



"This show was pure magic. Cookeville was so lucky to experience something this special."  
-Jennifer Welch, Cookeville Children's Theatre

#### SYNOPSIS:

8-YEAR-OLD SHEILA AND HER FRIENDS BUILD AN AMAZING FORT ONE SUMMER, BUT EVERYTHING CHANGES WHEN IT CAPTURES THE ATTENTION OF A COYOTE DRIVING A PICKUP TRUCK. THE KIDS SOON FIND THEMSELVES DEEP IN THE DESERT, FACING THE COUNCIL OF HOWLS, THE STING BRIGADE AND THE CHALLENGE OF A LIFETIME.

"CACTUS" IS A ONE-OF-A-KIND, WHIRLWIND ADVENTURE ABOUT HOW WE AFFECT THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE ANIMALS WITH WHOM WE SHARE THE PLANET, TOLD BY ONE ACTOR WITH A CRATE FULL OF JUNK AND AN AUDIENCE FULL OF IMAGINATION.



#### STATS:

-OBJECT PUPPETRY

-WORKS IN A VARIETY OF SPACES, INCLUDING LIBRARIES, CLASSROOMS, BOOKSTORES, THEATERS; NO SPECIAL LIGHTING OR TECH REQUIRED

-PERFORMER WILL NEED A TABLE

-RUN-TIME: 55 MINUTES INCLUDING PRE-SHOW SPEECH/ACTIVITY

-BEST FOR SMALL GROUPS OR 100 PEOPLE MAX., AGES 5 AND UP

-THEMES: COLLABORATION, ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS, EMPATHY, CREATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING



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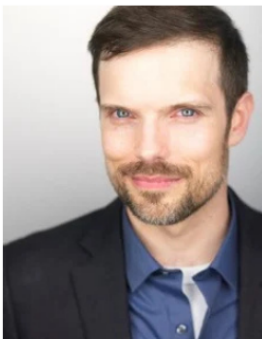


## THE ARTISTS



ERIC COBLE (PLAYWRIGHT) WAS BORN IN EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND AND RAISED ON THE NAVAJO AND UTE RESERVATIONS IN NEW MEXICO AND COLORADO. HIS SCRIPTS HAVE BEEN PRODUCED ON BROADWAY (TONY- AND PULITZER-NOMINATED *THE VELOCITY OF AUTUMN*), OFF-BROADWAY (*BRIGHT IDEAS*), IN ALL FIFTY STATES OF THE U.S., AND ON SEVERAL CONTINENTS. HIS PLAYS FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES INCLUDE AWARD-WINNING ADAPTATIONS OF LOIS LOWRY'S *THE GIVER* AND *GATHERING BLUE*, *SHERLOCK HOLMES: THE BAKER STREET IRREGULARS*, *THE STORM IN THE BARN*, AND HAVE BEEN PRODUCED THROUGHOUT THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONALLY INCLUDING IN DISNEY WORLD (*JEDI TRAINING: TRIAL OF THE TEMPLE*), AS WELL AS THE KENNEDY CENTER, ARENA STAGE, ACTORS THEATRE OF LOUISVILLE HUMANA FESTIVAL, HABIMA THEATRE (ISRAEL), AND PENTACION PRODUCTIONS (SPAIN). THIRTY-THREE OF HIS SCRIPTS HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED, AND HIS AWARDS INCLUDE THREE AATE DISTINGUISHED PLAY AWARDS, THE CHORPENNING PLAYWRITING AWARD FOR BODY OF WORK, THE CLEVELAND ARTS PRIZE, AND THE NATIONAL THEATRE CONFERENCE PLAYWRITING AWARD.

TIA SHEARER BASSETT (PERFORMER/PRODUCER) IS A THEATRE ARTIST WHO SPECIALIZES IN SOLO SHOWS, CHILDREN'S THEATRE, AND PLAYFUL THEATRE FOR GROWNUPS. SHE HAS BEEN A GRATEFUL MEMBER OF ONLY MAKE BELIEVE - PERFORMING INTERACTIVE THEATRE FOR CHILDREN IN HOSPITALS, CARE FACILITIES AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS - SINCE 2017. SHE ALSO PERFORMS SELF-PRODUCED WORK LIKE A POETIC ZOOM SHOW FEATURING HER SON'S TOYS. ACTING CREDITS INCLUDE: THE KENNEDY CENTER TYA (TWO NATIONAL TOURS OF *KNUFFLE BUNNY: A CAUTIONARY MUSICAL*, AS WELL AS THE PREMIERE OF IDRIS GOODWIN'S *FROM THE MOUTHS OF MONSTERS*), NASHVILLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE, THE SECOND CITY, IMAGINATION STAGE, BALTIMORE CENTER STAGE. SHE IS A DEVISING COMPANY MEMBER OF HAPPY THEATER, CO-CREATOR OF A WEB-SERIES STARRING HER LEOPARD GECKO: "EUGENE CHEESE GETS IT WRONG," FOUNDER AND HOST OF THE FROM-HOME FEST, LUCKY WIFE TO HER FAVORITE DIRECTOR, AND AN ADHD MOM TO AN AMAZING AUDHD KID.



MATT BASSETT (DIRECTOR) IS ALWAYS HAPPY TO WORK WITH HIS FAVORITE COLLABORATOR IN ART AND LIFE. MATT'S WORK AS A DIRECTOR AND PLAYWRIGHT HAS BEEN SEEN THROUGHOUT THE WASHINGTON, DC AREA AND RECOGNIZED WITH MULTIPLE HELEN HAYES AWARD NOMINATIONS, AS WELL AS AT THEATRES IN COLORADO, OHIO, TENNESSEE, AND PENNSYLVANIA. SOME OF MATT'S FAVORITE WORK HAS BEEN WITH HIS WIFE, TIA. FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SPECIFICALLY, THEY HAVE HELPED TO CREATE 12 ORIGINAL SHOWS BETWEEN THEM, AND HAVE BEEN PART OF ANOTHER 40+ PROFESSIONAL PRODUCTIONS. IN 2013, THEY WELCOMED THEIR SON TO THE WORLD, AND SINCE THEN, HAVE JOYFULLY CRAFTED THEATRE FOR THEIR SON'S AGE, FROM SHORT NONVERBAL SHOWS WHEN CHARLIE WAS A BABY AND TODDLER, TO PREVIEWING THIS VERY SHOW TO CHARLIE'S 4TH GRADE CLASS. MATT SERVED AS THEATRE DEPARTMENT CHAIR FOR METROPOLITAN SCHOOL OF THE ARTS IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA AND HAS BEEN ON THE FACULTIES OF MULTIPLE UNIVERSITIES AND THEATRES IN THE DC AREA SINCE 2010. TRAINING: MFA IN ACTING FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE. MATT LIVES IN TAKOMA PARK, MD, WITH HIS FAMILY.

## The Experience

"FROM THE FIRST MOMENT OF THE FIRST REHEARSAL WITH TIA, I KNEW I'D FOUND THE PERFECT ACTOR TO TELL MY TALE. HER PLAYFULNESS, LASER-FOCUS, WIT AND DEXTERITY - SHE EMBODIES EVERYTHING I WAS TRYING TO MANIFEST IN THIS STORY OF MAGIC."

-ERIC COBLE



"TIA SHEARER BASSETT IS SUCH AN INVENTIVE, ENERGETIC AND CONNECTED ACTOR. HER WORK IS FULL OF JOY AND HEART. SHE TAKES THE AUDIENCE ON A MAGICAL JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY AND DELIGHT."

-JULIA FLOOD

FORMER ARTISTIC DIRECTOR,  
METRO THEATER COMPANY

"THIS SHOW WAS PURE MAGIC. TIA SHEARER BASSETT BROUGHT A MIX OF PLAYFULNESS AND RAW EMOTION THAT PULLED US ALL-KIDS AND GROWN-UPS-INTO HER WORLD. MATT BASSETT'S DIRECTION GAVE THE STORY ROOM TO BREATHE AND SHINE. IT REMINDED US TO HOLD ON TO HOPE, COURAGE, AND CARE FOR THE PLANET. FROM AGES 3 TO 93, EVERYONE IN THE AUDIENCE LEFT TOUCHED AND INSPIRED."

-JENNIFER WELCH

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, COOKEVILLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE

"THIS SHOW WAS SUCH A DELIGHT! TIA ENDOWS AND PUPPETEERS SEEMINGLY RANDOM OBJECTS WITH SUCH SIMPLE YET RICH CHARACTERS AND IS AN ABSOLUTE JOY TO WATCH TELL A STORY."

-AUDIENCE MEMBER



"IT'S A GREAT PLAY ABOUT FRIENDSHIP AND ANIMALS.  
AND MY MOM IS AN ARTISTE."

-CHARLIE

TIA AND MATT'S KIDDO



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OBJECT PUPPETRY WORKSHOPS AVAILABLE!