

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Press Contact:**Kevin Kopjak, Prismatic Communications | [kevin@prismaticcommunications.com](mailto:kevin@prismaticcommunications.com)

## **THE GROUND FLOOR: BERKELEY REP'S CENTER FOR THE CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW WORK ANNOUNCES PARTICIPANTS FOR 2025 SUMMER RESIDENCY LAB**

**Berkeley Rep welcomes over 120 local and national artists to develop 24 innovative theatrical projects during nationally recognized development laboratory**

**Since its inception, The Ground Floor has been instrumental in the creation of dozens of new works for the American theatre**

**\*\*\* LAB DATES: JUNE 16–JULY 13, 2025 \*\*\***

BERKELEY, CA (June 10, 2025)—Today, Berkeley Repertory Theatre's Artistic Director **Johanna Pfaelzer** and Managing Director **Tom Parrish** announced the **Summer Residency Lab** participants of **The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep's Center for the Creation and Development of New Work**. Now in its 13th year, this nationally recognized incubator has become a much-anticipated laboratory for collaboration and creation. This year, over 120 local and national artists representing 24 projects will unite at Berkeley Rep's West Berkeley campus from **June 16–July 13, 2025**, for an intensive four-week period to exchange ideas, incubate new theatrical work, receive bespoke developmental support, and build artistic community.

"In this moment, when opportunities for artists to gather, experiment, and collaborate have become increasingly rare, the Ground Floor Summer Residency Lab remains a vital space for creative risk-taking," says **Pfaelzer**. "The more than 100 artists who will gather over 4 weeks, filling every available space at our Harrison Street pre-production facility, represent a thrilling range of voices, perspectives, and theatrical forms. Nurturing new work is core to Berkeley Rep's mission, and the Ground Floor allows us to invest in the future of the American theatre in a direct and meaningful way."

"This year's Resident Artists are a community of storytellers pushing the boundaries of form and genre for the stage," said **victor cervantes jr.**, Berkeley Rep Associate Producer – New Work. "These artists are delving into the visceral power of theatre through new musicals centered on Black land ownership and liberation, solo clown performances exploring migration, and serio-comedic works that celebrate intergenerational wisdom."

The Residency Lab brings artists to Berkeley to work on projects in one- to two-week residencies over the course of four weeks. Artists have been selected through an open application process, as well as via existing relationships with Berkeley Rep. Nearly 800 projects applied to participate in the 2025 Residency Lab. Depending on the expressed wishes of the artists, a project may culminate in a public sharing, though there is no requirement that the work be presented.

For more information on artists and projects, visit: [berkeleyrep.org/the-ground-floor/summer-residency-lab/artists/](https://berkeleyrep.org/the-ground-floor/summer-residency-lab/artists/).

## **GROUND FLOOR'S RESIDENCY LAB 2025 ARTISTS AND PROJECTS**

*In alphabetical order by title. Additional participants/casting to be named later. Lead Artists are original project applicants with Collaborators identified (by the Lead Artists) to engage with and deeply support the projects*

### ***41: A QUEER BALL***

**Lead Artists:** Richard A. Mosqueda, Dr. Karina Gutiérrez

**Collaborators:** Christopher Cortez

Inspired by a real-world 1901 queer scandal in Mexico, *41: A Queer Ball* reclaims a lost moment in Latine history through an experimental blend of music, dance, drag, and spoken word. The artists aim to honor their ancestors and resist ongoing erasure of queer, brown identities by creating a vibrant, genre-defying piece that is both celebratory and subversive. They seek a supportive space to explore, devise, and develop the work collaboratively from the ground up.

### ***ALAA: A FAMILY TRILOGY***

**Lead Artists:** Adam Ashraf Elsayigh, Salma Zohdi, Evren Odcikin (dir.)

In 2011, blogger Alaa Abd El-Fattah became a leading voice of the Egyptian Revolution by fusing his activism and tech acumen, inadvertently following in his famous family's activist legacy. Since then, he has spent much of the last decade in prison, unlawfully held by a military regime seeking to silence him and his family. Weaving writings and personal testimonials from Alaa and his family matriarchs, this epic play connects one family's enduring fight for justice to global struggles for human rights and freedom of expression.

### ***AFRICAN MOMS' BOOK CLUB***

**Lead Artist:** Gloria Majule

*African Moms' Book Club* is a dark comedy about four wealthy, devout Tanzanian women whose monthly Bible study group is upended when one discovers her husband is gay. Set against a backdrop of rising queerphobia, the play uses humor and scripture to challenge dominant narratives around LGBTQ+ identity in African and Christian contexts. The artist seeks to develop this work to foster dialogue and empathy within her community and beyond. Commissioned by Milwaukee Repertory Theater.

### ***THE BIGNESS OF US***

**Lead Artists:** Jord Liu, Mei Ann Teo (dir.)

Set in a hybrid world of 1920s Shanghai and modern-day San Francisco, this new musical follows Xiao, a rural pianist who joins a jazz combo and activist co-op amid growing political unrest. As tensions lead to the 1927 Shanghai Massacre, the story explores art, revolution, and why people commit to movements—or don't. Drawing on the historical jazz genre *shídàiqǔ* and inspired by contemporary activist communities, *The Bigness of Us* examines burnout, collective care, and the cyclical nature of resistance.

### **DAYLIGHT**

**Lead Artist: Kate Cortesi**

**Collaborator: Josiah Davis (dir.)**

*Daylight* is a play in development based on the real-life story of Joe Garcia, a man reflecting on his 21 years in prison, framed by his relationship to the music of Taylor Swift. Developed in collaboration with Garcia over a year and a half (and counting), *Daylight's* blend of direct address, scripted scenes, and evocative choreography explores accountability, true love, and the soul-saving power of pop music.

### **D.I.E.**

**Lead Artist: Ricardo Pérez González**

In *D.I.E.*, a disillusioned writer-turned-DEI trainer-turned kidnapper spirals into madness after faking a white identity to secure a book deal, culminating in a darkly comedic and violent unraveling of personal and professional lies. The playwright, drawing from lived experience, seeks space and collaboration to fully realize this horror-infused satire about liberal hypocrisy, identity commodification, and the moral rot within supposedly progressive spaces.

### **DRAGON BABY**

**Lead Artist: Sara Porkalob**

**Collaborator: Andrew Russell (dir.)**

*Dragon Baby* is the third play in Sara Porkalob's *The Dragon Cycle*, a genre-defying three-act musical-in-development. It follows Sara, the first in her Filipino American family to attend college, as she navigates personal crises, five jobs, and identity struggles while writing her senior thesis. Spanning her journey from a queer communal childhood to academia, the play explores purpose, artistic voice, and resistance to the Great White Way.

### **DREAMS OF BLURRY LINES**

**Lead Artist: You-Shin Chen**

*Dreams of Blurry Lines* is a visually driven, bilingual theatrical work that explores the subconscious landscape of immigration through the artist's vivid dreams, reflecting a 14-year journey from foreign student to U.S. citizen. Blending design, puppetry, and movement, the project images storytelling in which visuals drive narrative. It challenges traditional design boundaries to evoke the shifting identity, language, and emotional terrain of life between cultures—creating a dream world where transformation mirrors the artist's evolving sense of self.

### **I LOVE THIS SONG**

**Lead Artists: Daniel Handler, Torq Campbell, Ben Gibbard**

*I Love This Song* is a musical written by Torquil Campbell from the band Stars, Ben Gibbard from the bands Death Cab for Cutie and The Postal Service, and Daniel Handler, also known as Lemony Snicket. When Sara and Milo first meet in high school, they're in love with a song. Then they're in love with each other--maybe too much in love, or maybe not enough. A pop song is a dream of romantic perfection in a world cluttered with crappy melancholy--and so is love, of course. Over the years, Sara and Milo find each other, drift apart, and find each other again--and the song remains the same. *I Love This Song* is about the power of pop songs to show us what love might be--and our all-too-human failure to live up to those perfect moments.

### ***IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WAS HOUSE!***

**Lead Artists: Steven Sapp, Mildred Ruiz-Sapp, Tanya Palmer, and Chay Yew (dir.)**

*In The Beginning, There Was HOUSE!* delves into the rich history of Chicago's House Music, tracing its roots from early 20th-century migrations and cultural movements to its emergence in underground clubs. By exploring pivotal moments and figures, including the influence of Frankie Knuckles, it connects the genre's evolution to broader social and political struggles. The project highlights House's cultural significance, exploring how it became a powerful expression of resilience and belonging for marginalized communities.

### ***MOTHER OF EXILES***

**Lead Artists: Jessica Huang, Jaki Bradley (dir.)**

In 1898, on Angel Island, a pregnant Eddie Loi faces deportation amid America's tightening immigration laws. A century later, her grandson Braulio, through his role in the Miami border patrol, inadvertently conjures her spirit — unleashing a witty, opinionated ancestor. By 2063, their descendants, beset by climate catastrophe, embark on a perilous oceanic journey seeking sanctuary. From detention to diaspora, *Mother of Exiles* follows a single family's century-and-a-half odyssey — tracing their flight, fight, and the futures they dare imagine. Jessica Huang's multigenerational triptych blends historical drama with supernatural encounters, weaving moments of surprising humor into a powerful portrait of belonging and resilience.

### ***MY MARIA***

**Lead Artist: Andrew Russell**

**Collaborator: Morgan Green (dir.)**

*My Maria* is a bold and highly theatrical play set in a fictional southern Midwest town, where Chuck, a sixty-year-old school resource officer, falls in love with a mysterious woman named Maria through country line dancing. When his actions during a mass shooting call his courage into question and bring his world tumbling down, can their love survive? Moving and full of heart, the play unfolds across three genre-shifting acts—romantic comedy, surreal thriller, and grounded drama—to explore the complexities of cowardice and the power of love.

### ***NO HISTORY***

**Lead Artists: Reynaldo Piniella, Kevin R. Free (dir.), DJ Potts**

*No History* is a solo theatrical work that traces the extraordinary life of Arturo Schomburg, an Afro-Puerto Rican scholar who fought for Cuban and Puerto Rican independence, preserved Black history, and navigated the complexities of identity in early 20th-century New York. Blending historical narrative with music, dance, and personal reflection, the piece brings to life Schomburg's global journey—from Puerto Rico to Harlem—and reclaims his legacy as a vibrant, flawed, and joyous figure who reshaped cultural memory.

### ***ONWU DE PLAY – A WHATSAPP DRAMA***

**Lead Artist: Nkeiruka Oruche**

**Collaborator: Nemuna Ceesay**

*Onwu de Play – A WhatsApp Drama* is an Afro-urban dance-theatre piece that follows five Igbo millennials navigating the chaos of their mother's burial through messaging apps, revealing the tensions, humor, and heart of diasporic family life. Blending traditional Igbo culture with urban music, dance, and digital storytelling, the artist draws from personal and community experiences to explore grief, identity, and connection. The artist seeks dedicated time, space, and ensemble collaboration to deepen the work's choreography, script, and design.

### **PRETTY GOOD DAY**

**Lead Artist: Surrija**

**Collaborator: Daisuke Tsuji**

*Pretty Good Day* is an exploration of memory, strangeness of existence, and life's often insistence on dissociation. Drawing from the collaborators' lives as immigrants, they seek to shape a song cycle with clown/a physical theatrical piece that captures the nuance of emotional landscapes with intimacy and abstraction.

### **RATS WHEN IT'S NIGHT OUT**

**Lead Artists: Max Wolf Friedlich, Hannah Getts, Michael Herwitz (dir.)**

In 2011, a group of private school boys in New York City gather on a rooftop to help a friend through his first break-up. Seven years later, newly graduated from college, the boys reunite to understand why that night unfolded as it did. *Rats When It's Night Out* examines guilt, complicity, male friendship, and the possibility of accountability without self-justification or performativity.

### **SWEET CANAAN**

**Lead Artists: Eric Emauni, a.k. Payne, Ashley Thomas, Nora Schell, Brandon Michael Nase**

Set across generations, *Sweet Canaan* explores the legacy of Grace, a Black woman who acquired land in 1934 Arkansas and used it to empower her family. Drawing on archival research and personal connection to the land, the artists aim to reclaim suppressed histories of Black ownership, autonomy, and resilience. They seek to collaboratively build a script and music that honors Grace's story while challenging ongoing erasure of Black American narratives.

### **THIS IS NOT AN IMMIGRANT STORY**

**Lead Artists: Reza Salazar, Kate Whoriskey (dir.)**

*This Is Not An Immigrant Story* is a solo theatrical piece tracing a son's journey to understand and love his mother, shaped by their nomadic childhood as clowns traveling throughout South America. The artist explores how performing and survival blurred emotional boundaries, especially his early role as an emotional caretaker. Through memory, journals, and improvisation, he seeks to unpack suppressed experiences and build a shared narrative that honors both of their stories.

### **UGLY**

**Lead Artist: Nissy Aya**

The premier Black Love greeting card company, 28 Harper, finds its home in a building with an if-you-know-you-know "matchmaking" service, a sweet-tongued receptionist, and a ghostwriter who spends her days battling a menace. *UGLY* asks us to enter their space to be unmade in the face of death, desirability, and disco. The artist is reshaping an earlier draft to more center queer intimacy, and the care required to re/form yourself when your body is deemed "unworthy."

### **UNTITLED ADRIAN EINSPANIER PROJECT**

**Lead Artist: Adrian Einspanier**

**Collaborator: Caitlin Sullivan (dir.)**

Set entirely at a bar after closing shifts at the Friendly/Affordable/Supposedly Ethical grocery store where they work, this ensemble play follows a group of coworkers in the early stages of organizing a union, examining how seemingly casual conversations might evolve into collective action. Rooted in lived experience and extensive research, the artist is driven by a desire to explore the intersections of labor, love, and care, and seeks collaboration to refine this ambitious, emotionally rich piece that questions how we imagine solidarity and dream beyond survival.

### ***UNTITLED DIONYSUS PROJECT***

**Lead Artist: Ato Blankson-Wood**

**Collaborators: Taylor Barfield, Maya Sharpe**

*Untitled Dionysus Project* reimagines The Bacchae as a ritual of Black liberation, using Dionysus as a symbol of divine retribution against white supremacist systems. Developed in response to the racial reckoning of 2020, it explores how oppression afflicts the mind, soul, and body, and seeks to exorcise these forces through theory, spiritual ritual, and performance. The artists aim to process rage and envision healing through immersive, transformative theatrical experiences.

### ***UNTITLED HARUNA LEE PROJECT***

**Lead Artist: Haruna Lee**

This nascent project explores a child's attempt to piece together the fragmented legacy of their Taiwanese father and Japanese mother through personal writings, interviews, and translated texts to uncover family stories long buried by distance, grief, and Japanese imperialism. Blending memoir and history with the recreation of our deceased loved ones through AI, it traces the Zainichi Taiwanese experience, forbidden cross-cultural love, and the rupture of the family when facing the end of life. The work focuses on "emotional interstices," or the slow and psychic gaps left by death and time, asking how memory, migration, and language are constantly in concert with one another.

### ***WAVES***

**Lead Artist: Daniel Alexander Jones**

*WAVES* is a memoir-based performance installation exploring Daniel Alexander Jones' upbringing in a Black-centered, multiracial community and his apprenticeship with several avant-garde theatre artists. Revisiting one mentor's manuscript through the lens of grief and personal transformation, he aims to craft an immersive experience that uplifts her visionary teachings. He will use the space to develop a blueprint for this work, blending memory, ritual, and experimental storytelling in response to today's political and cultural precarity.

### ***WHAT'S EATING GILBERT GRAPE***

**Lead Artists: Adrian Blake Enscoe, Regina Strayhorn, Sydney Shepherd, Christopher Sears, Peter Hedges**

In a theatrical reimagining of the beloved book that served as the basis for the cult classic film, *What's Eating Gilbert Grape* focuses on a family navigating love, loss, and caregiving in a small town, told through an indie/folk musical lens. Created by a group of actor-musicians with the original writer Peter Hedges, the piece redefines key characters—centering a neurodivergent Arnie and a complex, plus-size Momma—while championing inclusive casting and fresh perspectives. The team aims to deepen the integration of music into the plot, refining arrangements and storytelling through a collaborative, instrument-driven process.

### **THE GROUND FLOOR'S SUMMER RESIDENCY LAB PROJECTS THAT HAVE BEEN PRESENTED ON THE BERKELEY REP MAINSTAGE INCLUDE:**

- *Troublemaker, or The Freakin Kick-A Adventures of Bradley Boatright* by Dan LeFranc (2012/13 season)
- *The House that will not Stand* by Marcus Gardley (2013/14 season)
- *X'S and O'S (A Football Love Story)* by KJ Sanchez with Jenny Mercein (2014/15 season)

- ***Notes From the Field: Doing Time In Education, The California Chapter* by Anna Deavere Smith** (2014/15 season)
- ***Aubergine* by Julia Cho** (2015/16 season)
- ***John Leguizamo: Latin History for Morons* by John Leguizamo** (2015/16 season)
- ***The Last Tiger in Haiti* by Jeff Augustin** (2016/17 season)
- ***Imaginary Comforts, or The Story of the Ghost of the Dead Rabbit* by Daniel Handler** (2017/18 season)
- ***Fairview* by Jackie Sibblies Drury** (2018/19 season)
- ***Becky Nurse of Salem* by Sarah Ruhl** (2019/20 season)
- ***the ripple, the wave that carried me home* by Christina Anderson** (2021/22 season)
- ***Cambodian Rock Band* by Lauren Yee** (2022/23 season)
- ***Out of Character* by Ari'el Stachel** (2022/23 season)

Since 2012, The Ground Floor has been Berkeley Repertory Theatre's home for new work development, supporting over 1,000 artists in creating more than 200 projects that have gone on to win major awards and grace stages worldwide. Projects developed at The Ground Floor's Summer Residency Lab that have gone on to notable productions elsewhere include ***Hadestown*** by Anaïs Mitchell, ***Flex*** by Candrice Jones, ***Ghost Quartet*** by Dave Malloy, ***Is This a Room*** by Tina Satter, ***Untitled F\*\*k M\*\*s S\*\*gon Play*** by Kimber Lee, ***The (curious case of the) Watson Intelligence*** by Madeleine George, ***The Monsters*** by Ngozi Anyanwu, ***Hold Me in the Water*** by Ryan Haddad, among many others.

The Ground Floor is supported by **Frances Hellman & Warren Breslau**, with additional funding provided by **Bank of America, The Maurer Family Foundation**, and the **National Endowment for the Arts**.

Berkeley Rep recognizes the generous support of **BART, OAK Airport, and Peet's Coffee**, its official season sponsors. Berkeley Rep is also delighted to acknowledge support at the season sponsor level from **Stephen & Susan Chamberlin, Yogen & Peggy Dalal, Bruce Golden & Michelle Mercer, Frances Hellman & Warren Breslau, Wayne Jordan & Quinn Delaney, Jonathan Logan & John Piane, Gisele & Kenneth F. Miller, Jack & Betty Schafer, The Shubert Foundation, The Strauch Kulhanjian Family, Kelli & Steffan Tomlinson, Gail & Arne Wagner, and William and Flora Hewlett Foundation**.

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## **ABOUT BERKELEY REP**

Berkeley Repertory Theatre has grown from a storefront stage to an international leader in innovative theatre. Known for its ambition, relevance, and excellence, as well as its adventurous audience, the nonprofit has provided a welcoming home for emerging and established artists since 1968. Over 6 million people have enjoyed more than 500 shows at Berkeley Rep, including 87 world premieres. Berkeley Rep shows have gone on to win eight Tony Awards, nine Obie Awards, 11 Drama Desk Awards, a Grammy Award, a Pulitzer Prize, and many other honors. In recognition of its place on the national stage, Berkeley Rep received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. Through its annual seven-play season, together with up to four special event presentations, Berkeley Rep invites audiences to enjoy an eclectic range of theatrical experiences featuring diverse artistic voices, themes, and perspectives. To formalize, enhance, and expand the processes by which Berkeley Rep makes theatre, The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep's Center for the Creation and Development of New Work was launched in 2012. Serving some 20,000 people a year, Berkeley Rep's School of Theatre ensures broad access to dynamic arts educational activities, especially for Bay Area youth, and provides immersive training for current and future theatre makers. In 2021, Berkeley Rep launched In Dialogue, a program

that places its theatre-making skills and resources in service of the community. Using storytelling as an anchor, In Dialogue is developing long-term collaborations with local, socially centered organizations, as well as educating and activating our audiences around organizations whose work aligns with the themes of our productions. Berkeley Rep's bustling facilities—which include the 600-seat Roda Theatre, 400-seat Peet's Theatre, Medak Center, and a spacious campus in West Berkeley—are helping revitalize a renowned city. Learn more at [berkeleyrep.org](http://berkeleyrep.org).

#### **41: A QUEER BALL**

**Richard A. Mosqueda** is a queer, Latine producer and director based in San Francisco. They are committed to amplifying queer and brown voices through epic and genre-defying theatrical storytelling. Select credits: *Spanish Stew* (World Premiere, Fall 2025; NCTC), *Love in the Time of Pinatas* (NYC Fringe Festival, Portland Center Stage, Epic Party Theatre), *A Picture of Two Boys* (World Premiere, NCTC), and *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (Shotgun Players). Richard is a graduate of The Theatre School at DePaul University.

**Karina Gutiérrez** (She/Her) is a Bay Area-based director, dramaturg, and scholar. As a director and dramaturg, Karina has had the pleasure of working with Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre, Crowded Fire, Huntington Theatre, Playwright's Foundation, SF Shakespeare Co., Shotgun Players, Stanford University, Townhall Theatre, West Edge Opera, and Word for Word. She is a member of the Latinx Theatre Commons Steering Committee, Board President at Crowded Fire Theatre, and a member of the executive board at Theatre Bay Area. She is currently a professor at UC Berkeley.

**Christopher Cortez** graduated in 2011 from Allan Hancock College (AHC) with an AA in Fine Arts-Dance and in 2015 from Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater with a Certificate in Dance. With a focus on Modern dance styles and Folklorico, Cortez has worked with companies such as 360 Dance Company, Calpulli Mexican Dance Co, Ballet Nepantla, Mexico Beyond Mariachi, and Rhythm of the Arts. Christopher's choreography has been set on AHC students, as well as recently in 2024 in a solo debut for NYC's MEXFEST. He has also performed for music artists such as Lila Downs and Los Tigres del Norte.

#### **ALAA: A FAMILY TRILOGY**

**Evren Odcikin** (he/him) is a Turkish-American theatermaker committed to championing historically excluded voices and stories in the American theatre. Directing: Soho Rep, PlayCo, OSF, Woolly Mammoth, Guthrie, Northern Stage, amongst others. Playwriting/translation: Cal Shakes, NYU Abu Dhabi, Golden Thread. In 2023, he served as the Interim Artistic Director at OSF where he was Associate Artistic Director for five seasons. Evren is the 2024-25 Artist in Residence at Golden Thread, an inaugural Iris Lab Fellow at UCSC, and a founding board member at MENA Theater Makers Alliance. [odcikin.com](http://odcikin.com)

**Adam Ashraf Elsayigh** Cairo-born and Dubai-raised, Adam Ashraf Elsayigh's childhood entwined a Muslim Egyptian home, American cable, and British schooling in a migrant-majority city. This cultural cross-section upbringing is core to the artist Adam is today. Adam writes plays about people navigating queerness, authoritarianism, and class across and between cultures. Adam's writing (*Drowning in Cairo*, *ALAA Family Trilogy*) has been developed across 4 continents, including at Sundance, NYTW, and Golden Thread. Adam holds a BA in Theater and Dramaturgy from NYU Abu Dhabi and an MFA in Playwriting from Brooklyn College.

**Salma Zohdi** is an Egyptian dramaturg living in the U.S. She is the Literary Manager at New York Theatre Workshop and an Adjunct Professor at NYU's Department of Dramatic Writing. Her credits include *The Mecca Tales*, *The Yacoubian Building*, *The Conversationalists*, *Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World*, *Once Upon a Time Called Now*, *Drowning in Cairo*, *House of Joy*, and *ALAA: A Family Trilogy*. Salma is passionate about creating spaces for inclusive conversations on art, culture, community, and global social justice. She holds an MFA from Columbia University and an MA from AUC.

### **AFRICAN MOMS' BOOK CLUB**

**Gloria Majule** is a Tanzanian storyteller. She writes for and about Africans and the African diaspora. Her work includes *My Father Was Shot in the Back of the Head* (Relentless Award Finalist), *Culture Shock* (Leah Ryan Prize Winner), and *Uhuru* (Alley All New Festival). Gloria has been awarded a MacDowell Fellowship, commissions by Audible and Atlantic Theater Company, and residencies by Yaddo, Art Omi, The New Harmony Project, and New York Stage and Film. BA: Cornell University, MFA: Yale School of Drama.

### **THE BIGNESS OF US**

**Jord Liu** (she/her) is a theatre maker, musician, and builder based in San Francisco, CA. She is the co-creator of *Baked! The Musical* (CMTF 2020, NAMT 2022, Village Theatre 2023, Theo 2023, Prospect Musicals 2023) and *TRACKING* with writing partner Deepak Kumar. Jord has done residencies at SFBATCO's Creator's Lab, MTF Makers III, Goodspeed Musicals JMF Writers Grove, Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center, and has had work produced by theatres in NYC, Seattle, Chicago, and San Francisco. By day, Jord also designs and builds exhibits at the Exploratorium, an art and science museum.

**Mei Ann Teo** makes theatre at the intersection of artistic/civic/contemplative practice, across genres, including music theatre, intermedial participatory work, classics, and documentary theatre. Teo's work has been in international festivals and has directed/developed new work across the US. Teo has served in artistic leadership as the Artistic Director of Musical Theatre Factory and the Assoc. Artistic Director and Director of New Work at OSF. Teo is currently an artistic leader at Ping Chong and Company.

### **DAYLIGHT**

**Kate Cortesi** is a Brooklyn/Boston-based playwright from Washington, D.C. Full-length plays: *Great Kills* (Princess Grace Award), *A Patron of the Arts* (Cherry Lane Theatre), *ONE MORE LESS* (NYFA Award, Relentless finalist), *Love* (Sky Cooper New American Play Prize, MTC, Ojai Playwrights Conference), *Is Edward Snowden Single?* (The Pool Plays, The Jungle Theatre, many others) and *Ten Grand* (Pacific Playwrights Festival). Commissions: Playwrights Horizons, Keen Company, Lucille Lortel, South Coast Rep. Residencies: New Dramatists, Huntington Theatre, O'Neill, Lucille Lortel. More at [katecortesi.com](http://katecortesi.com)

**Josiah Davis** (he/him) is a multi-disciplinary artist. He is a Princess Grace Honoraria, NYTW 2050 fellow, National Black Theatre Soul Directing Resident, Susan Stroman Directing Award Recipient, Clubbed Thumb Directing Fellow. He is a graduate from UCLA TFT and Brown/Trinity MFA Directing. Selected credits: *Mary Gets Hers* (Playwrights Realm/MCC) *Omar Offrendum's Little Syria* (BAM), *Lessons in Survival* (Vineyard Theatre), *Amani* (Rattlestick/NBT), *Clyde's* (ASF/Arkansas Rep/St.Louis Rep), *Importance of Being Earnest* (Portland Center Stage), *Mr. Saturday Night* (Broadway, Assoc.). [josiahdavis.net](http://josiahdavis.net).

### **D.I.E.**

**Ricardo Pérez González** is a queer Puerto Rican writer celebrated for his evocative storytelling. His debut play, *In Fields Where They Lay*, was lauded by The NY Times as “gripping” and a “moving drama.” Notable works include *On the Grounds of Belonging*, his comedy *Mother of God*, and *Don't Eat the Mangos*, hailed by the SF Chronicle as a “reminder that great family dramas are still being written.” He also wrote on Netflix's *Designated Survivor*. A teacher at NYU, Harvard, and Yale, he has been honored by Sundance and is an alumnus of the EWG at The Public. MFA NYU Tisch.

[www.ricardoperezgonzalez.com](http://www.ricardoperezgonzalez.com)

### **DRAGON BABY**

**Andrew Russell** is a writer and director who creates new work often inspired by real-life events, including *Stu for Silverton* (Intiman Theatre); *John Baxter is a Switch Hitter* (Intiman Theatre); and Sara Porkalob's *The Dragon Cycle*, featuring *Dragon Lady* (Intiman Theatre, American Repertory Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, The Geffen Playhouse), *Dragon Mama* (American Repertory Theatre, Diversionary Theatre, Williamstown Theatre Festival), and *Dragon Baby* (in development). Once upon a time, he was Producing Artistic Director of the Tony-winning Intiman Theatre in Seattle.

**Sara Porkalob** is a storyteller and creator of *The Dragon Cycle*, an award-winning trilogy of plays about her Filipina-American gangster family. Awards: 2021 Princess Grace Award Winner, Seattle Times “11 Movers and Shakers to Watch this Decade,” Seattle Magazine’s “2018’s Most Influential People.” Broadway: *Edward Rutledge, 1776*. She’s a consultant with Seattle’s Creative Strategies Initiative (CSI), a new city effort using arts- and culture-based approaches to build racial and gender equity in non-arts policy areas. She is under commission by Geffen Playhouse, adapting *The Dragon Cycle* for TV, and writing her first feature film. [www.saraporkalob.com](http://www.saraporkalob.com)

### **DREAMS OF BLURRY LINES**

**You-Shin Chen** is an award-winning Taiwanese American scenic designer. As a theatre collaborator, she is committed to diversity and humanity through visual storytelling. You-Shin centers humans, both the characters and the viewers, and their experiences in her process of creating a three-dimensional space. She is consistently interested in exploring how tangible and intangible elements inform and influence the visual and psychological aspects of a space. You-Shin is excited to embark on her project with Ground Floor Residency at Berkeley Rep. Assistant Professor at Muhlenberg College. USA829.

### **I LOVE THIS SONG**

**Daniel Handler** is the author of seven novels, and, as “Lemony Snicket”, far too many books for children. He has worked extensively and inexplicably in film and television and has on-going commissions from the Royal Shakespeare Company, the New York MOMA, the San Francisco Symphony, and the Hans Christian Andersen Museum. His work has sold more than seventy million copies and has been translated into thirty-nine languages.

**Torquil Campbell** is a musician, actor, and writer who plays in the bands “Stars”, “Memphis” and “Total Fucking Darkness”. He toured his one-man play *True Crime* all over Canada a little while back, and he also composes for film and theatre. He has acted all over the place including in the plays *Shopping and Fucking* at New York Theatre Workshop and several seasons at the Stratford Festival in Canada. This machine kills fascists.

**Benjamin Gibbard** is a multi-platinum, Grammy-nominated singer, songwriter and guitarist. He is the lead vocalist, guitarist, and primary songwriter of “Death Cab for Cutie”, formed in 1997. The band has since recorded ten studio albums, including, most recently, the critically acclaimed *Asphalt Meadows* (2022). Gibbard is also one half of the electronic duo “The Postal Service,” whose sole album, *Give Up* (2003), is Platinum-certified and the second best-selling title in the 37-year history of Sub Pop Records. Gibbard is an avid ultra-marathon runner and a long-term resident of Seattle, WA.

### ***IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WAS HOUSE!***

**Chay Yew** New York credits include the Public, Playwrights Horizons, NYTW, Signature, New York City Center Encores!, Flea, Playwrights Realm, Audible, Rattlestick, and EST. Regional credits include the Goodman, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Rep, Arena, ACT, La Jolla Playhouse, Alley, Goodspeed, South Coast Rep, Old Globe, Center Theatre Group, Denver Center Theater, Huntington, Seattle Rep, Victory Gardens, Portland Center Stage, amongst others. Opera credits include Perelman, Tanglewood, and LA Philharmonic. He is the recipient of the 2024 Doris Duke Artist Award, and the OBIE for direction.

**Mildred Ruiz-Sapp** Co-founder UNIVERSES Theater. Playwriting/Acting credits: *AmericUS, UNISON, PARTY PEOPLE, AMERIVILLE, SLANGUAGE*. Director: *The Tempest*. Filmmaker credit: *Rising* (2022 Smithsonian and Ashland Independent Film Festival). Awards/Affiliations: A.E. Caleyssens Artist in Residence (Northwestern Univ), 2020 Andrew W. Mellon Foundation National Playwright Residency Program recipient, 2015 Doris Duke Performing Artist Award (Theatre), Former Oregon Shakespeare Festival Acting Company Member/Ensemble in Residence. Member: AEA.

### **Steven Sapp**

Theatre. Playwriting/Acting credits: *AmericUS, UNISON, PARTY PEOPLE, AMERIVILLE, SLANGUAGE*. Director: *Titus Andronicus, Serious Money, Metamorphosis, The Thanksgiving Play, Fireflies, Pass Over, UBU Unchained*. Awards/Affiliations: A.E. Caleyssens Artist in Residence (Northwestern University), 2020 Mellon Foundation National Playwright Residency, 2015 Doris Duke Performing Artist Award (Theatre), Oregon Shakespeare Festival (2012-2014), 2008 US State Department State Department/Jazz at Lincoln Center-Rhythm Road, 2008 Peter Zeisler Award, TCG Directors Award.

**Tanya Palmer** (Dramaturg) is a dramaturg, creative producer, educator, and playwright who currently serves as the Assistant Dean and Executive Artistic Director at Northwestern University’s School of Communication, where she oversees programming at the Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Centers for the Performing and Media Arts. She served as the Director of New Play Development at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago for 14 seasons and at Actors Theatre of Louisville for 5 seasons. Originally from Calgary, Canada she lives in Evanston, Illinois with her husband Jim and their two teenagers, Harper and Theo.

### ***MOTHER OF EXILES***

**Jessica Huang** is a playwright and producer based in New York, from Minnesota. She is the inaugural recipient of the 4 Seasons Residency; the 2019 resident playwright at Chance Theater; a 2018 MacDowell Fellow; and a three-time Playwrights’ Center Fellow. Her work includes *The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin* (2018 Barry and Bernice Stavis Award, 2017 Kilroy’s List), *Mother of Exiles, Transmissions in Advance of the Second Great Dying, and Purple Cloud*. She has commissions with Manhattan Theatre Club, TimeLine Theatre Company, Audible, Theater Masters, History Theatre, and Theater Mu. She has received awards from the Sloan Foundation, the Jerome Foundation, and the Minnesota State Arts

Board. Jessica co-founded and co-directs Other Tiger Productions, a theatrical production company with a mission to pursue multidisciplinary collaborations, intentional inclusivity, and a re-examination of traditional theatre practices. She has been a member of the Civilians R&D Group, Page 73's Interstate 73, and Ars Nova Play Group. She attends the Playwrights Program at Juilliard.

**Jaki Bradley** is a writer and director for theatre, TV, and film. She has directed at theatres across the country, including Berkeley Repertory Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop, Ars Nova, New York Stage and Film, Ojai Playwrights Conference, Denver Center, Clubbed Thumb, Williamstown, Soho Rep, the O'Neill, and Arena Stage. Jaki has been a member of the Civilians R&D Group, an Artist-in-Residence at Ars Nova, a Drama League Artist-in-Residence and TV/Film Fellow, a member of the Soho Rep Writer/Director Lab, the Williamstown Directing Corps, Lincoln Center Director's Lab, New York Stage and Film Screenwriters Lab, and a U.S. Fulbright Scholar. Proud member of the Writer's Guild of America and Stage Directors and Choreographers Society.

**Michele Selene Ang** is a Chinese-Indonesian-American actor who is drawn to stories about guarded but passionate people, tales of feminine rage, and gutsy non-sentimental love. Her perspective is inherently influenced by her conservative, suburban upbringing; which leads her to gravitate towards scripts that feature messy, witty characters with emotions too big for their bodies - and the hilarity or tragedy that ensues when they are compelled to stifle them. Born in Surabaya, raised in the Bay Area, and educated in New York, Michele now splits her time between NYC and California.

**Ricardo Vázquez** is a New York actor, singer, and theatre creator who recently appeared in the 2024 Broadway revival of *Our Town* directed by Kenny Leon. He was also part of the original Broadway cast of *The Inheritance*, which won the Tony Award for Best Play in 2020. Other recent New York credits include *Fuente Ovejuna* at Theatre for a New Audience and The Pool Play's production of *Superstitions*.

## **MY MARIA**

**Andrew Russell** is a writer and director who creates work often inspired by real-life events, including *Stu for Silverton* (Intiman Theatre); *John Baxter is a Switch Hitter* (Intiman Theatre); and Sara Porkalob's *The Dragon Cycle*, featuring *Dragon Lady* (Intiman Theatre, American Repertory Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, The Geffen Playhouse), *Dragon Mama* (American Repertory Theatre, Diversionary Theatre, Williamstown Theatre Festival), and *Dragon Baby* (in development). Once upon a time, he was Producing Artistic Director of the Tony-winning Intiman Theatre in Seattle.

**Morgan Green** is an Obie Award winning theatre director and Co-Artistic Director of the Tony Award winning Wilma Theater in Philadelphia. Recent credits include: *Five Models in Ruins, 1981* by Caitlin Saylor Stephens (LCT3), *The Comeuppance* by Branden Jacobs Jenkins (Woolly Mammoth Theatre, Wilma), *Staff Meal* by Abe Koogler (Playwrights Horizons), *School Pictures* by Milo Cramer (Playwrights Horizons, Wilma), *The Wolves* by Sarah DeLappe (Marin Theatre Company) and *MINOR CHARACTER* created by New Saloon (The Public Theater, The Sharon Playhouse).

## **NO HISTORY**

**Kevin R. Free** *Kudzu Calling* (Alabama Shakespeare Festival); *Tiny Beautiful Things* (Mile Square Theatre); *Pass Over* (Marin Theatre Company); *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure*; *Last Ship To Proxima Centauri* (Portland Stage); *Black & Blue* (also with Reynaldo Piniella; Ars Nova ANTFest); *Marcus, or the Secret of Sweet* (Nevada Conservatory Theatre); *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill* (Peterborough

Players). Awards: Obie (2015); Golden Voice (2023); Apollo New Works Lab (2024); Everett Quinton Award (2024). [www.kevinrfree.com](http://www.kevinrfree.com) IG: @kevinrfree

**Reynaldo Piniella** was seen on Broadway in *Thoughts of a Colored Man* and *Trouble in Mind*. Off-Broadway: Signature, The Public, the Working Theater, TFANA, and Rattlestick, regionally with Baltimore Center Stage, Syracuse Stage, Long Wharf Theatre, the O'Neill, Cleveland Playhouse, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, St. Louis Shakespeare Festival, and Actors Theatre of Louisville. TV: *Reservation Dogs*, *Sneaky Pete*, *Law & Order: SVU*, *The Carrie Diaries*, *Flesh & Bone*, *Blue Bloods*, *Greenleaf*, *NYC 22*, *Us & Them*, and *The Daily Show*.

**DJ Potts** Sound Designer. Off-Broadway: Traverse32: Triple Threat | PAC NYC: Icons of Culture, Refuge: A concert Series | The Shed: Open Call | The Drama League of NYC: The Bull Jean Stories, Hello Again | REGIONAL: Shakespeare Theatre Company: Kunene and The King | Chautauqua Theater Company: Fabulation, or The Re-Education of Undine | Vermont Northern Stage: King James. Education: The New School: Romeo & Juliet, Glass n' Mirrors. | Rutgers: Angela Davis School for Girls With Big Eyes, Holy Week.

### **ONWU DE PLAY – A WHATSAPP DRAMA**

**Nkeiruka Oruche** is a multimedia creative and cultural producer passionate about Afro Urban culture. She created *Mixtape of the Dead & Gone #1* dance-theatre comedy about death & Igbo cosmology. She was on SF Playhouse's 2023 *Nollywood Dreams* creative team. Oruche was a Dance/USA Artist Fellow, Kikwetu Honoree, NYFA Immigrant Artist Fellow, and YBCA 100 Honoree, with awards from Creative Work Fund, MAP Fund, Kenneth Rainin Foundation, and California Arts Council. Her work has been featured in BBC Africa, Goethe-Institut, Fjord Review, Coal City University Enugu, and Oakland Museum of California.

**Nemuna Ceesay** (she/her) is a NY based artist. Select Directing: *The Kitchen* (Uncle!), Playwrights Horizons (Amusements), 66th Obie Awards, Associate Director of *A Strange Loop* (Broadway). 2022 Clubbed Thumb New Play Directing Fellow. Select Acting: New York Theatre Workshop (*Here There Are Blueberries*), Actors Theatre of Louisville (*Loving and Loving*), The Shed (*Straight Line Crazy*), Second Stage (*Patience*), Oregon Shakespeare Festival (2015/2016 seasons). MFA in acting from American Conservatory Theater. Website: [nemunaceesay.com](http://nemunaceesay.com), IG: @nemuna.ceesay

### **PRETTY GOOD DAY**

**Surrija** Recording artist. Recent credits: featured vocals as Opera Evelyn in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (A24). Music Director and originating cast member in *Cambodian Rock Band* (Off-Broadway Signature Theatre, LJP, National Tour). Huong in *Vietgone* (East West Players). Original compositions in *All's Well That Ends Well* (OSF). "SURRIJA" is a new project that explores electronic treatment of classical roots. Music video *Southern Winds* earned Best Music Video at Dublin Web Fest 2017. She has worked with "Son Lux," "Felicia Day," "CDZA," with a cult following on YouTube channel, "[Luieland](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)." @surrija

**Daisuke Tsuji** is an actor/clown/director. His journey as a clown started with Cirque Du Soleil's *Dralion*. Since then, he has created/performed in his own clown show, *Death and Giggles* at The Actors' Gang, as well as *Clowns Are Peoples Too* as a Midnight Project at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. As an actor, he was last seen as Duch in *Cambodian Rock Band* at East West Players. Broadway: *Life of Pi*. TV: *Night Agent*, *Invasion*. Video Games: Jin Sakai in *Ghost of Tsushima*.

## ***RATS WHEN ITS NIGHT OUT***

**Michael Herwitz** is a New York-based director of plays and musicals. He directed *Job* by Max Wolf Friedlich on Broadway at the Hayes Theater as well as the two sold-out preceding Off-Broadway productions at the SoHo Playhouse and Connelly Theater. Other New York credits include *Cold Water* with Little Engine Theater and *Dance Dance Revolution* at JACK. Michael has developed new plays and musicals at Ars Nova, Ensemble Studio Theater, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Martha's Vineyard Playhouse, and Pasadena Playhouse. Education: Northwestern, LaGuardia Arts.

[www.michaelherwitz.com](http://www.michaelherwitz.com)

**Max Wolf Friedlich** is a writer from New York City. His play *Job* (NY Times Critics Pick, John Gassner Award nominee), after two sold out runs off-Broadway, transferred to Broadway in July of 2024. *Job* had its regional debut at the Signature Theatre in Arlington, VA and its international debut at Coal Mine Theatre in Toronto, with 25 more domestic and international productions to come including Miami, Philadelphia, and Melbourne in 2025.

**Hannah Getts** was the producer and dramaturg of *Job*, a New York Times Critic's Pick by Max Wolf Friedlich, which had its Broadway debut at The Hayes Theater in 2024. She was also the producer and dramaturg for both Off-Broadway productions of *Job* at SoHo Playhouse and The Connelly Theater. She is currently Vice President of Television at Ridley Scott's award-winning production company, Scott Free. She previously worked at Campout Productions and FilmNation Entertainment.

## ***SWEET CANAAN***

**a.k. payne** (they&she) is a playwright and theatermaker with roots in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. They hold a B.A. in English and African-American Studies from Yale College and an MFA in Playwriting from the Yale School of Drama. They are currently a resident artist with Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh Foundation). They are a grandchild of the Great Migration; a genderqueer abolitionist, and of a great lineage of Black women living-room archivists; all of which deeply informs their work as a playwright, community organizer and spacemaker.

**Ashley M. Thomas** If June Ambrose and James Baldwin had a baby, it'd be Ashley M. Thomas (she/her(s)/herself). Born and bred in Harlem, NY, Ashley is an artist whose work—spanning plays, poems, creative criticism, and short stories — centers on Black life from the mundane to the surreal. She's a proud alumna of the First Wave Urban Arts Scholarship at University of Wisconsin-Madison where she graduated with her Bachelor of Social Work. She also holds an MFA in Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism from Yale School of Drama. Ashley is a Libra Sun, Aries Rising, and Taurus Moon.

**Eric Emauni** is a Tony nominated producer, world builder, and Founder of Iconic Vizion Productions; creating transformative spaces for artists and fueling truth. He has been fortunate to work with esteemed cultural institutions such as Harlem Stage, The Public Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, LAByrnth Theater Company, The TEAM, National Black Theatre, And PAC NYC. Eric is the recipient of the AKA 500 Hour Producers of Color Initiative, the I AM SOUL Producer in Residence at National Black Theatre, Petri Project Artist with The TEAM, Prince/TTLP Fellow, and Member of the Broadway League.

**Brandon Michael Nase** is a multi-disciplinary artist currently based in New York City. Brandon currently works as a producer, educator, and music director/supervisor. He music-supervised the London revival of *Passing Strange* at the Young Vic in the Spring of 2024 and is the Music Director/Arranger of the upcoming John Legend/Lynn Nottage musical, *Imitation of Life*. He has been a guest teaching artist at

Texas State University, Missouri State University, Pace University and an adjunct faculty member at Northwestern University.

**Nora Schell** is best known as an Obie Award winning actor for their portrayal of Bustopher Jones in *Cats: The Jellicle Ball*, *Jagged Little Pill* (OBC), and *Spamilton* (Drama Desk, Drama League & Clive Barnes Nominations). They've been a long-time singer-songwriter but will be making their composing debut with *Sweet Canaan*. Their immediately memorable melodies and expert harmonic vocal stacking combined with lyrics both deliciously biting and unflinchingly vulnerable create a unique fusion of pop, folk, gospel, and musical theatre that is deeply representative of Black American influence on music.

### ***THIS IS NOT AN IMMIGRANT STORY***

**Reza Salazar** is an actor, writer, and director who began his career as a child in South America, working with his mother as clowns. He originated the role of Rafael in the Tony nominated play *Clyde's*. He has worked Off Broadway, Television, and Film, and in some of the most esteemed regional theatres across the country such as the Mark Taper Forum, Goodman Theatre, Guthrie Theater, and Arena Stage. He is currently a social practice artist-in-residence at the SHED.

**Kate Whoriskey** Broadway: *Clyde's*, *Sweat*, and *The Miracle Worker*. Off-Broadway: *The Apiary*, *Ruined*, *Letters from Max*, *Fabulation*, *Inked Baby*, *Sweat*, *Aubergine*, *All the Natalie Portmans*, among others. Internationally, her work has been seen at the Chatelet in Paris, the Carriage House in Sydney, Australia. Regional includes: The Goodman, The Taper, The Geffen, the A.R.T, the Arena, South Coast Rep, Oregon Shakespeare Theatre, Sundance Theatre Lab.

### ***UGLY***

**Nissy Aya** is a Black girl from the Bronx. She and all her younger selves tell stories and tall tales. As a cultural worker, she believes in the transformative nature of storytelling, rehearsing revolution (quiet, world-ending, and otherwise), and examining how we shape/end the world through healing justice, Afrofuturist frameworks, and tenderness/intimacy/practices of feeling good. Zir creative work reflects those notions while exploring the lines between oral history, archives and memory, detailing both the absence and presence of love, and giving all the life (and then some) to Black Femmes.

### ***UNTITLED BY ADRIAN EINSPANIER***

**Adrian Einspanier's** plays include *Lunch Bunch* (PlayCo & Clubbed Thumb; New York Times & Time Out Critic's Picks; licensed by Concord Theatricals; in development for television with Film Nation), *House Plant* (New York Theatre Workshop's Next Door; Lambda Literary Award Finalist), *I forgot to tell you* (published in The Brooklyn Rail), and *DEBT* (co-written with reid tang, in development with Breaking the Binary Theatre, Pride Plays, & NYSAF). A recipient of the Lotos Foundation Prize, Adrian is working on a new play commission for Darren Aronofsky's Protozoa Pictures and LAMF's Theater Fund.

**Caitlin Sullivan** is a director and theatre maker based in New York City. Recent work includes *The Antiquities* (Playwrights Horizons), *The Good John Proctor* (Bedlam, The New Yorker's Best Theatre of 2023), *Find Me Here* and *WORK HARD HAVE FUN MAKE HISTORY* (Clubbed Thumb), *Nova* (The Lyceum/Pemberley), *United States vs Gupta* (JACK), and *Sanctuary City* (New York Theatre Workshop). Born and raised in Boston, she is a graduate of Williams College, an alum of the Drama League Directors Project and the Clubbed Thumb Directing Fellowship, and a New Georges Affiliate Artist.

## **UNTITLED DIONYSUS PROJECT**

**Ato Blankson-Wood** Broadway: *Cabaret*, *Slave Play* (Tony Nomination), *Hair*, *Lysistrata Jones*. Selected Theatre: *Slave Play* at NYTW (Drama League Nomination, Lortel Nomination), *The Total Bent* at the Public (Drama League & Lucille Lortel nomination), *Hamlet* at Shakespeare in the Park, and *Long Day's Journey Into Night* for Audible. Films/TV: Kathryn Bigelow's *Detroit*, Spike Lee's *BlackKkKlansman*, *Worth*, Peter Hedge's *The Same Storm*, *Monster: Dahmer*, *The Good Fight*, *She's Gotta Have It*, and Ava DuVernay's *When They See Us*. Ato is a graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and the Yale School of Drama.

**Taylor Barfield** is a dramaturg, writer, and theatre artist from Baltimore, MD. He served as the Acting Literary Manager at Yale Rep and the Literary Manager at Two River Theater. Taylor currently works as a freelance dramaturg and consultant working with organizations such as the Guthrie, BMG, Portland Center Stage, the August Wilson African American Cultural Center, and Yale Rep. Taylor received his B.A. in Biology and English Literature from Johns Hopkins University and is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama, where he earned his MFA and DFA in Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism.

**Maya Sharpe** is a multi-passionate maker, thinker, and writer. Maya's passion lies in exploring simplicity in humanity through composition. Maya's goal is to demonstrate that there is more of a connection and love between everything than the politically derived disconnect and hatred.

## **UNTITLED BY HARUNA LEE**

**Haruna Lee** (they/them) is a Taiwanese/Japanese/American theatre maker, screenwriter, educator, and community steward whose work is rooted in liberation and healing. Plays include *War Lesbian*, *Memory Retrograde*, *plural (love)*, and *Suicide Forest*, for which they received an Obie Award for Playwriting and Conception and is published by 53rd State Press. Lee has received a Special Commendation from the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, the Steinberg Playwright Award, FCA Grants to Artists Award, and is a member of New Dramatists. They teach at Yale and Hunter College in the MFA playwriting program.

**Liz Carlson** is a director and creative producer committed to the development of new stories. With New York Stage and Film ('16 - '24), Liz supported artists such as César Alvarez, Ngozi Anyanwu, Christopher Ashley, Jocelyn Bioh, Jaki Bradley, Adam Chanler-Berat, Margaret Cho, Heather Christian, Laurence Fishburne, Beth Henley, Jessica Huang, Michael R. Jackson, Brian Quijada, Amber Ruffin, Lauren Yee, and more. As a director, new work with: Ars Nova, EST, The Flea, Keen Company, Manhattan School of Music, MTC, The New Group, Playwrights Horizons, The Playwrights Realm, Signature Theatre Company, Williamstown, etc. MFA The New School. Alumna: The Drama League.

## **WAVES**

**Daniel Alexander Jones** Unpredictable and unbound, Daniel Alexander Jones flourishes at the intersections of interdisciplinary and experimental performance, music, literature, and traditions of art as civic practice. Accolades from over three decades of work include a TED Fellowship; the Doris Duke Artist Award; a Guggenheim Fellowship; and the Alpert Award in the Arts. Books include *Love Like Light* (53rd State Press). Projects include *Black Light* (Public Theater); *Duat* (Soho Rep); *Radiate* (Soho Rep and national tour) and *Phoenix Fabrik* (Pillsbury House Theatre). Jones lives in Los Angeles.

## **WHAT'S EATING GILBERT GRAPE**

**Christopher Sears** is an artist from a family of theatre makers. He's an actor, composer, and painter. Favorite credits include *Cult of Love* (Broadway / Berkeley Rep) and *Stupid Fucking Bird* (The Pearl). He's currently writing an Opera about his life, which he worked on at Ground Floor last summer. This summer, he is here collaborating with Peter Hedges and "Bandits on the Run" to adapt *What's Eating Gilbert Grape* for the stage. Proud member of Edie's Fairytale Theatre. BFA from Rutgers. For more info on new works, go to his Instagram @christophersart.

**Regina Strayhorn** (she/her) is a musician and casting professional based in Brooklyn, New York. She's a founding member of "Bandits on the Run," an indie-folk-pop-american outfit known for their vivacious performance style, genre-defying sound, soaring harmonies, and ability to make music-magic happen everywhere from subway platforms to concert halls. "Bandits on the Run" are known for their custom compositions for TV, Film, theatre, and beyond. As a casting professional, Regina has worked on several pilots and series for HULU, CBS, AMAZON, Apple TV+, and HBO MAX. @banditsontherun

**Adrian Blake Enscoe** (they/he) is best known for originating the role of Little Brother in the critically acclaimed Broadway production of *Swept Away* (originally premiered at Berkeley Rep) and starring as Austin Dickinson in the Peabody Award-winning series *Dickinson*. Adrian is 1/3 of the internationally-touring, indie folk band "Bandits on the Run." They are currently adapting *What's Eating Gilbert Grape* as a stage musical with longtime collaborator Christopher Sears, co-Bandits Sydney Shepherd and Regina Strayhorn, with Academy Award Nominee Peter Hedges on book. @adrian.blake.enscoe @banditsontherun

**Sydney Shepherd** is an actor, singer, songwriter, and multi-instrumentalist. Acting credits include Lizzie Borden in *Lizzie*, Lyla Novacek in *August Rush*, and *First Date* on Broadway. This fall Sydney will be starring in the world premiere of George Abud's *The Ruins* at the Guthrie Theatre. Sydney is 1/3 of the critically acclaimed band "Bandits on The Run." They received an NEA grant for their stage musical *Yukon Ho!* currently in development with Prospect Musicals. The Bandits and fellow actor/musician Christopher Sears are currently working with writer Peter Hedges on the musical *What's Eating Gilbert Grape*.

**Peter Hedges** adapted his first novel, *What's Eating Gilbert Grape*, for the screen. He has written and directed the films *Pieces of April*, *Dan in Real Life*, *The Odd Life of Timothy Green*, *Ben Is Back*, and *The Same Storm*. Also, a novelist and playwright, Peter is married to the poet Susan Bruce. They are the parents of two adult sons. He lives in Brooklyn, NY with his wife and their two dogs, fifteen-year-old Willy and thirteen-year-old Sadie-Goat.

## **DRAMATURG-IN-RESIDENCE**

**Liz Carlson** is a director and creative producer committed to the development of new stories. With New York Stage and Film ('16 - '24), Liz supported artists such as César Alvarez, Ngozi Anyanwu, Christopher Ashley, Jocelyn Bioh, Jaki Bradley, Adam Chanler-Berat, Margaret Cho, Heather Christian, Laurence Fishburne, Beth Henley, Jessica Huang, Michael R. Jackson, Brian Quijada, Amber Ruffin, Lauren Yee, and more. As a director, new work with: Ars Nova, EST, The Flea, Keen Company, Manhattan School of Music, MTC, The New Group, Playwrights Horizons, The Playwrights Realm, Signature Theatre Company, Williamstown, etc. MFA The New School. Alumna: The Drama League.