

CAST INFORMATION

For Immediate Release

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CONTACT: Kori Radloff, korir@rosetheater.org, 402-502-4641

How to Build an Ark: Searching for Joel Sartore **Cast Information**



Nivi Varanasi
Vita

Nivi Varanasi (*Vita*)

Nivi is a freshman at Gretna High School. She has performed as Anna in *Frozen. Jr.*, Mrs. Lanford from *Show N' Spell*, and the Mayor from *Homeschooled*, along with some other roles in small skits. Nivi is an Indian classical dancer and likes to sing and act. This is her first mainstage role at The Rose Theater.



Sarah Lynn Brown
*Mom/Omniscient
Narrator*

Sarah Lynn Brown (*Mom/Omniscient Narrator*)

Sarah Lynn Brown has worked in Omaha as a Shakespeare-focused director, actor and educator for the past 20 years. In 2016, she founded an all-female production program, Juno's Swans, which produced adaptations of *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Richard 3*, *Julius Caesar*, and *All's Well That Ends Well*. Through her work with Juno's Swans, Sarah explores gender performance using creative character/movement development techniques, unlocking a personal understanding of gender performance and how our current culture has shaped and defined gender roles in society.

As an actor, director and educator, Sarah has worked for Nebraska Shakespeare, Utah Shakespeare, NTC productions, Folger Library Theatre, The Blue Barn, Omaha Performing Arts, Omaha Symphony, Opera Omaha, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Creighton University, and The Rose Theater. Sarah has also taught and directed in numerous Omaha Metro High Schools and Middle Schools. She has a Masters of Arts in Theatre Education from the University of Northern Colorado and a BA from University of Nebraska at Omaha in Theatre Performance. Most recently, Sarah adapted/directed *It's A Wonderful Life* for The Rose Theater.

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DJ Tyree
Camera

DJ Tyree (*Camera*)

Dj Tyree is an Omaha native. He graduated from Omaha South High. He attended the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in NYC from their integrated program. Dj Tyree is no stranger to The Rose Theater; as a teen, he was part of the *Young, Gifted and Black* troupe. He has also done productions in Omaha over the years and is very happy to be part of this awesome show.



Maddie Grissom
Frog/Naked Mole Rat

Maddie Grissom (*Frog/Naked Mole Rat*)

Maddie Grissom is a second year Teaching Artist at The Rose Theater. She is a 2019 graduate of The University of Northern Iowa, majoring in Theater for Youth. She is so excited to finally make her mainstage debut in *How to Build an Ark*. Her previous acting experiences include *A Bucket of Blessings*, *You and Me and the Land of Peas*, and *The Tale of Two Wolves* at The Rose Theater, *The Crystal* at The Apollon Arts Space, and *To Touch the Moon* at The University of Northern Iowa. Along with acting and teaching, Maddie has a love of stage management, Animal Crossing, and reading books.



Jackie Kappes
Bear/Sea Turtle

Jackie Kappes (*Bear/Sea Turtle*)

Jackie began at The Rose as a summer education intern and is delighted to return as the Director of Education. She has had the privilege of working as a theater artist and teacher in communities across the country and world, including with Disney Musicals in Schools, Seattle Children's Theatre, Lexington Children's Theatre, Bay Area Children's Theater, Shanghai Children's Art Theater, 7 Stages International Theatre, San Francisco Playback Theatre, Chattanooga Theatre Centre and StageWrite. Her work at The Rose Theater ignited her passion for theater for social change and she went on to receive her Masters in Counseling Psychology and Drama Therapy at the California Institute of Integral Studies.

Since she has utilized theatre to facilitate dialogue for communities and organizations around topics such as harassment, immigration, veterans' issues, LGBTQ+ pride and much more with San Francisco Playback Theater. Jackie has also brought drama therapy practices into schools in order to support students and families in building feelings of confidence, working through trauma and grief, fostering more positive relationships and preparing for big life transitions. Jackie is thrilled to have the opportunity to serve the vibrant artistic community that so graciously and fruitfully supported her in her first steps out into the professional world of theater education so many years ago.



Tamia Renée
*Naked Mole Rat/
Monarch Butterfly*

Tamia Renée (*Naked Mole Rat/Monarch Butterfly*)

Tamia Renée is a full-time undergraduate student at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She is currently obtaining her degree in Studio Arts and will graduate in May 2021. In her spare time, she enjoys creating digital art, playing video games, and taking acting courses. Over the last 4 years, she has become involved with acting, taking classes at UNO, the Omaha Community Playhouse, and most recently the Identity School of Acting. This will be her acting debut and she is excited to help bring this play to life!

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Gaven Rames
Joel Sartore

Gaven Rames (*Joel Sartore*)

Gaven Rames is in 6th grade at Loveland Elementary where he performed as King Louie in *Jungle Book Kids* and a narrator in *Aladdin Kids*. He has attended multiple camps at The Rose and is excited to perform on the mainstage. In Gaven's free time, he enjoys playing hockey, watching anime, writing, singing, hanging out with friends, and working on/ annoying his family with dialects and accents. His family usually puts up with him, and is always supportive of him. He has also received incredible support from Raydell Cordell III, who directed plays at Loveland.



Maddie Smith
Vita Understudy

Maddie Smith (*Vita Understudy*)

Maddie is excited to return to The Rose Theater. She recently appeared in the 2020 holiday production of *It's a Wonderful Life*. A freshman at Marian High School, Maddie is a member of the Mock Trial and Speech Teams. Maddie made her Rose Theater debut in *The Doll Maker's Gift* in 2019 as Nora and played her dream role as the title character of the June 2019 production of *Matilda the Musical*. Her previous theater credits include Shawanda in *Elf the Musical* at The Rose, as well as productions at the Omaha Community Playhouse: Little Fiona in *Shrek The Musical* (2018) , James Trotter in *James and the Giant Peach* (2018) , Chip in *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) and *A Christmas Carol* (2015 – 2018).



Katie Otten
Adult Understudy

Katie Otten (*Adult Understudy*)

Katie Otten received her MA in Theatre Performance at the University of Nebraska - Omaha, and her BA in Theatre Education at the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee. At The Rose Theater, she has acted in: *A Child's Garden of Verses*, *The Cat in the Hat*, *The Grocer's Goblin & The Little Mermaid*, among others. Some of her other favorite roles include: *The Glass Menagerie* (Brigit Saint Brigit), and *She Kills Monsters* (Creighton University). She's also worked on several short and feature-length films and commercials. As a voice actor, she has narrated audiobooks, voiced characters in video games, and educational videos.

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