

# WAITRESS

Book by **Jessie Nelson**

Music & Lyrics by **Sara Bareilles**

Based upon the motion picture written by **Adrienne Shelly**

Directed by **Melinda Pfundstein**

Musical Direction by **Tom Griffin**

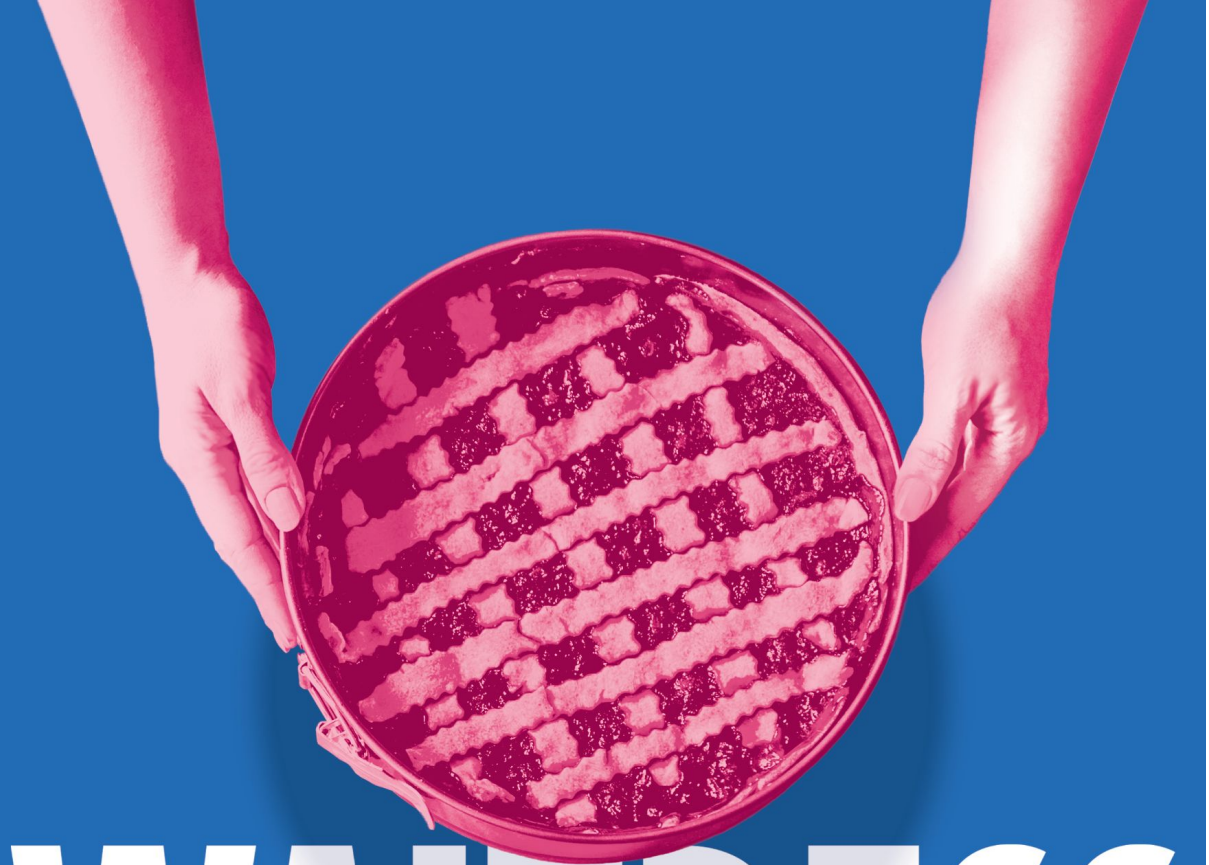
Choreographed by **Natalie Malotke**

May 2 - 17, 2025

## SPOTLIGHT STUDY GUIDE For Teachers and Students



Pioneer Theatre Company's Student Matinee Program is made possible through the support of Salt Lake County's Zoo, Arts, and Parks Program, The Simmons Family Foundation, and The Meldrum Foundation Endowment Fund.



# WAITRESS



Credit: BW Productions



**SETTING:** A small town off Highway 27 - not so long ago.

**SYNOPSIS:** Based on the 2007 movie of the same title, *WAITRESS* follows the story of Jenna, a waitress at Joe's Pie Diner who feels stuck in her small town and abusive marriage. Jenna uses baking as a way to process her emotions and experiences, and her creative pies are a major attraction for customers at the diner. Her closest friends and confidants are Becky and Dawn, fellow waitresses at Joe's Pie Diner who also harbor fantasies of a life with more love and happiness.

Jenna's discovery of her pregnancy forces her to confront her hurts and take action to change her circumstances. Through the support of her friends, Jenna finds the courage to take a long-abandoned dream off the shelf. She secretly saves her tip money to enter a local pie-baking contest. But will she win the prize money and be able to leave her husband Earl in order to start a new life?

## CHARACTERS



### JENNA HUNTERSON

Unhappily married expert piemaker who works at a roadside diner and dreams of more, pours herself into the pies she makes



### DAWN

Jenna's friend—eccentric and youngest of the waitresses, enjoys playing Betsy Ross in Revolutionary War reenactments and is looking for a love who likes the same.



### DOCTOR JIM POMATTER

Jenna's sweet doctor who is blown away by her pies, genuinely warm, if clumsy in manner, recently moved to town from Connecticut.



### BECKY

Jenna's friend—oldest of the waitresses, Becky has seen it all, done it all, and got the t-shirt. Incredibly particular about things like the placement of salt and pepper shakers on tables.



### EARL HUNTERSON

Jenna's husband who is handsome but peaked in high school. Short-tempered and abusive toward Jenna.



### OGIE

A charming, irresistible nerd, 32, a tax auditor, an amateur magician, competitive clog dancer, has all his hair, has a kind smile, loves poetry, Pavarotti, and puzzles and Dawn's quirky oddball date



### CAL

Jenna's boss and cook at Joe's Pie Diner



### JOE

Elderly owner of Joe's Pie Diner

# Adrienne Shelly's Movie

By Luke Foti

The stage musical *Waitress* was adapted from Adrienne Shelly's 2007 film of the same name. Much like Jenna, the main character in *Waitress*, Shelly was an artist that dared to dream of more. She wrote the script while pregnant with her daughter Sophie, thinking about how her life as an independent filmmaker would change once she was born. This multi-talent then directed, co-set designed, Co-costume designed, composed a song for the soundtrack, and even acted in her film in the role of Dawn.



Adrienne Shelly as "Dawn" in her movie, *Waitress*.

Shelly was dedicated to flipping the narrative upside-down. Her movies contained women that broke free of stereotypes and brought the hardships of the female experience into the spotlight. Ally Sheedy, who acted in Shelly's second film, *I'll Take You There*, described Shelly as "this tiny, extremely beautiful little spirit of a person". But also, that she had "this ferocious quality. She was not afraid, would not be intimidated, would keep creating no matter what. She was not going to wait around for agents to call, or for Hollywood to give her the parts she wanted. She was going to put on her running shoes and get out there and tell the stories herself."

*Waitress* (2007) was a massive success. Shelly created a colorful comedy/drama layered with powerful and relatable dialogue and characters. The final product was a beautiful mish-mash of comedy and drama that also highlighted women's struggles in our society. The film was accepted into the 2007 Sundance Film Festival where it would go on to earn a \$22 million box office value, with a budget of only \$1.5 million.

**ACTIVITY:** *Waitress* features some strong female characters. What traits do you think make strong women?

Sadly, Shelly wasn't around to see the film's success as she was murdered on November 1<sup>st</sup> 2006. Honoring her legacy, Shelly's husband, Andy Ostroy, established the Adrienne Shelly Foundation, "a non-profit organization with a critical mission: Supporting Women Filmmakers".

Shelly lives on through her husband, daughter, and countless other directors, actors, and filmmakers that her kindness and fearlessness inspired.

## Female Creatives on Broadway

The 2007 film *Waitress*, upon which the musical is based, was the brainchild of Adrienne Shelly, an independent film actor and director who was a strong leader guiding the film's production at every step of the process. *Waitress* also made history when it opened on Broadway in 2016 with the first ever all-female creative team: Jessie Nelson (book), Sara Bareilles (music & lyrics), Diane Paulus (director), and Lorin Latarro (choreographer).



Broadway's *Waitress* Creative Team: Choreographer Lorin Latarro, Composer & Lyricist Sara Bareilles, Director Diane Paulus, and Book Writer Jessie Nelson

# Meet Composer & Lyricist, Sara Bareilles

Sara Bareilles has written chart-topping anthems about heartbreak ("Gravity"), defiance ("Love Song"), and triumph ("Brave"). As a five-time Grammy nominated singer-songwriter she isn't used to being behind the scenes, but happily stepped into her role as the composer behind *Waitress*.

## How did your involvement with *Waitress* begin? What attracted you to the project?

**SARA BAREILLES:** Diane Paulus first told me about the project over lunch a little over two years ago. I was certainly interested, but nervous because it felt like a huge undertaking. I had no experience writing in this format, but my first love was musical theater. Growing up, I devoured shows like *The Secret Garden*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Les Misérables*, *Chess*, *Oklahoma!*, and *Miss Saigon*. They informed how I listened to music, and I think my being a storyteller was also influenced by that kind of writing. I watched the *Adrienne Shelly* film after I met with Diane, and the material spoke to me. I thought it was charming and heartfelt, and that there was a beautiful foundation to develop into a musical. I made a pact that I would do it with the condition that if it wasn't going well, Diane would tap me on the shoulder and let me know. And nobody has tapped me on the shoulder yet! ...

## How did you relate to the show's characters?

**SB:** I really connected to the lead character, Jenna. She is deeply flawed, pained, and broken, but also has so much strength and soul. When I first watched the movie, I was compelled by the lowest point in her character arc, and that was what made me want to go to the piano. The first song I wrote was "She Used to Be Mine," which is about that phenomenon of waking up and looking at yourself and



*Broadway's original Jenna, Jessie Mueller, with Sara Bareilles (Photo by Pamela Hanson)*

realizing there's a part of you that doesn't recognize who you are anymore.

I also fell in love with all the other characters and their quirks. The character Ogie, who is the oddball love interest of one of Jenna's waitressing buddies, is so funny, so warm, so delightful. I had a great time playing with humor in the writing and capturing this really quirky character with sound.

I realized that with an exercise in empathy, I could kind of find myself in all these characters, and that's how I could give them an opportunity for storytelling. It was really interesting. Some characters were harder to find my way in than others, but ultimately that's what's so amazing about this story, and I give *Adrienne Shelly* [the writer of the original movie] credit for that. All of these characters are really human. They're complicated, they're messy. No one is anything but a shade of grey. It's good people making bad choices. There's really no "bad" people; there's just humans who are doing the best they can to figure life out. It's hard! We can all relate to that.

## Do you remember the first time you played "She Used to Be Mine" for someone?

**SB:** I remember the first time I played it in the show, actually, I can remember that very well. We were in Florida. I felt very self-conscious, because there was the word "pie" in the lyrics: "She's all of this mixed up and baked in a beautiful pie." And I was like, "That's gonna feel so weird to sing!" But there was something that happened when I played the song. The response from the audience was like, cuckoo bananas. And I [thought], "Oh, I think this song actually works outside of [the show]," I think [that's] a cool bridge for this project, to have a song that can live outside. The journey of that song alone has been really incredible, to watch it be embraced by so many people in so many different communities.



# Meet Composer & Lyricist, Sara Bareilles (cont.)

**You've said you consider yourself a feminist. Why do you think Jenna's story is important to tell now in this country?**

**SB:** We're dealing with a woman in an abusive relationship who has to find strength within herself and within her community. One of the things I love about this story is that it highlights sisterhood amongst friends. I also think there is so much happening right now that celebrates what it means to embody a female spirit, and how that is evolving and changing for each new generation. The story deals with traditional value systems, but we're challenging them within the world of the musical.

**Did your upbringing in a small town in California help you capture that world?**

**SB:** I encountered a lot of these characters growing up in Eureka—people who have big dreams that never came to life because they never got out of town, and people who are perfectly content, who made a wonderful life in a tight-knit community. You were never more than a couple degrees of separation from anybody else, so I really relate to that. I also worked as a waitress for a long time—all through my college years, and post-college when I first formed a band. I actually loved being a waitress. It's hard work, but it's also really gratifying and social. And that experience has definitely informed some of the *Waitress* lyrics. I worked at a little beer bar in Santa Monica after I graduated from UCLA. We had regular patrons who came in every single day. It was a unique experience because I knew them, and at the same time didn't know everything about them. But the bar provided a sense of familiarity and a sense of home.

**You've worked with other artists before, but how has this project for the theater been different?**

**SB:** This is by far the most collaborative thing I've ever done, and that is both super challenging and exhilarating. I think the reason people collaborate is because the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Diane is visionary, brave, and bold, and I love that she has very high expectations. She is deeply collaborative, and so good at finding the gems and knowing when things need to be deepened and pushed further. I feel like I've hit the jackpot getting to learn from someone like her during my first professional experience in the theater.

**ACTIVITY:** Relationships also play a big part in *Waitress*. What do you think makes a "good" relationship? What do you think defines a "bad" relationship?

**It's so fun that you did your own version of the cast album [2015's "What's Inside: Songs from Waitress"]. Why did you want to do that?**

**SB:** It felt really intuitive to me. I had no context for writing songs that I wouldn't sing. I never personally wrote for other artists; I've always only written for myself. And so every little song that came out felt like this little gem that I was like, "Oh, I love this one. And I love this one!" And it just felt natural to me to make a concept album. Ultimately, one thing that I think can shift in the theater is letting people get to know the material ahead of time so they come in with a little bit of familiarity. I think that's actually a good thing.

**A generation ago, so many more people were familiar with the songs from a musical than had ever seen a production of the musical, right?**

**SB:** They used to be pop songs on the radio!



Sara Bareilles as Jenna in the Broadway production of "Waitress." Bareilles also wrote the music and lyrics for the show. (Photo by Jeremy Daniels)

<https://www.elle.com/culture/celebrities/news/a34732/sara-bareilles-waitress-the-musical-interview/>  
<https://www.indiewire.com/features/interviews/sara-bareilles-interview-waitress-musical-1234931799/>

<https://american-rep-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/10152617/waitress-toolkit-final-8.19.pdf>

# How Pie Got Its Sweetness

**Food with a lid. A lid you can eat. And edible sides and bottom too. When you think about it, the pie is a masterpiece of food engineering.**

## A Quick History of Pie (Savory and Sweet!)

Historians trace the origin of pie to the Egyptians back in 9500 BCE. In Egypt, the first pies were made with ground grains like barley, wheat, or oats combined with water. This “dough” was shaped into an oval and filled with savory ingredients like nuts, honey, and meat. Pie was a great creation because it helped preserve food and was a portable meal for workers and travelers.

Other ancient civilizations quickly caught on to the delicious benefits of pie. The Greeks refined the Egyptian concept by making their pies with a flakier pastry shell. Then the Romans later learned about pie from the Greeks.

The wealthiest Romans made pies with many different kinds of meat and even seafood. They may have also been the first to make pies with both a top and bottom crust. As the Roman empire spread, so did their sweet and savory pie fillings.

## A Taste of the Language

The term “pie” eventually originated in medieval England, where they were called “pyes.” English pie was often filled with meat like beef, lamb, or duck and spiced with currants, dates, or pepper. In fact, the word pie likely comes from magpie, the bird known for collecting odds and

## Did You Know? Fun Facts About Pies...

### Pie crust was first used as Tupperware

Before the perfect buttery, flaky pastry was lovingly created, the lid of the pie had a more practical purpose. The pastry itself was so hard and tough that it was basically inedible but instead served as a tub to seal in the food and keep it fresher for longer and was known as the ‘coffyn of paste’. People would take off the pastry lid and discard it, then use the pie as a container from which they could eat whatever was inside. Nowadays, we know that a perfectly baked, melt-in-your-mouth pie casing can be the best bit!



## Eating Humble Pie

While the upper classes could enjoy rich venison meat, the leftover parts (heart, kidney, liver) of the animal would be whipped up and put into an ‘umble pie’, for the lower classes. However, it’s thought that the true connection is derived from the French word *nomble*, meaning “deer’s innards.”



ends in its nest. This shows that pie eaters were not picky. People in medieval England happily dined on chickens, pigeons, rabbits, and just about any other animal you could throw in crust. “Eat crow” isn’t just common sayings but leftover from the era when crow was a common pie filling.



*Elaborate pies with theatrical fillings were the centrepiece of many medieval banquets.*

## Pie Theatrics

In medieval times pies weren’t just for eating. Cooks used to be tasked with coming up with inventive ways to create not only delicious food but also entertainment to please their Masters. So birds and even dwarves would emerge from pies with great theatrics, much to the delight of those awaiting their supper. We’re not sure we’d want to eat a pie that a live bird had been scratching about in, but each to their own!

## The Royal Fruit

Fruit pies emerged in the 1500s and Queen Elizabeth I was apparently a big fan of cherry pie. By the 17th century, sweet pies and tarts had become commonplace. But like most foods in history, as the pie spread it became a versatile culinary creation that evolved with local cultures. America was no exception.

# How Pie Got Its Sweetness (cont.)



*Cherry pie was, allegedly, first served up to Elizabeth I.*

## The Evolution of Pie in America

Contrary to popular belief, the pilgrims did not have modern-day pumpkin pie at the first Thanksgiving in 1621. These English immigrants were much more partial to the meat-based pies back home.

In their new country, the colonists eventually had more access to sweeteners like maple syrup, molasses, cane sugar, and honey. Increased access to local fruits and squashes like pear, apple, quince, pumpkin, and blueberry also helped grow the popularity of sweeter pies.

As pie spread in popularity, New England became known as America's "pie belt." Fruit and pumpkin pies were a staple in our region even at breakfast. Over time, different U.S. regions created their pie specialties. The Midwest made its cream and cheese pies, the Upper Plains had tart berry pies, and the Southwest made nut pies from native pecan and walnut trees. Sweet potato pie gained popularity in the South while key lime pie became Florida's claim to fame.

## American Pie Slang

"As easy as pie" is an American expression. In the 1890's, "pie" was a common slang expression meaning anything easy, a cinch; the expression "easy as pie" stemmed quite readily from that.

By the 1800s, the pie was pretty commonplace in America. But in the late 19th and early 20th century, pie dropped in popularity when it was condemned as an "unhealthy" food. Pie-making returned with conveniences like ready-made pie crusts and the invention of refrigeration. Now, chilled pie recipes like Coconut Cream were delicious options too.

In modern-day America, our pie options are seemingly endless. But in many ways, we're still re-discovering the roots of pie making. History has shown us that it all comes down to homemade crust and fresh, locally sourced fillings.

## Pie Crime

At one time it was against the law to serve ice cream on cherry pie in Kansas.

## In a Sweet State

There are only 6 Official State Pies:

- 1999 — Vermont — Apple pie
- 2006 – Florida — Key Lime
- 2009 – Delaware — Peach pie
- 2011 — Maine — Blueberry pie
- 2013 – Texas — Pecan pie
- 2016 — Illinois — Pumpkin pie

## Some of the fun pies mentioned in WAITRESS include:

- Deep Dish Blueberry Bacon Pie
- Mermaid Marshmallow Pie
- Meet Your Dream Chocolate Cream Pie
- White Knuckle Cream Pie
- Believe Again Poppy Seed Pocket Pies
- A Little Wild, Wild Berry Pie
- Pineapple Upside Down Pie
- In the Dark Chocolate Pie
- Devil's Food Oasis Pie



## Some of Jenna's fun Imaginary pies include:

- I Don't Want Earl's Baby Pie
- Betrayed By My Eggs Pie
- My Husband's A Jerk Chicken Pot Pie

<https://slate.com/human-interest/2015/03/history-of-pie-how-savory-meat-pies-evolved-into-americas-favorite-dessert.html>

[https://mudfoods.com/blogs/news/10-facts-about-pies-that-you-didnt-know?srsltid=AfmBOoqawIgwY2FZMvJnMfN3fpR1pndhnJ5VfbA2RYx1Pn7\\_Sz0PgxB](https://mudfoods.com/blogs/news/10-facts-about-pies-that-you-didnt-know?srsltid=AfmBOoqawIgwY2FZMvJnMfN3fpR1pndhnJ5VfbA2RYx1Pn7_Sz0PgxB)

[https://coldhollow.com/blogs/news/a-slice-of-history-the-sweet-origin-of-pie-in-new-england-and-beyond?srsltid=AfmBOopycmMY5BOj72AriKKYRhn\\_XCx\\_skMxUXWO42n5UhTWq7GsTv5u](https://coldhollow.com/blogs/news/a-slice-of-history-the-sweet-origin-of-pie-in-new-england-and-beyond?srsltid=AfmBOopycmMY5BOj72AriKKYRhn_XCx_skMxUXWO42n5UhTWq7GsTv5u)

# Community through Shared Meals

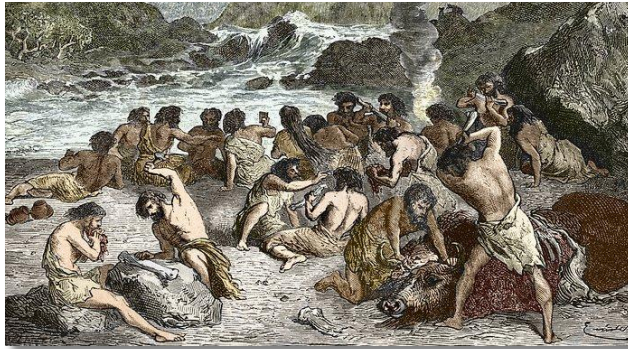
By Jess Ellison

One of the main throughlines in the story of *Waitress* is food, specifically pie, and even more specifically, sharing pie. Sharing pie becomes a point of connection, bonding, and even healing for many of the characters in the show.

The first ideas of a feast, an abundant meal, and the more active act of feasting date all the way back to the Neolithic Age (circa 10,000

B.C.) when the first food surpluses were created.

The Neolithic Age, also known as the “Stone Age,” is marked by human’s domestication of animals, cultivation of plants, creation of pottery, and transition



into more settled communities; all factors that allowed for humans to store excess food. With excess food, people in the Neolithic Age hosted feasts, often accompanied by a special event or ritualistic ceremony. Often, feasts would be attended by a large portion of the community and the act of sharing food marked an important part of the corresponding event or ceremony.

In more contemporary times, people are known to “break bread” with their friends and family, and use shared meals, often dinner or an evening meal, as a time to connect with loved ones. Shared meals are also used as a way to get to know new people and expand one’s community. “Going out to lunch” or “grabbing a bite to eat” are often first activities for new friends, co-workers, neighbors, and even potential romantic partners. It’s not uncommon to hear people say that one of the best ways to get to know someone new is by sharing a meal.

Many immigrant and global majority communities also regard food as a way to honor family traditions and respect cultural memories. Whether a migration was by choice or forced, it can be challenging to adjust to a new environment where culturally significant foods may not even grow. In this case, gaining access to important foods, sharing recipes with younger generations, and creating memories of cooking and feasting together, can become acts of resistance and acts of empowerment.

While there is a more social understanding that food can bring people together, there is also a scientific basis for this as well. A study published in 2017, investigated if there really was a positive correlation between eating with others, wellbeing and happiness, and the size and quantity of one’s social network. The study found that laughter, singing, dancing, and storytelling (all factors that have been proven to increase dopamine and the feeling of pleasure) are common occurrences when sharing a meal with others (whether it’s just one other person or multiple). The study also found that people who eat meals with others tend to be happier and more engaged with people who eat meals with others less often. They also have a wider network that provides more consistent social and emotional support.

Sharing a meal and eating with others (even if you’re just eating pie) can be mistaken for a rather simple and everyday act. However, as you engage with the story of *Waitress*, keep an eye out for the moments of bravery, connection, vulnerability, and joy that are fostered just by sharing a slice of pie.





# Sugar, Butter Word Search

Find the following words in the puzzle.  
Words are hidden → ↓ and ↘

## Puzzle Word List:

JENNA  
LULU'S PIES  
POMATTER  
DAWN  
OGIE  
EARL  
BECKY  
CAL  
SUGAR  
BUTTER  
FLOUR  
BAKING  
PIES  
TABLE  
WAITRESS  
JOE  
TASTE  
DINER  
COFFEE



# The ABC's of Diner Lingo

When diners first popped up in America, servers and short-order cooks quickly developed their own code words and phrases for the food and people in the diners. Below are a few classic diner lingo terms and what they mean.



**Axle Grease**—Butter  
**Aggies**—Sausages  
**Belly Warmer**—Coffee  
**Blue-plate special**—daily meat, vegetable and potato dish special  
**Cackleberries**—eggs  
**Cut the grass**—no relish  
**Dine and Dash**—leave the restaurant without paying the bill  
**Dowse it**—cover it in sauce  
**Eighty-six**—cancel the order and/or a menu item has ran out  
**Eve with a lid on**—apple pie  
**Fog**—mashed potatoes  
**Foreign entanglements**—spaghetti  
**Give it shoes**—make it a takeout order  
**Grunt**—bacon  
**Hail**—ice  
**Hope**—oatmeal  
**In the alley**—served as a side dish  
**Italian perfume**—garlic  
**Jack**—grilled American cheese sandwich  
**Java**—coffee



**Keep off the grass**—no lettuce  
**Kiss the pan**—cook the eggs over easy  
**Life preservers**—doughnuts  
**Lumber**—toothpick  
**Mississippi Mud**—mustard  
**Motor Oil**—syrup  
**Nervous pudding**—Jell-o  
**No cow**—without milk  
**Old maids**—prunes  
**On the hoof**—cooked rare  
**Paint it red**—put ketchup on it  
**Pipes**—straws  
**Raft**—toast  
**Ruff it**—add whipped cream

**Sand**—sugar  
**Sea dust**—salt  
**Tube steak**—hot dog  
**Twelve alive**—a dozen raw oysters  
**Velvet**—milkshake  
**Virtue**—cherry pie  
**The Works**—add all the condiments  
**Wreck 'em**—scramble the egg  
**Yellow paint**—mustard  
**Yum-yum**—sugar  
**Z**—mushrooms  
**Zeppelin**—sausage

## Sugar, Butter, Word Search

C	.	.	.	.	C	O	F	F	E	E	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
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**ACTIVITY:** For Jenna, the diner is a place where she feels comfortable and safe. Where do you go when you want to feel that way?

# Meet the Cast



**KYLE BRAND\*** (Ensemble) is ecstatic to be returning to PTC! He's currently an Atlanta-based director and choreographer, with regional acting credits of *Mary Poppins* (Alabama Shakespeare Festival); *Oliver!* (Pioneer Theatre Co.); *Mary Poppins, Matilda* (Northern Stage); *A Christmas Carol: A Ghost Story of Christmas* (Hartford Stage Co.). As a director, his work includes *Side By Side by Sondheim* (Northern Stage); *Tenderly, Avenue Q, Altar Boyz* (Playhouse on Park); *Guys and Dolls, Damn Yankees* (Monomoy Theatre); and *Titanic* (The Hartt School). As a choreographer: *A Gentleman's Guide... , The Legend of the Georgia McBride* (Florida Rep); *Beauty and the Beast, Once, Mamma Mia!*, (Northern Stage); *Spamalot, Godspell* (New London Barn Playhouse); and *Escape to Margaritaville (Wagon Wheel)*. He holds his BFA in Music Theatre from the Hartt School.



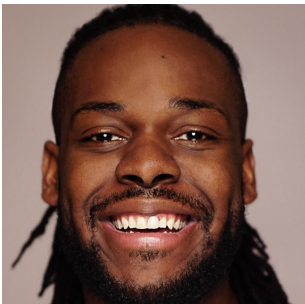
**BEN JACOBY\*** (Dr. Pomatter) happily returns to PTC with *Waitress*. Previously at PTC: Ted Hinton in *Bonnie and Clyde*. Broadway: Barry Mann in *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*. National Tour: Raoul in *The Phantom of the Opera*. Off-Broadway: Mark Livingstone in Irish Rep.'s OCC-nominated *The Streets of New York*. Odysseus in York Theatre Company's World Premiere of *Penelope, or How the Odyssey Was Really Written* (Cast Album). Regional: LaJolla Playhouse, Milwaukee Rep., Ogunquit Playhouse, Sacramento Music Circus, La Mirada Theatre, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, Gulfshore Playhouse, Weston Playhouse, Maine State Music Theatre, and more. Television: *The Good Wife* (CBS), *Madame Secretary* (CBS), *When They See Us* (Netflix).



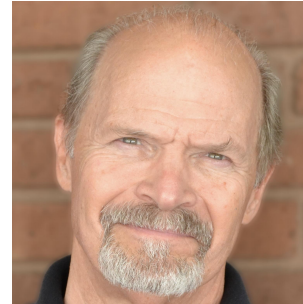
**MARJORIE FAILONI\*** (Ensemble/Nurse Norma) is thrilled to return to Pioneer. Broadway: *Escape to Margaritaville* (Dance Captain/Tammy u/s.). National Tours: *9 to 5, High School Musical*. Favorite credits: *Escape to Margaritaville* (La Jolla), *White Christmas* (Tuacahn), *A Christmas Story* (Goodspeed, Tuacahn, Paper Mill), *Anything Goes* (MUNY, PCLO), *Something Rotten!* (Pioneer Theatre Company), *Oklahoma!* (NSMT), *High School Musical 2!* (TOTS), *The Little Mermaid* (TUTS/Dallas/LaMirada), *42nd Street* (MSMT), *Shrek* (MUNY), *Elf and The Witches of Eastwick* (Ogunquit). Choreographer: World Premiere of *Christmas in Connecticut* (Goodspeed Opera House, Connecticut Critics Circle Awards Nominee Outstanding Choreography), Disney's *The Little Mermaid* (Disney Wish). BFA University of Michigan. Thanks to Karen, Natalie, Melinda, Tom, CTG, friends, and my family! @mfailoni [marjoriefailoni.com](http://marjoriefailoni.com)



**VINCENT ORTEGA\*** (Ensemble) Broadway/National Tours: *Mamma Mia!*, *On Your Feet!*, and *In the Heights*. Regional: *On Your Feet!* (Papermill Playhouse), *In the Heights* as Piragua Guy, *Saturday Night Fever* (DJ Monty), *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Black Stash), and *Shrek* (Lord Farquaad). Film/TV: *Westworld*, *Movie 43*, *Enchanted*, the VMAs, AMAs, and projects for Netflix, Disney Channel, Warner Brothers, and most recently, Nickelodeon. His versatility extends to the music industry, where he has had the privilege of working with artists such as Ricky Martin, Janet Jackson, the Black Eyed Peas, Ice Cube, and Camila Cabello. Big thank You to Pioneer Theatre Company and Natalie Malotke. Follow Vincent: @VinceOrtega [www.VinceOrtega.com](http://www.VinceOrtega.com)



**AARON ARNELL HARRINGTON\*** (Cal) is a native of Durham, North Carolina, and is SO honored to make his Pioneer Theatre Company debut! Recently ending his four-year run in New York City's *Little Shop of Horrors*, Aaron made history as the longest running "Voice of Audrey II", both on, and Off-Broadway. He's made appearances on major talk shows including *The Tonight Show & Good Morning America*, as well as his personal favorite highlight, performing for NPR's *Tiny Desk* concert series. Other credits: *RENT* (Tom Collins; 20th Anniversary National Tour), *Gun & Powder* (Paper Mill Playhouse premiere); voiceover: *Melon's House Party* (Wonderly), *The Moon is Cheese* (The Puppet Kitchen); and film: *INFLUENCE*. Huge shoutout to my DGRW family! Last, but certainly not least, Dad— this one's for you. @aayron\_



**WILLIAM PARRY\*** (Joe) is pleased to return to Pioneer Theatre Company, having played Sen. Higgins in the premiere of *Alabama Story* and J. Pulitzer in *Newsies*. He was in the original casts of eleven Broadway productions, including: Stephen Sondheim's *Sunday in the Park with George* and *Passion* (both filmed for PBS); *Agamemnon* at Lincoln Center; *Gypsy* with Bernadette Peters, *Camelot* (understudy to Richard Burton and Richard Harris); *Groundhog Day*; and the original *Jesus Christ Superstar* ('71). Off-Broadway: original productions of Sondheim's *Assassins* and *Road Show*; and *Dessa Rose* at Lincoln Center, among others. National tours: *A Few Good Men*, *Memphis*, and *Titanic* (Capt. E.J. Smith). Some 40 regional productions, including Joe Keller in *All My Sons*. Numerous TV and Film credits. Radio: two seasons on Garrison Keillor's *A Prairie Home Companion*.

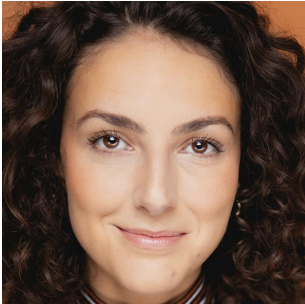
# Meet the Cast



**DANIEL PLIMPTON\*** (Ogie) is very happy to be eating pie in one of his favorite cities! Previous Pioneer: Nigel in *Something Rotten* and Bill Cagney in *Cagney*. Other Salt Lake City: *Book of Mormon* First National Tour (SLC debut) and *Spring Awakening* National Tour (SLC debut). Other Tour: *White Christmas*. Highlights include Bobby Child in *Crazy for You* (Asolo Rep), Cosmo Brown in *Singin' In The Rain* (Arrow Rock, Engeman), Davey in *Newsies* (North Carolina Theatre), Jimmy in *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Engeman), *The Secret Garden* and *A Christmas Carol* (Denver Center), Maine State, Fulton, Flat Rock, Maltz Jupiter, Sharon, Bucks County, Paper Mill. BFA: Boston Conservatory. Thanks to Karen, Melinda, Lexi, and everyone at PTC! For Abue and Gavin.



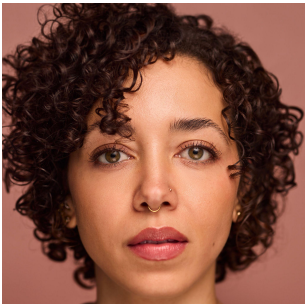
**BRENT THIESSEN\*** (Earl) For PTC: *Jersey Boys*, *Putting It Together*. Brent is a Canadian-born actor living in New York City. He originated the role of John in the new musical adaptation of Iris Rainer Dart's *BEACHES* and is currently developing the role of saxophone legend Gerry Mulligan for her upcoming play *Mulligan & Me*. As part of the original first national company of *Pretty Woman: The Musical*, Brent was the first Canadian to perform the starring role of Edward Lewis in Gary Marshall and Bryan Adams' stage version of the iconic film. Brent recently helped lead an all-star cast for Broadway Sacramento as Prince Tophy in *Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella*, a role he previously starred in for the Walnut Street Theatre. His favorite pie is lemon meringue.  
[www.BrentThiessen.com](http://www.BrentThiessen.com)



**LEXI RABADI\*** (Dawn) is grateful to be returning to beautiful Salt Lake City and Pioneer Theatre Company, having last been seen as Portia in *Something Rotten!* in 2022. Most recently, Lexi was in the original cast of the Broadway revival of *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, which was a "Bloody-Dream-Come-True Pie." Other favorite credits include Belle in *Beauty and the Beast* (Maine State Music Theatre) and Laura in *The Glass Menagerie* (Fulton Theatre). Bottom-of-the-heart thanks to Bob, Karen, Teresa, and this incredible company of artists. Endless love to family. "Stay Humble. Make Something."



**CANDICE MARIE WOODS\*** (Becky) (they/she) This native Texan has performed all over the United States, Canada, and internationally. They are so excited to join the Pioneer Theatre Company cast of *Waitress* as Becky. Broadway: *Hairspray the Musical* (Dynamite/us little Inez), *Catch Me If You Can* (OBC-Ensemble), *Nice Work If You Can Get It* (OBC-Flo/Ensemble), *The Book of Mormon* (Ensemble/us Nabulungi), and *Ain't Too Proud: The Life and Times of the Temptations* (OBC-Diana Ross). National tours: *Dirty Dancing: The Classic Story on Stage* (lead female vocalist), *Legally Blonde the Musical* (Pilar), and *1776* (Joseph Hewes/us John Adams). Regional: *Smokey Joe's Café* (Brenda), and *Trouble in Mind* (Millie Davis) International: Worklight Production/OD Company Korean Tour of *Dreamgirls* (Deena Jones), and *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (Diva). They send love to their family and friends for their continued support, with special Titi kisses for Jolie, Ava, and Sean.



**CLAIRE SAUNDERS\*** (Jenna) Pioneer debut! Seattle native turned New Yorker. Broadway: *Sweeney Todd*. Select Off-Broadway & Regional credits: *The Rat Trap* (Ruby Raymond), *Importance of Being Earnest* (Cecily), *Steel Magnolias* (Shelby), *Irving Berlin's White Christmas* (Betty Haynes), *School Girls; or the African Mean Girls Play* (Ericka), *Cyrano* (Orange Girl), *The Wolves* (#8), *In the Heights* (Vanessa). TV/Film: *Daredevil: Born Again* (Disney), *Modern Love* (Amazon), *Law & Order: SVU* (NBC), *Tell Me a Story* (CBS), *The Good Cop* (Netflix), *Wild Eyed & Wicked* (The Old Way Movie), *The Intern* (Warner Bros), CitiBank commercial. Carnegie Mellon Graduate. Aside from the acting thing, Claire dabbles in running a tech startup, all things fitness, and anxiety. Thanks to BRS/Gage. Love to her people (especially Alanna, Dev & Lex). [TheSaundersCollective.com](http://TheSaundersCollective.com)

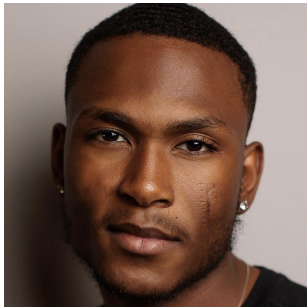
# Meet the Cast



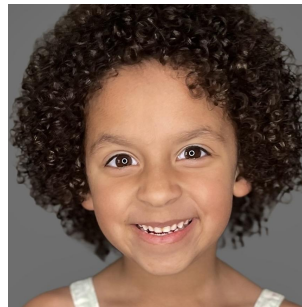
**JORDAN CRUZ** (Ensemble) is delighted to return to the Pioneer Theatre stage after performing in *Elf*, *The Prom*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Bonnie & Clyde*, and most recently as Francine in *Jersey Boys*. Jordan will receive her BFA in Musical Theatre on the same day she opens this dream show! Jordan would love to thank her family, friends, professors, and PTC for their support!



**COURTNEY MCMULLIN** (Ensemble/Francine) is thrilled to be making her Pioneer Theatre Company debut! Favorite credits include Heather Chandler (*Heathers: the Musical*), Kira (*Xanadu*), Missy (*The Winter Wonderettes*), Hope Cladwell (*Urinetown*), and Octet Caroler (*A Christmas Carol*, *HCT*). Many thanks and much love to my husband, friends, and mentors. @courtney.rae.mcmullin | [courtneymcmullin.com](http://courtneymcmullin.com)



**ZETH DIXON** (Ensemble) is ecstatic to be joining this production of *Waitress*. Regional Credits: *Rent* (Tom Collins), *A Chorus Line* (Mark / u.s Richie), *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Pharaoh / Zebulun). He gives all glory to God and a HUGE thank you to DGRW, his family, close friends; and the teachers, mentors, and loved ones who have supported him along the way. Instagram: @zethdixon



**IRIS FERNELIUS** (Lulu at certain performances) is so excited to make her Pioneer Theatre Company debut as Lulu in *Waitress*! Iris is no stranger to performing, as she has been a part of several commercial projects. Iris recently performed on stage for the very first time, in the musical *Ragtime* (Little Coalhouse) at HCTRuth. She would like to thank her family and friends for all their love and support!



**LUKE FOTI** (Ensemble) is thrilled to be making his PTC debut as a senior in the University of Utah's Musical Theatre Program. Recent roles include Moritz in *Spring Awakening* and Chiron in *The Lightning Thief* (Babcock Theatre). He would love to thank his wonderful friends and family for their continued support throughout the years.



**HAILEY HARDING** (Lulu at certain performances) is a talented 5-year-old making her breakout debut with Pioneer Theatre Company as Lulu in *Waitress*! She loves dance, tumbling, and gymnastics. She is excited to continue exploring the world of theatre and looks forward to bringing joy to audiences with her performance. She is grateful for the support from her family and friends!



**KAMALUONALANI MATTHIAS** (Ensemble/Jenna's Mother) is currently based out of Philly, and is very excited to spend some time in the mountains of Utah! Previous roles include *Little Shop of Horrors* (Audrey), *Massenet's Cendrillon* (La Fee), *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (Millie); *Goblin Market* workshop (Christina Rossetti). "Thank you to my beloved friends and family for your support, love you all!" IG: Kamaluonalani\_\_ B.A. Voice Performance, BYU-Hawai'i, M.M. Vocal Arts, Temple University.



**HAZEL WILDE PEARCE** (Lulu at certain performances) is so excited to make her stage debut at just 4 years old! When she's not performing, you can find her enjoying soccer, gymnastics, or playing with her huge collection of stuffed animals. As she dreams about the future, Hazel hopes to become a vet one day. She is a fantastic skier and golfer, loves playing with her friends, and pillow fights with her dad. Above all, Hazel wants everyone to know how much she loves her family!