

UNICORN · COLONIAL · PLAYHOUSE
BERKSHIRE
THEATRE GROUP

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**Berkshire Theatre Group Announces
Cast for the Upcoming Production of *John & Jen*
A soaring musical about family, memory
and the love that shapes us across a lifetime.**

Pittsfield, MA— Berkshire Theatre Group (BTG) and Artistic Director, CEO Kate Maguire are pleased to announce the cast and creative team for the upcoming production of *John & Jen*, the intimate and deeply moving musical by Andrew Lippa and Tom Greenwald. Directed by Gregg Edelman, with music direction by Nicolas Perez, the production will run May 20 through June 7 on the Larry Vaber Stage at The Unicorn Theatre.

John & Jen traces the evolving bond between siblings—and later between mother and son—across three decades. Told through a soaring contemporary score that blends pop, folk and musical theatre influences, the story follows Jen as she reflects on her childhood with her younger brother John. Their connection, shaped by youthful rebellion, family expectations and unspoken love, is marked by small but powerful touchstones—including a well-worn baseball glove that becomes a quiet symbol of memory, loss and enduring devotion. As Jen grows into adulthood and raises her own son, the echoes of her past shape her hopes, fears and fierce love as a parent.

Directed by Gregg Edelman, whose previous work at Berkshire Theatre Group includes directing acclaimed productions of Irving Berlin's *White Christmas* and *Once* and acting in last season's award-winning *Metamorphoses*, this production benefits from his decades of

experience on Broadway and beyond. A Tony Award nominee, Edelman's Broadway credits include *City of Angels*, *Les Misérables*, *Into the Woods*, *Cabaret*, *Sweeney Todd* and *Water for Elephants*, reflecting a career rooted in powerful, character-driven musical storytelling.

Music direction is by Nicolas Perez, a New York City-based music director and accompanist currently on the music team for Broadway's *Buena Vista Social Club* and serving as music director for its upcoming First National Tour. He previously served as Music Supervisor and Principal Accompanist for the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus and is also the music director for *The Phantom of the Opera* star Franc D'Ambrosio, touring nationally and internationally.

This production features **Samantha Gershman** as Jen and **Jake Bentley Young** as John.

[Click Here to Download Headshots](#)

DIRECTED BY
Gregg Edelman

John & Jen

Jake Bentley Young

Samantha Gershman

AT THE UNICORN THEATRE

John & Jen

A Musical

directed by Gregg Edelman

on the Larry Vaber Stage

at The Unicorn Theatre

Previews: Wednesday, May 20 at 7pm & Thursday, May 21 at 7pm
Opening/Press Night: Friday, May 22 at 7pm
Closing: Sunday, June 7 at 2pm

About

John & Jen is a poignant, personal and quietly powerful musical about family, memory and the enduring bonds that shape our lives. With its close-knit focus and deeply resonant score, the musical exemplifies the kind of artist-driven storytelling that defines The Unicorn Theatre. Through three decades of life, love and loss, *John & Jen* offers audiences a moving theatrical experience about the connections that define us and the memories that stay with us

About the Artists

Jake Bentley Young (John) Jake is honored to join the company of *John & Jen*. Broadway: *The Queen of Versailles*; Off-Broadway: *The Play That Goes Wrong*; Regional: Papermill Playhouse, Sacramento Music Circus, North Shore Music Theatre, Bay Street Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, among many others. Jake starred as the titular character in the world premiere of Pulitzer Prize winning playwright Robert Schenkkan's new play, *Bob & Jean: A Love Story*. Jake also originated the role of Johnny Lawrence in the pre-Broadway tryout of *The Karate Kid: The Musical*. TV/Film: *Elsbeth*, Darren Aronofsky's *Caught Stealing*. Endless thanks to CGF, PH Entertainment, The TRC Company, Gregg Edelman and most of all, my Ana. For Mom and Dad, always. www.jakebentleyyoung.com @jakebentleyyoung

Samantha Gershman (Jen) Samantha is thrilled to make her BTG debut and gives a very special thank you to Gregg Edelman and Claire Burke for making that happen! She was most recently seen in the Classic Stage Company production of *The Baker's Wife* (Inez) and as Gabriella in the Amazon Prime series, *Gravesend*, airing this summer. Broadway Credits: *Water for Elephants* (Marlena standby), *A Beautiful Noise* (Swing). National Tours: *Jersey Boys* (Mary Delgado), *Jekyll & Hyde* (Lucy standby). Favorite regional credits: *Beautiful* (Carole King; Jeff nomination*), *Evita* (Eva Perón), *A Chorus Line* (Diana Morales; Helen Hayes Winner*). Endless thanks to DGRW and her beautiful family. Dedicated to her dad.

About the Creative Artists

Andrew Lippa (Playwright) is an award-winning composer, lyricist and playwright known for creating emotionally rich, character-driven musicals that span both intimate chamber works and large-scale Broadway productions. He is best known for *John & Jen*, *The Wild Party*, *Big Fish* and the Tony Award-nominated Broadway musical *The Addams Family*. Lippa's writing blends contemporary musical theater storytelling with humor, heart and sweeping melodies, often exploring themes of family, identity and personal transformation.

His honors include the Drama Desk Award and Outer Critics Circle Award for *The Wild Party*, along with Tony Award and Grammy Award nominations for his Broadway work. In addition to his stage musicals, Lippa created the concert oratorio *I Am Harvey Milk*, which has been performed by orchestras and choruses across the country. A frequent collaborator with regional

theaters and symphonies, Lippa continues to develop new work for stage and concert performance while remaining a respected voice in contemporary American musical theater.

Tom Greenwald (Playwright) is a playwright, lyricist and novelist whose work spans musical theater, children's literature and television writing. He is best known in the theater world as the lyricist and co-book writer of *John & Jen*, written with composer Andrew Lippa, an intimate two-person musical that has become a widely produced favorite at regional theaters and conservatories. Greenwald's stage work is known for its emotional clarity, character-driven storytelling and thoughtful exploration of family, identity and relationships.

In addition to his theater writing, Greenwald is an accomplished author of books for young readers, including *Charlie Joe Jackson's Guide to Not Reading* and *Jack Strong Takes a Stand*, praised for their humor and insight into adolescent life. His work across mediums reflects a consistent focus on authentic voice and heartfelt storytelling, making him a respected contributor to contemporary musical theater and literary audiences alike.

Gregg Edelman (Director) is grateful to be returning to his directing home for this season's *John & Jen*. Gregg was most recently seen at BTG as a member of the cast in last season's *Metamorphoses*, but previously he directed BTG's production of *Once* at The Colonial Theatre. His other directing efforts at BTG include *Constellations*, *White Christmas*, *What We May Be* and *Arsenic and Old Lace*. His acting credits include numerous Broadway productions such as *City Of Angels*, *Into The Woods*, *1776*, *Passion*, *Wonderful Town* and *Cabaret*. Other NYC productions include *The Perplexed* at MTC, *Flight*, *Candide* at NYC Opera, *Forbidden Broadway* and *Reefer Madness*. He dedicates his work on this production to his mother, Shirle. In the '50s and '60s, with little help from friends, family or the legal system, she raised two boys all on her own. He was always impressed by his mom when he was a child but it wasn't until he became a father that he realized what a monumental achievement she accomplished. Here's to Shirle Ann Edelman...and all the other single parents in this world.

Nicolas Perez (Music Director) is a NYC music director and accompanist. He is currently on the music team for Broadway's *Buena Vista Social Club* and is the music director for the upcoming First National Tour. Previously, he was the Music Supervisor and Principal Accompanist for the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus. He is the music director for *Phantom of the Opera's Franc D'Ambrosio*, touring across the US and internationally. @nickplayspiano

Jason Simms (Scenic Director) is a designer for plays, musical theatre, opera and media. Jason is honored to return to BTG after designing *Metamorphoses* (2025), *4000 Miles* (2024), *The Smile of Her* (2023), *Hair* (2018), *The Puppetmaster of Lodz* (2012) and *Dutch Masters* (2011). Work in other regional theatres includes: Walnut Street Theatre (Philadelphia), Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Pioneer Theatre Co. (Salt Lake City), Weston Playhouse (Vermont), George St. Playhouse, Philadelphia Theatre Co., People's Light and Theatre (Philadelphia), Bristol Riverside Theatre (Bristol, PA), Denver Center Theatre Co., Chautauqua Theatre Co. (Chautauqua, NY), The Old Globe (San Diego), TheatreWorks (Silicon Valley), Two River

Theatre Co. (Red Bank, NJ) and many others. NYC venues include: The Public, The Cherry Lane, 2nd Stage Uptown, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Soho Playhouse, The Juilliard School, The Ohio Theater, The New Ohio Theater, The Bushwick Starr and many others. Jason is an Assistant Professor of Design at The University of Iowa, Department of Theatre Arts. MFA: NYU, Tisch School of the Arts.

Amanda Roberge (Costume Designer) is a New York based costume designer for theater, opera, film and television. Recent works include the Climate Change Operas, BAM, world premiere; *And Then There Were None*, Alley Theater and *As You Like It*, Public Works. She is invested in pursuing sustainable design practices. MFA NYU Tisch School of Design for Stage and Film.

Patricia M. Nichols (Lighting Designer) is based in New York, and her work has been seen Off-Broadway, on national tours and in regional theatres across the country, as well as in live activation installations. Off-Broadway credits include *How Alfo Learned to Love*, *Broken*, *Splintered Souls*, *Fidelity* (FutureStages at New World Stages), *Because I Can* and *Safety*. She was also part of the artistic team for the national tours of *The Elf on the Shelf: A Christmas Musical* and *The Gazillion Bubble Show*. Her regional theatre work includes productions at Berkshire Theatre Group, Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theatre, Dorset Theatre Festival, Cape Rep Theatre and Skyline Theatre Company. Alongside her own design work, Tricia has served as Associate Lighting Designer for the Broadway production, all domestic and international productions and the film of *Jersey Boys*. She was also Associate Lighting Designer for the Broadway productions of *The Pirate Queen* and *Freeman of Color*, as well as the Broadway and touring productions plus the HBO special of *Billy Crystal's 700 Sundays*. In addition, she has assisted numerous lighting designers on Broadway and out-of-town productions. Nichols is a member of United Scenic Artists and received her MFA in Lighting Design from the University of California, San Diego.

Joanna Lynne Staub (Sound Designer) is a NYC-based Sound Designer and Audio Engineer. Previous designs at BTG: *The Mousetrap*, Mel Brooks' *Young Frankenstein*. Other regional designs include work at Alliance Theatre, Asolo Rep, Bay Street Playhouse, Bucks County Playhouse, Cleveland Playhouse, Dallas Theatre Center, Ensemble Studio Theatre, 5th Avenue Theatre, Geva Theatre, Goodman Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Nashville Children's Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Public Theatre, Seattle Rep, TheatreWorks Hartford, Trinity Rep, Weston Playhouse and WP Theatre. She has extensive credits for associate designing and engineering Broadway shows and national touring companies. Her TV credits include audio engineering PBS's *Great Performances* and NBC productions of *The Sound of Music Live!*, *Peter Pan Live!* and *The Wiz Live!*. She has lectured at Ithaca College, Princeton University, University of Cincinnati and SUNY Albany. She holds music, audio engineering and technical theatre degrees from Ithaca College and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Proud Member of USA829. jlsound.com

Jenn Gallo (Stage Manager) is happy to be spending another spring in the Berkshires. Recently, she has been working at the Walnut Street Theatre (*Dreamgirls*, *Elf*, *A Christmas Story*) and on a National Tour (*Jagged Little Pill*). Past favorites at BTG include *Metamorphoses*, *Once* and *The Music Man*. Please check out the awesome work done by @trevorproject and @hrc.

The TRC Company, Claire Burke, CSA (Casting Director) Led by partners Claire Burke, Kevin Metzger-Timson, Xavier Rubiano and Peter Van Dam. BTG: *Pipe Dream*. Broadway: *Beaches*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Dead Outlaw*, *BOOP! The Musical*, Stephen Sondheim's *Old Friends*, *Buena Vista Social Club*, *Death Becomes Her*, *Left on Tenth*, *The Outsiders*, *SIX*, *Aladdin*. National Tours: *The Phantom of The Opera*, *Water for Elephants*, *Beauty & The Beast*, *The Wiz*, *Back To The Future*, *Les Misérables*. The TRC Company is proud to continue the casting legacy of Tara Rubin Casting and Johnson-Liff Casting.

Get Ready—This Cast Reveal Is About to Strut In

Audiences can also look ahead to this summer's *The Legend of Georgia McBride*, a high-energy, feel-good comedy packed with big laughs, bold performances and plenty of heart. **Michael Wartella** takes on the role of Casey, who transforms into the dazzling Georgia McBride in a story that celebrates identity, reinvention and the magic of performance.

Joining Wartella are BTG favorites **Shayne Haley** and **David Adkins**, along with **Courter Simmons**, the internationally renowned live-singing drag artist known as Cacophony Daniels, who has recently worked off-Broadway understudying the legendary Bianca Del Rio. With sharp comedy, standout performances and a whole lot of sparkle, *The Legend of Georgia McBride* is shaping up to be one of the season's most joyful theatrical events.

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About Berkshire Theatre Group

The Colonial Theatre, founded in 1903, and Berkshire Theatre Festival, founded in 1928, are two of the oldest cultural organizations in the Berkshires. In 2010, under the leadership of Artistic Director and CEO Kate Maguire, the two organizations merged to form Berkshire Theatre Group (BTG).

Berkshire Theatre Group's mission is to support wide-ranging artistic exploration and acclaimed performances in theatre, dance, music and entertainment. Each year, BTG produces and presents performances to over 68,000 attendees and, through its Education Program, serves over 10,000 Berkshire County school children annually. BTG is proud to offer the only approved curriculum-based theatre educational programming of its kind in the region, integrating the arts directly into classroom learning and enriching students' academic and creative development.

In July 2020, Berkshire Theatre Group was the first company in the United States to earn approval from Actors' Equity Association to produce a musical (*Godspell*) in the wake of the

COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2028, Berkshire Theatre Group will celebrate 100 years of theatre.