

GRAND
OPENING MONTH!

DREAM
with

VANGUARD



VANGUARD THEATER COMPANY



A NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Our acronym - **DREAM** - came to me one evening around 3:00 am (when most of my creative ideas conveniently decide to present themselves). Vanguard had been operating for a short time with an emphasis on creating diverse performance, training and audience spaces, but I felt there were a few missing pieces, and it was in the wee hours of the morning that it came to me: DREAM

Our DREAM leads with Diversity, of course, but it also incorporates:

Reciprocity: We've all been blessed with talents, and it's our duty to use them to give back and serve others;

Education: not only arts education, but remembering that throughout our lives we should be in a constant state of learning - learning about people who differ from us, and learning how we can better ourselves as humans;

Activism: this comes back to duty. It's the artist-activist's responsibility to use their voices to bring about change to the world we live in; and finally

Mentorship: because everyone needs someone who sees more talent and ability within them than they see within themselves.

We've been actively building this mission of DREAM for the last six years. We've rented theaters, schools, churches - It didn't matter where we were - the heart of the mission lived within each and every one of us - our Board of Directors, Staff, Creative Teams, and Casts alike. Though we had indeed been searching for a space, the time just never felt right. Ironically, some would say that our timing couldn't have been worse when we signed our lease at 180

Bloomfield Ave on March 1st, 2020. But the truth is, having the past year to really think about how to renovate the space in a way that's not only aesthetically appealing, but also a **safe space** where our Vanguard Families would feel comfortable gathering. Creating safe spaces has *always* been a primary goal of ours. It has now been intimately woven into creating a safe *physical* space from a sanitation standpoint. We made sure to dot our "i"s and cross our "t"s. We have installed a brand new fresh air ventilation system, restrooms with sensor devices thus reducing touch and contact, sanitizing foggers are dispersed through the space, as well as sanitation stations.

Now we are ready to open our doors and serve YOU. We recognize that having a space of our own provides an even greater responsibility to extend our service to the greater community of Montclair, NJ, which we now call home. Montclair has had a history of embracing arts, culture, and service in a way that felt completely in line with our mission. We know this because of all the numerous partnerships we've had over the years with Montclair organizations such as *Montclair Film, Toni's Kitchen, and Covenant House NJ*, just to name a few. Planting roots in Montclair seemed like the perfect place for us to continue to build our DREAM.

They say - if you build it - they will come! So thank YOU for coming and joining us for our opening month which we feel fully embodies our mission of changing the narrative through theater dedicated to DREAM. I also want to say a special thank you to everyone who has helped us along the way: our Founding Board of Directors, our current Board of Directors, our generous Sponsors, our Community Partners - and personally, I must take a moment to thank Vanguard's Managing Director- Jessica Sporn, who I like

VANGUARD THEATER COMPANY

to call the wind beneath my wings. No matter what, Jessica does everything in her power to see to it that Vanguard not only survives - but thrives. Together we've conquered so many odds, jumped so many hurdles, and somehow we continue to land on our feet. Through our partnership, I've learned the true meaning of team. Thank you Jess. Vanguard wouldn't be here without your love, dedication, and commitment to the mission.

A couple more thank you's - though truthfully I can't even begin to scratch the surface. Thank you to my amazing husband Dwayne who's willingly allowed our house to be Vanguard's storage garage for the last 6 years. Thank you for driving truck after truck for load-ins, strikes, and I'm so sorry for all the times that you threw your back out while schlepping ridiculously heavy set pieces across the tri-state area. I appreciate you more than words can say. Thank you to Freddie- (Jessica's other half) for always saying yes - no matter what we ask! THANK YOU!

Thank you Terri - you've been here from the very beginning, and you always have my back.

I also want to say a special thank you to Noel from *Beam and Bloom Design* for her beautiful vision, and Jeff McCrum, our incredible theater consultant who's been holding our hand the entire way - and always with a smile.

And now, on with the shows!

Our opening weekend begins with *Songs For A New World* - a song cycle written by Jason Robert Brown, which we've filmed on locations in NJ with a dynamic and diverse cast of professional actors - many who not

only are fantastic performers, but who also serve as Resident Artists and Mentors in Vanguard's Education Programs. I chose this Song Cycle because it's all about moments that change one's life forever. Working collaboratively with the actors, we've taken a look at these songs through fresh eyes in a way that will truly resonate given the year we've all been through.

Our second weekend will be a screening of our VTC kids production of *Shrek Jr.*, which is all about self acceptance, self-love, and not making assumptions about people based on preconceived notions. Not only did we dive deeply into the show's social message with our young people, but in true VTC fashion, *Shrek Jr.* involves our youngest Vanguardians all the way up to our students who are seniors in High School who served as our show mentors. We love bringing artists of all different ages together to create magic! The diversity of age contributes to the learning (for all), and **Mentorship** is naturally built into this model in a seamless way.

For our third weekend, we're partnering with the *Montclair Neighborhood Development Corporation*, *Montclair African American Heritage Foundation*, and the *Montclair NAACP* on a Juneteenth presentation. We couldn't think of better partners in this endeavor of having an entertaining, educational and enlightening performance and discussion about this ever important day in American history, that is often overlooked.

Our fourth weekend is the world premiere of *Walk In My Gravity*, conceived, written and performed by members of VTC Next, a program designed to train the next generation of "behind-the-scenes" theater professionals. Their stunning song cycle - recorded in a state of the art Montclair recording

VANGUARD THEATER COMPANY

studio (Sound on Sound Studios) earlier this spring - takes audiences on a journey through the true weight of their gravity. These brave composers/performers tackle issues such as race relations, acceptance, grief, identity, flawed gender norms, code switching, sexuality and so much more. It's been inspiring throughout the process watching them grow as storytellers and theater creators.

This month is just the beginning of what we hope will be years of thought provoking theater making at our new home. We welcome you to come back time and time again to DREAM with us.

Janece Freeman Clark

Founding Artistic Director,
Vanguard Theater Company



VANGUARD
THEATER COMPANY

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180 Bloomfield Ave, Montclair, NJ

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Janeece Freeman-Clark
(Director/Costumes)
Janeece Freeman Clark is a Professor of Theater at Seton Hall University, where she also serves as special advisor to the Arts

Council. As a Theater Director, her New York productions of *Everything is Fine Until It's Not*, and *A Portrait of Ray*, have won numerous awards and critical acclaim. Her production of *Showtime with Shakespeare* premiered at Georgetreest Playhouse and NJPAC, followed by two successful national tours. Janeece is the founding Artistic Director of Vanguard Theater Company, based in Montclair, NJ. Under Janeece's direction Vanguard has presented NYC productions of: *Runaways*, *Spring Awakening*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Children's Letters to God*, *A Little Princess* and NJ productions of *Memphis*, *Hairspray*, *Heathers*, *Carrie*, *The Music Man*, and *Song For A New World* (film). In addition to VTC's theatrical season offerings, their robust educational programming equips the younger generation with the tools to be professional performers as well as gatekeepers within the industry. Signature programs such as: *Broadway Buddy* pairs Broadway artists with mentees who are aspiring to a professional career in the industry; *VTC Next* trains and mentors a diverse group of up-and-coming "theater-gatekeepers" (writers, producers, directors, choreographers, stage managers, etc.); and *DreamVTC* teaches the importance of artist activism alongside performance skills. Janeece has cultivated and produced video media revolving around the "Origins of Blackface Minstrelsy"; she has presented TedX talks centered on Diversity and Inclusion; and has created theatrical curriculum for institutions such as New Jersey Performing Arts Center, where she is in residence. Janeece received her Bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan and her Masters from Rider University. As an actor, Janeece has appeared on Broadway, off-Broadway, national tours,

television, film, commercials, and voiceovers. Janeece resides in South Orange, NJ and married to Broadway Actor, Dwayne Clark, whom with she shares two children: Jada & DJ who've been a part of every VTC Kids production.



Jessica Sporn (Managing Director) Jessica joined Vanguard after 20 years with Gas Lamp Players, which she incorporated as a not for profit in 2007 and helped grow

to a robust, year-round performing arts company in residence in Glen Ridge, NJ. In her years with Gas Lamp Players, she developed a strong reputation as an arts leader, creating a legacy of excellence and community involvement through producing musicals, developing educational and scholarship programs, and contributing to enhancements of the Glen Ridge performing arts facilities. Jessica is an accomplished visual artist who creates stencils, stamps and Judaica products, among other pieces. Originally an actress, she switched to law after becoming involved in politics. Then, after her first daughter was born, she turned her love of art into a career. Recently, she designed the artwork for the new "In The Heights" movie opening this summer and for Lin-Manuel Miranda's campaign to assist Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria devastated the island. She previously designed artwork for Miranda after the Orlando shooting in June, 2016.



VANGUARD! THEATER COMPANY

be a part of the D.R.E.A.M.

__ MAKE A DONATION: every donation to our not-for-profit company is an investment in our dream of uniting people and changing lives through the magic of innovative storytelling. No donation is too small (or big)! Pick up an envelope in the lobby, donate through our website, or mail your tax deductible donation to Vanguard Theater Company, PO Box 409, Montclair, NJ 07042

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WE WISH TO SEE IN THE WORLD**

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VANGUARD THEATER COMPANY

PRESENTS

SONGS FOR A NEW WORLD

June 9, 2021 - June 30, 2021

Originally Produced by the WPA Theatre, New York City, 1995
(Kyle Renick, Artistic Director)

Original Orchestration by
Brian Besterman and Jason Robert Brown

with

Shania Mundy Lou Steele Branden Mangan Lawrence Dandridge April Leonhard Lauren Palmeri

Music Direction
Alex Ratner

Stage Management
Natalie Jones

Lighting Design
Jeff McCrum

Choreography
Lawrence Dandridge & Janeece Freeman Clark

Music Production / Audio Mixing
Alex Ratner / Mark Watter

Videography & Video Editing
Selena Alvarez

Film & Stage Direction by
Janeece Freeman Clark

Songs For A New World is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. www.MTIShows.com
Recorded at Sound on Sound Studios, Montclair, NJ

MUSICAL NUMBERS

“The New World”Company
“On the Deck of a Spanish Sailing Ship”.....Lawrence & Company
“Just One Step”April
“I’m Not Afraid Of Anything”Shania
“The River Won’t Flow”Branden, Lawrence & Company
“Stars and the Moon”Lauren
“She Cries”Lou
“The Steam Train”Branden & Company
The World Was Dancing.....Lou, Lauren & Company
Surabaya Santa.....April
Christmas Lullaby.....Lauren
I’d Give It All For You.....Lou & Shania
King of the World.....Branden
The Flagmaker, 1775.....Shania, Branden & Lawrence
Flying Home.....Lawrence & Company
Hear My Song.....Company



CAST



April Leonhard



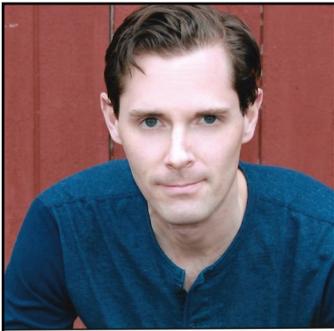
Branden R. Mangan



Lauren Palmeri



Lawrence Dandridge



Lou Steele



Shania Mundy

WHO'S WHO

April Leonhard (April) April Leonhard has been with Vanguard since 2018 and could not have made it through the last year without this incredibly talented, giving, and supportive group of humans. VANGUARD PRODUCTIONS: *Songs for a New World*, *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (Mayor of Halloweentown), *Spring Awakening* (Adult Woman), *A Little Princess* (Miss. Minchin), and *Heathers: The Musical* (Ms. Fleming). REGIONAL: *An American in Paris* (Olga/Cabaret Singer), *Make Someone Happy* (Rose), and *HONK!* (Maureen/Queenie). OFF BROADWAY: *The Wild Party* (Madelaine True).

Branden R. Mangan (Branden) Branden R. Mangan has been in every single Vanguard mainstage production since the beginning! You may have seen him in *Hairspray*, *Memphis*, *Heathers*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and so many more! He is currently in Smokey Joe's Café, directed and choreographed by Jelani Remy. This October he is happy to be resuming his role as Mr. Beauregarde in the Broadway National Tour of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. You can follow him on his many adventures on his Instagram @branden_mangan.

Lauren Palmeri (Lauren) Lauren has worked for VTC on *The Wiz of Oz*, as a teaching artist for their Disney Dance and Triple Threat classes, and on the Broadway Buddy mentorship program! National tours: *Elf The Musical* (1st Nat'L) and *Beauty and the Beast* (Belle u/s). Regional: *Tick, Tick...BOOM!* (Susan), *Funny Girl* (Fanny Brice), *The Bridges of Madison County* (Francesca), and *Ragtime* (Mother). Production vocalist for Princess Cruises world cruise! BFA in Musical Theatre from UARTS and currently working toward her MA in Educational Theatre at NYU. Thank you to Janeece, the cast and crew, and love to Mom, Dad, and Seba!
www.laurenpalmerionline.com

Lawrence Dandridge (Lawrence) Lawrence Dandridge is a multifaceted artist and creator bred in Newark, NJ. He made his Vanguard debut in *Memphis in the summer of 2017 as Gator*. Since, he has been seen in VTC's productions of *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Thorio), *A Little Princess* (Featured Ensemble), and *The Nightmare Before Christmas In Concert* (Santa), with cameo roles in VTC's summerstock productions of *Heathers* (Dad) and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Dad). Lawrence also serves as a resident choreographer and teaching artist with Vanguard and is thrilled to be involved in this gorgeous piece. Co-Founder and Creative Director of Aurway Repertory Theatre.

Lou Steele (Lou) Lou feels blessed to have joined the Vanguard family via Songs For A New World amidst a pandemic and can't wait for what's next! Previous credits include Radames in *Aida*, Chris in *Miss Saigon*, Jonathan in *Tick, Tick...BOOM!*, and Monty in *Violet*. He had the great joy of working with Kathleen Marshall, Lon Hoyt, and Sheryl Crow in a production of *Diner: The Musical* at the Signature Theatre. Thank you to my family and friends for their constant love and support, especially Laura, Juliet, and Lucas.
Visit www.lousteele.net for more.

Shania Mundy (Shania) Shania Mundy is from New Orleans, Louisiana, and has been performing since she was 4 years old. In February 2020, Shania graduated with her Bachelor's Degree from AMDA College of the Performing Arts. She's portrayed roles such as Aida (*Aida*), Anabel (*Lucky Stiff*), and Clara (*Ghost*), and is now a lead vocalist in Elegant Music Group's Hyde Park. Shania also enjoys writing her own music and plans to record her own jazz album in the future! When she's not on stage, Shania enjoys learning French, meditating, & cooking.

WHO'S WHO

Selena Alvarez (Videographer) Selena Alvarez (aka "Ninamoonlove") is a marketing freelancer with a passion for dance and all things creative. This is her second visual project with Vanguard Theater Company and she's grateful to have formed an amazing connection with them. Selena is known for her work in cinematography, creative directing, video editing, dancing, and social media marketing. She is also the Digital Marketing Assistant for Carolyn Dorfman Dance. Selena specializes in dance videography, showcasing stories that matter, and connecting with passionate creators. Growing up as a Puertorican creative child, she continues to give her all in helping others showcase their visions and capture everlasting moments.

Alex Ratner (Music Director) celebrates Vanguard's opening month as musical director/arranger of Songs for a New World and a co-director of Walk In My Gravity. A theatre writer, musical director, and arranger, Alex's latest musical, Tyrell, a Game of Thrones prequel, made its London debut in February 2020, following the release of a concept album starring Tony-winner Christine Ebersole. Credits include War Paint (Broadway), Far From Heaven (Off-Broadway) and The Flamingo Kid (Hartford Stage). Alex also adapted the score of Children of Eden JR. and arranged as a member of the Yale Whiffenpoofs, the oldest a cappella group in the country. www.alexratnermusic.com / [@alexratner](https://www.instagram.com/alexratner)

Jeff McCrum (Lighting Designer) has been involved with Vanguard since 2017's The Music Man and has been fortunate to continue working with them for a number of other productions (Songs for a New World, Runaways, Children's Letters to God, A Little Princess, Two Gentlemen of Verona). He works as a theatre consultant and lighting designer in New York and has been really excited to help Vanguard take its next steps in the new space. MFA: New York University; BA: Point Park College.

Janece Freeman Clark (Director/Musical Staging)

Lawrence Dandridge (Choreographer of "River Won't Flow")

Natalie Jones (Stage Manager) Natalie Jones is a freelance theatre artist based in Astoria, Queens. She previously stage-managed VTC's Songs for a New World, Broadway Buddy Mentorship Cabaret 2019, and Memphis. Other credits include: Gruesome Playground Injuries, Marguerite (starring Tony Award-winner Cady Huffman), Romeo and Juliet, In The Bleak Midwinter (written by and starring Emmy Award-winner Dorothy Lyman), Elvira: The Immigration Play (Collaboraction Theater – Chicago, IL), and Ebenezer (Resorts Casino – Atlantic City, NJ), among others. In addition to her stage managing work, Natalie is a Kennedy Center-recognized performer and director as well as an accomplished teaching artist and dialect coach.

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Vanguard Theater Company

PRESENTS

SHREK JR THE MUSICAL

June 11 2021 - June 13 2021

Based on the DreamWorks Animation Motion Picture and the book by William Steig

Book and Lyrics by David Lindsay-Abair

Music by Jeanine Tesori

Originally Produced on Broadway by

DreamWorks Theatricals and Neal Street Productions

Costume Design Janece Freeman Clark	Set Pieces & Lighting Design Dan Drew	Makeup Design Jonathan Jarvis	VTC Education Coordinator Melissa McHugh
Stage Managers Veronica Gommiah Lenyx Rose	Costume Assistant/Alterations Ginger Garrett	Production Assistant Nyobi Boddie	Location Scouts Janece Freeman Clark Nyobie Boddie

Music and Vocal Direction by

Dwayne Clark

Choreography by

Lawrence Dandridge & Jonathan Duvelson

Videography & Editing by

Selena Alvarez

Directed by

Janece Freeman Clark

Original Production Directed by James Moore and Rob Ashford

“I’m A Believer” by Neil Diamond

*Shrek the Musical is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI).
All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI.*

SCENES & MUSICAL NUMBERS

Land of Far Away

- Scene 1: Fairytale Book
“Big, Bright, Beautiful World”Storytellers, Papa Ogre, Mama Ogre, Young Shrek & Shrek
- Scene 2: Shrek’s Swamp
“Story of My Life”Captains of the Guards & Fairytale Creatures
- Scene 3: The Forest
“Don’t Let Me Go”Donkey, Shrek
- Scene 4: Gates of Duloc
“Regiment”Farquaad’s Guards
“What’s Up, Duloc? Part 1”Farquaad & Citizens of Duloc
“What’s Up Duloc? Part 2”Farquaad & Citizens of Duloc
“What’s Up Duloc? Reprise”Farquaad & Citizens of Duloc
- Scene 5: Fiona’s Tower
“I Know It’s Today”Young Fiona, Teen Fiona, & Princess Fiona
- Scene 6: The Forest
“Travel Song”Donkey & Shrek
- Scene 7: Dragon’s Keep
“Forever”Dragon, The Knights, & Donkey
- Scene 8: Outside of Fiona’s Tower
“This Is How A Dream Comes True”Princess Fiona
- Scene 9: Waterfall
“Who I’d Be”Shrek, Princess Fiona, & Donkey
- Scene 10: The Forest
“Morning Person”Princess Fiona, Pied Piper, & Rats
“I Think I Got You Beat”Shrek & Princess Fiona
- Scene 11: Abandoned Bard
“Make a Move”Donkey & Shrek, Princess Fiona, Spice Mice,
Destiny’s Mice, Beatle Mice, Jackson Mice
- Scene 12: The Woods
“Morning Person” (Reprise)Princess Fiona
- Scene 13: Another area in The Woods
“Let Your Freak Flag Fly”Gingy, Sugar Plum Fairy, Mama Bear & The Fairytale Creatures
- Scene 14: Cathedral
“Big, Bright, Beautiful World” (Reprise)Shrek
“Finale”Shrek, Princess Fiona, Donkey & Fairytale Creatures

CAST



Aidan Elias
Eastmond



Alexandra Nina
Blackmore



Ava Rhys
Soares



Bailey
Edelman



Christian
Balmir



Colin
Boyle



DJ Clark



Dylan
Crespo



Ezekiel
Cohen



Gillian Millie
Hintelmann
Crawford



India
McLean



Jada
Clark

CAST



Jasir
Quddus



Jordan
Balmir



Jordan
Mann



Kazoani
Gonmiah



Kenny
Lee



Lotus
Harvell



Lux
Harvell



Madison Leigh
Gaines



Mason
Walton



Noah Anthony
Raj



Norah
Raj



Nyasah Soleil
Simmons

CAST



Seneca
Steplight-Tillet



Tarren
Allen



Troi
Gaines



Vincent
Fondetto



Vivienne
Vengroff



Walalehnon
Gonmiah



Zoë L.
Sepúlveda



WHO'S WHO

Aiden Elias Eastmond (Humpty Dumpty, Farquaad Guard, Rat) Aiden is excited about making his theatrical debut with Vanguard Theater Company's production of *Shrek Jr.*! Caleb is in the 7th grade at South Orange Middle School in South Orange, NJ where he's a member of the Elite Chorus lead by Jake Ezzo, SOMS general chorus, SOMS chamber music ensemble (viola) club, and the SOMS 7th grade orchestra. Aiden likes to read and study the stars, and dreams of becoming an Astrophysicist and a Broadway actor one day. He made his first appearance in the SOMS musical *Mama Mia* as the village men, bachelor at the bachelor party, and wedding guest. Aiden would like to thank his parents, grandparents, and South Orange Mommy village for their support!

Alexandra Nina Blacknore (Storyteller, Duloc Citizen, Spice Mice) Nina is excited to be returning to Vanguard. She performed in Vanguard's production of the *Lion King Kids* and has since been asked on several occasions to participate again. She has participated in dance and music recitals and school performances. She plays the violin and keyboard, takes tennis lessons, and aspires to be a teacher, camp counselor, actress, dancer and doctor. Nina is in 5th grade and attends Farley Elementary School.

Ava Rhys Soares (Storyteller, Duloc Citizen, Mini Guard, Destiny's Mice) Ava Soares is a happy 3rd grader hailing from South Orange, NJ. She loves her family, hanging with her besties, and singing. She has a little brother, Ellington.

Bailey Edelman (Princess Fiona) Bailey Edelman is a Junior at Millburn High School, and has plans on getting her BFA in Musical Theatre. Her most recent Vanguard credits include Lucy in *For The Love of Charlie Brown*, and Broadway Buddy.

Some of her other favorite roles include Vi in *Footloose* and Ms. Hannigan in *Annie*. She is absolutely excited to be in this production of *Shrek Jr.* with the most amazing cast! She would like to thank the creative team at Vanguard, Janeece, Dwayne, and Lawrence for the most amazing experience and show!!

Christian Balmir (Bishop, Storyteller, Duloc Citizen, Jackson Mice, Beatle Mice) Christian Balmir is a cerebral performer with a level of intensity beyond his years. As a budding jazz enthusiast, Christian began studying the piano at 3 years old and has now developed an interest in composing his own music. When not playing the piano, Christian enjoys soccer, baseball, and track, and was most recently granted the nickname of "Wheelz" by his baseball teammates. He is returning to Vanguard Theater Company after his debut last year in the *The Wiz of Oz*. He was also in his school's production of *Junie B. Jones* in 2019. Christian often credits his family for inspiring his imagination and creativity, and for nurturing his strong determination and unwavering curiosity.

Colin Boyle (Storyteller, Duloc Citizen, Beatle Mice) Colin Boyle has performed in many productions at Vanguard, Gas Lamp Players, and Ridgewood Ave. School. Favorite roles include JoJo in *Seussical*, King George III in *Hamilton*, and Zazu in *The Lion King Jr.* Special love and thanks to Ms. Janeece and Mr. Jonathan for believing in me and helping me grow as an actor!

DJ Clark (Little Pig, Storyteller, Duloc Citizen, Jackson Mice) Dwayne Harrison Clark (DJ) is so excited to be back with his VTC Kids family in *Shrek Jr.*! Prior VTC kids credits include: *Lion King Kids* (Young Simba), *Jungle Book Kids* (Mowgli), and *The Wiz of Oz* (Featured Munchkin). He was also a part of VTC's production of *The Music Man*. In addition to theater, DJ loves

WHO'S WHO

the drums - which he's been playing since the age of 2! He's also a competitive fencer (Sabre) and has won awards in his division. DJ also loves dancing and has been taking hip hop, ballet, and jazz for several years now. DJ's voice can be heard on various audio books, and an episode Paw Patrol. He's been featured in National Commercials for Glade and Flapjack. He's so happy that VTC has a place to call home and looks forward to spending a great amount of time there as the years go by. He wants to thank his mom - Janeece Freeman Clark - for all her hard work and dedication.

Dylan Crespo (Peter Pan, Farquaad Guard, Farquaad's Father, Rat) Dylan Crespo is currently a 6th grader at Montclair Kimberley Academy. He participated in Frenchwoods production of *Once on This Island Jr.* in summer 2019. He participated in Vanguard Theatre's *The Wiz of Oz* in February of 2020. He has continued virtual theatre classes since March with NY Film Academy's Musical Theatre Camp as well as Frenchwoods virtual camp. He is so excited to return to VTC for *Shrek Jr.*!

Ezekiel Cohen (Young Shrek, Storyteller, Duloc Citizen, Beatle Mice) Zeke is thrilled to be performing in his first production with Vanguard Theater! Previously, he was seen in Oak Knoll's summer productions of *Willy Wonka Jr. & Summer Camp*. Other productions have been more intimate - mostly in his home - where he can be found singing and dancing in the kitchen while preparing - and eating - breakfast (which is a challenge, it's hard to eat and sing at the same time). Zeke also has a passion for making up songs "on demand" for pretty much all occasions. Zeke lives with his Mom and Dad, and their two doggies, Ethel & Lucy.

Gillian Millie Hintelmann Crawford (Captain of the Guards, Pied Piper, White Rabbit)

Gillian Crawford can't wait to participate in the Vanguard Theater Company production of *Shrek Jr.*, having performed the play last fall at NJPAC! Previously, she was part of the *Create Your Own Musical* and *Theater Apprentice* programs in Newark. Currently, she is in 6th grade at Maplewood Middle School. Gillian's other interests include reading, jiu jitsu, drawing, and tormenting her twin brother. She would like to thank her parents for their constant encouragement and support.

India McLean (Duloc Citizen, Storyteller) India Jolie McLean is excited to bring down the curtain on her first appearance with Vanguard Theater Company. India has performed previously with Essex Youth Theater in *Grease is the Word* and *School of Rock*. A true creative and entrepreneur, India loves running the show. She can be found selling "India's Italian Ices" and designing children's bedding. She's made great friends and is very thankful for all she has learned from the professionals at Vanguard.

Jada Clark (Cheshire Cat, Dragon) Jada Jane Clark is thrilled to be in another VTC Kids production. Her prior VTC kids credits include: *Lion King Kids*, *The Wiz of Oz*, and *Honk*. She was also in VTC's mainstage productions of *Memphis* and *The Music Man*. In addition to her love of theater - Jada has a love for music and has been playing both the violin and piano since she was 3 years old. She's a member of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra Youth Orchestra program. Jada also loves dance and for almost a decade now has been studying ballet, tap, jazz, and contemporary forms of dance. Jada has been featured in several National commercials including Glade, Flapjack, MILK, and Daniel the Tiger. Jada is so proud of her mom (Janeece Freeman Clark) for realizing her DREAM. Though Jada's involved in many extra-curricular activities, she calls her Vanguard

WHO'S WHO

friends her true family and is thrilled that they now have a place to call home.

Jasir Quddus (Papa Ogre, Wolf, Guard, Dragon Holder) Jasir Quddus is delighted to be returning to Vanguard Theater Company. He played the lion in *The Wiz of Oz*, Rafikii 1 in *Lion King Kids*, and has participated in other productions with Vanguard Theater Company. Ryan was also in *High School Musical* with NJPAC arts education. Skimbleshanks, Macavity and Munglegerie in *Cats*, Scarecrow in *The Wiz* with Appel Farms. Jasir loves to dance with *Hip Hop Intensive* at NJPAC. He recently choreographed a dance for Open House to interest young students in hip hop dance. Jasir currently goes to Arts High School in the drama department. Jasir thanks his family for always supporting his dream to sing, dance, and act. Thank you to the Vanguard family for their support over the years.

Jordan Balmir (Pinocchio, Guard) Jordan Balmir is a vibrant performer who is funny, easy-going, and not afraid to put himself out there. He enjoys baseball, soccer, and dancing, and you might catch a glimpse of him "cutting a rug" in the infield! Jordan is returning to VTC after his debut last year in the *The Wiz of Oz*. He has been in three school productions: *James and the Giant Peach*, *Junie B. Jones* and *The Show Must Go Online* (a virtual musical production) and was selected to play the lead role of Charlie in *The Most Epic Birthday Party Ever* before it got canceled in May. Jordan is grateful to his parents for encouraging his versatility and allowing him to pursue his dream of performing.

Jordan Mann (Papa Bear, Guard) Jordan Mann is a natural performer who's love of the stage started in school at the age of 6 where he held various roles in *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*. His exposure to musical theater was further developed

when he participated in multiple programs at NJPAC where he appeared in several performances. He is thrilled to join the Vanguard team to connect with old and new friends in *Shrek the Musical Jr.*

Kazoani Gonmiah (Mama Ogre, Mama Bear, Knight) Kazoani Gonmiah is a young actor from Newark, NJ and a rising vocal major at the historic Arts High School. Her past credits include *Something Like a Fairytale*, *A Little Princess*, *The Wiz of Oz*, *Lion King*, and *Passion Play*. Kazoani is so happy to be able to create art with her Vanguard Family again and can't wait to do more!!

Kenny Lee (Donkey) Kenny Lee is a 17 year old senior who attends Parsippany High School. In addition to playing Donkey in VTC's production of *Shrek Jr.*, he was also a part of last year's *Broadway Buddy* program. Some of his favorite previous roles include: Mark Cohen in *Rent*, Sonny de la Vega in *In the Heights*, and Frank Abagnale Jr. in *Catch Me If You Can*. He'll be attending Boston Conservatory in the fall for Musical Theater. Kenny would like to thank everyone at Vanguard for being so creative and flexible, and allowing theater to continue in spite of these trying times.

Lotus Harvell (Duloc Citizen, Storyteller, Mini Guard) Lotus Harvell is in the 3rd grade at Jefferson Elementary School in Maplewood. She is happy to return to Vanguard Theater Company, having previously been seen in *Lion King Kids* and *The Wiz of Oz*. Additionally, Lotus takes voice lessons with Dwayne Clark and studies hip hop and jazz at Class Act Performing Arts Studio. She can be found FaceTiming with friends, playing Roblox, or riding her bike when not reciting her favorite lines from *Shrek Jr.* In addition to dance and theater, Lotus enjoys creative writing, playing field hockey, and being a member of the Dolphins Swim Team. Lotus wants to thank her family for

WHO'S WHO

supporting her and the Vanguard Theater Company for this opportunity.

Lux Harvell (Duloc Citizen, Storyteller) Lux Harvell is in the 5th grade at Jefferson Elementary School in Maplewood. Lux Harvell is happy to return to Vanguard Theater Company, having previously been seen in *The Wiz of Oz*. Additionally, Lux takes voice lessons with Dwayne Clark and studies Lyrical and Jazz at Class Act Performing Arts Studio. She can be found practicing her pirouette or playing when not reciting her favorite lines from *Shrek Jr.* In addition to dance and theater, Lux enjoys creative writing and West African mythology as well as reading fantasy and science fiction books. Lux wants to thank her family for supporting her and the Vanguard Theater Company for this opportunity.

Madison Leigh Gaines (Sugar Plum Fairy, Knight) Madison Leigh Gaines is 13 years old and this is her 3rd time being apart of a Vanguard production. She has a 4.29 GPA and is excited to be entering 8th grade at Rise Academy. Her hobbies include hanging out with her Grandma, dancing, trying new food trends, and hanging with her siblings. She loves Vanguard and all the things she's learned.

Mason Walton (Ugly Duckling, Guard) Mason Walton is a self taught dancer that is in the 4th grade. He loves performing and all things creative!

Noah Anthony Raj (Farquaad) Noah Raj is excited to participate in his second Vanguard Theater production. Noah captured hearts as the scarecrow in VTC's rendition of *The Wiz of Oz*. Through his million-dollar smile, uplifting voice, and witty humor, Noah always brings his A-game to the stage here at VTC. He has also performed at Paper Mill Playhouse and Triple Threat Theater camp as well as in church plays and

school concerts. In addition to acting and singing, Noah plays the piano, clarinet, and cello. He loves historical fiction and basketball. Noah is especially grateful to his family and Vanguard Theater Company for this incredible opportunity to learn from such an esteemed group of acting professionals.

Norah Raj (Young Fiona, Duloc Citizen, Storyteller, Mini Guard) Norah Raj has been singing and dancing well before she taught herself how to walk! This is Norah's second VTC production; her first was playing a munchkin in VTC's rendition of *The Wiz of Oz*. She has participated in a few class productions at the Paper Mill Playhouse in addition to Triple Threat Theater Summer Camp. In her spare time, she loves to read and learn new musical numbers to practice in front of the mirror!

Nyasah Soleil Simmons (Little Pig, Duloc Citizen, Storyteller) Nyasah Soleil Simmons is excited to return for her fourth season with Vanguard Theater Company. Nyasah first saw a teen production of *Shrek* when she was four years old, and has waited more than six years for a chance to be a part of this show. When she's not taking on fourth grade at the Montclair Cooperative School, Nyasah is practicing piano, playing Prodigy, video chatting with her friends, and running her slime business. Nyasah thanks her family for always supporting the things that are important to her.

Seneca Steplight-Tillet (Duloc Citizen, Storyteller, Mini Guard) Seneca N. Steplight-Tillet is an avid dancer and enthusiastic singer as well as a budding choreographer and theater director. She recently played The Adorable Lion in *My Father's Dragon* and the Step-Mother in *Cinderella/Cinderella* at Montclair-Kimberely Academy. When she is not playing basketball, swimming, or playing roblox, she is casting and directing her friends in *Hamilton*.

WHO'S WHO

Tarren Allen (Wicked Witch, Knight) Tarren Jasmine Allen is very excited to be in another Vanguard musical. Tarren is 13 years old from Plainsboro, NJ. She attends Community Middle School where she is a part of the 8th Grade Chorus. Tarren made her musical theater debut in *101 Dalmatians* as Pepper at the age of 8. From there Tarren continued her love for the arts, specifically musical theater. She participated in the NJPAC musical theater summer program. Tarren made her Vanguardian debut this past year in *The Wiz of Oz* following the ensemble tract.

Troi Gaines (Shrek) Troi Gaines is 17 years old and has been with Vanguard since he was 12. He was thrilled to take on the role of Shrek and join the staff once again to present a new type of production for the company. He enjoys art and music. He would like to thank his parents for making the sacrifices necessary to take him to every rehearsal and filming day, and Ms. Janeece for giving him the opportunity to play yet another amazing role.

Vincent Fondetto (GINGY, STORYTELLER, DULOC CITIZEN, BEATLE MICE) Vincent Fondetto is thrilled to make his debut in Vanguard Theater Company's Production of *Shrek, Jr.* He is 11 and attends 5th grade at Mount Pleasant Elementary in West Orange, NJ. Vincent has appeared in shows at Lyric PAC and Essex Youth Theater. Vincent is currently studying musical theater and voice at Papermill Playhouse. He enjoys writing stories especially comedy. Vincent thanks his friends and family for their love and support.

Vivienne Vengroff (Mad Hatter, Captain of the Guards, Dragon Holder) Vivvy Vengroff is thrilled to be returning to Vanguard Theater Company, having previously been seen in *Lion King Kids* and *The Wiz of Oz*. She is in 6th grade at Far Brook, where

she studies piano and violin, and will be playing Goneril in Far Brook's *The Tragedy of King Lear*. In addition to her love of theater, Vivvy plays softball with the Maplewood South Orange Villagers. Vivvy would like to thank Vanguard Theater Company for this opportunity.

Walalehnon Gonmiah (Little Pig, Duloc Citizen, Storyteller) Walalehnon Gonmiah is a young artist and actor who is so excited to be a part of the cast of *Shrek Jr!* Past VTC credits include: *Lion King Kids*, *The Jungle Book*, and *The Wiz of Oz!* She is very happy to be creating art with her #VanFam again!

Zoë L. Sepúlveda (Teen Fiona, Baby Bear) Zoë Luisa Sepúlveda is a 6th grader at South Orange Middle School. She is happily returning to Vanguard again after performing in *Lion King Kids*, *The Jungle Book Kids*, and *The Wiz of Oz*. Zoë has picked up cooking and baking while she continues to dance at Inspirational Dance and takes vocal and piano lessons at the Institute of Music for Children. She has a passion for the arts and loves Broadway, especially *Hamilton!* Zoë is thankful to her parents and Vanguard for the opportunity to share her creative side.

Dan Drew (Scenic Design) Dan Drew has been part of the Vanguard family since playing Huey in *Memphis* in 2017. In addition to acting, he works as the resident scenic and lighting designer for the department of arts education at NJPAC and a house carpenter and electrician at Rutgers Newark/ NJIT. Additionally, he has designed for national tours and has worked as technical director for the Crossroads Theater Company. He is thrilled to be taking on the role of Technical Director for Vanguard's new space and looks forward to many years of shows to come.

WHO'S WHO

Dwayne Clark (Co- Director/ Music Director) Dwayne Clark has been a part of Vanguard Theater company from the very beginning when he played the title character (Ray Charles) in *A Portrait of Ray* which premiered at Vanguard's inaugural gala. Since then he played in *Memphis* and has co-directed and co-music directed the VTC Kids productions of *Lion King Kids*, *The Wiz of Oz*, and *Shrek Jr.* alongside Janeece. His Broadway credits include *Rent*, *Smokey Joe's Cafe*, *Tarzan*, *Spiderman Turn Off The Dark*, *Urinetown*, *The Color Purple*, and *Crybaby* just to name a few. He's so proud of his wife, Janeece Freeman Clark, for pursuing her DREAM, and can't wait to see where this next chapter leads.

Ginger Garrett (Costume Associate)

Janeece Freeman Clark (Director/ Costumes)

Jonathan Duvelson (Choreographer)

Jonathan Jarvis (Makeup Design) Jonathan, better known as BoyLondon or Princess, has been doing makeup since he was 14. As a make-up artist he's worked on musicals, music video shoots, films, weddings, sweet sixteens, photoshoots and more! He's also a trained Musical Theater Artist who has appeared in dozens of musicals and counting!

Lawrence Dandridge (Choreographer)

Lenyx Rose (Associate Stage Manager) Lenyx Rose is the writer, director and composer of the short musical film, *Love Boom Bap* and docuseries *Love Boom Chat*. The Trinidadian native made her Off-Broadway debut with Vanguard Theater Company in the leading role of Aljana in *A Little Princess*. Rose is an award winning Stage Manager. Through Vanguard she has worked on several productions including *You're A Good Man Charlie Brown*, *Little Shop of*

Horrors, *The Wiz of Oz*, *Spelling Bee*, *Lion King Kids*, and *Shrek Jr.*! Rose's mission is to continue telling stories that showcase the beauty and experiences of the African diaspora through music, theater, and film.

Melissa McHugh (Education Coordinator, Front of House Manager) Melissa is thrilled to be a part of the Vanguard team. She has worked in the performing arts both on-stage and behind the scenes with American Stage Company, Shawnee Playhouse, Grey Advertising, and the Rutherford School District. Melissa would like to thank her family for their love and support, and Janeece for the opportunity to work with VTC.

Nyobi Boddie (Production Assistant) Nyobi Boddie is a longtime member of Vanguard Theater Company starring in *Little Shop of Horrors* (Audrey 2) and *For the Love of Charlie Brown*(Snoopy). He was also the Co-Director and Producer of *VTC Next's* production of *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. She is apart of the Syracuse University Visual Performing Arts' Musical Theater class of 2025 where she is using the skills she learned here at Vanguard!

Selena Alvarez (Videography & Editing)

Veronica Gonmiah (Stage Manager) Veronica Gonmiah is a Newark native and Arts High School alum. Veronica is a freelance photographer, as well as an independent professional flyer and content creator. Along with performing as a singer and in musical theatre, Veronica also works on the production side of things, taking on such roles as production manager, stage manager, production designer, and set/costume design for many film and theatrical pieces. (@becauseveronica for more updates and visit becauseveronica.com for more content.)

2021 - 2022 Tentative Season



Vanguard Theater Company

PRESENTS

THE WORLD PREMIERE OF

WALK IN MY GRAVITY

June 26TH 2021 - June 27TH 2021

Written as part of VTC Next's Song Cycle Creation Program

MUSIC & LYRICS WRITTEN BY

Abraham Deitz-Green

Lydia Ryan

Nimat Saleem

Bella Dimichino

Malcolm Green

Olivia Ridley

Darius Mullens

Maria Nalieth

Sylvie Schuetz

Jordan Allen

Nala King

Veronica Gonzalez

Yasmeena Sharif

ADDITIONAL MUSIC & LYRICS BY

Alex Ratner

Lawrence Dandridge

Stage Manager

Natalie Jones

Scenic Design Mentor

Jason Simms

Scenic Designer

Ariana Michel-Hamblin

Scenic Designer

Ashantah Kerr

Lighting Design

Jeff McCrum

Piano

Alex Ratner

Drums

Peter Saleh

Bass

Jeff Gellis

VTC Music Supervisor

Terri Gorgone

Music and Vocal Direction by

Alex Ratner

Choreography & Assistant Direction

Lawrence Dandridge

Song Cycle Creation Program Artistic Direction

Janece Freeman Clark

Alex Ratner

Lawrence Dandridge

Stage Direction

Janece Freeman Clark

VTC Next is a program designed to train the next generation of "Behind-the-Scenes" theater professionals - in order to create a pipeline for an equitable theater community.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

Composed by

“Walk In My Gravity”	Lyrics & Music by Song Cycle Creation Class
“Hiding”	Lyrics & Music by Darius Mullens, Malcolm Green, and Jordan Allen
“Too Real Too Fake”	Lyrics and Music by Bella Dimichino and Veronica Gonzalez
“To Be or Not To Be”	Lyrics & Music by Lydia Ryan, Maria Nalieth, and Yasmeena Sharif
“Transition 1 / Pins: My Hijab and I”	Lyrics and Music by Nimat Saleem and Nala King
“Image of a Man”	Lyrics & Music by Bella Dimichino and Veronica Gonzalez
“Just Like That”	Lyrics & Music by Songwriting & Music Production Class Summer 2020
“Transition 2 / Clean”	Lyrics & Music by Maria Nalieth and Sylvie Schuetz
“Sinful Society”	Lyrics & Music by Bella Dimichino and Veronica Gonzalez
“Who Can I Be”	Lyrics & Music by Abraham-Deitz-Green and Malcolm Green
“Transition 3 / Roots”	Lyrics & Music By Lydia Ryan & Veronica Gonzalez
“Human Touch”	Lyrics & Music by Darius Mullens & Bella Dimichino
“Black Girl Lotto”	Lyrics & Music by Nala King, Nimat Saleem, and Yasmeena Sharif
“Transition 4 / Mend Me To You”	Lyrics & Music by Song Cycle Creation Class

MUSICAL NUMBERS

Performed by

“Walk In My Gravity”	Company
“Hiding”	Marcus Beckett and Nigel Finley
“Too Real Too Fake”	Bella Dimichino and Veronica Gonzalez
“To Be or Not To Be”	Lydia Ryan, Gabby Beredo, Malcolm Green, and Company
“Transition 1 / Pins: My Hijab and I”	Sylvie Schuetz and Nimat Saleem
“Image of a Man”	Aaron Bowes and Bella Dimichino
“Just Like That”	Company
“Transition 2 / Clean”	Trevor Lavine and Maria Nalieth
“Sinful Society”	Veronica Gonzalez, David Harper, Nimat Saleem, Marcus Beckett
“Who Can I Be”	Troi Gaines and Gabby Beredo
“Transition 3 / Roots”	Abraham Deitz-Green, Yasmeena Sharif, Samy Cordero, Nala King
“Human Touch”	Marcus Beckett, Kenny Lee and Aaron Bowes
“Black Girl Lotto”	Nala King
“Transition 4”	Olivia Ridley, Sylvie Schuetz, Abraham Deitz-Green, Trevor Lavine
“Mend Me To You”	Company

CAST



Aaron
Bowes



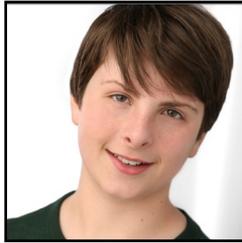
Abraham
Deitz-Green



Amil
Simmons



Bella
Dimichino



David
Harper



Gabby
Beredo



Jordan
Muhammad



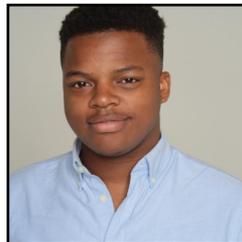
Kenny
Lee



Lydia
Ryan



Malcolm
Green



Marcus
Beckett



Maria
Nalieth

CAST



Mike
Amazan



Nala
King



Nigel
Finley



Nimat
Saleem



Olivia
Ridley



Samy
Cordero



Sol
Lecour



Sylvie
Schuetz



Trevor
Lavine



Troi
Gaines



Veronica
Gonzalez



Yasmeena
Sharif

WHO'S WHO

Aaron Bowes (Aaron) Aaron Bowes has appeared in MANY Vanguard productions including: *Hairspray*, *Memphis*, *Runaways*, *Carrie*, *Heathers*, *Spring Awakening*, and *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. He was in the 1st and 2nd National tour of *Showtime with Shakespeare* in the title role of William Shakespeare. He currently resides in Tampa, FL where he heads the band: Pilot Jonezz. Aaron studied acting at The New School of Drama.

Abraham Deitz-Green (Abraham/Composer) Abraham Deitz-Green is thrilled to be a part of *Walk In My Gravity*! Previous Vanguard credits: *Spring Awakening 2x* (Melchior), *Runaways* (Ensemble), *13* (Evan). In his free time, Abraham enjoys trampolining, spending time with friends, and venturing around Whole Foods looking for sampling stations. Next year, Abraham will study theatre and something else at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL, where there is, in fact, a Whole Foods, which does, in fact, have sampling stations. He would like to thank Janeece, Lawrence, Alex, Natalie, the cast, and his family for their unending support.

Amil Simmons (Amil) Amil Simmons is a junior at West Orange High School. Favorite credits include VTC's *Runaways* (Ensemble), *Spring Awakening* (Featured Dance Ensemble), and *A Little Princess* (African Ensemble), as well as *Seussical* (Mayzie), *Hairspray* (Little Inez), and *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* (Lady Capulet). Film/Television credits include *Sesame Street*, *Power*, *Kevin Can Wait*, *Orange Is the New Black*, *She's Gotta Have It*, and *The Upside*. Amil began all-around dance training at Irby's Dance Studio and continues dance, theatre, and voice at Class Act Performing Arts Studio. This is her third year with VTC.

Bella Dimichino (Bella/Composer) Bella Dimichino is thrilled to announce her com-

mitment to Berklee College of Music in Boston, MA. She is excited to be a part of the original song cycle, *Walk In My Gravity*, as she was one of the writers throughout its process. Other Vanguard productions include *The Music Man* (Ensemble), *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Featured Ensemble), *Runaways* (Featured Ensemble), *Heathers* (Heather Duke), *Spring Awakening* (Featured Ensemble), and the *Broadway Buddy* program, singing a duet with Joanna Young. Bella wants to thank Vanguard and each loving Vanguard member for their hard work and dedication--*Walk In My Gravity* is a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

David Harper (David) David has been in Vanguard for almost five years now. Some roles include Seymour in *Little Shop of Horrors*, Leaf Coneybear in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, The Baker in *Into the Woods*, and many more. He has also participated in programs such as *Broadway Buddy* and the recording of the album for this song cycle. He is so appreciative that he was given the opportunity to participate in this production, especially in this confusing time in the world.

Gabby Beredo (Gabby) Gabby Beredo is thrilled to be performing in her fourth Vanguard Theater Company production. Theatre credits include: VTC's *A Little Princess* (Becky), *Broadway Buddy Mentorship Cabaret 2019*, and *For the Love of Charlie Brown* (Sally); *Matilda the Musical US Tour* (Lavender), *Millions* AEA Reading, *School of Rock Promo Tour*, and *Annie* at Paper Mill Playhouse (Pepper). PSA credits include: "You Will Be Found" KOTA video, "Only We Know" video with Mia Michaels (So You Think You Can Dance), and Global Girls Alliance video with former FLOTUS Michelle Obama. Sending all my LOVE to the cast and crew!

WHO'S WHO

Jordan Muhammad (Jordan) Jordan Muhammad is a freshman at Northwestern University studying Theatre and American Studies and is thrilled to be home performing with VTC again. Her recent credits include: *Spring Awakening* (Thea), *Runaways* (Ensemble), and choreographing *The Nightmare Before Christmas* with Vanguard Theatre Company, and *Matilda* (The Acrobat), *Fabulation* (Allison; Grandma), and *Shakespeare in Love* (Viola de Lesseps) at Columbia High School in Maplewood. Jordan is also a lifelong dancer who studied primarily at Sharron Miller's Academy for the Performing Arts and recently starred in a dance film entitled "Back in a Storm" at NU.

Kenny Lee (Kenny) Kenny Lee is a 17 year old senior from Parsippany High School. In addition to playing Donkey in VTC's production of *Shrek Jr.*, Kenny was also a part of last year's *Broadway Buddy* program. Some of his favorite previous roles include: Mark Cohen in *Rent*, Sonny de la Vega in *In the Heights*, and Frank Abagnale Jr. in *Catch Me If You Can*. He'll be attending Boston Conservatory in the fall for Musical Theater. Kenny would like to thank everyone at Vanguard for being so creative and flexible and allowing theater to continue in spite of these trying times.

Lydia Ryan (Lydia/Composer) Lydia is thrilled to be performing in the first show in which she contributed to the development process! She has performed with Vanguard for two years: *A Little Princess* (schoolgirl and Lavinia understudy) and *For the Love of Charlie Brown* (Marcie). Outside of Vanguard, Lydia has appeared as a member of the ensemble in the pilot production of *Matilda JR.*, as well as in revues and at Carnegie Hall. Lydia enjoys teaching music and theatre to younger children as well as performing. She is grateful to her Vanguard family for this opportunity!

Malcom Green (Malcom/Composer) Malcom Green could not be any more grateful to be a part of Vanguard Theater Company's *Walk In My Gravity!* You might have seen him in Vanguard's *Broadway Buddy* Performance, as Melchoir in *Spring Awakening* with Aspire PAC, or Tom Collins in *Rent* with Forbidden Theatre He has been recognized by National Youth Arts with the Outstanding Lead Performance Award. He thanks Darius Mullens and Abraham Deitz-Green for their immense talent. He also thanks Maranda Felton, Clifton Jones, Makhari Felton, and his loving friends for their overwhelming support. Lastly, he thanks Janeece Freeman, Lawrence Dandridge, Alex Ratner, and everyone behind the scenes who have been involved in such a beautiful process.

Marcus Beckett (Marcus) Marcus Beckett, a native of East Orange, NJ, is an artist and educator throughout the NYC/NJ area. Past Vanguard credits include *The Music Man* and *A Little Princess*. Other onstage credits include: *Till* (Emmett), *Another Part of the Forest* (Oscar), *The Colored Museum* (Guy/Man/Waiter), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Bottom), *Noises Off* (Garry), *Magic Tree House* (Dipper), *Pippin* (Leading Player), *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Mitch), *Dreamgirls* (Jimmy), *The Movement* (Tobias), and *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* (Schroeder).

Maria Nalieth (Maria/Composer) Maria Nalieth is so excited to be a part of *Walk in my Gravity*. This is her 10th production with Vanguard Theater Company. Past credits include *Spring Awakening* (Wendla), *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Olive), and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Lucetta); she also assisted backstage on shows such as *The Nightmare Before Christmas* and *The Wiz of Oz*. Maria is so proud of her talented peers for creating such beautiful art amidst a world that kept

WHO'S WHO

falling apart. She is so grateful for everything Vanguard has given her and cannot wait to share this show with her loved ones.

Mike Amazan (Mike) Mike Amazan has appeared in past Vanguard productions of *Memphis* (2017) and *Hairspray* (2015), and he is thrilled to be part of the cast of *Walk In My Gravity*. Coming off a performing hiatus, this has been an amazing opportunity for Mike. Being surrounded by talented and like-minded individuals and creating a new piece of work has been the best escape from the pandemic that has taken over the world.

Nala King (Nala/Composer) Nala King is thrilled to be returning to Vanguard Theater Company, where her most recent/favorite credits include *Into the Woods Jr.*, *13*, and *Spring Awakening*. She is a student at both North Plainfield High School and Somerset County Vocational Technical High School's Theater Arts Program. Additional credits include: *Once on This Island Jr.* with NJPAC, *Hairspray* with ShowKids Invitational Theater, *Legally Blonde* with North Plainfield School, and *A Chorus Line* with SCVTHS. Nala is grateful for the nurturing and loving atmosphere created by Vanguard. Thank you to Mom, Dad, Noah, and family.

Nigel Finley (Nigel) Nigel Finley is a Harlem-based arts administrator and performing artist. His Vanguard credits include *A Little Princess* and *Spring Awakening*. Other recent theatre credits include *Coming Home: A Family Musical* (Aurway Repertory Theatre).

Nimat Saleem (Nimat/Composer) Nimat Saleem educates many peers through her various performances here at Vanguard Theater Company. Through Vanguard's

supportive and beneficial programs and opportunities, Saleem enhanced her performing arts abilities through shows such as *Once on This Island*. Alongside Vanguard's performances, Saleem has further developed her experiences on stage at her high school, The Cicely L. Tyson M/H School of Performing and Fine Arts. She discovered her passion for performing during her 8th grade year at Whitney E. Houston Academy and now in her 12th grade year, she hopes to inspire her audiences and family with her desire to entertain.

Olivia Ridley (Olivia/Composer) Olivia Ridley is a senior at West Orange High School and will be attending Yale University in the fall. Over her 4 years with Vanguard, she's had the pleasure of performing in many VTC productions, her favorite credits including *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Olive Ostrovsky) and two productions of *Spring Awakening* (Martha/Ilse). Her interests extend beyond performance; she loves poetry, political science, and playwriting, and recently had her play, *Ghost Gun*, published by Playscripts. She cannot express her gratitude enough for Vanguard, for providing a platform for truly diverse theater and serving as a source of undying love and support.

Samy Cordero (Samy/Assistant Director) Samy Cordero is so excited to be back with her Vanguard Family after the crazy last two years. Her Favorite Vanguard credits include *Spring Awakening* (Wendla), *Carrie The Musical* (Sue), *Heathers the Musical* (Veronica), *Runaways* at the ATA Theatre in New York, and the first four years of *Broadway Buddy*. Samy is a rising junior at Webster Conservatory of Theatre Arts pursuing a degree in Acting. She was most recently seen in Webster's Production of *The Living* by Anthony Clarvoe.

WHO'S WHO

Sol Lecour (Sol) Sol Lecour is incredibly grateful to be part of another Vanguard Theater Company production. Her previous VTC credits include *Spring Awakening* and the *2020 Broadway Buddy Cabaret*. Her other favorite credits include *In the Heights* and *Trojan Women* performed at West Orange High School and *Midnight Madness* with New Jersey Youth Theatre. Sol has trained in dance for over 10 years at Unique Performance Arts Center and has been dancing for 15 years. She is forever grateful for her parents' continuous support of her performance endeavors and to Vanguard for such a wonderful opportunity to grow as a performing artist.

Sylvie Schuetz (Sylvie/Composer) Sylvie Schuetz is delighted to be performing in *Walk In My Gravity*. Recent credits include *Spring Awakening* and *Runaways* with Vanguard Theater Company. After graduating from Columbia High School, Sylvie will attend Boston Conservatory at Berklee in the fall to work toward a BFA in contemporary theater. She will miss her Vanguard family deeply but will never forget the profound impact each member has had on her understanding of this world.

Trevor Lavine (Trevor) Vanguard Credits: *Into The Woods*, *Children's Letters to God*, *13: The Musical*, *Runaways*, *A Little Princess*. Trevor Lavine is a 17-year-old senior currently attending Cicely L. Tyson School of Performing and Fine Arts. Over the course of his high school career, Trevor found that he was passionate about being on-stage. This led to his Off-Broadway debut in New York City playing Brett in *Children's Letters to God*. You might've seen him in shows like: *Runaways*, *A Little Princess*, *The Wiz of Oz*, *Sister Act*, and many more. Trevor hopes to continue down the path of performing and wants to pursue his dreams of being a successful working actor.

Troi Gaines (Troi) Troi Gaines is 17 years old and has been with Vanguard since he was 12, appearing in productions such as *Shrek Jr.* (Shrek), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Seymour), *Into the Woods* (Jack), *13: The Musical* (Archie), *Runaways*, *Fright Night*, and several years of *Broadway Buddy*. In addition to theatre, he enjoys art and music. He would like to thank his parents for their love and support and Ms. Janeece for always finding him such amazing opportunities.

Veronica Gonzalez (Veronica/Composer) Veronica Gonzalez, a rising senior at Montclair Kimberley Academy, is honored to be a part of *Walk In My Gravity*, her third Vanguard production. Other Vanguard roles include Anna in *Spring Awakening* and Audrey in *Little Shop of Horrors*. She was also a member of Vanguard's *Broadway Buddy* program and worked with Gabriella Sorrentino. Since the age of ten, Veronica has performed in local musicals and is a member of Paper Mill's Children's Theater on Tour. Veronica wants to thank Vanguard for this amazing experience and congratulate them on their new theater space!

Yasmeena Sharif (Yasmeena/Composer) Yasmeena Sharif is 15 and a student at Newark Academy. She is excited to have been a part of the writing process of VTC's *Walk In My Gravity!* Her past credits include: *The Little Mermaid* (Ariel), *For the Love of Charlie Brown* (Sally), *13: The Musical* (Patrice), *Into the Woods* (Cinderella), *Hairspray* (Little Inez), *A Little Princess* (Ermengarde/Sara US), *Children's Letters to God* (Joanna), *Godspell* (Anna Maria), *The Wiz* (Dorothy), and *Seussical JR.* (Jolo). She is so excited for the *Walk In My Gravity* song cycle and honored to have been able to help contribute to this project.

WHO'S WHO

Alex Ratner (Music Director/Co-Director of VTC Next's Song Cycle Creation Program)

Ariana Michel-Hamblin (Set Designer) Ariana Michel-Hamblin (she/her) is an aspiring scenic designer for theatre, film, and television. She is currently an undergraduate student at Montclair State University pursuing a BFA in Theatre & Dance under the production/design concentration. From a young age, Ariana always showed interest in the world of performing arts, whether it was onstage or backstage, and she is eager to further experience both sides of the spectrum. She was recently props master for Montclair State University's spring musical *Brooklyn's Bridge* and is currently in the process of set-designing MSU's fall 2021 production of Jonathan Larson's *Rent*.

Ashantah Kerr (Set Designer) Ashantah Kerr's history of working in theatre stems from about the time of middle school when she began stage crew. That later led into work in high school as a fly operator, stage manager and set chief/designer of small pieces on school productions such as *Hairspray*, *Mary Poppins*, and *Matilda*. This love for theatre allowed for the opportunity of a spot in the Montclair State University Theatre Program as an Undergraduate in Production and Design with a focus in Scenic Design. She loves to create and can't wait to create small--and even big--designs for shows everywhere someday!

Janece Freeman Clark (Stage Direction / Co-Director of VTC Next's Song Cycle Creation Program)

Jason Simms (Set Design Mentor) Jason Simms (he/him) is an award-winning scenographer for theater, opera, musicals, and film and has designed over 200 productions as well as several film projects including music videos and short films. Born and

raised in Carson City, NV, Simms started designing for theatre at the age of 15. He now resides in Ithaca, NY, where he is an Assistant Professor of Design at Cornell University in the department of Performing & Media Arts. He designs sets in New York City as well as at regional theaters across the United States. Learn more about Jason at www.jasonsimmsdesign.com.

Lawrence Dandridge (Choreographer / Associate Director/Co-Director of VTC Next's Song Cycle Creation Program)

Terri Gorgone (VTC Music Supervisor) Terri Gorgone is a freelance musician and musical director in theatres and venues throughout New York and New Jersey. She has been a music educator for over 30 years. She presently teaches musical theatre at the Cicely L. Tyson School of Performing Arts and is the director and music director of several shows produced throughout the school year. She is currently on the Executive Board of The Vanguard Theater Company where she serves as the Secretary and Music Supervisor. She is one of the founding board members of Vanguard Theater Company and has been instrumental in creating and developing shows and educational content for the company. She has been the musical director for the Encore Youth Theatre at the New Jersey School of Dramatic Arts and worked as music director and accompanist at NJPAC. She is a graduate of the Crane of Music with Piano Performance concentration and has a Masters degree from NYU in theater. Terri has served as musical director for over 50 shows and counting. She lends her musical talents to professional theater, community theater, and educational theater alike.

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Lighting: \$1K
Contractor Fee: \$10K
ROOM TOTAL: \$13.5K

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Lighting: \$1K
Contractor Fees: \$10K
Total: \$13.5K

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Contractor Fees: \$30K
Total: \$39K

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Boston University, directs the Afro-
can-American Studies Program, and is
Editor in Chief of the journal, *The Black
Scholar*.

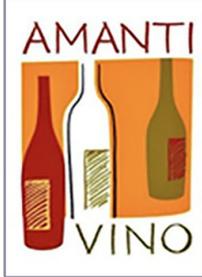




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