



## Meet Our Summer 2022 Teaching Artists

**Eli Aronson**, tenor, earned his B.M. in Vocal Performance with a focus in vocal pedagogy from St. Olaf College. He has performed with Cedar Rapids Opera Theater, Halifax Summer Opera Festival, and Journey North Opera Company. Notable performances include *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Into the Woods*, *La Canterina*, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Brigadoon*, and *Turandot*. He is also a frequent choral performer, having sung with the St. Olaf Choir and having served as the tenor section leader for St. John's Episcopal Church in Minneapolis. Eli also runs a voice studio where he focuses on cross training the voice to sing everything from pop to classical and everything in between. When not onstage, he enjoys Netflix, a good fantasy book, and trying new restaurants and breweries around the Twin Cities.

**Barb Brauch** earned bachelor's degrees from the College of St. Catherine and Augsburg College. Her master's degree is from St. Cloud State University. Barb retired from teaching at Wayzata West Middle School having spent her entire 34-year career there. She received dance training for three years with Minnesota Dance Theatre. The ten years Barb spent dancing and teaching at the Dance Shoppe came in handy when she and Charlie Leonard, founder of Blue Water Theatre Company, joined forces to produce musicals. She was one of the organization's original board members and served as Chair of the Board of Directors for five years. Her musical theatre choreography credits include: *No, No Nanette*, *The Music Man*, *How to Succeed In Business Without Really Trying*, *Into the Woods*, *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*, *Babes in Arms*, *Joseph the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Bye, Bye Birdie*, *42nd Street*, *Funny Girl*, *Anything Goes*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Fiddler On the Roof*, *Once Upon a Mattress*, *State Fair*, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, and *Big Fish*. Barb is also the director and choreographer of a tap dance entertainment group called "The Satin Dolls" which performs for the Minnesota Lynx and Timberwolves basketball teams and throughout the metro area. When she's not dancing or preparing choreography, Barb enjoys reading, theatre, and doing anything with her grandchildren!

**Casey Marie Holmes** is a Twin Cities based theatre artist. She has been teaching and working with student actors for the last eight years for companies around the metro

area. Casey serves as the Educational Director for Locally Grown Theatre in Cottage Grove. She is excited to be joining the teaching team at Blue Water this summer.

**Mary Huebert** has been choreographing since 2004. Before joining BWTC, Mary worked for Front Porch Musical Theatre for seven years. Mary teaches science in the Juntos Spanish-immersion program at Hopkins North Junior High School, and also has choreographed there and at Hopkins High School. Mary learned Spanish through Concordia Language Villages and through studying abroad in Nicaragua and Spain. She went to college for Biology at Humboldt State University in the beautiful redwood forest of the northern California coast.

**D.J. Mendel** is an actor, director, writer, and filmmaker who has worked extensively with avant-garde theater-makers like Richard Foreman (*The Universe, Permanent Brain Damage and Panic!*), Karen Coonrod (*Christmas at the Ivanov's*), and Robert Cacuzza. Pre-Pandemic, Mendel was the head of Advanced Acting at NYU's Playwright's Horizons studio. Mendel has also worked with emerging new writers, directors, and groups such as the Keen Company, 13P and 31 Down. He starred in the European Premiere of *Elizabeth ou l'equity*, which played at the prestigious Theatre du Rond Point in Paris. Mendel starred in Hal Hartley's feature film, *Meanwhile*. His collaborations with Hartley began with *The Book of Life* opposite Martin Donovan and PJ Harvey. Other projects include Hartley's play, *Soon* at de Singel Theater in Antwerp. Mendel has played roles in Hartley's feature films *No Such Thing* (2001), *The Girl from Monday* (2004) and *Fay Grim* (2007). As a director, Mendel has worked with Cynthia Hopkins, directing her shows: *This Clement World*, which premiered at St. Ann's Warehouse (NYC) and Walker Art Center (Minneapolis), *The Truth: A Tragedy*, which premiered at Soho Rep and toured the U.S. and Europe, *Accidental Nostalgia, Must Don't Whip 'Um* and *The Success of Failure (or, The Failure of Success)*— all of which were presented at St. Ann's Warehouse in New York as well as throughout the US and Europe. D.J. also works with singer Rosanne Cash, video designing tours: *Black Cadillac, The List* and *The River and the Thread*, as well as directing several of her music videos.

**Danielle Nelson** is a seasoned performer and choreographer in the Twin Cities. She has performed at Theater Latte Da and the Jungle Theater and has had extensive dance training with Larkin Dance Studio and various Broadway choreographers while living in New York City. Favorite choreography credits include *Oliver* with BWTC and *Shrek* with River Valley Theater Company. Danielle has a passion for dance and watching kids succeed! Danielle teaches with goal-oriented standards. No goal is ever too high to strive for and can be achieved through dedication, hard work and the strong desire to make your dreams come true. The passion for dance that emanates from

Danielle leads her dancers to greatness. Her goal is to make every child feel successful and reach for their dreams!

**Maureen O'Malley** feels incredibly lucky to be a part of the BWTC team after spending many years of her youth as an onstage participant! After earning her BFA in Musical Theatre from Minnesota State University, Mankato, Maureen moved home to Minneapolis where she works as an actress and arts educator. She has worked with several area theatres including The Old Log Theatre, Walking Shadow Theatre Company, and Lyric Arts. Maureen also runs her own acting and audition coaching business. When not onstage, she can be found with her nose in a book, playing a variety of instruments, or chasing strangers down the street to ask if she can pet their dogs.

**Maridee Slater** (she/they) was recently named Artistic Director of BWTC. She holds an MFA in Directing from Columbia University, and BFAs in Acting/Directing and Technical Design from Colorado Mesa University. Maridee has taught at Drew University, the University of Washington, Cornish College of the Arts, Marymount Manhattan College, among others. Since 2013, she has taught Creating Original Theatre for the Summer Immersive Program at Columbia University. In 2015, she assisted in the development workshop for *Waitress: The Musical* and Assistant Directed *Blackout: House* (S2BN). She has worked with myriad companies in the US and Europe, including Intiman, Seattle Rep (where she was a carpenter and welder for over 35 shows, including *Shrek* on Broadway), The Guggenheim, SIT Company, Tectonic Theatre Project, Seattle International Children's Festival, Ontroerend Goed, Chashama, The Bushwick Starr, Degenerate Art Ensemble, P3 East, and Barn Arts Collective. She is currently a producer on *36.5 / A Durational Performance with the Sea* and was recently named Artistic Director of Blue Water Theatre Company.

**Scott Stafford** is a dancer, movement director, and teaching artist based in Minneapolis. His choreographic work has been presented at various Twin Cities venues including Walker Art Center, Southern Theater, Red Eye Theater, Park Square Theater, University of Minnesota, Fresh Oysters Performance Research, and Blue Water Theatre Company.

**Betsy Stewart** is a graduate of UMD and a Fabricator and Properties Artisan. Betsy loves theatre because of the living relationship between performers and audience and loves to tell stories that spark joy through items and scenery.

**Jake Sullivan** is a director, artist and educator based in and from the Twin Cities. He has worked with companies such as Theatre Mu, Lyric Arts, Park Square, Lakeshore

Players Theatre, The Jungle Theatre, Classical Actors Ensemble, and Wayward Theatre Company, as well as serving as the theatre director for Anoka High School.

**Maya Vagle** (she/her/hers) is a recent graduate of Ball State University's Department of Theatre and Dance where she earned her BFA in Acting. She has a passion for language, creating original work, and finding joy in any theatre she can get her hands on. After four years away from the Twin Cities, she is overjoyed to be back and looks forward to working with you this summer!

**Jacob Wright** recently graduated from the University of Northwestern St. Paul with a Bachelor's degree in both English Education and Theatre. At Blue Water, he combines both of these passions by teaching theatre classes, and works in the Twin Cities as both an educator, and an actor/director. In his free time, he loves to read, play Dungeons & Dragons, and spend time with his wife Siri, and their cats, Merry & Pippin!