

Iowa Stage Theatre Company presents
the world-premiere production of

ADORE US! LINE

Parody Book & Lyrics by Robert John Ford

Based on "A Chorus Line"

Original Music by Marvin Hamlisch

Original Book by James Kirkwood & Nicholas Dante

Original Lyrics by Edward Kleban

Original script published and distributed by
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This production is supported in part by
BRAVO of Greater Des Moines and The Iowa Foundation
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***Adore Us! Line* is presented without intermission and
contains subject matter and language that may not be
suitable for audience members under the age of 13.**



The use of recording devices, either audio or video, and
the taking of photographs, either with or without flash, are
strictly prohibited. Please turn off all mobile devices, pagers,
and other audible electronic devices.

Adore Us! Line

Cast & Crew

JOE BIDEN..... Charlie Reese+
CORY BOOKER..... Madison Ray
PETE BUTTIGIEG..... Ryan Henzi+
KAMALA HARRIS..... Davida Williams+
AMY KLOBUCHAR..... Heidi Mason*
BETO O'ROURKE Jonathan deLima*
BERNIE SANDERS..... Joe Smith
ELIZABETH WARREN Mary Bricker+
UTILITY ACTOR Sydney M. Allen
UTILITY ACTOR Michael Clinkscales*
IOWA VOTER.....Eric Olson

Director
Maxwell Schaeffer+

Choreographer
Megan Helmers+

Stage Manager
Brittany Beridon

Music Director
Eric Layden

Assistant Director
Emily Davis

Scenic Design
Kiah Kayser

Costume Design Susanna Douthit+

Light Design Jim Trenberth*+

Sound Design Josh Jepson*+

Props Rebel Clodi, Laura Jordan

Fight Consultant Gabe Thompson

Light Board Operator Todd Warming

* Resident Artist Company Member

+ Cloris Award Winner

Song List

"I Hope I Win It"	All
"I Can Beat That"	O'Rourke
"Wow"	Biden, Sanders, Booker, O'Rourke, Buttigieg, Williamson
"In The White House"	Klobuchar, Harris, Gillibrand, Warren
"Montage, Part 1: Hello, Ames!"	All
"Montage, Part 2: People"	Klobuchar, All
"Montage, Part 3: Canvassing"	Booker, All
"Pissed!"	Sanders, All
"My Name Is"	Harris, Castro, Buttigieg
"Pocahontas"	Warren
"Wisconsin And Ohio"	Biden
"For The Time Is Now"	Buttigieg, All
"Finale"	All

Musicians

Keyboard 1	Sonya Siebert
Keyboard 2.....	Josh Whitver
Keyboard 3/Conductor	Eric Layden
Keyboard 4	Anna Lackaff
Drums/Percussion	Ben Poppen
Orchestral Reduction	Josh Whitver
Synth Programming	Josh Whitver

Setting

Somewhere in Iowa, October 2019

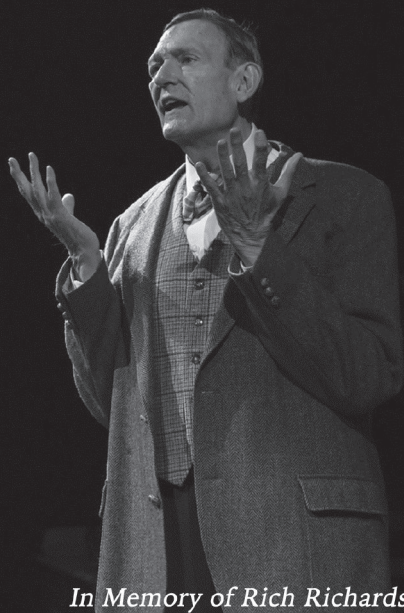
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From the Playwright



When *Caucus! The Musical* was first presented to audiences as a staged reading at the Des Moines Playhouse in January 2004, little did I know it would become a theatrical tradition and an international phenomenon every four years thereafter. But following the 2016 production (the best, in my opinion), I felt the show had run its course, as the political landscape—and audience sensibilities to

political satire—were rapidly transforming.

Still, I felt the three-ring circus known as the Iowa Caucuses was fertile ground for musical comedy, so in early 2019 I started jotting down ideas for an entirely new show. As the number of presidential aspirants surpassed the two dozen mark, it dawned on me that a nearly-perfect musical in which many characters are vying to be the “one singular sensation” had already been written and was ripe for parody—*A Chorus Line*. At that moment, *Adore Us! Line* was born.

The concept was simple: rather than dancers auditioning for a Broadway director, the real-life 2020 Democratic candidates would be auditioning for an Iowa Voter (as they do!). As I began writing the script and lyrics, I established three ground rules:

- 1) the show would parallel the original *ACL* as much as possible—the character types, the song order, the balance between comedic and serious moments, etc.;
- 2) discussion of political issues would be off-limits. This would be purely a character study; and
- 3) it would not be a condemnation of Republicans and the current POTUS, nor would it be a love letter to Democrats.

And, for true fans of *Caucus! The Musical*, I threw in a few Easter eggs throughout the show for them to discover.

Of course, without the Board, staff, and artists of Iowa Stage Theatre Company, who wholeheartedly committed to presenting the world-premiere production based only on a pitch, *Adore Us! Line* may have never made it from the page to the stage. And without you, the audience, there is no theatre. I am grateful to the countless number of people who have demonstrated their belief in me and my talents throughout the development of this project.

Enjoy the show!

Robert John Ford
Creator of *Adore Us! Line*

A Message from the Board



Iowa's rich political identity reaches a crescendo every four years with our first in the nation caucuses. In the early 1970s, Democrats in Iowa determined that they needed to move the caucuses to earlier in the year to hold distinct district and state conventions, moving towards more grassroots input and away from the political machinery that had dominated candidate selection

up to that point.

Over the years since 1972, which represents the initial instance we had first in the nation status, Iowa has diligently held onto this spot in the political landscape, often coming under fire and being questioned, but each cycle holding on to this part of our identity as a state and contribution towards the selection of a candidate for President.

What you will experience tonight is a parody that celebrates our place in the political conversation. Oscar Wilde stated that "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery", and I would argue that, by extension, parody fits well within our definition of imitation. Our parody of the much-celebrated musical *A Chorus Line* comes at a time when our nation could collectively use a little levity and relief from the current state of political affairs.

Every four years our state has the opportunity to welcome candidates, reporters, political pundits, interns, and the associated groups of friends, fans, and interested parties that come to see what the outcome of our process will bear. It's an opportunity that brings the national conversation to our doorstep and something we, as Iowans, take enormous pride in.

And, though we take our first-in-the-nation responsibility seriously, that doesn't mean we shouldn't have a little fun in the process.

We wish to welcome you all to a celebration and satire of the caucuses, with each candidate making their case to the voters through song. If you are a candidate, reporter, or any one of the groups mentioned (or someone I've missed) above, caucus member, or just an interested theater patron, we hope you enjoy the show. On behalf of the ISTC board of directors, I welcome you to sit back and be part of our democratic tradition – and have some fun in the process!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Benesh". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent vertical line through the middle.

Joe Benesh

President, ISTC Board of Directors



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Cast

(alphabetical, last name)



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Sydney M. Allen (Utility Actor) Sydney is extremely excited to be making her ISTC debut as well as performing in her second RJF production. She was last scene in *Ordinary Days* (Deb) at the Tallgrass theatre company, her favorite role to date. Sydney has performed around the community in productions like *Six-on-Six* (Gloria Lavelle)

Urbandale Community Theatre/RJF Productions, *Ragtime* (Ensemble) Des Moines Community Playhouse, *[Title of Show]* (Heidi) at the Ames Community Theatre as well as others. By day, Sydney works as an Interactive Banking Specialist with First American Bank. By night, you can find her crafting cocktails at her favorite place in Des Moines, Noce Jazz & Cabaret.



Mary Bricker+ (Elizabeth Warren) is thrilled and honored to be playing the iconic Senator Warren! Mary performs regularly on many stages in Central Iowa. Recent appearances include Miss Hannigan in *Annie* (Urbandale Community Theatre), Grandma in *Billy Elliot* (Des Moines Playhouse), Mrs. Crachit in *A Christmas Carol* (Iowa Stage Theatre Company)

and as an original cast member in *UTOPIA – The Iowa Musical Revue* (Epic Stage Productions). Some of Mary's other favorite roles include Frau Blucher (*Young Frankenstein*, Des Moines Playhouse) – Cloris Award winner; Evelyn Briggs (*Independence*, Tallgrass Theatre) – Cloris Award nominee; Dolly Levi (*Hello, Dolly!*, Des Moines Playhouse); and Eileen Osbourne (*The Cripple of Inishmaan*, Mooncoin Entertainment). Film work includes features and short films, and commercial and industrial work throughout the state. Mary is especially pleased to be sharing the *Adore Us! Line* stage with her husband, Joe Smith.



Michael Clinkscales* (Utility Actor) Michael Clinkscales is a Urbandale Native and Resident Artist with Iowa Stage Theatre Company. Most recently he has appeared as Geoffrey in *The Lion in Winter* among other roles with Iowa Stage Theatre. He is thrilled to have the opportunity to work with such a fun script and cast. He'd like to thank his

family and his girlfriend Kiley for reinvigorating his passion for politics!

Cast

(alphabetical, last name)



IOWA STAGE
THEATRE COMPANY



Jonathan deLima* (Beto O'Rourke) was deemed lanky and pale enough to evoke Mr. O'Rourke, even though Jonathan's trace of Hispanic heritage still significantly outweighs that of the Texan - believe it or not. Previously, Jonathan played Isaac in *Disgraced*, Pastor in *The Christians*, and Harry in *Company* at Iowa Stage Theatre Company. Other roles in Des Moines have included Bill Fordham in *Stagewest/RTI's August: Osage County*, Mr. Dussel in *The Diary of Anne Frank* and James Daley in *That Championship Season* with Repertory Theatre of Iowa; Pastor Greg in *Hand to God*, Anthony Reilly in *Outside Mullingar*, Dan in *Next to Normal*, and Mike in *Good People* with StageWest; Wolf in *Into The Woods* at the Des Moines Playhouse; Father in *Little Women* with the Des Moines Young Artists Theatre. He also helped develop projects in Los Angeles at Actors Studio West and Centre Theatre Group.



Ryan Henzi+ (Pete Buttigieg) is a 9th grader from Ankeny, IA. This is his 2nd performance with ISTC, his 1st role was Tiny Tim in *A Christmas Carol*. A few of his favorite roles include Ralphie in *A Christmas Story* (DMP), Les in *Disney's Newsies* (DMP), Snoopy in *You're A Great Man Charlie Brown* (DMYAT), Gavroche in *Les Miserables* (ISU), and James in *James and the Giant Peach* (STC). Ryan was honored to have received the 2019 Rising Star Cloris Award. When Ryan is not on stage, he enjoys volunteering at the Blank Park Zoo, playing video games, and fishing. Just like Pete, Ryan loves playing claw machines. Ryan is thrilled to represent Pete Buttigieg in this role.



Heidi Mason* (Amy Klobuchar) Heidi Mason is a resident artist company member at Iowa Stage Theatre Company. Recent credits include *Disgraced* (Emily), *Romeo and Juliet* (Nurse), and *Company* (Amy). During the day, Heidi works at Des Moines Performing Arts on the education team where she runs the Applause Series, and streamlines processes on the education team. Heidi is thrilled to be a part of this amazing team, and thanks Jeff for holding down the fort the past couple of months.

Cast

(alphabetical, last name)



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Eric Olson* (Iowa Voter) Local credits: ISTC: Company; StageWest: *Straight White Men*; Kingman Row: *Private Passage*; Tallgrass Theatre: *Rumors*, *Oleanna* (Cloris Nomination), *Hillary: A Modern Greek Tragedy With A (Somewhat) Happy Ending*; Des Moines Playhouse: *Around the World In 80 Days*; *711 Project* (Outstanding Production 2016).

Other select credits: Coronado Playhouse: *Monty Python's Spamalot*; Desert Ensemble Theatre Company: *God of Carnage*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; La Quinta Playhouse: *Waiting for Godot*, *Baby With The Bathwater*; *Lend Me A Tenor*. Education: BA, UCLA; MS, Columbia University. Career: Public Relations/Marketing, Playwright, Writer, Director. Special thanks and love to Juli and my daughters, Paige and Sophie, for their support (and patience)!



Madison Ray (Cory Booker) Madison Ray was trained by Johnny Contardo of ShaNaNa and has performed with the likes of: Aaron Carter, Mya, Belinda Carlisle, Latin Grammy award winner Nestor Torres, Christopher the Conquered, Planet Booty, Dominique Morgan, Ellis Hall of Tower of Power, Martha Wash, Thelma Houston, Thea Austin, American Idol's David Hernandez, Debbie Gibson, Jose Feliciano and Victor Wooten. He sometimes sings with the Des Moines Metro Opera and has starred in *RENT* as Tom Collins and the Rocky Horror Show as Eddie.



Charlie Reese+ (Joe Biden) Iowa Stage Theatre Company: *Company* (Bobby, Cloris Nomination). Tallgrass Theatre Company: *Ordinary Days* (Jason); StageWest: *Hand to God* (Jason/Tyrone), *Avenue Q* (Princeton/Rod). Des Moines Community Playhouse: *Young Frankenstein* (Dr. Frankenstein, Cloris Award), *Spamalot The Musical* (Dennis/Galahad), *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* (Billy Bibbit), *Legally Blonde* (Emmett Forrest); Des Moines Onstage: *Tick, Tick... Boom!* (Jonathan, Cloris Nomination), *Murder Ballad* (Michael), *Cabaret* (Clifford Brandshaw). Career—Compliance

Cast

(alphabetical, last name)



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Consultant at Wells Fargo. He would like to thank you friends and family for their continued love and support, and especially to Megan for being patient with him while he learned her difficult choreography.



Joe Smith (Bernie Sanders) Joe's a frequently-seen local actor. His most-recent roles include Ernie in Neil Simon's *Rumors* (2018) from Tallgrass Theater Company, Jon in StageWest's *Marjorie Prime* (2017) and Tony Riley in StageWest's *Outside Mullingar* (2016). Favorite past roles for a variety of Des Moines theater companies include Saul in *True West* (2014), Mr. Smith in *The Bald Soprano* (2013), Adam in *As You Like It* (2009), and Louis Howe in *Sunrise at Campobello* (2006). He's also a frequent backstage contributor. Joe is married to actress Mary Bricker (Elizabeth Warren in this production); they have two grown sons, Jeffrey and Carter. Joe works as a Marketing Communications Business Partner for UnityPoint Health System Services in West Des Moines.



Davida Williams+ (Kamala Harris) This is Davida's ISTC mainstage debut having previously participated in *Scriptease*. She was most recently seen in *Lost Girl* with Des Moines Young Artists Theatre and Esther in *Intimate Apparel* with Pyramid Theatre Company, for which she earned a Cloris Award for Best Actress. She was also featured in *Dead Dog Park* with Open Door Rep and *Rumors* with Tallgrass Theatre Company (she gets around). Born and raised in Des Moines, she's been on stage since the age of 14. Davida studied theatre at Grandview University and has done countless industrials and voice work. Some of her favorite roles include Claire in *Rumors*, Lady Capulet in *Romeo & Juliet*, and her beloved Esther in *Intimate Apparel*.

Crew



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Robert John Ford+ (Writer) is an award-winning playwright, composer, lyricist, and theatre producer. Since 2005, his plays and musicals - including *Caucus! The Musical*, *Utopia*, *The Iowa Musical Revue*, *The World's Largest Aluminum Foil Ball*, *Sleeping Dogs*, and *My Dinner With Andrew* - have been

seen by more than 40,000 people in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United Arab Emirates. His songs have been performed at Carnegie Hall and 54 Below in New York and at cabaret clubs from Chicago to Toronto by notable Broadway performers including Jeremy Jordan and Laura Benanti. In 2012 he was selected to participate as a lyricist in the prestigious BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop in New York and continues his involvement today in the Advanced Workshop. In June 2014 he was one of five artists selected to be an Iowa Arts Council Fellow in the inaugural year of the program. He is the recipient of The Vittum Award, The Cloris Leachman Award for Outstanding Achievement, and numerous grants from the Iowa Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts. His musicals have been nominated for seven Cloris Leachman Awards and selected as the winner of several national new play competitions, including The Ashland New Play Festival, The Iowa Playwright's Workshop, and Cygnet Theatre's Playwrights in Process. A native of Iowa, he splits his time between New York and Des Moines, where he is the Founder & Operator of both Custom Songs & Scripts, a creative writing service, and RJFCreative, an arts management company. He dedicates this production to Susan Grozier. RobertJohnFord.com

Crew



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Maxwell Schaeffer+ (Director) Directing credits include *The Christians* for Iowa Stage Theatre Company. Max directed *Hair*, *Superior Donuts*, *The Underpants*, *Fuddy Meers*, *The Lt. of Inishmore* and others for StageWest, as well as *Young Frankenstein*, *Elf*, *A Christmas Story* and others for The Des Moines Playhouse, where, in 2012, he was named a Playhouse “Legend”. Max is also a Cloris Award winning actor, composer, theatre sound designer and voice talent. His 30+ year history as an Iowa broadcaster has earned him a spot in the Iowa Rock n’ Roll Hall of Fame. Max’s wife, Karen, is a published playwright, whose comedy, *Girls’ Weekend*, has been produced in the US, Canada and Germany.



Megan Helmers+ (Choreography) Megan Helmers directed & choreographed *Disney’s Freaky Friday* and *A Chorus Line* at the Playhouse, *Ordinary Days* at Tallgrass Theatre Company, *Bring it On* at Des Moines Young Artists’ Theatre (Cloris Award: Best Choreography), *Tick, Tick... Boom!* at Noce, and many others. Her recent choreography includes *A Christmas Story*, *Disney’s Newsies* (Cloris Award: Best Choreography), *Elf – The Musical*, *Billy Elliot The Musical*, *Disney’s The Little Mermaid* (Des Moines Playhouse), *Hello, Dolly!* (Theatre Cedar Rapids), *Oklahoma!*, *Chaplin* (Revival Theatre Company, Cedar Rapids), *A Christmas Carol*, *Fun Home*, *Company* (Iowa Stage Theatre Company), and more. Megan is the director of marketing and PR at the Des Moines Symphony, teaches at the School of Classical Ballet & Dance, and enjoys dancing around the house with husband Charlie Reese and their pets.

Crew

Eric Layden (Music Director) is the band director at Saydel High School in Des Moines, where he runs the marching band, jazz band, and concert band. He has been involved in local theater for several years, including performing in *Young Frankenstein* (Ziggy, Des Moines Playhouse) and *Ragtime* (Father, Des Moines Playhouse). He has also performed (either singing or playing piano for his beautiful and talented wife Taylor) at several late night cabarets at Noce. This is his first production with Iowa Stage Theatre, and he's excited to step into the music directing world.



Brittany Beridon (Stage Manager) is happy to be joining the ISTC crew again, this time as a stage manager. She has been busy directing titles such as *The Wolves* by Sarah DeLappe, *A Midnight Dreary* by Scott Dixon (Simon Estes School of Fine Arts) and *13 The Musical* by Jason Robert Brown (Des Moines

Young Artists Theatre) in the last year. Her other stage management credits included *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown* and *Bring It On: The Musical* (DMYAT). She hopes you enjoy the show!



Emily Davis (Assistant Director) Emily Davis is thrilled to be on the production team of *Adore Us! Line*. Other directorial credits include *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, and *The Vagina Monologues*. Her favorite onstage roles include Alice from *Closer* with Open Door Rep, Alice in

You Can't Take It With You, and Kristine in *A Chorus Line* with the Des Moines Playhouse, and Carol in *Oleanna* with Tallgrass Theatre Company. Emily has a BA from Northwestern College in music and theater and spends her days as an actor, director, educator, adjudicator, and supporter of her fellow theater artists.

Crew



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Susanna Douthit+ (Costume Designer) Susanna has designed costumes for ISTC's *The Lion in Winter*, for Pyramid Theater's *Intimate Apparel*, *The Amen Corner*, for DMYAT's *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, for DM Playhouse's *Around the World in 80 days* and *Lion, Witch and the Wardrobe*. Susanna has also designed costumes for the world premiere of *Our Town*, *The Opera*, for Festival Opera in California, the 2007 season for The National Ballet of Peru, and for several years for Olympian Figure Skater Brian Boitano. She was the Director of San Francisco Dance Center and the Executive Director of Dance Through Time. She has built giant puppets for parades in Santa Barbara, San Francisco, and Wilmington, NC. She has performed in New York City, St. Petersburg and Moscow, and even here in Iowa. She has come to love this beautiful state where she lives five minutes away from her awesome grandsons and their very cool parents.

Jim Trenberth*+ (Lighting Designer) Jim Trenberth has designed the lighting for over 30 StageWest productions dating back to *Urinetown* in 2009. His bucket list includes designing the 11 Shakespeare plays he has not done (Come on Iowa Stage Theatre; *Timon of Athens*). Jim recently retired as the Resident Lighting Designer and Production Manager for Iowa State University Theatre. Other theatre work includes The Wisconsin Shakespeare Festival, Wildspace Dance Company of Milwaukee, Sunset Theatre in Milwaukee, Central College, Drake University, StageWest and The Des Moines Metro Opera. His longest running production is a two hander with his wonderful understanding editor and wife, Nancy Evans. They have six wonderful children all answering twice daily when the cat food is brought out of the cabinet.

Crew



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Kiah Kayser (Scenic Designer) is a freelance scenic designer originally hailing from Minnesota. Her recent design credits include: *Peter Pan* (Playhouse on the Square), *Chasing George Washington* (Iowa State University), *Fun Home* (Hollins University), *Madagascar* (Circuit Playhouse), *Girl Crazy*, *Candide*, *La Perichole* (Ohio Light Opera), *As Is* (Regeneration Theatre), *A Piece of My Heart* (Onomatopoeia Theatre), *It's a Wonderful Life* (TheatreSquared). She received her MFA in scenic design from University of Arkansas. In addition to her design work, Kiah has also worked as a scenic artist for a variety of places including: Irish Repertory Theatre, Infinite Scenic, Variety 57, Repertory Theatre of Iowa, Prairie Repertory Theatre, and Cedar Rapids Opera.

Josh Jepson (Sound Design) Josh has worked with Epic Stage Productions (2016), StageWest Theater Company (every musical the company has done since 2011), Iowa State Theater Since 2011 and numerous productions with Repertory Theater of Iowa. He's also worked with Barrington Stage Company on *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (2004) and *The Burnt Part Boys* (2006). Josh currently works as the Technical Director at Hoyt Sherman Place and does freelance sound design and audio engineering. Josh enjoys spending time with his wife, his son, and their two pets: Fluffy the domestic long hair and Pixie the pappion.



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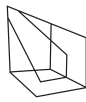
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