

THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

# RED RIDING HOOD

BY ALLISON GREGORY



PERFORMED AT RICHARD AND NANCY DONAHUE FAMILY ACADEMIC ARTS CENTER

PRODUCED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND UMASS LOWELL

## JANUARY 12-28, 2024



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**Welcome to the third production of MRT's 45th Season and the sensational fun of *Red Riding Hood*.** In our first ever venture for young audiences, we are thrilled to share the joy of live theatre with this modern adaptation of a classic in partnership with Middlesex Community College (MCC) and UMass Lowell (UML).

Perhaps the most joyous part of the art you are about to see is the artists who are making the work. Playwright Allison Gregory has crafted a vibrant

story centering bravery and play. Shepherding this production is Karen Oster, Chair of Performing Arts at MCC, who leads with heart and humor. The design team represents some of MRT's treasured community including Lee Viliesis on Costumes and Rob Stimmel on Sound. Our own Lighting and Sound Supervisor Mike Finke steps into the Lighting Designer role on this production. And UML Faculty Kathleen Chadwick's gorgeous scenic design was built in partnership with UML students. This venture truly represents a team effort and we are so fortunate to feel the vibration of this collaborative spirit in the production.

We are equally proud of the acting ensemble who will play this show to over 1,500 students in our student matinee series! *Red Riding Hood* asks of performers a particular style, energy, and endurance. This wildly talented company brings prodigious power to this playful romp.

Special thanks to MCC President Phil Sisson and UML Chancellor Julie Chen for their partnership and support. Because of this collaboration, we have offered theatre to students who would rarely have access including our Sensory Friendly performance on Sunday 1/21 at 11am. **We at MRT believe theatre is for everyone and through community we make that possible.**

Enjoy *Red Riding Hood*!

In Service,  
Courtney

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PRESENTS

# RED RIDING HOOD

BY

**ALLISON GREGORY**

FEATURING

**CELENA LOPES  
CAMERON MERULLO  
KATIE WIITALA**

SCENIC DESIGNER

**KATHLEEN CHADWICK**

COSTUME DESIGNER

**LEE VILIESIS**

LIGHTING DESIGNER

**MICHAEL FINKE**

SOUND DESIGNER

**ROBERT CARLTON STIMMEL**

STAGE MANAGER

**SAMANTHA PERRY**

DIRECTED BY

**KAREN OSTER**

PRODUCED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND UMASS LOWELL

PERFORMED AT RICHARD AND NANCY DONAHUE FAMILY ACADEMIC ARTS CENTER

**JANUARY 12-28, 2024**

## CAST

Celena Lopes ..... Delivery  
Cameron Merullo ..... Wolfgang  
Katie Wiitala ..... Delivery Understudy

## ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION CREDITS

Lynn Sullivan ..... Production Assistant  
Amy Myres ..... Props Artisan  
Leigh Kostenbader ..... Wardrobe Assistant  
John Bachelder ..... AAC Building Manager, Sound Operator

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^The Scenic, Costume, Lighting, and Sound Designers in this production are represented by United Scenic Artists (USA) Local USA-829, IATSE.



Merrimack Repertory Theatre is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre.



Merrimack Repertory Theatre operates under agreements between the League of Resident Theatres (LORT), a consortium of regional theatres throughout the nation, and AEA (Actors' Equity Association), SDC (Stage Directors and Choreographers Society), and USA (United Scenic Artists).

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## WHO'S WHO



**CELENA LOPES** (Performer; Delivery) she/her/hers. Celena Lopes is a Cape Verdean theater artist from Brockton, Ma.

During her time at UMass Amherst she recounts fondly starring in *What of the Night*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *If/Then* (among others <3). She has spent time in New York doing extra work for *SNL* and *City on a Hill*. Now, she is teaching 5th grade ESL in the heart of the hood, she can't think of a better way to give back to the city that raised her. She thanks Courtney for her kind heart and open mind, Merrimack Rep is shaping the new theater world! She has had the time of her life discovering the Middlesex Community College Theater community, earlier this year she played her Dream role Mimi in their production of *Rent*. She would like to thank Karen for being her rock, her joy and for creating such a beautiful and safe space for creative expression. The show wouldn't be as magical without her gorgeous and incredibly talented cast and hardworking team. She dreams of a world where we can all play like we do on stage, we tell our stories, we listen to each other and we heal, together.



**CAMERON MERULLO** (Performer; Wolfgang Understudy) he/him/his. Cameron is an actor from Chelmsford, Massachusetts. Over

the course of ten years, he has starred in theatre rolls such as Usanavi in *In The Heights*, Willard in *Footloose*, Seymour in *Little Shop of Horrors*, Melchior in *Spring Awakening*, Tybalt in *Romeo & Juliet*, Harold Hill in *The Music Man*, Garry in *Noises Off!*, Sancho in *Man of La Mancha*, Brad in *The Rocky Horror Show*, Mark in *RENT*, and others. In high school, he was nominated three times at the Theatre at the Mount HS Musical Theatre Awards (Best Actor for *In The Heights*, Best Supporting Actor for *Footloose*, and Best Featured Ensemble for *35MM*). He graduated from Middlesex Community College with an associate's degree in acting/theatre where he was a two-time Irene Ryan Award nominee at the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. After college, he spent a semester at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center as a part of the National Musical Theatre Institute. Cam is super excited to take part in his first production with MRT and would like to thank Karen and Courtney for giving him this opportunity and his fellow castmates for being such an awesome team to work with!



**KATIE WIITALA** (Performer; Delivery Understudy) she/her/hers. Katie is from Billerica MA, and is excited to be working with Merrimack Repertory Theatre for the very first time! Katie, at a young age, began performing as a competitive dancer and traveled around New

## WHO'S WHO

England and neighboring states from the ages of 8-17. Katie began performing in theater her senior year of high school and won the METG all star actor award for her performance at Milly in *Upon a Sea of Dreams*. She now has an associates degree in Theater Arts from Middlesex Community College. Alongside acting, Katie has choreographed and directed several shows, including the *Addams Family JR.* at the children's theater summer program at MCC. Some recent performances include: Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2022), Janet Weiss in *The Rocky Horror Show* (2022), Sandrine in *Almost Maine* (2022), Medusa in *Interview With a Gorgon* (2023), Fleure/Dance Captain in *Phantom* (2023), along with many others. Special thanks to Karen Oster and Courtney Sale for this amazing and wonderful opportunity and for being so great to work with, along with everyone at MRT and MCC for making this happen! She would also like to thank her family, friends and amazing boyfriend Peter for their love and support!

**KAREN OSTER** (Director) she/her/hers. Chair of Performing Arts, Middlesex Community College, BFA from The Boston Conservatory, M.Ed from Cambridge College, PH.D candidate Lesley University. Karen has directed and coordinated the performances of young cast members in numerous productions including the Broadway/National tour of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, and Paul Simon's

*The Capeman* on Broadway with Marc Anthony. Karen is a professional musician and actress as well, having performed in various productions including: *Nunsense*, *Swingtime Canteen*, and *Pump Boys and Dinettes*. She has performed at The Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Fullerton Civic Light Opera, Weston Playhouse, Charles Playhouse, Seaside Repertory Theatre, Royal Poinciana Playhouse and The Parker Playhouse. Karen has studied with well-known cabaret artists: Margaret Whiting, Julie Wilson, Andrea Marcovicci, and Craig Carnelia. And has directed and produced the revival of *The Baker's Wife* with composer/lyricist Stephen Schwartz. Her adaptation of *The King and I* (G2K) is currently licensed for performance throughout the country.

**KATHLEEN CHADWICK** (Scenic Designer) she/her/hers. **REGIONAL:** Northeastern University (*Sisterhood of the Survivors*), College of the Holy Cross (*Company*, *Iphigenia*, *Our Town*), UMass Lowell (*Perfect Arrangement*, *Macbeth*). BA Hampshire College 2002, MFA Temple University 2007. I'm very happy to be working with MRT for the first time!

**LEE VILIESIS** (Costumer Designer) all pronouns. Credits Include: The 2016 National Tour of *Fame!*, *A Woman of the World*, *Fannie Lou Hamer*, *Speak on it!*, *45 Plays for 45 Presidents*, *Tinker to Evers to Chance*, *It's A Wonderful Life:*

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## WHO'S WHO

*A Live Radio Play, This Verse Business* (Staring Gordon Clapp), and *Stella and Lou* (Merrimack Repertory Theatre), *Silent Sky* (Merrimack College), *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (Dorset Theatre Festival), *Godly Creatures* (The Hub Theatre Company of Boston), *Our Town* (Riverside Theatre Works), *Forbidden Broadway, Shout! The Mod Musical, Annie, The Producers,* and *Nunset Boulevard* (The Arundel Barn Playhouse) *Hansel and Gretel's Grim Tale* and *Romeo and Juliet* (Virginia Stage Company Educational Tour). Education: BFA Theater Design, Rutgers University. Mason Grass School of the Arts. Lee is thrilled to continue working with the incredibly talented individuals at Merrimack Repertory Theatre, while serving the Lowell's art community as Director of the Lowell Folk Festival. [www.aleeviliesis.com](http://www.aleeviliesis.com)

**MICHAEL FINKE** (Lighting Designer) he/him/his. **REGIONAL:** Assistant Technical Director/ Master Carpenter-Peterborough Players, 2004. Master of Theatre Studies in Production and Design, Southern Oregon University. Much love to Amy for supporting me while I run away to join the show.

**ROBERT CARLTON STIMMEL** (Sound Designer) he/him/his. Robert is the Co- Technical Director at Cincinnati Shakespeare Company, where he also works as a Sound, Projection and Lighting Designer. Robert is thrilled to return to Merrimack Repertory Theatre

after Sound Designing *Gaslight* this past Fall. He is a Cincinnati area native, hailing from Fairfield, Ohio. After receiving his BA in Theatre at Miami University, he has worked with various theatres including Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Alliance Theatre, Short North Stage, and Tantrum Theatre. In addition to his technician and design work, he is also a performer and producer and is always working to expand his artistic knowledge. He would like to thank his wife Kayla for her constant support of his artistic aspirations and her unconditional love.

**AMY MYRES** (Props Lead) she/her/hers. Amy has been the Outreach Coordinator for the Theatre Department at Middlesex Community College for the past 6 years, and the Assistant Director/ Stage Manager for the MCC Children's Theatre for the last 15 years where she first began prop making. A proud alum of MCC, Amy is incredibly grateful to continue a career in theatre under Karen Oster, her mentor and inspiration.

**SAMANTHA PERRY** (Stage Manager) she/they/theirs. This is Samantha's first professional theatre gig and they are excited to join the MRT family. Previous credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Rocky Horror Picture Show, Dead Man's Cell Phone,* and *Rent*. She is a student at Middlesex Community College and will be graduating in the spring, and she has Karen Oster to thank as her biggest inspiration and fueling her

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## WHO'S WHO

passion for theatre, along with her dad for being her biggest supporter in her life.

**COURTNEY SALE** (Executive Artistic Director) she/her/hers. Courtney proudly serves as the MRT's Executive Artistic Director. She joined the company in March of 2020 and is honored to work for a remarkable organization with incredible people. At MRT she has directed *Gaslight, The 39 Steps, A Woman Of The World, Wild Horses,* and both seasons of *A Christmas Carol*. Playwrights commissioned under her tenure include Trista Baldwin, Vichet Chum, Kevin Kling, Melinda Lopez, Dael Orlandersmith, Klean Ung. She launched the Sokhary Chau Playwriting Fellowship. Under her leadership, MRT has increased service to students, strengthened its partnership in community, and ensured artistic excellence. She serves on Lowell's Canal Cultural District Management Committee. Courtney's directing has been seen across the country: *Tiny Beautiful Things* (Seattle Rep), *The Overview Effect, Support Group For Men, The Cake, Wild Horses, Not Medea* (Contemporary American Theater Festival), *The Mountaintop, The Mousetrap, April 4 1968,* (Indiana Rep, also Associate Artistic Director 2013-2016), *Gaslight* (Cincinnati Shakes), *On Clover Road* (Phoenix Theatre), *Twelfth Night* (IndyShakes). She previously served as the Artistic Director at Seattle Children's Theatre (SCT), the nation's

leading generator of new work for family audiences. She has developed new work with Denver Center, New Harmony, Dorset Theatre Festival, Emerson Stage, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, and the Orchard Project. Other distinctions include Cornish College Distinguished Alumni Award, IBJ's 40 under 40 designation, and the 2017 keynote at the International Council of Fine Arts Deans. Courtney is a member of the National Theatre Conference. BFA, Cornish College of the Arts. MFA, The University of Texas at Austin.

**MERRIMACK REPERTORY THEATRE** ([www.mrt.org](http://www.mrt.org)) Merrimack Repertory Theatre (MRT) celebrates 45 years this season as the Merrimack Valley's professional theatre. With a steadfast commitment to new voices, MRT's season includes several premieres, in the 279-seat Nancy L. Donahue Theatre at Liberty Hall.

Under the leadership of the **Nancy L. Donahue Executive Artistic Director Courtney Sale**, MRT strives to fulfill its mission to "create remarkable new and contemporary plays that bring joy to our art form while engaging, entertaining and enriching our community." The non-profit company guarantees that shows are accessible to audiences of all incomes; partners with businesses and other non-profits to fully engage the community; and contributes to the economic vitality of Lowell by attracting diverse audiences from throughout the

## WHO'S WHO

region.

Recent acclaimed productions include *Letters from Home*, *The 39 Steps*, *Best Summer Ever*, *Erma Bombeck: At Wit's End*, *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*, the bestselling production in MRT's history, and *The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley*, both by Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon; *Cambodian Rock Band* by Lauren Yee and *KNYUM* by Vichet Chum, works

in celebration of Lowell's Cambodian community; *The Haunted Life*, a world premiere adaptation of Jack Kerouac's unfinished novel; the world premiere of *The Rise and Fall of Holly Fudge* by Trista Baldwin; and plays about the Black experience, including *Until the Flood* by Dael Orlandersmith, *Nina Simone: Four Women* by Christina Ham, and *Back Together Again: The Music of Roberta Flack and Donny Hathaway*.

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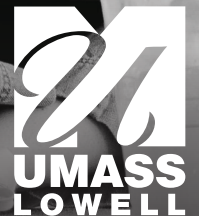


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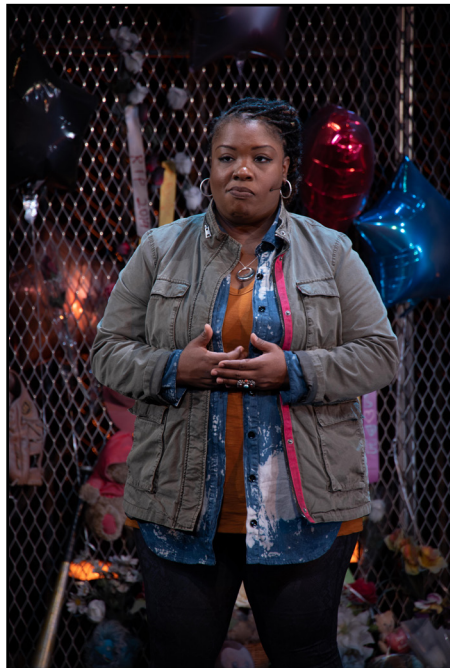
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Denise Cormier in *A Woman of the World* this past spring.

Photo by Kathy Wittman.



Maiesha McQueen in *Until the Flood* our first video on demand production and the first show of the special 2021-22 Season.

Photo by Kathy Wittman.

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Merrimack Repertory Theatre's Living Legacy Society was established to provide a lasting legacy for donors who believe in the mission of MRT.



The Living Legacy Society helps you combine financial goals with charitable giving. When you support MRT with a planned gift to the Living Legacy Society, you can:

- **Secure steady payments throughout your lifetime and increase available income**
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- **Ensure support of a loved one after your lifetime**
- **Build lasting support for the greater Merrimack Valley's only professional theatre**

Living Legacy Society gifts may be made through a bequest, a gift of appreciated securities or assets, beneficiary designation of retirement plans or life insurance, a charitable remainder trust, or a gift of property.

Your support will ensure that MRT continues its vital role in arts, education, and community building for years to come.

If you have already made MRT part of your estate plans, we invite you to join the Living Legacy Society. Thank you.

*For more information, please contact:*

**Kristin McCauley, Director of Development & Engagement, at [kristin.mccauley@mrt.org](mailto:kristin.mccauley@mrt.org).**

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MRT gratefully acknowledges all donations to the 2023 MRT Annual Gala this past June.  
Thank you for contributing to an impactful night!

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Leenya Rideout in *Wild Horses* at Stevens-Coolidge House and Gardens.  
Photo courtesy of Megpix/Meghan Moore

# MRT STAFF

Nancy L. Donahue Executive Artistic Director ..... Courtney Sale

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Young Company Director ..... Robert Cornelius  
Commissioned Playwrights ..... Vichet Chum, Kevin Kling, Melinda Lopez,  
Dael Orlandersmith, Kaeon Ung  
Young Company Coordinator ..... Kaitlyn Crockett

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Interim Production Manager ..... Andrew Andrews  
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MERIMACK REPERTORY THEATRE'S  
**45<sup>TH</sup> SEASON**  
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PHOTO BY MICHAEL BROSSLOW

# DISHWASHER DREAMS

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY **ALAUDIN ULLAH** DIRECTED BY **CHAY YEW**

DISHWASHER DREAMS WAS PRESENTED AT HARTFORD STAGE AND WRITERS THEATRE

# DISHWASHER DREAMS

**FEBRUARY 28  
THROUGH  
MARCH 17**



MERIMACK REPERTORY THEATRE'S  
**45<sup>TH</sup> SEASON**  
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PHOTO BY JONATHAN STEELE

# THE PORCH ON WINDY HILL

A NEW PLAY WITH OLD MUSIC

WRITTEN BY **SHERRY STREGACK LUTKEN, LISA HELMI JOHANSON, MORGAN MORSE, & DAVID M. LUTKEN**  
CONCEIVED AND DIRECTED BY **SHERRY STREGACK LUTKEN**

# THE PORCH ON WINDY HILL

**APRIL 3-21**



MERIMACK REPERTORY THEATRE'S  
**45<sup>TH</sup> SEASON**  
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PHOTO BY SETH FREEMAN

# SPIRITUS/VIRGIL'S DANCE

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY **DAEL ORLANDERSMITH** DIRECTED BY **NEEL KELLER**

A COMMISSION BY MRT PRODUCED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN THEATER FESTIVAL AND KATLITZSTECK THEATER

# SPIRITUS/VIRGIL'S DANCE

**MAY 8-26**