



CAST BIOS

Westley Armbrust (Roger) is a 17-year-old and will soon be attending ASU's musical theatre program in the Fall. He is so excited to be a part of one of his favorite productions. His past roles include the Herald in *Cinderella* (Places!), the King in *Alice in Wonderland* (EVCT), Buddy in *Elf* (EVCT), Ichabod Crane in *Sleepy Hollow* (EVCT), Soldier/Congregation in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (VYT), Aphrodite in *Xanadu* (EVCT), Gleb Vaganov in *Anastasia* (EVCT), D'Artagnan in *3 Musketeers* (EVCT), Grasp in *Beauty and the Beast* (EVCT) and Postman in *Yes, Virginia, There is a Santa Claus* (EVCT). He thanks the cast and crew for all their hard work and everyone at Places! for giving him this opportunity.

Adalia Blitz (Sheila- OPENING CAST) has a free, creative spirit. She spends her free time reading, playing piano, and taking voice lessons. Adalia is also a passionate volunteer, working with children for the past six years. Past musical performances include *Nightmare Before Christmas*. *Grease* is her debut show with Places! Productions, and she is excited for many opportunities in the future.

Liam Chacon (Scientist) is an eighth grader at Saint Timothy's Catholic School and a proud member of the school's drama club. He has appeared as one of the Three Wise Men in the club's Christmas Nativity show, Schroeder in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, Cowardly Lion in *The Wizard of Oz*, and, most recently, as the Beast in *Beauty and the Beast*. Liam has also performed with Places! Productions, where his roles have included Johnny in *At the Bandstand*, Randolph in *Bye Bye Birdie*, the Chairman in *Mary Poppins*, Thing and the Rat in *The Addams Family*. In addition to acting, Liam enjoys playing the piano and is currently taking guitar lessons.

Aidan Dame (Eugene- OPENING CAST) This is Aidan's fifth and sixth time performing in a musical. He has been featured as David the Innkeeper in *The Most Wonderful Time of the Year*, The Wizard of Oz in *The Wizard of Oz*, Gaston in *Beauty and the Beast*, and Ensemble in *The Music Man*. He will be performing this year as Eugene in *Grease*, and Bobby Darin in *Jukebox Time Machine*. Aidan is very excited about joining the Places! Production family. "Enjoy the show!"

Zack Desmangles (Doody) is super excited to be in Places! Productions production of *Grease!* This Zack's 4th show with Places and has been seen in shows like *Urinetown*, *Narnia*, and *Cinderella*. In his off time, he loves playing music and writing songs! He loves playing with his band "Basement Confessions", and doing worship at Sun Valley Community Church. He would like to thank Allison for letting him have this opportunity and his fellow cast mates for making this experience very special!

Danielle Fritz (Student) is a high school junior, honors student, and has several years of experience in color/winter guard performing in half-time shows and competitions across the valley. She loves public speaking and singing and has participated in choirs whenever the opportunity arises. She is at the beginning of her theater career and is grateful to have found Places! Productions as a great place to grow her talents. This will be her second performance with Places! Productions.

Sylvia Fuller (Johnny Casino- CLOSING) is 16 years old and is thrilled to be playing the role of Johnny in *Grease!* Some of her favorite roles are Jasmine in *Aladdin*, Marty in *Grease*, and Lucy in *13!* She would like to thank mom and dad for always being so supportive of her passions and accomplishments.

Liliana Groth (Girl- OPENING) is a 15-year-old sophomore and is thrilled to be making her debut with Places! Productions. Some of her favorite past roles include Babette in *Beauty and the Beast* (HCT), Gretchen in *Freaky Friday* (MTE), and Suzie in *Bye Bye Birdie* (MTE). Liliana would like to thank her amazing parents and friends for their endless support, love, and encouragement throughout her theatre journey. Hugs.

Kaylin Hamelwright (Miss Lynch- CLOSING) is excited to be playing Miss Lynch in *Grease* at Places! as her second show here. Her previous roles include Mrs. Mayor (*Seussical*) and Nancy (*Bye Bye Birdie*) at MTE, Mrs. Puff (*SpongeBob Youth Edition*) at AYT, and Goober Addams (*Addams Family*) at Places!. Kaylin just graduated from Desert Ridge High and EVIT, and is planning to go to MCC for Marketing. When she is not acting, she enjoys Aerial Arts & hanging out with friends and family. She would like to thank Allison and the rest of the Places! Team for this opportunity to be in *Grease!*

Ben Harwood (Sonny) is an incoming college freshman at ASU and is thrilled to be joining his first show at Places! He has been involved in theatre for several years, and some recent roles include Eddie in *Sister Act* and Wadsworth in *Clue*. He would like to thank all of his friends and family for their constant support throughout the years.

Tanner Hutchinson (Hero) This is Tanner's 4th show with Places! Previously, he was in *Mary Poppins, Jr.* (George Banks), *Addams Family* (Thing/Rat) and *Cinderella* (Palace Trumpeter, Footman and more.) He has also performed with the Titan Drama Club including *Beauty and the Beast* (Cogsworth), *The Music Man* (Children's Ensemble), *The Wizard of Oz* (Scarecrow) and *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* (Linus). Tanner is very excited to be a part of this cast and is looking forward to future shows.

Ayden Iwan (Danny) is very honored to be portraying the role of Danny Zuko In Places! Productions' production of *Grease!* Some of Ayden's past roles with Places! include Conrad Birdie (*Bye Bye Birdie*), Bert (*Mary Poppins*), Marius (*Les Miserables*), and Gomez (*Addams Family*). Ayden would like to thank all the wonderful and talented people he collaborated with to bring this amazing production to life!

Mady King (Sandy- OPENING) is excited to join the cast of *Grease!* She enjoys performing with Places! Her favorite credits include, Places! Productions' *Cinderella* (Cinderella), *Mary Poppins Jr.* (Mary Poppins), *Addams Family* (Morticia), *Les Miserables* (Cosette), *Bye Bye Birdie* (Kim), and *Beauty and the Beast Jr.* (Belle). In addition to musical theater, Mady enjoys being a part of Places! Productions' PRESTO Show Choir. She sincerely thanks her family and the Places! Team for all their love and support!

Cecily Kinnaman (Cha-Cha- OPENING) is thrilled to be playing Cha-Cha in *Grease!* Her most recent role with Places! Productions was the Queen in *Cinderella*. When she's not on stage, she's in the ballet studio perfecting her technique. She'd like to thank Allison and the amazing *Grease* crew for all their support and for believing in her!

Neelan Kumar (Patti- OPENING) was born in 2009 in Gilbert, Arizona and has lived in Mesa her whole life. She started taking voice lessons in August of 2017 and continued for 4 years. She then became interested in piano and began lessons in 2018 and continued taking lessons until 2021. Neelan is a student at BASIS Mesa and is currently learning the tenor saxophone in her band class. At school, she has been given many awards, such as citizenship and kindness certificates. Neelan joined NJHS in the 7th grade and became historian and parliamentarian of the organization in her 8th grade year. Neelan enjoys spending time with her family and friends, hiking, target shooting, and traveling. Neelan has visited many countries such as Italy, Switzerland, India, France, and Iran. Neelan joined Places! Productions in 2021 and has since been in *Pinkalicious*, *The Little Match Girl*, *Les Miserables*, *The Secret Garden*, *At The Bandstand*, *Mary Poppins*, *We Are Monsters*, *The Addams Family*, and is currently in *Grease*.

Alexis Martin (Miss Lynch- OPENING) is thrilled to be back to Places! for *Grease!!* She is an incoming junior at BASIS Mesa, and over three years became a leader in her school's theater program after starring in the *Wizard of Oz* as Dorothy, Belle in *Beauty and the Beast*, and Miss Honey in *Matilda*. Other favorite roles at Places! include *At the Bandstand* (Robin), *The Addams Family* (Long John Addams), and ensemble in *Les Miserables*. She would like to thank Allison, Mills, Jung, Stephanie, Joseph, and the entire Places! Production team!

Hyrum McClure (Kenickie) will be starting his senior year at ALA GN where he is busy with the Varsity Ballroom team, Jazz Choir, and the Theatre department. Some of his favorite musical roles have included Mr Krabs in *SpongeBob the Musical*, Gomez Addams in *The Addams Family*, Sebastian in *The Little Mermaid*, Albert Peterson in *Bye Bye Birdie*, and George Banks in *Mary Poppins*. His role of Kenickie marks his 6th production at Places! and he loves working with the staff and his fellow performers. Hyrum would like to thank his family and friends for their continued love and support.

Tegan McGrail (Frenchy- CLOSING) is a 17-year-old homeschooled student in Mesa. This is her twenty-first production and first with Places! Productions. She most recently was seen as Martha Dunnstock in *Heathers* and previously as Margot in *Legally Blonde* at Chandler Youth Theater. Other past favorite roles include Wednesday Addams in *The Addams Family Young at Part* at Spark Performing Arts, and Laverne in *Xanadu Jr* at East Valley Children's Theatre. When she's not performing, she loves singing & songwriting, playing the ukulele and piano, hanging out with her friends, and playing with her dog, Indie. She's excited to play Frenchy and be a fellow Pink Lady in *Grease!*

Ellee McGinn (Jan- CLOSING) is so excited for her first show here at Places! She was previously in *Carrie the Musical* at NAU in the spring. She will be back at NAU next year still doing theater. She was very happy and blessed that she got to meet new people and make friends during this process. She is also sad that this is her first and last summer that she could do a show with Places! but happy that she got this experience.

Josie Poehls (Jan- OPENING) is extremely excited to be back on stage with Places! Productions. She was recently seen in *Urinetown* and *Cinderella* at Places! Josie is a recent high school graduate and will be attending college in the fall to study film and psychology. She has done 2 years at Presto and helped with Ping for 1 year! Josie is sad to leave the Places! stage as a performer, but ready to see what else lies ahead as she attends school in Minnesota!

Izzy Redwitz (Rizzo- OPENING) is so excited to perform as Rizzo in *Grease!* She has been in theatre for a little over four years now, and is so grateful for the opportunity to be at Places! Some of her favorite roles include the Fairy Godmother in Rodger and Hammerstein's *Cinderella*, Alice in *The Addams Family*, Ensemble in *Les Miserables*, and Josephine Strong in *Urinetown*. She would like to thank everyone who made this show what it is and everyone who came to watch the show. She hopes they enjoy!

Piper Searcy (Sandy- CLOSING) has been in love with musical theater from a young age. She is so incredibly excited to be playing Sandy in *Grease!* She has been doing shows with Places! for almost three years now and couldn't have asked for a better experience! Some of her favorite performances are *Les Misérables*, *Urinetown*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, and now *Grease!* Outside of theater, Piper loves to bake and she loves learning French! She'd like to thank her friends and family for being so supportive of her passion!

Savannah Springer (Marty- OPENING), 15-year-old with a big heart and a wicked sense of humor, Savannah is thrilled to make her Places! debut as Marty in *Grease!* She's been

performing in her living room since age 2 and on stages across the Valley since she was 6. Past favorite roles include Gertrude McFuzz (*Seussical Jr.*), Catherine of Aragon (*Six*), Roxie Hart (*Chicago: Teen Edition*) and Narrator (*Joseph...Dream Coat*). When not dancing and singing—even in her sleep—Savannah loves softball, guitar, spending time with friends and family and cuddling her zoo of small dogs.

Jayda Vannoy (Cha-Cha-CLOSING) is a sixteen-year-old junior at LFPA High School. This is Jayda's 8th performance with Places! Productions. She started out playing Nancy in *Bye Bye Birdie*, Sweep 4 in *Mary Poppins*, The Poor in *Urinetown*, Gargoyle in *We are Monsters*, Cousin Helga in *Addams Family*, Leopard in *Narnia*, and *Cinderella*. Some of her other performances include Jane Fairfax in *Emma*, Meg March Little Women, (Gaelyn- Legally Blonde). Besides doing theater Jayda loves being in Show Choir with Places! Production, enjoys playing video games. Jayda wants to thank everyone at Places! Productions. Being here has been truly inspiring for her. Being around such great talent has been good for her confidence. She would also like to thank her mom for being beside her every step of the way and for taking her to all her rehearsals.

Allie Weid (Marty- CLOSING) is entering her senior year at Desert Ridge High School. She's happy to be back on stage with her Places! friends. Her favorite roles include Penelope Pennywise in *Urinetown*, Anne Boleyn in *Six*, and Eponine in *Les Miserables*.

Audrey Williams (Student) loves theatre and always has a good time doing all of the Places! Productions shows. She has been in many shows including *Legally Blonde*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Sweeney Todd*, *SpongeBob the Musical*, and many more. Audrey goes to American Leadership Academy where she does theatre along with ballroom. Audrey would like to thank her family and her friends for always supporting her.

PRODUCTION BIOS

Isabella Bluesky Brewer (Stage Manager) is so happy to be working with Places! Productions, the very people who made her fall in love with theater. She is currently attending California Institute of the Arts to get her BFA in Experience Design and Production with specialization Emphasis in Stage Management & Sound Design. She will be going into her sophomore year of college in the Fall and cannot thank the Places! team enough for an amazing opportunity to practice what she loves over the summer. Special thanks to her family and friends for always supporting her.

Jung Lee (Music Director) is a passionate music educator, performer, and director with many years of experience teaching voice and piano. She has served as a longtime music director at her church, where she leads choirs, musicals, and worship music. This spring, she adjudicated piano students for the Arizona Study Program at ASU and recently enjoyed teaching the vocal music for *Grease*. Jung is honored to be part of the Places! Productions team and is dedicated to inspiring the next generation of performers through music and the arts.

Heather McArthur (Program Director) is delighted to be working once again with *Places! Productions*. Most recently, she co-choreographed *Narnia the Musical* and last summer's *The Addams Family – Young@Part* for the company. While musical theatre has always held a special place in her heart, classical ballet has been Heather's true calling. She danced professionally for five years with Nevada Ballet Theatre and for seven years with Ballet Arizona. During that time, she performed both lead and supporting roles in *Giselle*, *Fairy Doll*, *Peter Pan*, *Cinderella*, *Swan Lake*, *Coppélia*, *Don Quixote*, *Raymonda*, *Les Sylphides*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *La Sylphide*, and of course, *The Nutcracker*. She also had the privilege of dancing in George Balanchine's *Rubies*, *Theme and Variations*, *Serenade*, *The Four Temperaments*, *La Valse*, *Divertimento No. 15*, *Concerto Barocco*, and *La Sonnambula*. After retiring from the stage in 2010 to start a family, Heather began teaching and choreographing ballet at all levels across the Valley. She currently teaches the highest-level dancers at Studio R in Mesa. Three years ago, she launched her own business, Classical Ballet Beginnings, which brings ballet to grade school students directly within their schools. Heather is the proud mother of three daughters—her middle daughter, Farrah, frequently performs with *Places!* She would like to thank Allison Houston and the *Places!* board for the opportunity to work with such a talented and inspiring group of artists.

Tim Mills (Assistant Director) is a proud Assistant Director for *Places! Productions*. He is also a junior high teacher at LFPA-Gilbert where he also helps with Musical Theatre. His assistant directing credits with *Places!* before *Grease* include *Annie Jr.*, *Aladdin Jr.*, *Hairspray Jr.*, *The Happiest Place on Earth*, *Footloose*, *Shrek the Musical*, the short film *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *We Will Rock You*, *Legally Blonde Jr.*, *Les Miserables*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, *Mary Poppins Jr.*, *The Addams Family*, *Narnia the Musical*, and *Cinderella*. His *Places!* directing credits include the one-act play *Remember Me* and the musical *Beauty and the Beast Jr.* He has enjoyed being a part of *Places!* since the beginning and watching the theatre grow and having the privilege to work with such fine young actors! "A big thank you to all casts for your efforts and desire to grow into even better performers! Thank you to our audiences for supporting the arts and *Places!* Enjoy the shows!"

Stephanie Smith Nguyen (Choreographer) is a choreographer, arts administrator, and dance anthropologist. She holds an MA in Dance Knowledge, Practice and Heritage from Choreomundus (a consortium of universities in France, Hungary, Norway, and the UK). Stephanie has worked with dance studios, touring teams, theatre companies, universities, and art exhibits around the world in just about every aspect of the creative process! She is passionate about the historical contexts of movement and how embodying dance from the past provides insights on humanity today. Stephanie is over-the-moon excited to be working on her first show with *Places! Productions*.

Allison Zuccaro (Director) is the Founding Artistic Director of *Places! Productions*, about to celebrate its 10th anniversary! She graduated from ASU in 2012 with a BM in Music Theatre and Minor in Justice Studies and performed as a member of Actors' Equity Association before deciding her heart was truly in teaching and directing. She currently runs an award-winning private voice studio in Queen Creek and directs *Places! Productions'* show choir. Between performing and directing, she has now worked on over 100 shows. She thanks the amazingly talented *Grease* cast, crew, and production team

(Wow, that was a lot of dancing in two weeks!), the Places! Board, all of our incredible volunteers and donors, her brilliant parents, her supportive husband John and sweet baby Zoe, YOU for supporting the arts, and Liz Rhodes, who always encouraged Allison to pursue her dreams.

Jim Jacobs (Book, Music and Lyrics). Jacobs, who created Grease (in 1970) with Warren Casey, was born and raised on the mean streets of Chicago's far northwest side. During the golden era of rock 'n' roll (1956-1960) he was a guitar-playing "greaser" student at Taft High School. In 1963, Jacobs met Warren Casey when they were both cast in a local theatre production of A Shot in the Dark. Seven years later they wrote what was to become one of the greatest musicals of all time. Grease opened in 1971 in a former trolley barn called the Kingston Mines Theatre in Chicago. A year later, Grease made it to Broadway and "Greasemania" took off, resulting in one of the longest running shows in Broadway history. The 1978 movie became and remains the highest grossing movie musical of all time. Originally an actor, Jacobs has been seen on television, in motion pictures, regional theatre, national tours, and on Broadway. He is the co-author of several other plays and musicals including Island of Lost Coeds, a musical spoof of the low budget sci-fi/horror/jungle movies of the 1950s, which he wrote with Warren Casey. In May 2014, Mr. Jacobs was presented with an honorary doctorate degree from Columbia College in Chicago. He currently resides in Southern California and remains active in the theatre, especially with the American Theatre Company of Chicago.

Warren Casey (Author, Composer and Lyricist) was born in Yonkers, New York, and attended Syracuse University. During the late '50s, he learned all about "greasers" while working as an art teacher in upstate New York. He moved to Chicago in 1962, where he hoped to pursue an acting career. He appeared in dozens of productions, including creating the role of Bernie Litko in David Mamet's Sexual Perversity in Chicago. He supported himself with jobs in retail, including working as an assistant manager of a chain of apparel stores, and as a record salesman. In the meantime, he taught himself how to play the guitar and began writing songs. Mr. Casey acted with the Chicago Stage Guild (where he met Jim Jacobs), the Old Town Players, and the Kingston Mines Theatre. The latter company staged the original production of GREASE which he wrote with Jim Jacobs.