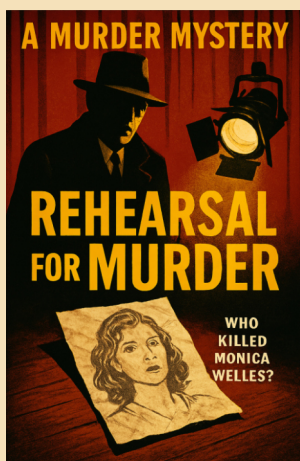




Book by Stuart Hample
Music by David Evans
Lyrics by Douglas J. Cohen
Based on the book by Stuart Hample and Eric Marshall

May 9th & 10th, 2025

Performed at the
Sorg Opera House
63 South Main Street - Middletown - Ohio 45044



A FUNDRAISER

for the

SORG OPERA HOUSE

REHEARSAL FOR MURDER

Adapted for the stage by D.D. Brooke
From the television play by: Richard Levinson & William Link

Directed by Joel Brown

The play is set in an empty Broadway theater, giving the audience a “fly-on-the-wall” experience, as the action of the play unfolds all around them, in real time. Through flashbacks, we learn that exactly one year ago, his fiancé Monica Welles and star of his latest play is discovered dead after a cast party and her death has been ruled a suicide.

Now Alex has invited back, several people involved in that play, including the cast, director and producer. He tells them they are reading scenes for a new play he is writing. With mysterious men in the shadows, re-enactments using Monica’s furniture set up on the stage, concealed identities and masterful manipulation, Alex sets out to prove that Monica was murdered, and to unmask her murderer!

SEPTEMBER 19th & 20th, 2025

Put on your sleuthing caps and join us for an evening of mystery and fun. All proceeds will go to current and on-going renovations of the opera house. For extra fun we will have several raffle baskets, drink specials, door prizes and more!

for complete information:
MIDDLETOWNLYRIC.ORG

Produced by Middletown Lyric Theatre
and by special arrangement with The Dramatic Publishing Company of
Woodstock, Illinois

Middletown Lyric Theatre

Sponsored by in-part by
J.C. & Anita Shew - Diane & Stuart Wilson - Fred & Cathy Young
Present:

CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO GOD

Book by Stuart Hample
Music by David Evans
Lyrics by Douglas J. Cohen
Based on the book by Stuart Hample and Eric Marshall

With:

Sophia Griffith, Cora Koltak, Heidi Nelson,
Sam Nguyen, Karlee Robertson, Aster Williams,
Beatrice Williams, Eric Wood

Scenic Design
CHARLEY SHAFOR

Lighting Design
EDWIN TOY

Production Assistance:
Tim, Nancy, Grace, and Kimberly Griffith,
Scott Landen, Angie Markham, Karen Oehler

Vocal / Music Director
MARY ELLEN CLINARD

Assistant Director
ABBIE MILLER

Directed By
CHARLEY SHAFOR

Originally Produced by Carolyn Rossi Copeland Productions, Inc. : and The
Lamb's Theatre Co. Ltd

Developed at the Lark Play Development Center, New York City
Originally presented in the Developmental Reading Series at The York Theatre
Company, James Morgan, Artistic Director

CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO GOD is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals.
www.concordtheatricals.com

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to our show. My first theatre experience was helping to build “Mona’s Mountain,” for a production of DAMES AT SEA, I was ten, and from that point on I was hooked. It also helped that I had siblings, relatives and friends immersed in local theatre and the arts in general. But it was that first opportunity that has given me a lifetime of memories and a career that has served me well.

We weren’t sure of the response, when we first decided to do this show. No dancing snowman, mean girls, princes or mermaids, just kids being kids. Fortunately for us, these eight young performers took a leap into the unknown and were willing to do something different. It is our entire teams hope that they will also walk away with a little more knowledge about theatre and a few memories that will last them a lifetime.

Of course I did not do this alone. If it weren’t for Mary Ellen Clinard, Abbie Miller, Edwin Toy, and Nancy Griffith we would have never made it. But I would be remiss if I didn’t also include the parents, of each child, because they are the ones that believe their children should experience the arts. We also thank The SORG Revitalization Group for their support and we look forward to our new partnership in 2026, offering accessible, affordable, and entertaining community theatre.

Thank you for coming. We hope you enjoy our production and will continue to support young people in the arts. Because we all deserve the opportunity to create memories that will last a lifetime.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Cheryl Sifer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent 'C' and 'S'.

THE CAST

Sophia Griffith as Tish
Cora Koltak as JoAnna
Heidi Nelson as Iris
Sam Nguyen as Brett
Karlee Robertson as Ruthie
Aster Williams as Abbie
Beatrice Williams as Kicker
Eric Wood as Theo

Please turn off your cell phone, beeper, watch alarm or anything else that might make a noise during the performance. Unwrap any candies, cough drops, or mints before the performance begins to avoid disturbing your fellow audience members or the actors on stage.

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SPECIAL THANKS



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MUSICAL NUMBERS

Prologue / Questions, Questions
Thirteen
Arnold
Like Everybody Else
Questions for the Rain
Ants
A Simple Holiday Song
Six Hours as a Princess
An Only Child
When I'm in Charge

Company
Brett
Iris and Company
Theo and Company
Iris and Company
Kicker
Company
Joanna
Kicker and Joanna
Company

INTERMISSION - 15 Minutes

Daydreams:

I Will Not Dream in Class
Daydreams: Part I
Are you Happy With Me?
Wyoming
Daydream: Part II

Kicker Brown
Silly Old Hat
How Come?
I Know
Bows / I Know (Reprise)

Joanna and Iris
Company
Company
Brett
Company
Theo
Brett
Company
Company
Company

WHO'S WHO



Sophia Griffith (Tish)

Sophia is very excited to be back on the stage with Middletown Lyric Theatre. She was last seen in Bishop Fenwick High School's Addams Family and running for the 400 for Coach Spencer. She's most famous for being the last of The Griffith Girls.

"This is where the fun begins"



Cora Koltak, (JoAnna)

Cora is 15 years old and in 9th grade at the Cincinnati School of Creative and Performing Arts (SCPA). She is excited to return to MLT. Other recent shows include: *Shrek*, *The Musical KIDS* (Guard and Little Red Riding hood), *World Debut* at the Junior Theater Festival, *Into the Woods* (Little Red Riding hood) at MLT, *Newsies, Jr.* (Romeo) at SCPA, *13, The Musical, jr.* (Patrice) at SCPA, *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Young Vixen Cub) at Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music, *Seussical, Jr.* (Wickersham) at The Cincinnati Children's Theatre (TCT), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Chiffon) at TCT, *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella* (Youth Swing) at La Comedia, *Seussical, Jr.* (Ensemble) at TCT, *Junie B. Jones, Jr.* (Ensemble) at TCT, *The Music Man* (Amarylis) at La Comedia, *The Wizard of Oz* (Dorothy) at Clifton Performing Arts, and many other roles. Cora would like to thank MLT and all the members of the cast for this opportunity.



Heidi Nelson (Iris)

Heidi started acting when she was just 4 years old. Her favorite role to date is Baby Sour Kangaroo, in the musical *SEUSSICAL Jr.* When not acting, Heidi enjoys crocheting, playing volleyball, and dancing. She is looking forward to summer and going to Kings Island with her friends. She hopes you enjoy the show!



Sam Nguyen (Brett)

Sam is a Freshman at The Cincinnati School of Creative and Performing Arts. (SCPA) He has performed in *13jr.*, *And then They Came for Me*, and *A Monster Calls*. This is Sam's first show outside of SCPA

WHO'S WHO



Karlee Robertson (Ruthie)

Karlee is 10 years old and has two brothers. She attends Franklin Intermediate School. Her three favorite musicals are *Six*, *Wicked*, and *Mamma Mia*. She loves makeup, cats, and hanging out with her friends, which she has also made from being in this production. This is her first time in a theater production, and is very thankful to have been cast, and very excited about this production. She hopes you will enjoy our production of *Children's Letters to God*!



Aster Williams (Abbie)

Aster is 11 years old, and *Children's Letters to God* is her 6th show. Aster is in the fifth grade. In her free time, she enjoys playing the flute, spending time with her cats, visiting Kings Island, and reading. Her favorite role has previously been Young Elsa in *Frozen Junior*. She hopes that you enjoy the show!



Beatrice Williams (Kicker)

Beatrice is 8 years old, and *Children's Letters to God* is her 6th show. Beatrice is in the second grade. In her free time, she enjoys playing with her cats, playing basketball, going to Kings Island, and art. Her favorite food is spaghetti, and she wants to be a singer when she grows up.



Eric Wood (Theo)

Eric is a voice and stage actor. He has been in many performances with Playhouse in the Park. He also enjoys improv acting and fencing. He has only recently started doing musicals, and recently performed in *Beetlejuice Jr.* for Plains Junior School. This is his first performance with Middletown Lyric Theatre, and hopes to do more in the future.

WHO'S WHO

Mary Ellen Clinard (Vocal & Music Director / Pianist)

Mary Ellen is in her 13th year of working with the wonderful cast and crew of MLT. She loves the growth process of taking music and a cast that is new and working through the struggles and details of learning parts with other vocalists and melding it with accompaniment to create the magical finished product that you see on stage. She is the Director of Worship at First United Methodist Church in Middletown where she directs the choir, plays the organ, and coordinates the First Friday Concert and Artist Series. She is also the accompanist for Middletown High School Show Choir.

Abbie Miller (Assistant Director)

Abbie was last seen on stage as Alicia in *The Thanksgiving Play*. Abbie was the Assistant Director and played the role of Lucinda in MLT's production of *Into The Woods*. She also the Vocal Director and Choreographer for *Little Shop of Horrors*. Other MLT productions include *String of Pearls*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Gifts of the Magi*, *The Last Five Years*, *SNAPSHOTS: A Musical Scrapbook* and many more. She has also been seen in *Company* at Beaver Creek Community Theatre and *Guys and Dolls*, *She Loves Me*, and *The Bridges of Madison County* at Lebanon Theatre Company. Abbie spent a year touring the US and Canada with Missoula Children's Theatre of Missoula, MT, and has been the theatre director at Lakota Plains Junior School for eight seasons.

Charley Shafor (Director / Scenic / Costume Design)

This is Charley's 37th year in theatre. In Ohio, Charley's artistry has been seen with the company's and on the stages of; Middletown Summer Youth Theatre, LaComedia Dinner Theatre, MUSE Machine, The Human Race Theatre Company, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company and Weathervane Playhouse. He has been a guest artist at the University of IOWA'S Summer Playwright's Festival twice as well as several productions at the Fireside Playhouse in Ft. Atkinson Wisconsin. Charley has worked for several LORT Theatre's including; George Street Playhouse, Crossroads Theatre and the McCarter all in New Jersey. Circle Repertory, Playwright's Horizons and Manhattan Theatre Club in New York City, Ogunquit Playhouse in Ogunquit, ME and The Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam Ct. where he had the opportunity to work on the original ANNIE 2 later to be called ANNIE WARBUCKS with composer Charles Strouse. While there he also built specialty costumes for the revival of *Pal Joey* featuring; Peter Reardon & Florence Lacey. His work traveled to London's West end with the production *The Fields of Ambrosia* by Martin Silvestri and Joel Higgins; featuring Broadway veteran Christine Andreas. Outside of the theatre,

WHO'S WHO

Shafor (continued)

Charley created art installations for the NCR Corporation, The Reynolds & Reynolds Company and Johnson and Johnson World Headquarters.

Before returning to Ohio, Charley spent seven years, on faculty, at the Tower Hill School; a private Pre-K through 12 college preparatory school in Wilmington, De. While at Tower Hill he developed curriculum, taught a course on American Musical Theatre, technical theatre and worked with various departments to create multi-media arts events.

Edwin Toy (Lighting Design)

Over the past 16 years, Edwin has designed over 60 productions for MLT. Locally, is design work has also been seen at Lebanon Theatre Company. Prior design experiences has taken him up and down the east coast where he spent eight years as resident lighting designer for The Pierre S. du Pont Arts Center in Wilmington, DE. He has also worked with St. Michael's Playhouse (Winooski, VT), Ogunquit Playhouse (Ogunquit, ME), Thalian Hall Center for the Performing Arts (Wilmington, NC), and Skyward Productions (Washington, DC). When not in the theatre, Edwin works as the Print Production Manager for Makino Machine Tool Company.




380 Middletown Eaton Road - Middletown, Ohio 45042
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SORG

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"See you at the Sorg"

UPCOMING EVENTS



TYLER CHRISTOPHER
 & The Roustabout Show Band

May 16th



The
Cleverlys

May 23rd

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