

Creative Conversations: Alan Plado, *Dear Evan Hansen* Music Director



Dear Evan Hansen music director, Alan Plado, shares what he enjoys about music directing this production, keeping the integrity of a well-known musical album, and how every great musical encourages characters to sing when words fail.

Q: *Dear Evan Hansen* has one of the most recognizable contemporary musical theatre scores. What stands out to you as a music director?

Plado: Definitely the orchestration. I think the combination of a string section (violin, viola, cello) with a rhythm section (guitars, piano, bass, drums) is a rare and emotionally evocative way to approach a contemporary score.

Q: How does the music help audiences connect with characters who are struggling to express themselves?

Plado: Like in any great musical, the songs come out of a moment where the only thing left for the character to do is sing, such as in, “Words Fail.” This song evokes strong emotion from both the audience and the character, hopefully revealing something that wasn’t there before.

Q: What challenges and opportunities come with conducting a score that so many audience members already know?

Plado: As a music director, it’s important to honor what the original writers created, while allowing the performers to breathe life into these characters within that framework.

Q: Is there a song in the show that you think deserves more attention from a musical standpoint?

Plado: Probably “You Will Be Found”. We wanted this number to impact every member of the audience, so a great deal of time was spent on integrating the music, lights, and video content.

Q: What has been your favorite part of being Music Director for this show? So far!

Plado: It would have to be working with young actors who are just starting out in their careers. It’s such an exciting time for them and you can feel that energy on and off the stage. Also, to play this score with these incredible musicians each night is such a joy!

Details

Dates: June 10 – August 2, 2026

Location: The Phoenix Theatre Company, Hormel Theatre

Tickets: phoenixtheatre.com | (602) 254-2151

Audio Description and American Sign Language interpretation performance dates can be found at phoenixtheatre.com.