

# TRUST CHAOS



5 PM EASTERN JULY 27 2021

THE ASTROLABE THEATER COMPANY

PRESENTS

# IN THE TENT OF STARS

A MUSICAL

ON THE EDGE OF LIMBO



ONE HOT SUMMER WEEKEND, THE THEATER COMES TO TOWN. THE TENT RISES IN THE FIELD JUST DOWN THE STREET, AND THE BAND PLAYS, THE MAGICIAN DOES THE IMPOSSIBLE, LAUGHTER AND MUSIC RING OUT IN THE NIGHT, AND A YOUNG BOY SELLS YOU POPCORN FOR A NICKEL A BAG.

BUT WHILE YOU ENJOY MARK TWAIN SAND DANCING WITH TOM AND HUCK, OR THE COMEDIC OPERA OF THE CHORUS LADIES, BACKSTAGE LIVES ARE CHANGED, DREAMS ARE REKINDLED, AND THE SHATTERED WORLD MOSAIC IS SLOWLY REASSEMBLED BECAUSE THE TENT OF STARS IS MORE THAN IT SEEMS.

THE ASTROLABE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A TOOL TO GUIDE US, BUT THERE WAS ONCE A BOY WITH THE SAME NAME, AND HE KNEW SOMETHING AMAZING. WHAT HE LEFT US WAS WHAT CHANGES EVERYONE SO THAT EVERYONE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD TOGETHER.





# THE CHARACTERS



## **LINCOLN FOSTER** (The central character)

Lincoln is 12- 14 years old but emotionally sensitive and, at this point, troubled. He wants to do theater, but his mother wants to keep him away and be a lawyer like her father. She refuses to acknowledge his dreams and talent because she fears the life he might have based on her own life struggles. His father has abandoned him but then comes back for him to make him choose between his parents.

## **MARGERY FOSTER:**

Broadway star now reduced to traveling in midwest tent shows after the separation from her husband/stage partner. She is Lincoln's Mom.

## **CHARLEY GOLDSBERRY:**

This player/comedian in the Royal Dragoons Band and Glee Club is trying to decide between entertainment and family.

## **ALEX:**

(Revealed at the end to be the other central character, the one that the events of the play were put in motion for.) A mysterious 12 ish boy (smaller and younger than Lincoln) lives with Peter and Heloise. He hawks tickets, sells popcorn, acts as the magician's assistant, and dances in the show. He befriends Lincoln, who, along with the audience, discovers Alex's secret in the last few scenes and must choose to accept it.

## **ROBERTA** (Madam Ravin):

A black female magician who wants to be taken seriously and struggles with the injustice of racism. She learns to enjoy the gifts she has and the genuine friendships she has in her theater family.

## **GEORGE WASHINGTON:**

Ironically plays Abe Lincoln, as well as Mark Twain. He can't let go of the tragedy of losing his wife and child to a fire while he was off fighting in WW1.

## **HELOISE DU PARACLETE:**

Stage mom to the entire show, she does everything from props to costumes to general wrangling of the cast. She is also secretly a 12th-century French nun, writer, scholar, and abbess. She was the mother to Astrolabe, lost to her now in time.

## **PETER ABELARD:**

MC, the road manager, and director, always watching for meaning in everything. He is a medieval French scholastic philosopher, leading logician, theologian, teacher, musician, composer, and poet. He was castrated by Heloise's father after he had a child with Heloise named Astrolabe, whom the theater is named after. He laments his only child that he barely knew.

## **OLIVER FOSTER:**

Margery's estranged husband, now regretting running off with a starlet and wants to win his family back. He is the shows 'villain' but sees himself just as the survivor.



# OUR CAST



## LELAND PARKER MCGUIRE AS LINCOLN

Just signed for a still secret movie deal, 10 year old Leland has performed in several regional theater productions in roles like Charly Bucket in Willy Wonka, Jojo in Seussical the Musical, and Billy in Christmas with Anton. He is a model for several major companies including H&M. He's a real knockout with gymnastics and dancing and will apparently challenge anyone to a backflip competition! Then there is that smile...

<https://www.backstage.com/u/leland-parker-mcguire/>

## ETHAN MATHIAS AS ALEX

This 12 year old is now in his first Off-Broadway show, "The Last Boy," Ethan recently appeared on Amazon Prime in Miracle On Christmas ( as Caleb ) and has also been in Fargo, Evil Lives Here (#609), Next, and played Crutchie in the national virtual production of Newsies with Actors Technique NY. Amongst his regional theater roles have been John Bechdel in Fun Home with the Circle Theatre, and he has danced with the Grand Rapids Ballet in The Nutcracker, and now the West Michigan Youth Ballet's production of Sleeping Beauty. This kid simultaneously takes multiple ballet classes, acting workshops, piano lessons (He plays better than me) and is really dedicated to his craft. [www.ethanmathias.com](http://www.ethanmathias.com)





## ASHLEY KNAACK AS MARGERY

Ashley has appeared in *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cymbeline* with the *Commonwealth Shakespeare Company*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, and *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* with *Shenandoah Summer MT*, and six productions with the *Shenandoah Conservatory*.

She has the beautiful singing voice that Margery needs to make her character of a 1920 Broadway classical singer real. She quite literally swooped in at the last minute and snagged the part. I couldn't picture a better person to play Lincoln's mother.

<https://www.ashleyknaack.com/>

## PHILIP TROSSARELLO AS CHARLEY

Philip comes with a long pedigree of shows like *RENT*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Harvey*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Titus Andronicus*, *King Lear*, *Les Misérables*. He is also the second cast member to star in an episode of *Evil Lives Here*. Should I be concerned with that trend?

<https://www.backstage.com/u/philip-trossarello/>



## MICHELE QUINTERO AS ROBERTA

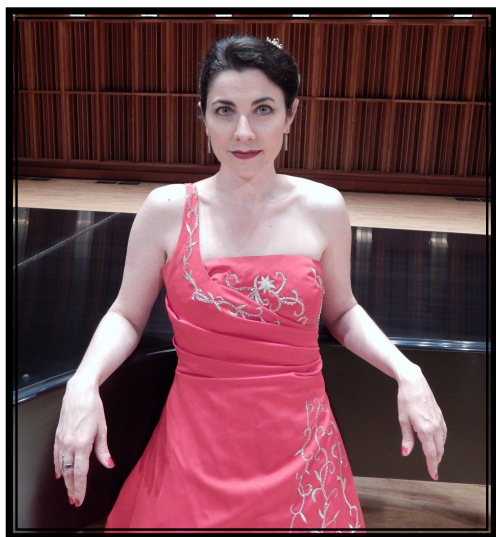
Fresh from a film role in "*Dear Eleanor*," Michele is a dynamic actor/ vocalist who has appeared in *Our Lady of 121st Street* with the *N.Y. Heights Players*, *Sistas on Fire* at the *East Village Playhouse*, and *Afterburn* at the *NYC Fringe Festival*. She is making magic with this.

<https://www.backstage.com/u/michele-quintero/>



## RUSTY REAGAN AS GEORGE

If you were a child of the 70s, you grew up with Rusty selling you Kool Aid, Skippy peanut butter, Honeycombs, and more. He was even a Gerber Baby. He has toured Europe, given Jungle cruises, robbed trains, done Improve, Headlined the Branson Murder Mystery, and is now filming as a lead in a new cable sitcom "Minding the Family." <https://www.backstage.com/u/rusty-reagan/>



## JULIE LYN BARBER AS HELOISE

Juliet in Romeo and Juliet: Lord Strange Players, London, ON, the Witch in Into the Woods: Nettle Creek Players, Hagerstown, IN, Titania in A Midsummer Night's Dream Canterbury Theatre, Michigan City, IN, The Blue Fairy in Pinocchio Northwest Children's Theater, Portland, OR, Lady Larkin in Once Upon A Mattress: Broadway Rose Theatre, Tigard OR and on and on. Now she plays Heloise for us!

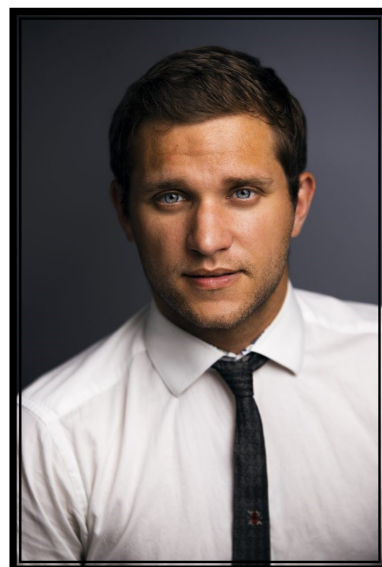
[www.JulieLynBarber.net](http://www.JulieLynBarber.net)

## CEDRIC GEGEL AS PETER

Cedric seems equally at home on stage and in film with roles like The Beast in Beauty and the Beast, Hamlet's Claudius, and Link Larkin in Hairspray in the former and roles such as James Rigby in The Coroner's Assistant, and the title role in Sullivan in the latter case. What's more, he is the writer, director, and co-executive producer of Cadia: The World Within, which features Corbin Bernsen, James Phelps, and John Wells!

<https://www.imdb.com/video/vi3120216601?>

<https://cedricgegel.wixsite.com/cedric-gegel>





## ACT ONE

TIME TO MAKE TIME (*CAST*)  
THEATER KID (*LINCOLN*)  
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS (*CHARLEY*)  
WASHINGTON POST MARCH/GOD BLESS SOUSA, HE'S SO USA  
(*THE DRAGOONS W /CHARLEY & PETER*)  
MAGIC IN MY LIFE (*ROBERTA, LINCOLN*)  
THE HOPE CAROL (*MARGERY*)  
IN THE DARK (*OLIVER, MARGERY*)  
THE OBLIGATORY BIG TIME DANCE (*CHARLEY & CAST*)  
IN THE DARK REPRISE (*ALEX*)

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## ACT TWO

BROKEN (*LINCOLN, ALEX, GEORGE*)  
THEATER KID REPRISE (*LINCOLN*)  
WE'RE ALL OKAY. OK? (*HELOISE AND THE CHORUS*)  
SILLY ME (*ROBERTA*)  
IF EVER THE TWAIN YOU MEET (*GEORGE*)  
THE INSIDE ME (*ALEX*)  
A JOYFUL HEART (*MARGERY, LINCOLN, ALEX*)  
IN THE DARK REPRISE (*OLIVER AND LINCOLN*)  
BROKEN REPRISE (*HELOISE*)  
THESE ARE THE DAYS (*CAST*)



# THE SCENES



## ACT I

SCENE 1: TEA TABLE IN THE BLACK VOID

SCENE 2: FIELD IN A NORTH MISSOURI TOWN

*THE SCENE BEGINS ON A WAGON, THEN DURING THE OPENING NUMBER, THE TENT IS RAISED.*

SCENE 3: IN THE TENT BEFORE THE SHOW

SCENE 4: LINCOLN AND CHARLEY IN THE MAIN TENT STAGE

SCENE 5: POPCORN PITCH IN THE AUDIENCE

SCENE 6: THE ROYAL DRAGOONS IN THE MAIN TENT STAGE

*THIS SCENE BEGINS WITH THE ROYAL DRAGOONS MARCHING IN THROUGH THE AUDIENCE*

SCENE 7: ABE LINCOLN'S GETTYSBURG ADDRESS ON THE APRON

*PHYSICAL COMEDY AS "ABE" TRY'S TO RETAIN COMPOSER DURING A WARD ROBE MALFUNCTION*

SCENE 8: MADAM RAVEN IN THE MAIN TENT STAGE

*BIG STAGE ILLUSIONS*

SCENE 9: MARGERY'S DEBUT, MAIN TENT STAGE

SCENE 10: OLIVER RETURNS. OUTSIDE THE TENT LEFT

SCENE 11: GUEST ACT, MAIN TENT STAGE

SCENE 12: BIG TIME DANCE BIT MAIN TENT STAGE

SCENE 13: PROSCENIUM CURTAIN DOWN APRON RIGHT NIGHTTIME.



# ACT 2

SCENE 1: **MISTY NIGHT IN A FIELD**

SCENE 2: **THE CRATES STAGE LEFT, OUTSIDE THE TENT**

SCENE 3: **BRIGHT MORNING OUTSIDE THE TENT STAGE RIGHT**

SCENE 4: **IN THE TENT**

SCENE 5: **ROBERTA'S TENT**

*SHE BEGINS SINGING "SILLY ME", THEN STEPS BEHIND THE DRESSING SCREEN.  
THE SCENE CHANGES*

SCENE 6: **MAIN STAGE TENT MADAM RAVEN NIGHT 2**

*WHEN THE SCREEN PARTS, WE ARE IN THE SHOW, AND SHE WALKS UP A SET  
OF INVISIBLE STAIRS*

*IT ENDS WITH A KICK LINE WITH THE BOYS 10 FEET ABOVE THE STAGE SING  
ING "CLEVER ME"*

SCENE 7: **THE CHORUS BEFORE THE OLEO**

*MY TRIBUTE TO IREN RYAN WHOSE LAST SONG WAS THE MOST FAMOUS SING  
ALONG ON BROADWAY*

SCENE 8: **MARK TWAIN APRON CENTER**

*FEATURING A SAND DANCE*

SCENE 9: **OUTSIDE OF TENT LEFT DRESSING TENT EXTERIOR**

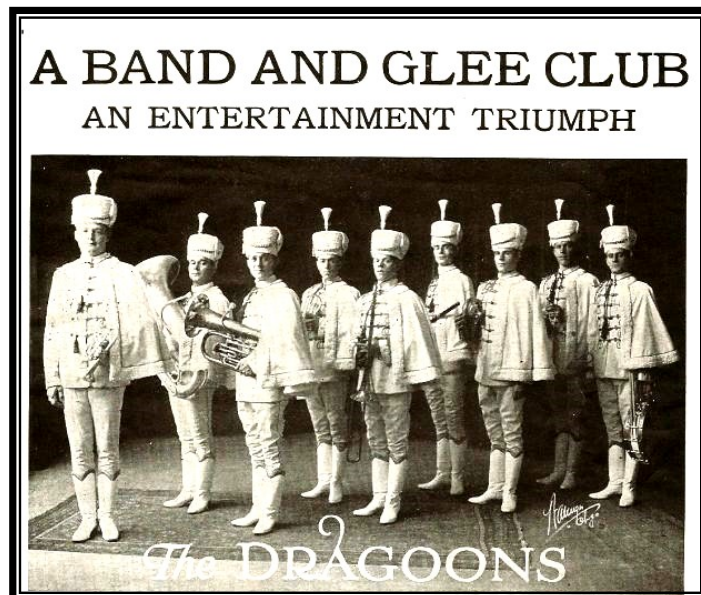
SCENE 10: **MAIN STAGE TENT**

*MARGERY SINGS LINCOLN'S SONG*

SCENE 11: **OUTSIDE THE TENT STAGE RIGHT NIGHT**

SCENE 12: **FINALE, MAIN STAGE**

*STRIKING THE TENT REVEALING THE ASTROLABE MOON BEHIND IT.*





# STAGING

In The Tent of Stars is a more or less one set show, which begins in an empty field as the curtain goes up, in which is sitting two “wagons” as seen in the photo on page two, The horses, are mimed by the chorus, and they drag the wagon off stage during the opening of the scene. During the opening number the roustabouts and cast members raise the tent onstage and fill the interior with the set pieces like the band risers made from the wagon’s bodies.

The tent itself take up the majority of the back and mid center of the stage leaving openings to the field beyond which serve as the off stage, or Backtent areas, as Alex calls them. Stage left has the front to a dressing tent through which characters enter and exit. In front of that is a small stack of crates which serve various functions in the show. Stage right contains the tea table brought in from the right thrust after the opening black box scene.

The major player in the set is the old fashioned oleo which roles up and down in the tent. In our case it is made of a shark tooth scrim which can appear solid or see through depending on lighting, offering central backstage scenes while action is taking pace on the mainstage. The show also uses old fashioned footlights within the tent.

Madam Ravin's tent is on a fly, as is a moonlit field backdrop.

At the end the tent drops revealing the Astrolabe moon in front of which Heloise makes her epilogue in the finale.



# ABOUT THE SHOW

The Lincoln storyline came from an unproduced musical written for Silver Dollar City MO theme park in the mid 80s. In the original it was the father that was a playwright going back to his birthplace and taking his son, who he didn't understand. That character became Oliver. Lincoln is very much my childhood self.

The Alex storyline was based on a childhood incident where I reacted badly to a friend who was more than I thought. 50 years later, this is how I say I'm sorry.

Charley's storyline is that of the real Charley Goldsberry, my Grandfather who traveled with Chautauqua during the 20s. His family story is also based on his life.

Roberta is an amalgamation of Ellen Armstrong the 1930 black female magician, and Black Vaudeville star Bert Williams who sought to subvert prejudice by embracing the blackface minstrel trope, but twisting it to make it a farce of the culture that created it.

George is based on my adult self, and coming to terms with the loss of my wife.

Heloise and Peter are historical figures who in life were forced to live forever separated despite their love for each other after the birth of their child Astrolabe. They constantly challenged the medieval church to embrace the philosophy of ancient Greece, and were only joined after death being buried next to each other. By medieval church doctrine, they would both have been consigned to limbo for their teachings.

Finally, the unseen Astrolabe, is based on the late child poet and peacemaker Mattie J T Stepanac whose imagery of the broken mosaic of humanity permeates the story at its roots. He believed that if we could celebrate our differences, it would ultimately bring peace to the world. He is honored today by the We are Family foundation who awards the Mattie Stepanek Peace Prize every year.

We have all sat in this tent, in this little pocket of limbo before. It is up to us to help others there now to find their path home again. Go Change the World.

YOU ARE ALL INVITED BACKSTAGE TO LISTEN TO ALL THE SONGS IN THE CAST RECORDINGS AND READ THE FULL SCRIPT AT. [HTTPS://WWW.ASTROLABETHEATER.COM/CRAWLSPACE/](https://www.astrolabetheater.com/crawlspace/)

THIS PAGE IS NOT AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC, SO PLEASE DO NOT SHARE



THE REAL CHARLEY GOLDSBERRY





**THANK YOU!**

To all of you for the time and consideration you have given me just in participating in my dream.

To all the staff from Ken on down, the visiting speakers, and to my fellow theater makers in the Theatermakers Studio, This would not be seen by anyone without you.

To my family and friends for reading and commenting all along the way, you made this better.

To my late wife Jan, for the music you left, the spirit that you imbued into it, and all the hopes you sent along with it.

To my cast for letting me into your lives and giving these characters a piece of yourselves. That part of you will keep going for as long as this play survives. I am grateful.

To Mattie, who even though we never met, spoke to me in the quiet moments when I stopped to listen. Our voices echo on long after we speak, and that can truly change the future for all of us.

And finally, to all the trans children who, if we truly see them, show us what we could all be to each other if we are willing to face our true selves. I stand with you.