



MEET THE STAFF



Janet Erlick, Executive Artistic Director

Janet oversees both the administrative and artistic components of award-winning Florida Children's Theatre. She teaches, directs and acts in the community and developed the theatre's comprehensive outreach program that serves thousands of people each year. That program includes *A Bridge From Me to You*, an anti-bullying and conflict resolution program and *From Page to Stage*, an in-school literacy and arts integration program. She created partnerships with many cultural and social service organizations throughout South Florida and frequently facilitates workshops throughout the Southeast region with a special focus on infusing the arts across the academic curriculum and working with families dealing with terminal illness or crisis. Currently, she serves as the Chair of the Cultural Executives Committee and Broward Arts Connection and is a member of the Broward Cultural Council and Broward Women's Alliance. She is a graduate of Leadership Broward and is active on many of their committees. A former recipient of the City of Hope Businesswoman of the Year Award, Janet also received the a Woman Extraordinaire Award from South Florida Business Leader, the Remy Service Award from South Florida Theatre League and was an honoree of Spring for the Arts in addition to the Outstanding Contribution to Arts Education through Arts Ed Forever, a program of Broward Cultural Division and Business for the Arts of Broward. She also received national recognition through NBC's Characters Unite among others. Janet is a graduate of Swarthmore College with a double major in Theatre and Psychology, and is currently President of their Alumni Council. Janet@FLCTstar.org



Sean Cutler, Producing Director

Sean oversees the production aspect of Florida Children's Theatre, in addition to teaching and handling certain administrative and grant responsibilities. He directs many of FLCT's productions, and his work in lighting and sound design, as well as in technical direction, informs all of the performances. Prior to FLCT, Sean served as a Company Manager and General Manager for several Off Broadway shows including *The Donkey Show*, *The Karaoke Show*, *American Rhapsody: Songs of The Gershwins*, and *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living In Paris*. He was a member of the management team of Blue Man Group's NYC production of *Tubes*. He was also the Managing Director of the award-winning Colony Theatre Company in Los Angeles. Sean holds degrees in Film & TV Production as well as Political Science from New York University and is a graduate of The New World School of the Arts in Miami. Along with resident music director, Rick Kaydas, he authored *Snow White: An Original Musical Adaptation of the Grimm Fairytale*, which debuted by FLCT in 2010. In 2016 Sean was recognized by the South Florida Theatre League for his work Sean@FLCTStar.org



Lauren Formica, Program Director/ Camp Director

Lauren is an alumna of Florida Children's Theatre and is proud to say she has been a member of the FLCT family for over 15 years. Lauren graduated from Florida State University with a Bachelors degree in Humanities with concentrations in English, Education and Human Rights. While a full-time student, Lauren taught in various middle and high schools in Tallahassee. She served as a Preschool teacher at Happyland Day School in Fort Lauderdale, where she currently teaches an after school Creative Drama class. Lauren started a drama program at Rose Academy, an alternative school, where she served as their Fine Arts teacher specializing in art and theatre for three years. For the last two years Lauren has served as The Sagemont Lower School drama teacher in Weston directing *Seussical Jr.* and *Peter Pan Jr.* with their elementary students. Lauren has directed numerous productions throughout her years at FLCT, including *Aladdin KIDS* at FLCT in partnership with Kids in Distress of Broward County, Summer Stage Camp shows: *Honk Jr.*, *Pocahontas*, *Peter Pan Jr.*, *Disney's Little Mermaid Jr.*, & *Shrek Jr.* Most recently Lauren directed FLCT's December mainstages *Beauty and the Beast Jr* and *Elf the Musical, Jr.*, and makes forever memories with the most wonderful camp programs. Lauren@FLCTstar.org



Melissa Sheffield, Education Director

Melissa joined FLCT full-time in 2016 and oversees the educational curriculum including teaching many classes. She has a BS in Music Education from Hofstra University and a MA in Theatre Education from Emerson College. Melissa has worked in Wardrobe at the Maltz Jupiter theatre and puppetry at Universal Studios Florida. She also taught Elementary Music, High School Theatre /Music and Middle School Show Choir in Massachusetts for three years. In addition to teaching FLCT's classes during the year and implementing a circus program Melissa directed FLCT's Performance Project Shows: *A Year with Frog and Toad Kids* and *Dear Edwina Jr.* Melissa was excited to choreograph her first Young Repertory Production with FLCT, *Side Show the Musical*. Melissa has performed throughout Massachusetts, New York and Connecticut. Some of her favorite performances include Gertrude Mcfuzz in *Seussical*, Marcy Park in *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, and Luisa in *The Fantasticks*. Melissa@FLCTstar.org



Darius J. Manuel, Teaching Artist and Director

A graduate of the University of the Arts with a BFA in Musical Theatre, Darius is thrilled to come home to FLCT, where he was a student while in high school. He has been part of FLCT's Summer Stage Camp team for five years, directing and choreographing the productions and leading workshops and activities in a wide variety of techniques. As a guest director at FLCT, he spearheaded *The Wiz* and the teen repertory production of *Carrie the Musical*, which won him and FLCT BroadwayWorld Awards for Best Director, Best Choreographer and Best Musical. Other directing credits include: *Next To Normal*, *Pretty Hurts: A Beyoncé Jukebox Musical*, *Off I Go*, *Shadowland: A Villainous Disney Revue* at University of the Arts and *Spring Awakening* at Area Stage in Coral Gables. He was most recently seen on the Broadway National Tour of *ELF The Musical* and will be next appearing on stage in *Tarzan* and *Memphis* with Slow Burn Theatre. www.dariusjmanuel.com

Adjunct Teaching Artists

Maya Burton (Summer Camp)

Andrea Heighes (Storybook Adventures, Performance Project)

Alexa Meyers (Improv)

Administrative and Support Staff

Melanie Hale, Business Manager, Melanie@FLCTstar.org

Patti Meyers, Outreach Coordinator, Patti@FLCTstar.org

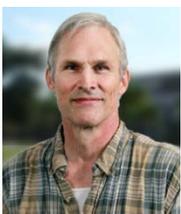
Mary Damiano, Administrative Assistant, Mary@FLCTstar.org

Florida Children's Theatre's Resident Artistic Team



Ron Hutchins, Resident Choreographer and Dance Instructor

As an internationally acclaimed artist Ron's choreography has been seen with Sevenages productions in Beijing and Shanghai, China. South Florida Theatre credits include The Actors Playhouse, The Wick Theatre, Broward Stage Door Theatre and The Boca Raton Theatre Guild. Ron's work has been featured nationally with Cirque Productions, Hard Rock Cafe, Goodman Theatre, Marriott Theatre, Georgia Shakespeare Festival, Tennessee Repertory Theatre, Chicago Center for the Performing Arts, Arkansas Repertory Theatre, Cleveland Playhouse, Ford's Theatre and Trump Taj Mahal. Ron works on multiple FLCT productions each year, and teaches dance classes, and delighted audiences with a tap dancing spectacle during FLCT's *Mary Poppins*. A passionate educator, Ron has been an adjunct professor at the University of Miami, Vanderbilt University, Columbia College, Roosevelt University and Morehead State University and teaches and choreographs in many community programs. Ron has been honored with multiple Carbonell and Silver Palm Awards for Best Choreography, most recently for *West Side Story* at Actors Playhouse. <https://sites.google.com/site/ronhutchinsofficialsite>



Tyler Smith, Resident Scenic Designer

Tyler has been the visual voice of FLCT for more than a decade, designing and building the sets and specialty props and costume pieces for dozens of productions. Tyler's experience as an art director and special effects designer has taken him through the worlds of television, feature film and special effects. His work has been seen on the Tonight Show with Jay Leno, Nickelodeon, MTV, Showtime and in Paramount, Touchstone, Columbia and Zenith film, and for numerous commercials and ads. Areas of expertise include sculpture, special effects makeup and robotic creatures as well as all aspects of design and illustration. As an arts educator, Tyler has taught in a variety of media for middle school, high school and college programs including Rhode Island School of Design, Nova Southeastern University and Broward College. His work as a sculptor and illustrator is featured in shows throughout South Florida and beyond, and sells in local galleries. www.tksmithart.com

Karen Kang Hancock, Resident Costume Designer



Karen has been Costume Designer for FLCT since 2003, and has designed, stitched, patterned, sewed, styled, glued and embellished thousands of costumes for dozens of productions, appearances and special events. Originally from Berkeley, California, she has had a lifelong interest in the arts. She earned a Bachelor of Music degree from Northwestern University and was a professional musician in several symphony orchestras including the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra. She learned to sew at age 13, and further developed her interest in sewing and costume designing, starting as a parent costume volunteer for FLCT when her son Ross became involved in productions. Her designs have also appeared at Area Stage and Charlotte Players in North Carolina, and she served as an associate costume designer for American Heritage School. Additionally, Karen works with many local school and community theatre programs as a costume consultant and coordinator.



Rick Kaydas, Resident Music Director

Rick has been playing music professionally since the age of 13. As a student, he was a founder and leader of the Las Olas Brass, a successful band that attracted the area's best young musical talent, including the late jazz legend Jaco Pastorius. After a number of project ventures with then Fort Lauderdale Children's Theatre, in 2000 Rick began working with FLCT as music director and arranger/composer. In this capacity he has music directed dozens of productions, either arranging and tracking the entire score or conducting and directing a live band. He also serves as music director for a variety of other theatre companies, both in Boston and throughout South Florida. His composing credits, Rick created original scores for FLCT, and won the ASCAP Benny Davis award for his work on *South of the North Pole*.