

BURST

by Rachel Bublitz

FEBRUARY 27TH - MARCH 1ST, 2026



NiAGARA
UNIVERSITY
PLAYERS

NIAGARA UNIVERSITY PLAYERS

The Niagara University Players is a student theatre organization that has been in existence for over sixty years and organizes social activities, fundraisers, and community service activities. The NU Players also present an all-student production once a year. Join us this year for our production of Burst. Any NU student is eligible for membership (contact: nuplayers@niagara.edu).

Co-Presidents: Sam Prezioso, Briege Lennon

VP: Jada Stewart

Secretary: Ryan Needham

Co-Treasurers: Paige Tomlinson & James Arnold

Head Events: Jacob Beaudoin & Jairus Drayton

Community Service: Finnley Fleury

Soireé/Banquet: Kale Kurek & Brian Cunningham

Publicity: Brianna Garcia

Apparel: Hannah LaRuez

Student Advocacy: Paige Tomlinson

Presents...



Burst



by Rachel Bublitz

Directed by: Brian Cunningham, Class of '26

Artistic Director: Lillian Jarzabek, Class of '26

Asst. Artistic Director: Max Decker, Class of '28

Set Designer:
Ella Hartzell
Class of '28

Sound Designer:
Paige Tomlinson
Class of '27

Technical Director:
Sam Prezioso
Class of '26

Costume Designer:
Hannah LaRuez
Class of '27

Lighting Designer:
James David Maxim
III, Class of '26

Stage Managed by:
Paris Moffitt
Class of '26

PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S NOTE

LILLIAN



JARZABEK

As artistic director, it goes without saying that putting *Burst* on this stage has been a long labor of love for me. I have known since the moment I read the play that it would be a fantastic piece to showcase the range of talents we have in the Niagara University Theatre department. I love the show's commentary on environmentalism and corporate America, but what I truly love about the show more than anything is the relationships between the characters. Sarah and Weaver's friendship being so complex and so compelling is truly what sold me on this show- and not to mention Alexis's strength and fire. It is such a special dynamic and this cast could not capture it any better. I am extremely proud of everything everyone has put into this stunning show, and I am so grateful to have an audience to finally see their hard work. Thank you so much for supporting the Niagara University players, and please enjoy *Burst*!

CAST

(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

SARAH BOYD ---- **KALE KUREK**

JENNIFER WEAVER ---- **GRACE GORDON**

ALEXIS LYONS ---- **PENNY LANE**



CONTENT WARNING:
EXPLICIT LANGUAGE

PRODUCTION

Asst. Technical Director.....	Jacob Beaudoin, James Arnold
NU Players Faculty Advisor.....	Dave Peterson, PHD
Faculty Technical Advisor.....	Jackie Renaud
Assistant Stage Manager.....	Ryan Needham
Scenic Painter.....	Ella Hartzell
Wardrobe Head.....	Jessica Spengler
Sound Board Operator.....	Koral Davis
Light Board Operator.....	Hailey Westendarp
Props Acquisition.....	Wyatt Fleury
Front of House.....	Max Decker, Isaac Hohl
Box Office Supervisor.....	Emily Weber
Box Office Manager.....	Marilyn Deighton
Box Office Personnel.....	Emily Conti, Matthew Denman, Ella Frank, Millie Glamatovic-Mckinstry
Social Media	Emily Webber
Graphic Design.....	Suzanne Karaszewski
Production Photography.....	Mark Duggan
Headshot Photography.....	Brian Rock
Playbill and Slideshow Coordination.....	Max Decker

Special thank you to the NU scene shop work study students for their work on building our set!



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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



Rachel Bublitz is an award-winning and internationally produced playwright known for telling stories about women and creating exciting new work for young performers. Her play *Funny, Like An Abortion* received a National New Play Network rolling world premiere by Mile Square Theatre, Cleveland Public Theatre and The VORTEX. She received the prestigious Will Glickman Award for the best new play to premiere in the San Francisco Bay Area for *Ripped*, produced at Z Space. She was recognized as the top emerging female playwright in the Bay Area, receiving the June Anne Baker Prize from PlayGround. Her work has been produced by theatres and schools across the country, as well as in Canada, Ireland and England. Her forthcoming book on the craft of playwriting, *The Playwright's Alphabet*, will be published by Stage Partners. Bublitz lives in Salt Lake City where she's the resident playwright of the Egyptian You Theatre. Additional published plays include *The Night Witches* (Dramatic Publishing) *Ripped* (Original Works Publishing) and *The Book Women* (Stage Partners). When she's not writing, she's most likely watching her two kids dominate at water polo. For more information, visit: RachelBublitz.com

CAST & PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES



JAMES ARNOLD, is a freshman from Ithaca, NY. They are a Theatre Performance major, and are still deciding on minors. Favorite credits include: Urinetown (Officer Barrel), The Prom (Tom Hawkins), Mean Girls (Mr. Duvall), and High School Musical (Ms. Darbus). Offstage credits include: The Tempest (Director), Footloose (Assistant Director), and Little Shop of Horrors (Stage Manager). James also teaches with The Hanagar Theatre's Next Generation School of Theatre where they received the Erin Aljoe Schlather Inspiration award for their contributions to the program.



JACOB BEAUDOIN, a junior from Canandiauga, NY, is a Theatre Performance Major at Niagara University. NU credits A Dolls House (Torvald), The Loveliest Afternoon (Man), Company (Peter) Other Collegiate credits: Eurydice (Interesting Nasty Man/Lord of the Underworld), Machinal (Doctor, Judge, Priest). Outside Credits: Bad Auditions on Camera (Casting Director) and, at Canandaigua Academy The Spongebob Musical (Mr. Krabs), The Laramie Project (Dr. Cantway, Rob DeBree), Mamma Mia (Father Alexandrios), Almost Maine (Pete), All Shook Up (Ensemble). Offstage credits: Allegheny College Playshop Head Over Heels (QLab Operator).



BRIAN CUNNINGHAM is an actor from Lyndonville, NY. Brian has recently been seen in Buffalo as Dormouse (Alice by Heart) with Bellissima Productions and Angel (Kinky Boots) as well as Josh (9 to 5) with The Lockport Palace Theatre. Brian holds an Associates Degree from SUNY Niagara in Theatre Art. Brian has most recently been seen at Niagara, as Paul (Company), Krogstad (A Doll's House) and Man #3 (The Diary of Anne Frank). Other College/Educational credits include Macbeth (Macbeth), Aaron (First Date: The Musical), Fat/Fayette/Grady (Waiting for Lefty), East/Dave (Almost, Maine), George Spelvin (The Actor's Nightmare), Laure (Little Women: The Musical), Harry (Mamma Mia), TJ (Sister Act), Pugstey (The Addams Family), Lefou (Beauty and the Beast), and Big Julie (Guys and Dolls). Community credits include Oklahoma! and It's a Wonderful Life: The Musical (Lake Plains Players). Brian would like to thank his family and friends for their unwavering support. IG - @bri_2342



KORAL DAVIS, a Sophomore from Wareham, Massachusetts, is pursuing a Theater Performance Major, with minors in Dance and Writing Studies. NU Credits: 2025 Short Play Festival's Smile (Woman) and A Bottle of Vodka (Judy), Company (April). Outside Credits: With Wareham High School, Heathers: The Musical (Veronica Sawyer), An Experiment ("Courageous"), Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street (Johanna), and You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown (Lucy Van Pelt). Korall was awarded "Excellence in Acting" for her performance in An Experiment by the Massachusetts Educational Theater Guild.

CAST & PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES



MAX DECKER, a sophomore from Buffalo NY, is a Theatre Performance major. NU Credits, Return to the Forbidden Planet (Ensemble) and Mothers and Sons (Cal). Outside credits, Kinky Boots (Angel), at both OFC Creations in Rochester, and the Historic Palace Theatre in Lockport. Also at the Palace- Pippin, White Christmas (2023), Sister Act, Young Frankenstein, and many more. Max is the Assistant Artistic Director of the NU Players and has big things in store for the 2026-2027 NU Season. Outside of school, Max is a model with Presence Models and Talent Atlanta, and MMG Models located in NYC. IG @max_decker726 & @msbritneyblackout



WYATT FLEURY, a sophomore from Novato, CA, is pursuing a Theatre Performance and Psychology Major. NU Credits: 2025 Short Play Festival Foul Territory (Owen), Forbidden Planet (Prop Acquisition), Company (ASM/Waiter), Mothers and Sons (Props Acquisition). Outside credits: Young Frankenstein (Ensemble/Igor u/s), Romeo and Juliet (Benvolio), Into the Woods (Ensemble), Stupid F***ing Bird (Conrad u/s, Prop Designer), Cabaret (Bobby), Follies (Ensemble), A Midsummer Night's Dream (Nick Bottom), Once Upon a Mattress (Minstrel) Offstage credits: Follies (Assistant Director/Prop Manager), Seminar (Intimacy Coordinator/Assistant Director), Rent (Backstage Crew/Prop Manager/Alt Spotlight Operator).



GRACE GORDON, a sophomore from Blasdell, NY, is pursuing a major in Theatre Performance. NU Credits: Seagull (Masha), Return to the Forbidden Planet (Audio 2), and Company (Props Acquisition). Outside Credits: Alice by Heart (Alice), Heathers the Musical (Martha), Hadestown: Teen Edition (Fate 1), Company (Amy), The Prom (Dee Dee Allen), and more. Offstage Credits: Irish Classical Theatre Company's Crocodile Fever (Props Apprentice) and the short film Love and Rodents (Casting Assistant).



ELLA HARTZELL, a sophomore from Tonawanda, NY, is pursuing a major in Theatre Design/Production with a second major in Communications & Media Studies. NU credits: A Doll's House Part 2 (Assistant Scenic Charge), Seagull (Assistant Scenic Charge). Outside credits: High School Musical (Sound Tech), Leader of the Pack (Sound Tech), Mamma Mia (Stage Manager), Grease (Stage Manager), Crocodile Fever (Carpenter).

CAST & PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES



ISAAC HOHL, a senior at Niagara University from Kennesaw, GA, is pursuing a Theatre Performance major with a Dance minor. NU credits: Company (Harry), Return to the Forbidden Planet (Cookie), RENT (Benny), Discovering Me, Embracing We (Dancer), and Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder (Ensemble) Outside credits: ROCeltic: Sláinte, Raise a Glass to 5 Years! (Dancer), Roger and Hammerstein's Cinderella (Sebastian), Peter Pan (John Darling), Into the Woods (Wolf/Mysterious Man), and The Little Mermaid (Chef Louis/Ensemble).



LILLIAN JARZABEK, a senior from Conesus, NY, is currently pursuing a theatre performance major and a dance minor. NU credits: Company (Sarah), Return to the Forbidden Planet (Gloria), Rent (Ensemble), Discovering Me, Embracing We (company dancer), Art (Marc), Dancing in the Light Showcase (choreographer), Much Ado About Nothing (assistant stage manager), Us & Them: Aerial Investigations (prop runner), Everybody (prop runner). Outside credits: Sweet Charity (Rosie), Into the Woods (The Witch), A Chorus Line (Ensemble, Kristine U/S). Lillian is also the NU Players Artistic Director. Follow her on instagram @lil_jarzy.



KALE KUREK is a Senior Theater Performance Major from Hamburg, NY. NU Credits: Seagull (Yevgeny Dorn), The Taming (Patricia), Short Play Festival 2024, Fun Home (John), Short Play Festival 2023, Art (Yvan), A Gentleman's Guide (...) (Head Usher), Much Ado (...) (House Manager), The Diary of Anne Frank (Sound Board Operator), Company (Dramaturge, Sound Board Operator), Mothers and Sons (Artistic Director), Short Play Festival 2025 (Director), Engagements (Assistant Artistic Director, Sound Board Operator). Outside Credits: Coraline the Musical (Mr. Bobo), Keyhole Theatrics (Assistant Artistic Director), Lockport Palace Theater (Spot Light Operator). @kalekurek on ig ! <3



PENNY LANE, a freshman from Niagara Falls, NY, is pursuing Theatre Performance major through Niagara University. Outside credits: Frozen jr.(ensemble), Freaky Friday one act edition (ensemble), Back Cover (Madison then), Ranked (Maya), a Charlie Brown Christmas (Sally), 1984 (Julia), Freaky Friday (Ellie), and The Anxiety Project (ensemble). Offstage credits Willy Wonka jr. (stage manager), and Jesus Christ Superstar (stage crew).

CAST & PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES



HANNAH LARUEZ, a junior at Niagara University from Rochester, N.Y. She's pursuing a theatre design/technology major, concentrated on costume design, and minor in dance. NU Credits: *Discovering Me*, *Embracing We* (Ensemble Dancer), *Engagements* (Costume Designer), *A Doll's House* (Wardrobe Head), *Mothers and Sons* (Costume Designer), *Company* (Assistant Costume Designer). Outside School Credits: *White Christmas* (Ensemble), *The Prom!* (Kaylee/Dance Captain), *Jersey Boys* (Spotlight Operator), *Newsies* (Wardrobe Head), *Lion King Jr* (Build Lead/Costume Design), *Coraline: The Musical* (Stage Manager), and more! Hannah also works at OFC Creations Theater Center as a Wardrobe Head/Costume Designer. Hannah would especially like to thank her momma for always pushing her to follow her dreams!



JAMES DAVID MAXIM, a senior from Corning, NY, is happy to be back at NU pursuing his BFA in Theatre Performance with a minor in Theatre Design/Production. At Niagara University Theatre he has performed in *Company* (Larry), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Don John), *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Black Stache), and *The Thanksgiving Play* (Jaxton). Last summer, James David had the pleasure of working as a Show Operations Intern at Sight & Sound Theatres in Lancaster, PA. In the summers of 2023 and 2024 he worked as a Stage Operations Apprentice at the Glimmerglass Festival in Cooperstown, NY. IG: @j.david_maxim



PARIS MOFFITT is a senior from Gasport, NY. She is pursuing a degree in Theatre Arts & Performance with a focus in Stage Management. NU Credits: *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Snee), *Short Play Festival '23*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* (Ensemble), N.U.R.T '23 ("Pink" Ensemble), *A Sondheim Review* (Ensemble/Assistant Stage Manager), *Fun Home* (Assistant Stage Manager), *Short Play Festival '24*, *The Taming* (Stage Manager), *RENT* (Mrs.Cohen/Ensemble), N.U.R.T '24 ("Light Blue" Ensemble), *Schoolhouse Rock Live!* (Dori), *A Doll's House* (Stage Manager), *Eight Women and a Murder* (Beatrice), *Pillow* (Director), *Smile* (Stage Manager), *Company* (Susan). Outside Credits: In London England for NU's study abroad program, *As You Like It* (Phoebe/Touchstone), at Teal's Niagara Theatre, *Coraline the Musical* (Miss Spink), at the Lockport Palace Theatre, *Scrooge The Musical* (Ensemble & Cratchit Child), *Suessical The Musical* (Ensemble), *The Wizard of Oz* (Munchkin & Ensemble), *Joseph And The Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Ensemble), *The Little Mermaid, Jr.* (Ursula), and at Barker, Jr/Sr High School, *Mary Poppins* (Ensemble), *Mamma Mia!* (Ali), *Addams Family* (Grandma Addams), *Little Women* (Marmee). Paris was nominated for a Kenny Award in the category Outstanding Dramatic Performance for Marmee. She would like to thank her family for their unending support and love, which allows her to follow her dreams and share the love of live theatre. @paris.moffitt



RYAN NEEDHAM (he/him), a sophomore from Hammond, IN, is majoring in Theater Specializations in Dramaturgy with a Design and Production minor. NU Credits: *8 Women and a Murder* (Assistant Stage Manager), *2025 Short Play Festival's Foul Territory* (Stage Manager), as well as *Last Dance* (Camden), *Mothers and Sons* (Bud), and *The Seagull* (dramaturg).

CAST & PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES



SAM PREZIOSO, a senior from the Hudson Valley, is pursuing a Theatre Performance major with a minor in Theatre Design/Production. NU credits: Company (Marta & Assistant Technical Director), Mothers & Sons (Technical Director), Return to the Forbidden Planet (Ensemble/Monster), RENT! (Ensemble), Much Ado About Nothing (Balthasar), Everybody (Stuff/Senses). Outside credits: The Taylor Theatre's Kenan Christmas Cabaret. Offstage credits: Finger Lakes Opera's Rigoletto (Load In/Strike Crew), Irish Classical Theatre's The Loved Ones and The Fitzgerald's of St. Paul (Scenic Assistant), Shea's 710/Kavinoky Theatre's Newsies (Scenic Assistant), Overhire for IATSE Local 10 (Stagehand). She recently studied and performed in NU's Study Abroad program in London and is the Senior Co-President of the NU Players.



PAIGE TOMLINSON, a junior from Hamburg, NY, is pursuing a Theatre Performance and English double major. NU credits: Company (Kathy), Return to the Forbidden Planet (Miranda), Rent (Ensemble), and 2024 Short Play Festival. Outside credits: Alice in Wonderland (Tall Alice) and, at Frontier High School, Mamma Mia (Ensemble), A Killer Party (Lily Wright), Sister Act (Tina/Featured Nun), Clue: On Stage (Miss Scarlet), and Beauty and the Beast (Silly Girl/Belle Understudy).



JESSICA SPENGLER, a Junior from West Seneca, N.Y., is pursuing a Theater Design and Production major at Niagara University. NU credits: The Seagull 2025 (Wardrobe head), A Doll's House Pt.2 2025 (Stitcher), Mothers and Sons 2025 (Wardrobe head), 8 Women and a Murder (Wardrobe crew/Stitcher), Return to the Forbidden Planet (Hair and Makeup Head) 2024, Rent 2024 (Stitcher). Outside credits: College Light Opera Company (CLOC) Summer season 2025 (Costume technician, Wardrobe crew) and MusicalFare Theaters Waitress (Wardrobe head).



HAILEY WESTENDARP is a freshman Theatre Design and Production major.

PLAYERS PRESENTS RETROSPECTIVE

- 2025: Mothers and Sons
- 2024: Engagments
- 2023: ART
- 2022: girl.
- 2021: Independence
- 2020: Sylvia
- 2019: Some Girls
- 2018: Recent Tragic Events
- 2017: The Effect of Gamma Rays on
Man- in- the-Moon Marigolds
- 2016: Extremities
- 2015: Love Song
- 2014: The Shape of Things
- 2013: Time Stands Still
- 2012: The Twilight of the Golds
- 2011: How I Learned
to Drive
- 2010: Proof
- 2009: Fat Pig
- 2007: Five Women Wearing the Same
Dress
- 2006: An Evening of Culture...

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Niagara University acknowledges that we are privileged to gather on the lands of the Seneca and Tuscarora nations and other Indigenous communities who have stewarded this land throughout generations. We honor their sovereignty, demonstrate respect and correct the stories and practices that have erased Indigenous peoples' history and culture by inviting and honoring truth. We are so honored to have you here for our 2025/2026 season, and to share with you the thrill of live theatre



NU THEATRE INVITES YOU TO RETURN FOR OUR UPCOMING SHOWS



Hurricane Diane
March 26th - 29th



Godspell
April 23rd - May 3rd

For more information on our upcoming shows, and to reserve tickets, please visit our website:

<https://theatre.niagara.edu/>

Or contact our box office:

Phone: (716) 286-8685
Email: boxoffice@niagara.edu

The Friends of Niagara University Theatre, incorporated in 1986, help raise awareness and develop support for the theatre department and its students. You, too, can join us in our efforts to help ensure the future of one of the oldest professional theatre training programs in the region, and provide invaluable opportunities for future generations of theatre artists.

For more information, please visit theatre.niagara.edu/support or call 716-286-8483.

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WATERKEEPER**

Water Quality Protection



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Climate and Coastal Resiliency



Community Engagement



Scajaquada Creek



About Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper

Just like our region, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper's story is one of triumph over adversity, commitment and persistence in the face of nearly insurmountable challenges, and revitalization. Our organization has worked tirelessly for the last three decades, and with many partners, to bring the Buffalo River back to life. It's a tremendous, largely untold success story that played an integral role in the city's resurgence and renaissance in recent years.

Our mission going forward is to work to achieve the same success for our other waterways. From restoring the highly impaired yet historically and culturally significant Scajaquada Creek, to transforming our degraded banks into living shorelines, engaging WNY's youth in hands-on experiences in their natural world, monitoring our water quality and working to keep pollutants out of it, enhancing public access to our waterways and protecting our precious headwaters, our work doesn't end.

Today, we are managing over 60 construction projects, community engagement programs and state and federal advocacy campaigns to ensure clean water for our families and for future generations.

Learn more and get involved at BNWaterkeeper.org

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NIAGARA UNIVERSITY THEATRE PRESENTS

The Class of 2026 BFA Showcase



Directed by Robyn Lee
Musically Directed by Bridget Moriarty

SENIORS

www.niagarabfashowcase.com

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