



ROADLESSTRAVELEDTHEATER

THE LIGHT FANTASTIC

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road less traveled theater



Cell Phones / Electronic Devices: Please silence all personal devices prior to the start of the show. Please remember to silence devices again if used during intermission.

Food is not permitted inside the Road Less Traveled Theater and must be consumed in the lobby bar area only. Beverages purchased at the lobby bar are permitted inside the Road Less Traveled Theater during the performance.

Performances: Thursday, Friday, Saturday: 7:30pm / Sunday at 2:00pm

Tickets for Regular Season Productions:

General Admission: \$45-\$50 / Student (Fri. Sat. Sun): \$25

Mighty Taco Student Thursday: \$10 with Student ID (general pricing otherwise)

Group Rates for parties of 10 or more. Please call for details.

Road Less Traveled Productions: PO Box 542, Bflo NY 14205

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welcome from the artistic director



Welcome to RLTP's 20th Anniversary Season at our home here at 456 Main Street in downtown Buffalo!

It's hard to imagine that it's been twenty years since co-founder Jon Elston and I started Road Less Traveled Productions with a production of Jon's play *Project* at the former New Phoenix Theater (2003). I'm proud to say that after 96 productions, three theater spaces, hundreds of theater artists, and over 100 Artie Award nominations that RLTP is still thriving on the Road Less Traveled. Managing Director Gina Gandolfo and I are so encouraged by all the support from the WNY community over the years that RLTP has received to continue to create exceptional & unforgettable live

theater experiences for WNY. I'm also very proud to announce a unique partnership with our friends at M&T Bank and Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield called ALL ACCESS FRIDAYS. In recognition of our 20th anniversary season we will be offering FREE tickets to the first Friday performance of each production. We will be collaborating with Arts Access (ASI) and a diverse group of media outlets to distribute these special tickets to low income, underserved, and first-time theatergoers to continue our mission of bringing communal storytelling to everyone in our WNY community.

I first discovered *The Light Fantastic* just before the pandemic hit and for years after its world premiere, I searched for the opportunity just to read the script. Thankfully I was finally able to connect with playwright Ike Holter and was thrilled not only to read his play, but also secure the 2nd production rights. After reading this script and assessing the genre/tone and technical challenges, I decided I really wanted to work with Ensemble Member John Hurley on this production. I'm grateful for his friendship, creativity and commitment to excellence which has been invaluable during this process. *The Light Fantastic* features a super-charged group of artists that have committed entirely to this process and this comedy thriller. I'd also like to recognize the enormous contributions that our designers have made to this production — John Rickus, Collin Ranney, Katie Menke, Maura Price, and Gillian Cavanaugh.

I'm excited to announce that RLTP's improv program is taking a major step forward this season. Previously we had been offering one improv comedy show per RLTP production. This season we are producing *UNSCRIPTED: Comedy Improv Night* every Wednesday night during regularly scheduled RLTP season productions! Each Wednesday, we invite a special guest artist to join the group and partake in that evening's *UNSCRIPTED* performance! Join the cast of some of Buffalo's best improv talents (Todd Benzin, Kevin DiLucente, Don Gervasi, Meghan Joyce, Annie Moor, & Jimmie Byrd) as they improvise an entire play, all while utilizing the stage and set of the current running RLTP show. This show is the perfect mix of grounded theater and laugh-out-loud improv comedy. One night of theater never seen before and never to be seen again! Performances begin at 7:30pm. Tickets are \$20 (\$15 for BLUE CARD members!). Our lobby cocktail lounge opens 1 hour prior to performances and reopens after.

This June, we are excited to present *Buffalo Stories: The Life of LeRoi C. Johnson* as we welcome and celebrate guest of honor LeRoi C. Johnson. Tickets are limited for this one-night-only event taking place on Saturday, June 1. For ticket info, please visit our website at www.roadlesstraveledproductions.org.

There is a lot more to come this season at RLTP so stay tuned for more announcements. With two productions left this season, BLUE CARDS are still available and on sale: 4 tickets and more for just \$150! Thank you for joining us on the Road Less Traveled!

Sincerely,

Scott Behrend Artistic/Executive Director

feature presentation



THE LIGHT FANTASTIC

By Ike Holter

Co-Directed by Scott Behrend* & John Hurley*

Assistant Direction by Mike Doben

CAST

Grace Leah Berst
Harriet Davida Evette Tolbert
Eddie Alejandro Gabriel Gómez
Fiona Diane DiBernardo
Adam Ricky Needham
Katrina Melinda Capeles
Peter/Rufus Greg Howze*

PRODUCTION TEAM

Production Stage Management Sarah Foote*
Set Design Collin Ranney
Sound Design Katie Menke*
Light Design John Rickus*
Costume Design Maura Price*
Properties Master Diane Almeter Jones*
Fight Choreography Shelby Converse
Technical Director Lou Iannone*
Production Coordinator Hasheen DeBerry*
Assistant Stage Management Amber Greer
Assistant Stage Management Darren Valdera
Scenic Painter Jennifer Carter

**Member of RLTP Ensemble*

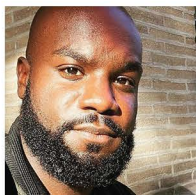
PLACE:

Rural Indiana. A big old house that looks old as fuck.

TIME:

FALL. Modern, but feels and looks like 1996, cause it's rural fucking Indiana.

There will be no intermission during the performance.



IKE HOLTER (PLAYWRIGHT) Ike Holter is a Chicago writer and the author of plays including *Exit Strategy*, *Hit the Wall* and *Put Your House in Order*. He wrote *The Rightlynd Saga*, a series of 7 interconnected plays set in a fictional Chicago neighborhood that the Chicago Tribune called “One of the most significant literary achievements in modern-day Chicago.” For television, he’s received the WGA award for “Best Adaptation”

for his work on the Emmy-award winning FX series *Fosse/Verdon*, and his miniseries *Harold* was recently picked up by Wayfarer Studios. He is currently developing film and TV projects with Netflix and TriBeCa Productions, and has taught at University of Chicago, DePaul, and is a lecturer at Yale University. Winner of the 2017 Windham-Campbell prize for drama, one of the highest literary awards in the world, and the 2021 Steinberg Playwright award. Repped by WME and M88.



SCOTT BEHREND (CO-DIRECTOR) Artistic/Executive Director Scott Behrend is co-founder of Road Less Traveled Productions and is a graduate of Syracuse University. Mr. Behrend has produced over 96 productions in RLTP's 19 year history and directed many of the company's celebrated productions, including: *The Antipodes*, *The Christians*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *True West*, *Appropriate*, *Race*, *Clybourne Park*, *Buffalo Rises*, *Circle*

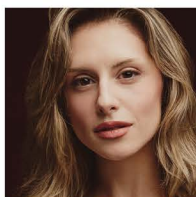
Mirror Transformation, *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*, *The Man Who Had All The Luck*, and many more. He has been nominated five times by the Artie Awards as Best Director, winning in 2009. He has directed at Studio Arena Theater and Shea's 710 Theatre and has also worked extensively in Buffalo theater as a set designer and cultural advocate. Scott was named a 2010 honoree of Business First's class of 40 under 40 and is a founding board member and the current Co-Chair of the Greater Buffalo Cultural Alliance.



JOHN HURLEY (CO-DIRECTOR) For RLTP: *Mysterious Circumstances* by Michael Mitnick, *Hand to God* by Robert Askins, *The Illusion* by Tony Kushner, *Disgraced* by Ayad Akhtar, *It's a Wonderful Life: a Live Radio Play* (at Shea's 710), *The Chimes: A Goblin Story* by Charles Dickens, and *Bigfoot* by Jon Elston (online). For RLTP and BPO: *Ellis Island: The Dream of America* (at Kleinhans). As an actor for RLTP: Danny M in *The Antipodes* by

Annie Baker. He is a proud member of the RLTP ensemble. He is a proud member of the RLTP ensemble. Many thanks and much love to Leanne and family.





LEAH BERST (GRACE) is so excited to return to RLTP for *THE LIGHT FANTASTIC!* Leah earned a BFA in Music Theatre from UB in 2017 and has been working professionally in Buffalo ever since. Favorite credits include: Stage: *Murder Ballad* (Narrator, Road Less Traveled Productions), *Tick Tick...Boom!* (Susan, Second Generation Theatre), *Tell Me on a Sunday* (Emma, Musicallyfare Theatre, Artie Nominee-Best Actress), *The Crucible* (Mary Warren, Kavinoky Theatre). Film: *Heartbreak Falls Pt. 1 & 2* (Eliza, Lotus Roads LLC), *Making Amends* (Group Leader, Gelia Studios, 48 Hr Film Festival Nominee-Best Actress). Love and gratitude to all who support her on stage and off.



DAVIDA EVETTE TOLBERT (HARRIET) —a.k.a. Dee Dee, is ready to turn the corner to the intersection of supernatural and spiritual in this new adventure in *The Light Fantastic*. She is more than excited to see where this journey takes her personally and professionally. During this production, Dee will do her best to tap into the fabric of her community to share this story and bring it to life. As the season moves forward, Dee always keeps her

Buffalo roots in mind. She stays in tune with the legacies left for her, that still moves her energy positively, and tries to use her own influence to encourage the next artists in line. Dee thanks God, her “mom-a-ger,” and a host of family and friends who consistently support her efforts. Now, let’s get to it!



ALEJANDRO GABRIEL GÓMEZ (EDDIE) is an Artie-nominated performer (*In The Heights*, *Desde El Puente: Musical Edition*, *West Side Story*) from Buffalo, NY and an ensemble member of Raíces Theatre Company. Since 2021, Alejandro has been a lead teaching artist at Shea’s Performing Arts Center and is completing his degree in Theater with a minor in Television and Film Arts at Buffalo State University. “To my family, ya tú sabes <3.”



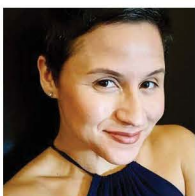
DIANE DIBERNARDO (FIONA) was last seen on the RLTP stage as Jessie in *Sweat* last season. Favorite roles include: Abby in *A Great Wilderness* at BUA, Mrs. Bennett in *Pride and Prejudice*, Bella in *Lost in Yonkers*, Belinda Sue in *Once in My Lifetime: A Buffalo Football Fantasy*, Bette in *The Undeniable Sound of Right Now*, Emma in *Stupid F**king Bird*, Nurse Ratched in *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, Mistress Ford in

Merry Wives of Windsor, Bananas in *House of Blue Leaves*, Mrs. Tottendale in *The Drowsy Chaperone*, and Portia in *Julius Caesar*. Diane is also a professional makeup artist whose work includes off off Broadway, The Maury Povich Show, numerous independent films and runway shows. Proud graduate of the Niagara University Theatre program. Instagram: therealdianiber



RICKY NEEDHAM (ADAM) is thrilled to be returning to the RLTP stage! He is a two-time Buffalo Spree (Best Of) recipient and is an Artie Award winner/nominee. He has a BA in Theatre from SUNY Buffalo State, and has studied & performed with The Second City Theatre in Chicago, IL. Professional credits include Drew in *Rock of Ages* (D'Youville's Kavinoky Theatre), Monty in *A Gentlemen's Guide to Love and Murder* (MusicalFare

MusicalFare Theatre), Will in *Big Fish* (Second Generation Theatre), and many others. He thanks Scott, John, Mike, Gina, and the whole RLTP team for the opportunity. Lastly, he thanks Rhiannon and his family for their endless love & support.



MELINDA CAPELES (KATRINA), an acclaimed Hard of Hearing Performing Artist, captivates audiences with a kaleidoscope of talents spanning dance, singing, acting, and circus arts. A three-time Artie Award recipient, Melinda's adaptability has graced global stages, collaborating with renowned companies such as Cirque du Soleil, Walt Disney World, and Feld Entertainment. Locally, Melinda has had the honor to work with

esteemed venues, including D'Youville Kavinoky Theatre, 710 Main, Second Generation Theater, Irish Classical Theater, Road Less Traveled, and Raices. Dedicated to uniting hearing and deaf performers, Melinda passionately advocates for inclusivity in the arts.



GREG HOWZE (PETER/RUFUS), an RLTP Ensemble member, is excited and grateful to be making yet another appearance on the RLTP stage. Past RLTP productions you may have caught him in over the years include: *Insidious*, *A Very Fine Use for a Grenade*, *Buffalo Rises*, *Speed of Light*, *The Motherf**ker with the Hat*, his multiple roles in last season's *Mysterious Circumstances*, and this season's *All My Sons*. When not in a

production, Greg likes to spend time with his son Isaiah, acrylic painting, cooking, and making music. He would like to thank the entire production team at RLTP for once again allowing him a part of another incredible piece of work in yet another exciting season of theater.

SARAH FOOTE (STAGE MANAGER), an RLTP Ensemble member, is excited for her seventh season at The Road Less Traveled! A graduate of Buffalo State, she has stage managed Road Less Traveled productions of *Guards at the Taj*, *The Thin Place*, *Sweat*, *Interrogation Room*, *Superior Donuts*, *The Undeniable Sound of Right Now*, *Between Riverside and Crazy*, *Miss Bennett: Christmas at Pemberley*, *Disgraced*, *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*, *Little Women...Now*, and the virtual production of *Bigfoot*. She has also stage managed The Kavinoky Theatre's *From Honky Tonk to Protest: A Woman's View of Country Music* and *Pride and Prejudice*. She'd like to thank everyone at The Road Less Traveled as well as her friends, family, and Andrew for all that they do!



MIKE DOBEN (ASSISTANT DIRECTOR) is the Co-Artistic Director of Buffalo United Artists, Buffalo's only exclusively LGBTQIA+ theater company. Mike has worked on the RLTP Production Staff since 2017 and this will be his 10th show with the company. Mike has also worked at Subversive Theatre Collective where he directed *Fahrenheit 451* and *Mercury Fur*. For the latter he garnered an Artie nomination for Outstanding Direction of a Play. Other directorial credits include *Foxfinder* (New Phoenix Theatre) and most recently *Reset* (First Look Buffalo). Mike would like to thank Scott Behrend and John Hurley for the opportunity to contribute to this daring production and 20th anniversary season.

COLLIN RANNEY (SET DESIGNER) Collin's scenic and costume design work can be seen at theatres throughout Buffalo. His recent scenic design work at Alleyway Theatre earned him Outstanding Scenic Design Artie Award nominations for *Burst* in 2023 and *Berserker* in 2022. Collin holds his formal design training in the theatre with a Master's of Fine Arts in Scenic & Costume Design from The University of Maryland and Bachelor's of Fine Arts in Theatre Technology from The University at Buffalo. Collin has designed and assisted at theatres throughout the Washington DC, Maryland and Virginia area and now Buffalo, NY. Design portfolio available at collinranneydesign.com.

KATIE MENKE (SOUND DESIGNER), an RLTP Ensemble member, is excited for the 20th Anniversary Season at RLTP. She has designed sound for RLTP for 17 of those seasons! She started in 2006 with *The Dodo Bird* when RLTP was located at the Market Arcade movie theatre. 17 years for Katie has amounted to over 60 sound designs, three RLTP theatre installs, job changes, and becoming a mom to two beautiful boys. Katie is a second generation Buffalo theatre designer (love you Dad!) and hopes her boys will develop a love of art and theatre just like she did at their age.

JOHN RICKUS (LIGHT DESIGNER), an RLTP Ensemble member, has been designing lights for RLTP since its inception. John received a degree in Television/Theater Arts from Valparaiso University in 1992. After returning to WNY he started working for Indigo Productions and spent 10 years in charge of Lighting and Rigging for various events and concerts. In 2001, he joined the Production Department of UB's Center For the Arts as Head Carpenter. John and Carlie Todor-Rickus started Eclectic Oil and Light LLC about 10 years ago. They work together on lighting projects and installations (see their work on Instagram @eclecticcoilandlight).

MAURA PRICE (COSTUME DESIGNER), an RLTP Ensemble member, is excited to be back for the 20th anniversary. She has been with the company since its conception. She has been working with theatrical costumes since 1999 upon graduation from Buffalo State University. She worked at Studio Arena Theater for seven seasons in various capacities in costuming, with the last three seasons as wardrobe supervisor. Maura has been lucky enough to work on five films here in Buffalo as a member of the wardrobe union. During the pandemic Maura went back to Buffalo State University and is currently working towards her Masters Degree in Education, majoring in Career and Technical Education. She is currently a full-time teacher of Home and Careers at two Buffalo public schools. Maura (aka Mo) is a proud member of both the latse local 10 (stagehand) and 783 (wardrobe) unions. Working behind the scenes is such an important part of theater and Maura is honored to be a part of it.



SHELBY CONVERSE (FIGHT DIRECTOR) (she/they) returns to RLTP this season after last year's gruesome work on *Guards at the Taj* and *Mysterious Circumstances*. A graduate of SUNY Fredonia (#FREDWorks), they have spent the last few years studying with intimacy directors and coordinators while also continuing to train all across the country through the Society of American Fight Directors. More recently, Shelby's fight direction has been seen onstage in *Belfast Girls* (Irish Classical Theatre Company), *Murder on the Orient Express* (Shea's 710 Theatre), and *Bloom* (Raíces Theatre Company), while also working as a queer intimacy director for *The Gentleman Caller* (Buffalo United Artists) and *Choir Boy* (Ujima Theatre Company).

DIANE ALMETER JONES (PROPS MASTER), an RLTP Ensemble member and a freelance designer, is delighted to be working at RLTP as a prop master. She can also be found propping around Buffalo at Irish Classical, Ujima, Raices, Alleyway, All For One Productions, Second Generation Theatre and the Kavinoky. Almeter Jones continues to hone her skills as a union member of IATSE 52 in art departments. As a mental health advocate, she writes and produces her own work. Cheers, and a tip of the hat to Tim and her ever-supportive family and friends.

AMBER GREER (ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER) is ecstatic to be working with Road Less Traveled Productions for another season. Amber is a first gen graduate from SUNY Buffalo State University with a bachelor's degree in Theater Arts/Dance. Her previous work consists of stage manager for *Bloom* (Raíces Theatre Company), props master for *Once on this Island* (Shea's 710 Theatre), co-props master for *The Color Purple*, *Murder on the Orient Express* (Shea's 710 Theatre), and Assistant stage manager for *Guards at the Taj* and *Sweat* (Road Less Traveled Productions). Amber would like to thank her mother, friends, and Upward Bound family for all the support to continue her theatre career.

DARREN VALDERA (ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER) (He/They) is a passionate theater artist. They started as a performer and fell in love with technical production. He has held positions in carpentry, electrics, run crew, sound, as well as stage managing and assistant stage managing. Recent works include: Torn Space's *Generations* (Summer Assistant); *Modern Workshop* by Selda Sahin and Derek Gregor (Stage Manager); *All Maine Points* (Assistant Director); *Marvelous Wonderettes* (Assistant Stage Manager). Aside from running around backstage, Darren helps organize and run The Lavender Room, a local DIY community space, and plays drums in two bands. Darren has worked on varying theatrical experiences and is excited to work with Road Less Traveled for the very first time! He'd like to thank stage manager Sarah for bringing him in and the team for bringing this production to life!

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A portrait of LeRoi C. Johnson, a man with short grey hair and glasses, wearing a dark blue blazer over a black t-shirt with a white graphic. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression.

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THE LIFE OF LEROI C. JOHNSON

AN ORIGINAL MUSICAL BY JON ELSTON

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PHOTO BY YVES-RICHARD BLANC

Buffalo Stories 2024 will feature guest of honor, LeRoi C. Johnson, a Buffalo-based visual artist who works as a lawyer by day even while becoming an accomplished artist locally and internationally. The time Johnson spent living, working, and painting in Washington, DC in the 1970s was integral in the evolution of his style and recurring artistic themes. He describes his work as "electric primitive," exploring cubism and surrealism but incorporating bold, bright colors as well as African, Caribbean, and South American cultural influences. He quickly established himself within the city's art community, exhibiting in local galleries and across the nation. He has also served on the boards of the Burchfield Penney Art Center and the Buffalo Society of Artists. In 2019 Johnson's work was included in the London Biennial.

The evening will include:

- * pre-show reception at 7:00 p.m. (open bar and hors d'oeuvres) *
- * 8:00 p.m. performance *
- * post-show reception *



Seating is limited. Advance purchase only.

Tickets can be purchased online at www.roadlesstraveledproductions.org or by phone at (716) 629-3069

Buffalo Stories offers a glimpse into the lives of Buffalo's most intriguing personalities while toasting our vibrant community and supporting Road Less Traveled Productions. The event celebrates the life of a local Buffalo icon by presenting a one-night only musical written about the guest of honor's life.

Past honorees include

Anthony Masiello, Thurman Thomas, Russell Salvatore, Shelley Drake, Robert Gioia & Maryann Saccomando Freedman.

Funds from the event will benefit Road Less Traveled Productions.

many thanks



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many thanks



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Sarah Schramm
Jill Schulz
Jo A Schweitzer
Frederico Serrafiero
David & Cindy Silverstein
Alexandra Smith
Karen Spaulding
Francis Sullivan
Lois Tripp
Susan Vasi
Ann Venuto
David Walia
Michael Walline
Julie Wilk
Mary Wilson
Gary Witten
Michele Wolf
Ann & Rick Wolney
Mary Yates
David Zak
Paul Zarembka

Donors listed reflect those who have given during the 2022/23 & 2023/24 seasons.

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**WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 28
SPECIAL GUEST
CHRISTIAN BRANDJES**



**WEDNESDAY MARCH 6
SPECIAL GUEST
CHARMAGNE CHI**



**WEDNESDAY MARCH 13
SPECIAL GUEST
JOEY BUCHEKER**



**WEDNESDAY MARCH 20
SPECIAL GUEST
LISA LUDWIG**



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