

THE GOVERNMENT ИНСПЕКТОР

BY NIKOLAI GOGOL
ADAPTED BY JEFFERY HATCHER
DIRECTED BY PAUL KALINA



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IOWA

Theatre Arts

Presented by UNIVERSITY OF IOWA DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS

The Government Inspector

Adapted by Jeffrey Hatcher

From the original by Nikolai Gogol

Directed by Paul Kalina

October 9–11, 15–17, 2026

UI Theatre Building / E.C. Mabie Theatre

Approximate run time is 1 hour 45 minutes, with a 15 minute intermission.

Please be advised this play contains strobe lighting, crude humor, firearm use/gunshots, sexual innuendos, and intimacy.

When a small Russian town receives word that an undercover government inspector is headed their way to root out corruption, the town's leaders panic and desperately try to maintain their status quo...by any means necessary. Greed, mistaken identity, ambition, and a healthy dose of stupidity steer Jeffrey Hatcher's witty adaptation of Gogol's timeless satirical farce.

Special thanks to Fannie, Bones, Levi, and Hatti Kalina; David Lee Painter; Caroline Clay; and Mark Bruckner.

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Originally commissioned and produced by the Guthrie Theater, Joe Dowling, Artistic Director.

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Satire Under the Tsar: Nicolai Gogol's *The Government Inspector*

Written by Ani Jilavyan, Dramaturg

On October 7, 1835, Gogol wrote to Alexander Pushkin, the father of modern Russian literature:

"...Please do me a favor and give me some kind of a plot. Any plot: funny or not but specifically a genuine Russian anecdote. I am itching to write a comedy. If that won't happen, my time will go to waste, and I don't know what I'll do given my circumstances. Besides the wretched university salary of 600 rubles, I don't have any other position at the moment. Please, give me a plot and I will immediately turn it into a five-act comedy, and I swear it will be funnier than hell. For God's sake. Both my mind and my stomach are starving." (Gogol, my trans.)

Alexander Pushkin gave Gogol an idea for a play; however it probably happened in a less direct and conscious way. Pushkin told Gogol how he once was mistaken for an undercover government inspector in Novgorod province by local authorities and how he was treated with special respect (Veresaev). He also recounted similar incidents of mistaken identity happening elsewhere in Russia (Veresaev). Gogol was intrigued and inspired by the story and as promised, immediately (within a couple of months!) turned it into a five-act satire. However, writing a play was one thing and passing the censorship of Tsar Nicholas I (1825-1855) was another.

Tsar Nicholas I ascended to the throne with the slogan "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality," and these interconnected concepts became the guide for the official ideology (Edwards 83). The principle pursued Imperial unity under Orthodox Christianity and the absolute authority of the Emperor, while suppressing ideas considered destructive to that unity. By 1833, Nicholas had created an intimidating and overwhelming apparatus of censorship which could dictate his politico-religious ideology to all authors in Russia preventing "linguistic impurities and political foolishness" (Edwards 85). The censors would read the piece first and in some special cases, they would pass it to the Tsar for the final decision. Gogol's piece was such a special case: censors handed *The Government Inspector* to the Tsar.

Poet Vasiliy Zhukovsky, who acted as Gogol's mentor and friend, was well acquainted with Nicholas I's literary tastes because he had access to the Imperial family (Yakovleva). He also knew well that a disapproved text could cause a writer to be viewed as a revolutionary and therefore a political enemy, destroying their career and life. Gogol's play was making fun of the flaws of the Tsar's system, and so it had a high chance of being rejected, risking

a severe ban for Gogol. Therefore, Zhukovsky personally coordinated a staged reading of the play for the Tsar, and convinced him that "there was nothing subversive in the comedy," and that "it was merely a lighthearted satire on incompetent provincial officials" (Yakovleva). The Tsar approved the piece and even attended the premiere of the show.

Some records state that Nicholas I left the theater after laughing the whole night and said: "What a play! Everybody got his due, I most of all!" (Nabokov, 36). This account has been questioned by different literary scholars, including novelist and critic Nabokov (who loved criticizing everything else other than his own work!). Regardless of the anecdote's historical accuracy, the play was indeed staged and Nicholas I attended it. If he truly failed to see that the satire criticized not only provincial officials but also his entire autocratic system, then it makes Gogol's point even more ironic. It is important to note that Gogol's original five-act script never mentions the Tsar, unlike Hatcher's adaptation, therefore, it is entirely possible that Nicholas simply missed the connection between the depicted bureaucrats and himself.

Just as Gogol took the risky path of unfiltered satire during a dangerous political climate, Hatcher too, in his adaptation of *The Government Inspector* (premiered in 2008), leaned into biting satire when modernizing the script, embracing bold humor that risked backfiring on him with today's audiences. Hatcher took a lot of liberties: he added snappy dialogues full of shocking, unapologetic jokes, where some punchlines might feel offensive to keep the audience on their toes and show the true stupidity, immorality and narrow-mindedness of the characters. Each time we encounter a new character, we think that they are the most ridiculous person possible, until a new one enters. Even the characters we think of as smart are only intelligent relative to the ones that are around them.

Written in 1835 (published in 1836), *The Government Inspector* has inspired more than 15 film adaptations and operas in different languages, alongside roughly 10 English-language play adaptations over many years. It has proven to be a timeless and global piece, allowing audiences everywhere recognize the flaws of the systemic corruption and leaders who don't see past their own bellies.

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Meet The Cast



Hlestakov | RAPHAEL THOMÉ**

Raphael Thomé is a third-year MFA acting candidate. Born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, he worked in TV shows and movies such as *Pelé – Birth of a Legend* and *The Text*, a *Cola-Cola* short. In 2018, he came to the United States to pursue an undergraduate degree at Cal State Northridge. There, he got to play Tartuffe, Laertes in *Hamlet*, and direct Ionesco's *The Killing Game*. At Iowa, he was seen as Fersen in *Marie Antoniette*, Hovstad in *An Enemy of the People*, Lord Capulet in *Romeo & Juliet*, Nathaniel in *Stained Glass*, Astrov in *Uncle Vanya*, and now he's thrilled to play Hlestakov alongside such passionate actors.



Osip | DALE LEONHEART**



Anna | LEAH URZENDOWSKI**

Leah has been on the UIowa stage in *Marie Antoinette*, *An Enemy of the People*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. Previous, Leah was an ensemble member of The Neo-futurists from 2011-2021. She regularly wrote, directed, and performed in *Too Much Light Makes The Baby Go Blind* and *The Infinite Wrench*.

Performer/choreographer/devisor credits include: *Burning Bluebeard*, *Miss Neo Pageant*, *The Unicorn Hour* (Neo-futurists). Choreography credits include: *Lord of The Flies* (Steppenwolf), *The Magic Play* (Goodman), *Ivywild* (Hypocrites), and Jeff award winner for *All Quiet on the Western*

Front (Red Tape). Performer credits include: *500 Clown Trapped*, *500 Clown Frankenstein* (500 Clown), *Hunchback* (Redmoon). Thank you for witnessing live theatre. Please do it again.



Mayor | BRENNEN SAVON MALONE**

Brennen Savon Malone (they/he) is a third-year MFA actor and artist at the University of Iowa, where they've done shows like *Head Over Heels* (Basilus), *Argonautika* (Eighth Man), *Side Show* (Jake), and *Marie Antoinette* (Joseph/Mr. Sauce). While in Philly, they originated the role of Juicy in the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Fat Ham* by James Ijames at the Wilma Theater. They also played Brad in *Rocky Horror Picture Show* at Theatre Horizon, Wilbur in *Charlotte's Web* at the Arden Theatre, and Parmesan in *Gay Mis* with Jaffe St. Queer Productions. They are incredibly grateful for this amazing crew of artists and are forever grateful to their

beautiful partner, Steven, and the silliest doggo, Stanley. Feel free to give Brennen a follow on Instagram [@brennensavonmalone](https://www.instagram.com/brennensavonmalone). They need the love. Enjoy the show.



Marya | SHELBY LANDUYT*

Shelby Landuyt is a fourth-year double major in theatre arts and cinematic arts with an emphasis in acting. Her recent University of Iowa credits include *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Indoctrination of Bananas*, and *The T-Rex-Formation*. She is incredibly grateful for all of the friends, family, and professors who have shaped her into the person she is today. She loves you all very much, and she hopes you enjoy the show! Thank you for believing in the power of live theatre. The world needs it.



Grusha | FRANCES DAPIER*

Frances Dapier is a third-year theatre arts major on the musical theatre track, with minors in dance and media management. She is so excited to be part of her third mainstage production at the University of Iowa! Most recently, she appeared in last semester's musical, *Head Over Heels* (Arcadian), the workshop production of *Drill, Drill, Drill* (Mia), and *Side Show* (Lobster Girl/Vale Sister). She is endlessly grateful to her friends and family for their love and support, and to this wonderful cast and crew for making this experience so special.



Judge | AIDAN SEVILLE*

Aidan Seville is a fourth-year musical theatre major at the University of Iowa. Aidan's most recent show here was *Argonautika*(Meleager), Aidan is very excited to be apart of this production because it's funny! He's loved his time with the entire company whose made him laugh every single day. He'd like to thank his mother for giving him all of his talent. And he swears that she doesn't make him write that.



School Principal | CARTER HOUCHINS-WITT*

Carter is so excited to do a show with the University of Iowa! He's done many shows around Iowa City including most recently *Newsies*(Tommy Boy) with City Circle, *A Gentlemen's Guide to Love and Murder* (The D'ysquiths) with Theatre West, and *Metamorphosis*(Phaeton/Eros) with Crooked Path. He wants to thank everyone who supports his acting in any way shape or form.



Hospital Director | KAIYA KRALIK*

Kaiya is a third-year undergraduate double majoring in screenwriting and musical theatre, minoring in cinema, and pursuing the social justice and performing arts certificate. Her most recent credits include *Three Cubes and a Ghostlight*, *The Boy with the Sun in his Eyes*, *Head Over Heels*, and *Rituals of Theophany*. She's honored and excited to be a part of this show and work with this spectacular and hilarious cast. She's thankful for her supportive family (including her brother who's along for the ride), her amazing friends, her incredible boyfriend, and cats Scrump and Soup. She

hopes you enjoy the show and laugh a lot!



Postmaster | TOBIAS BURKLEY*

Tobias Burkley is a junior transfer student. This is his first show at the University of Iowa. He is very excited to be a part of the production and hopes to have fun in the theater. He hopes to not repeat THE INCIDENT. He would like to thank his family for supporting him in this venture.



Doctor | EVAN SCHMIDT*

Evan Schmidt is a second-year musical theatre student at the University of Iowa. He is thrilled to be part of his first mainstage and perform on the Mabie stage! Some of his previous notable roles include: *Newsies* (Darcy/Ike) with City Circle, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Archangel Raguel) with the University of Iowa School of Music, *1984* (Winston Smith), *Hello, Dolly!* (Cornelius Hackl), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Apostle). He's very grateful to his friends and family for their support!



Innkeepers Wife / Corporals Widow | MAR Y LUNA HASKINS*

Mar Y Luna Haskins is a second-year theatre major on the musical theatre track. This will be her fourth production at the University of Iowa, previously being in *Drill, Drill, Drill* (Anya Svenson), *Head Over Heels* (Ensemble), and *Drag'dalore* (Drag Thing). She is incredibly thankful to be a part of such an amazing show. She would like to thank her parents, boyfriend, and hilarious cast mates for helping her through this show's process. She hopes you enjoy!



Waitress / Locksmith's Wife | KAYLA LEACOCK**

Kayla Leacock is thrilled to be in *The Government Inspector*! Select credits include: National Tour: *PAW Patrol Live!* (Rocky), *Rosie Revere Engineer & Friends* (Ada Twist) Regional: *The Color Purple* (Nettie), *Hurricane Diane* (Renee), *Bad World: A New Musical* (Linnea), *Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical* (Lily Polkadot), *Hairspray* (Dynamite) University of Iowa: *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Esmeralda), *How to Defend Yourself* (Kara), *Earthus Terminus* (Madame President), *Adaku* (Mma), *Far Away* (Harper). Special thanks to her family and friends!



Svetsunov | ALEX SMITH-PERRY*

Alex Smith-Perry is a third-year undergraduate student from Atlanta, Georgia, studying theatre arts with minors in journalism and religious studies. He was previously seen at the university in *Adaku* (Priest/Akojindu), *Argonautika* (Ninth Man-Hylas, Dymas), and *All That Glitters* (Kit), as well as outside the university in *Clue* (Colonel Mustard). Alex is thrilled to be a part of *The Government Inspector*, and to put on a satirical show in a very anti-satire political climate. He would like to thank his moms, grandmother, dog, and friends for their endless support and love.



**Abdullin / Constable / Imperial Messenger
| RIDGE RUTHERFORD***

Ridge Rutherford is a first-year double majoring in theatre arts and cinema. He is excited to perform his first production at the University of Iowa. He has performed live theater in several fields from high school to community productions. He would like to thank his mother for starting his interest in acting and supporting him.



Pentelaeyev / Constable | JIMMY REMPEL*

Jimmy Rempel is a second-year student studying musical theatre at the University of Iowa. *The Government Inspector* is his fourth production with Iowa, with past credits including *Drag'da Lore* and *Head Over Heels*. Additional credits include *The Drowsy Chaperone* as George (Washington Community Theatre), and *Into the Woods* as The Baker (Mid-Prairie High School). He is honored to be a part of one of Iowa's rare comedic pieces, and would like to thank Paul Kalina for the opportunity. He would also like to thank his family, friends, and his amazing girlfriend for championing him every day. (He would also like to ask the audience to let him

know if they can tell that his toe is broken.)



Chernaeyev / Constable | LUCAS DE LA ROSA*



Dobchinsky | JACK MCCARTHY*

Jack McCarthy is a freshman and cannot wait to portray Pyotr Ivanovich Dobchinsky in his first show at the University of Iowa, *The Government Inspector!* Jack works at ComedySportz Quad Cities as an improvisational actor and enjoys all aspects of the arts. He would like to thank his late father and his two heroes, his mom and brother, for their constant stream of support and encouragement as he continues to chase his dreams.



Bobchinsky | THOMAS MCCARTHY*

Thomas McCarthy, a third-year undergrad at the University of Iowa, is pursuing a BA in theatre arts on the musical theatre track and a BA in economics. He is extremely excited to be a part of another incredible production at the university. You may have seen Thomas in past university productions such as *The (T-)Re(x)Formation* (Jedd), *Side Show* (Roustabout/Ensemble), *3 Cubes and a Ghostlight* (Actor 6), *Drag'daLore* (Zachary Scott Brandon/Lincoln Bio), *Argonautika* (Sixth Man), and *Head Over Heels* (Dametas). Thomas would like to thank everyone involved in the process of bringing this hilariously powerful piece of art to life.

He would also like to thank his two heroes, his brother, Jack, and his mom, Regan, for supporting him in everything he does. Enjoy the show!

*Undergraduate student.

**Graduate student.

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Meet The Creative Team



Playwright | NIKOLAI GOGOL

Russian dramatist and novelist Nikolai Gogol, the founder of realism in Russian literature, was born in 1809 in Ukraine. He moved to St. Petersburg in 1828, where he supported himself by working as a history professor and a civil servant. In 1831, he met Alexander Pushkin and began a close friendship that would later influence his writing. That year, Gogol published "Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka," a collection of short stories about his life in Ukraine that brought him great success. Over the next few years he published several successful short stories that combined humor and the fantastic,

including "Taras Bulba" (1835), "Diary of a Madman" (1835), "The Nose" (1836), and "The Overcoat" (1842). He also produced the plays *The Marriage* (1835), *The Gamblers* (1836), *Decoration of Vladimir of the Third Class* (1832), and *The Inspector General* (1836), his famous satire of corrupt public officials. From 1836 to 1846 Gogol lived in Rome, where he wrote his picaresque novel "Dead Souls." He lived in Russia during the last few years of his life and attempted to write a second part to "Dead Souls," but in 1852, he destroyed the manuscript. Gogol died a few days later in Moscow.



Adapter | JEFFREY HATCHER

Broadway: *Never Gonna Dance* (Book). Off-Broadway: *Three Viewings* and *A Picasso* at Manhattan Theatre Club; *Scotland Road* and *The Turn of the Screw* at Primary Stages; *Tuesdays with Morrie* (with Mitch Albom) at The Minetta Lane; *Murder By Poe*, *The Turn of the Screw* and *The Spy* at The Acting Company; *Neddy* at American Place; and *Fellow Travelers* at Manhattan Punchline.

Other Plays/Theaters: *Compleat Female Stage Beauty*, *Mrs. Mannerly*, *Murderers*, *Mercy of a Storm*, *Smash*, *Armada*, *Korczak's Children*, *To Fool the Eye*, *The*

Falls, *A Piece of the Rope*, *All the Way with LBJ*, *The Government Inspector*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and others at The Guthrie, Old Globe, Yale Rep, The Geffen, Seattle Rep, Cincinnati Playhouse, Cleveland Playhouse, South Coast Rep, Arizona Theater Company, San Jose Rep, The Empty Space, Indiana Rep, Children's Theater Company, History Theater, Madison Rep, Intiman, Illusion, Denver Center, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Milwaukee Rep, Repertory Theater of St. Louis, Actors Theater of Louisville, Philadelphia Theater Company, Asolo, City Theater, Studio Arena and dozens more in the U.S. and abroad.

Film/ TV: *Stage Beauty*, *Casanova*, *The Duchess*, and episodes of *Columbo*.

Grants/Awards: NEA, TCG, Lila Wallace Fund, Rosenthal New Play Prize, Frankel Award, Charles MacArthur Fellowship Award, McKnight Foundation, Jerome Foundation and Barrymore Award Best New Play. He is a member and/or alumnus of The Playwrights Center, the Dramatists Guild, the Writers Guild and New Dramatists.



Director / Fight Choreographer | PAUL KALINA

Paul is an associate professor of movement studies. A founding member of the Chicago physical theatre company, *500 Clown*, he has performed their shows throughout the United States and England including PS 122 in New York, Steppenwolf Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre and the State Theatre in New Jersey. He is a graduate of the Dell Arte School of Physical Theatre and received his MFA in directing from the University of Idaho.



Dramaturg | ANI JILAVYAN**

Ani Jilavyan is a translator and dramaturg from Yerevan, Armenia. She was the dramaturg for *The Words of Ants* by Xiaoyan Kang (directed by Meredith G. Healy; New Play Festival 2025); *Jellyfish Baby* by Darrin Terpstra; *How to Defend Yourself* by Liliana Padilla (both directed by Meredith G. Healy); *Uncle Vanya* by Anton Chekhov, adapted by Annie Baker (directed by Kayla Adams) and *Rituals of Theophany* by Darrin Terpstra (directed by Vivian Bonde; New Play Festival 2026). She also was part of the *Just a word, and the word a movement*, a theatre arts interdisciplinary ten-day summer

workshop culminating in an experimental performance inspired by the University of Iowa Dada and Fluxus special collections. She is thankful to her family and friends for their continuous support and hopes you enjoy the show!



Stage Manager | **BONNIE RUBLE****

Bonnie Ruble is a Midwest-based stage manager, and they are excited to be working on this show! They are an MFA stage management candidate in their third year here at the University of Iowa. Their recent credits include PA- *Tosca* (Wolf Trap Opera), ASM- *Eugene Onegin* (Wolf Trap Opera), PA- *La Cenerentola* (Wolf Trap Opera), SM- *How to Defend Yourself* (University of Iowa), ASM- *Hunchback of Notre Dame* (University of Iowa), PA- *Tosca* (Cincinnati Opera). Thank you for supporting local theatre!



Scenic/Media Designer | **NAZANIN VAKILI****

Nazanin Vakili (she/her) is an artist from Iran with a background in architecture. She is pursuing her third year in the MFA Theatre Design program at the University of Iowa, focusing on scenic and media design. Her recent work includes *Argonautika*, *Head Over Heels*, *Adaku*, *Drag'daLore: The Musical*, *Ballroom Epic*, *Flashes*, and *The Indoctrination of Bananas*. She is interested in creating experimental immersive environments through the intersection of scenery design, storytelling, and visual media. She is honored and excited to work

alongside all the wonderful artists and collaborators on *The Government Inspector*.



Costume Designer | BELLA FORTUNADO

Bella Fortunato is an Iowa-based costume designer and artisan. Over the course of her career, her work has taken her all over the country including Connecticut, Utah, and New York. Some of her favorite costume credits include *Side Show* (University of Iowa), *Come from Away* (Yale Dramatic Association), and *Pirates of Penzance* (ICCC). Bella is at her happiest when she is creating art and looks forward to another year of doing just that.



Sound Designer | MARISA RODRIGUEZ*

Marisa Rodriguez is a fourth-year theatre arts major and digital arts certificate student. Their previous University of Iowa design credits are lighting and media design for *Ten Minute Play Festival 2025*, sound design for *salt tongue* in the 2025 New Play Festival, lighting and media design for *Drill Drill Drill*, sound design for *How to Defend Yourself*, and lighting design for *The Milk Miracle* in the 2026 New Play Festival. They've also stage managed and co-sound designed for *Myocardium*; *Graphite* with Dreamwell Theater; did lighting, sound, and media design for *Former Poster Child* at the

James Theater; and they were a collaborator for *Just a word, and the word a movement*, the interdisciplinary Dada/Fluxus workshop performance.



Lighting Designer | BRYON WINN†

Bryon Winn is a professor of design and has served as the Director of Theatre Arts at the University of Iowa since 2003. He has designed lighting, scenery, projections, and/or media for theatre, opera, and corporate events throughout the country. This includes over 300 productions and over 50 premieres of new plays. At the University of Iowa, Bryon teaches courses in lighting and entertainment design, including courses in lighting for the camera and concert design. Bryon is a recipient of a CLAS Collegiate Teaching Award, the Distinguished Achievement in the Arts and Humanities Research Award,

and is a member of United Scenic Artists 829.



Intimacy Choreographer | CRISTINA GOYENECHÉ

Cristina Goyeneche is an actress, director, fight choreographer, and educator who comes from Bakersfield, CA, where she taught at California State University, Bakersfield (acting) and Bakersfield College (acting and film studies). Cristina received a BA in both Theatre Arts and Psychology from California State University, Bakersfield and her MFA in Acting from the University of Iowa.



the live space.

**Assistant Director | ARMAN
HODASEFAT****

Arman Hodasefat is an MFA directing candidate at the University of Iowa. Originally trained in film, Arman is a filmmaker and director whose work explores family, memory, displacement, and the complexities of human relationships. His approach to directing is shaped by a particular interest in character-driven stories, psychological depth, and the quiet tensions that exist beneath everyday life. Through theatre, he is interested in creating intimate, actor-centered experiences and discovering new ways to bring cinematic storytelling into



**Assistant Stage Manager | MIREYA
SOTO****

Mireya is a first-year MFA stage management candidate from Jerome, Idaho. She is a recent graduate from Idaho State University with her BA in English and theatre. Some of her recent credits include ASM on *Beehive: The 60's Musical* and *Around the World in 80 Days* (Tent Theatre), and SM on *Christmas Carol* and *Steel Magnolias* (Idaho State University).



Assistant Costume Designer | AVA BURMAHL*

Ava Burmahl is a fourth-year undergraduate student majoring in theatre arts with a focus in costume design. After pivoting from performance to production work, this is her first time as an Assistant Costume Designer. She is very grateful to work alongside this show's incredible Costume Designer, Bella Fortunado, and would like to thank her and Cathy Parrott for encouraging her aspirations to work in this field.

*Undergraduate student.

**Graduate student.

†Member of the United Scenic Artists, Local 829.

UI Theatre is dedicated to providing hands-on theatre experience for both undergraduate and graduate students.

Meet The Crew

Position	Name(s)
Wardrobe Crew Captain	Sarah Morgan*
Deck & Automation Crew Captain	Lexi Wartschlager*
Light Board Operator	Aiden Kelsey*
Q-Lab Operator	Sonia Cryptomeria*
Run Crew – Wardrobe	Carden Green* Charlotte Larsen* Victoria Wojdan*
Run Crew – Deck	Haydon Bailey* Roxy Glave*
Run Crew – Deck & Fly	Silas Young*
Run Crew – Deck, Fly, Automation	Kate Jensen*
Production Lab TA	Bonnie Ruble**
Wardrobe Associate	Sasha Hildebrand

*Undergraduate student.

**Graduate student.

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