

Love Fest a Valentine's Spectacular

Saturday, February 11th 7pm

City View

unitingpride.org



Uniting Pride
of Champaign County

Love Fest Production Team

Director/Producer

Nicole Frydman

Music Director/Accompanist

Jack Bertrand, Finale Music Director
Cheryl Forest Morganson, Breeze Off
the River Pianist

Love Fest Planning Committee

Nicole Frydman, Director of Operations
Joshua Gavel, Operations Manager
Aiden Novinska, Operations Coordinator



Uniting Pride
of Champaign County

1001 S Wright St | Champaign, IL
unitingpride.org

Uniting Pride of Champaign County

Uniting Pride of Champaign County was founded in 2009 as an organization to advocate for the equality, wellness, advocacy, and visibility of our LGBTQ+ communities in Champaign County.

Since then, we have been active in the community through support and social groups, community-building events, educational workshops, clothing drives, political advocacy, and our signature Pride Fest.

Our Mission

Uniting Pride exists to create a Champaign County where all who identify as sexual and/or gender minorities can live full, healthy, and vibrant lives.

Our Vision

Uniting Pride will achieve its mission while promoting the well-being of the overall community through advocacy, education, and outreach.

In order to achieve its vision, The UP Center of Champaign County will:

- Strengthen our community through visibility and celebration
- Connect our community to each other by facilitating safe and genuine social interaction
- Serve as a community hub for resources and information
- Advocate for our community through education
- We do this while building a strong and sustainable Uniting Pride that will be here to serve our community for decades to come.

Our Commitment to Anti-Racism

The board and staff at Uniting Pride choose to adopt an anti-racist framework by:

- Acknowledging the ways racism, oppression, and privilege perpetuate homophobia and transphobia;
 - Ensuring that the strategies, actions, and policies that we support and employ do not undermine efforts to combat racism;
- Organizing a movement that is mindful of how the issues of racism affect safety for all of the LGBTQ+ community;
- Developing and implementing anti-racist strategies that are specific to the including, without limitation:
 - Practicing and modeling respectful behavior,
 - Employing anti-racist language and group dynamics,
 - Examining every situation to understand how the dynamics of racism and white privilege work in that situation;
 - Challenging all aspects of white privilege—individual, cultural, political, and organizational, and;
 - Engaging in ongoing self-assessment and recognizing that doing work with an anti-racist lens is an ongoing process.



Land Acknowledgement

We believe that creating our work – and the opportunity to share it with you is a privilege. Our ability to gather in these spaces and engage with perspectives other than our own is a privilege that we consider sacred. Because of this, it's important to us that we acknowledge both the Indigenous land we occupy, as well as the hands that built the country and cities we call home.

We recognize and acknowledge that we gather today on Indigenous land – the traditional homeland of the people of Kickapoo, Peoria, Kaskaskia, Myaamia, and Ochethi Sakowin – which was taken through deception, coercion, violence and genocide. We acknowledge the continued displacement and oppression of Native people and honor their commitments to survival, identity, and the protection of our world.

We also acknowledge that the United States was built at the often fatal expense of forcefully enslaved Black people. We acknowledge those who still cannot safely walk down the street or fully enjoy fundamental civil rights and freedoms. We acknowledge that our twin cities and county remain segregated and inequitable. We aim to cultivate space for Black stories to be uplifted and for Black lives to be celebrated. We pledge to infuse our work with true values of anti-racism.

We offer these acknowledgments and experiences into this space with respect and gratitude, along with the intention to spark more awareness, compassion and empathy for every life in our community.

Letter from the President

Dear Valued Guests,

It is an honor for this to be what is probably my final public statement as President of the Board of Uniting Pride. What a way to end a term!

This event is incredibly special. To have a show built for and around celebrating love within the LGBTQIA+ community is something that was not done even ten or twenty years ago. Now, my child and zir peers are growing up with it being an annual event in their hometown. It blows my mind to see how far we have come.

I had the great privilege to hear stories during our rehearsals for tonight's finale about the days of having a Gay Men's Choir in Champaign-Urbana. The love and camaraderie that are still apparent in the members of that group are so palpable that I am swiping at tears as I'm remembering them speaking while I type these words. These are the memories and experiences we need to preserve. These are the pieces of history we need to build upon to continue to strengthen our community.

Thank you all for being here. Thank you for supporting Uniting Pride, and supporting our community. Thank you for helping us create new memories, new pieces of history, new building blocks for the generations that follow our own. Thank you for being with us throughout all of the seasons of love.

In love, peace, solidarity, and utmost appreciation,
Martha

Letter from the Director

Dear Love Fest community,

I cannot put into words how much it means to me that you have chosen to join us tonight. I've been a performing, teaching, and producing artist for 45 years, and queer for longer than that (even if for some of that time I didn't admit it to myself). So marrying these two very important parts of who I am in this way fill my heart and soul with so much joy. The work I do with Uniting Pride is often quite hard, in a variety of ways. And the current climate of both rhetoric and legislation isn't exactly making it any easier. So I try to reach for moments of love anywhere I can find them. Getting to gather with you all tonight in celebration of love, getting to show love in my own little artistic way, and getting to watch as tonight's other artists share their love, is pure magic. It is healing. It is powerful. And I will carry it with me as fuel for the work to come.

Thank you for choosing to support Uniting Pride of Champaign County. Thank you for joining us in love tonight. And I hope you enjoy the show!

Nicole Frydman
Director of Operations
Uniting Pride of Champaign County

Show Song List

Act 1

Love Will Keep Us Together - Nicole Frydman & Mr. Knightly

It Will Be Joey - Dylan Holt

5 Lesbians Eating a Quiche - Station Theatre Cast

As Time Goes By - Mr. Knightly

All of Me - Jake Fava

Abba Mix - Raven Starling

Natural Woman - Nicole Frydman

Whitney Houston Mix - Ceduxion Carrington

Wannabe - Adrian Rochelle, Raven Starling, Carissa Yau, Dylan Holt, Mr. Knightly, Kaila Simpson

Intermission

Act 2

Janelle Monae/Prince Mix - Ceduxion Carrington

Alone - Adrian Rochelle

Somebody to Love - Emily McKown

The Moon Represents My Heart - Carissa Yau

Breeze Off the River - Martha Mills and Cheryl Forest Morganson

Ain't No Mountain High Enough - Nicole Frydman & Adrian Rochelle

Power of Two - Martha Mills, Carissa Yau, & Jake Fava

Dream a Little Dream - Jake Fava

You're the Top - Mr. Knightly

At Last - Kaila Simpson

Seasons of Love - Love Fest Choir

Meet the Cast



Callie Luttman (She/Her) | Emcee

Callie is one of the hosts for "Tommy and Callie in the Morning" on Mix 94.5 and in her free time she enjoys being the Emcee for variety of events in CU and the surrounding counties. Callie is dedicated to using her platform in radio to serve and reflect the needs of her community.

Message of Love:

I hope the love you experience in this lifetime, brings you joy, comfort, and pleasure. But I also hope it teaches you how to listen better, how to show up for those who need you, how to fight against hate, and most importantly, gives you the belief that you are important and everything you do matters and has impact. This is the love I imagine for a better world.



Nicole Frydman (She/They) | Director

Nicole Frydman has been a performing, producing, and teaching artist for over 40 years and can't wait to see what the next 40 or so bring! Some favorite moments include: swing dancing on stage at Lincoln Center, getting the chance to tackle some dream roles like Lady of the Lake in Spamalot, Velma in Chicago, and Reno in Anything Goes, playing Ethel Merman in a hilarious spoof musical called Book of Merman, and literally dancing circles around Julia Roberts in the movie Mona Lisa Smile. These days she spends most of her time as the Director of Operations for Uniting Pride and is thrilled the two worlds can collide with this little Love Fest!

Message of Love:

I believe love saves. It heals hurt, it brings people together, it spreads joy, it creates a more just world, it opens minds, it is the one and only thing that can overcome hate. When I feel lost, which happens a lot these days, I focus in on all the love around me to find my way. The love my family and friends give me all the time. The love my community gives me. The love people show for total strangers with random acts of kindness and charity. Yes, there is love everywhere, but sometimes I have to remind myself of that. I'm so grateful this show is giving us all a chance to focus on love and drown everything else out, even for just a moment.

Meet the Cast



Ceduxion Carrington (She/Her)

Ceduxion Carrington is the grand-matriarch of the Carrington drag family that dominates across Central Illinois and beyond. That means she has become a drag mom and mentored many young drag performers over the years, and in turn they did the same to the next generation, making Ceduxion a Drag Grandma! Her family tree spreads far and wide and various members have taken the family art all over the country. Ceduxion is a true professional, always showing up and showing out at every show she does, whether it's as a performer, host, producer, or sometimes all of the above at once! Check out the upcoming show at the Canopy Club on Feb 19th!

Message of Love:

Don't love someone so much that you don't have any love for yourself!



Jake Fava (He/Him)

Jake has been involved in a number of productions around CU since 2015, working with Illini Student Musicals, Parkland College, and the Station Theatre both on and off the stage. You will also find him in the local music scene, performing shows and hosting open mic/jam nights alongside his partner and frequent collaborator, Anika Emily, and his best friends and bandmates – the gentlemen of Booth Blues.

Message of Love:

A message for everyone, but particularly those who are going through tough times – don't be afraid to ask for help! Our lowest moments are the ones where we need to lean on each other most. :)

Meet the Cast



Dylan Holt (He/Him)

Dylan has been involved in theatre both through high school and college, the latter which he graduated with a BFA in Music Theatre Cum Laude this last May. Dylan recently performed at Pendragon Theatre in Saranac Lake, New York in *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* as William Barfée. Other projects include *Head Over Heels* as Dametas, *Chess* as the Arbiter, *Three Days of Rain*, and *King Charles III*. You can usually find him loving on all the dogs at The Dog Den or running his own Dungeons and Dragons campaign at a local nerd spot. See him next in CUTC's *Arsenic and Old Lace* as Mortimer Brewster at the Station Theatre, running March 2-5 and the 9-12!

During high school, I never went out and auditioned into the CU theatre and arts scene because of my own personal insecurities. Now that I've went through college, it seems a little silly that I did not. This wonderful show is a way for me to give back to the wonderful shows and artists I saw growing up in the area, and to all of the wonderful queer people that have been there for me and guided me through the winding river that is queer-dom <3

Message of Love:

To my family, thank you for everything you've done for me and currently helping me navigate through post-graduation into full adulthood. And to Ethan, I love you so so so much. I can't wait to grow together and move to NYC with you <3.

Mr. Knightly (He/Him)

Mr.Knightly has performed as a Drag King for almost 5 years and has performed in cities all over the US, including (but not limited to) Chicago, Boston, Atlanta, Indianapolis, and St Louis. He specializes in highly visual makeup and live singing in his performances.

Message of Love:

To the most beautiful creature to grace this earth with your divine presence... myself. And Danny DeVito.



Meet the Cast



Emily McKown (She/Her)

Emily Anne is a singer-songwriter and activist; Emily is very much in love with her CU community of justice, art, and music makers! She is Executive Director of the U.U. Campus and Community Center, Channing-Murray Foundation. Emily also hosts the weekly Urbana Hootenanny, Monday nights at the Rosebowl Tavern; home to a collaborative open stage of local acoustic musicians.

Message of Love:

I love Champaign-Urbana with all my heart. I've traveled a lot of places, and this community is like no other; CU is down-to-earth, creative, and the people are committed to supporting one another. If you're reading this— I love you too!



Martha Mills (She/They)

Martha has been a board member of Uniting Pride for two and a half years. They are also a mom, a partner, a student, a boxer, and a reluctant participant in the capitalistic workforce. They are very excited Nicole agreed to let them participate in Love Fest again without even making them beg. Performing with and among these incredibly talented individuals is humbling and inspiring. They feel honored to be able to be with so many members of the queer community celebrating love in all its many forms.

Message of Love:

To my family, my friends, and my community: I love you. I love you for your creativity, your tenacity, your advocacy, your anarchy, your endurance, and your strength. In all of these things, you have helped me start to learn how to love me.

Meet the Cast



Adrian Rochelle (They/Them/All)

Adrian Rochelle (Addy Roche) Is a C-U Native that has been surrounded by music since birth. They then began performing in Theatre and Dance in middle school and proceeded to receive their BFA in Musical Theatre from SIUC. They proceeded to perform professionally around the Midwest and during covid choreographed for local drama department and projects in the community. Currently they work as the Front of House Performance Supervisor at the Krannert Center while staying active in the local drag scene and Dance it Up classes with The UP Center.

Message of Love:

When surrounded by so much darkness be the light you want to see. Lead with love because that's what ultimately lights the way. Never forget to give yourself the love you give out because you deserve it the most.



Kaila Simpson (She/Her)

Kaila Simpson was born and raised in Champaign-Urbana but has only been performing in local shows for about a year. She was most recently in Shrek the musical as Dragon and she will be in the ensemble of Sweeney Todd at Parkland in April. She also sings with the CUTC carolers and the Toast of Champaign women's a cappella barbershop chorus. She is currently a math teacher at University Laboratory High School.

Message of Love:

I send love to the entire community of Champaign-Urbana. I send love to all my friends and family. Ever since C Street closed it's been hard to find spaces for the LGBT community. I am so glad to be able to spread love with the UP center at Lovefest. Enjoy the show, I hope you can feel the love through the songs of some amazing performers and humans.

Meet the Cast



Raven Starling (She/Her)

I have been performing drag for over 4 years nationwide. I'm the current reigning Mx Chambana Pride 2022-2023. I've been living in CU for over three years, but a life long Central IL resident.

This show is important to me because I love my community. Uniting Pride is a fantastic organization, and I believe in everything it stands for.

Message of Love:

Remember to stay kind to yourself, and stay respectful to others.



Carissa Yau (She/They)

This is Carissa's second LoveFest with the UP Center. It's been such a pleasure to be invited back a second year to be a part of such an amazing fundraiser. Making spaces that empower and display the love in the queer community are so important, so she hope that even after tonight, everyone in attendance will continue to support queer people, creators, and art. Thank you for being a part of tonight!

Message of Love:

To the friends, family, and community members that have come to join us, thank you so much. It's such a pleasure to be sharing this with you. I appreciate you all so much.



Love Fest Choir

Introducing our Love Fest Choir! A labor of love thanks to our talented community of performers. They will close out our wonderful program with a wonderful rendition of 'Seasons of Love' from RENT!

Members:

Jack Bertrand, Music Director

Kevin Allen, Jerry Carden, Ashley Clarke, Jake Fava, Nicole Frydman, Joshua Gavel, Rachel Gushee, Dylan Holt, Timothy Hutchison, Mr. Knightly, Michael Lambert, Faie Melton, Daniel Menzies, Martha Mills, Monica Samii-Porter, Kaila Simpson, Raven Starling, and Carissa Yau

Meet the Cast



The Cast of 5 Lesbians Eating A Quiche

The officers of the Susan B Anthony Society for the Sisters of Gertrude Stein (Cast:)

Ellen Magee as Lulie, President

Heather Smith Holley as Wren, Chairwoman

Tiphaine Kouadou as Ginny, Secretary

Erin Roux as Dale, Historian

Zoë Dunn as Vern, Building & Grounds

Directed by Kendall Jeonson

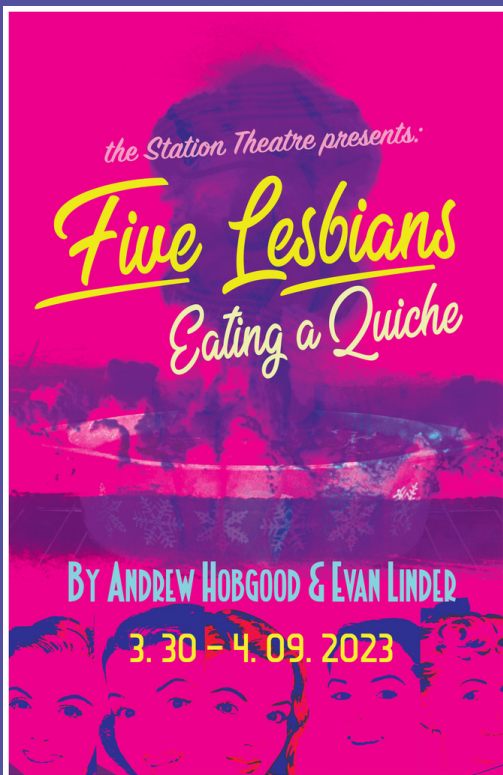
Music Composition by Cheryl Forest Morganson

Costumes by Vivian Krishnan

This is Zoë's first full show at the Station Theater, while Heather and Erin are performing in their second show but first season at the Station Theater. Tiphaine serves on the board and is excited to be in her second show at the Station. Ellen is back from New York after previously acting in *Appropriate* at the Station Theater in 2015. Kendall currently serves as the board president and has been performing and stage managing at the Station Theater since 2009.

Message of Love:

The entire cast and crew of *5 Lesbians Eating a Quiche* wants you all to know how much it means to us to have you all watching this little snippet of our show. We hope to see you all at the Station when we open March 30th. The Station Board of Directors loves seeing all your faces in our audience, and hope you love seeing our shows as much as we do. <3



Uniting Pride Programs



Uniting Pride Social and Support Groups

Queries – 1st and 3rd Mondays from 6 – 7 p.m.

A support group for LGBTQ+ and questioning preteens ages 10 – 13

Talk It UP! – Every Monday from 6 – 8 p.m.

A support group for LGBTQ+ and questioning teens ages 13 – 18

UParent – 2nd and 4th Mondays at 7 p.m.

A support group for parents of LGBTQ+ children of any age

Dance It UP – Thursdays from 5:30 – 7 p.m.

Free dance classes for teens and adults at the Phillips Recreation Center

Trans UP – Every Thursday at 5:30 p.m.

A support and social group for members of the trans and gender diverse community

Lift UP – Every Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

A support group for sexual minorities

Aging UP – Every Sunday at 3 p.m. (Virtual)

A support group for LGBTQ+ older adults

Meet UP – Last Sunday of every month

A social group for LGBTQ+ adults

Thank You Sponsors



 **HIRE A HELPER**

Urbana Acupuncture
lincoln square mall urbana-acu.com (217) 344 - 9118

Jerry Carden & Tim Temple

 **Illinois Eagle**

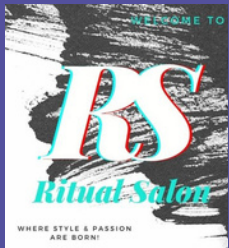
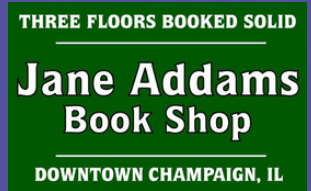
 **dish**
passionate cuisine

nuEra



Your Generosity Is Appreciated!

Thank You Raffle Sponsors!



Your Generosity Is Appreciated!



Uniting Pride of Champaign County

Board and Staff

Executive Board

Martha Mills (she/they), President
Valena Hedin (she/they), President-Elect
MJ Salas (they/elle), Secretary

Members at Large

Jacqueline Kalipeni (she/her)
Alli Nisley (she/her)
Dane Rivas-Koehl (he/him)
Hannah Sheets (she/her)
Brette Dow (they/she)
Carlton Cummings (All Pronouns)

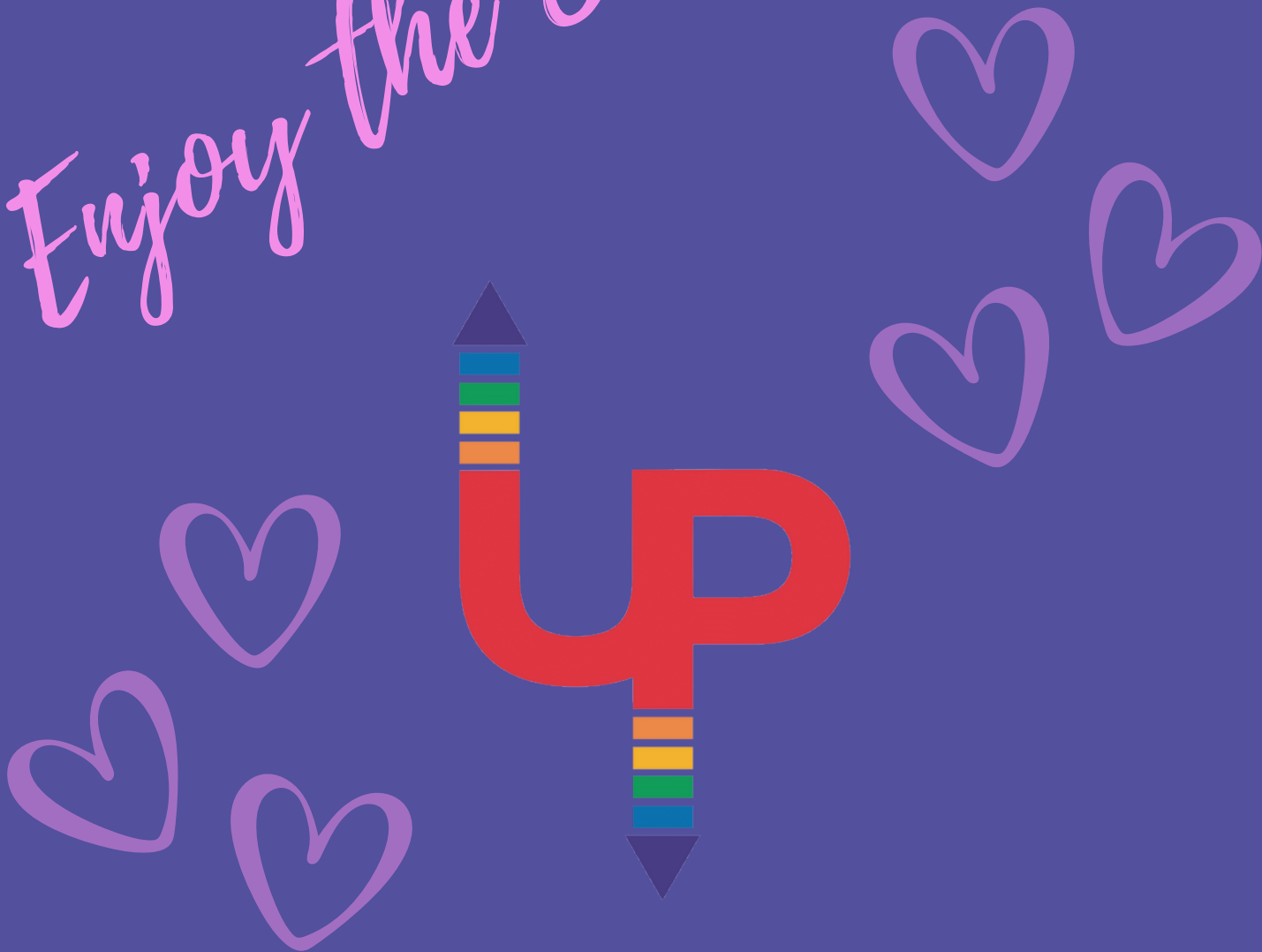
Staff

Nicole Frydman (she/they),
Director of Operations
Joshua Gavel (he/him),
Operations Manager
Aiden Novinska (he/him),
Operations Coordinator

**To learn more about Uniting Pride,
please visit www.unitingpride.org or
email info@unitingpride.org**



Enjoy the Show!



**Thank You for Supporting
Uniting Pride!**