

Pen Pals

Time:

November 10, 2002

Place:

Secaucus, New Jersey and Sheffield, England

JODI BENSON (*Bernie*) Jodi is blessed and honored to be the recipient of the prestigious Disney Legend Award and proud to serve The Walt Disney Company for the past 38 amazing years. Jodi has received worldwide recognition as the beloved singing and speaking voice of Ariel in the Academy Award winning Disney animated film, *The Little Mermaid* as well as the bubbly voice of Barbie in Disney Pixar's *Toy Story II* (Golden Globe Best Animated Film) and the Academy Award winning film, *Toy Story 3* as the effervescent voice of Barbie for Disney/Pixar. She also gave life to the spirited Weebo in Disney's live action *Flubber* co-starring the brilliant Robin Williams.

Ms. Benson returned as Ariel with all of the Disney Princesses for the first time ever in Disney's hit *Wreck it Ralph 2: Ralph Breaks the Internet*. For Warner Brothers, she created the title voice of Thumbelina and Jodi made a special cameo appearance in the new live action feature for Disney *The Little Mermaid*. Jodi's other film projects include *The Little Mermaid III*, *The Little Mermaid II: Return To The Sea* as Ariel, *Lady and The Tramp II* as Lady, *101 Dalmatians II* as Anita, DreamWorks's animated video *Joseph: King of Dreams* as his wife Asenath and in *Balto II* and *III* as Jenna. She appears as Sam, (Patrick Dempsey's Assistant) in Disney's feature film *Enchanted*. Jodi was honored to introduce the Emmy nominated 30th Anniversary celebration "The Little Mermaid Live" ABC television special event. She currently stars as Ariel in the *Lego Princess Series* of movies for Disney+.

Ms. Benson received a Tony Award and a Helen Hayes Award nomination for Best Actress in a Musical for creating the starring role of Polly Baker in the Tony Award winning Broadway Gershwin musical *Crazy For You*. Jodi was thrilled to recently star as Rose in *Gypsy* in upstate NY playing opposite her daughter, Delaney, starring as Louise. This was their second time performing *Gypsy* together in these iconic mother-daughter roles. Jodi also starred as Dolly Levi in *Hello, Dolly!* to sold out crowds at Steinmetz Hall at the Dr. Phillips Center in Orlando.

Other Broadway credits include: creating the starring role of Doria Hudson in the Howard Ashman/Marvin Hamlisch musical *Smile*, Betty Bursteter in Cy Coleman's *Welcome To The Club*, and Virginia in Kenny Ortega's *Marilyn: An American Fable*.

Internationally, Ms. Benson has had the honor of sharing the stage with her husband Ray Benson in the European Premiere of Gershwin's *My One and Only*, starring as Miss Edythe Herbert. Currently, Jodi just wrapped Season 5 of the Netflix hit series, "Sweet Magnolias" as the character of Iris Maddox, Cal's Mom after guest starring in Season 4.

Her animated television series include starring as Nia in "Wingfeather Saga" (Angel Studios), Disney's "Sofia The First-The Floating Palace" (Queen Emmaline & Ariel), Cartoon Network's Emmy Award winning hit "Camp Lazlo" as the voices of Patsy Smiles, Jane Doe and Almondine, the Emmy Award winning "The Little Mermaid", "Pepper Ann", "Pirates of Dark Water" (Hanna-Barbera), "P.J. Sparkles", Disney's "Hercules" as Helen of Troy, "Batman Beyond", "The Grim Adventures of Billy and Mandy", "The Wild Thornberry's" and many others.

On the concert stage, Ms. Benson recently performed for her fifth time at the incredible Hollywood Bowl with Disney's 80s-90s Celebration, starred in *The Little Mermaid Live in Concert to Film* also at the Hollywood Bowl to sold out crowds of 18,000 fans and in Tokyo & Osaka with the brilliant Alan Menken. She fulfilled her childhood dream by singing at Carnegie Hall with the illustrious New York Pops. Jodi had the honor of appearing as the guest soloist at the Kennedy Center Honors for Miss Ginger Rogers. Jodi has performed with symphonies all over the world including The Philly Pops (Conductor Peter Nero), The National Symphony (Conductor Marvin Hamlisch), Toronto, Cleveland, Dallas, Tokyo Philharmonic, San Francisco and Chicago.

Ms. Benson is honored to be the resident guest soloist for the Walt Disney Company, Disney Cruise Line, ambassador for feature animation, narrator for Candlelight Processional at Walt Disney World and a member of the Disney family. She is thrilled to accept her new position with the Company as the D23 Fan Ambassador. Jodi has her book available Part of My World with behind the scenes inside stories which highlight the many amazing people along her journey. www.partofmyworldbook.com

Jodi gives thanks and praise to God for her family, friends, for her loving husband of 41 years, Ray, and her amazing children; daughter Delaney and son McKinley & his wife Mackenzie. IG: [jodi.benson](https://www.instagram.com/jodi.benson) FB: Jodi Benson

MARCIA MITZMAN GAVEN (*Mags*) Marcia Mitzman Gaven received a Tony Award nomination for her performance as Mrs. Walker in the Broadway smash *Tommy* directed by Des McAnuff and was praised by music critics for her "show stopping performance" on the Grammy winning original cast recording. During her Broadway career, she has starred as Svetlana in *Chess* directed by Trevor Nunn, (Broadway Cast album), The Widow in *Zorba* with Anthony Quinn, Rizzo in *Grease*, and Carol in Cy Coleman's, *Welcome To The Club*. Off -Broadway credits include Audrey in *Little Shop Of Horrors* by Alan Menken and Howard Ashman. At Lincoln Center she was mentored by opera diva Beverly Sills who recruited Marcia to star in several New York City Opera productions in their Broadway Show Series. Marcia won critical raves as Nellie in *South Pacific*, Meg in *Brigadoon* opposite Tony Roberts, and Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeny Todd* for Harold Prince. Marcia is known by Los Angeles audiences for her

starring role as Mother in the American premiere of *Ragtime*, for which she won the Ovation Award for Best Lead Actress, and starred opposite Roger Rees, as Abigail Adams in *1776* at Reprise! Also in Los Angeles, Marcia won the Ovation award and L.A. Drama Critics Circle award for Best Lead Actress as Florence in *Chess*. She was Countess Charlotte in *A Little Night Music* with Glynis Johns at the Doolittle Theatre and created the role of Mrs. Walker in La Jolla Playhouse's hit *The Who's Tommy* before re-creating the role on Broadway. Most recently, Marcia starred as Judy Garland in *The Boy From Oz* at OFC Theatre NY. Marcia's work includes numerous film and television credits and her extensive voice over work can be heard in animation (she voiced the roles of Maude Flanders, Helen Lovejoy, Luann Van Hooten and Miss Hoover in "The Simpsons") and in countless commercials and promos.

PAIGE DAVIS (*u/s Bernie, Mags*) - Broadway: *Boeing-Boeing* (Gloria), *Chicago* (Roxie). National tours: *Sweet Charity* (Charity), *The Vagina Monologues*, *Beauty and the Beast* (Babette). Favorite Regional: *An Act Of God* (God) at Arizona Theater Company (Directed by Marsha Mason), *Always*, *Patsy Cline* (Louise), title role in *Hello, Dolly* at Pioneer Theatre Company, title role in *The Drowsy Chaperone* at Pittsburgh CLO, and the title role in *Mame* at North Shore Music Theater. Senga in the world premiere of *Dancing Lessons* at Barrington Stage Co., April in *Company* at Missouri Repertory Theater, Val in *A Chorus Line* at Austin Music Theater, and Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Chicago Cultural Center. Television/Film: Emmy Award-nominated host of "Home Made Simple" (OWN). Host: "Home and Family" (Hallmark). Host: "Trading Spaces" (TLC). FBI: "Most Wanted", "The Unicorn", "Being Michael Madsen". Her book, *Paige by Paige* spent several weeks on The New York Times Best Seller list.

LOUIS B. CROCCO (*Production Stage Manager*) National Tours: *A Soldiers Play* starring Norm Lewis, *All Things Equal - The Life and Trials of Ruth Bader Ginsburg*, and *Menopause the Musical*. NYC Off-Broadway: *Just Sex*, *Piggy Nation*, and *Pretención*.

When not stage managing Louis is a podcast host for *The Loyal Littles Podcast*
www.loyallittlespod.com

He is also an accomplished Actor / Musician / Director who has been involved in over 100 productions including 15 National and International tours. Favorites include *Disney's High School Musical*, *Rent* (Japan Cast), *Irving Berlin's White Christmas*, and *Cheek to Cheek* (NYC Off-Broadway). He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Music / Theatre Education from Hartwick College in Oneonta, NY. He would like to thank Megan for her continued love and support, and Rose Riccardi and LDK Productions for this amazing opportunity!

MICHAEL GRIFFO (*Playwright*) is overjoyed to bring Bernie & Mags to NYC! Other plays include *9th Street Water*, *The Date*, *No More Sundays* – NJ Perry Award Best Original Play, *Can Dina Even Spell Afghanistan?* – Reva Shiner Comedy Award finalist. His High School plays – *Material Girls* and *Promapocalypse!* – are licensed by TheatricalRights.com. He has published 15 novels including *Unnatural*, *Moonglow*, and *The Ferrara Family Mysteries*. His new series set in Positano, Italy includes *Murder In*

An Italian Village and *Murder In An Italian Café*. Screenplays include *The Silver Reindeer* and *Holiday High School Reunion*. For Mom and Sheila.

SUZANNE BARABAS (*Director*) is the Artistic Director of New Jersey Rep. For NJ Rep, SuzAnne directed *Two-Hander* (premiere), *Find Me a Voice*, *North Fork* (premiere), *Immortal Interlude* (premiere), *Octet* (premiere), *Till Morning Comes* (premiere), *Maggie Rose*, *Getting in Touch With My Inner B*tch* (starring Christine Lavin, premiere), *The Adjustment*, *10% of Molly Snyder*, *Romulus Linney's Klonsky & Schwartz*, *Apostasy* (premiere), *Women Who Steal*, *Apple*, *The Housewives of Mannheim* (premiere), *Evie's Waltz*, *Dead Ringer* (premiere), *Steven Dietz's Yankee Tavern*, *Puma* (premiere), *Night Train* (premiere), *Just In Time: The Judy Holliday Story*, *Bakersfield Mist*, *Annapurna*, *Happy*, *Broomstick* (premiere), *Lucky Me* (premiere), *Swimming at the Ritz* (US premiere), and *The Realization of Emily Linder* (premiere). SuzAnne directed productions of *The Housewives of Mannheim* at 59E59 Theater (NYC), Ensemble Theater of Santa Barbara (CA), and Phoenix Theater (Indianapolis). In addition, she directed regional productions of *Ibsen's A Doll's House*, *The Fantasticks*, *The Roar of the Greasepaint the Smell of the Crowd*, *Cabaret*, *Shaw's Heartbreak House*, *A.R. Gurney's The Perfect Party*, *Marsha Norman's 'Night Mother*, *Philip Barry's The Philadelphia Story*, *Christopher Durang's Beyond Therapy*, *Mark Dunn's Belles*, *Lee Blessing's Down the Road* among others. She is a member of Actors Equity Association, BMI, the Dramatists Guild, SDC, and LPTW.

JESSICA PARKS (*NJ Rep Scene Design*) has been a professional theater designer since 2003 and has served as the resident scenic designer at New Jersey Repertory Company since 2010. NYC credits include *Fern Hill* (Michael Tucker), *Butler*, *The Housewives of Mannheim*, *Jericho*, and *Poetic License* at 59E59 Theaters; *The End of Hester* at The Lion Theatre at Theatre Row (upcoming November production); *Brecht: Call & Respond* at Paradise Factory Theatre; and Dan Lauria's *Dinner with the Boys* at The Acorn Theater. New Jersey Repertory Company designs include *Your Name Means Dream*, *Memoirs of a Forgotten Man*, *Wolf at the Door*, *The Jag*, *Swimming at the Ritz*, *Happy*, and *Broomstick*. Jessica continues to bring her innovative artistry to stages across New York and New Jersey.

DAVID C. WOOLARD (*Costume Consultant*) received Tony Award nominations for *The Rocky Horror Show* and *The Who's Tommy*. He has designed over 20 shows on Broadway and over 200 shows around the world, including *West Side Story*, *Damn Yankees*, the operas *Diving Bell*, *Cold Mountain*, *Everest*. In addition to his Tony nominations, Mr. Woolard has won a Drama Desk Award, the Henry Hewes Design Awards and was nominated for an Olivier Award. For additional credits, please visit <http://davidcwoolard.com>.

JILL NAGLE (*NJ Rep Lighting Design*) New York City credits include designs at Theatre Row, 59E59, The Westside Arts, La Mama, Bank Street, The School of Dramatic Arts, The Pulse, and the NY Shakespeare Festival. Jill is the Resident Lighting Designer at NJ Repertory Company and Technical Director at Montclair Kimberly Academy. Jill has also designed numerous shows for Chester Theater, Luna Stage,

Dreamcatcher Repertory, The Theater Project, Montclair State University, and New Jersey City University.

NICHOLAS SIMONE (*NJ Rep Sound Design*) NJ Rep resident sound designer and chief audio engineer for Fenix Studios in Staten Island. Shows include *A Progressive Love Story*, *The Norwegians*, *North to Maine*, *IYOM*, *Wild Children*, *Time Travelers Trip to Niagara*, *The Diorama*, *Shakespeare's Hamlet at Bryant Park*, *Extreme Weather*, *Don't Dress for Dinner*, *Villainous Company*, *Capone*, & *Romantic Trapezoid*. Teaching Artist: Roundabout Theatre Company, Apollo Theater, and Sundog Theatre specializing in sound design and musical disciplines. He has credits on multiple albums, films, broadcasts, streaming, music videos, and mobile apps and has worked with up-and-coming talent and platinum-selling artists in different genres, from Lorde to Coldplay.

RED RISING (*Marketing Management*) develops campaigns for live entertainment and events. Select current/past clients include *A Guide for the Homesick*, *Mama I'm A Big Girl Now*, *A Guide for the Homesick*, *Kowalski*, *Katsura Sunshine's Rakugo*, *Okuni*, *The Life and Slimes of Marc Summers*, *Tennessee Williams's The Night of the Iguana*, *Anthony Rapp's Without You*, *Jersey Boys*, *Emergence*, *Tripping On Life*, *Love + Science*, *Little Girl Blue*, *A Bronx Tale*, *Summer: The Donna Summer Musical*, *Showstoppers!* and *A Letter to Harvey Milk*. 25 years in, Michael Redman has worked on over 400 theatrical projects. www.redrisingnyc.com.

JT PUBLIC RELATIONS (*Publicity/Co-Producer*) was founded by Joe Trentacosta in 2014 and represents projects on and Off-Broadway, National Tours, as well as developmental and industry presentations, film releases, special events, and non-profit organizations. Recent/ current projects include *A Guide for The Homesick*, *Mama, I'm A Big Girl Now!*, *Godless* (Film), *Pen Pals* (co-producer), *Katsura Sunshine's Rakugo* (Executive Producer), *Okuni*, *The Life and Slimes of Marc Summers*, *Tennessee Williams's The Night of the Iguana*, *Anthony Rapp's Without You*. Theatre companies Urban Stages, Theatre Breaking Through Barriers, Houses on the Moon, NJ Rep, Argyle Theatre, and SAY. He is currently in development for the new musical *Six Triple Eight*.

LDK PRODUCTIONS (*General Manager*) is a NYC-based theatrical general management and production firm founded in 2007. Select recent/upcoming credits include *Pen Pals*, *A Guide for the Homesick*, *Cellino v. Barnes*, *The Life and Slimes of Marc Summers*, *White Rose: The Musical*, *The Night of the Iguana* (directed by Emily Mann), Patrick Olson's *Emergence: Things Are Not As They Seem*, *Anthony Rapp's Without You*, *Eisenhower: This Piece of Ground*, *Little Girl Blue*, *Katsura Sunshine's Rakugo*, *Be More Chill*, the immersive theatrical adaptation of the film *Sideways*, *A Lovely Sunday for Creve Coeur*, and *A Letter to Harvey Milk*. LDKProductions.com.

LISA DOZIER SHACKET (*Producer*) founded LDK Productions, a NYC-based theatrical management and producing firm, in 2007. Select recent credits: *Mama, I'm A Big Girl Now!*, *The Life and Slimes of Marc Summers*, *Anthony Rapp's Without You* (US and Japan), *Tennessee Williams's The Night of the Iguana*, *White Rose the*

Musical, Eisenhower: This Piece of Ground, Little Girl Blue, Katsura Sunshine's Rakugo, Be More Chill (Off-Broadway, Broadway, West End), the immersive theatrical adaptation of the film *Sideways*, *A Lovely Sunday for Creve Coeur*, *A Letter to Harvey Milk* (NY and UK). Lisa was the founding producing director of the regional theatre Miami New Drama and was the general manager of the National Alliance for Musical Theatre's Festival of New Musicals for eleven years. LDKProductions.com.

RACHEL STANGE (*Co-Producer*) began her career as a reporter for CBS News affiliate KWTX 10 in Waco, Texas. She made the move to New York working there with high-profile news organizations: CBS News, Entertainment Tonight and CBS Entertainment. She is also a two-time Telly Award winner for her work as writer and producer on cable show "Jamie deRoy & friends". Rachel's passion for the arts led her to a career change to theater. She is proud to be the conceiver and lead producer of the new musical *Esther*, which had its regional premier in Houston, Texas last year. Other theater credits include: *Mama, I'm a Big Girl Now!*, *Chasing Jack* and *Godspell* (Broadway). In film she is a producer on the documentary *Broadway: Beyond the Golden Age* which aired on PBS' Great Performances. She is a member of The League of Professional Theatre Women, T.R.U. Producers and sits on the board of the Abingdon Theatre Company in New York.

LOGAN DEWITT (*Associate Producer*) Assistant General Manager at LDK Productions. LIU Post Alumni. "We were girls together".

ANTHONY HAZZARD and SCOTT STOLZENBERG (*Co- Producers*) Proud sponsors of the arts! Theater: *Godspell* (Circle in the Square), *Pen Pals* (Theater at St. Clement's), Roundabout Theatre Company, Manhattan Theatre Club, Lincoln Center Theater, Encores. Film: *Broadway Beyond the Golden Age*, *Elaine Stritch*, *Sesame Street*. TV: "Reading Rainbow". Music: Pippin-revival, Lea DeLaria, Aaron Lazar, Marin Mazzie and Jason Danieley.

HOLLY GARMAN (*Co-Producer*) is thrilled to be working on this beautiful production with such an incredible team! With an exceptionally diverse background both as a theater producer and a press representative, Holly has worked with La Mama Experimental Theater Club, McCarter Theatre Center, George Street Playhouse, Long Wharf Theatre and Arena Stage to name a few. Broadway: *CHESS* (Imperial Theater), *Just In Time* (Circle in the Square). Off Broadway: *American Dreams*, *Border People* (Working Theater), *Miracle in Rwanda* (Theatre Row, Lightweight (SoHo Rep). Non-Profit: The Eliza Project (Hamilton & Graham Windham partnership), the documentary film *Sharing Our Stories*, The Broadway Brews Project (featuring the casts of *Hamilton*, *Waitress & Come From Away*) and Arts in the Armed Forces with founder Adam Driver. She is the proud co-conceiver and lead producer of *Six Triple Eight: A New Musical*.

MICHAEL GRAF (*Co-Producer*) has contributed to a range of acclaimed productions across stage and screen. With a career rooted in entertainment and a passion for storytelling, *Pen Pals* marks another step in a journey dedicated to dynamic and diverse artistic expression. Recent projects include *The Roommate* and *Reincarnation Blues* (a new musical in development). Thank you to my daughters for inspiring me to stay curious and take chances - I love you so much.

CHERIE LINDLEY (*Co- Producer*) Proud to be a first time off-Broadway producer. Also involved in a new musical entitled *Esther*, which had its premiere in Houston, Texas last fall.

NEW JERSEY REPERTORY COMPANY (*Producer*) was founded in 1997 by SuzAnne and Gabor Barabas. Its current central headquarters is the Lumia Theater, located on lower Broadway in Long Branch. The theater's mission is to develop and produce new plays and to make a lasting contribution to the American Stage. Over two decades, NJ Rep has produced 152 plays, of which 128 have been world premieres. The theater has the additional distinction of having had many of its plays produced by other theaters around the country, totaling over 200 subsequent productions in the US and overseas. In 2012 and 2018, NJ Rep was the recipient of a National Theater Company Grant from the American Theater Wing that sponsors the annual Tony Awards for Broadway in recognition of its contribution to the repertoire of the American Stage. Only seven theaters have had this distinction. In addition, the theater has presented over 400 developmental readings as well as introduced 136 new works through its Theatre Brut Short-Play Festivals that focus on visionary and avant-garde works. NJRep acquired a new property, a 28,000 square foot school situated on 2 ½ acres and located just five minutes from its Main Stage Lumia Theater and two blocks from the Jersey Shore. The theater plans on gradually transforming the school in stages into a cultural center that will house additional performance spaces, an art cinema, an art museum, a rooftop café, an arts education wing, and residences for out-of-town actors and playwrights. When completed, the center will present a wide array of programs in acting, playwriting, art, sculpture, poetry, music, and photography and will serve as a catalyst for economic development and as the foundation for the cultural renaissance of the community.

HEIRESS PRODUCTIONS, INC. (*Producer*) is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization founded in 2006 by Laura Faith and Mary Willis White as a bold fusion of their passion for theatre and their mission to support the cancer community. Prior to *Pen Pals*, Heiress produced seven off-Broadway productions in the heart of NYC's theatre district. In addition to their work on stage, Heiress recently produced their first short film, *Hold*. *Hold* stars Emmy and Tony Award winner Debra Monk, and is currently garnering awards and acclaim on the film festival circuit. At Heiress Productions, we're proud to be "*fighting cancer, one show at a time...*" heiressproductions.com

Staff for *PEN PALS*

Opening Night December 11, 2024

**GENERAL MANAGEMENT
LDK PRODUCTIONS**

Lisa Dozier Shacket
Michael Shannon
Logan DeWitt Jonathan Amable
Paul Bakey Michele Metzger
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Production Stages ManagerLouis B. Crocco
Assistant Stage ManagerAlexandrea Hess Rodriguez
Assistant Lighting DesignerJaney Huber
Production Electrician..... Tom Dyer

Banking.....City National Bank/Roberto Larrinaga Yocom
Production Photographer.....Russ Rowland
Payroll Service.....Checks&Balances/Sarah Galbraith
Jennifer Kemp
Bookkeeper.....LDK Productions/Jonathan Amable

Insurance..... Risk Strategies/Dewitt Stern Entertainment/Anthony Pittari

CREDITS

Additional Lighting instruments provided by Hayden Production Services

Prop Rentals by NJ Repertory Company

Curtains by Rosebrand

SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks to Evan Bergman, Maria Cameron, Farrah Cukor, Megan Dettmer, Tom Dyer, Kate O'Carroll, Jason Marsh, Sarah Schetter, Elizabeth Weidner, Alice Whitley.



THE ACTORS AND STAGE MANAGERS EMPLOYED IN THIS PRODUCTION ARE MEMBERS OF ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION, THE UNION OF PROFESSIONAL ACTORS AND STAGE MANAGERS IN THE UNITED STATES.



The Director is a member of the **STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY**, a national theatrical labor union.