We are all here tonight. We are at each entrance, we are in the booth, we are backstage, we are in the cast, we are at the piano. You see, we have all been waiting...waiting to come back to work again, waiting to tell stories, waiting to christen a new building, waiting to publicly acknowledge our gratitude, waiting to share this dream with our community, waiting to celebrate the miracle of creation.

Many of us, as Believers, celebrate the miracle of creation every day. And in our loneliest times, our faith remains unshaken. Our year of waiting has brought unimaginable challenges. So as Mary Oliver suggests, if in some way your heart has room this season, if Aurora has brightened your day, lightened your load, given you a small sliver of hope, or provided a moment of peace, please help us carry the weight of this dream we began 25 years ago, which right now is just too heavy to carry alone.

**"Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" -Mary Oliver**

We made a promise to our city, one we intend to keep. Long after any election, we will still be here serving our community, not with optimistic promises that often go unanswered, but with a vibrant center for the arts that promises to welcome everyone. We don't mean a physical building. We mean a **CENTER** - the point from which all activities are focused.

But right now.... we are waiting: waiting for the opening of a new building, waiting to be able to go back to work, waiting for the grace of healing.

**"You can have the other words - chance, luck, coincidence, serendipity. I'll take grace. I don't know what it is exactly, but I'll take it." -Mary Oliver**

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Feliz Noche de Velas, Happy Kwanza! Whatever you celebrate, may we celebrate together.



**Anthony Rodriguez**  
Producing Artistic Director/Co-Founder



**Ann-Carol Pence**  
Associate Producer/Co-Founder



**Bella Rodriguez**  
Barx Office Manager



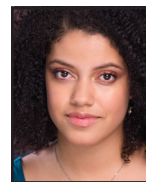
## CAST BIOGRAPHIES



**MICHAEL CRUTE** is thrilled to be back at the Aurora Theatre. He recently had his Aurora Theatre debut in Aurora's summer production of *Children of Eden* and was in *On Your Feet!* earlier this year. He is a graduate of University of Georgia, with his B.A in Advertising & a certificate in Music Business. He's honored to be a part of such a talented cast and would like to thank his family, friends and God for all of their love, support and continued encouragement.



**LAUREN HILL**, an Atlanta native, is thrilled to return to the Aurora! Recent credits: *Aida* (Amneris) and *Beauty and the Beast* (Belle) at the Atlanta Lyric, *Children of Eden* (Aphra/Yonah u/s) at the Aurora Theatre, *Legally Blonde* (Elle) at the Gainesville Theatre Alliance. Thanks to the entire *Christmas Canteen* production team for the opportunity to spread some much needed Christmas cheer! Love to her family, friends, and Thomas! To God be the glory! IG: @lauren\_ehill



**MAYA QUIÑONES** is happy to be back at Aurora after *On Your Feet!* earlier this year! She is an emerging singer/songwriter, currently working on her first Latin Fusion EP, *Waves*. Credits include: *Judas in Godspell*, *Nautica in Bring It On*, *Ensemble in The Wiz in Concert* (Independent Artists' Playhouse). A Dare Dream Dance alumna, she spent much of her youth studying various forms of dance; among her favorites are Afro-Cuban and Horton. She is currently a senior at Campbell High School and plans to study contemporary vocal performance in college. Mami & Papi, thank you for always supporting my dreams. IG: @mayaquinn



**HADEN RIDER** is thrilled to be back at the Aurora Theatre and is honored to share the stage with such an incredible cast and crew this holiday season! Haden is the Co-Founder/Director of Play On Players and a proud member of the Freddie G. Fellowship. Haden holds a BA theatre degree (Brenau University- GTA '14). Besides performing and directing, Haden is a self-employed vocal teacher/pedagog. Past Atlanta Credits: *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*- Quasimodo [Suzi Bass Award, Outstanding Lead Actor- Musical] (Aurora/Theatrical Outfit), *Aida*- Radames, *Jesus Christ Superstar*- Jesus (Atlanta Lyric), *Next To Normal*- Gabe, *Parade*- Tom Watson (WBTC)- Boundless thanks to the Aurora team and his family/friends for their love and support. [www.hadenrider.com](http://www.hadenrider.com)



**INDIA TYREE** holds a B.A in Theatre Arts from Old Dominion University. She furthered her education and training at New York Conservatory for Dramatic Arts Summer Intensive and is a graduate of Aurora's AppCo16. Acting credits: *Shakespeare Tavern's, Twelfth Night* (Olivia), *Rock of Ages* (Justice) and *Burn The Floor* (Lead Vocalist) on Norwegian Cruise Line, *Aida* (Aida) at Atlanta Lyric Theater and Serenbe Playhouse's *Titanic* (Kate M.), *The Little Mermaid* (Sebastian). Teaching experience: Aurora Theater Academy 2015-present, Warren Boys and Girls Club 2018-2019, Utopia School for The Arts 2018, Camp Broadway 2017, Shakespeare Tavern Playhouse Teaching Artist 2017.



**JUAN CARLOS UNZUETA** is so excited to be part of this year's *Christmas Canteen*. Other Atlanta credits: *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Rock Experience* (Alliance Theatre), *Miss Bennet Christmas at Pemberley* (Theatrical Outfit), *In The Heights, Pais de Bicicleta, The Three Billy Goats Gruff, Beat Bugs A Musical Adventure* (Aurora Theatre), *Little Shop of Horrors, Merrily We Roll Along in Concert*, and *Fun Home* (Actor's Express), *Freaky Friday* (Horizon Theatre) *Songs for a New World* (BUICentennial Productions). Education: BFA, BA, University of North Florida. Other: Director of Cross-Cultural Programs at Aurora Theatre, Represented by People Store. IG: @juanchao181

## PRODUCTION STAFF BIOGRAPHIES

**DAVID ROSSETTI (Director/Choreographer/Script Development)** is thrilled to join his friends at The Aurora Theatre for another Christmas Canteen! Previous artistic work includes Associate Choreographer to Andy Blankenbuehler (*Hamilton*, *In The Heights*, *Cats* revival) for the *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* national tour and Dance Captain and swing for the Broadway revival of *Annie*. Choreography and directing credits: *Legally Blonde* at Gainesville Theatre Alliance, *Thanksgiving: The Musical*, *Nightfall on Miranga Island* (2012 Fringe Festival "Encore Series"), the viral sensation *The Spidey Project* which was an official selection for the 2018 New York Musical's Festival (retitled *Peter, Who*), *Once on this Island*, *Hairspray*, *Cabaret*, *Thoroughly Modern Mille*, *The Wedding Singer*, and *Singin' in the Rain*. He also served as an Assistant Director for the *Hairspray* National Tour and at Paper Mill Playhouse. He thanks his uber-talented cast, crew, and creative team for their dedication to this beloved Holiday spectacular. He also thanks his Aurora family, especially Tony & AC, for bringing him on board this year and his hubby Dustin for letting him leave NYC to come down South. Check out more at [www.davidrossetti.com](http://www.davidrossetti.com)

**ANN-CAROL PENCE (Associate Producer/Co-Founder/Music Director)** arranged the music for Aurora's first *Christmas Canteen* in 1996 and was hired full-time in September of 1998 as Resident Musical Director. An education major at James Madison University, she used her background to develop Learning Library (or L2). As a musician, she created Aurora's Musicals by Moonlight, and Aurora's New Musical Initiative. She has performed as pianist and/or music director both nationally (Goodspeed Opera House, Pasadena Playhouse, The Cleveland Playhouse, The Kennedy Center) and locally (The Alliance, Theatrical Outfit, Horizon). As a passionate citizen of Gwinnett, Ann-Carol is most proud of Aurora Theatre winning the first ever Pinnacle Award for Large Non-Profit and the first ever Moxie Award (for women led businesses). These go well with her 5 Suzi Awards for Outstanding Music Direction for *The Bridges of Madison County*, *Les Misérables*, *Mary Poppins*, Aurora's world premiere of *Clyde 'n Bonnie: A Folktale*, and *A Catered Affair* and multiple past nominations. Currently, Ann-Carol is a member of the National Alliance for Musical Theatre. She was a proud participant in the 2016 Atlanta Regional Leadership Institute and member of 2016's "Best Class Ever!" along with friend, colleague & Aurora board member Nicole Love Hendrickson. PLEASE VOTE!

**ANTHONY RODRIGUEZ (Producing Artistic Director/Co-Founder)** Aurora Theatre opened in the summer of 1996 and Anthony Rodriguez and Ann-Carol Pence established Aurora Theatre, Inc. as a non-profit organization in 1999. Under their leadership, the theatre grew from 120 season subscribers to the 5000 subscribers. Aurora's success led to an ABBY Award nomination in 2002 for Arts Professional of the Year. Mr. Rodriguez's greatest accomplishment to date was the successful negotiation to relocate Aurora Theatre to downtown Lawrenceville, where it is now undergoing a \$32 million campus expansion. Aurora's accomplishments include: Learning Library, an Educational Theatre Program, Aurora's Apprenticeship for recent college graduates, Aurora Academy and Conservatory where students learn about theatre from working professionals, Aurora's Musicals by Moonlight an annual outdoor summer concert, Cabaret and Comedy Series musical and stand-up comedy evenings between mainstage events, and Teatro Aurora, a professional Spanish-language theatre company that was created to highlight Latinx cultural heritage and to help build social bridges in our community. Anthony is past Chair of Partnership Gwinnett and past Chair of the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce, where he was the first Latino and Arts leader to serve in that position. Mr. Rodriguez is a member of Screen Actor's Guild, is on the boards of NAMT (National Alliance for Musical Theatre) and TCG (Theatre Communications Group), and serves on the national steering committee for the Latinx Theatre Commons. Mr. Rodriguez is a graduate of Marist High School, the University of Georgia with a BFA in Theatre, the Atlanta Regional Commission's Regional Leadership Institute and the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures' Leadership Institute, and Advocacy Institute. Mr. Rodriguez is a cancer survivor and has been cancer free for 29 years

**KATIE PELKEY (Managing Director/Stage Manager)** is celebrating twelve seasons with Aurora! In 2013, Katie transitioned to the role of Company Manager, having previously served as Resident Stage Manager. She also created the highly-successful Stage Management and

Costume Apprentice programs that operate simultaneously with Aurora's Acting Apprentice Company program. For five seasons, she worked as Aurora's Educational Resources Associate developing educational curriculum for teachers to use in conjunction with Aurora's TYA Learning Library offerings. And for over a decade, Katie served as Production Stage Manager for New Plays for Young Audiences, a prestigious TYA summer staged reading series based at New York University. She received her BA in Educational Theatre from New York University with a minor in Dramatic Literature. Many thanks to Michael, Maxwell, and Alexander for their love and support!

**ALAN YEONG (Costume Designer)** is honored to be a part of *Christmas Canteen*. Alan is lucky to be collaborating with an amazing production design team and acting company. He is a Professor of Costume Design at The University of West Georgia during the day, occasionally freelancing with metro Atlanta theatre companies for the past 17 years. He recently was honored with 2016 Broadway World Atlanta Regional Best Professional Costume Design for a Musical for *Miss Saigon* (Serenbe Playhouse). Several Suzi Bass Award nominations - *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Aurora Theatre/Theatrical Outfit), *Miss Saigon* (Serenbe Playhouse), *Les Misérables* (Aurora Theatre), *The Little Foxes* (Theatre in the Square). Also a special thank you to Aurora Theatre for believing in my work. Special thanks to all of his friends, colleagues, students, and University of West Georgia Theatre Arts Department for allowing him to continually be part of the vibrant metro Atlanta theatre community. Come visit, [alanyeong.com](http://alanyeong.com)

**RACHAEL KARAS (Wig Stylist)** is an alumni of the Aurora Theatre's Apprentice program. Previously, she has worked around the metro Atlanta area as costume designer for Theatre Buford's *Footloose*, and as assistant to the costume designer on Aurora Theatre's *Children of Eden*. She is currently working on her MFA in costume design at the University of Georgia.

**JON SANDMAIER (Technical Director/Set Designer)** has worked as Master Carpenter at Aurora for the last couple years. After graduating from IPFW at the end of the last millennium, Jon spent most of his time designing and building sets for various arts organizations in and around Fort Wayne, Indiana. He and his wife relocated to Georgia in the summer of 2016.

**KEVIN FRAZIER (Lighting Designer)** Atlanta credits include: Actors Express, 7 Stages, Fabrefaction, Pinch 'N' Ouch, Synchronicity and Serenbe Playhouse. Other credits include Merrimack Rep and Stoneham Theatre (MA), The Peterborough Players (NH), Glow Lyric Theatre, The Warehouse Theatre, the Distracted Globe and Centre Stage (SC) and both the New York and DC Fringe Festivals. Educational credits include: Furman University (SC), Case Western Reserve University (OH), Lafayette College (PA) and the Gainesville Theatre Alliance. Thanks to God and his family for their love and support. [www.kevinfrazier.net](http://www.kevinfrazier.net)

**DANIEL POPE (Production Manager/Sound Designer)** is proud to be a member of the team at Aurora Theatre as Production Manager. Daniel has been a sound designer and engineer in the Atlanta area for the past eight years. He's had the pleasure of designing sound for the Aurora Theatre on many occasions on shows such as: *Into the Woods*, *Christmas Canteen*, *Sweep*, and most recently *The Bridges of Madison County*. Additionally, he's worked on countless other productions in the Atlanta theatre community including: *Evita* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* as Sound Designer and Production Manager at Serenbe Playhouse. Daniel received a Bachelors in Marketing with a specialization in sales and a minor in Music from The University of West Georgia in 2010.

**RENITA JAMES (Director of Education/Assistant Stage Manager)** is a proud graduate of AppCo 2013. It was during that year that she furthered her love of educational theatre while performing in *Unnecessary Monsters* and teaching several classes and workshops. Upon completion of her apprenticeship, Renita performed with theatres across the country. She also completed a teaching artist fellowship with Metro Theater Company, before returning home to Atlanta. Renita currently heads up Teen Nation, Aurora's program exclusively for teens, and works closely with our educational partners. Some of her favorite acting credits include: *FML: How Carson McCullers Saved My Life* (7 stages), *Once Upon A Mattress* (Stage Door Players), and *The 12 Dates Of Christmas* (Aurora).

**ASHLEY HOGAN (Assistant Technical Director)** is excited to officially join Aurora's family as a staff member. She has enjoyed working her summers at Aurora the past few years while pursuing her degree at Georgia State University. After graduating summer of '18, she has spent the past year expanding her skill craft as an over-hire carpenter at Aurora.

**JUSTIN ANDERSON (Associate Artistic Director/Properties Designer)** has served as Aurora Theatre's Associate Artistic Director since 2014. His directorial work has earned 12 Suzi Bass Award Nominations for Outstanding Direction (Winner for *The Bridges of Madison County* and *Les Misérables* at Aurora Theatre, in 2017 and 2013 respectively). He is also an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Theatre and Performance Studies at Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Georgia where he directs and teaches courses in acting and musical theatre. He holds a B.A. in Theatre Arts from Campbell University and an M.A. in Theatre Studies from Regent University, with additional course study at Rutgers. Much love to Michael.

**MARK BIERING (Percussion)** has been part of the Aurora team since 1997, when he played for the second-ever *Christmas Canteen*. He also plays at other theatres around town when the opportunity arises, and during the day he slaves over a hot computer doing software (and occasionally hardware) support. Likes: Airplanes, strawberries, kittens. Dislikes: Licorice, mean people, and seeing pictures of himself (so no photography during the show, please!)

**DON KLAYMAN (Bass)** has worked with such artists as Bill Waltrous, Marvin Stamm, Ed Schaunessy, Carmen Cavelero and The Jimmy Dorsey Band while in college. Don has 30+ years of performing and touring experience and was a bass instructor at the Atlanta Institute of Music. Don has performed on various recording projects as well as playing in various groups, churches, and shows in Atlanta Georgia, and as a songwriter. He has developed his own bass sound and feel with influence from jazz, funk, classical, and rock.

**BRIAN SMITH (Guitar)** is a guitarist and teacher in the Athens, GA area. Originally from Augusta, GA, he moved to Athens in 1995 to study guitar at the University of Georgia under the tutelage of John Sutherland. While there, Brian met the members of the Georgia Guitar Quartet and began a more than twenty year career with the ensemble, taking the group to various performance halls across the country and recording five albums together. Brian is also a founding member of the ensemble, Revien. The group, which features cello and two classical guitars and electronics, has recorded two albums together and has toured around the Southeast. Brian has been performing as a solo artist for the past three years, developing his style and technique to showcase original pieces and newly commissioned works as well as more traditional classical guitar pieces. In addition to performing and recording, Brian plays guitar for several theatres including Aurora Theatre, Gainesville Theatre Alliance, and Oconee Youth Playhouse.

**AURORA THEATRE STAFF**

Producing Artistic Director/Co-Founder .....	<b>ANTHONY RODRIGUEZ</b>
Associate Producer/Co-Founder .....	<b>ANN-CAROL PENCE</b>
Managing Director .....	<b>KATIE PELKEY</b>
Associate Artistic Director .....	<b>JUSTIN ANDERSON</b>
Director of Cross-Cultural Programs .....	<b>JUAN CARLOS UNZUETA</b>
Director of Education .....	<b>RENITA JAMES</b>
Director of Corporate & Individual Giving .....	<b>KELLY CRISS</b>
Production Manager.....	<b>DANIEL POPE</b>
Technical Director .....	<b>JON SANDMAIER</b>
Assistant Technical Director .....	<b>ASHLEY HOGAN</b>
Director of Sales and Marketing .....	<b>AL STILO</b>
Marketing & Retention Manager.....	<b>AMEE VYAS</b>
Graphic Design & Marketing Associate.....	<b>ARI MCBRIDE</b>
Director of Patron Relations.....	<b>JENNIFER OWENS</b>
Box Office & Front of House Staff.....	<b>DAISIE AKKASHA, ROBYN ROGERS</b>

**THANK YOU!**

to those who have made very special contributions to our production:  
**Aurora Volunteer Guild • Serenbe Institute • Nan Stephens**  
**University of West Georgia Theatre Department • City of Sugar Hill, GA**