

**PHILIP
LYNCH**
Theatre

LEWISUNIVERSITY

OFFSTAGE

SPECIAL EXPANDED EDITION **2026**

Philip Lynch Theatre Box Office
Monday-Friday 1:00-4:30pm
phone: (815) 836-5500
email: boxoffice@lewisu.edu
website: www.lewisu.edu/plt

Volume 50 Issue 4
APRIL 2026

WINTER EDITION

Orchestration by
Doug Besterman

Vocal and Incidental Music
Arrangements by
Michael Kosarin

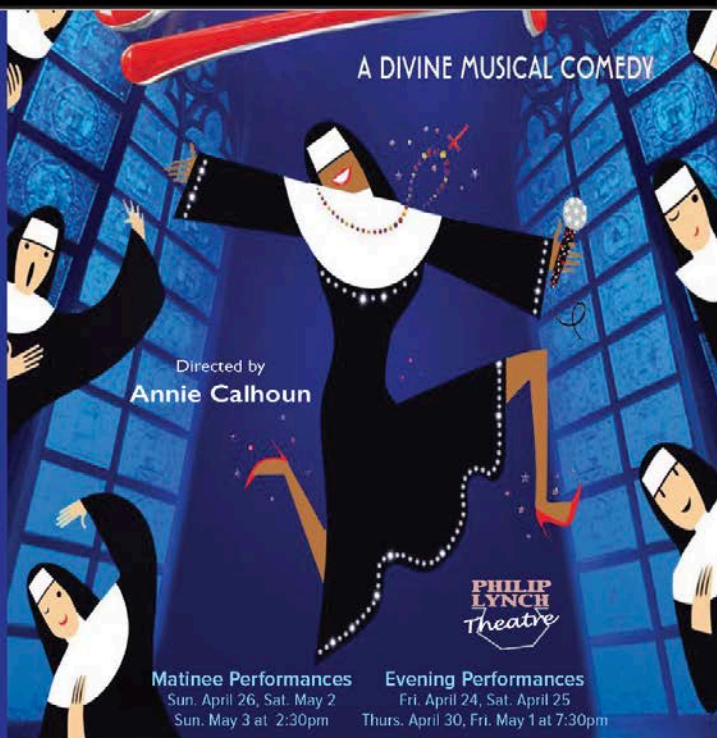
Dance Music Arrangements
by **Mark Hummel**

Based on the
Touchstone Pictures
Motion Picture *Sister Act*
written by **Joseph Howard**

Produced on Broadway by
Whoopi Goldberg &
Stage Entertainment in
association with the
Shubert Organization and
Disney Theatrical Productions

Original Production
Developed in Association with
**Pecar Schneider &
Michael Reno**

Produced by
Stage Entertainment
Sister Act is presented through
special arrangement with Music
Theatre International (MTI). All
authorized performance
materials are also supplied by
MTI. www.mtishows.com



A DIVINE MUSICAL COMEDY

Directed by
Annie Calhoun

Matinee Performances
Sun. April 26, Sat. May 2
Sun. May 3 at 2:30pm

Evening Performances
Fri. April 24, Sat. April 25
Thurs. April 30, Fri. May 1 at 7:30pm

SISTER ACT is the feel-good musical comedy smash based on the hit 1992 film that has audiences jumping to their feet! Featuring original music by Tony- and eight-time Oscar winner, Alan Menken (*Newsies*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Little Shop of Horrors*), this uplifting musical was nominated for five Tony Awards, including Best Musical.

When Deloris Van Cartier, witnesses a murder, she is put in protective custody in the one place the cops are sure she won't be a found: a convent! Disguised as a nun, she finds herself at odds with both the rigid lifestyle and uptight Mother Superior. Using her unique disco moves and singing talent to inspire the choir, Deloris breathes new life into the church and community but, in doing so, blows her cover. Soon, the gang is giving chase, only to find them up against Deloris and the power of her newly found sisterhood.

Filled with powerful gospel music, outrageous dancing and a truly moving story, *Sister Act* will leave audiences breathless. A sparkling tribute to the universal power of friendship, *Sister Act* is reason to REJOICE!



Cheri Steinkellner & Bill Steinkellner

Cheri and Bill Steinkellner are exceptionally talented, multi-award-winning screenwriters, librettists, and producers. Cheri and Bill have several Emmys, Golden Globes and Writers Guild awards for writing and producing *Cheers*; plus a few more Emmys, British Academy Awards, and Parent's Choice honors for the animated series and critically-acclaimed feature musical, *Disney's Teacher's Pet*, created with Mad Magazine artist, Gary Baseman.

On Broadway, they are the Tony-nominated authors of *Sister Act the Musical* (with Alan Menken and Glenn Slater). Together they co-wrote *The PeeWee Herman Show (1980/2010)*. Off Broadway, they wrote the books for *Princesses* (with David Zippel and Matthew Wilder), *Jailbirds on Broadway* (with Jeff Rizzo) and *Cheri is the Ovation* nominated, Indy-winning author of *Hello! My Baby*,

Tonight in Dreamland, and the upcoming *It's All Material*. The Steinkellners met as charter members of The Groundlings. Other TV credits include: *The Jeffersons*, *Benson*, *The Facts of Life*, *Family Ties*, *Who's The Boss*, *Bob*, (*Newhart*) and *Hope and Gloria*. They're also the creators of *InstaPlay*, L.A.'s original all-improvised musical. As Educators, Bill and Cheri are the honored recipients of UCSB's 2015 Inspiration Award for teaching. Bill teaches sitcom writing at USC, and Cheri teaches comedy and creative writing at Stanford University.

MEET THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE SCENES OF SISTER ACT



Elise Korst, Choreographer



Annie Calhoun, Director



Jeremy Landig, Music Director



Robert Burbridge, Stage Manager



Andrew Nelsen, Technical Director

TICKETS ARE STILL AVAILABLE

CONTACT THE PLT AT (815) 836-5500 OR VISIT THE TICKET WEBSITE

[HTTP://LEWISU.EDU/ACADEMICS/THEATRE/PLT-TIX.HTM](http://lewisu.edu/academics/theatre/plt-tix.htm)

Q & A WITH *SISTER ACT* CHOREOGRAPHER AND MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Musical Director, Jeremy Landig ~ Choreographer, Elise Korst

How do you balance the comedy and heart of the show through choreography/music?

JEREMY: *A lot of the comedy is wrapped up in the over-the-top style of the male characters' songs. Curtis intends to kill Deloris to prevent her from testifying against him, but when he sings about it, it's in a cheery Motown style. Eddie's song "I Could Be That Guy" starts out as a smooth R&B ballad, but he is inexplicably joined by a chorus of street people. "Lady In The Long Black Dress" shows that Curtis's henchmen are really more bark than bite. The ensemble of nuns also carry a lot of the comedic load, but though they gain confidence in their singing during the story, most of them are essentially the same people by the end of the show.*

How did you collaborate to ensure that the choreography enhances the musicality of numbers like "Take Me to Heaven" or "Raise Your Voice"?

ELISE: *Many of the large group numbers have such complex vocal arrangements and build in intensity to bring out the dramatic changes taking place in the characters. For example, "Raise Your Voice" begins as the nuns timidly make new choices to challenge their praise in voice and body. The song gradually increases in confidence, eventually overlapping layers of different vocal parts. The movement complements this change as individuals and small groups test out small movements one by one and then transition into a collective unit. The nuns change into a chorus of bold confidence. It is no wonder, then, that the next musical number, "Take Me To Heaven," we see the nuns singing before their congregation as a transformed choir.*

How do you build confidence in performers who may be stepping into such a bold, comedic, and high-energy style for the first time?

JEREMY: *Lots of repetition, and by taking the supports away gradually. If we are learning many sections of new music, I always try to ask "do you need to sing that one more time to lock it in?" and the cast has been pretty good about knowing whether they should go back or go on.*

ELISE: *Constant positivity and always seeking for any and all improvements sets the stage for building confidence in performers attempting this style for the first time. I encourage the performers to feel free to bring their own ideas and suggestions to the creative play that takes place during practice. Also, allowing myself as the choreographer to be seen as a team player is so important to the cohesion of our production. Never forgetting to have a beginner's mind when approaching a cast and keeping a sense of wonder as to what can I learn from my students is also important. I wish to let them see that we are all in a continual process of improving ourselves.*

What do you hope students learn from working on a show like *Sister Act*, both artistically and personally?

JEREMY: *I hope they can be dynamic and expressive stage performers and singers, and that they can learn from the show that it's possible to make the best of what might at first appear to be an uncomfortable or less-than-ideal situation! And, of course, everyone should be really listening to more disco, boogie, and especially Motown music!*

What growth have you seen in the cast from the first rehearsal to now?

ELISE: *I cannot believe some of the changes I have witnessed in the course of the last few weeks of practice. Some of the cast members have really surprised me when they boldly belt out a section of song that previously had been shied away from or executing steps with fluidity and ease that once were stumbled over. I truly believe that these are inspired moments when the Spirit is free to move through the individual revealing that they are capable of great things beyond themselves.*

SISTER ACT

Q & A WITH SISTER ACT DIRECTOR ANNIE CALHOUN

What excites you most about bringing *Sister Act* to life in a college theatre setting?

"Sister Act" is in line with my "why" or my motivation for working in the theatre. Theatre can elevate communities, and this play is about the power of an individual to help a struggling community find their spirit. Every community struggles and loses spirit and every individual struggles and we are here because we each have the power to help lift those around us to higher heights and the play has the power to remind the audience of that in themselves. Our college theatre program is an inclusive one where we bring in students of all majors for a transformative experience onstage together. This show in particular allows for more actors to share the stage than other musicals and plays.

What challenges come with staging large ensemble numbers in a show so driven by vocal power and rhythm?

Everyone can act, everyone can sing and everyone can move. It may not be at a professional level but these elements are in all of us as human beings. When you create an environment of inclusion and belonging, expression comes forth in a way you'd never believe! When people feel seen, the art in them thrives. One person's shine might look different than the person next to them and that diversity is a beautiful thing in educational theatre.

How do you build confidence in performers who may be stepping into such a bold, comedic, and high-energy style for the first time?

Lots of repetition and support! Comedy is very precise in musical theatre. It is about heightened movement that is specific, clear, and coordinated.

Are there specific character-driven moments where movement or musical direction plays a key storytelling role?

The solo song is a poem to be acted. The focus begins on acting the text and seeing where the repetition or images encourage the actor to heighten and change. A well-made solo song in musical theatre moves the plot forward and shows character growth and transformation. The actor must find the beats and know what they want and how to get what they want (tactics), just like in acting a monologue.

What do you hope students learn from working on a show like *Sister Act*, both artistically and personally?

My hope is that each student sees something in others and themselves that they hadn't seen before. For some, this might be the only show they are ever in. For others, it's a steppingstone in the process to becoming a professional theatre artist. Both are important. Musical theatre builds internal confidence and teaches the extraordinary power of the group as well as your own voice in it.

LEWIS THEATRE COSTUMER, CELESTE MACKEY



Celeste Mackey

Lewis University Resident Costumer
1991, BA Governors State University

Celeste Mackey taught English and Literature of the Holocaust at Joliet Catholic Academy for more than 15 years and has been the adjunct faculty costume instructor at Lewis University since 2000. She earned her degree in English from Governors State University and has studied at California State University Chico and American River College. Some of her favorite PLT costuming credits include: Dancing at Lughnasa, Moon Over Buffalo, Singin' in the Rain, Oh! What A Lovely War, Equus, Hay Fever, Mamma Mia and Arabian Nights. Celeste has also costumed shows for Plainfield South High School, as well as Holy Family Catholic School in Joliet, IL.

Celeste has been married for over 30 years to her husband, Chuck, she is the mother of two grown children, has four grandchildren, and resides in Joliet, IL.

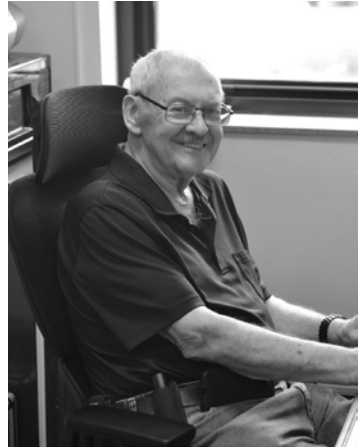


Join in Celebrating Celeste on Sunday, April 26th at 4:30pm
in the Wadsworth Family Art Gallery
in the Oremus Fine Arts Building

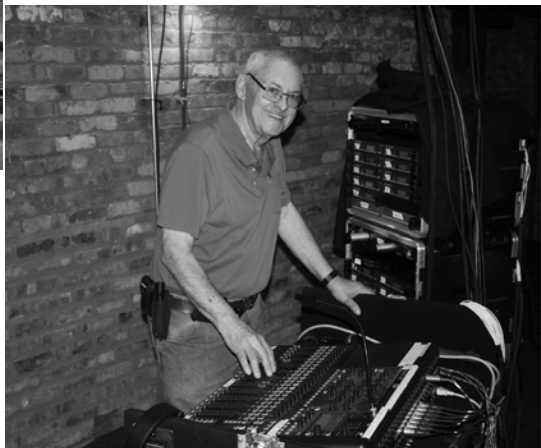
ASSISTANT TECHNICAL DIRECTOR, DAVE POMATTO

Dave Pomatto

Assistant Technical Director
1971, B.A. Lewis University



Dave Pomatto returned to Lewis where his theatre career began with Joliet Drama Guild and Lewis productions at the Studio Theatre. From 1976 to 1983, Dave Pomatto was a stage manager, technical director, and lighting designer for the Chicago Ballet and *The Nutcracker* Ballet at the Arie Crown Theater and dance performances at Chicago Civic Opera House, Seattle Opera House, Portland Civic Auditorium, Oakland Paramount Theater, and UNLV Performing Arts Center. He was the technical director, lighting and sound designer, and maintenance supervisor for Candlelight Playhouse and Forum Theater from 1974 to 1994. He was also the building manager, project coordinator, and special effects consultant for Production Plus Technologies, Inc. from 1994 to 2009. He has been the Events Facility Coordinator, providing all infrastructures on site for temporary events headlined by The Eagles in 2008, Paul Simon in 2005, Elton John in 2003, and Bette Midler in 2001. Dave was the recipient of the Joseph Jefferson Award for Sound Design for the *Little Shop of Horrors* at the Candlelight Dinner Playhouse and was nominated for the Joseph Jefferson Award for Lighting Design for *Nine*, also at the Candlelight Dinner Playhouse.



Join in Celebrating Dave
on Sunday, April 26th at 4:30pm
in the Wadsworth Family Art Gallery
in the Oremus Fine Arts Building

MEET THE *SISTER ACT* CAST

Meet the
CAST



PHILIP
LYNCH
Theatre

LEWIS UNIVERSITY

GRADUATING 2026 THEATRE SENIORS



Keegan Srebro
Bachelors of Arts
in Theatre
& receiving a
Minor in Psychology



Sara "Sei" Barbour
Bachelors of Arts
in Theatre



PLT 2026 YOUTH SUMMER THEATRE CAMP

THEATRE SUMMER CAMP JUNE 22-26

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With enough interest, we may add an additional week for ages 11-13



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Subscription Renewals will
OFFICIALLY begin on July 1, 2026

Tickets will become available for
Public Purchase on August 15, 2026

For Box Office Use ONLY

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- Mail-in your check today! Check made payable to Philip Lynch Theatre
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CLOSED ON FRIDAY

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