

# INSIDE THE MUSICAL GUIDE

## Irving Berlin's **WHITE CHRISTMAS** THE MUSICAL

**NOVEMBER 25 – DECEMBER 24, 2023**

**Based on the Paramount Pictures Film**

**Written for the Screen by Norman Krasna,  
Norman Panama, and Melvin Frank**

**Music and Lyrics by Irving Berlin**

**Book by David Ives and Paul Blake**

**Choreographed by James A. Rocco**

**Directed by James A. Rocco and David Armstrong**

This “Inside the Musical” Guide offers supplementary curriculum containing educational content, interactive activities, opportunities for reflection, and resources based on the themes of the show *Irving Berlin's White Christmas*. This guide can be utilized before or after experiencing the show.

Questions? Reach out to [educationprograms@5thavenue.org](mailto:educationprograms@5thavenue.org)

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# SYNOPSIS

Soldiers Bob Wallace and Phil Davis served under General Henry Waverly in World War II and ten years later they are still working together in a popular song and dance duo, Wallace and Davis. When they meet the singing sisters, Betty and Judy Haynes, Phil becomes enamored with the beautiful Judy, while Bob is more reserved about his feelings for Betty. The two men follow the sisters up to their seasonal engagement at The Columbia Inn in Vermont. They discover the inn is owned by General Waverly but, unbeknownst to him, the inn is struggling to survive. With the help of the concierge (Martha) and the General's granddaughter (Susan), Bob, Phil, Betty, and Judy decide to put on a big show to draw in business.

Bob arranges for his old friend Ralph Sheldrake to bring the General's former troops up to Vermont to support the show. Betty overhears Bob's plans and misinterprets his intentions, believing that he wants to buy the inn instead. Confusion ensues as Betty leaves to go back to New York alone. Bob follows her to attempt to reconcile but, believing he has lost her, he goes on The Ed Sullivan Show to reach out to his former comrades. Back in Vermont, the rehearsals are coming to an end and the General is convinced to wear his uniform to watch the show. He is moved to see his former men return to support him and decides to put his efforts into making the inn a success. Betty returns to apologize to Bob and the couple finally declare their love for each other. With the show a huge success, Bob leads the whole theater in a rendition of "White Christmas."

## Content Advisory:

*Irving Berlin's White Christmas* is generally suitable for all ages and contains some moments depicting war.

For more detailed information please visit

<https://www.5thavenue.org/shows/2023-2024/irving-berlin-s-white-christmas/>



Watch "Dissecting 'White Christmas,'" the *Irving Berlin's White Christmas* Show Talks with Albert Evans

CLICK HERE or scan the QR code to access.

# CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

## BOB WALLACE

A captain in the Army turned Broadway song and dance star. Level-headed and pragmatic to a fault.

## PHIL DAVIS

A private in the Army turned Broadway song and dance star. Impetuous and idealistic.

## BETTY HAYNES

The older Haynes sister. Protective and reserved.

## JUDY HAYNES

The younger Haynes sister. Dreamy and ambitious.

## GENERAL HENRY WAVERLY

General of the 151st Division turned inn owner. Proud and stern.

## SUSAN WAVERLY

General Waverly's nine-year-old granddaughter. Precocious and truehearted.

## MARTHA WATSON

The concierge at Columbia Inn, a secret Broadway belter. Loyal and inquisitive.



# Irving Berlin: America's Songwriter Laureate

By Albert Evans

Despite the inclusive promise of the Statue of Liberty, America in the late 1800s was anything but a “golden door” to desperate emigrants from foreign lands — the Irish escaping starvation during the potato famine; landless Italians fleeing hardship, exploitation, and violence; Russian Jews whose villages were being brutally destroyed by the Czar’s troops. Arriving at Ellis Island and other ports of entry, they endured having their ethnic names changed to more “pronounceable” ones, then were herded to crowded ghettos in New York, Chicago, and elsewhere, where they found only more poverty and exploitation.

Add to those miseries the continuing persecution of southern Black people moving north in the Great Migration seeking work and justice and a measure of respect. Shut out of respectable trades like banking and manufacturing, these displaced people had to create their own employment.

Luckily for some, big cities like New York were hungry for entertainment. Vaudeville was booming, sheet music was big business, and writers with talent, drive, and chutzpah could survive or even become rich writing the tunes that set the country singing.

Irving Berlin had chutzpah. Born in 1888 as Israel Beilin, or Izzy, the son of a Jewish cantor in a poor shtetl in eastern Russia, he had only one memory of his birthplace: clinging to his mother’s hand as his family watched their house burn in a midnight pogrom.

When Izzy was five, the Beilins packed their few belongings (*Fiddler on the Roof* style) and moved to New York City, then subsequently changed their last name to Baline after they were naturalized in the U.S. Papa Baline died shortly after. To ease the financial burden on his mother and five siblings, Izzy left home to sing and dance for pennies on the sidewalks of the Lower East Side. He slept in doorways and ate whatever

he could find until he got a job as a singing waiter at a rough Bowery saloon. After hours, he experimented picking out tunes on a battered piano.

Izzy wrote a few songs and peddled them to vaudeville performers. A printer's mistake credited one song to "I. Berlin." Izzy thought that it looked classier than Baline and expanded the I to Irving.

In 1911, Berlin found his "golden door." His lively march, "Alexander's Ragtime Band," became a major international hit and made Irving Berlin a very wealthy young man. He traveled to Europe as the Ragtime King (though "Alexander" had none of ragtime's signature rhythms). He soon mastered all the current styles: waltzes, marches, comic songs, and sentimental ballads — which were the lifeblood of the nation's most popular entertainment medium — touring vaudeville.

Vaudeville was built on ethnic and racial stereotypes, a lot of them offensive. Berlin's ethnic songs celebrated community and music and fun — and top vaudeville performers competed to introduce his tunes.

Berlin matured fast as a songwriter. His next goal was "respectable" musical theater: first Broadway revues like the Ziegfeld Follies, then musical comedies with actual stories. Soon he was writing for top acts like Al Jolson, Vernon and Irene Castle, and the Astaire kids.

When movies learned to talk, he found another outlet for his prolific talent. Altogether, in his lifetime, Berlin wrote music and lyrics for 19 Broadway shows, 18 motion pictures, and hundreds of non-theatrical songs.

What was his secret? As he explained, "Work, work, and more WORK!" He was an insomniac, obsessively going over his songs until there was not a note, not a word that felt wrong. Always haunted by his family's poverty-stricken past, always afraid that he'd somehow end up back in the ghetto, he had to continually prove himself worthy of his escape.

Berlin never learned to read or write music, but kept songs in his head until a secretary could write them down. Though his writing could be dazzlingly inventive, he insisted that a good song must be understandable at first hearing, with clarity winning over complexity.

Berlin became a chronicler of the American experience. He wrote about the standard topics—dancing, romance, heartbreak—but also cooking, movies, business, getting



tattooed, financial debt, farm life, city life, homesickness, drinking, Prohibition, operating an elevator, joining the Army, the YMCA, the Red Cross, politics, being rich, being poor, income tax, the Depression, the weather, nudism, Grant's Tomb, the Devil, burlesque, sex (it marches on), pregnancy, baby talk, the horror of

lynching, barbers, bellhops, the funny papers, haunted houses, jeeps, trains, growing old, and dying.

Some songs became popular anthems attached to events and holidays: "Easter Parade," "God Bless America," "There's No Business Like Show Business." For decades, no fashion parade was complete without "A Pretty Girl is Like a Melody." He even got around to setting that Statue of Liberty poem to music: "Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor." And "White Christmas," by many metrics, is still the best-selling song of all time!

In the 1960s, music and the music business began to change. Hundreds of Irving Berlin's songs were still popular, but the trendy hits were in a different style. Discouraged, he stopped writing, started painting, and became something of a recluse. When he outlived his early copyrights, the old fears of dying penniless returned, even though he was a very rich man.

Berlin died in 1989, at the age of 101, one year after his beloved wife of 63 years, Ellin Berlin, passed. His achievement was summed up by the great theater composer Jerome Kern. When asked "What is the place of Irving Berlin in American music?" he responded, "Irving Berlin has no place in American music. He is American music."

**To read more about Irving Berlin's life, check out the following books:**

Laurence Bergreen, *As Thousands Cheer: The Life of Irving Berlin*, Viking, 1990

Jeffrey Magee, *Irving Berlin's American Musical Theater*, Oxford University Press, 2012

# AMERICAN MUSICAL THEATER IN THE WORLD WAR II ERA

By Bri Little

Artistic expression has long been a way for people to cope with and respond to socio-political and economic conditions of the time period. World War II in particular spurred a resurgence in musical theater in the U.S. Paradoxically, as the war swallowed the country's resources, playwrights, composers, and lyricists found themselves heavily inspired by the grisly realities of war and the push toward American patriotism. The shows that arose during the late 1930s and into the '40s responded to the masses' need for live entertainment that was urgent, emotionally resonant, and simultaneously lighthearted, as Americans desired both to escape and support the war effort.

The WWII era saw the rise of what would become iconic productions in the musical theater canon. *Oklahoma!*, the first musical written by the duo of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, debuted in 1943. It fused story, song, and dance with fantastic choreography, launching a new era of American musical theater. *Oklahoma!* reflected white Americans' early stance towards the war, a patriotic nostalgia for the turn of the 20th century, when the Western frontier represented limitless opportunity. Another Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, *South Pacific*, became the second-longest running Broadway musical (behind *Oklahoma!*) and was renowned for its more progressive take on racism following the war.

Black musical theater also reached new heights in the 1940s. Langston Hughes's New Negro Theater opened in LA in 1939, and that same year, Ethel Waters was the first Black woman to star in a Broadway production in *Mamba's Daughters*. Paul Robeson famously starred as the titular character in *Othello*. Black audiences turned up to theaters in their community with an appetite for escapist productions, the shows encouraging hope that their country would emerge as a true democracy. Musicals like *Tropicana* and *Carmen Jones* were

popular productions that marked strides in Black musical comedy as escapist art. Yet the war waged on, earlier venues shut down because men joined the war effort, and by its end, the state still persecuted and discriminated against Black people under Jim Crow law.

While providing escapist fantasies for the everyday American, theater played another important role: promoting patriotism and influencing public opinion about the war. Irving Berlin's quintessentially patriotic revue, *This is the Army*, was designed to boost morale in the U.S. The American government launched an aggressive marketing campaign for war bonds, and theaters across the country exchanged free admission for the purchase of war bonds, collecting over \$185 million by WWII's end. Theaters also offered the public a space to watch newsreel films of American campaigns overseas.

The U.S. emerged from WWII with economic strength (due to the increased demand for military supplies) and the claim of victory over the Nazis. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the 1950s ushered in a golden age of musical theater—it encapsulated the energy of the years immediately following the war; its immediate horrors and moral difficulties were seemingly in the distant past as soldiers returned home, the economy boomed, and Americans enjoyed their status as a global superpower.

Shows like *Irving Berlin's White Christmas*—which takes place both during the war and well into the '50s—mark a return to the spectacle, the lighthearted and whimsical musical tradition. *White Christmas* references WWII by portraying some of its negative long-term impacts on soldiers, yet it echoes lessons Americans emerged with from the war: the importance of working together to save the day and supporting one another during difficult times.

# United States History: 1944-1954

“Christmas Eve, 1944. I don’t see any flying reindeer in this little corner of hell tonight...Maybe in a year we’ll be celebrating the holidays around a fire with our families and friends. Ten years from now — 1954 — who knows where we’ll be. Let’s pray it’s a better world.”

—General Henry Waverly, *Irving Berlin’s White Christmas*

The first moments of *Irving Berlin’s White Christmas* take place somewhere on the Western Front on Christmas Eve in 1944. The next time we see Bob Wallace, Phil Davis, and General Waverly, ten years have passed. What was happening in the United States during those ten years after World War II?

## 1944:

The G.I. Bill provides benefits for World War II soldiers. D-Day takes place, the largest seaborne invasion in history. Franklin D. Roosevelt is reelected for a 4th term, becoming the only U.S. president elected four times. Harry S. Truman becomes Vice President; only 88 days after Roosevelt’s inauguration, Truman would assume the presidency upon FDR’s death.

## 1945:

Germany surrenders, ending WWII in Europe. After the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan surrenders, effectively ending WWII. The United Nations is established, replacing the League of Nations and becoming the world’s largest international organization. *Carousel* and *The Glass Menagerie* open in New York.

## 1945–49:

The Nuremberg Trials and Nuremberg Military Tribunals prosecute the war crimes committed by Nazi leaders.

## 1946:

The President’s Committee on Civil Rights is established by President Truman to investigate the status of civil rights in the United States.

**1947:**

The World Series is broadcast live on TV for the first time; the New York Yankees defeat the Brooklyn Dodgers in seven games. The Brooklyn Dodgers featured Jackie Robinson, who broke the color barrier in major league baseball earlier the same year and won the inaugural Rookie of the Year Award. A UFO crashes in Roswell, New Mexico; the Polaroid camera is invented; and Jackson Pollack begins to paint his famous "drip" paintings.

**1949:**

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, is formed. As an international military alliance, NATO's member states pledge to defend other members from attacks by third parties. NATO formed with 12 member states; currently there are 31.

**1948:**

Harry S. Truman is elected for a full term and desegregates the armed forces. *The Ed Sullivan Show* begins its 23 year run on CBS.

**1950:**

Senator Joseph McCarthy gains power, beginning the second Red Scare (also known as McCarthyism), a campaign spreading fear of alleged communist interference in American institutions. The Korean War begins, and Charles Schultz publishes *Peanuts*.

**1951:**

The first live transcontinental TV broadcast takes place. In other TV news, *I Love Lucy* premieres, beginning the Golden Age of Television. *The Catcher in the Rye* is published.

**1953:**

The Korean Armistice Agreement ends hostilities in the Korean War.

**1952:**

Dwight D. Eisenhower is elected president; Richard Nixon is elected as Vice President.

**1954:**

*Brown v. Board of Education* strikes down the "separate but equal" doctrine, a major victory for the civil rights movement that paved the way for integration.

# From The Juba To Broadway: A Brief History of Tap Dance

By Jessica Ellison



Tap dancing is one of America's oldest vernacular dance forms. Vernacular dance is a broad category of dances that have developed as part of everyday culture. Today, one of the two main styles of tap is Broadway tap, which incorporates wide arm movements and large, full-body movements across the length of a stage, differentiating it from its counterpart, rhythmic tap dancing. While Broadway tap is recognizable to many audiences today, the artform went through many iterations before it became what so many of us know and love.

Tap dance first emerged in the Southern United States in the early 1700s as a fusion of African percussive dance developed by enslaved persons and Irish American step-dancing. When the 1740 Slave Laws prohibited drumming, enslaved persons created the Juba. The Juba derived from the African Djouba, where dancers would move in a counterclockwise circle, shuffle their feet, and clap their hands or other parts of the body to replicate a drum. The adapted African American Juba, sometimes referred to as the "patting Juba," involved clapping the hands and other parts of the body, in addition to various steps in order to create intricate, fast-paced rhythms. Because the Juba was created in response to the ban of a culturally significant music form, the Juba became a dance of resistance and rebellion, and allowed enslaved persons to express themselves and reconnect with some of the culture that had been stripped away from them.

Indentured Irish servants also brought with them knowledge of Irish step-dancing. Irish step-dance was, and still is, performed on a dancer's toes. It incorporates leaps and jumps, and features stiff arms. As interactions between African Americans and Irish Americans increased, their cultural dances began to collide. By

the 1800s, the loose nature of the Juba and the rigid structure of Irish step-dance merged and became known as jigging; one of the first iterations of tap dance. This new jig was characterized by springing steps and jumps that allowed the dancer to then create a rhythmic foot shuffle.

In early versions of the dance, dancers performed in soft wooden shoes—similar to clogs—meaning that the dance form was more so defined by its signature truncated rhythm rather than the actual tap sound. However, dancers began to nail pennies to their shoes to create a more sonic experience. By the 1920s, the first contemporary tap shoe was created, which nailed small pieces of metal to the toes and heels of the shoe. The newly developed tap shoe gave the dance the iconic tap sound.

From there, tap dance began to be featured in Vaudeville and would soon expand to Broadway and film. Other dance styles were more popular on Broadway, however the 1921 musical *Shuffle Along* introduced a form of tap dance that is often credited for sparking Broadway patrons' interest in tap dance on stage. *Shuffle Along* featured tap dance that incorporated traditional Broadway dance and early jazz dance forms. The success of *Shuffle Along* led to more Broadway shows including tap numbers, but the enthusiasm for tap dance quickly dwindled, as chorus girls and pop began to rise in prominence on Broadway stages. However, by the 1980s, musicals like *42nd Street* and *The Tap Dance Kid* featured well-developed tap numbers that contributed to a resurgence in Broadway's love for tap dance and laid the foundation for many of the iconic tap dance numbers seen on the stage today.



# Winter Holidays

By Beth Pollack



Many people have a winter holiday tradition that they look forward to all year — special food, a gathering of family and friends, a trip or outing. We love that so many people count The 5th Avenue Theatre’s winter show among their holiday traditions, but did you know that The 5th Avenue Theatre has a pretty sweet holiday

tradition of its own? We spoke to Marlys McDonald, our Wardrobe Head from 2008-2022, about the origins of Bundt Fest, a cake festival that unites the entire team at The 5th—crew, cast, and administrative staff.

“Starting in the 1980s, the wardrobe department would sponsor potluck dinners for the cast and crew at the end of a run, when the out of towners were thinking about loading out and flying home. These gatherings unified everyone who shared in the production and brought happiness to all who partook. Eventually, we transitioned to the Snack Off, an appetizer competition we had during *Paint Your Wagon* (the first time we did the production) in the 90s. In that instance, Roy Clark was one of the judges!

One thing led to another and subsequently, I suggested the Orb Fest — every entry had to be round. People were so creative! We even had melon balled potato salad.

I thought a Meatball Fest would be great — porcupine, Swedish, barbecue, sweet-and-sour, etc., but in the end, it didn’t lend itself to dietary restrictions, so I scrapped that idea. Then [I thought], How cool would it be if everyone submitted a Bundt cake?

THE BUNDT FEST WAS BORN! The very first Bundt Fest celebration was during *South Pacific* circa 2009. I think we had a total of seven entries, including a Fruit Loops and marshmallow crispy treat Bundt cake. Though we didn’t have a lot of entries, we certainly made up for it with loads of enthusiasm.



Eventually, we landed on an annual Christmas Bundt Fest, when festivities are at an all-time high. The Bundt Fest is not a competition, just a gathering of everyone’s creative baking prowess for all to enjoy. On that occasion, we pretty much forget about dinner because everyone is so stuffed with cake. We’ve had non-fat, all butter, vegan, gluten-free, savory, caramel, rum, pistachio, chocolate, strawberry, vanilla, peppermint, apple...too many to name but the possibilities are endless!”



The Bundt Fest tradition is so strong that it continued during Covid lockdowns. Shannin Strom, our Costume, Wardrobe, and Hair Director, tells us, “We held Bundt Fest via Zoom from our own homes and, while totally different, [it]



was just as fun to see faces and everyone’s creations. That was the year I made a dumpster fire COVID bundt cake: dark chocolate with chocolate ganache, sugared cranberries, cayenne pepper and red hot candies. SO yummy!”

Shannin also won’t let Marlys undersell her contributions to Bundt Fest. “Marlys always had the most incredible cakes. My favorite was the year that she made an Ursula

cake for *Disney’s The Little Mermaid* and then added dry ice so it smoked around her, it was incredible. She also made cakes that looked like the stages of *Annie* and *Holiday Inn*.”



Enjoy some pictures of Marlys’ fabulous cakes and other Bundt Fest festivities through the years, and read on to find out about other Winter holiday traditions that may be new to you!



**Christmas** falls on December 25 each year and celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. One of the most important feast days in the Christian liturgical year, Christmas is observed around the world, both as a religious service and a civil holiday.

Several related holidays are observed in December and January, such as Boxing Day, which is often celebrated in the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, and Las Posadas and Epiphany (Three Kings Day), both of which are highly celebrated in Spain, Latin America, and parts of the United States with large Latine populations.



**Hanukkah** is a Jewish holiday commemorating the rededication of Jerusalem’s Holy Temple in the second century BCE. The holiday lasts for eight days and nights in celebration of the miracle of a small amount of oil burning for eight days in the rededicated temple.

Observances of the holiday include eating foods fried in oil, such as doughnuts and latkes, as well as lighting the candles on a menorah, or a celebratory candelabra. Children will play with a dreidel, or a spinning top, and families exchange gifts.



**Kwanzaa** is a holiday observed from December 26-January 1 that honors African heritage in African Diaspora communities. Created by activist Maulana Karenga in 1966, Kwanzaa promotes seven values of African Heritage:

Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa (cooperative economics), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity), and Imani (faith). During the seven-day holiday, people decorate their houses using African art and cloth, exchange handmade gifts, take part in readings and reflections, and light candles on the kinara.



**Diwali** is a festival of lights that falls between mid-September and mid-November. The word Diwali comes from a Sanskrit word meaning “row of lights.” Originally a Hindu festival, Diwali is also celebrated by Jains, Sikhs, and Newar Buddhists and is thus associated with many gods, historical events, and stories.

In general, the holiday celebrates a symbolic victory of light over darkness and is commemorated by the lighting of oil lamps, candles, and lanterns. Celebrations last for five days and include ritual bathing, fireworks, feasting, and time spent with family and community.



**Yule** is a holiday that coincides with the winter solstice. Though it originated in Scandinavia, it is currently celebrated primarily by modern Pagans. Around the 9th century, “Yule” became a name for Christmas, and some of its traditions and celebrations, such as the yule log, were subsumed by the Christmas holiday. In modern times, many mark the holiday with reenactments of the legendary battle between the Holly King and the Oak King. Others burn yule logs, feast, or stay awake through the longest night of the year to observe the dawn.



**Soyal** is a winter solstice celebration for the Zuni and Hopi peoples in the American Southwest. Part of the observances include a ceremony to bring back the sun and dances representing protective Kachina spirits. Participants bless the community using pahos—prayer sticks—and sacred kiva chambers are opened for use in spiritual ceremonies.



**Loy Krathong** is a Thai festival that takes place on the evening of the full moon of the 12th month of the Thai lunar calendar; this date usually falls in the month of November. During the festival, people float on a krathong, or decorated basket, on a river to thank the Goddess Khongkha, who governs water and rivers. The krathong holds a small portion of food or dessert, three incense sticks, a candle, and occasionally a coin as an offering to the river spirits.



**Krampusnacht** precedes the Feast of St. Nicholas; the holidays are celebrated on December 5 and 6, respectively. On the Feast of St. Nicholas, good children are rewarded with gifts and sweets. The evening before, naughty children are punished by

Krampus, a folkloric figure with the hooves and horns of a goat. Krampus not only carries a bundle of birch branches to swat misbehaving children, but also is occasionally depicted with a sack or basket to carry away evil children for further punishment.



**Makar Sankranti** is a Hindu festival marking the transition of the sun from Sagittarius to Capricorn. The observance takes place on January 14 (or January 15 on a leap year) and is celebrated with decorations, fairs, dances, bonfires, and lots of food. The holiday symbolizes new beginnings, and it is common for people to take a ritual bath to wash away past sins and eat sticky sweets that symbolize togetherness.



**Dongzhi** is a Chinese festival that translates to “the coming of winter” and is observed on the winter solstice. Dongzhi not only celebrates the victory of light over darkness, but also the approaching harmony of days growing longer and becoming more in balance, aligning with the beliefs of yin and yang. People spend time with their families, often gathering to share a meal together and make tangyuan, or glutinous rice balls, and winter solstice dumplings; both foods symbolize reunion.



**Yaldā Night** is a Persian winter solstice holiday that celebrates the birthday of Mithra the sun god. People welcome the triumph of light over darkness and gather with their families to eat almonds, watermelons, and pomegranates, read poetry, and stay up to watch the dawn.

# Veteran Support Services

By Beth Pollack

“What can you do with a General when he stops being a General? Oh, what can you do with a General who retires? Who’s got a job for a general when he stops bein’ a general? They all get a job but a general no one hires.”

—Bob Wallace & Phil Davis, “What Can You Do With A General”

Returning veterans can struggle with a variety of challenges as they adjust to civilian life, including reconnecting with family, establishing a community, entering the workforce or returning to a job, and securing basic necessities, such as stable housing. They might also face health complications due to post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injuries, hearing loss, injury and disability, or exposure to toxic chemicals. There are a variety of national and local organizations that exist to help veterans face and overcome these challenges; here is a list of some places to get started if you or a veteran in your life need assistance:

## African American Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Association

The African American Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Association seeks and disseminates materials regarding Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) to encourage the implementation, identification, and expansion of effective programs. It provides initiatives that encourage healthy lifestyles and provides assistance with homelessness, self-education, training programs, and claims preparation for individuals with PTSD, TBI and/or other military service related concerns.

## American Legion

The American Legion’s mission is to enhance the well-being of America’s veterans, their families, our military, and our communities by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

## Disabled American Veterans

Disabled American Veterans is dedicated to a single purpose: empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. DAV accomplishes this by ensuring that veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them; fighting for the interests of America’s injured heroes on Capitol Hill; and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life.

# Veteran Support Services

## Minority Veterans of America

Minority Veterans of America programs operate around the country to provide unique opportunities for engagement and growth for minority veterans. Programs support social engagement and community connection, financial stability, leadership development, and greater access to critical systems and services that communities need most.

## King County Veterans Program

Since the 1950s, the King County Veterans Program has served low-income, houseless, disabled, and at-risk veterans and their families.

## National Association for Black Veterans

The National Association for Black Veterans provides personal advocacy on behalf of veterans seeking assistance with claims and benefits. NABVETS works in unity with the community to end homelessness, empower low-income and minority veterans and provide services to disadvantaged youth. NABVETS is passionate about preserving the historical contributions of minority Veterans and commemorating their legacies. NABVETS amplifies the voice of those often unheard, advocating for the needs of homeless and economically challenged veterans. NABVETS is committed to assisting incarcerated Veterans and those reintegrating into society with holistic wraparound services.

## Paralyzed Veterans of America

Paralyzed Veterans of America is the only nonprofit Veteran Service Organization dedicated solely to helping veterans with spinal cord injuries and disorders (SCI/D), and diseases like MS and ALS. PVA's mission is to ensure that every veteran of every age, every branch, and every conflict regains what they fought for: their freedom and independence.

## Seattle Vet Center

Seattle Vet Center offers confidential help for veterans, service members, and their families at no cost in a non-medical setting. Services include counseling for needs such as depression, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and the psychological effects of military sexual trauma (MST).

# Veteran Support Services

## Veterans of Color Pathfinders Program at El Centro de la Raza

The Veterans of Color Pathfinders Program at El Centro de la Raza provides outreach, advocacy, and service pathfinding to all veterans, with an emphasis on assisting veterans of color and their families living in King County. Veteran Pathfinders are here to connect all military service persons to supportive services that are available throughout King County. Services are available to all persons (including their family members) who have served in the United States Armed Forces, regardless of their discharge status.

## Veterans of Foreign Wars

The Veterans of Foreign Wars offers a wide range of assistance programs aimed at helping veterans of every generation. Whether that means providing free, professional help filing or appealing a VA claim, offering scholarships for post-secondary education, or providing emergency financial relief when times get tough, the VFW is there for America's veterans.

## Vietnam Veterans of America

Vietnam Veterans of America's goals are to promote and support the full range of issues important to Vietnam veterans, to create a new identity for this generation of veterans, and to change public perception of Vietnam veterans.

## Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs

The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs helps connect veterans and their family members to the benefits and services they earned through their military service. WDVA offers long-term care in four State Veteran Homes for honorably discharged veterans, spouses of residents, widows of eligible veterans, and Gold Star Parents. The Veterans Services and Counseling and Wellness Divisions provide claims assistance as well as counseling services for veterans and their family members. The State Veterans Cemetery honors veterans in their final resting place.

## YWCA: Supportive Services for Veteran Families

The goal of the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program is to promote housing stability among very low-income veteran families who reside in or are transitioning to permanent housing.

# CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

**After you experience the show, reflect on the following questions:**

- Which character did you relate to the most and why?
- What are the differences between Bob and Phil? What about the differences between Betty and Judy? How do those differences lead them into the romantic relationships we see form over the course of the show? How does each person change by the end of the show?
- If you were already familiar with the 1954 movie, what differences did you see in the musical on stage? Were there new moments that you enjoyed or pieces you missed? Why do you think any changes or adjustments were made?
- The winter holidays are often thought of as a time to join together in community and help the people around us. Bob and Phil use their talents to help General Waverly and call upon their showbiz pals and old army division to assist them in saving the inn. Are there people or communities that you know could use a little extra help during this holiday season? What gifts or talents do you have at your disposal and who could you call on to help you on your mission?

# ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS



**Jessica Ellison** (they/she) is the Education & Engagement Programs Manager at The 5th Avenue Theatre, as well as a freelance dramaturg, writer, and adjunct professor of theatre. Jessica received their Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology from the College of William and Mary and their Master of Arts in Theatre Studies from the University of Houston. Their artistic practice seeks to uplift stories written by and for black queer communities, while also bringing anthropological theory into conversation with theatre studies. You can check out more of Jessica's writing at [www.jeedramaturgy.com](http://www.jeedramaturgy.com).



**Albert Evans** has been on The 5th Avenue Theatre staff since 2008 as a musician, lyricist, composer, speaker, and dramaturg. He was composer-in-residence at New Jersey's Paper Mill Playhouse in the 1990s and is the composer and/or lyricist of the musicals *Nite Club Confidential*, *A Country Christmas Carol*, *The Texas Chainsaw Musical*, and *Pageant*. He also wrote English lyrics for New York City Opera's *The Merry Widow*, televised on Live from Lincoln Center. Evans is now a proud member of The 5th's Education Department, creating podcasts and blog posts that explain and demonstrate the artistic and craft elements that make our mainstage productions so extraordinary.



**Bri Little** is a poet, journalist, voracious reader, and copywriter at The 5th Avenue Theatre. She enjoys horror movies, fancy beverages, and starting (and sometimes finishing) crafting projects.



**Beth Pollack** (she/her) is a Seattle-based performer, dramaturg, and teaching artist. She is the Dramaturg and Curriculum Specialist at The 5th Avenue Theatre. As a dramaturg, Beth has additionally worked with Seattle Shakespeare Company and Dacha Theatre. As an educator, Beth has worked with Seattle's Young Shakespeare Workshop, Seattle Children's Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Jet City Improv, Book-It Repertory, ACT Theatre, and Seattle Rep's Public Works Program. As an actor, you may have seen or heard her work with Village Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Book-It, or Dacha Theatre, where she is a proud company member. Beth graduated magna cum laude from NYU's Gallatin School of Individualized Study with a degree in Theatre Studies and the Historicization of Dramatic Literature and would be happy to explain what that means. More at [beth-pollack.com](http://beth-pollack.com).



**Christa Fleming** is a graphic designer whose experience spans over 25 years. She has worked with a number of Seattle area organizations, including: The 5th Avenue Theatre, ACT Theatre, Town Hall Seattle, Pratt Fine Arts Center, The Arboretum Foundation, Associated Recreation Council, Pasado's Safe Haven, Cornish, Book-It Repertory Theatre, Northwest Girlchoir, Navos, many independent schools, and more. She also crochets. A lot. You can check out her design work at [christafleming.com](http://christafleming.com).

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