

**Merely Players**  
Presents  
**Small Mouth Sounds**

By  
**Bess Wohl**

Directed by  
**Zachary Chiero**

Note: Center each of these within themselves. They can each have their own line if needed as you make them large enough:

Tech Director  
**Charles Ford**

Scenic Designer  
**Natalie Cohn**

Stage Manager  
**Deborah Heath**

February 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 2024

*Small Mouth Sounds* is presented by arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc.

## *Small Mouth Sounds*

### CAST

The Teacher	Maureen May+
Judy	Cindy Laudadio-Hill
Joan	Joy Kilpatrick+
Alicia	Tara Demmy
Ned	Geoff Johnson+
Rodney	Conor Sheehan+
Jan	Stephen Bowers +

### CREW

Light/Sound Designer	Charles Ford+
Production Manager	Mona Wood-Patterson+
Costume Manager	JoAnn Nevils+
Props Master/Box Office Manager	Diane Panelli+
Light Technician	Abby Kubicek+
Sound Technician	Milli Grice+
Props Manager	Jamie Pickering+
Wardrobe Lead	Mary Lynn Clark+
Yoga Consultant/Stagehand	Jessica McCallum+
Ticket Manager	Greta Richter+
Photographer	Kara Cavalca+
Poster Design	Kate Ishay+

### **Set/Props Construction/Scenic Painting**

Natalie Cohn+	Charles Ford+	Michael Lee+
Zachary Chiero+	Mary Lynn Clark+	Dallas Padoven+
Milli Grice+	Jenny Mason+	Tara Demmy

Zach Robinson      Marc Saphir

### **Poster Distribution**

Cristina Janz      Grace Dendy+

### **Parking Lot Guides**

Clark Adomaitis      Jeff Widen      Mary Lynn Clark+  
Joe Hutchinson      Nora Stafford      Joel Ryan  
Melissa Mossinghoff+

+ Merely Players Artistic Company

This play will be performed without an intermission. DHS Student Gabe Clark and his business, Gabe's Goodies, will be providing concessions before the play.

*Please silence your cell phones; they don't work that well down here anyway.*

Videotaping or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited. We know that sometimes taking performance photos or video of your loved ones is a huge temptation. Please respect this rule of theatre etiquette and resist. Phone use during a show is distracting to actors and audience members and is disrespectful of our creative property. Live theatre is meant to be temporal – let it be just that. Thank you!

*That said, we welcome you to take photos/video in the theatre before and after, **but not during**, the performance. If you post photos of the stage, please be sure to credit and tag Merely Players. @merely\_players\_durango*

## **WHO'S WHO**

**Stephen Bowers** (*Jan*) cannot find words to express his delight working with this community of artists. Other Merely Players credits requiring a lot more line memorization include John D'Agata in *Lifespan of a Fact*, Duke Senior in *As You Like It* and Robin in *The Children*. As Gary Oldman said, "I enjoy playing characters where the silence is loud."

**Tara Demmy** (*Alicia*) is a theatre artist, teacher, historian, and clown. She has performed in comedy festivals all over the country and worked on five world-premieres with award-winning physical theatre company, Tribe of Fools. Favorite credits include: *Mr. Burns, a Post-Electric Play* (Jenny), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Verges), *The Revolutionists* (Comedy Coach), and *Clown Sex Ed* (Clown). Tara has a PhD in theatre and currently works for a nonprofit providing free arts / comedy classes to the military community. Many thanks to Zach and Merely Players! [tarademmy.com](http://tarademmy.com)

**Geoff Johnson** (*Ned*) is quietly excited to join the cast of *Small Mouth Sounds*. Recent Merely credits include Mike Ferris in *Hands on a Hardbody*, Antonio in *The Tempest*, and Hercule Poirot in *Murder on the Orient Express*. He was also seen at the Durango Arts Center in *Reefer Madness*, *The Complete History of America: Abridged* and *The Rocky Horror Show*. Geoff enjoys playing with friends Cindy and Mary in the occasional improv show. Geoff has experience with a variety of small mouth sounds but is more

known for larger noises not always involving the mouth. Geoff loves spending time with his totally awesome wife Mohriah James.

**Joy Kilpatrick** (*Joan*) is grateful to be on this silent retreat in *Small Mouth Sounds* and returns to the Merely Players stage, where she was last seen on a train, as Mrs. Hubbard in *Murder on the Orient Express*. Other local performances include The Mother in *Eurydice*, Ms. Fleming/Veronica's Mom in *Heathers: The Musical*, Donna in *Mamma Mia!* and May in *Fool For Love*. Joy's life is enriched by these special moments of collaboration and the love and support of her family and friends. "May all sentient beings be happy and free from suffering."

**Cindy Laudadio-Hill** (*Judy*) is (in no particular order) an actor, teacher, comedian, improviser, director, producer, writer, mother, wife, sister, aunt, daughter, and friend. She is happy to be back at Merely Players and was last seen here in the Underground as O.G in *Men on Boats*. She performs regularly with Mary Quinn and Lower Left Improv at the DAC. Cindy is grateful to Zach for this wonderful opportunity and to fellow cast and crew for their openness, kindness and talent. Also a quick shout out to all of Cindy's family, teachers, directors and cast mates along the way (Chris, Andy, Kate, Cori, The Bovine, The Second City, iO, Annoyance Theater, UCB, and Denver Center Performing Arts). Cindy also wants to thank Keeper... 'cause he's a good boy.

**Maureen May** (*The Teacher*) has been involved with live theater in Durango since the late 1980s. Some of her favorite past roles with Merely Players have been Rose in *The Children*, Ruth Steiner in *Collected Stories*, Polly Wyeth in *Other Desert Cities*, Rose in *Neglect*, Sister Aloysius in *Doubt*, and most recently, Hertha Ayrton in *The Half-Life of Marie Curie*. She played many past roles with The Durango Repertory Theater Company. She is also a visual artist; her work can be viewed at [maureenmayart.com](http://maureenmayart.com) and at Earthen Vessel Gallery in Durango. Maureen is thrilled to be working with Zachary Chiero and the amazing cast and crew of *Small Mouth Sounds*. Though the work is ever challenging, it is always worth the journey!

**Conor Sheehan** (*Rodney*) is beyond blessed to bring this wondrously wordless, silently splendid, awe-inspiringly absurdist show to life. Favorite past credits include Jim Fingal in *The Lifespan of a Fact*, Ariel in *The Tempest* and Greg Wilhote in *Hands on a Hardbody*. He wishes to thank all his fellow retreaters, the entire crew, Zach, Mona, Charles, his friends, and his family. Thanks especially his sister, Grace, for showing him the power in patience and listening. Peace, love and gratitude to you all and enjoy the show.

**Zachary Chiero** (*Director*) is quietly thrilled to be directing this brilliant cast of *Small Mouth Sounds*. After graduating from Muhlenberg College, Zachary spent the last decade working with many theatres throughout the greater Philadelphia area. He has created three world premiere national tours with Enchantment Theatre Company, where he is currently an associate Artistic Director. He is a proud company member of Tribe of Fools physical theatre company, where he has received Barrymore nominations for Best Choreography for his work on world premieres *Fly*, *Eagles Fly* and *Fishtown: A Hipster Noir*. Most recently at Merely, Zachary appeared in *Hands on a Hardbody*, directed

*Murder on the Orient Express*, and created movement for *The Tempest*. Special thanks to my clown wife, Tara Demmy. Love always to my husband, Dallas. [zacharyjchiero.com](http://zacharyjchiero.com).

**Mary Lynn Clark** (*Wardrobe Lead/Company Manager*) has attended many various retreats throughout her life but never a silent one. The thought of attending one would certainly be a challenge for her since she is a social animal and enjoys learning from others. She is delighted to be part of this soft-spoken team and is embracing the silence in order to learn how we as humans may grow closer and wiser by communicating through the use of body language.

**Natalie Cohn** (*Scenic Designer*) is very grateful to Merely Players for giving her the chance to scenic design for *Small Mouth Sounds*. She has worked as a shop supervisor in a number of theatres, and is very excited to have gotten into the more artistic side of things. She would like to thank Charles Ford for putting up with her daily antics and giving her all of the life-saving advice a technician could ever need.

**Charles Ford** (*Tech Director/Designer*) is a master backstage technician and the Technical Director of Merely Players. An avid puppeteer, mask-maker, make-up artist, robotics engineer, and special effects designer, he has designed dozens of sets for a variety of theatrical genres. During his career as Durango High School's tech director and resident designer, Charles was the recipient of several awards, including the Rocky Mountain Theatre Association Technical Theatre Award. Charles' world travels have seen him climbing to the top of Machu Picchu, swimming with sea turtles, and riding a camel. He has tried to bring the joy and exhilaration of travel back and use the inspiration to create theatre magic.

**Milli Grice** (*Sound Technician*) is a FLC theatre alum. This is her fourth show with Merely Players this season. She is excited to be back behind the board. In addition to working with the Players, she is planning on attending grad school for visual arts in the fall!

**Deborah Heath** (*Stage Manager*) moved to Durango in 2001 with her husband, Bern, and their three children. She has been part of the Merely Players community since 2013 and joined the Board of Directors in 2021. Deborah enjoys both on stage and back stage work. This is the fourth time she has staged managed for the company, the latest being *As You Like It* in 2022. She was recently seen on stage as Queen Alonsa in *The Tempest* and as Princess Dragomiroff in *Murder on the Orient Express*. As always, she is grateful to be part of this dynamic organization whose mission is to provide quality theatre experiences for our region.

**Abby Kubicek** (*Light Technician*) is thrilled to be making her debut on the Lights crew. This is her 6th Merely Players show, and she has played a variety of roles both on stage and behind the scenes. Abby loves to learn and has enjoyed getting to know the ins and outs of all the positions that make an amazing show like this possible. When she's not playing with the Merely Players crew, she enjoys her role as a mental health therapist during the day. She would like to give a shoutout to her wonderfully supportive friends and her husband, Mike.

**Jessica McCallum** (*Yoga Consultant/Stagehand*) is ecstatic to be combining two of the practices that make her feel most alive: yoga and making theatre art. She has been on a long and winding path of yoga for several decades and completed her teacher training in 2020. She has been on a short and fevered path of theatre for several years and enjoys both the dark side and the stage lights. She bows a heartfelt namaste to the cast, crew, and audience of this show.

**JoAnn Nevils** (*Costume Manager*) has designed clothing and costumes for many years, from her shop in La Jolla, California to her present Etsy shop, (CoComfortDurango) Most of her theatre work has been with Mona and Charles, both at Durango High School and with Merely Players. Favorite shows include Merely Players' *Mary Poppins*, the steampunk *The Wizard of Oz*, *Shrek the Musical*, and *The Secret Garden*. She hopes to continue stitching and expanding her experiences. Thank you to Mona and Charles and especially to my children, Bucky and Janette, for believing in me.

**Diane Panelli** (*Props Master/Box Office Manager*) was co-founder of a production company at Sarah Lawrence College. After graduating from cooking school in New York, she went on to own a restaurant in Telluride before moving to Durango. She currently serves on the board for Merely Players and thrives on the "Treasure Hunt" of finding all the little goodies that make a play come to life. Diane loves what she does!

**Jamie Pickering** (*Props Manager*) The smallest object can have a profound impact. A book of magic for a marooned, vengeful Duke. A hand knitted sweater for a newborn. A small vial of uranium for a dedicated scientist. All props bring deeper meaning to the story told by the performer. Jamie is looking forward to diving headfirst into the props department. When not immersed in the world of props, lights and costumes Jamie spends her time as a professional vampire at the local Veterans clinic.

**Greta Richter** (*Ticket Manager*) was born and raised in Sierra Madre, not far from Hollywood and Burbank. She grew up enjoying musicals and was excited when her children became involved in theatre when they moved to Durango. Greta loves her work as Merely Players' Ticket Manager. She is grateful to God for bringing amazing theatre people into her life.

**Bess Wohl** (*Author*) is a playwright and filmmaker. Her plays have been produced on and off Broadway, regionally, and internationally and her feature film debut, *Baby Ruby* was released by Magnolia Pictures. She also wrote for the Apple TV+ series, "Extrapolations." *Small Mouth Sounds* won the John Gassner Outer Critics Circle Award, and was cited on top ten lists in *The New York Times*, *The New York Post*, and *The Guardian*. She is a graduate of Harvard and the Yale School of Drama.

**Mona Wood-Patterson** (*Production Manager*) has devoted her professional life to studying, teaching, and making theatre. She has directed around 200 productions in various venues and presented at educational and theatre conferences both in the United States and abroad. The Artistic Director of Merely Players, Mona has been the recipient of numerous awards. She was named Colorado Theatre Teacher of the Year and awarded a Fulbright to teach theatre in England. An inductee into the Colorado State Thespian Hall of Fame, Mona was selected as a participant in LaMama's International Director's

Symposium in Italy in 2019. She is grateful that she gets to work and play amidst remarkable and talented people in Durango.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

We offer our sincere gratitude to those who donated items or helped us with this show. Many hands and kind hearts help us to do our work:

Animas High School	Community Foundation Serving SW Colorado
Durango Herald	Local News Network
Margy Dudley/4 Corners Arts Forum/ KDUR	
Maureen May	Jamie Pickering
Mary Lynn Clark	Jessica McCallum
Jeannie Wheeldon	

### **A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR**

Hello, and welcome to *Small Mouth Sounds*! Our cast and crew have been hard at work over the last six weeks, bringing this unique story to life in all of its rich and beautiful detail. We were faced with one challenge in particular that the script presents - the characters are attending a silent retreat, and are not allowed to speak. How do we tell each of their compelling stories with minimal words traded between them? Luckily, I have never worked with a more dedicated and able cast, and I hope you are surprised by how very much our actors communicate with virtually no language whatsoever.

The playwright, Bess Wohl, once said that she hoped audiences would not feel like they simply watched people in a silent retreat, but that they felt as though they had participated in a silent retreat themselves. While you as an audience member have been trained to listen intently to the words of the play, we invite you to laugh, to cry and to feel every peak and valley of the characters' journey. There is something in every character's (and every person's) story that you can connect to - the loss of a loved one, illness, the discovery of a new path forward. Jan, Alicia, Rodney, Ned, Joan and Judy all feel agonized and isolated at the top of this show. They feel alone in their struggle towards enlightenment. But as The Teacher says,

“You are not alone...

...and...Breathing in. Breathing out.”

Enjoy -

Zachary Chiero