

:: Lucia Colombi, Founder :: Celeste Cosentino, Executive Artistic Director ::

# FEB 9 - FEB 25

Mother Courage and Her Children

# by Bertolt Brecht

**Translated by Tony Kushner** 

**Ensemble Theatre** :: **2023-2024** Season:: Performing Arts Center-Notre Dame College 4545 College Rd. South Euclid, OH 44121

216.321.2930 www.ensembletheatrecle.org

# A Messace Iron the Artistic Director

Dear Friends,

What a journey the last few years have been. Navigating a pandemic and a move from a space we inhabited for almost a decade. We are so thankful for our new partners at Notre Dame College. We are so excited to become a part of the Performing Arts Family here in South Euclid! Both my mother and I graduated from Regina (now part of the college). How wonderful it is to return to where alot of this journey began for me! My office is in my old highschool, and what an honor to help young artists as they navigate the beginings of a journey I started here so many years ago.

Thank you for joining us for the third production of our second season here at Notre Dame College! We are happy to see so many familiar faces, of supporters who have been with us for many of the years along the way, some since the very first show! We are also happy to discover so many new faces and new members from our now expanded community of supporters in 'the land'! We are part of a rich theatre arts "ensemble" and arts community in Northeast Ohio and are excited for what this next chapter holds!

Mother Courage and Her Children is a very powerful play. Considered one of Brecht's most important works, it is also considered one of the greatest plays of the twentieth century. It lays bare some very significant world issues, while also exploring the bonds of fear, friendship, love, loss and family amoung those who have paid the heaviest price for war. It seems to me, the true cost of all war falls on those the least able to afford it, making this play as relevant today as when it was written. Will the war machine continue to consume us and roll ever forward... Or is there still a hope for peaceful resolutions to conflict?

Will our global community work together to create this unpresidented change?

I am also happy to be a part of creating the opportunity for such a wonderful group of Cleveland actors to shine as the wonderful artists they are!! A production like **Mother Courage and Her Children** requires the work of a true ensemble, and what a beautiful ensemble family of artists this show has created!

I wish them all the best for a fantastic run!

Thank you for continuing to be a part of our Ensemble family! Enjoy the show! Celeste Cosentino, Executive Artistic Director

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# **MOTHER COURAGE** AND HER CHILDREN By Bertolt Brecht Translated by Tony Kushner :: Music Composition by Duke Special

**Co-Directors ::** Ian Wolfgang Hinz & Rebecca Moselev Production Stage Manager :: Kava Sandel **Costume Design** :: Katie Wells & Rebecca Moselev Set & Lighting Design :: Ian Hinz **Props/Sound Design** :: Rebecca Moseley Dramaturg :: Danielle Bennett

#### :: The Cast ::

Laura Rauh (Mother Courage)

Joseph Milan (Cook), Dan Zalevsky (Chaplain), Kyle Huff (Singer), Leah P. Smith (Yvette). Kierstan Kathleen Conway (Kattrin). Michael Montanus (Swiss Cheese), Santino Montanez (Eilif) Ensemble: Emily Terry (U/S Mother Courage), Jabri Little (U/S Swiss Cheese) Keenan Carosielli (U/S Eilif), Ariana Starkman, Kelly Dunn, Mattie Blick, & Liam Zalevsky

**Time/Place:** 

Ostensibly a "chronical of the Thirty Years War" from 1624-1636, but really...any war, anywhere, at any time.

**Run Time:** 

Act One: 1hr & 30min. Act Two: Ihr. -There will be one ten minute intermission-

**Content Advisory:** Strong language, themes, gunshot sounds and simulated violence.

Presented with the cooperation of the Heirs of Bertolt Brecht.

PLEASE NOTE:

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## Who's who in the Cast:



Laura Rauh (Mother Courage) (she/her) is thrilled to be returning to the Ensemble stage after performing as The Other Woman in The River , as Mariya/ Mrs. Petrovna in Ensemble's award winning production of **Describe the Night**, and, almost a decade ago, in **All This Intimacy**. She has also played in many wonderful Cleveland and Chicago stage and screen productions, including **King** Henry VIII, The Maids, No Exit, Independence & Miracle on 34th Street. Studies include Second City, Cleveland Play House, Steppenwolf Theatre, and a BFA from Ohio University. She is very grateful to Ensemble Theatre and her wonderful boys and husband for support.



Joseph Milan (The Cook) (he/him) is thrilled to return to Ensemble Theatre! He extends his heartfelt appreciation to his fellow cast and crew. Joe's recent stage appearances were in "A Fugitive's Lesson" and "Wenceslas Square" for Ceasar's Forum, "Alabama Story" and "The Hairy Ape" at Ensemble Theatre, "Candlelight Hypothesis" for Cleveland Public Theatre, and "Hamlet" for The Cleveland Shakespeare Festival. Please be kind and creative, seek knowledge, and treasure the arts.



**Dan Zalevsky (The Chaplain) (he/him)** is thrilled to return to the Ensemble Theatre stage in **Mother Courage**, having previously seen in Ensemble's productions of **Clybourne Park** (Karl/Steve) and **The River** (The Man). Dan has a BA in Theatre from the University of Northern Colorado. New York credits: Vital Theatre's The Tempest (Trinculo), Emerging Artists Theatre's The Gay Naked Play (Dan), founding member/writer/performer with the award-winning sketch comedy group, Fearsome (Upright Citizen's Brigade Theatre and the People's Improv Theatre, NYC). Cleveland theatre credits: Mercury Theatre's Clue (Professor Plum) as well as their reading of Lost in Yonkers (Uncle Louie), Heights Youth Theatre's alumni production of **Chitty Chitty Bang Bang** (Boris). Dan would like to thank his amazing wife, Claudia for her support and strength. This would not be possible without her. Thanks to Liam Claire and Hank for their energy, humor and love.

Kyle Huff (The Singer) (he/him) is blessed to have the opportunity to return to Ensemble for Mother Courage where he was seen in their award winning 2022 production of Describe the Night (Felix.) Kyle has been lucky enough to be an active participant in Cleveland theaters including Beck Center, WRP, The Cleveland Shakespeare Festival, and Ensemble since 2012. Most recently, he played Polixenes in Western Reserve Playhouse's production of **A Winter's** Tale. He is excited to work on another Bertolt Brecht script with such a wonderful company of artists. He would like to thank everyone who puts their heart and soul into bringing the magic of theatre to life.



Leah Paige Smith (Yvette) (she/her) is so excited to return to Ensemble's stage in Mother Courage. Previous roles at Ensemble include Rosie in Slow Dance on the Killing Ground, Tanya in Jerusalem, and Abra Bacon in East of Eden. Leah has just earned her MFA in Acting from the University of Arkansas where she played roles such as Hedda in Hedda Gabler, Coco Wawa in THIS BITCH, Ocean in Ride the Cyclone, Huldey in The Moors, Catherine in Love's Labour's Lost, and Gail Portman in In The Book Of. Other professional credits include Trinculo in **The Tempest** and Margaret in **Much Ado about Nothing** (Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre), Mrs. Fezziwig and others in **A Christmas Carol**, Big Kid in Matilda the Musical, Caroline u/s in Detroit '67, and Leigh u/s in At the Wedding (TheatreSquared), Kate Monster in Avenue Q (Blank Canvas Theater), Tessie Tura in Gypsy (Beck Center for the Arts), and Leah in Michael Stanley Superstar (Last Call Cleveland). Gratitude and

love to my family and my GDB: all my heart.



Kierstan Kathleen Conway (Kattrin) (she/her) is thrilled to make her debut at Ensemble Theatre! She is a graduate from Cleveland State University with a BA in Theatre and French. Her collegiate credits include: Richard III (Richard III), The Moors (Moor Hen), Sweeney Todd (Ensemble, u/s Mrs. Lovett), and Into the Woods (Florinda). Additional training includes: Summer Intensive with Shakespeare & Company, and French Theatre Performance with IES Abroad in Nantes, France. Since graduating she has performed at Clague Playhouse, French Creek Theatre, and Borderlight Fringe Festival. Kierstan is a teaching artist at Beck Center for the Arts and Dobama Theatre, a photographer, and a dialect coach. Many thanks to her friends, family, and Noah for their patience, love and support!



Michael J. Montanus (Swiss Cheese) (he/him) is a professional actor, stage manager, and tall guy for hire. He recently moved to Cleveland from Boise, Idaho where he earned his BA in Theatre Arts from Boise State University. Michael is thrilled to be making his Ensemble Theatre debut! Some of his other credits include Eddie, **Trouble in Mind** (Seat of the Pants), Isabella, **Measure for Measure** (Cleveland Shakespeare Festival), and the voice of Artie, **After the Blast** (Convergence Continuum). Thank you Mom. "I'll love you forever, I'll like you for always. As long as I'm living, my mother you'll be."

# Who's who in the cast (continued):



Santino Montanez (Eilif) (he/him) is proud to be making his return to Ensemble Theater in the role of Eilif. Santino has previously appeared at Ensemble in The Bloodless Jungle, The Hairy Ape, Mama Moon, Around the World in 80 Days, and in starring roles in The North Pool and Water By The Spoonful. Santino is a local actor who has been performing on stage for nearly 20 years. His most recent performances were as King Leontes in Shakespeare's Winter's Tale, Rageneau in Cyrano De Bergerac, and Theo Maske in The Underpants at Western Reserve Playhouse. When Santino is not performing he is likely engaged in one of his other passions which are cooking, tattooing, or spending time with his family and his three dogs. Santino is grateful to you, the audience. for allowing him to share this experience with vou.



Emily Terry (Ensemble, Mother Courage U/S) last appeared on the Ensemble Theater stage nearly a decade ago when she performed in several plays, including Charles Smith's Knock Me a Kiss and Orson Welles' Voodoo Macbeth. She is happy to join an Ensemble cast once again to take on a timely production of Mother Courage. Before the pandemic began, Emily performed in musicals at Cleveland's Near West Theater. She especially enjoyed playing the role of political activist Emma Goldman in their production of Sondheim's Assassins. Off stage, Emily is proud to be a working board member for the InterReligious Task Force on Central America & Colombia, a local non-profit that works to change US policies, consumer behaviors and corporate practices that threaten human dignity, damage the environment, and undermine justice domestically and internationally. Emily is supported in the work she does on and off stage by generous and loving family and friends.!



Ariana Starkman (Ensemble) (she/her) a Cleveland native, is delighted to be making her Ensemble Theatre debut. Recent/favorite credits include Tilly (She Kills Monsters), River (Appropriate), and Celeste (Real Maple Syrup). She has a BA in Theatre and Social Change and has spent significant amounts of time studying acting in Arezzo, Moscow, and London. Ariana is trained in ten stage combat weapons, is a Consent-Forward Artist with Intimacy Directors and Coordinators, and is a 200-hour level yoga instructor. As Program Manager for a Cleveland non-profit organization focused on somatics, Ariana values embodiment

and discovering ways our bodies tell stories. www.arianastarkman.com; IG: @ariana.starkman





Kelly Dunn (Ensemble)(she/her) is a theatre artist and arts administrator from Cleveland, OH who is passionate about the power theatre has as a tool for exploring, challenging, and changing the world around us. Kelly received a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from Bowling Green State University in 2019 where she specialized in Musical Theatre. Some of her favorite credits include The Cake (Barrington Stage Company), You Got Older, A Midsummer's Night's Dream, The Threepenny Opera, Diana of Dobson's, Twelfth Night, and Evelyn in Purgatory (Bowling Green State University). See you at the theatre! Instagram: @kelly\_a\_dunn

Mattie Blick (Ensemble) (she/her) is a recent graduate of the Kent State University theatre department and is so excited to be working with Ensemble Theatre for the first time! This spring she made her directorial debut codirecting Minds of Dolls, a black box show at Kent. She has recently been seen at Cleveland Playhouse in the CWRU MFA production of **The Tempest** (Alonsa), at Blank Canvas Theatre in both **The SpongeBob Musical** (Sardine/Plankton Dancer) and **The Last Starfighter** Musical (Marty/Miss July), and at the Kent State University Trumbull Theatre in **Romeo & Juliet** (Romeo) and **She Kills Monsters** (Lily/Lilith). Mattie would like to thank her Mom, Dad, Grace, Lucy, and her cat Diana for alwavs being there and believing in her.



Jabri Little (Ensemble/Swiss Cheese U/S) started acting at the tender age of 12. Once he saw his first play he knew his place in this life was on the the stage. Ever since he's immersed himself in the craft. After graduating from the illustrious Cleveland School of Arts studying under the late great Dr. Scott Miller. He spent time at Baldwin Wallace in the BFA program. He's now involved in the building of the craft of acting in the community of Cleveland with a non profit organization D.O.C studios. Prioritizing development, opportunity and community they hope to create an atmosphere where creativity and imagination are at the forefront. "Who said the sky was the limit, when there are more planets to seize"



Keenan Carosielli (Ensemble/Eilif U/S) is eager to make his first appearance at Ensemble Theater. Recently, Keenan had the pleasure of appearing in Cyrano de Bergerac as an ensemble member and 1970 as Casey Pedersen. He would like to thank August James Scarpelli for giving him the opportunity at Western Reserve Playhouse. Keenan would not be here without his loved ones and would like to thank his brother, sister, Aunt Tee, grandmother, father, and mother for all of their love. Finally, Keenan dedicates this performance to his grandfather,



Liam Zalevsky (Ensemble) (he/him)is honored to be a part of his first Ensemble Theatre production. His previous theatrical experience consists of running the soundboard for many shows at Heights Youth Theater. He has been playing classical and electric guitar for eight and a half years and is a founding member of the local Cleveland rock band **The Untitled Documents**. His other interests include fencing, in which he won the title of regional champion for his age group last year. He also loves playing D&D. He would like to thank Ian and Becca for his first professional theatrical opportunity.

## Meet the Crew :

**Ian Hinz (Co-Director/Set & Lighting Design)** :: (he/him/his) is a graduate of Ohio University. Ian has worked professionally as a producer, award winning director, Light, Set, & Projection Designer, director of operations and theater educator for over twenty years in Ohio and New York. He is co-founder of the Ensemble StageWrights' workshop, two-time winner of the Cleveland Critics' Circle Best Director award and served as Artistic Director and Operations Manager for the city of Cleveland Heights' historic Cain Park Amphitheater. He has worked in operations for The Ohio State University Jerome Schottenstein Center and the Cleveland State University Department of Music as a stage production specialist. He has produced off-off-broadway at the Gene Frankel Theater and worked in business development in the tech startup industry in New York City. He was the Executive Director of Raise the Roof for the Arts which operates The Historic Sidney Theatre in Sidney, Ohio from 2018 to 2023. He is excited for the next chapter as he steps into his new role as the General Manager of Cain Park for the City Cleveland Heights.

Rebecca Moseley (Co-Director/Co-Costumes/Sound/Props/General Manager) :: (she/her/hers) has worked in and around theatre for many years in a variety of capacities, and is happy to continue to do so for the second season at Ensemble's new home at Notre Dame College. In addition to serving as Ensemble's General Manager, she has served as the Resident Production Stage Manager for a number of Ensemble shows since 2013, including Describe the Night, Angels in America, A Raisin in the Sun, The Penelopiad, Intimate Apparel, The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail, Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo, the Iceman Cometh, Anna Christie, Death of a Salesman, and many, many more. She directed Ensemble's award winning sesaon opener Lungs, and has co-directed Run, Kingsbury, Run, East of Eden, and most recently Assistant Directed Norte Dame College's production of She Kills Monsters. She has been lucky enough to be on stage many times as well, most recently in Ensemble's 2023 production of The River. Long story short, she's been quite busy this past decade, theatrically speaking, and wouldn't have it any other way. She thanks Ian and Celeste for building and nurturing a theater that provides a constant supply of great scripts, and wonderful people to bring them to life, her family for their love and support, and her husband Kyle for always believing in the magic.

Katie Wells(Costume Design) (she/her/hers) Katie is thrilled to make her design debut at Ensemble Theatre where she was last seen ON stage as Urzula in Describe The Night, which won Best Non-Musical Production of 2022 for Cleveland Critic's Circle. After attending CSU with a Scholarship in Costume Design, her work has been seen on stages and screens through out OH, MD and NY. Over the last decade she has held over 6 design residencies in Northeast Ohio. She has won several awards for her costume designs including a Certificate of Honor from the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts. Also an actor, she is a proud Actor's Equity Membership Candidate. She would like to thank lan, Becca and Celeste for this opportunity. Thank you for supporting local theatre!

Kaya Sandel (Production Stage Manager) (she/her/hers) has been involved in theatre since her freshman year of high school. Although she has spent many years in different theaters, she has found her new home here with Ensemble Theatre. This will be her second show with Ensemble after stage managing the award winning Lungs earlier this season, and she could not be more proud! She is so grateful to her friends and family for all of their encouragement and support and would like to thank everyone involved in creating this beautiful show. Enjoy!



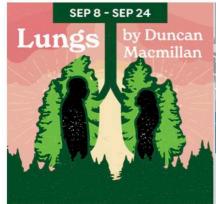
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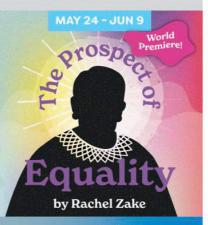


by Athol Fugard, John Kani, & Winston Ntshona

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Children

by Bertolt Brecht Translated by Tony Kushner







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## Co-Directors Note:

Set against the tumultuous backdrop of war, "**Mother Courage**" unveils the relentless struggles and sacrifices of its titular character as she maneuvers through a world torn asunder by conflict. This play demands your engagement; it is not a passive observer but a call to reflect critically on the harsh realities of war, capitalism, and the complexities of human nature.

What is war to the empire? The destruction of humans? What is a human to the war, a casualty? What is it when it is casual for those that visit it upon those being destroyed? Is it the same war for the oligarchs and the child? For the petite bourgeois and the Amazon worker? Is it the same war from the couch as it is in the refugee camp? Do you care? At all? War is the business of late stage capitalism.

Our data point in the timeline of human history tells us we are the wealthiest civilization that has ever existed, yet we face crippling economic inequality, lack of access to healthcare, unsustainable education and housing costs, all while the oceans rise and crops fail causing the most extreme climate refugee crisis ever recorded. In a country of over 300 million citizens the best we can come up with is a choice between Joe Biden and Donald Trump to lead us through tumultuous necessary change that will secure our children's future. But no matter, the empire continues the unfettered consumption of the future. Something is terribly wrong.

Bertolt Brecht wrote "Mother Courage and her Children" as Nazi Germany was ravaging Europe. Again, we have war in Europe, authoritarianism has returned around the globe. If we were able to time travel to our adolescence and try to explain what we have become, we would be laughed at and mocked. There was indeed a time when it was possible to imagine peace. Mother Courage is a classic because it forces us to confront that imagination. Some have said it is the greatest anti-war play ever written, others the greatest play of the twentieth century, wherever it may fall on that continuum what is certain is that it is a visceral wail to be heeded in times of peace and even more desperately today.

While we embrace Brecht's technique of alienation, designed to provoke analytical thought and detachment, it is essential to acknowledge the potent emotional undercurrent that runs through the veins of "Mother Courage and Her Children." Even as we strive for intellectual engagement, the strength of Brecht's storytelling and the poignant portrayal of characters allow emotion to break through. It is hard not to feel yourself impacted by the profound choices forced upon Mother Courage, feeling the weight of her decisions as they resonate in the depths of human experience.

We hope this production sparks dialogue and introspection. Thank you for joining us on this exploration of Brecht's compelling narrative, as we strive to honor his vision and provoke meaningful conversations about the human condition.

#### -Becca and Ian, 2/5/2024

# About the Playwright/Play:

#### <u>Bertolt Brecht and</u> <u>"Mother Courage and Her Children"</u>

One of the 20th century's most influential playwrights, Bertolt Brecht was born in Augsburg, Germany on February 10, 1898. Brecht attended the University of Munich to study medicine and served as a medical orderly for the German army in World War I. During this time, Brecht became disillusioned by the horrors of war and began writing politically charged plays.



Brecht was influenced by the writings of Karl Marx, a German sociologist with radical views on **capitalism**. Such Marxist ideas were strongly opposed by Adolf Hitler and the Nazis. As Hitler rose to power, Brecht's plays were banned. Ultimately Brecht fled Germany, first to European nations and then the United States. Brecht continued to write while in exile and produced plays that were critical of the Nazi regime and the world's political situation. Of these plays, the anti-war **Mother Courage and Her Children** became one of his best-known and critically acclaimed works.

Brecht returned to Germany in 1947 and, two years later, formed the Berliner Ensemble, a theater company in Berlin. Brecht continued to write and direct plays in Germany until he died of heart failure on August 14, 1956. Mother Courage and Her Children is one of many plays Brecht wrote as a response to the rise of fascism and the Nazi Party. When Adolf Hitler invaded Poland in 1939, Brecht and collaborator, Margarete Steffin, wrote the play in little over a month, in what some critics referred to as a white heat. Brecht chose to set the play during the Thirty Years' War, which happened between 1618 and 1648. Originally based in a conflict between Catholics and Protestants in the divided Holy Roman Empire, the war expanded as political motives brought new nations into the war until it consumed most of Europe (as World War II would soon after Mother Courage and Her Children was written). The disruption of industry and ongoing costs of war gutted government funds. Soldiers (like Mother Courage's son, Eilif) were expected to fund themselves through plunder, bringing devastation to entire populations as armies moved across the continent. It was one of the longest, most damaging conflicts in European History. Spanning 1624-1636, the play is made up of twelve scenes, each separated by a year or two. The play portrays the horrors of war and the idea that being a good person is not rewarded in corrupt times.

Ensemble is graciously supported













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#### **Special Thanks To:**

Notre Dame College Performing Arts Department, Aaron Elersich, Becca Moseley, Sam Landgraf, The City of South Euclid, The Ebony Bobcat Network, Tom Moore, Martin Cosentino, Ian Hinz, Austin Hinz, August Scarpelli, The Board of Ensemble Theatre, & Kyle Huff.

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