

The Cupid Players – Cast Bios

Brian Posen (Director), is artistic director and executive producer of Lukaba productions, the parent company of The Cupid Players. Brian is a native of Chicago. He received a few pieces of paper from Indiana University, one from Columbia, and an MFA in acting from University of Illinois. Brian teaches at The Second City (senior faculty) and Columbia College. He has also taught at Steppenwolf, The Actor's Theater, University of Illinois, Renaissance Faires, various Colleges, High Schools & corporations. He acts, directs, and produces live theater all around Chicago. Brian is a member of both SAG & AFTRA. He is also the executive producer of The Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival, which is the largest sketch comedy festival in the nation.

Brian Peterlin (Tech), a graduate of Devry, has been technical director for productions all around Chicago for the last 11 years. Brian is a self-taught genius in the booth. You can see him in a variety of theaters hanging from ladders or air guitaring his beer to Dr. Feelgood. You can also see Brian in the silent sketch comedy group Bri-Ko, which is quietly kicking ass. Brian has been the technical director of Chicago SketchFest for ten years - where he has teched over 1000 shows. He is also the Director of Facilities at Stage 773. He would like to thank his wife Jill and partner-in-crime Posen. It's all about mathematics people!

♥ Ensemble Cast ♥

Ashley Bush is a proud ensemble member of the Cupid Players for 4 years. She couldn't ask for more talented and generous performers to work with with every week and counts her lucky stars that she was welcomed into this hilarious family. She has been working in the Chicago world of Film, Sketch Comedy and Musical Theatre for 7 years. Some of her favorite roles include, Audrey in Little Shop of Horrors, Shelby in Steel Magnolias, Rhoda in A New Brain and Lucy in Lesbian in the Pantry. Ashley is also the executive director of La Costa Theatre Company. She thanks her family and Jon for their love and support. Especially to her dad who has always supported her singing about her lady parts.

Andrew Graves hails from Lawrence, KS where he attended the University of Kansas and received Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Vocal performance. After singing with the Grammy-Winning Kansas City Chorale, and co-founding/performing in an eight-person choral group in Kansas City called Octarium, Mr. Graves moved to New York City to pursue a career in the field of opera. In the summer of 2007 he moved to Chicago to pursue acting in the form of sketch, and improvisation. He is a graduate of the Second City Conservatory, and the iO Training Center. He can be seen performing The Harold at iO, and in various venues in Chicago, with his improv team, Inkling. Andrew is also a member of the Reader Recommended ResetList: The Improvised Rock Experience. He feels like a real boy, now that he's an ensemble member with The Cupid Players. Thanks need to go out to his family and friends for their constant support. Oh, and look how much bigger my bio is than Israel's.

Israel Pederson is now exponentially cooler since he has become a part of the Cupid Players. After graduating from Purdue University in 2007, he came to Chicago to pursue funny things - upon moving he

lived in his best friend's closet for three months, but eventually got out to train with Comedysportz, the Second City Music Conservatory, and the iO Theater. He can be seen around the city performing with Comedysportz, Infinite Sundaes, Reset List - the Improvised Rock Experience, and in Schaumburg with the Laugh Out Loud Theater. All of this fun could not be had without his number one fan, Sarah.

Ranjit Souri is a contributing essayist to Chicago Public Radio, and a columnist for India Currents magazine. His essay "Fireworks and Beethoven" was named a Notable Essay in the book *The Best American Essays 2007*. He teaches at The Second City Training Center (improvisation and comedy writing), StoryStudio Chicago (creative non-fiction writing), and Aardvark Prep (test preparation). Ranjit is a member of the comedy groups Cupid Players, Stir-Friday Night!, and Siblings of Doctors. A native of Barnesville, Ohio, Ranjit has an MBA from Columbia University and a B.S. in Accounting from Case Western Reserve University.

Tim Soszko is thrilled to be a part of The Cupid Players! He also writes and performs with Briko, and The Tim and Micah Project. Tim directs a whole mess of improv and sketch comedy groups and teaches all sorts of theatre classes with Second City, Barrel Of Monkeys, IO Chicago, Emerald City Theatre Co., Elmhurst Children's Theater, After School Matters, and Columbia College to name a few. And he is attempting to make millions as a voiceover artist. He has yet to reach his goal. www.timsoszko.com

Billy Sullivan, a Cupid Players ensemble member since 2001, was recently featured in CUPID PLUGGED! and currently appears with the cast of the long running hit "CUPID HAS A HEART ON" as he's done since its debut in 2003. He (with Cupid) has also performed at the Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival (2002-Present), TBS Just For Laughs Festival, and others from Boston, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, Minneapolis, Seattle, Portland (OR) as well as throughout Chicago. Other credits include Harry Cooper in MUISCAL OF THE LIVING DEAD (COWARDLY SCARECROW, Premiere Cast), BABY (Actors Theatre Co.), OKIBONO (founding member), OLD and toured with the NATIONAL THEATRE FOR CHILDREN (Minneapolis, MN). He trained with IO Chicago, Second City Training Center Conservatory and Annoyance Theatre. Love and thanks to Mr. Brian Posen (teacher first, friend always) and his entire family back east in his home state Massachusetts.

Jill Valentine is a South Side Chicago native that has worked with The Cupid Players since the beginning. You may have also seen Jill with The Deltones IO's musical improv group or with her burlesque inspired sketch comedy group Off Off Broadway. Some other recent credits are Barbara in Musical of the Living Dead and Ronnette in Little Shop of Horrors. Jill is the Executive Director of The Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival and was also recently named Director of Operations at Stage 773 formerly Theatre Building Chicago. When Jill is not onstage she is either chillin' at 773 (www.stage773.com) or at a bar...check both. Jill would like to send a shout out to her insanely supportive family and of course love to her favorite tech guy!

Mandy Whitenack has been a part of Cupid ever since its first show! She is a massage therapist farm girl from Portland, IN but has lived in Chicago for 15 years. Her most current projects include Helen in Musical of the Living Dead, Salazar/Oatsie in Vampire Lesbians of Sodom and her new hot sketch

burlesque show Off Off Broadway. When Mandy is not on stage you can find her sashaying in many local karaoke bars. She would like to thank her family and friends! Rock on!!

♥ Ensemble (hiatus) ♥

Carisa Barreca is a Chicago native and is just pleased as punch to be performing with the most badass musical sketch comedy group around. After graduating with degrees in Theatre and Dance from Marquette University, she performed with theatre companies throughout Chicago and Milwaukee and graduated from The Second City Conservatory. When Carisa is not performing with The Cupid Players she can be found sailing the seven sea's with The Second City's Boat Co., donning fishnets and corsets while singing hilariously dirty songs with Off Off Broadway, or choreographing for Matter Dance Company (MatterDance.com). She would like to send big THANK YOUS to the Cupid Players, The Broadz, Kevin, her family, and everyone who keeps seeing this amazing show.

Ever since **Sam Lewis** was a little boychik, he's been expressing himself through comedy, dance and song. After earning a liberal arts & sciences degree from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, he moved out to Los Angeles to live out his rock & roll fantasies. Shortly after forming the cubicle rock band Feathergun, his songs were being featured in TV & film. Shows like MTV's Pimp My Ride, Date My Mom or VH1's Bands Reunited still often feature his songwriting. Sam currently resides in Chicago, enjoying writing & performing musical sketch comedy with the Cupid Players, who just completed a successful run of the rock band musical "Plugged" at Stage773. Sam is also the resident sound designer at the Trap Door Theatre, recent credits include Trap Door Theatre's productions of "The Bitter Tears of Petra Von Kant", "Eva Peron", "the Beastly Bombing", "No Darkness Round My Stone", "Horses at the Window", "Me Too, Catherine Deneuve" and EP Theater's "By Obit".

♥ Featured Cast ♥

Christina Lundberg is thrilled to be a part of this amazing group, and is not ashamed to be the baby of the bunch. She has studied improv, sketch, and songwriting ever since she could walk and talk. Mostly a Chicago native (mixed with a touch of New York), she graduated from Columbia College with a BA in acting. Some favorite roles include "Rizzo" from Grease and "Sympathy the Learned" from Arabian Nights. You can also see Christina performing in shows here and there around this awesome city. Many thanks to the cast for making each Saturday night an adventure, and to my family and my friends for all their love and support.

Jonathan Hymen was most recently seen in Cowardly Scarecrows production of Musical of the Living Dead playing the role of Ted. Other Chicago credits include Seymour in Little Shop, Mark Cohen in RENT, Charlie Brown in You're a Good Man Charlie Brown, Matt Holden in Whirlybirds, Jack Daw in The Buddy Holly Story, Gordon Schwinn in A New Brain, Jamie in The Last Five Years, and Tony in A Kiss From Alexander. He was also seen at Theatre Building Chicago (now Stage 773) with the improv/sketch group Sitcom Live! In addition to his improv training from the Second City, Jonathan holds a BA in Acting from Columbia College Chicago. He sends thanks and love to his family, friends and fiance Ashley.

Megan Schemmel graduated with a B.F.A. in Theatre & Voice from the University of Kansas. Her regional credits include Rabbit Hole (Becca), Sweeney Todd (Beggar Woman/Lucy U.S.; Ensemble), All In The Timing (Mrs. Trotsky/Milton/Betty), Sweeney Todd (Johanna), The Wizard of Oz (The Wicked Witch), Trust (Holly) and The Rocky Horror Show (Magenta). She is a member of Matter Dance Company and Night Blue Performing Arts Co. www.meganschemmel.com

Tristan Tanner is super-excited to get to mess around with The Cupid Players! Boasting a minor in theater from Hobart & William Smith Colleges, (which is really just one college) she has also studied improvisation at The Second City Conservatory, and the iO and Annoyance Training Centers. She can currently be seen improvising with her iO Harold team, Old People, or at StudioBe with pH Productions, of which she is an Artistic Director. She likes singing and dancing and being funny and eating cookies. She would like to thank the folks of Cupid Players for helping her do most of these all at once.