


UNTO THE HILLS

A WORLD PREMIER MUSICAL
A Gift to the Community



A FAMILY, A COMMUNITY,
AND A YOUNG BOY IN CRISIS...
AND THE STRUGGLE FOR RESTORATION.
A TALE OF RURAL APPALACHIA, 1926.

Produced in association with CrossPointe Church

November 17-20, 2022

UNTO THE HILLS ~ PREMIER

Sycamore Tree Theatre
Bringing hope and making a difference

Music, lyrics, & orchestration by Steve Richards

Written by Tom & Denise Diffee

NOVEMBER 18, 1926

On the gentle mountain breeze, the distant sound of hymns float across the verdant valley vibrant with autumn leaves of the sugar maple, scarlet oak, sweetgum, and hickory trees. Voices and banjo melt together in harmonious disorder. Late in November, the frost has graced the hills for several weeks now, but the afternoon sun is still warm. Most of the harvest has been put up after months of hard work, and the evidence of the labor of a community is visible in barn lofts piled high with fragrant hay, beds topped with freshly filled straw mattresses, wheat crops put up, and cotton sacks filled with dried beans and wild chestnuts. Potatoes, carrots, parsnips, and cabbage are stored in hay lined pits in the now lifeless garden. Bushels of apples have been exchanged for winter clothes and shoes; the excess processed into apple butter and canned for the winter. Sturdy cabins, already weathered by many winters of smoky mountain wind and rain, are warm with the glow of oil lamps. Pantries are lined with shining glass jars filled with blackberry, blueberry, and gooseberry jam as well as a variety of grown and foraged vegetables. Inside one of these sturdy log cabins, several families gather in the glow of the fireplace. Chestnuts gathered earlier in the fall are roasting and crackling on the fireplace, their sweet earthy aroma filling the air. The annual chore of corn husking was the day's event, with families gathering under the premise that "many hands make light work." After a full day of work, the apple cider and the banjo appear, and the community gossip commences.

The inhabitants of this secluded valley nestled in the Great Smoky Mountains are a tenacious and hardy people, individualistic but always willing to help a neighbor. Hardworking, they labor through all seasons to provide for their families and livestock; God-fearing, they cannot help but find Him in the hazy blue majesty of the mountains rising above the lush meadows and in the bounty of the valley. Resilient and resolute, they overcome division, poverty, and difficult circumstances with the understanding that "it'll all quilt in" in the end.

Instead of only viewing this merely as a time simple and long forgotten, what if we learned from the strength of this people, from the faith and determination they exude? What if we applied that same tenacity to our own lives? What if we lived with the intentionality of helping our neighbor, providing for our families, valuing the land, and taking God at His Word? What if we, in times uncertain and restless, instead of losing our gaze in the confusion around us, lifted our eyes unto the hills, trusting that the Lord is our strength? Maybe we don't have the privilege of soaking in the misty mountains of rural Appalachia. Let today find us pondering the invaluable importance of returning to our own roots and spending time in the splendor of creation. Maybe we can't live in the hills, but we can always turn our eyes ***Unto the Hills***.

Written by **Shayliana Mills** (*Dramaturge*)

SCENES & SONGS

ACT I

Overture

Scene 1: Cades Cove, Tennessee 1926

<i>Goin' Home</i>	Mourner
<i>Cades Cove</i>	Goldie B & Ensemble
<i>Trust</i>	Eula Rae & Hurst

Scene 2: Outside Ben & Carolyn Mae's Cabin – later that afternoon

<i>Our Song</i>	Benjamin & Carolyn Mae
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Scene 3: Pastor Alton's Cabin – that night

<i>Settlin' Folk/Meddlin' Folk</i>	Ensemble, Gregory & Hugh Kyle
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Scene 4: Cades Cove Community Common – several days later

<i>Oh, Clyde</i>	Cades Cove Kids
<i>If I Had My Way</i>	Sonny Boy
<i>I Just Can't Forgive</i>	Elsie June & Ensemble Ladies

Intermission - Entr'acte

ACT II

Scene 1: Cades Cove Community Common – a few days later

<i>Troubles Come Our Way</i>	Ensemble
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Scene 2: Elsie June's Cabin – the same day

<i>The Mulberry Tree</i>	Callie & Elsie June
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Scene 3: Gregory's Cave in the hills – that night

<i>Hope To Go On</i>	Benjamin
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Scene 4: Cades Cove Community Common – a couple days later

<i>Let's Take A Quick Appraisal</i>	Ensemble
<i>If I Had My Way (Reprise)</i>	Tucker

Scene 5: Elsie June's Cabin – three months later

<i>If I Was That Mulberry Tree</i>	Sonny Boy
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Scene 6: Community Common & the Church – Christmas Eve

<i>Nothin' Like Christmas</i>	Ensemble & Cades Cove Kids
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Finale:

<i>In The Smoky Mountains</i>	Ensemble & Cades Cove Kids
<i>Cades Cove (Reprise)</i>	Ensemble & Cades Cove Kids
<i>Unto the Hills</i>	Elsie June
<i>In the Smoky Mountains (Reprise)</i>	Ensemble

CAST, ORCHESTRA, & PRODUCTION

Cast

(in order of appearance)

Townfolk of Cades Cove The Ensemble

Women:

Isabel Berline, Lorilee Brassuer, Rebekah Brown, Denise Diffie
 Josi Haugo, Melanie Jackson (Mourner), Deb Marpert, Richelle Rosioru

Men:

John Jones, Caleb Kotschevar (Soloist), Brian Matthewson (Soloist)

Cades Cove Kids:

Kaedon Garcia, Kennedy Garcia, Annie Matthewson, Evie Matthewson,
 Jonas Matthewson, Harper Spilker, Maddie Spilker

Tucker Cameron Skeith
 Pastor Alton Roger Wilson
 Goldie B..... David Potter
 Eula Rae Plunkett Kara Garcia
 Mabel Michelle Potter
 Sonny Boy..... Kaleo Kawabori
 Ruby Sue..... Ella Matthewson
 JT Caleb Selvig
 Oshie..... Talia Jarrell
 Callie Russell Bethany Haugo
 Hurst Landon Bruce Fitzgerald
 Benjamin Russell..... Dave Selvig
 Carolyn Mae Russell Ruth Stainer
 Elsie June Russell..... Merry McCallum
 Hugh Kyle Russell..... Aaron Seekins

Orchestra

Music Director..... Steve Richards
 Violin..... Ellen Lund, Victoria Nelson, Daniel Schull
 Viola..... Ysa Bombita
 Cello..... Norma Dermond, Gabe Bombita
 Bass Paul Selvig
 Flute..... Wendy Baker
 Clarinet Sherri Richards
 Oboe Lea Louder
 Bassoon Dana King
 Trumpet Mark Baker
 Horn..... Barb Jensen

CAST, ORCHESTRA, & PRODUCTION

Trombone Scott Higbee, Josiah Schweizer
 Bass Trombone..... Beethoven Castillo
 Keyboard Ludmila Udodik
 Percussion Lindsay Stevens, Nathan Way
 Drums Jim Mitchell
 Rehearsal Pianist..... Sam Cheng

Production Staff

Executive Producer Michelle Potter
 Producers David Potter, Denise Diffee
 Director Tom Diffee
 Assistant Director..... David Potter
 Music Director..... Steve Richards
 Choreographer..... Leslie Day
 Additional choreography for
Let's Take a Quick Appraisal..... Jeremy Anderson
 Sound Design and Engineer..... Mike Jorden
 Audio Assistant Alison Jorden
 Lighting Design Ruth Stainer
 Lighting Engineer..... Erich Britton
 Video Director Jeff Keith
 Stage Manager Leslie Day
 Backstage Managers..... Peggy Baker, Lilli Haugo, Shayliana Mills, Jakob Schulz
 Prop Mistress..... Lima Cheng
 Set Design Ruth Stainer
 Set Construction and Painting Ruth & Barry Stainer, John Gill, Dan Gabbert, Jeff Gutheil,
 Michelle Potter, David Seekins, Scott Spilker, Leone St. Clair
 Bench Engraving Peggy Baker
 Set Dressing..... Leone St. Clair
 Costume Design Mary Boose
 Costume Construction and Acquisition Mary Boose, Deb Marpert
 Hair and Make-up..... Richelle Rosioru, Mary Boose, Diane Van Inwegen
 Graphic Design Marshelle Anderson
 Dramaturge Shayliana Mills
 Camera Operators Paul Kowabori, Shu Liu, Steve McCallum, Declan Whaley-Sharp
 Concessions Christy Haugo, Suzanne Gutheil, Pam Hill, Laura Jarrell, Leone St. Clair
 Kid Wranglers Christa Donahue, Kathy Matthewson, Holly Spilker

*We would like to dedicate this show to
 Lupe Maple and Nick Schumacher:
 Gone too soon but forever in our hearts.*

MEET OUR CAST



Isabel Berline (*Ensemble*) is a senior at Cedar Park Christian School and has been involved in theatre productions there and elsewhere. She enjoys writing books, singing, and acting. She works at Chik-fil-A and hopes to open her own ranch in the future. She's so blessed to be able to be a part of this production.



Lorilee Brasseur (*Ensemble*) began lessons in piano and harp before she was 10. Through college, Lorilee focused on voice and began performing in college operettas, working as a professional section leader in choirs, and even composed and acted in a one-act opera for a college fund raiser, *Français Tempête*. Since graduation, she has sung in The Bellevue Chamber Chorus, toured the world with the Continental Singers and the Jeremiah People, and developed a career in church music directing. Other musical endeavors have been singing with the Seattle Symphony Chorale for five years, composing and performing *The Christmas Cantata* for choir and orchestra, and composing the original music for Tom and Denise Diffee's fabulously Irish musical, *Katie's Hope*. Lorilee is deeply blessed to perform again, (especially since Covid), this time as an older sister and the quirky Cade's Cove librarian she calls Victoria Higgenbotham.



Rebekah Brown (*Duet, Ensemble*) is excited to be in her first show with Sycamore Tree Theater. She has been doing theatre since high school as Constance (*The Three Musketeers*), Alana (*The Little Mermaid*), and Lucinda (*Into the Woods*). Outside of theatre, she enjoys going on walks with her husband and dog Luna, teaching piano, and finding the best way to make a latte.



Denise Diffee (*Ensemble, Producer, Author*) She has performed in numerous musical productions over the last 27 years, and music has been a part of her life for...well, forever! She never imagined that God would call her and her husband, Tom, to write 3 musicals of their own – the 3rd one being *Unto the Hills*. She has played many parts over the years, but the roles bringing her the greatest joy are being wife to Tom, mom to 3 wonderful daughters, and Mimi to 10 amazing grandchildren. She is especially thrilled to have granddaughters Maddie and Harper joining her in this musical. She is very grateful to finally have *Unto the Hills*, which is so very dear to her heart, being performed, and to God for His unfailing love and forgiveness.



Bruce Fitzgerald (*Hurst Landon, Ensemble*) caught the "Acting Bug" in high school and in his senior year he got the leading role of Sky Masterson in the musical *Guys and Dolls*. Musicals have been his favorite hobby ever since. A few of his favorite roles include Henri (*No Room at the Inn*), Benjamin (*The Zealot*), Preacher/Brother Bob (*Christmas Comes to Second Chance*), Mr. White (*The Staring Match*), and Sean McCleery (*Katie's Hope*). Bruce sends love and huge thanks to his wife, Kelsey, and their adult children, Katelyn, Jennifer, and Andrew (and their spouses) for all of their support!

MEET OUR CAST



Kaedon Garcia (*Kids Ensemble*) is excited to perform for her second time in a musical as an ensemble member (alongside mom & sister) in this year's production of *Unto the Hills*, first performing in *I'll Be Home for Christmas* in 2017 with Catalyst Theatre. Kaedon, currently a junior at Bothell HS, has been actively involved in music at BHS, chosen for WA All State Choir in 2021-22 and chosen as a member of BHS's Bel Canto choir for 2022-2023. She has hopes to be selected for All State Choir again for the 2022-23 year. Kaedon's other activities include leadership in ASL Honor Society, photographer for BHS's Catamount publication, while being a crazy good artist and a blue belt in jiu-jitsu. Kaedon thanks you all for being here and wishes you much Aloha!



Kara Garcia (*Eula Rae Plunkett, Ensemble*) has a passion for music and a love of theatre, and she is pleased to join the cast of *Unto the Hills*. Along with directing choir and leading on church worship teams, her music and theatre experiences include *Four Tickets to Christmas*, *Katie's Hope*, *A Light in the Attic*, and *I'll Be Home for Christmas*, with roles/soloing in *The Christmas Post* and *Café Java*. It's a joy to once again be performing with her children, Kaedon and Kennedy, in this year's production! When not singing, Kara works full time at the UW as an HR Manager and enjoys salsa dancing, movies, reading, and chocolate! Kara thanks her husband Ken for his love and support as the "ladies in his life" run around the stage!



Kennedy Garcia (*Kids Ensemble*) is thrilled to be joining in a musical for her second time as part of the ensemble (along with her mom & sister) in the production of *Unto the Hills*, first performing in *I'll Be Home for Christmas* in 2017. Kennedy has continued to hone her musical skills as an active member and soloist in her school choirs and hopes for more drama role opportunities in the future. Currently in 8th grade, Kennedy is her school's ASB secretary and WEB leadership team member and is active in select soccer year-round and a part-time volleyball player. She loves video games, spending time with friends, and making new ones. Kennedy thanks her family and friends for their love and support!



Bethany Haugo (*Callie Russell, Dance Captain*) is passionate about bringing glory to God in every area of her life and is excited to be able to do that with Sycamore Tree Theatre. "Miss Bethany," as she is called by her Sunday schoolers and ballet students, will happily sit and chat with the youngest members at any social gathering. When she is not smiling at babies, you can find Bethany on a bike trail, on a ferry boat, or hanging out at her grandparents' ranch in Idaho.



Josephine Haugo (*Duet, Ensemble*), a senior in high school, is thrilled to be a part of her fourth Sycamore Tree Theatre musical production (three previously under the Catalyst Theatre banner). She loves to sing and dance and has studied classical ballet for the past ten years. Her relationship with Jesus is the most important thing in her life and she desires to share the joy she has in the LORD with everyone around her.

MEET OUR CAST



Melanie Jackson (*Ensemble*) had a desire to one day be part of a musical after seeing a production of *Godspell*. She grew up taking dance lessons and singing in many choirs and has been part of church worship teams for the past 25 years. In college, she was a member of a quartet that traveled throughout Japan for 10 weeks one summer singing in 70 churches. In 2017, she was part of the ensemble and also played Stella Ashton in Catalyst Theatre's musical production of *I'll Be Home for Christmas*. Melanie is currently an Independent Study Advisor and enjoys spending time with her grandsons, Noah and Emery. She is so grateful to her husband Brad and children Dylan and Marissa (Beau) for their loving support.



Talia Jarrell (*Oshie, Kids Ensemble*) is a homeschooled sophomore this year and has absolutely loved being in *Unto the Hills*! Previous appearances have included *A Light in the Attic* and *I'll Be Home for Christmas*. When not acting, Talia enjoys drawing, playing with her cat, waiting for rain, and eating chips.



John Jones (*Ensemble*) spent 6 years in the Marine Corps and then attended Seattle Pacific University and Northwest University. He attends Cedar Park Church where he has been involved in the prison ministry and several stage productions with Catalyst Theatre. Music and drama are important to him, and he finds them fulfilling.



Kaleo Kawabori (*Sonny Boy, Kids Ensemble*) was born in Beverly Hills, CA with a love for music, acting and accents. Ten-year-old Kaleo is delighted to make his musical theater debut with *Unto the Hills*. Off stage, Kaleo can be found swimming competitively and practicing martial arts where he holds a 3rd degree black belt in Taekwondo.



Caleb Kotschevar (*Soloist, Ensemble*) is 19 years old and super excited to be in *Unto the Hills*! He has been acting for as long as he can remember and is looking forward to what God has in store for him. Some of his passions include his family, friends, reading, and singing at the top of his lungs. He enjoyed being in the cast of *Katie's Hope* and is so happy to be working with them again.



Deb Marpert (*Ensemble*) is delighted to "make a joyful noise" as a member of the *Unto the Hills* cast. In addition to the drama and comedy of raising two daughters and teaching preschoolers, Deb has sung in choirs, taught drama at Sambica summer camps, and was a cast member in *A Servant of Two Masters* while attending Trinity Western University. Deb has created costumes for a variety of shows, including Lake Washington School District/Studio East productions and *Unto the Hills*.

MEET OUR CAST



Anne Matthewson (*Kids Ensemble*) is eight years old and goes to Maltby Elementary. She likes to draw and do puzzles in her free time. This production marks her acting debut as she joins her older family members in this musical. Annie decided to follow Jesus when she was four years old.



Brian Matthewson (*Soloist, Ensemble*) has a Masters in Church Music with an emphasis on vocal performance. He has been married to his wife for 19 years, and they have 4 children, all of whom can be seen searching for Clyde in Cades Cove. Among his many past musical endeavors, he has also enjoyed singing in several Sycamore Tree productions under the banner Catalyst Theatre. He and his family currently attend Calvary Monroe, where he is actively involved serving in several ministries.



Ella Matthewson (*Ruby Sue, Kids Ensemble*) is sixteen years old and goes to Monroe High School, where she is involved in Drama club, Band, Jazz Band, Choir, and The Fellowship of Christian Students. Her acting debut was as Baby Jesus in a nativity at 1 month old, and she has loved the performing arts ever since. She has been with Sycamore Tree Theater since 2014, in the musical *Katie's Hope* and later *A Light in the Attic*. Ella has been in the faith her whole life and was baptized at the age of ten.



Evelyn Matthewson (*Kids Ensemble*) is eight years old and goes to Maltby Elementary. She likes going to church and helping her gramma at the barn when she can. This production marks her acting debut as she joins her older family members in this musical. Evie became a Christian when she was six years old.



Jonas Matthewson (*Kids Ensemble*) is thirteen years old and goes to Hidden River Middle School, where he is involved in Band, Jazz band, and Drama club. This production marks his acting debut, as he follows in the footsteps of his father and older sister. Jonas became a believer when he was six and was baptized at the age of nine.



Merry McCallum (*Elsie June Russell*) is excited to share in a fourth season with Sycamore Tree Theatre. Past roles include Katie (*Katie's Hope*), Lora (*A Light in the Attic*), and Norma (*I'll Be Home for Christmas*). Merry has also performed some short operas and a couple other productions (*The Christmas Post* and *Christmas Comes to Second Chance*). Musical theatre is Merry's "Happy Place" and she could not do these productions without the support of her husband, Steve, and her two sons, Josh and Caleb.

MEET OUR CAST



David Potter (*Goldie B, Ensemble, Assistant Director Producer*) got the theatre bug while performing in *The Victor*, Cedar Park Church's annual passion play, in which he was privileged to play many roles, including the part of Jesus. Other favorite roles include Jim Elliot (*Bridge of Blood*), Dimas (*The Wall*), and Leo Tannenbaum (*The Christmas Express*). While he enjoys acting,

David also enjoys directing as he helps actors bring their characters to life. Favorite directing roles include *I'll Be Home for Christmas*, *Catacombs*, and *A Little Christmas Spirit*. David is the Executive Director for Sycamore Tree Theatre, is a software engineering manager by trade, and lives with his wife, Michelle, with whom he shares this passion for theatre.



Michelle Potter (*Mabel, Ensemble, Executive Producer*) has had a love for dance and theatre since she was a kid. A co-founder of Catalyst Theatre Company and Sycamore Tree Theatre, Michelle has been acting and producing theatre for over 25 years. Favorite roles include Anne Weston (*The Rented Christmas*), Hilda (*The Christmas Express*), and the Bag Lady

(*Nativity on the Square*). Michelle works as a patient care coordinator for a dental office. Favorite hobbies include acrylic landscape painting, going to live theatre, and learning French. She is thankful to God and CrossPointe Church for the opportunity to share this beautiful story of forgiveness with our community and the honor of acting and singing alongside her best friend and husband David of 36 years.



Richelle Rosioru (*Ensemble, Hair and Make-up*) is living her childhood dream of being a wife (to Chris) and mother (to Stellan and Micah). She was in several productions with Catalyst Theatre, including *Katie's Hope*, *A Light in the Attic*, and *I'll Be Home for Christmas*. In her free time, she enjoys gardening, playing outside with her two boys, and listening to music.



Aaron Seekins (*Hugh Kyle Russell*) originally started acting when he was 8 and fell in love with theatre. He started working with Sycamore Tree Theatre (previously Catalyst Theatre) when he was 12. Now he's 16 and is honored to be working with Sycamore Tree Theatre again.



Caleb Selvig (*JT, Kids Ensemble*) is thrilled to be part of the cast for his first Sycamore Tree Theatre production. He was originally cast as Sonny Boy but due to the pandemic delays, was recast as JT. Caleb is the youngest of three generations of Selvigs in this production, including Dave (Benjamin Russell) and Paul (Bass). Outside of acting, Caleb likes to hang out with his friends

and play soccer.

MEET OUR CAST



David Selvig (*Benjamin Russell*) is pleased to be working with Sycamore Tree Theatre again, having appeared in *A Light in the Attic* and *I'll Be Home for Christmas* (under the banner of Catalyst Theatre). He has also appeared with Taproot Theatre, Driftwood Players, Renton Civic Theater, and Valley Center Stage. Favorite roles include Judge Taylor (*To Kill a Mockingbird*), Jacob (*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*), Grandpa Vanderhof (*You Can't Take It with You*), and Judge Wargrave (*And Then There Were None*). He has also appeared in films, TV commercials, and Imagination Theater on radio. He thanks God and his family for their support. Merry Christmas!



Cameron Skeith (*Tucker*) is very excited to be making his debut with Sycamore Tree Theatre in *Unto the Hills*. Theatre has been a passion for the better part of the last 20 years in his life, having been a part of Cedar Park Christian School's high school drama department and working with Anderlin Arts as both a cast member and assistant director. Anderlin Arts works include Charlie Cowell/Olin Britt (*The Music Man*); Harry the Horse (*Guys and Dolls*); and several roles in numerous musical theatre revues.



Harper Spilker (*Kids Ensemble*) is in 1st grade and as the second of three girls, she thinks it is fun to have a birthday just one day apart from her sister. She enjoys drawing pictures, playing with friends, school, recess, and chasing Clyde the pig! Her family is very proud of her for overcoming her fear by being in this musical. It especially helps calm her nerves by being able to perform in her first musical with her sister and her Mimi and Papa (Denise and Tom Diffee).



Maddie Spilker (*Kids Ensemble*) is 8 years old and is in 3rd grade. She is the oldest of three girls. She loves playing make-believe, writing stories, math, playdates, and hanging out with her cousins. She is very excited to make her dramatic debut in *Unto the Hills* with her Mimi and Papa (Denise and Tom Diffee) and she hopes to one day catch Clyde, that fool pig!



Ruth Stainer (*Carolyn Mae Russell, Set Design, Lighting Design*) has been acting since high school. She and her husband Barry founded Fishnet Theatre Company, a Christian community theatre company, with which they toured for over twenty years. Ruth was a drama and music teacher for thirty years in several Christian schools, including Heritage Christian Academy. Ruth likes all aspects of theatre, including set design and acting.



Roger Wilson (*Pastor Alton, Ensemble*) is happiest when he is singing. Favorite roles with Catalyst Theatre include John McFie (*A Light in the Attic*) and Martin Cullen (*Katie's Hope*). Previous favorites include Bob Cratchit (*A Christmas Carol*), Clarence (*It's a Wonderful Life*), Bob Ewell (*To Kill a Mockingbird*), and Christopher Riley (*Shadowlands*). Roger enjoys being on the stage and looks forward to more "favorite" roles. He thanks his many friends in the cast for the encouragement, and laughs, but mostly his wife, Terri, for putting up with the acting bug.

MEET OUR CREW

Peggy Baker (*Backstage Manager, Kid Wrangler*) has been working in dramas off and on for almost thirty years, both as an actor and a prop handler, including in *Katie's Hope* with Catalyst Theatre Company. She accepted Christ as a teenager and currently attends and serves at Northview Community Church. At home Peggy takes care of her farm and pets and spends time with her family.

Mary Boose (*Costume Design, Hair and Make-up*) had an inauspicious beginning in theatre. It all started as she shelved books in the library as part of her work study aid at college. A friend said, "theatre is more interesting." And that began her career as a costumer. She has designed and dressed about 30 shows since that auspicious day, including Youth Theater, High School Drama, Community Theater, and a Christmas Dessert Theater production. Her two favorite shows are her son's senior show, *Lend Me a Tenor*, and *Addam's Family*.

Erich Britton (*Lighting Engineer, Set Construction*) Erich has been working with Sycamore Tree Theatre for multiple productions. He began running a video camera and producing slide shows for the post-production parties. Then someone heard he was not afraid of power tools so that qualified him to build sets, so now he has 3 jobs. He's grateful for the opportunity to serve alongside all the talented individuals in these projects. He's also grateful to his family who allow him the time to dedicate to these projects. At least he thinks they're OK with it. They haven't changed the locks on him yet.

Lima Cheng (*Props Mistress*) is honored to be a part of her first production with Sycamore Tree Theatre. Lima is a part-time massage therapist and is active in Community Bible Study (CBS). She's married to her wonderful husband Sam and has 3 teen/tween children. Lima is grateful to Sycamore Tree Theatre for providing costumes to her family this past June that they wore while participating as extras for an episode in *The Chosen* TV series.

Sam Cheng (*Rehearsal Pianist*) is honored to be part of his first production with Sycamore Tree Theatre. Sam is a data analyst at Seattle Children's Hospital. He's married to his wonderful wife Lima and has 3 teen/tween children. Sam is grateful to Sycamore Tree Theatre for providing costumes to his family this past June that they wore while participating as extras for an episode in *The Chosen* TV series.

Leslie K. Day (*Choreographer, Stage Manager*) was blessed with an apprenticeship at the Metropolitan Musical Company outside of New York and was accepted into the dance corps during high school. She received a scholarship to attend college in fine arts and was later blessed with an acting scholarship for advanced studies. She has toured with multiple touring companies including the *Wizard of Oz*, *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*, and multiple Shakespeare productions. She currently works with the National Theater Education Association and the Washington State Thespians assisting students with obtaining scholarships.

MEET OUR CREW

Tom Diffee (*Director, Author*) has been writing, acting, and directing since ye olde days of yore... or at least more years than he can remember. He's enjoyed being in many productions and with many theatre companies – The Attic Theatre, Drawing Water, and the wonderful CrossWord Players – to name a few. A couple of highlights to this point are the productions of two of his own original shows, *Katie's Hope* and *A Light in the Attic*, with Catalyst Theatre. And he's thrilled to be directing this first production under the Sycamore Tree Theatre banner, even if it took 4 long years to get here! He's grateful to Pastors Nathan Hansen and Jake Foster of CrossPointe Church, and the many, many people (including David and Michelle Potter) who have patiently helped bring *Unto the Hills* to the stage; to the Lord for using drama ministry in such powerful ways; and to his perfect wife, Denise, and 3 daughters and 10 grandkids for their unwavering and enthusiastic support.

Lilliana Haugo (*Backstage Help*) is excited to join the backstage crew for *Unto the Hills*. She's a freshman in high school, has recently discovered a passion for gardening, can pencil sketch just about any animal, and is enjoying quizzing in her church's Bible Quiz ministry. Lilli's dream is to breed Rhodesian Ridgeback dogs and live on acreage.

Mike Jorden (*Sound Design and Engineer*) is a native of London, England and relocated to the US in 2004. He has a passion for Lego(!), video, sound, and theatre, and is a volunteer sound engineer at Meadowbrook Church in Redmond, WA. Mike has designed and operated sound for numerous productions with several theatre companies and churches around Seattle. Thanks to his lovely wife Alison for allowing him to play with all his toys!

Paul Kawabori (*Camera Operator*) is a filmmaker, photographer, voice actor, and singer. He is overjoyed to lend a hand in helping to document such an uplifting production and to see his son, Kaleo, debut as Sonny Boy.

Jeff Keith (*Video Director*), after a long career in the software industry, now focuses on video and photography, catering to ministries and non-profits that make a difference. He also records and livestreams events such as concerts, weddings, funerals, Bar Mitzvahs, dance, and more. He enjoys combining both the technical and artistic aspects of video, photography, and music to produce the complete package. Jeff has previously served as a worship musician and arranger, creating pieces for his family and others. He is the father of 3 grown daughters, all musicians.

Shu Liu (*Camera Operator*), born in Jining in Shandong province, graduated from Shandong Normal University majoring in Arts. She first worked as a journalist for CCTV and China Beijing TV Station and started getting in independent cinema in 2005. As an NGO employee, she initiated several events showcasing independent and underground films in different universities, as well as at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing. Liu Shu has also written, directed, and produced features premiering at Venice Critic Week and the Tallin Black Nights Official Competition.

MEET OUR CREW

Steve McCallum (*Camera Operator*) is excited to assist with *Unto the Hills*, where he can join his wife who is playing the role of Elsie June. This is Steve's second experience with this theatre production crew, after having a first time ever role onstage in *I'll Be Home for Christmas*. Steve works in the IT field at AT&T as a Principal System Engineer, and in addition to being a husband to Merry for 23 years, he is a great father to their two teenage sons, Joshua and Caleb.

Shayliana Mills (*Dramaturge*) is a registered nurse who adores being outside, spending time with her family and friends, and serving where needed. When she's not working night shift on her orthopedic medical-surgical unit, she enjoys art, country music, road trips, and adventuring to new places and learning the history behind them.

Steve Richards (*Music Director, Composer*) has been involved, for the past number of years in various musical productions, including *Katie's Hope*, *A Light in the Attic*, *I'll Be Home for Christmas*, and this year's offering of *Unto the Hills*. He is thrilled to be able to collaborate with Tom and Denise Diffie, David and Michelle Potter, and the rest of the Sycamore Tree Theater team in this musical, and prays the Lord's blessing on those who attend, and those who have been involved with all the aspects of putting it together.

Jakob Schulz (*Backstage Manager, Audio Assistant*) has participated in theatre since he was very young both on stage and off. He is excited to be part of a brand-new musical and to try his hand at stage management and assist backstage. In his downtime he loves to practice art and listen to music.

Declan Whaley-Sharp (*Camera Operator*) began his career as an excitable young kid with a can-do attitude and very little else; now... well, now things are pretty much the same, but he knows a lot about cameras. After his film school closed down due to Covid 19, he found himself astray in the dangerous world of freelancing, until happening upon a PA position at Element 7 Productions. There, he worked his way up to become a full-fledged producer thanks to the support of his loving family and fantastic partner: Danielle Heffner. Declan has filmed a plethora of live concerts, including Jack Johnson, One Republic, and Brandi Carlile, and he's thrilled to join us for *Unto the Hills*.

A NOTE FROM OUR DIRECTOR



Unto the Hills, like one of its predecessors, *Katie's Hope*, is a work of historical fiction. That is, the background for the story is historical fact, but the story itself, and the characters in it, are fictional. And we've even taken a few liberties with the setting.

But Cades Cove was indeed a thriving, prosperous community of between 600 and 700 folks – secluded but not isolated – in the Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee until around 1926 when Congress authorized a new national park, and the town slowly disappeared.

When Denise and I visited the site of the former community (which is the most popular destination in The Great Smoky Mountains National Park, visited by 2 million people annually) and learned some of its character and history, we began to think there might be a musical in there, somewhere!

There are differing accounts of where the name “Cades” came from, but the “Cove” part of the name has nothing to do with water. It is so called because it is a tranquil, beautiful valley “cove” surrounded by mountains. And the folks who lived there formed a tight-knit, hard-working, independent, spiritual community who, in a lot of ways, were like one big family.

But, like any family, there were disagreements and arguments and difficult times. The creation of the national park fueled some of those anxieties and arguments. And therein we found our story.

Because, the fact is, years before we knew much of anything about Cades Cove, Denise and I had felt led to write our next musical around the theme of forgiveness. And when we began to do some research about this special place, we realized that some of the hardships they faced might lend themselves to that subject.

But let me tell you, forgiveness can be a tough subject! Both to live through and write about. And I think it's something that probably everyone has to deal with in one way or another, at one time or another. We hope this story means something for you.

And we are so pleased to be able to finally bring this musical to the public! We cast the show over 3 years ago, thinking that we would be producing it back then. But then, of course, stuff happened (you all know what!), and since then, it's just been a series of starts and stops. We're so grateful to our wonderful cast, as most of them were able to stick with us through the long wait!

We are especially thankful to CrossPointe Church and Pastors Nathan Hansen and Jake Foster for stepping up, just this last summer, to partner with us as we produce this show! It's been a wonderful experience working with all these good folk here!

And, of course, we thank the Lord for the miraculously opened doors that brought us to this moment.

Finally, we thank each of you, our audience, for coming today! We hope you'll enjoy this glimpse of rural Appalachia in the 1920's, as we highlight the lives and struggles of some of the good people who lived there – even if it is in a fictional story. Let their stories, and their struggle for forgiveness and restoration in the midst of trouble stir your hearts and your imaginations.

And if you ever have a chance to travel to Eastern Tennessee, be sure and spend some time in the peacefulness of Cades Cove. And remember those who sacrificed their lands and livelihoods so that we, today, can enjoy the breathtaking beauty of God's creation in the Smoky Mountains. We, like the daffodils, should never forget. (Don't worry...if you listen closely, you'll understand what that means...)

Y'all have a good time now, ya' hear!

Tom Diffie

WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL

Special Thanks

Sycamore Tree Theatre would like to thank the following people and businesses for their support in this production:

The Wild Iris Inn

in La Conner, WA for providing a peaceful, comfy setting in which about half this script was written

Linda Collins

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for the filming of the silhouette sequences

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our hair and make-up team

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kid wranglers extraordinaire

Christy Haugo, Suzanne Gutheil, Pam Hill, and Laura Jarrell

our concessions crew

Ruth Stainer, Barry Stainer, Dan Gabbert, John Gill, Jeff Gutheil, David Seekins, Scott Spilker, and Leone St. Clair

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Pastor Nathan Hansen and Pastor Jake Foster

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Tina and Alex, CrossPointe Custodians

for your kindness in putting up with our long nights and interruptions to your daily routines

Bethany Haugo

for helping in so many ways (Dance Captain, rehearsing choreography with kids, filling in for actors when they were sick or injured)

John Stevens

for introducing us to CrossPointe Church in the first place

Everyone who helped in the recording of the silhouette scenes.

Ruth Stainer for the hundreds and hundreds of hours she poured into this production

Most especially to you, our audience, for your enthusiasm, applause, laughter, and tears. We hope you've enjoyed our presentation.