

A photograph of a restaurant interior, showing a table with a white tablecloth and chairs. The image is overlaid with a purple-to-pink gradient and a halftone dot pattern. The text 'FIRST DATE' is centered over the image.

**FIRST
DATE**



nickelodeon
THE
SPONGEBOB
MUSICAL
YOUTH EDITION
SEPTEMBER 14-16

SCHOOL OF
ROCK

OCTOBER 19-29


**HERSHEY AREA
PLAYHOUSE**
presents

FIRST DATE

**BOOK BY
AUSTIN WINSBERG**

**MUSIC & LYRICS BY
ALAN ZACHARY
MICHAEL WEINER**

**ORCHESTRATIONS BY
AUGUST ERIKSMOEN**

**VOCAL & INCIDENTAL MUSIC ARRANGEMENTS BY
DOMINICK AMENDUM**

DIRECTOR	<i>Danielle Cyphert</i>
MUSIC DIRECTOR	<i>Matthew Cyphert</i>
PRODUCER	<i>Rosemary Bucher</i>
LIGHTS	<i>Miguel Santiago</i>
SOUND	<i>Trent Coulon</i>
SET CONSTRUCTION	<i>Jeff Miller, Carlton Hoke</i>

FIRST DATE IS PRESENTED BY ARRANGEMENT WITH CONCORD THEATRICALS.
www.concordtheatricals.com

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PRODUCTION NOTES

Welcome to the Hershey Area Playhouse! It is my delight to welcome you to *First Date*, our latest main-stage production of the 2023 season. This season, we bring you stories that illustrate more than human nature, but human struggles made of vulnerability, fear, and hope. And there are few events on earth that bring these three elements together like that of a first date.

We are so proud to be a community environment where this vulnerability can shine in a safe and ever-growing space. In all its hilarity, *First Date* tells the story of just two but with the help of a whole group of people who weave together the full picture of Casey and Aaron's lives. Without each actor, musician, technician, and audience member, our story would be missing all the color and texture it needs to paint the vibrant tale before you. Thank you for being a part of our community and our story today.

As chair of the Board of the Hershey Area Playhouse, I wish to express my sincerest thanks to the many volunteers and current and past Board and Committee members who make performances like this a reality. Without their generosity of time, talent, and treasure, productions like these would not be possible. We follow a long line of dedicated individuals who have maintained a commitment to quality theatre in Central Pennsylvania. It is an honor to be a part of this tradition, and we thank you for your continued support. Please come back to visit us for our upcoming productions. If you like what you see today and are able to support our efforts, please consider sharing your own time, talent, and treasure at hersheyareaplayhouse.com.

**JASMINE AMMONS BUCHER,
CHAIR, HERSHEY AREA PLAYHOUSE**

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Everyone has had at least one experience of walking into a situation with no idea what to expect. Whether that experience came in the form of a first date, a job interview, a party where you only know the host, a first day of school, or any number of other situations that make you want to turn around and walk away before entering the room, everyone has experienced it. That experience will help you understand Aaron and Casey as you join them on their journeys today.

When *First Date* premiered on Broadway in August of 2013, it featured Zachary Levi as Aaron and Krysta Rodriguez as Casey. As a one-act romantic comedy that takes place in real time, it was (and is) something much different from most other musicals with which you may be familiar. Casey and Aaron have been set up on a blind date by Casey's sister, Lauren, and her brother-in-law, Kevin, who works with Aaron. As we quickly find out, though, Casey and Aaron are not alone on this date. As faces from their lives outside of the restaurant creep in as the personification of their inner critics, we learn a little more about what makes each of them tick!

When I was first offered the chance to direct this show, all I really knew about it was that my favorite Disney "prince," (Flynn Rider from *Tangled*) had been in it on Broadway. I had a bit of research to do. After studying both the music and script, I could not have been more excited to get the chance to find a cast who would bring these incredibly colorful characters to life.

This cast is comprised of some of the hardest working, most adaptable individuals with whom I have ever had the pleasure of working. Beginning rehearsals in another show's space is not easy, but that did not deter anyone from giving their all. While we all lead lives outside of this playhouse, every day that the cast walked in the doors was a day that we accomplished more than I had planned. Thank you all for everything that you have given to me and to this show. You have made this experience one that I will never forget!

I would never have been able to remain as dedicated to this show as I have if it weren't for the support that my parents and friends have given me throughout this process. Mom and Dad, you taught me to believe in myself and stand proud in the fact that I am a strong woman. To those friends who have shown support in so many ways, you have helped me to push through when I didn't think I could overcome any more obstacles! And to my "One," Jake, you have put up with the most from me throughout this past year of preparation, and still you are here (and have been here) through it all. Thank you for showing me your love in the best way you know how... by being right by my side this whole time!

Lastly, this show would not be what it is without someone very special behind the conductor's score. Matthew Derek, it has always been a dream of mine to work on a project like this with you. Thank you for allowing me to realize that dream! You are an incredible musician, an amazing person, and the best little brother a person could wish for.

I hope you all enjoy this *First Date* with us!

**DANIELLE CYPHERT,
DIRECTOR**

CAST

AARON

Travis Pierce

CASEY

Becky Marcus

WAITER/STONER GUY

David Deitz

GRANDMA IDA/AARON'S MOTHER

Kara Emily Hartman

REGGIE/AARON'S FUTURE SON/INSTAGRAM

Travis Gipe

GABE/CASEY'S CHRISTIAN FATHER

Aidan Stehman

LAUREN/FACEBOOK

Emily Myers

FRIENDLY THERAPIST/GOOGLE GIRL

Cheyleigh Rhae Hykes

ALLISON

Lauren Rothenberger

YOUTUBE/MEGAPHONE #2/BRITISH ARTIST

Sandy McInerney

BLAZE/TWITTER/MEGAPHONE #1

Toni Carosella

COMPANY

*Toni Carosella, Cheyleigh Rhae Hykes, Sandy McInerney,
Emily Myers, Lauren Rothenberger*

DANCE CAPTAIN

Cheyleigh Rhae Hykes

PIT ORCHESTRA

KEYBOARD 1

Nick Werner

DRUMS

Andrew Couldridge

KEYBOARD 2/MUSIC DIRECTOR

Matthew Cyphert

MUSICAL NUMBERS

THE ONE	<i>Company</i>
FIRST IMPRESSIONS	<i>Aaron & Casey</i>
BAILOUT SONG #1	<i>Reggie</i>
THE GIRL FOR YOU	<i>Company</i>
THE AWKWARD PAUSE	<i>Company</i>
ALLISON'S THEME #1	<i>Allison</i>
THE WORLD WIDE WEB IS FOREVER	<i>Company</i>
CAN'T HELP BUT LOVE ME (SLOW JAM)	<i>Bad Boys</i>
BAILOUT SONG #2	<i>Reggie</i>
SAFER	<i>Casey</i>
I'D ORDER LOVE	<i>Waiter</i>
ALLISON'S THEME #2	<i>Aaron</i>
THE THINGS I NEVER SAID	<i>Aaron & Aaron's Mother</i>
BAILOUT SONG #3	<i>Reggie</i>
IN LOVE WITH YOU	<i>Aaron</i>
THE CHECK!	<i>Company</i>
SOMETHING THAT WILL LAST	<i>Casey, Aaron, Company</i>
FIRST IMPRESSIONS (REPRISE)	<i>Waiter & Reggie</i>
SOMETHING THAT WILL LAST	<i>Casey, Aaron, Company</i>

CAST



Travis
Pierce



Becky
Marcus



David
Deitz



Kara Emily
Hartman



Travis
Gipe



Aidan
Stehman



Emily
Myers



Cheyleigh Rhae
Hykes



Lauren
Rothenberger



Sandy
McInerney



Toni
Carosella

CREATIVE TEAM



Danielle
Cyphert



Matthew
Cyphert



Rosemary
Bucher



Miguel
Santiago

ABOUT THE CAST

TRAVIS PIERCE (AARON) is thrilled to be making his debut at the Hershey Area Playhouse. After a brief hiatus, he is excited to be stepping back onto the stage, having spent most of the last 7 years directing musicals at Central Dauphin East High School (*Ghost, Bring It On, In the Heights, Side Show, Legally Blonde*), Theatre Harrisburg (*The Hunchback of Notre Dame*) and Keystone Theatrics at the Allenberry Playhouse (*Grease*). Some of his previous acting roles include *Little Women the Musical* (Professor Bhaer), *American Idiot the Musical* (Will), *The Little Mermaid* (King Triton) and *Mamma Mia!* (Pepper). Travis is a music teacher at Cumberland Valley School District where he teaches middle school music and orchestra at Mountain View Middle School. He would like to thank his family and friends for all of their support, encouragement, love and laughter! He/him

BECKY MARCUS (CASEY) is excited to step into one of her dream roles in her second production at Hershey Area Playhouse. Becky is a graduate of York College of PA with a Bachelors degree in Music Industry and Recording Technology and a minor in musical theater. While at YCP she was cast in *The Addams Family* (Grandma Addams), *The Secret Garden* (Rose Lennox), *Spelling Bee* (Olive Ostrovsky) and *Into the Woods* (The Witch). Other favorites include *Legally Blonde* (Paulette), *Shrek the Musical* (Fiona), and *The 39 Steps* (Clown #2) at Dreamwrights Center for Community Arts. Becky works at BRP Entertainment, only a few minutes from HAP. Having seen First Date with the original cast on Broadway during its brief run, it's a dream come true to be in it almost 10 years later and participate in its quirky, heartfelt humor. She hopes her role in this production helps to make a good "first impression" on anyone who sees the show. She/her

DAVID DEITZ (WAITER, STONER GUY) is thrilled to be participating in his first show at Hershey Area Playhouse! His favorite roles include Wig & Buckle's production of *Almost, Maine* (Dave), *The Crucible* (John Proctor) and *Macbeth* (Banquo), as well as the Yocum Institute's *Be More Chill* (Michael Mell), and Lebanon Community Theatre's *The Addams Family* (Uncle Fester). David recently graduated from Lebanon Valley College with a degree in English with a concentration in theater and a minor in musical theater. David has been acting for 9 years, has trained in vocal performance for 7 years, and dance for 2 years. He would like to thank his friends, family, and girlfriend Seleen for their support throughout the show. He/him

KARA EMILY HARTMAN (GRANDMA IDA/AARON'S MOTHER) is pleased to be making her debut this summer with HAP. A veteran of the Lancaster area community theater scene, she always looks forward to collaborating with new people. Thanks to the cast and crew for the experience! Favorite roles include: Luisa (*The Fantasticks*), Hope Cladwell (*Urinetown*), Grace Farrell (*Annie*), Eliza (*Hamilton*), and Hope/Glory/Villian/Gayle (*Almost, Maine*). By trade, she is an executive assistant for a small business in Marietta. When not on stage, she enjoys teaching ESL classes at her church, hanging with her beloved cat Gandalf, or playing some Dungeons and Dragons. Thank you to God for the gift of music and the opportunities to use my voice. I'm also thankful for my mom's encouragement and attendance at my shows, and for my voice teacher who laughs at my antics and always challenges me to stop overthinking and just sing.

TRAVIS GIPE (REGGIE, AARON'S FUTURE SON, INSTAGRAM) is so grateful for another opportunity to perform on the stage here at Hershey Area Playhouse. Last seen here on stage as Hanschen in *Spring Awakening*. Other favorites include Cogsworth (*Beauty and the Beast*), & Billy Crocker (*Anything Goes*). When he's not working in Pediatrics at Hershey Med - you can catch him cross-stitching on the couch! Much love to Mom, Dad, Alex, Kelsey and the family, friends, and coworkers who show their endless love and support all the time. He/him

AIDAN STEHMAN (GABE, CASEY'S CHRISTIAN FATHER) is a passionate performer who has been captivated by the world of performing arts from a very young age. His love for the stage was sparked by the melodies of "Frank Sinatra" and the "Rat Pack" played by his grandparents on the television. His first foray into the world of theater was a production of *Big Fish* his sophomore year of high school, and he previously appeared in *The Wedding Singer* and *9 to 5* at the Hershey Area Playhouse. He would like to express their sincere gratitude to the directors, cast, and crew for providing him with an amazing experience. He/him

EMILY MYERS (LAUREN/FACEBOOK/ENSEMBLE) is excited to be in her third HAP show this season! Her previous shows include *9 to 5* (Maria, Company), *Bandstand* (Jo/Julia u/s), *Sweeney Todd* (Company), *Sin* (Avery Bly), *Seussical* (Bird Girl 3), and *Wizard of Oz*: (Glinda). She wants to thank everyone involved with the Playhouse for becoming her theatre family, and thank her friends and family for their unending support. She/her

CHEYLEIGH RHAЕ HYKES (DANCE CAPTAIN, FRIENDLY THERAPIST, GOOGLE GIRL, ENSEMBLE) is elated to join the Hershey Area Playhouse in another amazing production. She was previously seen in HAP productions *The Wedding Singer* as a member of the Ensemble and *The Little Mermaid* as Flounder. Cheyleigh is going into her 2nd year of (AMDA) American Musical and Dramatic Academy's integrated musical theater conservatory program in October. Outside of performing she loves spending time with her little sister Lucy and the rest of her amazing family. Cheyleigh would like to thank her amazing director for being an incredible being and giving her this opportunity to work with her. She/they

LAUREN ROTHENBERGER (ALLISON, ENSEMBLE) is excited and thankful for this opportunity to perform in her first show at Hershey Area Playhouse. Lauren has previously been in: *On the Town* (ensemble), *Bonnie and Clyde* (ensemble) *Macbeth* (Angus, 2nd Murderer), and *Annie* (Grace Farrell). Lauren is a junior Early Childhood Education major. Lauren would like to thank her parents, grandparents, friends, and her voice coach, Mrs. Heffner for always supporting her when performing. She/her

SANDY MCINERNEY (YOUTUBE, MEGAPHONE #2, BRITISH ARTIST, ENSEMBLE) is thrilled to return to Hershey Area Playhouse! She has been seen on the Playhouse stage in previous years as The Artful Dodger in *Oliver!* and as Maid/Ensemble in *The Little Mermaid*. She recently graduated from Muhlenberg College with a double major in theatre and economics, where she performed in a variety of creative shows. These include but are not limited to *Love and Information* (Devising Ensemble) and *She Kills Monsters* (Tilly Evans). Sandy is very excited to be performing at the Playhouse once more, and hopes that everyone enjoys the show! She/her

TONI CAROSELLA (BLAZE, TWITTER, MEGAPHONE #1, ENSEMBLE) is thrilled to be back on stage with Hershey Area Playhouse. They were most recently seen here in *9 to 5* (Ensemble) and *The Wedding Singer* (Ensemble), as well as in *Pippin* (Ensemble) with The Little Theatre of Mechanicsburg. Toni has found a home in theatre in all sorts of ways: acting, directing, photography, and more. She is thankful for the community she's created with Hershey Area Playhouse as well as the support from her wonderful partner Chris. She/they

ABOUT THE CREATIVE TEAM

DANIELLE CYPHERT (DIRECTOR) is thrilled to be taking part in her second season at the Hershey Area Playhouse! She is incredibly grateful to have been given the opportunity to fulfill a long-forgotten dream of returning to directing. Thank you to her friends and loved ones who have supported her, and her parents for their unconditional love and support. Matthew Derek, it has been one of my longest dreams to work with my unbelievably talented little brother on a show in these roles. And Jake, I couldn't have done this without you! In the words of Aaron and Casey, "This could be something that will last..." She/her

MATTHEW CYPHERT (MUSIC DIRECTOR) is a Pittsburgh-area based professional vocalist, teacher of singing, choral director, and pianist. This will be Matthew's first production with Hershey Area Playhouse. Previous musical theatre experience includes: *Annie*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *Grease*, *The Music Man*, *Into the Woods*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*, *Cinderella*, *The Pajama Game*., *Avenue Q*, and *Tick, Tick...Boom!* Matthew has been teaching voice for over eight years with positions held at Kansas State University, West Virginia University, and at his private voice studio in Homer City PA. Degrees held by Matthew include: Bachelor of Fine Arts, Master of Music, and Doctor of Musical Arts. He/him

ROSEMARY BUCHER (PRODUCER) is an NYC-based producer, director, writer, singer, arts administrator, graphic designer, therapist for theatre teachers (amateur licensing associate at Concord Theatricals), and HAP board member. Directing projects include *Chess* (Lebanon Valley College), *Dog Sees God* (LVC), *Perfectly Normal* (Samuel French Off-Off Broadway Festival, NYC), *Digital Short Plays* (Hershey Area Playhouse), *Some Enchanted Evening* (with Kevin Edward Gane, HAP), *Tilda Swinton Betrayed Us* (NY Thespians), and *Sweeney Todd* (HAP). rosemarybucher.com. She/her

MIGUEL SANTIAGO (LIGHTING) has worked in all aspects of theatre from performing to involvement on the technical side. He specializes in lighting design and has worked as a designer on numerous shows, some of which include *Sweeney Todd*, *Kodachrome*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Bandstand*, and *9 to 5*. Miguel maintains a busy schedule working on and performing in productions at a number of central PA theaters and organizations. He also serves as the Technical Director at the Hershey Area Playhouse and Gretna Theatre! He/him

TRENT COULON (SOUND) is excited to work on his third show at the Hershey Area Playhouse! His first experiences with theater were in high school, when he performed in the pit for Dover Area High School's productions of *Back to the 80's*, *Les Misérables*, *The Addams Family*, and *The Little Mermaid*. He previously designed sound for the production of *Bandstand* at the Playhouse. Trent is a junior at Lebanon Valley College, currently studying audio and music production. He/him

JEFFREY MILLER (SET CONSTRUCTION) is a retired Superintendent of Schools from the Methacton School District (Norristown, PA). Previous to his service in Methacton, Jeff was Superintendent of Schools in the Lower Dauphin School District from 1991-2003. A former member of the Board of Directors of the Playhouse and current Operations Manager, Jeff has been in the Playhouse's productions of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *The Sound of Music*, *Annie*, *Hello, Dolly!*, *Oliver*, and *Fiddler on The Roof*. Jeff is happy to have partnered with Carlton Hoke to build many of the sets for Playhouse productions. Jeff lives in Hershey with his wife, Bonnie and their cat and has been an active supporter of the Hershey Area Playhouse. He/him

CARLTON HOKE (SET CONSTRUCTION) retired from teaching in 2005 after 35 years of teaching art and computer classes in the Derry Township School District. Since then he has designed, constructed, or painted stage settings at the playhouse for many of our productions. He says that working with Jeff on Playhouse projects is the perfect retirement job. He/him



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2023 SEASON



the property known as
GARLAND

FEBRUARY 9-12



BANDSTAND

MAY 25-JUNE 4



9 TO 5
THE MUSICAL

JULY 20-30



FIRST DATE

AUGUST 24-27



THE SPONGEBOB MUSICAL
YOUTH EDITION

SEPTEMBER 14-16



SCHOOL OF ROCK

OCTOBER 19-29



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