

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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*The Strange Tree Group Ecstatically Presents...*

## Hey! Mr. Spaceman!

*A Trapeze-Infused-1950's-Robot-Monster-Movie-Rock-Musical of Epic Proportions!*

When a robot boy escapes his vicious Martian captors and flees to the surface of earth, the town of Riverview, Illinois believes itself to be under attack. As local teens attempt to save themselves from the horror of villainous space-invaders, one lonely earth girl discovers that you don't need a human heart to love. Come and join us as we transform The Building Stage into the Riverview Drive-In Movie Theatre. Gaze amazed as Martian women dangle precariously above the stage, taste the flavors of the 50's at our nostalgic "Snack Shack", bop along to songs about annihilation, love and lasers performed by our hep house band and experience *TERROR! TERROR! TERROR!* in 3 outstanding dimensions as live performers scare up a hearty dose of Halloween fun mere feet from your own seat!

**Location:** The Building Stage  
412 N. Carpenter  
Chicago, IL 60642  
[www.buildingstage.com](http://www.buildingstage.com)

**Show Dates:** October 8-11, 15-18, 22-25 & 29-31, 2009  
Opening Night and Reception on Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>. Closing Performance & Robot Halloween Party is on Saturday, October 31<sup>ST</sup> with special guests Susie Gomez and Her Multiple Cats providing rockabilly dance tunes after the show, a robot box monster costume contest (with a goody bag of nostalgic gifts for the most creative robot costume) and 1950's Sci-Fi movies shown on the big screen!

**Show Times:** Performances are Thursday through Sunday. Shows from Thursday– Saturday start at 8PM. Sunday shows start at 7PM. Box Office opens 60 minutes prior to show time. Doors open 30 minutes prior to performances. Performances will start promptly at scheduled times.

**Tickets:** Individual tickets are \$20 and can be purchased in advance starting Tuesday, September 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2009 online at <http://www.strangetree.org>. A limited number of VIR (Very Important Robot) passes will be available for \$50 online. (\$50 VIR passes include reserved 'front of car' seating, a limited edition screen print poster signed by the artist, playwright and cast as well as complimentary old-fashioned soda pop, popcorn and nostalgic 50's candy from the Snack Shack. A limited amount of walk-up tickets will be available on a 'first come, first serve' basis at the door 30 minutes prior to show time. Thursday nights are Industry nights with \$15 dollar tickets available with headshot/resume and may be purchased at the door. Visit <http://www.strangetree.org> or call 773-598-8240 for ticket questions or availability.

**Cast:**

Robot Boy	Michael Downey
Snack Jerk	Weston Davis*
Jean Jenkins	Kate Nawrocki*
Dale	Cory Aiello
Connie	Delia Baseman*
Wayne	Stuart Ritter
Violet	Elizabeth Bagby
Fred	Todd Aiello
Joyce	Emily Schwartz*
Mike	Charles Filipov
Larry	Marvin Astorga
Queen Z	Jenifer Henry
Zola	Beth Stare
Zilla	Sarah Scanlon
Mr. Announcer	Maurice Basel
The Band	Marvin Astorga, Elizabeth Bagby, Noah Ginex, Thomas Zeitner**, with an assist from cool cats Wes Clark** & Scott Cupper*

<b>Production Team:</b>	Director	Bob Kruse**
	Asst. Director/Videographer	Allan Roysdon**
	Playwright/Songwriter	Emily Schwartz*
	Production Manager	Delia Baseman*
	Stage Manager	Sarah Luse
	Set Designer/Technical Director	Ira Amyx**
	Lighting Designer	Julian Pike*
	Costume Designer	Delia Baseman*
	Aerial Choreography	Beth Stare
	Ground Choreography	Lindsay Frattere
	Musical Arrangement	Thomas Mackey*
	Sound Designer	Emily Schwartz*, Kate Nawrocki*
	Band Leader	Thomas Zeitner**
	House Manager	Becca Phend
	Props Design/Management	Kate Nawrocki*, Marvin Astorga
	Press Photographs	Matthew Liang Chaboud**
	Poster Design	Phineas X. Jones
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\* *Strange Tree Company Members*, \*\* *Strange Tree Associates*

Check for updated materials and high-res downloads on the "Current Show" page at [www.strangetree.org](http://www.strangetree.org), and there's lots of cool stuff at [www.facebook.com/strangetreegroup](http://www.facebook.com/strangetreegroup).

### **About The Strange Tree Group**

The Strange Tree Group is a collective of multifaceted individuals dedicated to creating intricate, intimate theatrical experiences that extend beyond the boundaries of a traditional stage. We produce works that inspire creativity not only in our actors but also in our audience. We Trees embrace the theatricality inherent in live performance and are committed to producing pieces that celebrate the strange and the magical; the dangerous and the fantastical; and the surprisingly usual nature of unusual behavior. The world is full of adventure...let us embark on this one together! See [www.strangetree.org](http://www.strangetree.org) for more information.

### **Cast Biographies:**

#### **Cory Aiello – Dale**

Cory Aiello has been a Chicago actor for four years, having moved here after receiving his B.A. in Theater and Drama from Indiana University. He is originally from Avon, IN. Recent Chicago roles include Friar Laurence in 'Romeo and Juliet' (Purple Bench Productions), Michael in Point of Contention's 'CHAOS' festival, Augie/Milo in 'Blood Sausage' (Corn Productions), and Albany in 'King Lear' (North Region Theater).

#### **Todd Aiello – Fred**

Todd Aiello comes from Avon, Indiana, and is a graduate of Indiana University. Recent Chicago productions in which he's been seen include 'The Abbie Hoffman Died for Our Sins Festival' at Mary Arrchie Theatre, 'Cut to the Quick: Splayed Verbiage' at the Side Project, 'columbinus' at Raven Theatre (Non-Equity Jeff nomination: Best Production, Best Ensemble), 'Just Say Love' at The Balliwick, and 'Tony N Tina's Wedding' at Piper's Alley.

#### **Marvin Astorga - Larry**

Marvin is Amazing.

#### **Elizabeth Bagby – Violet**

Elizabeth Bagby is a Chicago actor, writer, and musician. She last performed with Strange Tree in 'The Mysterious Elephant'. Most recently, she played music in Signal Ensemble's 'Ballad of the Sad Café'; she has also worked with Sansculottes, Right Brain Project, Filament, Raven, Trap Door, Talisman, Theatre 5.2.1, Chicago ScriptWorks, and numerous others. She performs and records as a soloist, as well as with The Afterlife and The Loudness War.

#### **Maurice Basel – Mr. Announcer**

Maurice studied Irrational Conceptualism at the Paris School for the under gifted.

#### **Delia Baseman – Connie**

Delia Baseman (Connie, Costume Design, P.M.) is a proud company member of Strange Tree. With STG she has appeared in, Ghost Stories I & II, The Elephant Play, and the ill-fated Nightmare Before Christmas spectacular. Delia has also worked with numerous companies in Chicago including, Lookingglass, Remy Bumpo, and Collaboraction. Delia is a native East Coaster and would like to thank her family for loaning her to the Midwest for a while. Love to Bobby.

### **Weston Davis – Snack Jerk**

Weston Davis was first cast by Strange Tree for the sheer pleasure of seeing such a large man don a silly little dress. The experience turned out to be so much fun that we've "dragged" him back for nearly every show. You last spotted him as the evil Narrator in *The Mysterious Elephant*. And if you were disappointed by his lack of frilly skirts in the first act, then you know he more than made it up to you after intermission. Which reminds me... we need to write a poodle skirt into Weston's next role, as the Snack Jerk in Strange Tree's upcoming space extravaganza, "Hey! Mr. Spaceman!" Come see it!

### **Michael Downey – Robot Boy**

Michael Downey (Robot Boy) is a recent MFA graduate of the University of South Carolina. Some of his recent credits have been John Pace Seaver in 'The Violet Hour', Katurian in 'The Pillowman', and Touchstone in 'As You Like It'. He is happy to be making his Chicago debut in a Strange Tree production. Michael is thankful to Bob Kruse for helming this play and to Emily Schwartz for writing it! A special thanks to his loving and patient wife Liesl for her continued support.

### **Charles Filipov – Mike**

Charles Filipov, a recent Northwestern grad, is happy to be a part of Hey! Mr. Spaceman! It is his second original musical, his first being *The Types*, an adaptation of *The Breakfast Club*. Other Chicago credits include *Under Milk Wood* (Ensemble), *Be More Chill* (Michael), and *Dead End* (Angel).

### **Jenifer Henry – Queen Z**

Jen is originally from Louisville, Kentucky. She's very happy to be a part of The Strange Tree Group. You may have seen her on stage with STG as Cousin Madeline in last summer's production of 'The Mysterious Elephant...'. Some of her other favorite roles include Beatrice from 'Much Ado About Nothing', and Babe from 'Crimes of the Heart'. Jen has a theatre degree from Butler University, has studied with the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford, England, and is an alumnus of The National Theatre Institute. She would like to thank her friends and family for all their support and love, especially Mr. Harvey, "The World's Oldest Living Bunny". P.S. Glad you could make it!

### **Kate Nawrocki – Jean Jenkins**

Kate Nawrocki has performed in a variety of children's productions with Theatre Classics, Lifeline Theatre, and The Griffin Theatre Company. Other productions include Neil Gaiman's 'Stardust, Angus, Thongs, and Full Frontal Snogging' (2004 Jeff Citation awarded for Actress in a Principal Role) with The Griffin, 'Crossing California' with Lifeline, and 'Under Milk Wood' with Caffeine Theatre. Kate is a company member of the Strange Tree Group and has performed in their productions of 'Funeral Wedding: The Alvin Play', 'Ghost Stories!', 'Ghost Stories II: Crucible the Musible' (both with Aloft Aerial Dance), 'Mr. Spacky...', 'The Man Who Was Continuously Followed by Wolves', 'The Improper Princess Pieces' (with Second Floor Dance), and 'The Mysterious Elephant and the Terrible Tragedy of the Unlikely Addington Twins\* (\*Who Kill Him)'. She also co-designed the Jeff nominated set for Strange Tree's 2009 production of 'The Dastardly Ficus and Other Comedic Tales of Woe and Misery'.

### **Stuart Ritter – Wayne**

Stuart is thrilled to the gills about making his debut with the Strange Tree Group! Hailing from Jenks, Oklahoma; Stuart received a B.A. in Theatre and Drama from Indiana University and a certificate in classical studies from LAMDA. He was an apprentice at the Williamstown Theatre Festival and ensemble member at Chamber Repertory Theatre of Boston, both of Massachusetts. Locally he has worked with Timeline Theatre Co., Provision Theatre Co., Village Players, Historical Perspectives for Children, Pretty Blue Sky, Rogue Theatre, Stage Left Theatre, Keyhole Theatre and The Mill.

### **Sarah Scanlon - Zilla**

Sarah Scanlon is a jack of all trades in the world of fine arts and is thrilled to be joining the Strange Trees again to celebrate Halloween! Sarah holds an MFA in acting from the American Repertory Theatre's Institute and the Moscow Art Theatre School where she focused on integrating highly physical aspects into the theatre that she participates in. This is Sarah's third year as a company member for Aloft! Aerial Dance. Sarah occupies the rest of her time with being a personal trainer, the band she's in, and watching cooking shows with her cat.

### **Emily Schwartz – Joyce**

Emily Schwartz is the Artistic Director of and Resident Playwright for The Strange Tree Group. For them she has penned everything from 'The Dastardly Ficus and Other Comedic Tales of Woe and Misery', 'Funeral Wedding (The Alvin Play)', 'Mr. Spacky...The Man Who Was Continuously Followed by Wolves', 'The Mysterious Elephant and the Terrible Tragedy of the Unlikely Addington Twins>(\*Who Kill Him)', 'Ghost Stories: 13 Brides', 'Ghost Stories: Crucible the Musible', and finally 'Hey! Mr. Spaceman!'. Sometimes you can see her in the back of things singing songs or painting signs, sewing costumes, mending props, writing music, and generally having her nose in everyone else's business. Emily is an Artistic Associate of Collaboraction and was the critic's pick for best Chicago playwright of 2008 in the *Chicago Reader*. She is also a Jeff Nominated set designer for her co-design of *The Dastardly Ficus* with Kate Nawrocki.

### **Beth Stare – Zola**

Beth Stare is a proud company member of Aloft Aerial Dance with whom she has taught and performed for the past 6 years. Beth can be seen on duo Lyra in "Cirque du Freak: The Vampire's Assistant" starring John C. Reilly opening Oct 2009 and has traveled around the world performing stilt walking and fabric work for the likes of the Maxim magazine-Coors light national tour and with the Kim Tom international Clown Festival in Shanghai, China.

### **Production Team Biographies:**

#### **Bob Kruse – Director**

Bob Kruse studied via scholarship at Circle in the Square Theatre Conservatory in New York. There he directed Neil Labute's 'Bash at the Centerstage', 'Minnetonka Vanities' and Comedy Sketches at Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre as well as 'Anguish' at Circle. He assistant directed 'Pericles' at Circle in the Square under Ed Berkeley and directed 'Young Moses' at the Santa Monica Theatre. He is a co-founding member of Terrapin Theatre Company in New York and is proud to be an associate member of the Strange Tree Group.

#### **Allan Roysdon - Assistant Director/Videographer**

Allan Roysdon is a videographer with Crunchiefrog, a student of aerial arts and a performer. He's a friend of both Strange Tree and Aloft Aerial Dance.

#### **Emily Schwartz - Playwright/Songwriter**

See Bio above in Cast Biographies

#### **Delia Baseman - Production Manager/Costume Designer**

See Bio above in Cast Biographies

#### **Sarah Luse - Stage Manager**

Sarah could not be more excited to be working with Strange Tree on *Hey! Mr. Spaceman!* Sarah is originally from Montana and holds a B.A. in theatre for the University of Montana-Missoula. Some of her favorite Chicago credits include *W;t* and *The Ruby Sunrise (The Gift)*, *Twelfth Night (Piccolo)*, *Lady from Dubuque (Infamous Commonwealth)*, *Coronado (Steep)*, *The Adventures of Captain Marbles and His Acting Squad (Provision)*, and *The People I Know* and *What's Behind Our Eyes (Erasing the Distance)*. Sarah is also a company member of Infamous Commonwealth Theatre.

#### **Ira Amyx - Set Designer/Technical Director**

Ira lives in Chicago, where he works as a lot of things. He is honored to work with the Strange Ones.

#### **Julian Pike - Lighting Designer**

Julian is excited to be working with his fellow trees again. Previous credits include 'The Mysterious Elephant...', 'Crucible! The Musible', and 'Mr. Spacky...'. When not in the woods with the odd ones Julian is the Lighting Apprentice at the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

#### **Beth Stare - Aerial Choreography**

See Bio above in Cast Biographies

#### **Lindsay Frattare - Ground Choreography**

Lindsey Frattare, an Ohio native, received a Bachelors of Fine Arts in Dance Performance from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. While at SMU, she performed in works by Martha Graham, George Balanchine, Allison Chase and William Forsythe. Lindsey moved to Chicago in 2007 to join the scholarship program at the Lou Conte Dance Studio (the home of Hubbard Street Dance Chicago) under the direction of Claire Bataille. She has also attended summer projects with Alvin Ailey Dance Theater, Paul Taylor Dance Company, Toronto Dance Theater, River North Dance Chicago, Spectrum Dance and Northwest Professional Dance Project. Lindsey has performed in Chicago works by Eddy Ocampo, Mark Duthu, Autumn Eckaman and Winifred Haun. She joined Winifred Haun & Dancers in February of 2008.

**Kate Nawrocki – Sound Designer/Props Design & Management**

See Bio above in Cast Biographies

**Thomas Mackey - Musical Arrangement**

Tom cut his teeth in New Orleans, escaped University with a slightly better than average GPA, learned how to play a few instruments just in the nick of time and has aspirations to educate teenagers on the history of the world. Tom lives on a river in Indiana with his dog Alligator. Kara lives there, too.

**Thomas Zeitner - Band Leader**

Thomas Zeitner is a local musician and roustabout. He first worked with the Strange Tree Group as an accordion player for ‘Mr. Spacky... The Man Who Was Continuously Followed by Wolves’, and subsequent productions ‘Ghost Stories: Crucible the Musible!’ and ‘The Mysterious Elephant, and the Terrible Tragedy of the Unlikely Addington Twins (Who Kill Him)’. Now an Associate Member, he is very excited to finally play amplified. When not in fancy dress, he plays with fellow cast member Elizabeth Bagby in Chicago's newest supergroup, The Loudness War.

**Marvin Astorga - Props Design & Management**

See Bio above in Cast Biographies about how amazing Marvin is.

**Phineas X. Jones - Poster Design**

Can be found at [Octophant.us](http://Octophant.us) designing more posters to blow your mind.

**Max Wagner - Press**

Jack of all trades, master of none.