



## CREW BIOS

**Sarah Shanks (Director/Costume Designer/Lighting Designer/The Witch and Granny/Giant/Storyteller/Puppeteer Understudy)** is excited and scared to step back into the woods and into her KTG directorial debut. Her first experience in this twisted version of the fairytales she grew up with was as Jack's Mother in high school. She has recently served as Assistant Director for *How to Be a Respectable Junkie*, Music Director for *Cabaret*, and Assistant Music Director for *Rent* at KTG, Music Director for JCTC's production of *Seussical*, and Director of the 2019 production of *The Rocky Horror Show* and *Dog Sees God* at JCTC. You can also find her serving as Front of House Manager for most KTG productions. She hopes the woods reinforce what humanity can accomplish when we work together and support one another. She would like to thank her chosen family, friends, and Ben for their unending support and understanding as she has navigated the multiple facets of her life to prioritize this show.

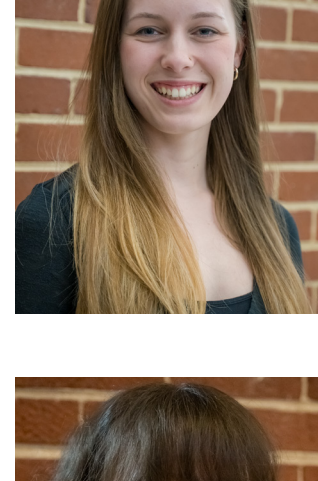
**Ryan Tackett Wardell (Music Director/Rapunzel's Prince and Cinderella's Prince/Wolf Understudy)** has appeared throughout the United States as a recitalist and chorister. His previous stage roles have included Frank (*Die Fledermaus*), The Beast (*Beauty and the Beast*), Lurch (*The Addams Family*), Ulysses S. Grant (*Mother of Us All*), Littore (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*), Masetto (*Don Giovanni*), Carl-Magnus (*A Little Night Music*), and Valentin (*Faust*). In the fall of 2019, Mr. Wardell served as a guest conductor and teaching artist with Morehead State University Opera Works. He previously served as the Artistic Director for *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine Outdoor Drama* in Big Stone Gap, VA from 2019 - 2022. As a music director and vocal coach, Ryan has worked on productions of *Little Shop of Horrors*, *The Secret Garden*, *Sweeney Todd*, *The Magic Flute*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Bright Star*, and numerous others. Mr. Wardell has performed extensively with the Cincinnati Vocal Arts Ensemble as both a soloist and chorister; performing the baritone solos in the regional premiere of Jake Runestad's *The Hope of Loving* under Craig Hella Johnson. Mr. Wardell received the Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees in vocal performance from Morehead State University, with additional graduate work at the University of North Texas. He is the Co-owner/Instructional Director for The Music School and Shop in Norton, VA. Mr. Wardell is currently on the teaching faculty at the University of Pikeville and the University of Virginia's College at Wise, where he is the director of the Musical Theater Workshop.

**Christian Coger (Assistant Director/Set Design/Baker Understudy)** is honored to serve as the Technical Director for Kingsport Theatre Guild. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies from East Tennessee State University, where he studied Theatre and Film. Christian is happy to call himself a true generalist within the theatre, one who keeps his hands in a bit of everything as the occasion warrants. He began his theatrical journey at the young age of 7 and has been enamored with its magic ever since. He is proud to have served local theatres across the region in all manner of positions both on-stage and off. From Actor to Stagehand to Director and more, Christian has also worked professionally as an Audio Engineer in New York City and locally. To date, Christian has helped to produce over 50 local theatrical productions including William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, *How I Learned to Drive* by Paula Vogel, *Grease* by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey, *Rent* by Jonathon Larson, and *Avenue Q* by Jeff Whitty.

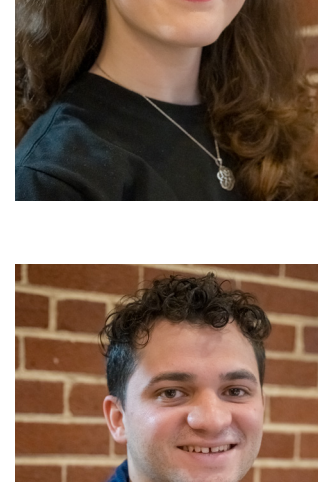
**Derek Smithpeters (Special Effects)** is a local to Jonesborough and has worked in the theatre arts for the last 20 years. Working both on and off stage, as an actor, costume designer, makeup artist, and special effects artist, he has done productions such as: *The Wizard of Oz*, *Shrek the Musical*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *The 39 Steps*, *Young Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, and so many more. Derek would like to thank his long time friend Sarah Shanks for asking him to be part of this show's production team, and he hopes there will be many more shows to work on together in the future.

**Brooke Bennett (Makeup Specialist)** is so proud to be a part of KTG as a makeup specialist and a performer. Theatre has always been a part of her life and hopefully always will be. Some of her favorite roles have been Phantom (*The Rocky Horror Show*), The Grinch (*Seussical*), and Rosie (*Cabaret*). A special thanks to her mom and dad for always supporting her in all she does and a shoutout to her best friend for always being there.

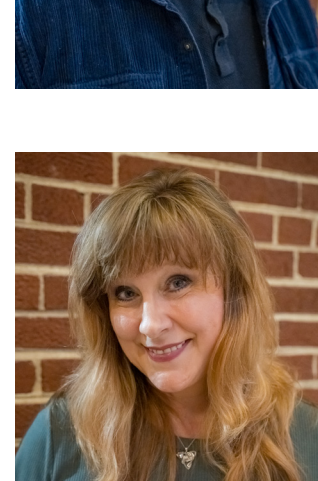
## CAST BIOS



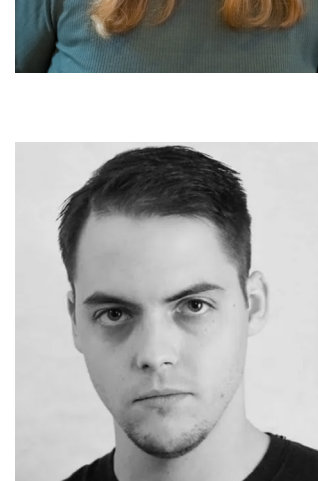
**Hannah Bare (Rapunzel)** first went into the woods as a child, never imagining growing up to be a part of the music and chaos. Following the role of Guthrie in *July House*, this is Hannah's second appearance in a KTG show. She would like to thank Sarah Shanks and Christian Coger for working with her again and growing her abilities.



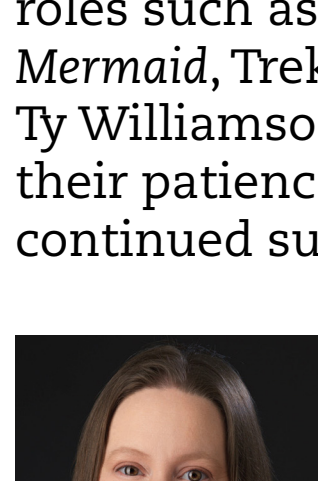
**Killen Boito (Snow White/Storyteller/Puppeteer/Steward and Little Red Ridinghood Understudy)** is excited to return for another show at KTG. She was previously on stage as Oz (*We Will Rock You*), Florence (*Bright Star*), and Ensemble (*The Rocky Horror Show*). She is thankful to work and share the stage with such a talented cast. Enjoy the show!



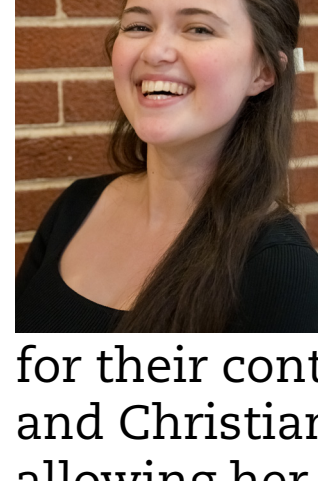
**Carlos Candelas Torres (The Narrator/Jack Understudy)** is doing his first show with KTG. He is excited to play a part of this show. *Into the Woods* is one of his favorite musicals and he can't wait to share this version of the show. That said, he would like to apologize to his new co-workers for always singing in the office during work hours.



**Neysa Childers (Cinderella's Stepmother)** is a Kingsport native, and is honored to work with such a talented director, music director, cast and crew on *Into the Woods*! You may have recently seen her as a phantom in KTG's *The Rocky Horror Show*. She was also stage manager for the 2024 debut of *Who Done Did It?* with BKCT in Elizabethton. She would like to thank Sam, Riley, and Andy for their continuous support and encouragement.



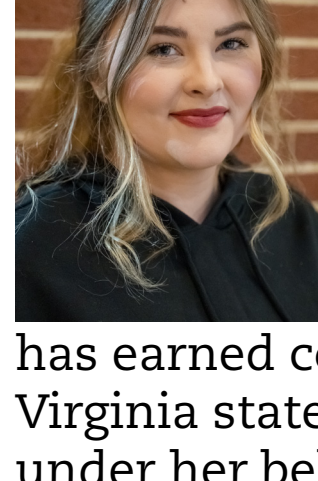
**Christian Coger (Baker)** is excitedly nervous to return to the stage at KTG. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies from East Tennessee State University, where he studied Theatre and Film. Christian began his theatrical journey at the young age of seven and has been enamored with its magic ever since. He is proud to have served local theatres across the region in all manner of positions both on-stage and off. You may have seen Christian in roles such as Riff Raff in *The Rocky Horror Show*, Chef Louis in Disney's *The Little Mermaid*, Trekkie Monster in *Avenue Q*, Audrey II in *Little Shop of Horrors*, or Ty Williamson in *Sordid Lives*. He would like to thank the cast and crew for their patience and belief, as well as his family, friends, and girlfriend for their continued support! #IBOW



**Karen Elb (Jack's Mother)** is a multi talented individual. She has lit dozens of shows and built numerous sets in various theatres. Karen also enjoys directing. Favorite past roles include Nanyehi in *Nanyehi* and Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Karen previously worked in professional theatres in a variety of places and roles. Karen lives in Johnson City with her magnificent husband and their awesome son. She's delighted to be performing with KTG again and hopes you enjoy the show!



**Nan Estes (Little Red Ridinghood)** is so happy to go *Into the Woods* with some incredible friends for this production! She recently directed and costume designed *Charlotte's Web* on KTG's main stage last season. Some of Nan's favorite acting credits include Audrey (*Little Shop of Horrors* - KTG), Flounder / Ariel US (*The Little Mermaid* - JCTC), and Gertrude McFuzz (*Seussical* - JCTC). She would like to thank her family, friends, and longtime boyfriend, Christian for their continuous love and support. She would also like to thank Sarah, Ryan, and Christian for trusting her with a role that she has adored for years and allowing her to eat a bunch of baked goods and sweets onstage. And thank YOU for supporting the arts and joining us for a moment in the woods! Enjoy the show!



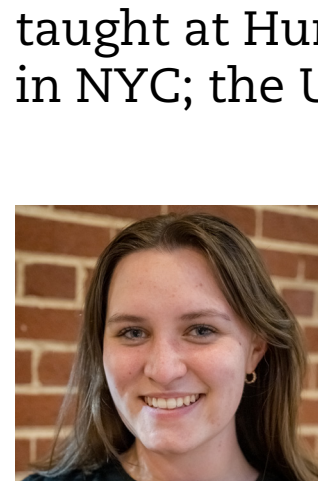
**Maximus Gaines (Jack)** is a student at The University of Virginia's College at Wise. Majoring in Music, he performs as a percussionist. Maximus serves as captain for the UVA Wise Marching Highland Cavaliers, The Highland Cavaliers Pep Band, and The Highland Winds. With his outstanding background of being first chair in Honors Band, second chair of All District Band, and All-State Honors Band, he shows off his stick skills. Maximus was cast in *Godspell* as well as having performed excerpts from *A Little Shop of Horrors*, *Addams Family*, and *A Little Night Music*.



**Elizabeth Hall (Florinda/Baker's Wife Understudy)** is from Coeburn, Virginia, and is presently a sophomore at the University of Virginia's College at Wise. Majoring in Ethnobotany, Elizabeth seamlessly blends her passion for the natural world with the creative expression found on stage. Her previous performances include roles in *Beauty and the Beast*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Mother Hicks*, and *The Spirit of Life* amongst numerous others. Elizabeth has earned considerable accolades in the competitive theatre world with five Virginia state championships for one act and a state championship in forensics under her belt. In addition to her academic and theatrical endeavors, Elizabeth contributes her talents to the Media Services at UVA Wise, further honing her skills in a range of media and communication platforms. Her commitment to growth in the performing arts is exemplified by her current studies under the guidance of Ryan Wardell as part of the UVA-Wise Musical Theater Workshop, where she continues to refine her abilities.



**Laura Harper (Lucinda/Cinderella Understudy)** is very excited to be back on stage for her second show with KTG! She was previously seen as a Phantom during 2023's *The Rocky Horror Show*, and is very eager to get to work with the most wonderful people she got to know last year. She wants to thank her family and best friend as always for supporting and loving her both on and off the stage!



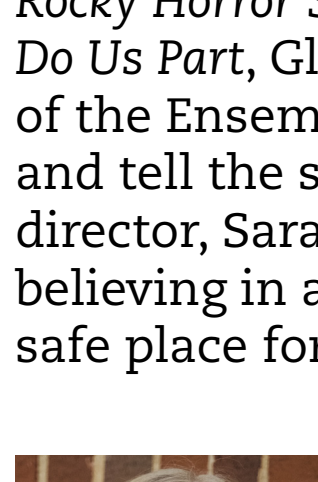
**Stephen K. Huff (Mysterious Man)** is thrilled to be working with the cast and production team of *Into the Woods*! He was last seen on stage at KTG as Buddy in *We Will Rock You*. Other recent stage credits include Aubrey Verdeen in *The Red Velvet Cake Wars* and Ensemble in *Bright Star* at KTG, Herr Schultz in *Cabaret* at the University of South Florida, and George in *I'll Be Back Before Midnight* at Ensemble Stage in Banner Elk, NC. A native of Tennessee, he has been seen in Memphis theaters as Bruce in *Fun Home*, Baptista in *Kiss Me Kate*, Jaques in *As You Like It*, Jack Jerome in *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, and Lord Capulet in *Romeo & Juliet*. Stephen holds a Ph.D. in Theatre from the City University of New York and has taught at Hunter, Queens, Bronx Community, and Marymount Manhattan Colleges in NYC; the University of Memphis; and the University of South Florida.



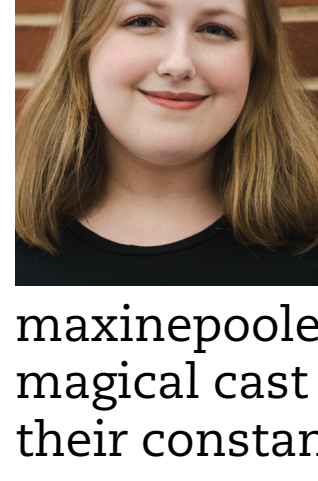
**Emma King (The Witch)** is new to KTG and is so excited to be a part of *Into the Woods*! Emma was originally introduced to theatre in Cookeville, TN. She wants to thank her husband Blake for running lines, supporting her, and always encouraging her to be her most musical self.



**Rebecca Nelson (Cinderella's Mother/Storyteller/Puppeteer/Jack's Mother Understudy)** is so excited to be back on stage with KTG! You may have seen her in *Boeing, Boeing*, *Red Velvet Cake War*, *White Christmas*, or *Charlotte's Web*. She loves spending time in the theatre but can otherwise be found homeschooling her 4 boys, working with her business, Creative Cat Graphics, or serving in Preschool at her church. She is so thankful for the opportunity to learn and grow as part of this amazing cast and crew! And she would like to thank her amazing husband who holds down the fort at home!



**Helen Pennington (Sleeping Beauty/Storyteller/Puppeteer/Florinda, Lucinda, Rapunzel, and Cinderella's Mother Understudy)** is very happy and thankful to be a part of *Into the Woods*! They are so excited to be able to finally perform one of her favorite shows that she adored growing up. Helen is a native from Pennington Gap, Virginia, where she started acting with Lee Players when she was 17. Their love of theatre has only grown from that moment on, especially with meeting so many new people that she can call friends, and a place she lovingly calls her home. Some of her favorite roles and shows she's been in include: Storyteller/Sleeping Beauty in *Into the Woods*, Phantom/Ensemble in *The Rocky Horror Show*, ACD/Ensemble in *We Will Rock You*, Lulu Dewep in *Till Death Do Us Part*, Gloria Gulock in a three-act play called *Everybody Loves Opal*, and part of the Ensemble in *Young Frankenstein!* Helen is so elated to bring this story to life and tell the story in a way it's not been before. They also want to thank their director, Sarah Shanks, for trusting them with the roles given to them, and always believing in and pushing them. And they'd like to thank KTG for always being a safe place for all who are a part of it and being a place they can always call home.

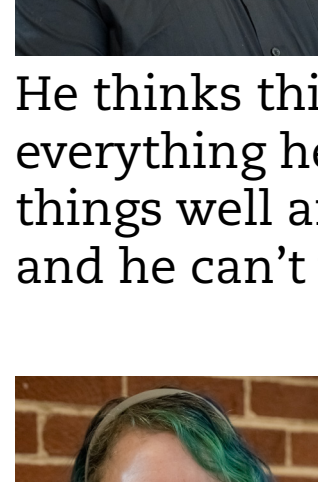


**Maxine Poole (Baker's Wife)** is overjoyed to be stepping into the shoes of one of her dream roles in one of her favorite musicals. Maxine studied at Emory & Henry College, where she received a BFA in Musical Theatre. Some of her favorite roles include Maureen (*RENT*), Janet (*The Rocky Horror Show*), Margo (*Bright Star*), Lulu (*Cabaret*), Marlene (*Top Girls*) and Blanche (*A Street Named Desire*). More of her theatrical work can be found at

maxinepoole.wixsite.com/2024. She is honored to be working alongside this magical cast and crew. She would like to thank her family and friends for their constant love and support, and her wonderful girlfriend Mack, for her encouragement and love.



**Joseph Rogers (Steward/Cinderella's Father Understudy)** is proud to be in his first show with Kingsport Theatre Guild and hopes everyone enjoys the show! Joseph is usually seen on the stage at the Jonesborough Repertory Theatre and was last seen in *Crazy for You*, *Anything Goes*, and the *Christmas USA* show.

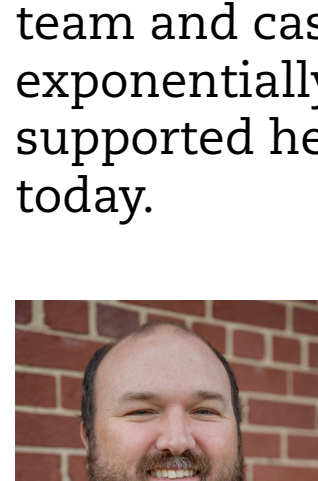


**Elijah Roucka (Rapunzel's Prince)** is 29 and has been in love with theatrical music for two decades. It's been an amazing ride that's taken him to 13 countries and 43 states, playing and learning all along the way. These adventures have been a huge part of who he is, both personally and professionally. But that's not all – he's also spent three years working in admin and HR, balancing spreadsheets and staff meetings with sheet music and symphonies.

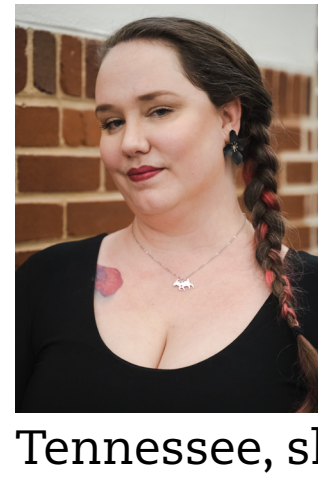
He thinks this mix of music and management really shapes how he approaches everything he does. Whether he is on the stage or in the office, he's all about doing things well and making a difference. It's been a wild and wonderful journey so far, and he can't wait to see what comes next.



**Sarah E. Sanders (Storyteller/Puppeteer/Snow White and Sleeping Beauty Understudy)** is overjoyed to be a part of this production! She has previously performed as Jack (*July House*) and a phantom (*The Rocky Horror Show*) here at KTG and as Sissy (*We Did It Together*) in Jonesborough at the McKinnon Center. She enjoys bringing stories to life and has learned so much through this process. She thanks her family and friends for their support and encouragement. Enjoy the show!



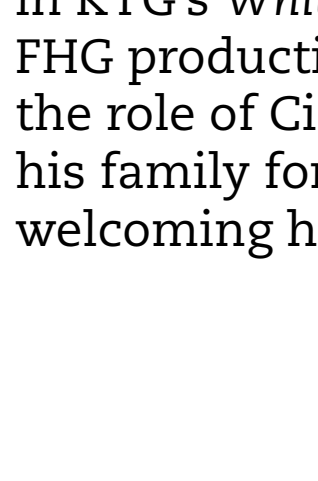
**Enelisa Sutton (Cinderella)** is a young artist that has been performing for over 14 years. She is thrilled to be returning to KTG's stage. Previous roles here include: Maggie (*Jake's Women*), Scaramouche (*We Will Rock You*), Texas (*Cabaret*), Spirit (*Bright Star*), and Alexi Darling (*Rent*). She recently managed *July House* on KTG's second stage. She has also done major productions with Theatre Bristol such as: Chava (*Fiddler on the Roof*), Julie Understudy (*Elf the Musical*), and Lady Tabby Belch (*Twelfth Night*). She is beyond excited to have had this opportunity to work with so many talented people on the production team and cast. It has been an amazing experience and she has grown exponentially as an actress and person. She wants to thank everyone who has supported her on her journey and given her the opportunity to be where she is today.



**David Taylor (Cinderella's Father/Mysterious Man Understudy)** is thrilled to be returning to the woods, giants or no giants. You may have previously seen David in roles such as Baker in *Into the Woods*, Uncle Billy in *It's A Wonderful Life*, Uncle Henry in *Wizard of Oz*, and Eddie/Dr. Scott in *The Rocky Horror Show*. He would like to thank his wife, Jenny, and his children for their love and support.



**Jessica White (Granny/Giant's Wife/Storyteller/Puppeteer/Cinderella's Stepmother Understudy)** has been performing since childhood with musical theatre, choral and acapella group performances. Once in college, she added to that ballroom dancing and the circus arts. After college, she moved to Boston where she began a 12-year love affair with burlesque and incorporated that in with her singing and circus. Since moving to Tennessee, she has been focusing primarily on singing vintage jazz and is so excited to be a part of her third KTG show!!



**Chris Williams (Cinderella's Prince/Big Bad Wolf)** graduated high school in East Texas where he was a part of *Into the Woods* as the Big Bad Wolf, *The Wizard of Oz* as various characters, in the choir, and in the band where he played multiple instruments. He is a US Air Force veteran, having traveled to many countries across the globe, and ended up in East Tennessee 4 years ago with his wife of 23 years and 3 children. Chris portrayed the dream role of his life as Bob Wallace in KTG's *White Christmas* in 2022 and as George Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life* with FHG productions in 2023. Coming back to the role of the Big Bad Wolf and adding the role of Cinderella's Prince brings it all full circle. Chris would like to thank his family for supporting him in all of his hobbies and also the KTG family for welcoming him with open arms.

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## Get Involved at KTG

The Kingsport Theatre Guild has many ways you can support us other than monetary donations. We need help with set construction, acting, ushering, publicity, concessions, and so much more!

**Website**  
[kingsporttheatre.com](http://kingsporttheatre.com)

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