



**THEATER**  
COMPANY

2019/2020  
SEASON

ST. LOUIS' PREMIER THEATER  
FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

The background of the title section features silhouettes of various cacti and a wolf howling against a large, glowing sun or moon. The title text is overlaid on this scene.

# THE GIRL WHO SWALLOWED A CACTUS

BY ERIC COBLE

WORKSHOPPED AND PRESENTED BY METRO THEATER COMPANY  
AS A REHEARSED READING IN APRIL 2018  
AT THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS  
AS PART OF THE *NEW VISIONS/NEW VOICES 2018*

Produced as part of a Rolling World Premiere with Childsplay Theatre in Phoenix, Arizona  
Dwayne Hartford, Artistic Director | Steve Martin, Managing Director

THE GIRL WHO SWALLOWED A CACTUS is produced by special arrangement with  
THE GERSH AGENCY, 41 Madison Avenue, 33rd Floor, New York, NY 10010

PRESENTED AT:

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MUSEUM  
OCTOBER 12 & 13

MISSOURI BOTANICAL  
GARDEN  
NOVEMBER 7

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CENTRAL BRANCH  
NOVEMBER 9



## MISSION STATEMENT

Inspired by the intelligence and emotional wisdom of young people, we create professional theater, foster inclusive community, and nurture meaningful learning through the arts.

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Metro Theater Company is a professional theater for young people and families and a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization. It is a proud member of the Theatre Communications Group (the national service organization for non-profit professional theaters), Theatre for Young Audiences/USA (the U.S. chapter of the international association of theaters for young people) and Missouri Citizens for the Arts, as well as a proud Cultural Partner of the School District of Clayton. Metro Theater Company receives financial assistance from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; Missouri Arts Council, a state agency; Missouri Humanities Council, a state agency; the Regional Arts Commission; the Arts and Education Council; and numerous corporations, foundations and individuals.

### WELCOME TO METRO THEATER COMPANY'S PRODUCTION OF THE GIRL WHO SWALLOWED A CACTUS!

We began this journey of imagination two years ago when playwright Eric Coble first told us about an idea that had been rattling around in his head for about five years. He wondered if Metro Theater Company might be interested in exploring it with him. The idea was rooted in Eric's childhood adventures with a bunch of friends and a pile of junk in the New Mexico desert. We said, yes, let's do it!



In the spring of 2018, the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC selected Metro Theater Company and THE GIRL WHO SWALLOWED A CACTUS as one of only eight national and international theater companies invited to develop new work for young audiences as part of the *New Visions/New Voices 2018* Festival of New Work.

This spring, Metro Theater Company's production of THE GIRL WHO SWALLOWED A CACTUS will return to the Kennedy Center, as part of their performances for young audiences series and to launch the *New Visions/New Voices 2020*.

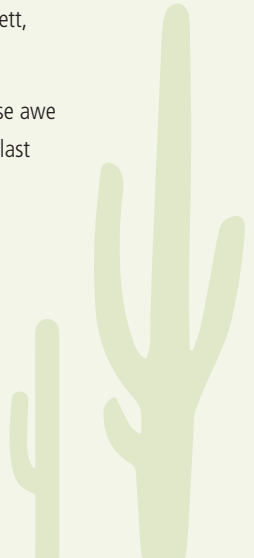
We are grateful to Eric Coble for sharing his idea with us, to the Kennedy Center for their support in developing play, to our friends at Childsplay in Arizona for their creative work on this rolling world premiere, and to Tia Shearer Bassett, our illustrious "Physical Dramaturg and Cone-sultant."

A special thank you to the young people in schools all over St. Louis whose awe and laughter have helped to shape the final version of this story over the last few weeks. You inspire us.

**"Time and Imagination. As we all know, that is more than enough to change the world."**

*Thank you for sharing your time and imagination with us today.*

**JULIA FLOOD | ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**



# THE GIRL WHO SWALLOWED A CACTUS

BY ERIC COBLE

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We are grateful to the generous support of so many in our community. Without you, Metro Theater Company's work would not be possible. We include below a list of all donors who have given \$100 or more since August 1, 2018. A full list of all donors will appear in the upcoming program for *It's a Wonderful Life*.

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Simon Tonkin  
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Dr. Jacques Van Ryn  
Bob Wagoner and  
Nancy Wagoner  
Molly Walsh and Kevin Farrell  
David Weber and Valerie Tripi  
John Weil and Anabeth Weil  
Mei Chen Welland  
Gwen Williams and  
Otis Williams  
Coleen Williams and  
Stephen Williams  
Shelly Williams  
Patricia Winchell and  
Michael Dwyer  
Jaime Winkler  
Steve Wollenberger and  
Flurina Wollenberger  
Iva Youkilis and Andy Youkilis  
Whitney Young  
Jessie Youngblood

We regret any inadvertent omissions from this list. If you made a pledge or a gift of greater than \$100 between August 1, 2018 and October 1, 2019 and do not see your name listed here, please contact Development Associate Lauren Brooks at [lauren@metroplays.org](mailto:lauren@metroplays.org).



THE GIRL WHO  
SWALLOWED A  
CACTUS

BY ERIC COBLE

## THE CAST

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DUST CLOUD..... JAMIE McKITTRICK

## PRODUCTION TEAM

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DIRECTOR..... *Julia Flood*

STAGE MANAGER..... *Jimmy Bernatowicz*

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT/ASM/PROPS.....*Jacob Cange*

PRODUCTION MANAGER/TECHNICAL DIRECTOR.....*Erik Kuhn*

SCENIC DESIGN..... *David Blake*

COSTUME DESIGN..... *Dominique Rhea Glaros*

LIGHTING DESIGN..... *Jayson Lawshee*

SCENIC PAINTER..... *Cristie Johnston*

## PLAYWRIGHT & CAST BIOGRAPHIES

### PLAYWRIGHT BIOGRAPHY

**ERIC COBLE** was born in Edinburgh, Scotland and raised on the Navajo and Ute reservations in New Mexico and Colorado. His scripts for adults have been produced on Broadway (Tony-nominated *The Velocity of Autumn*), Off-Broadway (*Bright Ideas*), and in all fifty states of the U.S. and on several continents. His plays for Young Audiences include his award-winning adaptations of Lois Lowry's *The Giver* and *Gathering Blue* as well as *The Storm In The Barn*, *The Baker Street Irregulars* and a dozen other published TYA scripts that have been produced at Dallas Children's Theatre, Childsplay, Metro Theater Company, Oregon Children's Theatre, First Stage, Denver Center Theatre Company, Cleveland Play House, Adventure Stage, Alliance Theatre and many others.



Awards include two AATE Distinguished Play Awards for Best Adaptation, an Emmy nomination, the Chorpenning Playwriting Award for *Body of Work*, the AT&T Onstage Award, National Theatre Conference Playwriting Award, an NEA Playwright in Residence Grant, a TCG Extended Collaboration Grant, the Cleveland Arts Prize, two Cuyahoga Arts and Culture Fellowships, and four Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Grants.

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### CAST BIOGRAPHY

**JAMIE MCKITTRICK** joins Metro Theater Company again after previously directing and choreographing *Wonderland: Alice's Rock & Roll Adventure*, choreographing and performing in *Frida Libre*, and choreographing *Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates*. McKittrick straddles the modes of theatre, dance, and performance art as performer, creator, choreographer, director and teacher. Recently, she directed *Gruesome Playground Injuries* for Creative Inhabitor, *The Birds* for UMSL, and *Lysistrata* for Webster Conservatory of the Arts. Notable original work includes *Sparkle-TA-DAAA!!!* (Critic's Choice Award winner of the St. Louis Fringe Festival), *SURVIVE!* ("Best of the Year" – Philadelphia Weekly), *Lady M* (curated by LiveArts Fest), and national tours with Enchantment Theatre Company. Other theatre credits include Mac Wellman's *Anything's Dream*, *Fefu and Her Friends* and *In the Heights*. Jamie is a Kevin Kline Award nominee. She's been on faculty at Muhlenberg College, UMSL and Webster University's Conservatory of Theatre teaching acting, movement and storytelling.



## PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES

### JIMMY BERNATOWICZ

**(Stage Manager)** is a local stage manager and director, and is thrilled to be working with Metro Theater Company again! He is a recent graduate from St. Louis University, with a B.A. in theatre and English. Previously, he stage-managed Metro Theater Company's touring show *Frida Libre*. He has also stage-managed for Shakespeare Festival St. Louis, The Midnight Company and Equally Represented Arts (ERA). Most recently, he directed, wrote, and produced Post-Romantics' premiere production of *Doomsday Faust*.

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### DAVID BLAKE

**(Scenic Design)** has designed sets for Metro Theater Company's *The Hundred Dresses*, *Frida Libre*, *Bud, Not Buddy*, *New Kid*, *Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates*, *Games Dad Didn't Play*, *And In This Corner...Cassius Clay*, *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*, *Out of the Box*, *Talkin' Trash*, *The Boy Who Loved Monsters* and *Afflicted: Daughters of Salem*. Other design credits include *Afflicted: Daughters of Salem* (Nashville Children's Theatre); *Twelfth Night and The Heart of Robin Hood* (Door Shakespeare); *District Merchants* (New Jewish Theatre); *Stray Dog Theatre's Ragtime* (St. Louis Theater Circle Award Nomination), *The Great American Trailer Park Musical* (St. Louis Theater Circle Award Nomination), *Little Shop of Horrors* (St. Louis Theatre Circle Award Nomination), *Spring Awakening*, and *Gypsy*; *Winning Juliet* (Shakespeare Festival of St. Louis); *Kosher Lutherans* (HotCity Theatre); and *Mary Shelley Monster Show* (SATE). David is resident designer for Metro Theater Company and a graduate of the UMKC Department of Theatre.

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### JACOB CANGE

**(Production Assistant/ASM/Props)** is excited to return to Metro Theater Company, where earlier this season he played Tommy Allen in *The Hundred Dresses* and He in *Frida Libre*. He recently played Banana in *Whammy! The Seven Secrets to a Sane Self*, and has previously appeared as Travis in PRIME Theatre Company's *Unheard Voices* and O'Shaughnessy in St. Louis Shakespeare's *Is He Dead?* Jacob is assistant technical director at the New Jewish Theatre, and he is a company member at the multimedia artistic collaboration Whale of the People. A native of Swansea, Illinois and a recent graduate of The Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Webster University, Jacob is a relatively fresh face in the St. Louis theatre scene.

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### JULIA FLOOD

**(Artistic Director/Director)** has directed *The Hundred Dresses*, *Frida Libre*, *Bud, Not Buddy*, *Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates*, *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*, *And In This Corner...Cassius Clay*, *Out of the Box*, *Talkin' Trash*, *Afflicted: Daughters of Salem*, *Unsorted* and *Say Something, Do Something!* for Metro Theater Company since she moved to St. Louis to become artistic director in February 2014. Previously, Julia spent 16 years as artistic director of Eckerd Theater Company in Clearwater, Florida where she commissioned such plays as *Vote?*, also by Eric Coble, provoked by Florida's role in the 2000 Presidential election, and *Battledrum* by Doug Cooney with Lee Ahlin, a musical about the effects of war on young people through the lens of Civil War drummer boys, subsequently produced at Metro Theater Company. A graduate of Northwestern University, Julia spent seven years as a resident member of the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble in Pennsylvania, a unique artist-led ensemble founded under the guidance of legendary acting teacher Alvina Krause, before following a freelance career as actor/director/playwright/teacher. This path led to Florida and eventually to her new artistic home in St. Louis. Julia served on the national board of director of Theatre for Young Audiences/USA from 2011 to 2019, and brings more than 35 years of experience to her role as artistic director of Metro Theater Company.

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## PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES

### DOMINIQUE RHEA GLAROS

**(Costume Design)** teaches costume design and technology in the Performing Arts Department at Washington University in St. Louis. A multitaled designer, she has designed costumes for numerous productions at Walt Disney World, Washington University in St. Louis, Baylor University and Truman State University. Recent designs include The Black Rep's *Nina Simone: Four Women* and *Sons of the Prophet* at American Theater Company in Chicago. A native of Royal Oak, Michigan, Dominique earned a M.F.A. in costume design from University of Cincinnati's College Conservatory of Music and a bachelor's in theatre design from University of Evansville. She is the recipient of Encore Michigan's 2010 Wilde Award for Best Costume Design.

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### ERIK KUHN

#### **(Production Manager/Technical Director)**

is an actor, technician and stage combatant. While studying acting at Washington University in St. Louis, he also developed an interest in technical theater. After graduating with his degree in drama, he began studying stage combat with the Society of American Fight Directors and Dueling Arts International, where he has earned a DAI Associate Instructor certification. As a freelance theater professional he has worked as a technical director, carpenter, electrician, fight director, stage combat instructor, and actor on dozens of productions with educational institutions and professional companies, including Metro Theater Company. He has served as the technical director for St. Louis Shakespeare, Upstream Theater, and Visitation Academy, and as the resident lighting designer for Equally Represented Arts (ERA).

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### JAYSON M. LAWSHEE

**(Lighting Design)** is pleased to work with Metro Theater Company this season as lighting designer for *The Girl Who Swallowed a Cactus* and the upcoming production of Idris Goodwin's *Ghost*, based on the award-winning bestseller by Jason Reynolds. His recent designs include *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark* at the Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Webster University and Shakespeare Festival Saint Louis' *Love at the River's Edge*. Jayson is a senior B.F.A. candidate at the Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Webster University.

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- Collinsville
- Columbia
- East St. Louis
- Edwardsville
- Glen Carbon



## QUESTIONS FOR THE RIDE HOME

1. Which character in Sheila's group do you identify most with, and why?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Each one of Sheila's friends has a strength they bring to their friend group. What are some strengths you share with your friends?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why do Sheila's friends follow her onto the truck, even though they feel scared?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Dennis made up the game of "hide-and-seek tag" with the car headlights. Have you ever made up a game with your friends?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Why did the coyote and other animals want to fight with the humans?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Sheila and friends try many different tactics to stop the coyote. Which tactics work, and why?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Where do you think Sheila went at the end of the story?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What do you like to do with your friends when you play outside?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. How do you resolve disagreements with your friends?  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What are some ways that humans can take better care of the land that animals live on?  
\_\_\_\_\_



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2019/2020  
SEASON

ST. LOUIS' PREMIER THEATER  
FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES



*"TROUBLE IS, YOU CAN'T RUN AWAY  
FROM YOURSELF."*



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**GHOST**

FEBRUARY 2 THRU MARCH 1, 2020

*A rolling world premiere by **IDRIS GOODWIN***

*Based on the award-winning bestseller by **JASON REYNOLDS***



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SEASON

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