



CANDY CANE KIDS

A HOLIDAY MUSICAL!



occasional notes productions

DECEMBER 4TH - 17TH, 2023

This performance is dedicated to the memory of Patricia M Johnston, a supporter of all things musical, dansical, and whimsical. Her generous support has helped to make this production possible.

A MESSAGE FROM BARB MITCHELL

The Candy Cane Kids concept was written by the kid in me and the memories of my childhood at Christmas. It was never about gifts and presents, when I was a kid, it was more. It was the taste of the sugar cookies that my mom made. It was the smell of the lopsided Christmas tree that was trying to hold up all the lights, tinsel, angel hair and popsicle stick ornaments - a complete fire hazard. It was dancing with cousins while my Grandma played Winter Wonderland on the old untuned farm piano. The feelings surrounding Christmas have now sadly changed. Families are stressed to find the perfect gift on the "list" (something that was NOT talked about in the 60's), and trying to find the time for Christmas - to relax and enjoy the simple things. Can't we revisit this way of celebrating? Candy Cane Kids might be a start. It is about music, singing, dancing and cookies. The music is sentimental, traditional, lively and fun. It is pushing back the coffee table to make room for dancing, popping corn and having fun in the living room with family.

CREATIVE TEAM AND CAST

BARB MITCHELL.....	WRITER / COMPOSER / PRODUCER
LAURIE PARENTE.....	DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS / PRODUCER
BOBBY STAGG.....	COMPOSER / MUSIC DIRECTOR
GRIFFIN CORK.....	DIRECTOR
JP THIBODEAU.....	LIGHTING AND PROJECTIONS DESIGNER
BRADY HILLMAN.....	STAGE MANAGER
HAILEY FOSS.....	ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
JOHN NAIRN.....	SOUND PRODUCTION
CATHERINE HANDFORD.....	COSTUME DESIGNER
SANDY STEWART.....	COSTUME DESIGNER
ADAM LALONDE.....	SOUND ENGINEER
KAYLA MACKENZIE.....	CHOREOGRAPHER

CAST	
KAYLA MACKENZIE.....	STRIPE
ALEX SMITH.....	PEP
KATIE MCMILLAN.....	COOKIE
CHRISTINE BAKER.....	COOKIE
BARBARA THORSON.....	MRS. SNOOZE
CATHY MARTIN.....	MRS. SNOOZE
IAN RIEP.....	EDDIE MCJINGLE III / PEP U/S
BRI ZUBICK.....	HOLLY BERRY
JR MCNEIL.....	ENSEMBLE / EDDIE U/S
JAYDA FREEMAN.....	ENSEMBLE / HOLLY U/S
SHAYLA FIVELAND.....	ENSEMBLE / STRIPE U/S
MEGAN KERRIGAN.....	ENSEMBLE / COOKIE U/S
AISHA KUEH.....	ENSEMBLE
MYAH CASTLE.....	ENSEMBLE
SULLIVAN ANDRUSIAK.....	ENSEMBLE

CANDY CANE SPECIAL EVENTS TEAM

THOMAS ZIMA.....	PEP
ALISHA BROWN.....	STRIPE
JACKIE THURBER.....	COOKIE



BARB MITCHELL

WRITER / COMPOSER / PRODUCER

Barb Mitchell studied at the University of Alberta, Mount Royal University and is an Associate teacher with the Royal Conservatory of Canada and Conservatory Canada. She is an experienced professional musician skilled in piano, composition, string arrangements, vocal arrangements, playwright, performing arts, creative direction and corporate events. She is the President / Co-Founder of ZooStreet Inc and Occasional Notes Productions.



LAURIE PARENTE

DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS / PRODUCER

Laurie Parente has a degree from the University of Calgary and studied with the Royal Conservatory of Music. Laurie taught piano for 40 years in the Calgary area while working as a Performing Musician. She is the CFO / Co-Founder of ZooStreet Inc and Occasional Notes Productions.



BOB STAGG

COMPOSER / MUSIC DIRECTOR

Bob Stagg is originally from Edmonton, but a long time Quebec resident. He is a musician, songwriter, producer and educator. A graduate of McGill and Grant MacEwan Universities, Bobby has recorded and toured with a veritable who's who of Canadian and Quebec musical artists over the past 30 plus years, and has taught high school music for the past 25 years.



GRIFFIN CORK

DIRECTOR

Griffin has been working in the theatre, film and voice industries for over 15 years, and he's so excited to be working with the Candy Cane Kids team again! As a performer, you might have last seen him in Stones in His Pockets (Rosebud Theatre), 12 Days Of Christmas (Stage West/Birnton Theatricals), Last Christmas (Lunchbox Theatre) and Forgiveness (Theatre Calgary/Arts Club Theatre) – for which he received both a Betty Mitchell Award nomination and Calgary Theatre Critic Award nomination for Outstanding Lead Performance in a Drama. Griffin received Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal for his contributions to arts and culture and was named a Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Emerging Artist in 2022. He'd like to dedicate this performance to Kevin Rothery for his shenanigans and joy. Griffin sends love to Kevin, Karen, Hailey, Max, and Oma – who hates list-y bios.



KAYLA MACKENZIE

"STRIPE" / CHOREOGRAPHER

Calgarian Artist, Vocal and Dance Coach, Kayla MacKenzie has been training and performing across North America for well over a decade. Most recently completing two years with the Professional Training Program at Decidedly Jazz Danceworks (Footprints '20/'22). In 2020, her performance as Esmerelda in Hunchback of Notre dame won her a CAT Award for Best Leading Actress in a Musical right after leaving for New York City for a featured performance in 'The Broadway Dreams' Showcase. Kayla is equally a passionate performer and creator. Her opportunities to create bud from numerous classes she has instructed across Canada. Kayla has been a guest teacher with numerous companies across Canada including Canada's National Ballet School, CDA, and Maven Movement. She currently teaches Theatre Dance and Diva Styles at Decidedly Jazz Danceworks as well as Advanced Hip Hop for their Youth Training Program. CHOREOGRAPHY CREDITS: Tick Tick Boom (Forte Musical Theatre), Newsies, Percy Jacksons' the Lightning Thief, Beauty and the Beast Jr. Spotlight, Adult Musical Theatre Program '22/'23 (Storybook Theatre), Candy Cane Kids (Occasional Notes), Battle of the Bands 'Born this Way' (Maven Movement), Entr'Act (Chorus Foundation of the Performing Arts) PERFORMANCE CREDITS: CARIFEST '22 (Carifest Calgary), Footprints 2022, Footprints 2021, Lightning in a Bottle (DJD/Michele Moss), Broadway Dreams (Calgary/New York), Sister Act the Musical, Miscast, Camp Rock (Storybook Theatre), The Hunchback of Notre Dame, The Great American Trailer Park Musical, RENT (Cappuccino Musical Theatre) Candy Cane Kids, If The Shoe Fits (Occasional Notes) Brush up your Broadway (Simply Theatre), West Side Story, Miss Saigon, Chicago, Seussical the Musical (University of Calgary), Fame (Youth Singers of Calgary CAST Program) For upcoming workshops/shows follow Kayla on her Instagram @kaylacmackenzie



JP THIBODEAU

LIGHTING AND PROJECTIONS DESIGNER

An award-winning actor, designer and director, JP has been both on and off the stage all over the world. He is currently the Artistic Director for StoryBook Theatre, which under his leadership, has grown to be Canada's largest volunteer-driven Theatre for Young Audiences. He works closely with playwright and composer Joe Slabe to create many world premiere musicals, including Lest We Forget (Lunchbox Theatre), Urban Jungle Book (2017 Tom Hendry Award Shortlisted New Musical), Twas the Night Before Christmas (StoryBook Theatre) and the multi-award winning productions of Touch Me: songs for a disconnected age (Theatre Calgary) and Naughty But Nice 1 to 7 (Forte Musical Theatre). Most recently, JP worked with Queen as the director of the all-Canadian North American tour of their musical We Will Rock You (Annerin Productions).



BRADY HILLMAN

STAGE MANAGER

Brady is feeling extra sparkly and twinkley to be joining the Candy Cane Kids team this year! A multidisciplinary theatre educator, performer, and full-time stage manager, he is very grateful for this opportunity and cannot wait to spread Christmas spirit! Select stage management credits include: Honk!, Disney's Newsies JR. (StoryBook Theatre), Carnivàle (Cirque Nuit), The Time Machinist (Jupiter Theatre/Cirque Nuit), Ride the Cyclone (BrownCow Collective), We Are Pussy Riot, or Everything is P.R. (Holy Fools Theatre) - for which he recently received a nomination at the 2023 CAT Awards (Outstanding Production of a Play). Huge thank you to Barb, Laurie and the entire Candy Cane Kids cast, crew, creative team and beyond for their dedication and support. Much love as always to Mom + Dad for their consistent encouragement in living out his dream.



HAILEY FOSS

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Hailey is so excited to come on board as Assistant Stage Manager for Candy Cane Kids! She is a 2022 graduate of the Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre in NYC and her theatre credits include Radium Girls (Rita Morgenthau Theatre) and Becky's New Car (North Vancouver Community Players). Her film credits include LOW (Pluto Pictures), Project: Six Shooter (Numera Films), and Red Letter Day (Epic/Dread Pictures). She'd like to send a thank you to her supporters: Joy, Sheldon, Griffin, Allison and Jack.



JOHN NAIRN

SOUND PRODUCTION

John is excited to be back with Occasional Notes for his third season with Candy Cane Kids. John has been a theater production and sound designer for many years and now spends most of his time working with Revv52 as Production Manager and Front of House Engineer for the last 15 years and can also be found working at the Jack Singer Concert Hall as one of their Alternate Heads of Sound and Stage.



ALEX SMITH

"PEP"

For Occasional Notes: If the shoe fits, Zoo Street
Elsewhere: Escape to Margaritaville, Billy Elliot (Theatre Calgary), Narnia, In studio: The words and music of Britta Johnson (Theatre Sheridan), Mamma Mia! (The Munny Webster intensive) Joseph and the amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, Madagascar the Musical, Rent, Les Miserables (Storybook theatre) Alex is a recent graduate of Sheridans Bachelor of Music Theatre Program. He is so happy to be back in Calgary for the holidays to spread some pep and cheer. He gives thanks to his friends, family and Barb and Laurie for all of their support and for this opportunity. You can find him on instagram and TikTok @alexfellowessmith



KATIE MCMILLAN

"COOKIE"

Katie is so excited to be back for another season of Christmas fun in candy cane kids! Katie is a professional actor, specializing in musical theatre, last seen in Margheritaville at Theatre Calgary. When not performing, Katie is a voice and piano teacher, where she gets to share her love of music!



CHRISTINE BAKER

"COOKIE"

Christine is thrilled to be a part of this incredible cast and crew! Candy Cane Kids is Christine's second production with Occasional Notes. Christine played Linda in Occasional Notes' Zoo Street. Past credits include, Cinderella (Untold Stories), Mama Mia, Avenue Q, Evita, Hear them Roar (Front Row Centre), and Star Warz: A Galactic Rock Comedy (Jubilations). Christine would like to thank all the amazing people in her life for their love and support! Christine hopes you enjoy this heart warming show that is baked to perfection!

CHRISTINE BAKER



BARBARA THORSON

"MRS. SNOOZE"

Barbara has been sharing her gift of song for many years. For Cowtown Opera: yoga mistress (Wrecking Balls), Cougar (The Cougar Opera), Storybook Theatre: Miss Andrew (Mary Poppins), Annie (Miscast), Evil Stepmother (Cinderella and the Tale of the Glass Slipper), Ensemble (Titanic), Mother (A New Brain). Calgary Opera (chorus member in over 33 operas). High Performance Rodeo's 10 Minute Play Festival 2014 and 2016. Bow Valley Chorus: Carmina Burana with Elmer Iseler Singers. Studied acting with Company of Rogues, Banff Centre Improv workshop. For Occasional Notes the voice of Margie for Zoo Street, If The Shoe Fits (Sparkle lady), Mrs. Snooze in Candy Cane Kids, various characters with Incognito, and various corporate events. Barbara is founder of ISING4U Productions, has released a CD entitled The Gift...songs of faith, and continues to perform in and around Calgary, British Columbia, Ontario, Germany and Czech Republic and anywhere she can find a dinner table or cruise ship stage to stand on.

CATHY MARTIN

"MRS. SNOOZE"

Cathy was last seen on the stage as "Berthe" in Storybook Theatre's production of "Pippin". Her other stage credits include "Follies", "Urinetown" and "Gypsy" for Front Row Centre, and a myriad of roles for (now defunct) Theatre80. Many thanks to Occasional Notes for the chance to be Mrs. Snooze and especially to the production crew.



IAN RIEP

"EDDIE MCJINGLE III" / "PEP" UNDERSTUDY

Ian is thrilled to be working on such a joyful, jingly, wonderful show. Previous credits include: Kinky Boots, Mamma Mia! (FRC), A Monster Calls, Shakespeare in Love, WROL (UofC), and Bring it On (Storybook Theatre). Ian is currently studying drama and psychology at the University of Calgary. In his spare time, he studies singing, watches movies, and occasionally works as a makeup designer. Up next, you can see Ian in Lights Out (UofC) and The Book of Joan (a staged reading of a new musical by Grant Tilly). @ian.riep





BRI ZUBICK

"HOLLY BERRY"

Bri is a professional dancer, choreographer, and educator. Her dance education starts in a small town in BC and has taken her to New York, Los Angeles, Toronto, Calgary, and most recently London, UK. Her passion for dance is driven by the belief that everyone should be able to access dance in any capacity. Some highlights of Bris performance career are performing with Opus Dance Collective, dancing in the Rotary International's Opening Ceremonies, being an ensemble member in both the live and film editions of Candy Cane Kids The Holiday Musical and other various credits. Bris performance experience gives her choreography and teaching a different perspective. Bri prides herself in being an educator who values the human behind the dancer. Creating a space that is both challenging, motivating and supportive. Bris' work has awarded her several choreography awards in both Alberta and British Columbia.

JR MCNEIL

ENSEMBLE / "EDDIE" UNDERSTUDY

J.R. McNeil is a versatile performance artist (Dance, Circus and Acting) who was born near St. Louis, Missouri. Shortly after moving up to Canada in 2016, he joined The Young Canadians and performed in two Grandstand Shows. J.R. attended high school at the Performing and Visual Arts Centre in Central Memorial (PVA) where he graduated as a dual disciplinary student (Dance and Drama). Afterwards, he took his training to Decidedly Jazz Danceworks (DJD) Professional Training Program for two years where he found his love for Africanist-Aesthetic dance. His training then took him into Cirque Du Soleil's NexGen professional development training program for Trampwall in Portugal. J.R. has recently received the honour of training with elders and mentors of the West African region and is excited about going to Guinea for a month to learn from them in the real cultural setting.



MEGAN KERRIGAN

ENSEMBLE / "COOKIE" UNDERSTUDY

Megan (she/her) is so excited to return to Candy Cane Kids this winter! Megan comes from Southern California where she studied musical theatre at Fullerton College. She now has a BFA in Drama from U of C where she founded Musical Theatre UCalgary. Past credits include Elle Woods in Legally Blonde, Sophie in Mamma Mia, Heather Duke in Heathers, and Little Red in Into the Woods. You can catch her this January as Maggie in A Chorus Line at Front Row Centre Calgary. www.megankerrigan.com





SHAYLA FIVELAND

ENSEMBLE / "STRIPE" UNDERSTUDY

Shayla is so excited to be back for yet another year of spreading Christmas cheer and Humbugging with Candy Cane Kids! Shayla is a graduate of Randolph College for the Performing Arts, and since graduating has been performing in both Edmonton and Calgary. Her previous credits include Race in Disney's Newsies (Storybook Theatre), Singer's at Sunset (Storybook Theatre), Miscast (Storybook Theatre), Stacey in Girls Just Wanna Have Fun (Jubilations and Celebrations Dinner Theatre), as well as some film roles. When she is not performing, she is currently in her second and final year at Bow Valley College where she is taking Disability Studies. She is very passionate about inclusivity and accessibility within the performing arts industry and hopes to be an advocate for performing arts accessibility. Also in her free time, she can be found teaching private voice lessons, teaching at Storybook Theatre School, and snuggling at home, watching her favourite Christmas movies with her cat. Shayla is very grateful for all the love and support from her partner, family and friends. She hopes you join in the festive season and enjoy the show!



JAYDA FREEMAN

ENSEMBLE / "HOLLY" UNDERSTUDY

Jayda Freeman is so excited to spread some Christmas joy this winter season with Occasional Notes! When not onstage Jayda loves to spend time being friends with Tinkerbell, with YYC Princess or doing any festive activity, especially baking. Have a Merry Christmas and enjoy the show! @jayda.allyn Select Credits Include: Pool Party (Tapped Potential), Elf the Musical, Legally Blonde, Newsies, Singers at Sunset (Storybook Theatre), Friends of Mine and The Tuesday Crew, The Waiting Room (Calgary Young People's Theatre), She Kills Monsters, Sideshow (Central Memorial High School PVA).



MYAH CASTLE

ENSEMBLE

Myah Castle is a Calgary based actress and is very excited to be a part of the show Candy Cane Kids! She has been part of a variety of performances but this is her first Holliday show. Myah is currently in school for her Bachelor's of Fine Arts in drama, which she is expected to grant next year in 2024. She recently played Sandy in Grease with MTUcalgary, as well as Serena in Legally Blonde. Myah has been pursuing musical theatre since she was in middle school, with her big debut as Narrator one in Aladdin Jr. Ever since then she fell deeply involved with making people laugh and smile. Myah hopes you enjoy the show and share your Christmas spirit all around!



AISHA KUEH

ENSEMBLE

Aisha Kueh (he/they) is thrilled to be spreading the Christmas spirit for the second time with Candy Cane Kids. He is so excited to be working with such a talented cast and team. Based in Calgary, Aisha is currently enrolled in the Performing and Visual Arts Program at CMHS. For Occasional Notes: Candy Cane Kids (2022). Select credits include: Ride The Cyclone, Home Grown (BrownCow Collective), Singers at Sunset 2023, The Lightning Thief, Legally Blonde, Descendants (SBT).



SULLIVAN ANDRUSIAK

ENSEMBLE

Sullivan Andrusiak is making his Occasional Notes debut in Candy Cane Kids. Favourite roles include Lucas Beineke in The Addams Family and Spiker in James and the Giant Peach with Storybook Theatre's Spotlight Program. Thank you to his family and theatre coaches for their support.



SANTA

AS HIMSELF

Santa would like to thank the cast and crew of Candy Cane Kids for all their hard work and dedication this year. He is very grateful to all those who help to keep the magic of Christmas alive all year long. HO HO HO! Merry Christmas!



THOMAS ZIMA

"PEP" SPECIAL EVENTS TEAM

Thomas is a Calgary based performer who is thrilled to be back for another year of bringing Christmas spirit to Calgary. When not performing he is a full time carpenter and enjoys spending time with his partner and cat.



ALISHA BROWN

"STRIPE" SPECIAL EVENTS TEAM

FOR STORYBOOK THEATRE: The Spongebob Musical, Junie B Jones, Joseph and the Technicolor dreamcoat, The Little Mermaid, Beauty & the Beast, Mary Poppins & Miscast ELSEWHERE: Vancouver Olympics Opening Ceremonies recording vocalist, The Young Canadians(2001-2011), World Skills performer, Juno awards dancer, Grey Cup Halftime show singer, Canadian idol guest vocalist, Calgary idol Winner 2005, Guys & Dolls (DDP), Buggy Malone (DDP), Off The Beaten Path (OBP), Story's of Arlyrus (OBP), Candy Cane Kids (ONP) BEHIND THE STAGE: choreographer- Artist's Elite, Dance teacher- Dance with France, Marketing & Admin- OBP productions & Occasional Notes productions. ASM- OBP productions (virtual)
OF INTEREST: Alisha was a guest judge on web-series "Canada's Sing for the Shot" vocal competition. In her spare time she is a Dental Assistant and Miss Tourism Canada 2021. She has worked hard to create affordable music therapy options for our city of Calgary through the CMHA.
Thank you for supporting the arts and enjoy the show.



JACKIE THURBER

"COOKIE" SPECIAL EVENTS TEAM

Jackie is so excited to back with the Candy Cane Kids! Jackie is a graduate of Capilano Musical theatre program. Select credits include The Descendants (Storybook Theatre) Into The Woods (CapU Theatre) Mary Poppins (Storybook Theatre) Disenchanted (Cappuccino Theatre) and many more! When not on stage she love to share her skills teaching dance and music lessons and spends her day as a preschool teacher. She is so excited to spread the holiday cheer across Calgary!

CATHERINE HANDFORD

COSTUME DESIGNER

SANDY STEWART

COSTUME DESIGNER

Passionate creators who revel in the tradition of design are invited to share in the joy of Sandy Stewart's sewing classes. Sandy offers individualized instruction for students with all levels of experience. She empowers you to express your creativity at her fully-equipped and bespoke studio in NorthWest Calgary. Whether you are a beginner or interested in fashion design and pattern drafting, Sandy's wealth of experience and love for sewing is unparalleled. She has travelled the world - from Paris to Portland to New York City - honing her craft and developing world-class quality garments and projects. Eager to share her knowledge, Sandy is generous with the time and attention and is able to relate to students of all ages and levels of experience.

ADAM LALONDE

SOUND ENGINEER

Adam Lalonde is a professional musician based in Hawkesbury, Ontario Canada. The first born son of Canadian Fiddle Sensation Bobby Lalonde. He has toured and recorded all across North America, with such acts as; CCMA winner YOAN, Canadian Celtic greats The Glengarry Bhoys, Searson, Quebecois country favourites Cindy Bédard and Phil G Smith, and many more. He aspires to become the Robin to Bobby Stagg's musical Batman.

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