

# PLAYBILL®

The National Edgar Allan Poe Theatre  
Baltimore, MD

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL FOR EDGAR ALLAN POE

*By Zac Pensol*



**"A BALTIMORE HOLIDAY  
TRADITION IN THE MAKING"**



**MOTORHOUSE THEATER**  
120 W North Ave, Baltimore, MD 21201



*Presents*

# A CHRISTMAS CAROL FOR EDGAR ALLAN POE

by Zac Pensol

*with:*

**Ian Blackwell Rogers**  
(Edgar Allan Poe)

**Oz Heiligman**  
(Child Edgar/Young Edgar)

**Mallory Shear**  
(Ghost of Memory/  
Spectre of Fear)

**Jade Greene**  
(Raven/Frances/Guest)

**Rocky Nunzio**  
(John/Bartender/Guest)

**Alex Zavistovich**  
(Patron/Future Edgar)

**Sarah Bella Joyce**  
(Virginia Clemm Poe)

**Anthony Parker**  
(Spirit of Fortune)

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**Director**  
Mark Kamie

**Stage Manager**  
Ronald Malone

**Makeup Designer**  
Siobhan Beckett

**Playwright**  
Zac Pensol

**Scenic Designer**  
James Raymond

**Costume Designer**  
Sarah Belle Joyce

**Artistic Director**  
Alex Zavistovich

**Sound Designer/Composer**  
James D. Watson III

**Asst. Stage Manager/  
Props Supervisor**  
Rachel Dercola

**Production Director**  
Katherine Ross

**Lighting Design**  
Andy Walling

**Archival Videographer**  
Jaya Marshall

**Assistant Director**  
Adam R. Adkins

**Fight/Intimacy  
Choreographer**  
Mallory Shear

**Overhire**  
Eleanor Ross

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Creative Baltimore Fund*

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## DIRECTOR'S LETTER

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Stories that ask us to confront our past are rarely gentle. They insist we look closely at the choices we made, the chances we missed, and the truths we tried to bury. Zac Pensol's brilliant new script begins with a provocative premise: What if the master of the macabre, Edgar Allan Poe, had his own Christmas Eve reckoning?

"A Christmas Carol for Edgar Allan Poe" imagines a singular night in which a raven, a memory, a fortune, and a fear force the poet to finally see the life he has been unable to see for himself. This is not simply a historical portrait; it is a ghost story told in the language of the mind.

Our production embraces the play's inherent liminality. Everything unfolds inside Poe's meager parlor, but truly inside his psyche, a dramatic crucible where memory, imagination, and longing dissolve into one shifting, atmospheric landscape. We exist in the moments between life and death, genius and madness, the present reality and the specters of regret. The play asks why we so often fail to recognize the good in our lives while we are living them. Poe begins the night convinced that his profound artistic drive is a curse: "God cursed me with this... this feeling that there is something gigantic inside me that I must release to the world." He interprets this powerful gift as punishment, allowing suffering to become the only narrative he trusts.

Yet the scenes he revisits reveal a different story. They certainly contain pain, but they also offer undeniable moments of love, joy, and possibility that his self-imposed darkness prevented him from recognizing. The ghosts are not present to punish him. They are here to widen his perspective and challenge the assumptions he has mistaken for truth.

Poe's journey becomes one of reclaimed agency. His declaration "I shall write myself a new fate!" marks the moment he understands that transformation begins not with a supernatural intervention but with the willingness to see clearly and to change the ending we author for ourselves. It is the lesson he must learn if he hopes to love fully, to live honestly, and to cherish the time he has left with Virginia.

My hope is that as you watch Poe wrestle with his shadows, you find something of your own story reflected back, not the bleakness, but the extraordinary possibility that clarity and compassion can open the door to renewal. This world premiere reminds us that even the most haunted among us are not beyond the persistent reach of hope.

Thank you for joining us and for stepping into this imaginative, transformative journey with us.

Mark Kamie  
December, 2025

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# PLAYWRIGHT'S LETTER

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I was familiar with The National Edgar Allan Poe Theatre's work from their "On the Air" radio drama productions on National Public Radio, which I thought were great, and then as fate would have it we crossed paths in 2021 when we both won Saturday Visiter Awards at the International Edgar Allan Poe Festival.

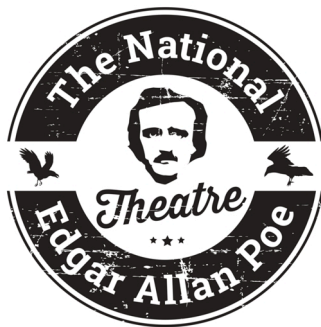
My goal with this play was to not only combine the classic elements of 'A Christmas Carol' with the most popular elements of Poe's writings, but to also tell the story of who Poe was - the human behind his much mythologized life.

I poured myself into tons of research about Poe's life - his highs and lows - and used that to speculate what Christmastime might've been like for him, especially in times where he was at his lowest.

It felt like it was meant to be when I realized that Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" had only been released in America the year prior to Poe's "The Raven." He was a fan of Dickens and it worked so well to think he was probably reading that soon-to-be Christmas classic right as he was unknowingly on the cusp of publishing the work for which he would always be known.

After putting years of work into this script, working alongside The National Edgar Allan Poe Theatre to make it the best it can be, I am so incredibly excited to see their production of it. The cast looks phenomenal, the crew is pouring their all into it, and I know there is an incredible amount of passion in every piece of this show.

Zac Pensol  
December 2025







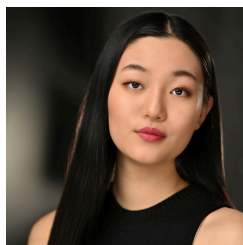
## Ian Blackwell Rogers

**Edgar Allan Poe.** Ian has been playing Edgar Allan Poe for some time, in immersive productions in DC and VA, "A Dream Within a Dream" and "A Dream Within a Dream: Madness" with Through the 4th Wall Productions, as well as here and there at events in DC and Baltimore. He's done a lot of Shakespeare and other early modern plays with the Baltimore Shakespeare Factory and Brave Spirits Theatre. Weirdly, he's never done any version of "A Christmas Carol" before.



## Jade Greene

**Raven/Frances Allan/Guest.** Originally from NJ, Jade's professional life began at The Haunted Mansion of Long Branch. Afterwards she formed her own touring theater company that performed interactive mysteries, adult comedies and dramas, and interactive rock 'n' roll fairytales for children in schools, restaurants, and other venues. Finally moving into her first brick and mortar theater, Thalia's Theatre, followed by the Jewelbox Theatre, Grange Playhouse, and Cafe Theatre, live theatre ended with the pandemic, as did fitness, which Jade had been teaching for 20 years. Moving to Maryland, Jade has continued her career as Poe's Cafe Theatre, performing mysteries at the Hard Rock Café and aboard the Choptank River Queen on the Eastern Shore, as well as many private parties in the DMV area. Jade is also a proud member of the board of the National Edgar Allan Poe Theatre!



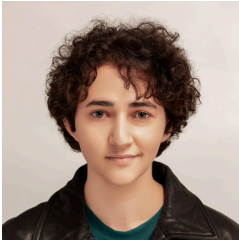
## Sarah Bella Joyce

**Virginia Clemm Poe.** Sarah Bella Joyce is a Baltimore-based singer, voice over artist, and actress recently featured as Stephanie Lalande in Poe Theatre's radio drama adaptation of "The Spectacles" and Chika Aki in Baltimore web series "Rosemary Street." She has performed with Maryland theatres such as Industrial Strength Theatre, Fells Point Corner Theatre, and Towson University's Academic Theatre.

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# WHO'S WHO ON STAGE

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## Oz Heiligman

**Child Edgar/Young Edgar.** (he/they) Oz is a DMV-based actor, improviser, teaching artist, and Edgar Allan Poe drag impersonator. They hold a BFA in Acting from Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle, WA. Some notable theatre credits include *Henry V*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Shakespeare Beyond: It's the Comedy of Errors, Hon!* with Chesapeake Shakespeare Company; *Henry VIII* with Baltimore Shakespeare Factory; and award-winning *Astro Boy & the God of Comics* with Flying V Theater.



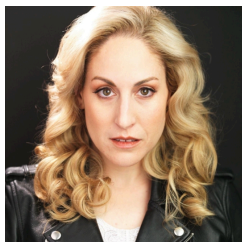
## Rocky Nunzio

**John Allan/Bartender/Guest.** Rocky is excited for his first production with The National Edgar Allan Poe Theatre. Acting: "King Lear" (Baltimore Shakespeare Factory); "Columbinus" (Helen Hayes Award Nomination-best ensemble) (1st Stage); "Lempira," "Garbage Quest DX" (Baltimore Rock Opera Society), "Wannabe" (Best of Fringe-Winner, Capital Fringe), "Blue Camp" (Rainbow Theatre Project); "On The Farce Day of Christmas," "Rapunzarella White" (Best Medicine Rep), "Fiveplay" (The Coil Project). Directing: "Dreamer/Seeker" (Capital Fringe), "Fiveplay" (Greenbelt Art Center). Writing: "Reflection of a Shadow" (New York Summer Theatre Festival), "A Very Apocalyptic Christmas" (Rapid Lemon Productions). Assistant Director: "Swimming With Whales, Civil War Christmas," "Well" (1st Stage)



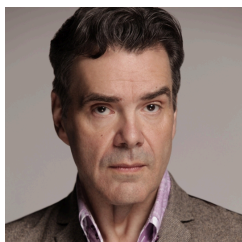
## Anthony Parker

**Spirit of Fortune.** Known professionally as Wordsmith, Anthony is a multidisciplinary artist from Baltimore, MD — a songwriter, composer, recording artist, actor, playwright, and philanthropist, whose mission is to inspire through purpose-driven art. A Grammy Voting Member, he is the winner of the 2025 Bernard/Ebb Songwriting Awards, a finalist for the 2025 Baltimore Screenwriters Competition, and a 2024 Baker Artist Awards finalist. He was also named one of The Baltimore Sun's "25 Black Marylanders to Watch." A TED Talk alumni and Artistic Partner with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Wordsmith's music and jingles have been featured on major platforms including WWE, ESPN SportsCenter, Netflix, AMC, and more. Currently, he is cast in the Tubi TV series "The Braxtons," and the independent film "About That Time."



## Mallory Shear



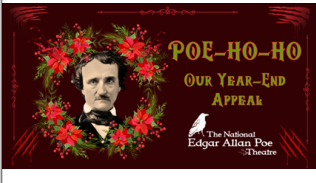

**Ghost of Memory/Spectre of Fear.** Chesapeake Shakespeare Company: "Romeo & Juliet," Macbeth; Washington National Opera: "Il Trovatore"; Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey: "Winter's Tale," "The Rivals"; Horwitz Performing Arts Center: "Monstrous," "We Could Be Heroes"; Maryland Renaissance Festival: "Julius Caesar," "Macbeth," "Fightasia (2, 3 & 4)," "Roaring Girl"; The Strand Theatre: "Blood Countess"; Flying V Theatre: "Secret History of the Unknown World," "Awesome-athon"; Molotov Theatre: "Blood, Sweat & Fears"; Adventure Theatre: "A Year With Frog and Toad"; Live Action Theatre: "Continuing Adventures of John Blade," "Super Spy," "Hero Complex," "MasterFights Theatre"; Washington Shakespeare Theatre: "Night & Day."



## Alex Zavistovich

**Future Edgar/Patron.** Alex is the founder and Artistic Director of The National Edgar Allan Poe Theatre. His award-winning work in preserving and reviving classic forms of horror theater has been profiled extensively in the scholarly text "Grand Guignolesque," published by the University of Exeter Press. Alex has appeared in principal roles with professional theater companies across Baltimore and Washington, DC, in many independent feature and experimental films, and on television in "The Wire" and "America's Most Wanted," among other programs. His Poe Theatre on the Air radio dramas can be heard internationally on National Public Radio, Audible and Amazon Music, among other outlets.

### Some Important QR Codes. Go Ahead and Scan Them. Why Not?

	<p>Poe Theatre on the Air: Listen to 30 radio drama adaptations of Poe's work, all completely free.</p>	
	<p>Contribute to our year-end appeal and help us bring our work to Baltimore and beyond. Poe-Ho-Ho!</p>	

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# WHO'S WHO BEHIND THE SCENES

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## Mark Kamie

**Director.** DC-based theatre director and educator Mark has built a strong reputation through his work with the National Edgar Allan Poe Theatre, The Source Festival, Molotov Theatre Group, Peter's Alley Theatre, and Adventure Theatre MTC. He was nominated by Broadway World DC for Best Director of a Professional Production. His directing foundation was strengthened through an MFA from Indiana University, where he also worked with Indiana Repertory Theatre, The Jewish Theatre of Bloomington, and Bloomington Playwrights Project. Before graduate school, Mark spent nine years contributing to Chicago's vibrant theatre scene as both actor and director. His passion for performance extends to the classroom, where he has taught acting, introduction to theatre, stand-up comedy, improvisation, sketch comedy writing, and public speaking at Montgomery College, Carroll Community College, and the Community College of Baltimore County.



## Zac Pensol

**Playwright.** Zac is a Kentucky-based playwright with a penchant for writing stories aimed at young performers and family audiences. In 2021, he took home Poe Baltimore's Saturday Visitor Award for his stage play "Edgar Allan Poe's Nightmare Theatre: A Frightful Comedy," and received a second nomination in 2025 for "A Christmas Carol for Edgar Allan Poe." Zac's plays put characters with genuine human feelings against fantastical backdrops — funny, scary, and bizarre — to tell stories that are both entertaining and meaningful. When he's not writing, Zac is an accomplished artist and would probably enjoy waterskiing if he ever tried it.

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# WHO'S WHO BEHIND THE SCENES

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## Katherine Ross

**Production Director.** Katherine works full time as the Advancement Manager for Theatre Washington in DC, and serves on the boards of Flying V (Treasurer) and Fluid Movement (Chair). A 13-year stage manager/A1 at the Maryland Renaissance Festival, she's also a general technician across DC and Baltimore venues and a freelance props designer/fabricator (recent and upcoming: *A Christmas Carol*, Chesapeake Shakespeare Company; *Much Ado About Nothing*, Faction of Fools). She's thrilled to reunite with Mark and Alex on Poe after stage managing *Nightfall with Edgar Allan Poe* under Mark's direction in 2014 with Molotov Theatre Group, NEAPT's artistic predecessor.



## Adam R. Adkins

**Assistant Director.** Adam is excited to be working with The National Edgar Allan Poe Theatre once again, of which he is the current Assistant Artistic Director. He recently filmed his first feature film, "Annihilator Unleashed," premiering soon on streaming platforms world-wide. Earlier this year he won Best Performer in a Play with The Little Theatre of Alexandria for his portrayal of Chris Bean in "The Play That Goes Wrong." Recent other stage performances include "Dracula: A Comedy of Errors" (Workhouse Arts Center) and "Shawshank Redemption" (Nextstop). He has also performed in numerous radio dramas with the Poe Theatre on the Air, including most recently "The Spectacles." He thanks his family and his partner Melanie for their unending support. Please visit [adamradkins.com](http://adamradkins.com) for all upcoming productions.

## Ronald K. Malone

**Stage Manager.** A Baltimore native, Ronald completed his BFA in Theater Arts at Howard University and his MS in Strategic Communications from University of Maryland Global Campus. Ronald has 40-plus years of experience as an actor, stage manager, technical theater, house manager, playwright, and audience development. He was founding artistic director of The David Players community theater, and cofounder and business manager of Caron Productions. Ron has stage managed for "Seven Guitars" (AngelWing Project), "My America" (Strand Theatre), "A Real N Show" (Blue Rose Production), "The Drum" and "Enemy of The People" (Arena Players), "Guys and Dolls" (Eubie Blake Cultural Arts). From his Personal Mission Statement: "As an artist, by divine predestination, I will seek to better the world by using my circle of influences to cultivate prodigious artistic experiences, phenomenal artistic didacticism, and extraordinary artistic productions."

## James D. Watson

**Composer, Sound designer.** James has worked on over one hundred fifteen productions in Maryland, Virginia, DC, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania as composer, arranger, orchestrator, music director, accompanist, and sound designer. He has provided sound design for numerous Poe Theatre on the Air radio dramas.

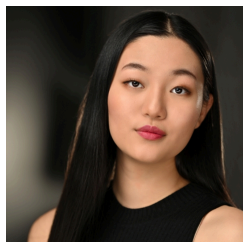


## James V. Raymond

**Set Designer.** James has worked in theatre since 1997. He collaborated with Director Michael Park, starred alongside Idina Menzel in "Redwood" on Broadway, and Choreographer Shannon Lewis (SNL), in designing "Tuck Everlasting" at Shenandoah University. James is a Project Manager/Onsite Designer with Design Foundry in Washington, DC. He was Onsite Designer for the DC movie premiere of "Wicked, Part One" at the British Embassy. James set dressed and sourced props for the Broadway production of "A Strange Loop," which won the 2022 Best Musical Tony Award. He has worked with the late 6-time Emmy award-winning Production Designer of "Sesame Street," Bob Phillips, 2-time Tony Award Nominated Designer Dede Ayite, and collaborated with Broadway's Associate Lighting Designer Timothy Reed ("Funny Girl," "Life of Pi," "Beetlejuice."). His company JV Raymond Studio, LLC, offers design consultation for live events and the like.

[www.jamesvraymond.com](http://www.jamesvraymond.com) @jvraymondstudiollc



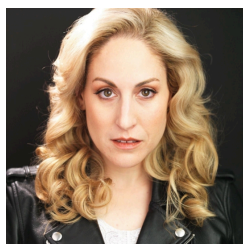


## Sarah Bella Joyce

**Costume Designer.** Sarah is a Baltimore-based singer, voice over artist, and actress recently featured as Stephanie Lalande in Poe Theatre on the Air's radio drama adaptation of "The Spectacles" and Chika Aki in Baltimore web series "Rosemary Street." She has performed with Maryland theatres such as Industrial Strength Theatre, Fells Point Corner Theatre, and Towson University's Academic Theatre.

## Andy Walling

**Lighting Designer.** Andy is a new Lighting Designer to the National Edgar Allan Poe Theater. They have worked throughout Maryland and DC, designing for local theatre, concerts, and dance performances. Andy is passionate about bringing the arts to life through environmental immersion, and they are excited to bring the world of this great author to life.



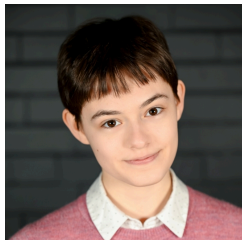
## Mallory Shear

**Fight Choreographer/Intimacy Choreographer.** Select credits:  
Arena Stage: "Jubilee," "Seven Guitars (assistant)"; Constellation Theatre: "Constellations"; Olney Theatre: "Dance Nation", "A Nice Indian Boy"; Keegan Theatre: "Shakespeare in Love"; Everyman Theatre: "Midsummer Night's Dream" (assistant); MET: "The Thanksgiving Play"; St. Mary's College: "Head Over Heels," "The Lost Girl," "Macbeth"; Iron Crow: "Head Over Heels," "Hurricane Diane"; Colonial Players of Annapolis: "Curious Incident," "Dracula: Comedy of Terrors"; Chesapeake Shakespeare Company: "Midsummer Night's Dream/Shakespeare Beyond"; Signature Theatre: "Signature in The Schools '23, '24, '25"; The Strand Theatre: "Drowning Girls," "Little Women," "Blood Countess, Romeo & Juliet." Winner of Kennedy Center ACTF Award for Excellence in Fight Choreography and WATCH Award Nominee for Fight Choreography.



## Siobhan Beckett

**Makeup Designer.** (she/her/hers) Siobhan is an actor, singer and special effects makeup artist living and working in the weird, wonderful, beautiful city of Baltimore. Siobhan, also known as Shiv, is an award winning makeup artist, having been recognized for her design work on productions like "Marat/Sade" and "Night of the Living Dead" the stage show. Siobhan is a performer, freelancer, haunted pub tour guide, standardized patient actor, immersive theatre maker and teaching artist, teaching rock vocals at Lutherville Rock School and stage makeup at the CCBC Essex and Catonsville campuses. She is also a proud company member of both The Mercury Theater in Baltimore and The National Edgar Allan Poe Theatre. Favorite recent past roles include Mrs. Lovett ("Sweeney Todd"), Florence ("Chess"), Horatio ("Hamlet/Black Parade"), Gus ("The Dumb Waiter"), Bridget "Maggie" Sullivan ("Lizzie") and Estelle/Maritza ("MAXA," Playwrights Horizons Studios, NYC).



## Rachel Dercola

**Assistant Stage Manager, Props Supervisor, Front of House.** Rachel is brimming with Christmas joy to be a part of this production. Previously, she has been a Stage Manager at Slippery Rock University in "M4M (Meas Ure | Meas Ure)" and "Tragedy, a Tragedy." Additionally, she has had roles as assistant stage manager in "Head Over Heels" and "Hand to God." Enjoy this very Edgar Allan Christmas play, and happy holidays from Rachel!



## Jaya Marshall

**Archival Videographer.** Jaya is a recent graduate from University of Maryland, Baltimore County and has a deep love for all theater. Currently Jaya works as a freelance videographer working alongside World Pride DC, clients like Jennifer Lopez, Trisha Paytas, and Raye. She has also worked at Maryland Public Television and has 5 TV credits. She's so excited to be a part of the Poe team!

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# ALEXANDER

## THE PRETTY GOOD



**MENTALIST  
AND SPIRITUALIST**