



POLKADOTS

The Cool Kids Musical

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Study Guide!

Streaming September 15- October 9



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Cast



Alexia Buckner (Lily) is so happy to be working with Mill Mountain Theatre this summer! She is a recent graduate of the Dobbins Conservatory at Southeast Missouri State University. During her time in school, she was given many opportunities to star in shows as Deloris Van Cartier in *Sister Act*, Beneatha Younger in *A Raisin in the Sun*, and the ferocious Dragon in *Shrek the Musical*. When she is not onstage, she loves to spend her time in aerial gyms, traveling, and watching Food Network. Follow her @thealexiabuckner to see what else she's working on!

Achilles Mulkey (Sky) is overjoyed to be working with Mill Mountain Theatre for the first time! He is a theatre artist, instrumentalist, and writer originally from NW Arkansas. Favorite credits include: Mr. Mistoffelees (*CATS*), Giuliano (*BIG LOVE*), and Peter Pan (*THE LOST GIRL*). In his spare time, he enjoys photography, exploring nature, and a good cup of tea. Training: Viterbo University (BFA Music Theatre), RAD Ballet. Special thanks to his family, Kai, Yoongi & Chashi. IG: @achillesmulkey/achillesmulkey.com



Nisa Isabella Mercado (Penelope) is so excited to be joining Mill Mountain Theatre's 2020 apprentice company! Although she was born and raised in California, she decided to further pursue her dreams of being a professional performer at Shenandoah Conservatory and is now finishing up her senior year as a BFA Musical Theatre major! Her favorite credits include, Diana Morales in *A CHORUS LINE* at Heritage Theatre Festival, Belinda Blair in *NOISES OFF* at Shenandoah Conservatory and U/S Glinda and ensemble in *THE WIZ* at Virginia Repertory Theatre.

Roberto Méndez (Papa Square) is originally from Puerto Rico, but moved to Atlanta, Georgia when he was nearly nine years old. He now lives in Columbus, Georgia where he is pursuing a BFA in Theatre Performance at Columbus State University. He is thrilled to be back at Mill Mountain Theatre where you may have seen him last as Ernst in *'Spring Awakening'*, or as Snail in *'A Year with Frog and Toad'*. He also hopes you enjoy the show as well as its pertinent message.





Madeline Walker (Ms. Square) recently graduated from the University of Central Florida with a BFA in Musical Theatre and minor in dance. She was a member of MMT’s 2018 Apprentice Company and returned last summer to perform in their Let’s Go to the Movies concert. Madeline enjoys performing at Universal Orlando Resort and SeaWorld Orlando. Theatre UCF credits include A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder (Miss Single), Hot Mikado (Yum Yum), and Oklahoma! (U/S Ado Annie).
MsMadelineMae.com

AnnElese Galleo (Swing) is a Salem-grown performer, creative artist, educator, and writer. A former Mill Mountain Conservatory student and summer intern, AnnElese is currently pursuing her BFA in Music Theatre at The Boston Conservatory at Berklee. Some of her favorite credits include Shrek (Fiona), Spring Awakening (Anna), and Newsies (Ensemble/Dance Captain). She is delighted to be back at Mill Mountain during this time to create art with such friendly faces.



Creative Team & Staff

Producer.....	Ginger Poole
Director & Choreographer.....	Christopher Castanho
Music Director.....	Seth Davis
Production Stage Manager.....	Taylor Cobb
Assistant Stage Manager.....	AnnElese Galleo
Scenic & Props Designer.....	Matt Shields
Costume Designer.....	Cole Spivia
Costume Support.....	Matt Shields, AnnElese Galleo & Taylor Cobb
Lighting Designer.....	Travis Kendrick
Projections Designer.....	Victoria Buck
Videographer.....	Richard Maddox
Video Editing.....	Christopher Castanho
Video Editing Assistant.....	Payton Moledor
Sound Support.....	Dylan Francis with Stage Sound
MMT Producing Artistic Director.....	Ginger Poole
MMT Director of Education.....	Travis Kendrick
MMT Education Associate.....	Victoria Buck
MMT Resident Creative & Teaching Artist.....	Christopher Castanho
MMT Business Manager.....	Larry Kufel
MMT Director of Development.....	John Levin
MMT Assistant Artistic Director.....	Payton Moledor
MMT Digital Creative Intern & Study Guide Designer.....	Olivia Bloch

Creators

MELVIN TUNSTALL III (Book) began his writing career while still a student at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music as a founding member of the AMP Theatre Company. A proud participant in the Yale Institute for Musical Theater, Melvin took a small break from writing to make his Broadway debut in Beautiful: The Carole King Musical after originating the role of “Ja’Keith” in the Toronto Company of the Broadway smash Rock of Ages. The acting bug now quenched, Melvin returned to writing with commissioned adaptations of the Broadway musicals Wonderland and The Wiz. His original musical BLOOM! was a finalist in the renowned NAMT Festival in New York City. Peter, darling..., his highly anticipated new musical version of the classic Peter Pan, was commissioned by and will premiere at Casa Mañana Theatre in TX Spring 2018. Melvin currently resides in New York City where he is hard at work writing the book, music and lyrics to Higgins In Harlem: a new musical Pygmalion.

DOUGLASS LYONS (Music, Lyrics, Original Concept) is a composer-lyricist and actor who’s originated roles on Broadway in The Book of Mormon and Beautiful. As a writer Douglas was awarded the Bully Free Communities Spotlight Award for Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical at Ivoryton Playhouse. Upcoming world premieres: Five Points at Theater Latte Da and Peter, Darling at Casa Mañana Theatre. With composer Ethan Pakchar his lyrics have played Lincoln Center, The Old Globe, Seattle Rep and more. Douglas is currently in residence at The Directors Company and under commission with Seattle’s 5th Ave Theatre and Premieres’ Inner Voices.

GREG BOROWSKY (Music) is a songwriter and producer from South Africa, signed to Sony ATV. He is the creative producer and writer behind some of South Africa’s biggest SAMA (SA Grammy) winning artists. His debut album, signed to Universal Music SA was nominated for a Metro FM Best RnB Award and his single “Chocolate Vanilla” was nominated for a Best RnB Channel O Africa Award. After co-writing and producing the official “20 Years of Freedom” song for the South African Government, Greg moved to New York to complete his next producer album, “The Greg Dean Project” featuring soul and Broadway artists, which reached #1 on the UK Soul Chart and remained on the USA Billboard RnB chart for 6 weeks in 2016. Greg is extremely honored to be a part of this special Polkadots family, and to be making his Off-Broadway composer debut with this Atlantic Theater Company production.

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Post-Show Discussion Questions

What was the first thing you noticed when the show began? What did the stage, costumes, lights, and objects look like?

When and where did the show take place? How did the set and costumes convey this?

Did you relate to any of the characters? Why? Who was your favorite character?

What was the show about? What lessons can you take away from it?

How did the characters use movement and their voices to help tell the story?

Synopsis and Background



Ruby Bridges, 1960. AP Photo/File

Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical follows the story of Lily Polkadot, the new kid in the "Squares-Only" town of Rockaway. She is the first polkadot to attend her all-squares elementary school, where she faces bullying and segregation on a daily basis because she is different. She feels very alone at her new

school until she meets Sky Square, a square boy who becomes her friend. Over time, Lily's peers learn to celebrate what makes them each unique instead of tearing others down for it.

The story of *Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical* is inspired by the real-life events of Ruby Bridges and the Little Rock Nine. In the 1950s and before, schools and other public places were segregated, meaning that white and black children were forced to attend different schools. In 1954, the court case *Brown vs. Board of Education* found that this was unconstitutional. In 1957, the Little Rock Nine enrolled in an all-white high school in Arkansas. When they arrived on the first day, they were blocked from entering, and had to be escorted in by troops sent by the President. Ruby Bridges was the first African-American child to attend an all-white elementary school in the South. When she first became a student there, many of the white students left the school, and all but one teacher refused to teach her. She is seen above being escorted on her way to class. Both of these events had a major impact on the Civil Rights Movement.

Questions for Reflection

- What similarities and differences can you find between Lily's story and that of Ruby Bridges and the Little Rock Nine?
- What lessons did the characters learn? How did they change from the beginning of the show to the end?
- Lily feels quite lonely at her new school until she meets Sky. How can you make someone feel welcomed and appreciated at your school?



The Little Rock Nine on their way to school.

1957. AP Photo/File

Using the space below, write a journal entry as if you were Lily Polkadot. What is she thinking and feeling? How does she see the world?

People of the Theatre

It takes A LOT of people working together to create a musical. Here are some of the people that worked make the show that you just saw happen:

Actor: A person who pretends to be someone else onstage.

Director: The person who oversees the main creative ideas for the show and helps the actors find movement in their lines.

Choreographer: The person who creates and stages the dance moves in the show.

Lighting Designer: The person in charge of creating the light looks for the show.

Music Director: The person that works with the actors and musicians to make the music sound good.

Stage Manager: The person behind the scenes who makes sure that the show runs smoothly.

Play your Part

- How did the actors use their faces and bodies to show emotion? Can you act happy, sad, or confused?
- What was the dancing like in the show? If you were the choreographer, how would you have directed the actors to dance? Make up some dance moves of your own!
- Describe the costumes and setting of the show. What were the colors like? How did the costumes set the characters apart or bring them together?
- What happened to each of the characters? What were they like in the beginning of the show, and what lessons did they learn?
- What was your favorite part of the show and why? What will you remember most about this experience?

Fun with Costumes!

A **Costume Designer** creates costumes for the actors to wear in the show.

Before a costume is sewn together, the Costume Designer creates a **rendering**, or a drawing of their ideas to use as a guide.

You can see the renderings for Lily Polkadot and Ms. Square to the right!

Costume Designers also **research** the fashion trends of the time and place in which the show takes place. You can see some of the images that inspired Lily Polkadot's costume below!



Lily PolkaDot

Polkadots: The Cool Kid's Musical

Presented By:
Mill Mountain Theatre
Directed By:
Christopher Castanho
Costume Design By:
Cole Spivia



Lily Polka Dot

Polkadots: The Cool Kid's Musical

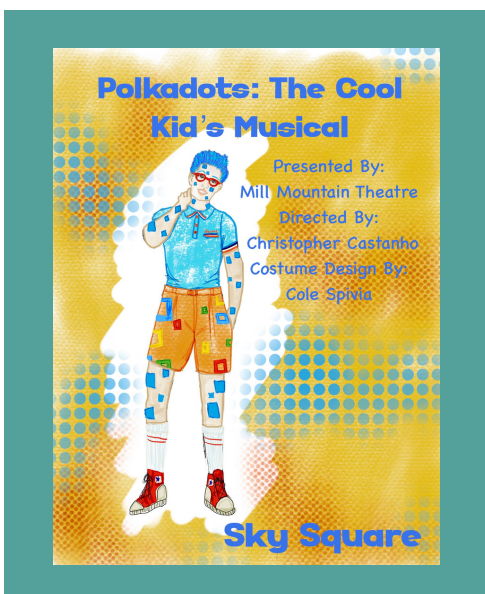
Presented By:
Mill Mountain Theatre
Directed By:
Christopher Castanho
Costume Design By:
Cole Spivia



Ms. Square

Design Your Own Costume!

What would the costumes have looked like if YOU were the Costume Designer? Use the space below to create a rendering of your own!



Additional Resources:

- Who Was Martin Luther King, Jr.? by Bonnie Bader and Nancy Harrison
- If You Were a Kid During the Civil Rights Movement by Gwendolyn Hooks and Kelly Kennedy
- Child of the Civil Rights Movement by Paula Young Shelton and Raul Colon
- Stick and Stone by Beth Ferry and Tom Litchenheld
- The Juice Box Bully: Empowering Kids to Stand Up for Others by Bob Sornson and Maria Dismondy
- Spaghetti in a Hot Dog Bun: Having the Courage To Be Who You Are by Maria Dismondy and Kathy Hiatt
- The Berenstain Bears and the Bully by Stan Berenstain and Jan Berenstain
- The Berenstain Bears and Too Much Teasing by Stan Berenstain and Jan Berenstain
- The Judgemental Flower by Julia Cook and Anita DuFalla
- We're Different, We're the Same (Sesame Street) by Bobby Kates and Joe Mathieu
- Whoever You Are (Reading Rainbow Books) by Mem Fox and Leslie Staub
- A Rainbow of Friends by P K Hallinan
- What I Like About Me! by Allia Zobel Nolan and Miki Sakamoto
- She Persisted: 13 American Women Who Changed The World by Chelsea Clinton and Alexandria Boiger
- Strictly No Elephants by Lisa Mantchev and Taeun Yoo
- Chocolate Milk, Por Favor: Celebrating Diversity with Empathy by Maria Dismondy and Nancy Day
- The Day the Crayons Quit by Drew Daywalt and Oliver Jeffers
- The Sneetches and Other Stories by Dr. Seuss
- The Butter Battle Book by Dr. Seuss
- Little Blue and Little Yellow by Leo Lionni
- Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes
- The Recess Queen by Alexis O'neill and Laura Huliska-Beith
- The Hundred Dresses by Eleanor Estes and Louis Slobodkin
- The Invisible Boy by ThruDY Ludwig and Patrice Barton
- Wonder by R.J. Palacio

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