

Penn Hills High School
Presents

ALMOST, MAINE

BY JOHN CARIANI

Fourth Revised Edition

A DPS ACTING EDITION PUBLISHED BY

BROADWAY
LICENSING GROUP

November 14, 15, 16 @ 7:00 pm
Thomas A. Bond Auditorium

A Note from the Directors

We are thrilled to bring 'Almost, Maine' back to the Penn Hills community, though it has never appeared on *this* stage. The show has special significance for me, as I was a senior and part of the cast in the fall of 2012, directed by Mr. Jeff Carey, when it was the final production on the old Penn Hills High School stage. Now, Mr. Jasper and I, have had the privilege of introducing it to a whole new crop of young thespians 12 years later. (Note: If you were part of the 2012 cast, then please make sure to see us so we can introduce you to the 2024 cast!)

'Almost, Maine' was written by John Cariani in 2004 and premiered in Portland, Maine, later that same year. Since then, the script has undergone several changes, as we will present to you tonight the fourth revised edition, but the mood and message of the show has remained constant. At our table read back in September, we stressed with our actors the value and importance of a work, such as a play, evolving and going through revisions. As Mr. Cariani states, "Thanks to anyone who challenges this play. It keeps it alive."

We want to thank everyone who played a role in making this production happen. Thank you to Mrs. Barb Spiri for donating time as a retired teacher to come and assist with running sound. We want to thank Mrs. Diane Tirio and her amazing costume team for assisting with costumes, all while being knee-deep in preparing costumes for the spring musical. Thank you to Mrs. Kelly Frye for offering time and energy into hunting down and supplying props for this show. There are too many people to thank by name, but know that if you played a role in making this show happen, it did not go unnoticed. Finally, thank you to the students. Your smiles and laughs, your effort and perseverance, and your evolution and growth are the biggest joys of our jobs and the thing that makes every production worth it! As always, we are proud of you and thrilled to be able to be your directors! 😊

Sincerely,

Mr. Ben Blinn & Mr. Loyal Jasper

High School Drama Awards



Our 5th annual drama awards recognize local area high school students and their accomplishments in creating their non-musical productions.

All positions involved in producing a stage production are important, and our award categories include both backstage and onstage roles.

The 5th Annual Awards Ceremony is January 11, 2025

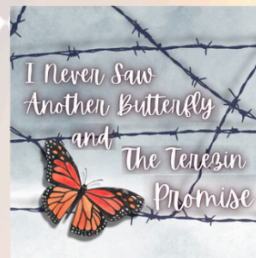
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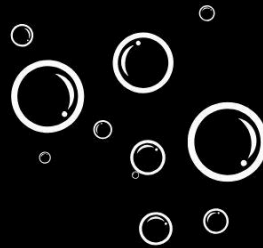


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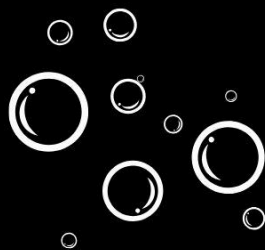
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Linton Middle School Auditorium

Friday, February 21st - 7 pm

Saturday, February 22nd - 7pm

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PHHS SPRING MUSICAL

April 3-6 2025

The title graphic features a repeating red damask pattern on a black background. The words "DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS" are written in a large, gold, serif font with a 3D effect. Below them, "THE MUSICAL" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

**DIRTY
ROTTEN
SCOUNDRELS**
THE MUSICAL

Nov. 19-21: Auditions

'Almost, Maine' Synopsis:

Welcome to Almost, Maine, a place that's so far north, it's almost not in the United States. It's almost in Canada. And it's not quite a town, because its residents never got around to getting organized. So it almost doesn't exist! One cold, clear, winter night, as the northern lights hover in the star-filled sky above, the residents of Almost, Maine, experience the life-altering power of the human heart. In a series of nine loosely connected vignettes of playful and surreal experiences, relationships end, begin, or change beyond recognition, as strangers become friends, friends become lovers, and lovers turn into strangers. Knees are bruised. Hearts are broken. But the bruises heal and the hearts mend, almost, in this delightful midwinter night's dream.

Note: There will be a 15-minute intermission between Act 1 and Act 2.

Stage Crew:

Quiaura Akitoye	Psalms Miranda
Alana Dorsey	Addy Mortle
Nevaeh Gibson	Ashleigh Pickens
Vivian Jefferson*	Taliah Smith*
Kai Jones	Jaysaun Warner
Jakob Lightcap	Mansur Zaynullin

*denotes crew chiefs

Production Staff:

Directors.....Ben Blinn ('13), Loyal Jasper ('12)
Student Director.....Tionna Robshaw-Burrell
Assistant Student Director.....Zachary Burkovich
Costume Director.....Diane Tirio ('69)
Costume Assistants.....Jamie McSweeny, Josette Pickens
Student Costume
Assistants.....Ashleigh Pickens, Isabella Pivirotto
Student Make-up Assistants.....Mariyah Bey, Ashleigh Pickens
Posters & T-Shirts.....Christine Rautkis
Stage Crew Director.....Bill Holodnik ('79)
Student Stage Managers.....Taliah Smith, Vivian Jefferson
Sound.....Loyal Jasper ('12), Barb Spiri ('72), Mike Berkey
Student Sound Assistant.....Isabella Pivirotto
Lighting.....Ben Blinn ('13), Mike Berkey
Student Lighting Assistant.....Taliah Smith
Prop Master.....Kelly Frye
Program.....Ben Blinn ('13)
Program Editor.....Don Blinn, Jr.
Concessions Coordinator.....Nikolette Senge

Inclusion of graduation year indicates Penn Hills' alumnus.

Director Bios:

Ben Blinn (Co-Director) is in his fourth year on staff at Penn Hills School District where he teaches 7th grade math at Linton Middle School, is the 7th grade Boys Basketball coach, and is the High School Musical Director. He is also the program director of the Linton Middle School 'Big Red Morning Announcements'. Ben is a 2013 valedictorian of PHHS and a 2017 graduate of Clarion University, where he majored in Secondary Mathematics Education and minored in Athletic Coaching. He received his graduate degree in Secondary Mathematics Education from Duquesne University (2020). Ben is an experienced performer, having appeared in productions at PHHS, Clarion University, and McKeesport Little Theater (MLT). Favorite past credits include: *Linus* in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* (MLT), *Dennis* in *All Shook Up* (PHHS) and *Bud Frump* in *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying* (PHHS).

Loyal Jasper (Co-Director) is thrilled to be coming back to co-direct '*Almost, Maine*'. Before he directed for the Penn Hills theater department, he acted for the Penn Hills theater department. While he was a student at Penn Hills, he participated in three shows: *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, *The Real Inspector Hound*, and Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, where he got to play his dream role, *Lumiere*. After graduating in 2012, he went on to Thiel College to study psychology and criminal justice and Slippery Rock University for graduate studies in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. While at each institution, he was both a participant and supporter of the theater programs. In 2021, Loyal came back to his alma mater to help direct the musical production of Disney's *Mary Poppins*, and he has been helping to direct every production since. Additionally, he is the director of the Penn Hills Elementary Musical. Most importantly, he is so happy to be giving back to the program that has given him so much.

'Almost, Maine' Scenes & Cast List

Note: Cast B performs 11/14, Cast A performs 11/15 & 11/16

Prologue

Ginette.....Ayana Branson (B), Vivian Jefferson (A)
Pete.....Mason DiDomenico

Her Heart

Glory.....Sierra Albright
East.....Julian Baldrige

Sad and Glad

Sandrine.....Tionna Robshaw-Burrell
Jimmy.....Roland Zuk
Waitress.....Kamara Fields

This Hurts

Marvalyn.....Athena Huffman (B), Julia Winkler (A)
Steve.....Mason DiDomenico

They Fell

Chad.....Ethan Herr
Randy.....Zachary Burkovich

-----Intermission-----

Interlogue

Pete.....Mason DiDomenico

Story of Hope

Hope.....Ashleigh Pickens (B), Victoria Senge (A)

Man.....Maurice Allen

Suzette.....Victoria Senge (B), Ashleigh Pickens (A)

Where It Went

Marci.....,Mariyah Bey

Phil.....Zachary Burkovich

Getting It Back

Gayle.....Ashleigh Pickens

Linda.....Isabella Bennett

Seeing the Thing

Rhonda.....Nevaeh Gibson

Dave.....Ethan Herr

Epilogue

Ginette.....Vivian Jefferson

Pete.....Mason DiDomenico

CAST BIOS:

Maurice Allen (*Man*) is a freshman at Penn Hills High School (PHHS). He has appeared previously in *Frozen Jr.* (Linton Middle School [LMS]). Maurice is currently in Marching Band and thanks himself.

Julian Baldrige (*East*) is a senior at PHHS. This play is his first experience on stage. He is a member of the Game's Club and the Drama Club and his hobbies include drawing and writing. Julian's future goals are to get his real estate license so that he can make enough money to create his own independent film and television company which will enable him to help aspiring writers and actors who are interested in the field.

Isabella Bennett (*Linda*) is a PHHS freshman. She has appeared in *Moana* (LMS). Isabella has been a team member of basketball, volleyball, cross country and flag football. She plans to go D1 in volleyball or basketball, potentially play professionally, and attend Harvard law school and become a judge.

Mariyah Bey (*Marci*) is a senior at PHHS. Their past credits include: *Fiona/Mad Hatter* in *Shrek* (PHHS), *Emily* in *Our Town* (PHHS), and *Ronnette* in *Little Shop of Horrors* (PHHS). They are a member of SADD, Marching Band(Majorette), BSU, Language Club, and Big Brother's Big Sister's, and enjoy singing in their free time. They plan to attend a four-year university for music education. Mariyah thanks their family and friends for supporting their dramatic endeavors.

Ayana Branson (*Ginette*) is a freshman at PHHS. Her favorite credits include: *Jojo* in *Seussical (LMS)*, *Ensemble* in *Moana (LMS)*, and *Queen Iduna/Ensemble* in *Frozen, Jr. (LMS)*. She thanks everyone for the things that she has accomplished in her middle school career. And to the cast of the play: "break a leg!"

Zachary Burkovich (*Randy and Phil*) is a PHHS senior. His most recent roles at PHHS include: *Shrek* from *Shrek the Musical* and *Sam Carmichael* from *Mamma Mia*. Zach is also one of this year's Drum Major's for the Penn Hills Marching Band.

Mason DiDomenico (*Pete and Steve*) is a freshman at PHHS. Past credits include: *Sven* in *Frozen Jr. (LMS)*. He is a member of the Marching Band (Drum Captain) and really enjoys playing music in his free time. He plans on pursuing a career that involves music. Mason proclaims that "Ben and Mr. Loyal are awesome directors!"

Ethan Herr (*Chad and Dave*) is a senior at PHHS. His favorite credits include: *Lord Farquaad* in *Shrek The Musical (PHHS)*, *Stage Manager* in *Our Town (PHHS)*, and *Sky* in *Mamma Mia (PHHS)*. He is a member of National Honor Society (NHS), sings tenor in Honor's Choir, and enjoys playing hockey. He plans to attend Robert Morris University to major in Criminal Justice and become a lawyer after college. Ethan thanks his amazing friends and family for supporting him through all his years in theater.

Athena Huffman (*Marvalyn*) is a sophomore at PHHS. Her favorite credits include: *3 Little Pigs/3 Blind Mice* in *Shrek The Musical* (PHHS), *Bird Girl* in *Seussical Jr.* (LMS), and *Chief Ancestor* in *Moana Jr.* (LMS). She is a member of Choir and Marching Band, and dances outside of school. Athena would like to show appreciation to her parents for all their support, to the cast and crew, and to the amazing directors of this production.

Vivian Jefferson (*Ginette & Stage Crew Chief*) is a senior at PHHS. Favorite credits include: *Humpty Dumpty* in *Shrek the Musical* (PHHS), *Mrs. Gibbs (u.s.)* in *Our Town* (PHHS), and *Ensemble* in *Mamma Mia* (PHHS). She is a member of Stage Crew (Crew Chief), Marching Band (Majorette Co-Captain), Pageturners (Captain), Theatre Club, SADD, BSU, and Games Club. She plans to study Music and Business after graduation. She would like to acknowledge how intensely the cast, crew, and directors have been working to make these stories come to life on stage. She appreciates the long practices and meetings that have resulted in hilarious memories! We got this!!!

Ashleigh Pickens (*Hope and Gayle*) is a sophomore at PHHS. Past credits include: *ensemble* in *Shrek* (PHHS) and *Mrs. Soames* in *Our Town* (PHHS). Ashleigh is involved in Marching Band, on the bowling team and also a member of stage crew.

Tionna (Kaz) Robshaw-Burrell (*Sandrine*) is a junior at PHHS. Her favorite credits include: *Pilar* in *Legally Blonde* (Riverfront Theatre), *Gingy* in *Shrek* (PHHS) and *Lisa* in *Mamma Mia* (PHHS). She is a member of Marching Band, Theatre club and Choir and enjoys doing multi-media art in her free time. She plans to attend college to pursue a career in the Arts. Kaz thanks the cast, crew and directors for their hard work this year and hopes to have an amazing show with them again!

Victoria Senge (*Hope*) is a sophomore at PHHS. Her favorite credits include: *the 3 Blind Mice* in *Shrek* (PHHS), *Pua* in *Moana* (LMS), and *Gertrude* in *Seussical* (LMS). She is a member of the Marching Band (clarinet section leader), Concert Band, Jazz Band, Musical, Coding Team, and SADD. Victoria thanks all of her amazing friends in the cast, and all of her teachers for continuing to support her!

Taliah Smith (*Stage Crew Chief*) is a senior at PHHS. Her favorite credits include: *Ensemble* in *Mamma Mia* (PHHS), *Mrs. Webb* in *Our Town* (PHHS), and *Mamma Bear* in *Shrek the Musical* (PHHS). She is a member of the Black Student Union, Students Against Destructive Decisions, World Language Club, Drama Club, Choir, Student Council, Page Turners, Games Club, National Honors Society, Stage Crew and the Penn Hills Big Red Marching Band as Color Guard Captain. Taliah thanks her friends and Mrs. York for comforting her through all her hard times and stress.

Julia Winkler (*Marvalyn*) is a senior homeschooled at Journey Academy. Most recently, she enjoyed playing the *Pied Piper* in *Shrek the Musical* (PHHS), *Samantha Craig* in *Our Town* (PHHS) and *Ensemble* in *Mamma Mia!* (PHHS). She has helped with stage crew at PHHS and is a co-captain of the color guard with PHHS Marching band. Julia plans to pursue a degree in Art Therapy. Julia thanks her fellow cast members, directors, costumers, stage crew, and parents for all they did to make this production possible.

Roland Zuk (*Jimmy*) is a freshman at PHHS. His credits include: *Kristoff* in *Frozen Jr.*(LMS), *Right Claw* in *Moana Jr.* (LMS), and *Mr. Mayor* in *Seussical Jr.*(LMS). He is a member of the Marching band and Honors Choir and enjoys playing guitar and collecting vinyls in his free time. Roland thanks his friends and family for being part of the process.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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