

## For Immediate Release

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## A Christmas Story: The Musical Cast Information



JJ Davis

### JJ Davis (Jean)

J.J. Davis, a Baltimore native, was last seen as Multiple Characters (7), in the 2024 Lofte Community Theater, Spring production of, "THE SUNSHINE EXPRESS", as Pastor Pete, in the August 2023 Omaha Fringe Festival play, "MIX & MACHINATE", at the Benson Theater, in a Play, as Dr. Henry Jekyll & Mr. Edward Hyde in the Florentine Players 2022 Fall production of, "THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL & MR. HYDE", as Chris Smith, a Republican Strategist, in the SNAP 2022 Summer Production of, "THE LAST SUPPER", at the Bellevue Little Theater. As "Fist Toes" and THREE other characters, in the BLUEBARN Theater 2021 production of, "A VERY DIEHARD CHRISTMAS." As "Lloyd Penny" in the LOFTE Community Theater 2020 production of "OFFICE HOURS", in September, Mr. Davis played the role of "Walter Flood" in the LOFTE Community Theater 2020 production of "BECKY'S NEW CAR", as "Martini" in the Florentine Players February 2020 production of "ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST". As "George" in the September 2019 LOFTE Community Theater production of "OF MICE AND MEN". Mr. Davis performed at the 2018 Great Plains Theater Conference as the "Father" in "ALL THE PEOPLE YOU'VE BEEN". JJ again played Multiple Roles in "THE RESISTABLE RISE OF ARTURO UI" at the BLUEBARN Theater in 2016 and as "Professor Willard" in the BLUEBARN Award-Winning 2015 Production of "OUR TOWN". Prior to that Mr. Davis was last seen in his Awarding - Winning role as The Foreman in "12 ANGRY MEN" at the Omaha Community Playhouse. J.J. received the Bill Bailey Award for Best Debut by a Male Actor at the Playhouse. A former Award-Winning Sportscaster in Omaha and around the country, JJ has performed on stage in multiple places, including Hollywood.

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Landon Backhaus

### **Landon Backhaus** (Ralphie)

Landon is excited to be playing Ralphie in A Christmas Story on the Rose MainStage! You may have recently seen Landon as Charlie in Charlie and the Chocolate Factory this past summer or as Rowley in Diary of a Wimpy Kid this past fall on the Rose Theater stage. Landon is 13 years old and has been singing, acting, and dancing in musical theater/dance classes at the Rose since he was 3 years old. He has starred in many roles in the Rose Theater Mini & Junior Brigade productions- Daddy Warbucks in Annie KIDS, Aladdin in Aladdin KIDS, Pinocchio in My Son Pinocchio JR., Marty the Zebra in Madagascar JR., a Wickersham Brother in Seussical JR. and Grasshopper in James and the Giant Peach JR. He also has performed as JoJo in Seussical at the Papillion Area Community Theater and as Young Thomas in TuckEverlasting at the Papillion La Vista South High School last year. Landon is currently in eighth grade at Russell Middle School. When he's not performing on the theater stage he enjoys playing his violin, playing the percussion instruments in his school band, or singing with his school show choir. Landon is thankful for this opportunity to be performing and thanks everyone who has come to see the show. He hopes you enjoy A CHRISTMAS STORY watching Cowboy Ralphie to the Rescue... Yippee-Kai-Oh!



Brendan Brown

### **Brendan Brown** (The Old Man)

Brendan is excited to return to the Rose stage! He last appeared in Diary of a Wimpy Kid. Brown has also starred in The Play That Goes Wrong, Beautiful: The Carole King Musical, Kinky Boots, The Color Purple, Ragtime, She Kills Monsters, Parade, Mamma Mia, Sister Act, and Hairspray, all at the Omaha Community Playhouse. He also starred in Red Summer, at the Bluebarn Theatre.



Lauren Krupski

### **Lauren Krupski** (Mother)

Lauren is an Omaha- based actor who has appeared in many productions throughout the area. Some notable roles include Maria in The Sound of Music at The Rose, Rosalie Mullins in School of Rock at the Omaha Community Playhouse, Princess Fiona in Shrek the Musical at The Rose and most recently as Sandra in The Play That Goes Wrong at the Omaha Community Playhouse. also, Lauren has performed many times with the Omaha Symphony in their family and educational shows. She has been seen in Mission Imagination for two years, as well as hosting the Link Up! concerts the last five years. Lauren has also appeared with the Sarasota Symphony, Rochester Philharmonic, and the Lima Symphony Orchestra.

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Addie Olsen

**Addie Olsen** (Randy)

Hi, I'm Addie Olsen and I'm playing Randy Parker in A Christmas Story. I'm very excited to be a part of this fun and funny, holiday classic. My first time performing at the Rose was in last summer's musical, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. I'm a student at Sunset Hills Elementary. I enjoy reading and writing stories, playing the saxophone and piano, and practicing with the cast and crew. What I love most is my time with family and friends. I want to say a big thank you to my mom, dad and sister, Juna, for always being by my side. Merry Christmas to everyone and I hope that you all enjoy the show!



Michelle Bester

**Michelle Bester** (Miss Shields)

Michelle is beyond thrilled to return to The Rose Theater in her first premium show! As a Bellevue native, it's an honor to perform within her community. You might recognize her from her last production here at The Rose Theater in "Three Little Birds," as Cedella or in "Dreamgirls," as an ensemble member at the Omaha Community Playhouse. While previously living in Chicago, she had the honor to perform with various equity theaters. When she's not performing, she loves exploring her love of fashion and traveling. Michelle would like to thank all of her family and friends for their support to follow her dreams, and most importantly God for giving her this opportunity! @ms\_bester



Rachel Smart

**Rachel Smart** (Mrs. Schwartz / Ensemble)

Rachel is a teaching artist, actor, and playwright originally from Brookings, South Dakota. At The Rose she works as a teaching artist contract where she has the honor of introducing the joy of theater to young people all across Omaha! Outside of the Rose, Rachel is a proud co-conspirator of Old School Shakespeare Omaha, a local theatre group that performs Shakespeare for all in local coffee shops, bars, and public spaces around the city. A Christmas Story is Rachel's second show at The Rose, and she's very excited to bring her dad's favorite Christmas movie to the stage! Special thanks to her mom and dad for supporting her dramatics from a young age!

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Jus. B

**Jus. B (Santa / Ensemble)**

Jus.B is no amateur to the Omaha entertainment scene. Known for his rich and sultry vocals, Jus.B is guaranteed to serenade and leave you wanting more. Jus.B has released recorded hits such as 'PartySoul', 'In My Zone', 'Secret', 'I Need Your Love' and his most recent single 'No Better' featuring Omaha rapper HB! Jus.B is also an award winning musical theater performer who starred in the Omaha Community Playhouse production of "Aint Misbehavin", gave a chilling portrayal of 'Mister' in "The Color Purple: Musical" and most recently wrapped up his portrayal of the charming yet dangerously ambitious 'Curtis Taylor Jr' in "Dreamgirls". Jus.B has been bitten by the "theater bug" and reviews definitely agree that he belongs on the stage! Jus.B is an all around creative- writing, arranging, recording, acting, and performing. Currently, Jus.B is working on his second studio project with Icon One Music as well as a number of collaborations with creatives from all over the country.



Courtney CJ Jackson

**Courtney CJ Jackson (Flick / Ensemble)**

My name is Courtney Jackson, but I go by the name CJ. I'm a 13 year old, 8th grader at King Science & Technology Middle School. I've been singing since I was 3 years old and acting for the past 5 years. I have attended acting classes at the Omaha Community Playhouse and have had many roles in past plays/musicals and won the Outstanding Youth Debut Award, there as well. I will make my debut here at The Rose Theater in The Christmas Story. I am excited & appreciative for the opportunity to showcase my talents.



Colin Kortright

**Colin Kortright (Schwartz / Kid / Ensemble)**

Colin is an 8th grader at Alice Buffett Middle School and is excited to make his Rose Theater debut! Some of his theater credits include Gate Monster in "Moana Jr", 2 of Spades in "House of Cards", Nate in "Camp Rock", Bernard in "No Body to Murder", and James in "James and the Giant Peach" all at his school theater. Colin has been active with The Rose Theater for the past 2 years, taking vocal lessons, Musical Theater and Broadway Techniques, BAD, and improv classes. He enjoyed his first theater intensive this past summer where he played Pig 2 in "Shrek the Musical". In addition to theater, Colin has also been a member of the OPS Mini Singers for the past 4 years. When Colin is not on stage, he enjoys spending time with his family and loves all things animal! He has spent his last 3 summers being a junior volunteer at the Omaha Henry Doorly Zoo.

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Jayde Dorsey

**Jayde Dorsey** (Esther Jane / Kid / Ensemble)

Jayde Dorsey is a current seventh grader at St. Pius St. Leo. Prior to joining SPSL Jayde attended Nelson Mandela Elementary School. Her favorite subjects are reading and choir class. Jayde is involved in church and school choir, basketball and volleyball, dance and musical lessons. Jayde is a member of Salem Baptist Church and has participated in Delta gems. Jayde is not a stranger to performing and has earned the crown of Miss Tiny Nebraska (at 6years old),

Miss Pre-Teen Miss Nebraska Superstar in 2023 and currently Miss Nebraska Pre-teen 2025 for Princess of America Pageants and Miss Nebraska Pre-teen 2024 for Miss American Coed Pageants. Last year Jayde sang at Joyful Noise (Salem Winter Concert 10th edition), 100 Black Men Gala, and won the Boys and Girls Club talent show, which earned her an opportunity to perform at the annual fundraising event. Jayde also has her Heart of Jayde non-profit where she gives care packages to underserved populations of people in the Omaha community. She is the proud daughter of Dr. Jamar and Nia Dorsey and sibling to Antiana, Robert, Nautika, and her twin brother Jamar (JJ).



Lucy Beutler

**Lucy Beutler** (Mary Beth)

Lucy is thrilled to return to the mainstage at The Rose in “A Christmas Story”! Her last production at The Rose Theater was “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer” as an elf. Lucy is in sixth grade and attends Westside Community Schools. She studies voice, piano, and violin. In her spare time, Lucy enjoys playing soccer and spending time with her younger siblings and friends.



Sam Rhodes

**Sam Rhodes** (Scut Farkus)

This is Sam’s 4th show at The Rose Theater. He is very excited to portray the classic bully of Scut Farkus in this musical. Previous credits include Fireball in Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer at The Rose Theatre, Romeo and Spot Conlon in Newsies at Westside High School, Oompa Loompa and Jeremy the Squirrel in Charlie and the Chocolate Factory at The Rose Theater, and Rodrick in Diary of a Wimpy Kid at The Rose Theater.

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Houston Fleck

**Houston Fleck (Grover Dill)**

It's my first show at The Rose Theater! I'm heavily involved in the arts at my school, including Student Council, Choir, Show Choir, One Act, Speech, Journalism, and Musical. I would like to thank my family and friends who have been so supportive and helpful during this whole process. Another shoutout to the entire cast and crew of this show. Thanks for making this an awesome time! Can't wait for you to see what we've been cooking up!



River Klein

**River Klein (Kid / Ensemble)**

River is an enthusiastic 11-year-old homeschool student and Junior Girl Scout, she brings a special spark to everything she does. River lives in Omaha with her mom, dad, three energetic brothers, two cats, one dog, and a flock of six chickens. River cherishes the friendships she's made through the productions she's participated in, and she wants to greet all her theater friends—old and new—with a big "Hello and welcome!" With dreams as big as the stage itself, River aspires to become a sign language interpreter for Broadway audiences, helping to make theater accessible and enjoyable for everyone.



Silas Krebbs

**Silas Krebbs (Kid / Ensemble)**

Silas Krebbs, a bright and talented young performer, is set to make his debut at the Rose Theater. This budding star, who will turn 10 during his performance, is a dedicated student at Montclair Elementary School, where he is beginning orchestra and choir. Beyond his academic pursuits, Silas is passionate about making friends and staying active.

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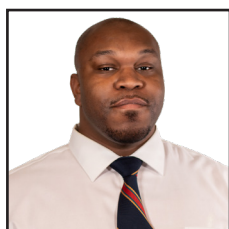
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Abby Sokol

**Abby Sokol (Elf / Ensemble)**

Abby Sokol (she/her) is so excited to be part of A Christmas Story! She recently graduated from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and is from the suburbs of Chicago. Abby is honored and grateful to be part of the Teaching Artist Fellowship at The Rose Theater! This is Abby's first Rose Theater production, and some Miami University credits include These Shining Lives (Charlotte) and Bright Star (Edna/ Ensemble). Outside of theatre, she loves dogs, food, watching TV, and spending time with people she loves. Abby would like to thank her family and friends for their support! Thank you to the company of A Christmas Story!



Aaron Q.T. Butler

**Aaron Q.T. Butler (Elf / Ensemble)**

By day he works as a lifeguard at the local Downtown YMCA by night he works in Santa's shop as an elf making toys for all the good little girls and boys of Omaha. Aaron has worked on 20+ films and staged performances here in the midwest, most recently; Clyde's, Spunk and Bank of Nebraska commercials. He hopes to bring joy to everyone who sees A Christmas Story here at The Rose.



Erin O'Hara

**Erin O'Hara (Waiter / Ensemble)**

Erin O'Hara is ecstatic to be returning to The Rose stage in A Christmas Story. She recently performed in Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Musical and was the occasional farm animal in Night at the Farm: A Bedtime Party. When she is not on stage, you can find her teaching young people around Omaha about all the joys the fine arts have to offer. She sends a big thank you to all of her mentors and coworkers here at The Rose! They rock and she couldn't do this job without their support, wisdom and kindness. Erin loves all things spider-man, swimming and warm chocolate chip cookies. And if you ever see her walking around Target, please feel free to say hello! :)

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Jesse Wohlman

**Jesse Wohlman** (Delivery Person / Mail Person / Ensemble)

Jesse Wohlman is a singer, actor, songwriter, and private music instructor based in Omaha, Nebraska. Locally, He has had the pleasure of working with a variety of performing arts organizations including the Omaha Symphony, BLUEBARN Theater, Opera Omaha, Vesper Concerts, Salt Creek Song Festival, and is a core member of the vocal ensemble Résonance. Jesse has appeared on the Rose stage as the Beast in Disney’s Beauty and the Beast, as Jerry Jubilee in Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, and he is thrilled to be back as an ensemble member in A Christmas Story.



CynFrancia Brooks

**CynFrancia Brooks** (Ensemble)

CynFrancia Brooks is excited to make her Rose Theater debut. Her past performance credits include Dreamgirls ensemble at Omaha Community Playhouse, Athena Sinclair in Suite Surrender at Florentine Players, and Tightrope Oddity in A Show of Greatness at Ambassadors Worship Center. She has also appeared in various short films and commercials in lead and supporting roles. When CynFrancia isn’t on stage, she enjoys crafting, enjoying nature, unique events/experiences, and sharing personal development knowledge with others.



Biannah Peji-Palm

**Biannah Peji-Palm** (Ensemble)

You may have seen Biannah in previous Rose Theater Productions as “Coraline” in Coraline, “Belle” in Beauty and the Beast, “Gabrielle” in Rogers and Hammerstein’s Cinderella & “Sister Margareta/US Maria & Mother Abbess” in The Sound of Music. She’s performed locally as well at the Omaha Community Playhouse in CABARET as “Rosie/Girl 1/Dance Captain” and with Omaha Symphony for their Lunar New Year Celebration. She started her performance training in the Philippines with the Halili Cruz School of Ballet whereby age 14 she competed and performed internationally with the Quezon City Ballet. She was also enrolled in voice and organ lessons through the Yamaha School of Music. After graduating high school at age 16, she joined a performing arts group in the USA and toured, performed, and taught musical numbers to students in Europe, Japan, and cities across the USA. She graduated with a BA in Arts Management and a Masters in Business Administration from Midland University. She started her career at The Rose as a Ballet/Tap teacher in 2019. Since then, she’s been grateful to have served as the Rose Studios for Youth Artists Manager, Interim Musical Theater Dance Director and now as the HR/Finance Generalist. She is grateful every day to still be involved with the performing arts. She is most grateful to witness young artists and dreamers find their voice and community through the performing arts as she once did when she was younger.

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Sydney DeLong

**Sydney DeLong** (Ensemble)

Sydney is excited to be back on The Rose's Mainstage for A Christmas Story. She has always loved singing and dancing, becoming a Rose Kid at age six, and quickly finding her passion for musicals. Sydney is a Junior at Papillion LaVista South High School where she performs in Varsity Show Choir and Color Guard. You may have also seen her last winter as Clarice in The Rose Theater's production of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. Sydney would like to thank her family for their support and encouragement.



Clare Lyons

**Clare Lyons** (Ensemble)

Clare is thrilled to make her Rose Theater debut! She is 10 years old and attends St. Cecilia Cathedral school. She loves all things musical theater, and studies voice and jazz/tap dance. Her previous theatre credits include the role of Munchkin/Youth Ensemble in The Wizard of Oz at the Ralston Community Theatre, and Little Cosette/Gavroche's Gang in the Millard West High School production of Les Misérables. In her spare time, Clare enjoys playing soccer, cooking, and spending time with her family, friends and two dogs.

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