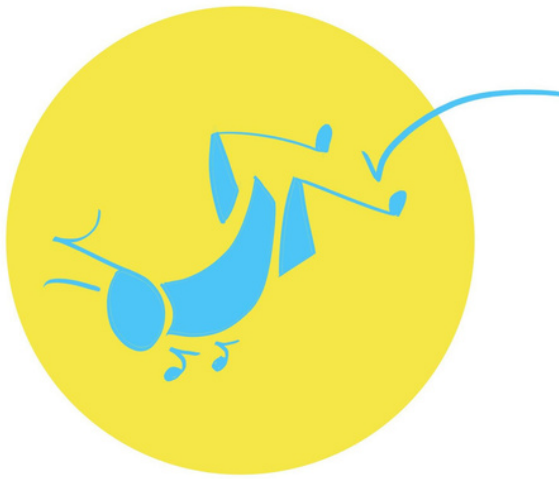


# PUP ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



Dear Princeton University Players Alumni,

The 2026–2027 PUP Board welcomes you to the newest addition of the alumni newsletter as the organization enters its 40th year as the only fully student-produced musical theater group on campus. Premiering in 1986, *One Fine Day* marked PUP's inaugural production. Since then, the club has grown to produce four to five annual Mainstage productions and have more than 1000 PUP alumni across the world.

As you review the newsletter, we invite you to reflect on your experiences with the organization as we celebrate these past 40 years of PUP! Thank you for your continued support. If you have any questions or requests, please do not hesitate to contact us. Happy reading!

## This newsletter features:

President's Address  
Alumni Involvement

A Note from PUP's Founder & 1<sup>st</sup> Director  
40<sup>th</sup> Season Announcement

2025–2026 Season Recap  
Current Officer Team



# President's Address



Dearest Most Beloved PUP Alumni and Friends,

It is my honor and pleasure to be sharing this most recent installment of the PUP Alumni Newsletter: a recap of our most recent season, a glimpse into next season, and a celebration of 40 years of Princeton's only fully student-run musical theatre collective on campus.

Theatre has been a significant part of my life since I was 6 years old, and, since then, I have been a part of over 50 theatrical productions, including 3 so far here at Princeton. Joining PUP my freshman fall, first as the Publicity Chair and now as President, was one of the most influential decisions I made on campus, introducing me to such a welcoming community of theatre lovers and allowing me to delve myself more into what it means to successfully run a theatre and make the process enjoyable for those involved. In a world gradually becoming so devoid of originality and authenticity, contributing to this space where students have the opportunity to come together and create art that is so meaningful and profound is something that I will cherish forever.

Holding the position of President has allowed me to take my passion for theatre and help create an atmosphere that makes a positive impact on our community. PUP in particular holds a wonderful niche amongst Princeton's community and campus, as it is the primary space through which students are able to tell musical stories, both original and pre-existing, through new, diverse, and unique lenses. Each production we put on continues to provide students with opportunities to express themselves artistically, daring to challenge themselves and those around them to enter worlds that are not so different from our own. It is through these stories, these experiences, that students spanning all of campus are able to come together and share something truly meaningful.

Our current season has really showed the importance of coming together. Our Fall semester, comprised of *Growing Pains: Feat. the Class of 2029*, directed by Mirabelle Zheng '29, and *Bit Parts*, written and directed by Zoë Nadal '28 and John Heitz '28, with Music Direction and orchestrations by Tal Naider '28, highlighted the significance of the transitional period between high school and college. While this and other transitions can be difficult for many, coming together to perform these works allowed primarily underclassmen to connect and share their talents with Princeton's campus for the first time, strengthening their connection with the theatre scene and welcoming them into this ever-growing community.

Our Spring semester has been busy, to say the least, featuring Stephen Sondheim's *Company* as our annual Joint Production with *Theatre Intime*, directed by Adam Bathurst '27 and Music Directed by Morgan Taylor '27, and our recent production of *Next to Normal*, directed by Emily Boyd '28 and Music Directed by Karin Zimba '27, in which I had the pleasure of portraying Dan. *Company*, both in the nature of the show's themes, as well as the nature of the Joint Production with *Theatre Intime*, highlighted the interconnectedness of campus, with an incredible cast comprised of members from each class year and audiences hailing from all over campus. Furthermore, *Next to Normal*'s small yet dynamic cast of six emphasized the importance of relationships and mental health, topics whose prominence grows more significant by the day, both in the context of college life and the current state of the world.

As this season comes to a close and we prepare to welcome the Great Class of 2030 onto our campus (does anybody else feel old hearing that?), I find it important to reflect on the experiences of each production, and move forward into the next season and academic year with a renewed sense of vigor and excitement. PUP plans to continue its mission of providing a space for students to take risks, create art, and tell stories, maintaining our 40-year-old tradition and hoping to keep it going for many more. PUP is as impactful as it is because of its people, from YOU, our wonderful alumni, to the PUP members of the present, to the PUP members of the future. Thank you so much, from the bottom of our hearts, for your continued support and for helping keep PUP's memory alive!

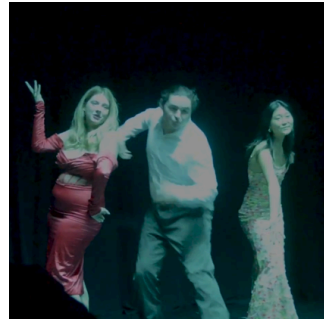
My sincerest regards,  
David Getz '28



# 2025-2026 Season



## Bit Parts



## Company



## Next to Normal





# A Note from PUP's Founder



Like many Princeton students, I arrived on campus already in love with musical theater. During my freshman year, I noticed that while Princeton had two terrific theater groups—Triangle and Intime—there wasn't a student organization dedicated specifically to musical theater, even though many more students were interested in performing than there were opportunities. It felt like there was room for something new.

My goal was to create a theatrical group open to anyone interested in participating in every aspect of production—from writing and arranging music to acting, directing, choreography, lighting, publicity, and more. Previous theater experience wasn't required. PUP would be a community where students could learn, create, and perform together.

The first step was creating a show. That vision took shape in our first production, *One Fine Day*. My roommate Suzannah Wilson and I were both fans of 1950s and 1960s music, and we wanted to build a musical around those songs. That meant creating an original show. Suzannah wrote the script, and together we shaped a Cinderella-inspired story centered on optimism and the belief that love—and a brighter future—can appear when you least expect it. The sound and spirit of the 1950s and 1960s music captured that feeling perfectly.

As the project began to take shape, other talented students joined in. I took on the role of producer, recruiting the creative team and helping coordinate the many pieces needed to bring the production together. Paul Berman brought the book to life as the show's director. Kate Smith created the choreography and oversaw costume design, and Hearn Cho led the band on guitar. Andy Zovko, Cindy Lombardo, Monica Lamboy, and many others were part of the early group who helped bring the project to fruition. The idea of creating a musical theater group at Princeton soon became a collaborative effort.

Starting the company meant starting from scratch. We had no theater space, no budget, and no name recognition. Still, incredibly talented people began to join—performers, musicians, set designers, stage crew, production managers, and fundraisers. Everyone contributed their time and creativity to make the production happen.

To make an impression, we decided to stage the show in Richardson Hall. By pure luck, Valentine's Day weekend was available. I used the \$700 I had saved from working at DFS for the deposit, while Suzannah went door-to-door along Nassau and Witherspoon Streets to sell advertising for our program. We also received support from the Dean of Students, the Student Government, and the Department of Theater and Dance.

What happened next exceeded all of our expectations.

When opening night arrived, the ticket line stretched outside Alexander Hall and around the building. In those days tickets had to be purchased in person, so the premiere was delayed 45 minutes while the line slowly worked its way forward. Only after every seat was sold did the show finally begin.

*One Fine Day* went on to break attendance records for Richardson Hall—and the new company even generated funds to support future productions. More importantly, it showed that the idea behind PUP resonated with the Princeton community.

The real magic, of course, was seeing the show come to life on stage - the first of many productions that would follow.

*Written by the founder of PUP: Liz Yin*



# A Note from PUP's Inaugural Director



Liz Yin approached me to direct PUP's inaugural production. This was in many ways a daring decision on her part. I had directed a large number of shows at Princeton, so I certainly had experience as a director, but I had developed a reputation on campus for creating theater works that were challenging and non-traditional, using avant-garde theatrical techniques. So, I was certainly not the obvious choice to direct a "fluffy" musical love story based on the Cinderella story!

But I loved the process of applying my penchant for theatrical razzle-dazzle in this context. For example, when our Cinderella (called Cindy) met her "Prince" at a high school dance, the couple were suddenly isolated in dramatic spotlight as all the rest of the ensemble froze in place, creating a theatrical tableau, and the fairy Godmother appeared in the "sky" of Richardson Auditorium, blessing them with a dramatic rendering of Sam Cooke's classic song "Cupid." Then, later, when Cindy was forced to flee the party at the stroke of midnight, we used the false floor of the Richardson orchestra pit to have her sink into the floor as the two lovers reached out to each other across the divide. And so on. It was fun and creatively fulfilling to bring everything I knew about building theatrical moments to this musical theater context. Even Alan Mokler, then the head of the Program in Theater and Dance and not a big fan of musicals, came to the show and had to admit that we had created what he called "real theater"!

The collaborative process was the most fun part. I loved seeing what the onstage band came up with, what the choreographer created, and so on. It was truly a group process, and I don't remember there ever being a major disagreement about our approach; everyone contributed their expertise without ego. And perhaps that was the nature of PUP in those early days. We were creating a new thing on campus; there were no entrenched hierarchies or traditions. We were creating it from scratch, and I think the infectious joy and enthusiasm of the cast, crew, and artistic and producing personnel really shone through in the final production. I was blown away by how popular the show was; it became a "must see" on campus. And to see that now, 40 years later, PUP has become a major theater group on campus is really a testament to Liz's vision and tenacity in putting this whole process in motion. I'm very pleased to have been able to play a small part in PUP's incredible success. Congratulations on 40 years!

*Written by PUP's first director: Paul Berman*



# 2025–2026 Season Recap

## Fall Semester Productions



### Sex on Broadway: An Annual Frosh Cabaret

November 7–8, 2025  
dir. Mirabelle Zhang '29

No Sex, Just Broadway! The theme of this year's annual all-freshmen cabaret was "Growing Pains," exploring the nuanced transitions that come with growing up, expressed through various musical theatre songs. Produced and performed by members of the Great Class of 2029, freshmen friends, upperclassmen, and family alike filled the audience to support the newest theatre-makers on Princeton's campus!



### Bit Parts

December 5–7, 2025  
dir. Zoë Nadal '28 and John Heitz '28

Bit Parts – written by Zoë Nadal '28, John Heitz '28, and Tal Naider '28 – is a new musical comedy satirizing the genre of high school dramas while following a senior's quest of self-discovery. When Jenny, who has been treated as a side character all her life, is asked about plans for her future, she realizes that she has no clue what's in store for her. She, along with her friend Ted, navigate what it means to come of age, finding who they are as characters in a show that wasn't always written for them...



In addition to the all-student cast, crew, pit, and prod team, Bit Parts was completely written by current Princetonians, epitomizing the student-led nature of PUP. With a strong freshmen presence in the cast, in the pit, and backstage, the show started the mainstage season strong, sharing a deeply sentimental story with audiences while missing no opportunity to incite uproarious laughter with its witty, unrelenting humor!





# 2025–2026 Season Recap

## Spring Semester Productions



### Company

February 20–22 and February 27–28, 2026  
dir. Adam Bathurst '27

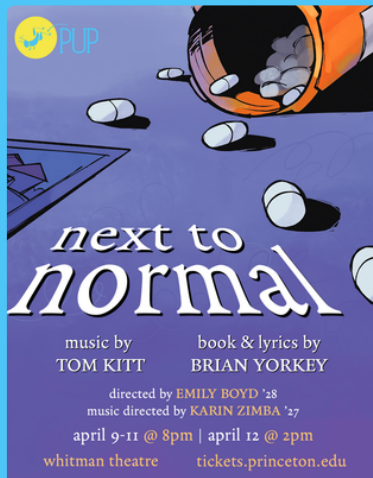
Examining the most fundamental sides of the human condition, Sondheim's game-changing musical *Company* depicts the confusing and hazy moments of life in vivid vignettes. Both witty and mellow, it follows a man and his failed relationships, as he tries to figure out what it's all about. Will he find the company he needs?

*Company*, which was jointly produced by PUP and Theatre Intime, captured audience members for not one, but two weekends! The cast of 14 featured dazzlingly talented performers from all four class years, and, combined with the immaculate work of the crew, pit, and prod team, those who were lucky enough to see the production were left with a bit more appreciation for "Being Alive."



### Next to Normal

April 9–11, 2026  
dir. Emily Boyd '28



They're the perfect loving family on the outside. But between Diana's bipolar episodes, her daughter's feelings of abandonment, and her particular attachment to her son Gabe, they're actually anything but. Though, is perfect really normal? *Next to Normal* provides a raw, emotional look at the impacts of mental health and the strength needed to face life's challenges.



This hauntingly stunning production truly left not a single dry eye in the house. The crew, pit, and prod team brought the rock-musical to life beautifully, and the cast's nuanced portrayal of such heavy topics both moved and amazed audiences. The show's most tragic moments were, of course, devastating, but the hope promised was perhaps what resonated most deeply with attendees, both young and old.



# Season Recap Overview



Between an original student written work, two emotional and technically complex productions, and a daring fully freshman cabaret, this year's PUP season revealed how directors navigate vastly different creative universes. Across the '25-'26 season shows – *Bit Parts*, *Next to Normal*, *Company*, and *Sex on Broadway* – our amazing directors learned how to build something meaningful with others rather than sticking to any one plan or course of action.

In the case of John Heitz, Zoë Nadal, and Tal Naider, the process of directing *Bit Parts* began with creation itself. Developing an original piece meant embracing uncertainty from the very beginning, whether that be through character designs and structure, music composition, or the navigation of serious themes hidden behind the guise of a comedy. Rather than working towards one fixed endpoint, rehearsals were a space for experimentation –one in which actors and directors alike came together to create a project truly their own.

That same spirit of collective creation continued into PUP's spring show, *Next to Normal*. When speaking with director Emily Boyd one key idea was very prevalent: intense collaboration. Emily's love, admiration, and dedication to directing this piece created an atmosphere that invited streams of collaboration from all aspects of the show's production. Boyd expressed her strong belief that if everyone, from cast to tech, truly feels pride in their work and the art they are interpreting, then the overall result will always shine and exceed expectations.

For PUP and Theatre Intime's joint show, *Company*, a different kind of challenge emerged. Adam Bathurst, the show's director, faced challenges with balancing honoring the well-established work with finding ways to interpret it on his own. During our interview, Adam brought up a comment made to him by a close friend who spoke about how uniquely intimate the production was to Adam as a person. Through his production Adam was able to adhere to a rather musically difficult and emotionally intense piece while also prioritizing his unique interpretations and not simply replicating the original.

Finally, *Sex on Broadway*, our annual fully freshman cabaret, brought a bold and energetic contrast to the season. The production thrived from its creativity, spontaneity, and its willingness to take risks. For its director, Mirabelle Zhang, the challenges laid in shaping a wide range of ideas and voices while simultaneously getting used to a completely new campus, school, and community. The result was a greatly energetic and deeply collaborative piece.

Across all four productions, the directors faced similar challenges of limited time, evolving ideas, and the unpredictability of live performances. These obstacles however, became opportunities to grow and learn in their directorial role. Through the process, they learned not only how to refine their artistic vision, but also how to listen, adapt, and trust those around them to contribute creatively.

In the end their shared message to future theater-makers and directors is clear: embracing uncertainty. The most powerful moments in theater are often not the ones carefully planned, but the ones discovered together.

Interested in watching clips from our 2025-2026 season shows?

[Click here to watch the Season Show Recap Video](#)



# Alumni Involvement



*Are you a PUP alumni?  
Do you enjoy musical theater?  
Do you want to reconnect with other PUP alumni?  
Do you want to support current PUP members?*

If you answered YES to any of these questions, we would be honored to have your support! As we enter our 40th season, we hope to reconnect with YOU and all PUP alumni!

## Future Involvement Interest Form

We are beyond grateful for your support in helping to develop this club and would be overjoyed to continue to connect with you all. We hope that you enjoyed reading the newest edition of our newsletter, which is one of many more. We are requesting all PUP alumni to complete this interest form to indicate if you would be interested in forging more connections with us. Also, please stay tuned for future newsletters and ways to directly support us!

[\*\*CLICK HERE TO COMPLETE THE FUTURE INVOLVEMENT INTEREST FORM\*\*](#)

## Stay Connected!

Check out our website for our updates, ways to get involved, and ways that you can support us in helping as many student artists as possible to bring their creative visions to life!

PUP Website:

<https://pup.princeton.edu/>



PUP Instagram:

[\*\*@puplayers\*\*](#)





# 40th Season Announcement



F • A • L • L

DIRECTED BY SOA ANDRIAMANANJARA      MUSIC DIRECTED BY JASPER ZIMMERMAN

## THE DEVIL DOWNSTAIRS

An Original Musical  
Written by John Heitz

DIRECTED BY MADISON ANDERSON      MUSIC DIRECTED BY CHERN YANG



## WATSON

A SHERLOCK HOLMES MUSICAL  
WRITTEN BY CHERN YANG

A PUP + INTIME JOINT SHOW

## SWEENEY TODD:

*The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*

DIRECTED BY DANTE KANTEREZHI-GATTO  
CO- MUSIC DIRECTED BY KABIN ZIMBA + FRANCHESA ALEJO



S • P • R • I • N • G



## Amélie



DIRECTED BY KAILANI MELVIN  
&  
MUSIC DIRECTED BY LOUISA JOY



# The 2026 PUP Student Board



## EXECUTIVE BOARD

**David Getz '28**

President

[presidentofpup@gmail.com](mailto:presidentofpup@gmail.com)

**Dante Kanterezhi-Gatto '29**

Vice President (Alumni Relations)

[pupvicepresident@gmail.com](mailto:pupvicepresident@gmail.com)

**John Heitz '28**

Production Manager & Goods  
Manager

**Mindy Sim '27**

Business Manager

**Louisa Joy '29**

Publicity Chair

**Rowan Johnson '27**

Technical Director

**Miniya Malone '29**

Equity Diversion & Inclusion (EDI)  
Chair

## MANAGING BOARD

**Tal Naider '28**

Music Director

**Nora Glass '29**

Director of New Works

**Ethan Gotthold '29**

Assistant Technical Director

**Jayden Moore '29**

Webmaster & Graphics Designer

**Diego Castro '29**

Historian

**Jared Smith '28**

Box Office Manager

**Lucia Colwell '27**

Social Chair

**Lota Alagbe '28**

General Board Member

If you have any questions, concerns, comments,  
or suggestions regarding this newsletter and/or  
future involvement in PUP, please do not hesitate  
to contact the Vice President, Dante, at

[pupvicepresident@gmail.com](mailto:pupvicepresident@gmail.com)