



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **History Theatre announces cast of World Premiere WHOA, NELLIE! THE OUTLAW KING OF THE WILD MIDDLE WEST**

SAINT PAUL, MN – This spring, History Theatre proudly presents the world premiere of *Whoa, Nellie! Outlaw King of the Wild Middle West*. This rip-roaring musical tale of Nellie King, the “wily and scandalous female cowboy detective” whose countless criminal exploits and penchant for male attire made her an 1800s Minnesota media icon. *Whoa Nellie!* is directed by Laura Leffler and runs May 17-June 8, 2025- tickets on sale now!

*“Whoa, Nellie” is about many things, but this above all: a (charismatic & complicated) person in pursuit of fame as a means of achieving love, acceptance and transcendent immortality. A response, in some ways, to Jesse James or other lionized male “outlaw” characters of the era whose notoriety transformed over time, into iconic status that often muted the questionable or outright evil aspects of their character. What does it mean to see a female (possibly nonbinary/trans) individual of that era considered in the same fashion? How does that illuminate historical realities around an array of issues that are centered again in contemporary culture - in particular media sensationalism, addiction, mental health, gender identity and gender inequity? This musical digs (by turns humorously, tunefully and emotionally) into the roots of the American obsession with celebrity, through one individual’s willing, desperate pursuit of the seductive promises it offers”. Josef Evans (Playwright, Composer, Lyricist)*

This grand spectacle resurrects an array of Vaudevillian superstars to share a story of surprising contemporary resonance. Plumbing the depths of America’s obsession with celebrity, the show reveals potent historical truths around gender, addiction, mental health, and media sensationalism.

The cast features **Em Adam Rosenberg** in their History Theatre debut as Nellie King, **Thomas Bevan** (*The Boy Wonder*), **Jay Owen Eisenberg\*** (History Theatre debut), **Erin Nicole Farsté** (*Not In Our Neighborhood; Teen Idol: The Bobby Vee Story*), **Grace Hillmyer** (*I Am Betty* (Understudy), **John Jamison II\*** (History Theatre debut), **Tod Petersen\*** (*Sweet Land, Teen Idol*), **Leslie Vincent** (*Teen Idol: The Bobby Vee Story; Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story*), and **Therese Walth\*** (History Theatre debut). Understudies include **Elena Glass\***, **Charlotte McDaniel**, **Adam Qualls\***, and **France A. Roberts**.

The team includes **Josef Evans** (Playwright and Composer), **Laura Leffler** (Director), **Joey Miller** (Choreographer/Associate Director), **Amanda Weis** (Music Director), **Robert Elhai** (Arranger), **Joel Sass** (Scenic Designer), **Rebecca Jo Malmstrom** (Props Designer), **Bryce Turgeon** (Costume Designer), **Grant E. Merges** (Lighting Designer), **C Andrew Mayer#** (Sound Designer), **Catherine Charles Hammond** (Dramaturg), **Sophie Peyton** (Intimacy Coordinator), **Annie Enneking** (Fight Choreographer), **Stacy**

**McIntosh** (Stage Manager), **Gianna Haseman** (Asst. Stage Manager), **Gunther Gullickson** (Technical Director), **Evan Sima** (Associate Technical Director), **Nick Walberg** (Master Electrician), and **Meghan Kent** (Costume Assistant).

Musicians include **Kyle Simons Baker`** (Guitar and Bass), **Corey Fitzgerald`** (Drums), **Audrey Q. Snyder`** (Cello and Violin), **Amanda Weis`** (Music Director and Piano).

\* Member AEA # Member USA 829 `Member Twin Cities Musicians Union

### **Josef Evans (Playwright/Composer)**

History Theatre: Debut. Theater: Open Eye Theatre: (musicals, book/music/lyrics) Holiday Ham, Loch Mess, Hair Ball, Log Jam, Constance in the Darkness. (musical, book) Strumply Peter. (plays) To The Moon! and Nothing is Something. Guthrie Theater (co-presented): Home Street Home (Zamya Theater), Love in a Time of Rinderpest (Bedlam Theatre). In The Heart of the Beast Theater: Hot Corn. Bedlam Theatre: Superlatives of Excellence, The Million Dollar Museum, The Turducken, The Hole at the Bottom of the Holiday, What God Said On Tuesday, The Haunted Spoon. George Mason University/UMBC: The Only Americans Welcome. Zamya Theater (devised with the company): A Prairie Homeless Companion, There's No Place Like Home, Ten You Win/Ten You Lose, Little (Foreclosed) House on the (Stolen) Prairie, Act Before Midnight: A Random Collection of Everyday Americans. Additional works produced nationally at St. Louis Black Repertory, Matrix Theater (Detroit), Pangaea Theatre (Denver), New Jersey Playwrights' Theater, Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center (Seattle). Founding Artist, Zamya Theater Project, arts initiative centered on housing justice. Other: Former director, Theater Corps (national community-engaged arts program). Awards: 2015 Ivey Award, "Overall Artistic Excellence," Nothing is Something. City Pages' "Top Ten Shows of the Year" for To The Moon! and Strumply Peter. CLEARCorps /USA Distinguished Service Award (for creation of Theater Corps), Washington DC. Training: English/Theatre, University of Notre Dame. Playwriting, University of Washington (Seattle). Change/Exchange Artist Residency, Los Angeles Poverty Department. Theater of the Oppressed/Forum Theater, Brecht Forum (NYC) with Augusto Boal. Master Class: Edward Albee, Marsha Norman. Member, Dramatists Guild. [www.josefevans.com](http://www.josefevans.com) IG:@showsbyjoe

### **Ticket Information**

**Tiers 1-5:** \$30-74. **Students:** \$15. Additional discounts are available for seniors (available online) and patrons under 30 (must call to purchase). For tickets call 651-292-4323 or visit [historytheatre.com](http://historytheatre.com). Discount rates for groups of 10 or more. Call 651-292-4320 or email [groups@historytheatre.com](mailto:groups@historytheatre.com) to book a group. Discounts also available for Veterans.

**Pay What You Can Previews:** May 15 and 16 at 7:30pm. Pre-reserve for \$20 or PWYC at the door. Cash and credit accepted.

### **Afterthoughts held following Sunday Matinees**

May 18, 25, June 1 and 8. Free and open to all ticketed patrons get closer to the story on stage with a lively post-show talkback. Guest Speakers TBA. More info on the History Theatre website.

### **Accessibility at History Theatre**

History Theatre strives to make all events accessible to all patrons. When purchasing tickets please alert the box office of any accommodation or assistance needed. Accessibility offerings include hearing enhancement receivers, seating for patrons with wheelchairs and their companions, accessible

restrooms, Entrance on Cedar St., and elevator right to the theatre level for easy access. Contact the box office at 651-292-4323 for more information. [www.historytheatre.com/box-office/accessibility](http://www.historytheatre.com/box-office/accessibility)

- **Audio Description/ASL:** Sunday, June 1 2:00 p.m.
- **Open Captioning:** Saturday June 7 2:00 p.m. and Sunday June 8 2:00pm

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**History Theatre Mission:** History Theatre entertains, educates, and engages through creating, developing, and producing new and existing works that explore Minnesota's past and the diverse American experience. Its work provides a unique lens which links our past to the present, explores our common heritage, and illuminates our understanding of what it means to be American.  
[www.historytheatre.com](http://www.historytheatre.com)

**Land Acknowledgement:** History Theatre sits on the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary land of the Dakota people, for whom the land holds historical, spiritual, and political significance. We recognize and honor the Dakota people, ancestors, and descendants, as well as the land itself, and all the sovereign Native nations in Minnesota and beyond. We recognize that this acknowledgement itself is not enough, and only serves as a first step towards decolonization.