

# AMERICAN THEATRE

JULY/AUGUST 2018 THEATRE COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

The Complete Text:  
Lauren Yee's  
CAMBODIAN ROCK BAND  
How Jules Fisher & Peggy  
Eisenhauer Light Up  
Broadway

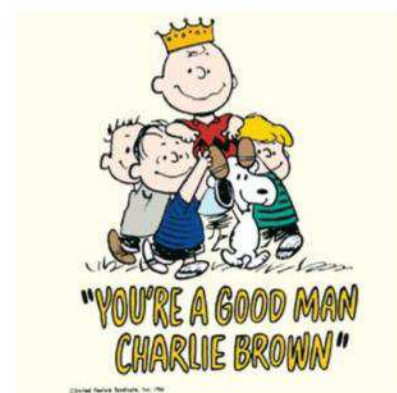
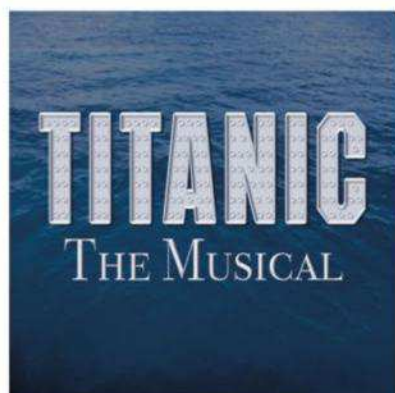
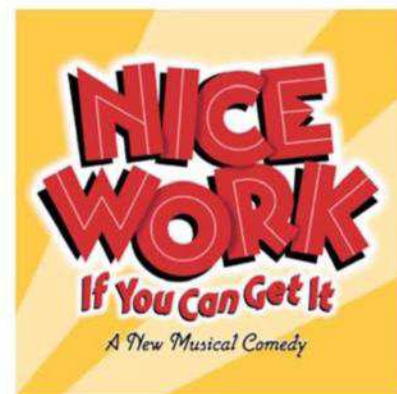
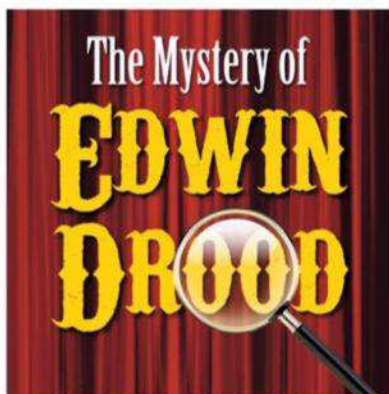
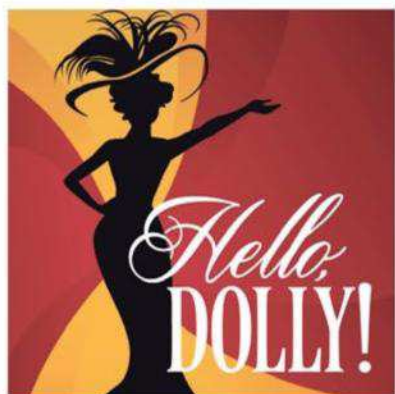
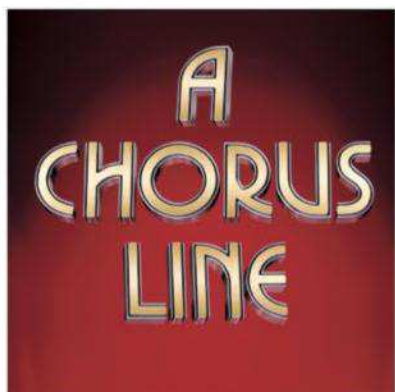
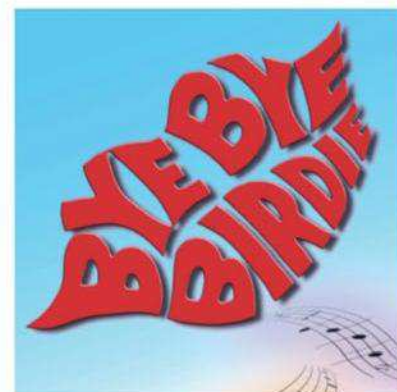
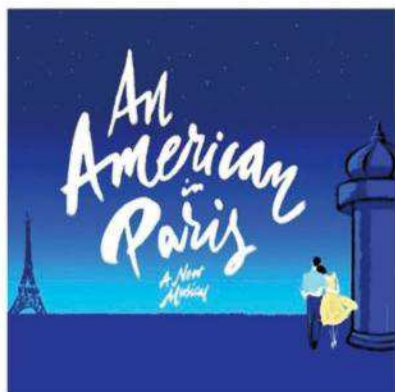
PLUS:  
An LED Makeover,  
Idris Goodwin,  
Ilana M. Brownstein





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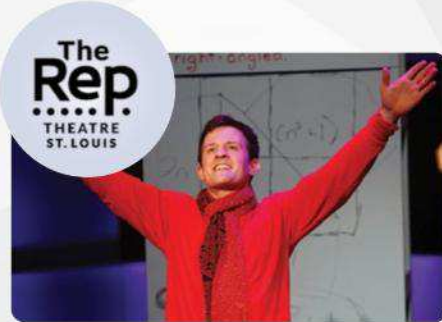


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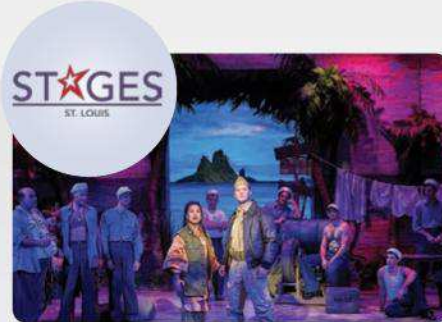
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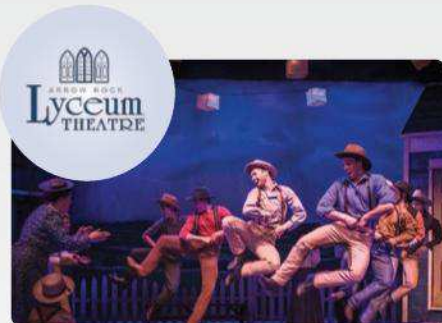
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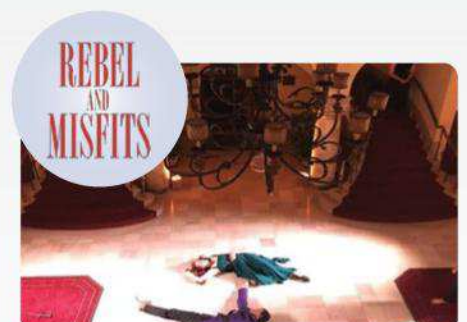
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**"DUSKY." "STARK." "VERSATILE."**

These are some of the adjectives I've used most frequently to describe lighting design in my former (and still occasional) life as a theatre critic. Designers must know this drill all too well: Most stage reviews focus on the work of the playwright, with some reference to the lead performances and the work of the director, followed by a sprinkling of somewhat obligatory mentions of set, lighting, sound, and costumes. Typically the most these hard-working folks receive in a review, if they're mentioned at all, is an adjective next to their name attempting to suggest the competence of their work ("deft," "resourceful," "fluid") or to characterize its special qualities ("glaring," "wintry," "mottled," "creepy," "sepulchral"). In my partial defense, in my reviews I have very occasionally devoted whole sentences to the work of designers, and even used other parts of speech—verbs, nouns, adverbs—to capture what I think they're doing. But I confess that I, like many of my critical colleagues, have mostly raided my thesaurus and imagination to come up with succinct one- or two-word summations of what I've seen. (Real talk: When it comes to lighting I apparently have food on the brain, as I've variously used such descriptors as "egg-dye," "oven-baking," "deliciously rich," "marzipan," and, getting right to the point, "edible.")

Indeed, while lighting design is seen as so central to movies it's called cinematography, the work of stage lighting designers may be the most imperceptible to the average theatregoer (and hence to professional theatregoers, a.k.a. critics). Sets and costumes are three-dimensional, often pictorial things, and sound design unmistakably greets our ears; even projection design, a cousin of sorts to lighting, is right there before our eyes. But lighting designers work on and over those palpable surfaces, directing our attention and framing *how* we see more than what we see. Their closest analogues in the film world, funnily enough, may be sound designers: You may not quite be able to point to their work—it seems like a simple sensory given, that there is light onstage and sound on film—but you'd certainly miss it if it were gone. Perhaps music is a better analogy: As the fin de siècle producer/playwright David Belasco, no slouch in the lighting department, once said, "Lights are to a drama what music is to the lyrics of a song... No other factor that enters into the production of a play is so effective in conveying its moods and feeling."

Belasco's heyday stretched from the 1880s through the 1920s, which means that he got in on the ground floor of a fundamental change in theatrical lighting: from gas to electric. The field now seems to be on the cusp of another huge transition, from incandescent to LED, as reporter Jerald Raymond Pierce details in a story on p. 26 *American Theatre* doesn't typically delve too deeply into stage tech, but for this issue on the theme of stage lighting we found that to do the subject justice we had to go beyond talking about the art with such masters as Jules Fisher and Peggy Eisenhauer (p. 16), or such emerging talents as Know Theatre artistic director Andrew Hungerford (p. 22). Like lighting designers, we felt the need to reckon with the how as much as the what, all the better to expand our vocabulary beyond mere adjectives. You might even say we've seen the light. —ROB WEINERT-KENDT

**CONTRIBUTORS**

When **Jerald Raymond Pierce** reviewed plays in Chicago some years ago, his fellow audience members "probably thought I was a little off, because I'd spend a good few minutes before the show started or during intermission just staring straight up, looking at the instruments being used and trying to think about what the lighting designer did to create the looks onstage." His fascination with theatre's behind-the-scenes world, which has also led to work as a stage manager, made him a perfect fit to write about theatres' slow but growing changeover to LED lights (p. 26)—a trend Pierce says may "change the world of lighting design forever. Being a part of that, even tangentially, is pretty cool."



"Many people joke that Cincinnati is a 'small big city,'" says critic and reporter **Jackie Mulay**, who contributed this month's profile of Know Theatre artistic director Andrew Hungerford (p. 22), a lighting designer and director with a degree in astrophysics who has taken the small Queen City company in adventurous new directions. She found that profiling Hungerford inevitably became a portrait of a scene. As Mulay puts it, "This community is so interconnected and supportive of each other's endeavors, and each person brings their own fantastically unique story to the stage. It was such a joy to have the opportunity to more deeply engage the Cincinnati theatre community."

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JENNY GRAHAM

*Our Town* at the Pasadena Playhouse in 2017, co-produced by the Los Angeles-based Deaf West Theatre.

### Young 'Town'

I was excited to see that a piece about *Our Town* was in this month's *American Theatre* magazine ("Something Eternal," March '18), as I've just finished directing that play at a Catholic K-12 school in Kensington, Md., just outside D.C. I've had many jobs in my life, worn many hats, accomplished many things, but there is simply nothing of which I'm prouder than this production, in which these children dug deep into their souls to give the most moving portrayals I, and hundreds of others, have ever witnessed. And yet, according to Howard Sherman, that's not really possible, because unless all these children have already lost loved ones, they simply can't "fully appreciate and enact the agonizing third act" of *Our Town*.

I wonder if Mr. Sherman has actually witnessed a high school production of *Our Town*. I certainly wish he had attended mine. He would have found that children steeped in an environment of compassion and service, as these Catholic schoolkids are, possess a soulfulness that belies their youth. I'm guessing Wilder wanted *precisely* this youthful soulfulness when he chose to make the romantic leads of *Our Town* teenagers.

After the curtain call on the first night of the show, I found a woman waiting for me whom I did not know. She told me she lives in Kensington and has, over her lifetime, made a habit of seeing as many performances of *Our Town* as she possibly can, because it is her favorite play. Clasp my hands in hers, she told me that she knew every change I'd made to the script, that she loved all the changes, and that this performance had moved her like no other one she'd seen.

Perhaps we should, as a nation, spend more time pondering how much teenagers have to give, rather than how little. How capable they are of rising—or falling—to the level of our expectations. I expected great things of these kids, and greatness is what I got.

Marilyn Millstone  
Kensington, Md.

### Size Matters

As a fat actress I've grown a lot in how I perceive my own body, from fearing that it made me unworthy of pursuing this career at all to now believing that it is one of my assets as a performer ("All Sizes Fit All," March '18). When I played the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* a few years ago I remember loving the fact that I was fat, because for many reasons (not all of them good) fat *is* inherently funny. I loved the fact that Juliet was so much smaller than I was, that I had broad shoulders and a motherly bosom and all of those great things that assisted in making my relationship to this girl as her caretaker believable to watch. I didn't resent the role at all—rather, I felt it helped guide me toward my "type" and taught me how to *own* and work with the physical tools I have.

Our bodies tell stories onstage before we ever say a word. And while I agree with the thesis of this piece that increasing the visibility of fatness onstage is a worthy and necessary pursuit, you cannot force an audience to see a fat woman onstage and not associate her with their own personal biases and stigmas. What you *can* do is guide them to see her through a new lens. An actress, simply by being fat, can add depth and nuance to a role where it didn't previously exist because her fatness brings with it a host of social connotations that an audience must individually confront. Cast a fat actress as Blanche in *Streetcar* and watch how all of that text about being this delusional, fading Southern belle becomes endowed with complex new meaning. And that's only one example—the possibilities are endless, but it requires directors to cast fat women not only for the sake of more visibility but as a deliberate artistic choice.

As fat actresses we can pout over never being considered for Juliet, or we can take the archaic theatrical paradigms we're dissatisfied with and ditch them, focusing instead on the creation of new material that allows us to be seen and to tell our own authentic stories, or finding a tribe of theatre-makers willing to repurpose and explore established texts in unconventional ways. We do not need the permission of small-minded or cruel casting directors to perform as we are.

KD McTeigue  
Albany, N.Y.

### Corrections

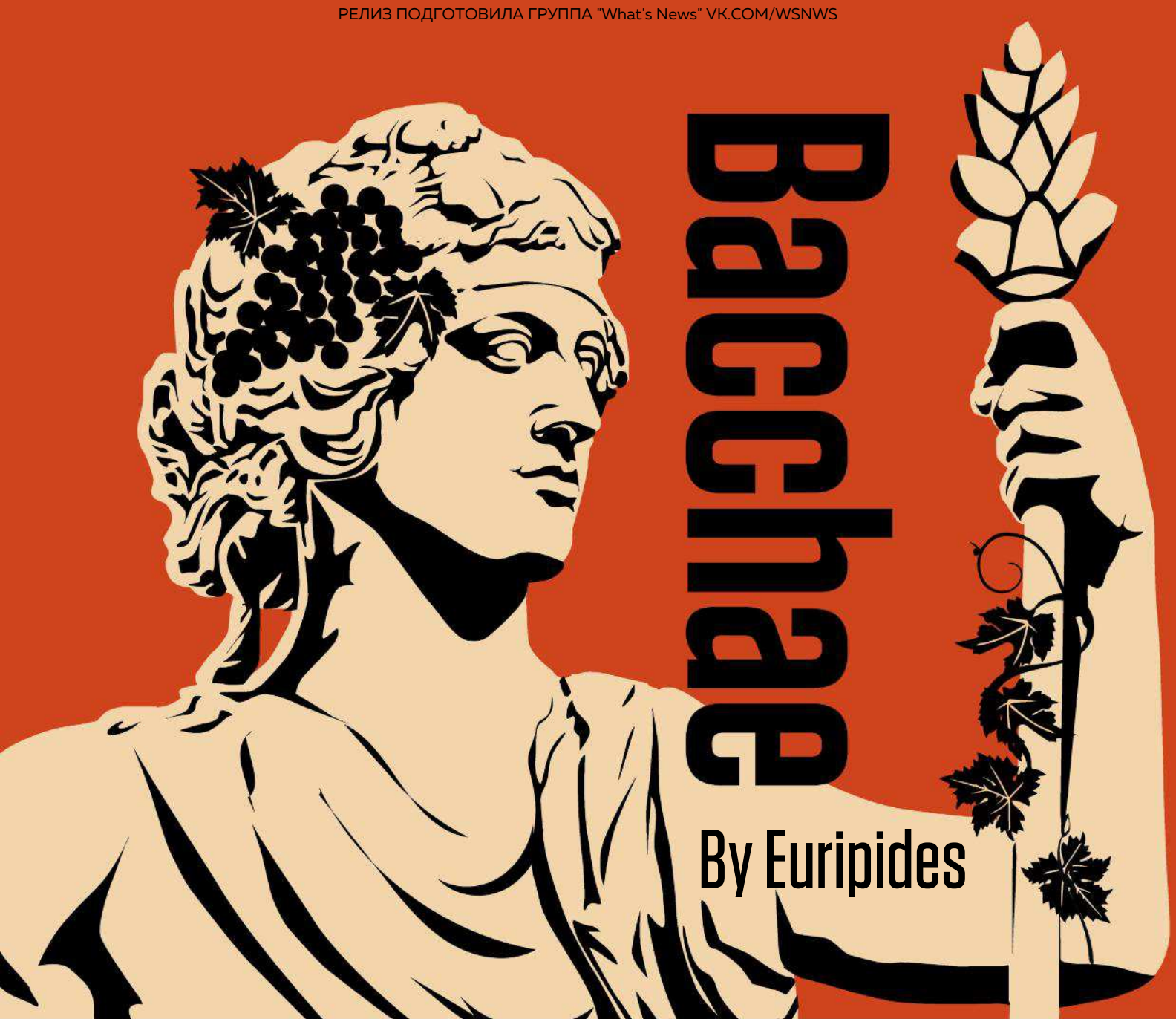
**APRIL '18:** The story "Ibsen, Our Contemporary," included three errors: In *An Enemy of the People*, Hovstad is the editor of the local newspaper, not the mayor; Ibsen returned to his native Norway in 1891, not 1901; and that play was presented in South Carolina earlier this year by the College of Charleston, rather than "Theatre Charleston," which is the name of a website, not a company.

**MAY/JUNE '18:** The professional name of the photographer who shot the cover image is Elisa Noemí, not Elisa Orellana.

**American Theatre** welcomes comments from readers. Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity.

Write to the Editor, *American Theatre*, 520 Eighth Ave., 24th Floor, New York, NY 10018-4156, via email at [letters@tcg.org](mailto:letters@tcg.org), or online at [AmericanTheatre.org](http://AmericanTheatre.org). Please include a daytime phone number.





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# To Lift Hiring Higher

BY ADRIAN BUDHU

**F**OR THIS COLUMN, I DRAW INSPIRATION FROM TCG's values of equity, diversity, and inclusion, and the ways they bolster a transparent hiring and onboarding process. In the midst of field-wide leadership changes in artistic and administrative positions, TCG is going through or has already completed searches to fill key leadership positions in finance, information technology, marketing, and fundraising. I believe that realizing TCG's vision ("a Better World for Theatre, a Better World Because of Theatre") and executing our mission ("to strengthen, nurture, and promote the professional not-for-profit American theatre") starts with our staff.

These past few months I've been working closely with our internal Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion work group to develop and implement our new hiring and onboarding policy. This policy is built around three areas with specific outcomes associated with each: hiring and recruitment, the time before the employee starts, and first days/first few months.

Hiring and recruitment may seem like a simple process: You write a job description, post it on websites and job boards, interview a few candidates, and pick the best one to hire. In reality it's not that easy. Not only can it be difficult to find a person with the right qualifications; there's also the challenge of finding someone who truly understands our organization's and the field's evolving EDI cultures. If you aren't already doing this, then I recommend that the supervisor of a given position take the lead in job posting and outreach, and not the HR department. Why? Because it builds accountability and ownership. The supervisor understands the day-to-day operations of their department and how a candidate may fit into the subculture of their department as well as the overall organizational culture.

At TCG, our EDI work group is supporting this process by vetting all job descriptions. Not only does this build transparency with other staff; it may also help remove exclusionary language from job descriptions. For example, do years of experience and knowledge of the field

carry the same weight as a college degree?

Additionally, as we assess and understand our staff demographics, our job postings and outreach plans will prioritize those voices that are underrepresented. At TCG we believe that diverse ideas, cultures, and traditions reflecting the broad diversity of the U.S. are vital assets which enrich the programs and services TCG provides for the theatre field. We

respect intersectionality of identities and are committed to EDI in all areas of our work and workplace.

The onboarding process is designed to build understanding between the new employee and the company's culture. It's also about giving new staff the tools and information they need to become productive and start to feel "settled in" as a new team member. Onboarding new staff at an organization should be a strategic process that lasts at least one year, since the way employers handle the first few days and months of a new employee's experience is crucial to ensuring high retention.

The process actually starts before the employee's first day. It's important to emphasize that this piece of the process should be carried out by the supervisor if it's already not being done. In much the same way that audience engagement must begin before theatregoers take their seat, I believe that the onboarding process begins before the employee's official start date. Why? Because it lets the employee know that our organization is a welcoming and rewarding environment with informed colleagues and a fully equipped workspace. This step can be as simple as sending out an email to all staff with information about the new hire: start date, employee's role, photo, gender pronouns, and bio. It's important that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined for the new hire as well as the other team members whose work is closely related. This will avoid confusion and keep existing team members from feeling threatened that someone new could come in and take over their responsibilities. This also means working with your IT and office administrators to get the new hire's office environment set up prior to their first date. It means setting up in advance all pertinent trainings required for the job, and a new employee orientation session to complete the necessary paperwork. It speaks volumes about your organization's leadership and culture when a new employee starts and on Day One sees their name listed on the company's directory or already affixed to their work station, alongside staff members who are expecting them and know who they are. These signs of preparedness send a message to the new employee that they are welcomed and appreciated from their first day.

From there it's a process of being transparent about expectations and goals but also friendly and welcoming. On their first day at TCG, new employees are greeted by the hiring supervisor, who introduces them to others in the workplace and takes them out to lunch. I want the new staff to know that we care and want to build rapport. All our lofty statements about equity and inclusion will mean nothing unless we put them into practice with intentionality, person to person.

Until next time, best of luck in your searches and hiring! 🍀

In much the same way that audience engagement begins before theatregoers take their seat, the onboarding process begins before the employee's official start date.



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Above: Esther Addo-Scott in the National Theatre of Ghana's  
production of TEN BLOCKS ON THE CAMINO REAL at the 2017  
Provincetown TW Theater Festival. Photo by Ride Hamilton





# Maria Manuela Goyanes

## Pushing Theatre Forward



Maria Manuela Goyanes

ZACK DEZON

**IN THE MISSION STATEMENT FOR WOOLLY MAMMOTH Theatre Company**, a \$4.5 million company in Washington, D.C., one part stands out: “We are a supportive home for creative risk-taking.” They’ve done good by that mission; in their 40-year-history, the company has premiered such boundary-breaking works as *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play* by Anne Washburn and *Bootycandy* by Robert O’Hara.

This reputation for artistic innovation is what attracted Maria Manuela Goyanes to the job of leading the organization after co-founder/artistic director Howard Shalwitz announced he would retire at the end of the 2017-18 season. Woolly and Goyanes feel like a perfect match: Goyanes has worked as the Public Theater in New York City for 14 years, most recently as an associate producer (over a season, she oversees production on 15-20 works in

five spaces). She was also the executive producer of the now-defunct 13P playwrights collective, which world-premiered 13 plays from writers like Sarah Ruhl and Young Jean Lee.

Goyanes starts her new job in September. She spoke in June from her office at the Public. —*Diep Tran*

**At the Public you’ve worked under artistic director Oskar Eustis, and before that George C. Wolfe. What have you learned about the kind of artistic director you want to be?**

The time with George, the time with 13P, with those [13] rotating artistic directors, and the time with Oskar—it was all so invaluable. The biggest lesson for me has been how everything ties back to being a citizen in this world and what culture is actually supposed to be doing in a community.

## JULY/AUGUST

## ALMANAC

## BY THE OSCAR G. BROCKETT CENTER FOR THEATRE HISTORY AND CRITICISM

**175 YEARS AGO (1843)**

Showman and future circus impresario P.T. Barnum stages a free Grand Buffalo Hunt in Hoboken, N.J., with ads touting a thick double-rail fence that will protect spectators from a herd of wild bison imported from New Mexico. In reality spectators are greeted with a group of scrawny, malnourished buffalo purchased by a local merchant; spooked by the crowd’s jeering, the animals break through the flimsy barrier and escape.

**165 YEARS AGO (1853)**

George C. Howard’s company transfers its production of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin; or, Life Among the Lowly* from the Troy Museum in New York state’s Capital Region to the National Theatre in New York City. While Harriet Beecher Stowe’s anti-slavery novel is the best selling book of the 19th century (after the Bible), theatrical adaptations will reach three times as many people in the U.S. as the original text does.

**155 YEARS AGO (1863)**

John T. Ford opens a rebuilt and renovated “New Theatre” in Washington, D.C., after the original building is destroyed by a fire. Two years later, Ford’s Theatre will mount a production of *Our American Cousin*, during which actor and Confederate conspirator John Wilkes Booth—who had previously appeared onstage at Ford’s—will fatally shoot President Lincoln during an evening performance.

**140 YEARS AGO (1878)**

Legendary outlaws Bat Masterson and Wyatt Earp attend a performance at the Comique Theater in Leadville, Colo. During the show, shots are fired through the theatre’s walls, allegedly intended for Earp and Masterson. The theatre’s lead actor, Eddie Foy, will later recount that this was not an uncommon occurrence in Leadville, and that, after the commotion dies down, the actors resumed their performance as planned.



It's fascinating that all these roads have led me to Woolly Mammoth, because when I think about Woolly, I think about two facets. First is aesthetic innovation—real artistic risk and experimentation in the work. Second is moral and civic provocation, challenging audiences to see the world around them in new ways. So it's a really great confluence for me to be able to go to Woolly, given my time with both 13P and the Public. Woolly unites the two sides of me.

**Because Woolly is known for being forward-thinking, where do you see the company going next?**

The company of artists or the company in general? What's interesting about Woolly is that it has an affiliated company of artists. It's a cross-disciplinary group of actors, directors, designers, and a playwright. Part of my job is to cultivate and be in dialogue with that local community of artists. They've made a life and commitment to being in the D.C. area, and that means something.

In terms of the future of the company as a whole, there is so much possibility and appetite at Woolly! I am looking for the most daring voices in our field. How far can we challenge an audience and still feel like we can have a collective experience together? How can Woolly expand beyond the four walls of its theatre? Woolly was built to be radical, that's in the DNA.

**What does artistic innovation look like in 2018?**

Innovation happens with experimentation, you know? The beauty of the theatre is that it's ephemeral; it's something that happens and impacts your memory and hopefully haunts you in a good way as you move through your life. So I think that is the exact question and conversation that I am going to be having with every artist who comes through Woolly's doors. What's the experiment? What are we trying?

For example, is there a place for VR [virtual reality] in the theatre? What does that experiment look like? Can this type of technology enhance our theatre experience?

**With artistic risk comes failure, so being in a company like Woolly known for risk-taking, do you feel a sense of safety in being able to fail?**

Coming from the Latinx identity, I definitely feel a lot of pressure in terms of not being allowed to fail, because it's important that other Latinas get a chance to do a job like this in the future. And even though my personal skin experience in the world is different from my brothers and sisters of color who are darker than I am, there's just not that many women of color running theatres, period. So yep, there is a lot of pressure.

That said, I feel like I have really great odds at Woolly. We have had such open, generous and forward-thinking conversations on every level—staff, board, with Meghan Pressman [Woolly's managing director]. They embrace breaking the mold, so there is safety in that.

I am following a founder, and that can be tricky. What's the hazing going to be like? We shall see!

**They say it takes three years to really get acclimated when you're a new artistic director.**

Yes, this is what I hear. Part of that is because I don't really know the audience in D.C. yet. My understanding is that the Woolly audience is younger than the average theatregoing audience, which is cool. I look forward to getting to know them.

I went down to go see *Underground Railroad Game*, the Ars Nova production [about race and history] that was at Woolly recently. I sat next to a woman and her husband who hardly go to the theatre because they have a two-year-old at home and they had chosen Woolly and this incredibly provocative show as their one date night to finally get out! And I thought to myself, "Oh my God, what an amazing thing that an audience is so interested in being pushed and propelled toward deeper conversations about the things that are going on in our culture."

**Did they like it?**

They were totally into it! They stayed and chatted with me afterwards.

**Are you already recruiting subscribers?**

[laughs] Maybe. Tina, if you're out there, subscribe! 📧

**135 YEARS AGO (1883)**

Thomas Edison's exciting new invention, the electric light bulb, is featured in the NYC production of *Excelsior*, a musical ballet previously presented in Milan and Paris. For its New York bow, this visual extravaganza finds ways to showcase electric lights, including each chorus girl receiving an electric wand with a small light bulb at the tip. The production will tour, lights and all.

**100 YEARS AGO (1918)**

Performance company Cuadro Novel performs for the first time at the Hidalgo, an up-and-coming theatre in Los Angeles. The troupe's performances of Spanish *zarzuelas* and *revistas* skyrocket the Hidalgo to success, so much so that ticket prices at the Hidalgo are increased to 75 cents for an orchestra seat. Within the year Novel will open its own rival theatre.

**25 YEARS AGO (1993)**

Tim Dang becomes artistic director of L.A.'s East West Players, replacing Nobu McCarthy. Under Dang's leadership the organization will grow in both size and diversity as Dang reaches out to L.A.'s many Asian American communities. In five years the company will relocate to a new theatre space, the former Union Church in Little Tokyo, and from there will lead new-play development and actor training for Asian American theatre.

**15 YEARS AGO (2003)**

Heather Raffo's *9 Parts of Desire* premieres at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in Scotland before moving to the Bush Theatre in London's Off-West End, then to the Public Theater in New York. For this project Raffo researched the Iraqi artist Layla Al-Attar, who had been killed by a U.S. air raid in 1993, and interviewed several women to create a collage of nine Iraqi women's lives.



■ In May, Bangor, Maine's Penobscot Theatre Company welcomed **John Hedges** as its new executive director. Hedges takes over for **Mary Budd**, who began a management role at Starboard Leadership Consulting in Bangor in June.

■ Shakespeare Festival St. Louis has named **Tom Ridgely** the theatre's new executive producer, succeeding **Rick Dildine**. Ridgely began his tenure in May.

■ Houston's 4th Wall Theatre Company has appointed **Tim Richey** to the newly created position of managing director following a nationwide search. Richey, who was most recently the direc-

tor of major gifts and individual giving for the Alley Theatre, took up his new post in May as well.

■ **Debby Buchholz** has been promoted to managing director of California's La Jolla Playhouse. She served as the company's general manager since 2002. She too started the new post in May, and she replaces **Michael S. Rosenberg**, now the managing director at McCarter Theatre Center in Princeton, N.J.


■ Seattle Children's Theatre welcomed **Kevin Malgesini** as its new managing director, also in May. He succeeds Karen Sharp, who recently resigned after 19 years with the theatre.

■ Bristol Riverside Theatre in Pennsylvania has announced that **Kevin Maroney** will join the theatre as its new managing director, following **Anne S. Kohn**, who departed in 2017.



■ In June **Jane Chu** stepped down from her position as the chair of the National Endowment for the Arts, the federal

agency based in Washington, D.C. She departed at the conclusion of her four-year term. During her tenure, Chu traveled to 200 communities in 50 states, making more than 400 site visits, and under her leadership the NEA received a special Tony Award in 2016.

■ Aurora Theatre Company in Berkeley, Calif., has announced that artistic director **Tom Ross** will step down in July 2019. Ross joined the theatre in 1992 as general manager, and later served as both managing director and producing director before his 2004 appointment as artistic director. A search committee is being formed to select a new leader. 

Martin E. Segal Theatre Center Publications  
**Arab Theatre Series**

The Martin E. Segal Theatre Center, at the CUNY Graduate Center, publishes plays in translation from Argentina, Belgium, The Czech Republic, Egypt, France, Italy, Poland, Romania, Syria, Tunisia, and more. See them all at: [www.theSegalCenter.org](http://www.theSegalCenter.org)



■ The 2018 Pulitzer Prize for drama, which comes with a \$15,000 cash prize, was awarded to *Cost of Living* by **Martyna Majok**. The finalists in the drama category were *Everybody* by **Branden Jacobs-Jenkins** and *The Minutes* by **Tracy Letts**.

■ New York City's Whiting Foundation gave its 2018 Whiting Awards to playwrights **Nathan Alan Davis**, **Hansol Jung**, and **Antoinette Nwandu**. Each receive \$50,000.

■ The American Theatre Critics Association gave the Harold and Mimi Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award to **Lauren Gunderson** for her play *The Book of Will*. The \$25,000 honor recognizes playwrights for scripts that premiered outside of NYC. Citations for the Steinberg, which come with \$7,500 apiece, were given to Molly Smith Metzler for *Cry It Out* and Ike Holter for *The Wolf at the End of the Block*.

■ The Yale Drama Series, in cooperation with Yale University Press, named **Leah Nanako Winkler** the winner of the 2018 Yale Drama Series Prize for her play *God Said This*. Winkler, who was selected by Ayad Akhtar, will receive a cash prize of \$10,000, sponsored by the David Charles Horn Foundation, and her play will receive a private staged reading at NYC's Lincoln Center Theater in October.

■ The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., announced the winners of the 2018 Kennedy Center/

Stephen Sondheim Inspirational Teacher Awards, which recognize U.S. educators. This year's winners include **Catherine Albers** of Oregon, Wisc.; **Askia Egashira** of Brooklyn; **Dennis McDavid** of Oak Park, Mich.; and **Caryn Obert** of Staten Island, N.Y. Each of the recipients, who were nominated by students, will receive a cash prize of \$10,000.

■ The American Academy of Arts and Letters announced the recipients of the 2018 Richard Rodgers Awards for Musical Theatre, honoring works by emerging composers and writers. This year's winners are *Gun & Powder* by Ross Baum and Angelica Chéri and *KPOP* by Jason Kim, Helen Park, Max Vernon, and Woodshed Collective. Each of the teams will receive support for a studio production of their work in NYC.

■ History Matters/Back to the Future announced the winner of the annual Judith Barlow Prize: Texas State University graduate student **Audrey Webb** will receive a \$2,500 prize for her winning one-act play, *The Only Hills We've Ever Had*. The play, inspired by Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, received a reading in April at the Cherry Lane Theatre in New York.

■ Marin Theatre Company in Mill Valley, Calif., named **Antoinette Nwandu** as the 2017 Sky Cooper New American Play Prize winner for her play *Pass Over*, and **Audrey Cefaly** as the 2017 David Calicchio Emerg-

ing American Playwright Prize winner for her play *Alabaster*. Nwandu will receive \$10,000 and a developmental workshop as part of MTC's annual New Play Reading Series, and *Pass Over* will be considered for a full production on MTC's mainstage. Cefaly will receive \$2,500, and *Alabaster* will have two public staged readings at MTC in the company's New Play Reading Series. The award also covers Cefaly's travel and accommodations for the show's rehearsal period at MTC.

■ The Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee Theatre Research Institute at the Ohio State University named **Paula Vogel** the recipient of the 2018 Margo Jones Award. The annual award, established in 1961 and named for the woman often recognized as the founder of the U.S. regional theatre movement, is given to a theatremaker who has demonstrated a significant impact, understanding, and affirmation of the craft of playwriting.

■ Actors' Equity Association in NYC selected **Lin-Manuel Miranda** as the recipient of the 2018 Rosetta LeNoire Award. Established in 1988, the award is presented to an individual, theatre, or producing organization with an exemplary record in hiring or promotion of people of color, women, and actors with disabilities through diverse and inclusive casting. The award was presented at Equity's National membership meeting in April.

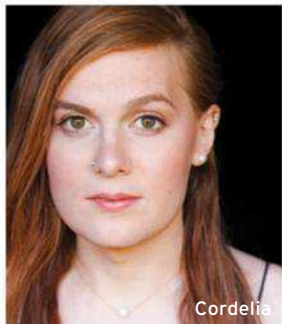
■ The Drama Critics' Circle in NYC awarded *Mary Jane* by **Amy Herzog** best play of the 2017-18 season, and *Hangmen* by **Martin McDonagh** best foreign play at a ceremony in May. Special citations were given to **Park Avenue Armory** for adventurous theatre programming, to the theatre company **Transport Group**, and to the staging, design, and illusions of *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*.

■ Chicago's Goodman Theatre awarded **Jo Cattell** the 2017-18 Michael Maggio Directing Fellowship. The fellowship will allow Cattell to observe the artistic process at the Goodman this season, and to assist on a production at the theatre.

■ The Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis announced recipients of the 2018-19 McKnight National Residency and Commission, and the 2018-19 McKnight Fellowships in Playwriting. **Idris Goodwin** was selected for the 2018-19 McKnight National Residency and Commission and will receive a \$15,000 commission, \$5,750 in workshop funds, and travel and housing stipends to support the development of his play *Scarfoot Lives*. The 2018-19 McKnight Fellowships in Playwriting, awarded to Minnesota-based writers, go to **May Lee-Yang** and **Tori Sampson**, who will each receive a \$25,000 stipend, \$2,500 to support play development and other professional expenses, and \$1,400 in travel funds. 📄

# ROLE CALL

## PEOPLE TO WATCH



Cordelia

### BEA CORDELIA

**Profession:** Theatremaker/filmmaker

**Hometown & current home:** Chicago

**KNOWN FOR:** Cordelia's autobiographical *Chasing Blue* was at Steppenwolf in 2017 after premiering at the Brick in Brooklyn in the inaugural Trans Theatre Festival. Her multimedia installation performance *The Cosmic Body* was part of a lab residency at the University of Chicago. She's currently a Limunarts Creative Writing Fellow, and Chicago's filmmaker-in-residence with her friend and collaborator Daniel Kyri.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** In June, her web series "The T," created with Kyri, was released on OTV | Open Television. She's currently working on her first book, *D: a great american romance*.

**WHAT MAKES HER SPECIAL:** Joseph Varisco, a co-curator of

Chicago's Salonathon, cites Cordelia's compassion, particularly in a Salonathon act in which "she sat surrounded by 100-plus people in a room washing the feet of friends and strangers. It's her unwavering desire to utilize the magnificent body to touch, to connect, to allow her audience to be as seen as she wants to be. This will doubtlessly remain her greatest asset for as long as she continues with her unrelenting pursuit to see herself."

**INSPIRING TRUTHS:** "I am a transgender woman in America, which is its own unending fount of inspiration," Cordelia says. "It's kind of funny that so many haters think they can quiet me, when really all they do is fuel me to be louder." She practices what she calls "weaponized vulnerability," by which she turns her marginalized status into an asset. "Rather than give into the tempting political shouting matches of our time, I go inward, go open, I grind out my innermost self in as public channels as I can. I'm often physically, and always emotionally, naked whenever I go onstage."



Ozaki

### COURTNEY OZAKI

**Profession:** Producer & administrator

**Hometown:** Arvada, Colo.

**Current home:** Denver

**KNOWN FOR:** After receiving her MFA in performing arts management at Brooklyn College, Ozaki worked with New York City's HERE and Beth Morrison Productions on the inaugural PROTOTYPE Festival in 2013 and as a project manager and producer for the Joyce Theater's

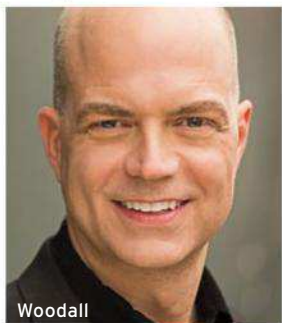
touring programs. She is currently the operations and business director for Colorado's Lone Tree Arts Center, and a founding member of Japanese taiko drum ensemble Mirai Daiko.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** Ozaki is curating LTAC's Passport to Culture, Seedlings (ages 0-4), and Arts in the Afternoon program series with an emphasis on increased accessibility, sensory-friendly

and intergenerational theatre, dance, and music programming. And she's part of the 2018 Association of Performing Arts Professionals Leadership Fellows Cohort IV.

**WHAT MAKES HER SPECIAL:** Lone Tree executive director Lisa Riggsby Peterson says that Ozaki's "multidisciplinary arts experience has been especially helpful as we plan our presenting season each year, and her prior experience working as an artist's representative has given her a keen sensitivity to the needs of individual artists. This perspective dovetails perfectly with our commitment to creating a welcoming environment in which our artists can create their best work."

**MELDING IDEAS:** Ozaki says she envisions "an arts culture that encourages the melding of ideas, integrates generations, and opens minds. My motivation to build and cultivate an arts culture of inclusivity is driven by the impetus that access to the arts leads to greater understanding and a more productive and empathetic society."



Woodall

### ERIC WOODALL

**Profession:** Casting director/director

**Hometown:** Benson, N.C

**Current home:** New York City

**KNOWN FOR:** A casting director for Tara Rubin Casting for 16 years, he currently works on *Aladdin* and *The Phantom of the Opera*. As a director, he helmed *Big River* at Casa Mañana Theatre in Fort Worth, Texas (set "in a large old library with over 2,000 real books on the

shelves/walls"), and *The Light in the Piazza* at Theatre Raleigh, staged immersively in the North Carolina Museum of Art.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** Helming a "scaled-down" *Big Fish* at Theatre Raleigh, July 11-22, and helping to cast upcoming Broadway productions of *Dreamgirls* and *The Heart of Rock and Roll*.

**WHAT MAKES HIM SPECIAL:** Anne Quart, senior vice president of production at Disney Theatrical Group, who's worked with Woodall on multiple productions, enthuses about his casting, "He never fails to surprise with someone who you have never heard of before or who he discovered in a dinner theatre or cabaret." Tara Rubin adds that "he's so thorough and dogged in his pursuit of talent that his office nickname is Javert."

**HERE HE GOES AGAIN:** An instructive moment in his career was casting *Mamma Mia!*, which inspired him to "think outside the box" and "cast replacements who didn't necessarily physically resemble (or approach) their characters in the same way as their predecessors, which was a fun, rare challenge." He approaches his current projects in the same way, with an eye toward "pushing the needle forward" on diversity in casting, while admitting, "We aren't where we should be. We aren't where we will be, but at least we aren't where we were."





Heller

### MELISSA HELLER

**Profession:** Costume designer

**Hometown:** Bend, Ore.

**Current home:** Portland, Ore.

**KNOWN FOR:** Outdoor summer Shakespeare shows with Bag&Baggage, where she's served as resident costume designer for the past five years. "I get to be very fancy when I design these," she says, "because the costumes are usually the only design element (besides very minimal set) that everyone sees."

One of Bag&Baggage artistic director Scott Palmer's favorite Heller shows was *The Merry Wives of Windsor; or The Amorous Adventures of the Comical Knight Sir John Falstaff*, staged as a black-and-white 1950s sitcom, a production on which Heller also served as makeup designer.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** Bag&Baggage's world premiere adaptation of

*As You Like It* (July 12-29).

**WHAT MAKES HER SPECIAL:** Palmer first got to know Heller 12 years ago, when she was a student at Oregon State University and he was on the school's theatre arts faculty. "Her attention to detail, and her appreciation for the way costumes work with actors to create fully realized characters, makes her an invaluable member of our creative team," says Palmer. "It would not be an overstatement to say that Melissa's work with costumes has played an enormous role in our success and our reputation for innovation and creativity."

**OVER THE TOP:** She says her biography will someday be titled "More Is More" because she especially enjoys creating designs she considers "too much." What does that mean to her? "'Too much' is an extension and a flip on the phrase 'less is more.' I like to have someone tell me to pull back rather than to give more. I appreciate spectacle and like to flex that muscle as much as possible."



Ramirez

TODD V. WOLFSON

### RUDY RAMIREZ

**Profession:** Director

**Hometown:** Born in Austin, raised in San Antonio and Washington, D.C.

**Current home:** Austin

**KNOWN FOR:** An associate artistic director of VORTEX Repertory Company, he directs for companies such as Shrewd Productions and Sky Candy Aerials, including world premieres by Gabriel Jason Dean, Reina Hardy, and Lisa B. Thompson.

Devised pieces include the *Barbarella*-inspired aerial show *Agent Andromeda: The Orion Crusade*, which has plans to tour.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** An adaptation of *The Importance of Being Earnest* with queer performers and designers in New York City; the VORTEX run of the National New Play Network rolling world premiere of Dean's *Heartland; Last*, a devised piece

exploring extinction through sketch comedy; and *Carnaval X*, a festival of new Latinx plays and performances.

**WHAT MAKES HIM SPECIAL:** Playwright Hardy calls Ramirez "an incredibly generous and perceptive director" who is "also utterly no-bullshit: gritty, straightforward, and practical. He keeps the ship on course, but he makes every moment of the journey joyful. It's a cruise ship on a quest for deeper theatrical truth." Sometimes she wonders if their "aesthetics are *too* aligned and we shouldn't be allowed to encourage each other. We're out there adding more jokes and moments of transcendence and throwing glitter everywhere, for cohesion."

**TRULY MOVING:** Ramirez started out collaborating with anarchist collectives and environmental activists constructing "giant bike puppets, so I really fell in love with theatre that showcases human power and builds things with bodies, whether it's butoh dancers representing the spread of cancer or aerialists transforming into alien ships in a space battle."



Hamilton

### SHAWN HAMILTON

**Profession:** Actor

**Hometown:** Houston

**Current homes:** Minneapolis and Houston

**KNOWN FOR:** Classical stage acting in more than 25 productions ranging from the Guthrie Theater to Trinity Rep, Yale Rep, California Shakespeare Theater, Penumbra, and others, with some tangents, he notes, from playing sax for

Vinnette Carroll in *Dallas* in a musical that starred Samuel E. Wright to riding a donkey in a Geico commercial.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** *The Mousetrap* (Aug. 10-Sept. 2) at the Alley Theatre in Houston, then *The Great Society* at the History Theatre in St. Paul, Minn., and *A Christmas Carol* at the Alley.

**WHAT MAKES HIM SPECIAL:** Jack Reuler, artistic director of Minneapolis's *Mixed Blood*, who has worked with Hamilton for 25 years, calls him "the consummate chameleon of Twin Cities theatre people...He offers directors choices they were unaware were even possible. Mechanically, he thinks in terms of actions and objectives and beats. Emotionally he has an honesty that is unparalleled, that permits the gamut of emotions to spring forth in far deeper than superficial ways."

**SAY YES:** Hamilton studied music, dance, and theatre at the University of North Texas, saying, "It's not the size or renown of a school but the stage time that matters." What keeps him going is the "love the excitement and challenge of performing for a live audience nightly. I learn something new on every play I work on. I feel lucky to have a chance to work in a profession that will challenge me for a lifetime, and I'm often surprised where I end up when I have the courage to say yes."

# Light Headed

DESIGNERS JULES FISHER AND PEGGY EISENHAUER HELP US SEE WHAT THEIR DIRECTORS WANT TO SHOW US

BY STUART MILLER

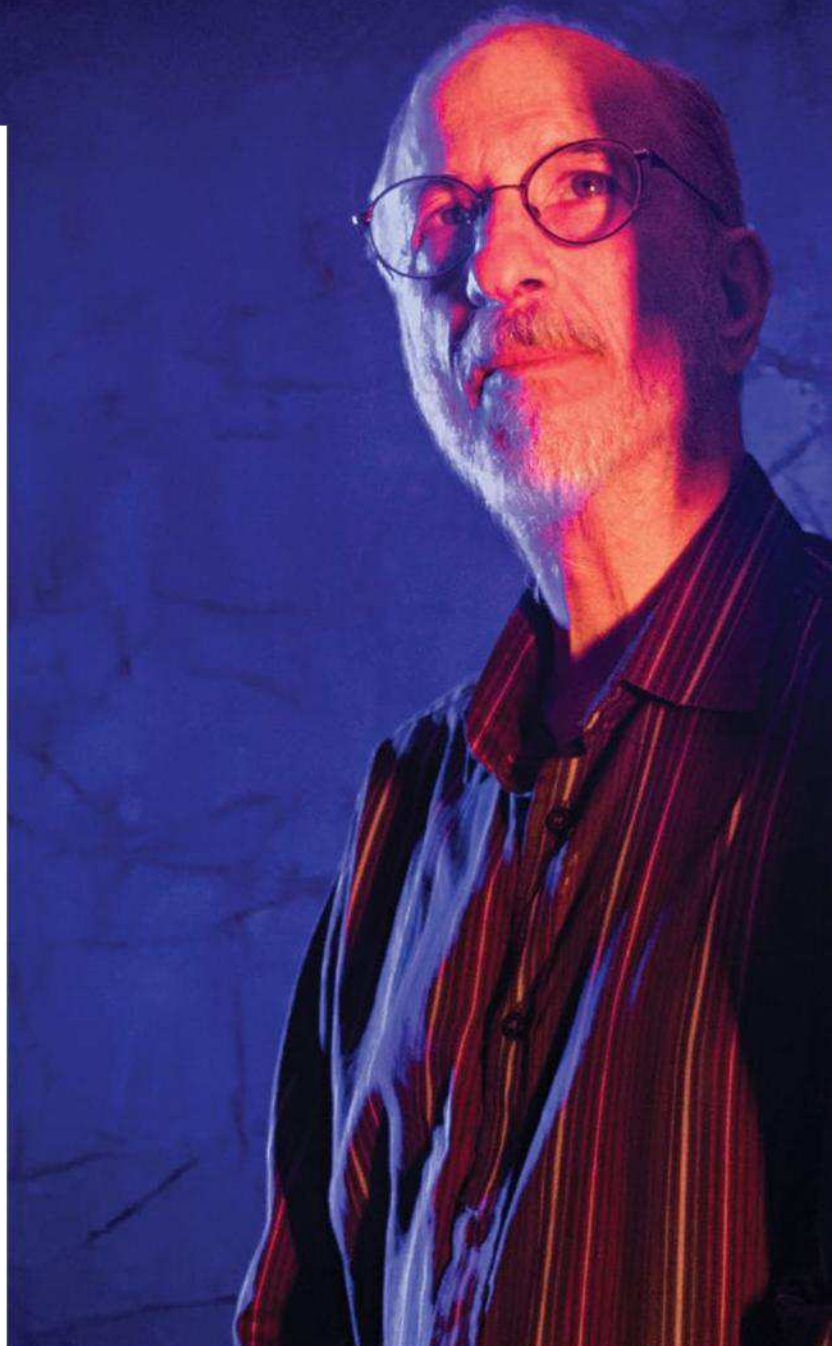
**T**HE CAST OF *THE ICEMAN COMETH* STANDS in a circle onstage at the Bernard B. Jacobs Theatre, hands clasped, lines from the play ricocheting from one actor to another. It's a starry group—David Morse, Bill Irwin, Colm Meaney, and, of course, Denzel Washington—yet during this rehearsal they are left in semi-darkness. The only person fully illuminated is an 80-year-old man, standing alone, unmoving, at the top of the staircase stage right.

That man, Jules Fisher, is not part of the cast, yet he is an essential part of the show; he has been lighting up stages in New York City (and beyond) for more than 50 years. Fisher, along with his working partner Peggy Eisenhauer, 55, are among the preeminent lighting designers in the American theatre, while also lending their illuminative talents to movies, rock concerts, opera, and Las Vegas spectacles. Fisher made his Broadway debut in 1963, seven years before a Tony Award for lighting even existed. He has been nominated, solo or with Eisenhauer, 21 times for that award, winning nine.

Light is, of course, ephemeral—both wave and particle, a thing and not a thing. And even for old hands like Fisher and Eisenhauer, things get a bit blurry when they try to describe what they do, whether it's to a reporter or to a director counting on them to match his or her vision, or to a producer about to lay out a major investment for the equipment they need before a show.

"Our primary job is enhancing the mood and emotion of the storytelling," Eisenhauer says, hastening to add, "The most difficult thing about being a lighting designer is communicating what we do."

The pair has struggled over the years to develop a vocabulary that directors and producers can relate to, pulling in words or phrases from other media. "We can relate something we're planning to a painting or music or to a scene from *The Godfather*," Fisher says, and Eisenhauer chimes in that they "collect words" that resonate—"words about speed and tempo and time, or an emotional quality, and every word that has to do with brightness or dimness or darkness or shadow and time of day."



Jules Fisher and Peggy Eisenhauer.





HEIDI BOHNENKAMP FOR AMERICAN THEATRE

Ultimately, Fisher says, to communicate fully they need to look at the director face to face to “see in their eyes if they understand what we are saying. We are trying to inhabit the mind of the director.”

This kind of mind reading is necessary because, until a show is up onstage, there is no way to demonstrate in advance how a lighting design will work. Even during that *Iceman* rehearsal, Fisher was pointing out how the actors’ street clothes would reflect or absorb the light differently than their costumes.

“We can’t *show* them what we are planning beforehand,” Fisher emphasizes. “The costume designers or scenic designers can bring a rendering, a photograph, or a model to show the director or producer.” This isn’t just an aesthetic challenge but an economic one: Producers have to take their word that they need a half-million dollars worth of equipment rather than a quarter-million dollars worth. “It is a gigantic leap of faith on the part of producers,” Eisenhauer concedes, explaining that directors are at least more attuned to their ideas and concepts, like working with the dynamics of a space.

Some of this has to be modesty, as directors continually clamor to work with the duo. Director George C. Wolfe has previously collaborated with them 11 times before *Iceman*. “George shows confidence in us, and we’ve developed a shorthand with him,” Fisher says. “He rarely says ‘make this blue’ or ‘make that brighter’—he’ll say, ‘I don’t understand the fear in that scene,’” and his designers will interpret that on their lighting board.

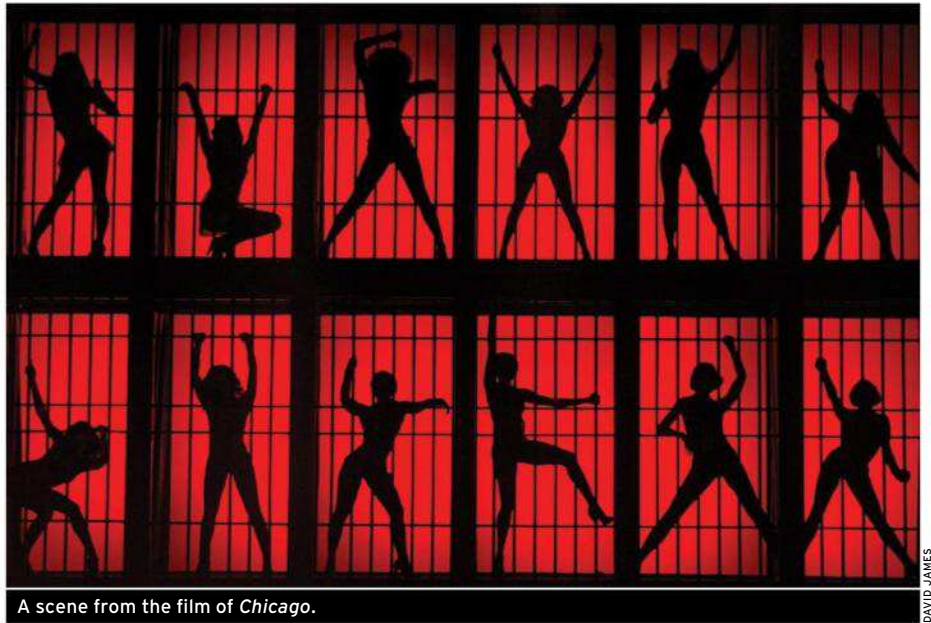
Wolfe might be the team’s biggest fan. “They have incredible sense of craft and storytelling, regardless of what show it is,” the prolific director says. “On *Jelly’s Last Jam*, I had the idea of darkness as a color, and they were able to articulate that. And on *Bring in ’da Noise, Bring in ’da Funk*, I wanted lighting fueled by the rhythm—and they did that.”

In *Noise/Funk*, Wolfe wanted the dancing to suddenly bring a lynching to mind. He says that Eisenhauer and Fisher took that impulse and translated it by embedding a light in the cotton bales onstage to make it look like the dancer’s head was disembodied.

Fisher had climbed up onstage during Wolfe’s *Iceman* rehearsal just hours before a preview because he and Eisenhauer were relentlessly trying to tweak a minor problem. “Denzel leans over every night when he’s on the staircase, taking him out where there is no light,” Fisher explains, after climbing down from Washington’s spot on the staircase. “We ask him to stand straight, but he has his way of doing it. Now Peggy has found way to keep him in the light that should work. We’ll see tonight.”

**THE LENNON-MCCARTNEY-STYLE SHARE-ALL-CREDIT** partnership between Fisher and Eisenhauer is unusual in lighting design, which is typically a field for solo artists, and it’s even more surprising because of the quarter-century difference in their ages. Yet it was that gap that actually led to their working together.

Fisher grew up in Norristown, Pa., and as a child aspired to be a magician, another field that relies on a flair for making audi-



A scene from the film of *Chicago*.

DAVID JAMES

ences see what you want them to see. An uncle in New York would take him to magic shows where he’d see how the magicians used lighting to their advantage. In Delbert Unruh’s book *The Designs of Jules Fisher*, the designer recalls building a puppet theatre with red and blue bulbs, then creating switches that enabled him to mix the colors in different ways. On the stage crew in high school, he’d sneak in alone and run the dimmers in the theatre to see how the colors mixed there.

“I liked science—the idea of the physics of things,” Fisher recalls. He really wanted to be a magician, but this son of a delicatessen owner was “too practical” to take the plunge. “Maybe it was a mistake—maybe I would have been a wonderful magician,” he says with a laugh.

Instead, in 1954, after his last year of high school, he worked for the summer at the Valley Forge Music Fair doing various jobs. “I looked up at the lighting and said, ‘I can do that,’” Fisher recalls. He got encouragement from a colleague who told him that Carnegie Tech (now Carnegie Mellon) had the top lighting program. Fisher was already enrolled at Penn State but he quit to move to Philadelphia, where he picked up a job loading in shows, many heading for Broadway, while working in lighting in amateur theatre.

One day he was carrying lights for *The Most Happy Fella* when designing legend Jo Mielziner took the time to explain some tricks of the trade to him. That made a lasting impression and helped inspire Fisher to apply to Carnegie Tech to study lighting. During his senior year there, a friend who had graduated invited him to light *All the King’s Men* Off-Broadway, so he got permission to miss a couple of weeks of class. Then that show’s scenic designer invited him to light the Off-Broadway production of Jerry Herman’s *Parade*. His professors weren’t thrilled, but Fisher would not be deterred—even when that gig led to a third show and more missed class time. He did finally graduate, and was able to move to New York as an established lighting designer in 1960.

Fisher worked on nearly two dozen Off-Broadway shows—and patented one of the first pan-and-tilt moving lights—before landing his first Broadway job in 1963 in *Spoon River Anthology*. He got to work with everyone from Mielziner to Richard Rodgers to Ste-





JOAN MARCUS

Mia Williamson, Alex Newell, Hailey Kilgore, and the cast of *Once on This Island* on Broadway.

phen Sondheim, and lit *Hair* not only on Broadway but all over the world. By the 1970s, he'd emerged as a star. In one seven-year span, he lit 21 Broadway shows (including an *Iceman* starring James Earl Jones), raking in six Tony nominations and three awards.

But his career also expanded wildly to include lighting and production supervision for epic tours by David Bowie, the Rolling Stones, George Clinton, and KISS, and later the Simon & Garfunkel reunion in Central Park. He oversaw the concert sequences for the Barbra Streisand movie *A Star Is Born*, and started theatre consulting and architectural lighting firms, with projects including the disco Studio 54. He was so much the epitome of a lighting designer that when he wasn't lighting such Bob Fosse shows as *Pippin*, *Chicago*, and *Dancin'*, he was *playing* a lighting designer named Jules Fisher in a small role in Fosse's film *All That Jazz*.

Fisher divides most directors into nurturers or despots, but says Fosse was both—he could be cruel but still get the best out of people. “I once told him my solution to a problem he'd raised, and he asked if I was sure it would work,” Fisher recalls. When Fisher expressed confidence, Fosse changed tactics, asking if Fisher had ever used that particular idea before. Fisher said he had once, but this didn't placate the director. “He said, ‘Then I don't want it!’ He always wanted something fresh, something new.”

Working with Fosse on *Pippin* brought Fisher his first Tony, but the bigger impact on his career was the effect his magical work in that show had on the audience—or at least on one teenage girl.

**PEGGY EISENHAUER STARTED TRAINING IN CLASSICAL** piano at age six in Nyack, a New York suburb. “It was very serious,” she says, explaining that the following year her instructor added music theory to her education. “My folks didn't know where it would lead, but they felt it really was important to learn a discipline early, to learn the importance of practice.” Eisenhauer says that her relentless work ethic and willingness to try every possibility in lighting a scene to get it right dates back to those days of endless practice. “We are *performing* as lighting designers—we are delivering a creative performance in the now, driven by the clock of the tight production schedule.”

When Eisenhauer was 13, her attention shifted: She started hanging around a community theatre and helping out. “I thought I wanted to be a performer, maybe a tap dancer,” she says. One day a grown-up didn't show and they stuck this teen girl on the lighting console. She loved the job and stuck with it. Within two years she was designing lighting for the theatre.

That 13th year proved particularly important, as Eisenhauer got invited by a friend to see *Pippin*. Just describing the experience seems to transport Eisenhauer back to the gushing enthusiasm of a teen.

“I don't have a great visual memory, but I can still picture this moment where Ben Vereen popped out with his white gloves and black bowler hat,” Eisenhauer recalls. “He delivered his line in a sharp purple spotlight—*POW*. The light created a visceral sensation.”

She noted the name of the designer, Jules Fisher, and her parents—“my clipping service”—began to look for information about him and encourage her to see shows he designed. When *The New York Times* profiled Fisher (“above the fold,” she remembers), her mom had the paper waiting for Peggy on her breakfast plate.

Carnegie Mellon was the ideal college for an aspiring lighting designer, but Eisenhauer readily adds that one impetus for going there was to follow in Fisher's footsteps. On the essay question that asked, “What person, living or dead, would you want to meet, and why?” she wrote about...well, everyone reading this article can guess.

During her sophomore year she saw an announcement posted about a “mandatory attendance” lecture from a certain famous alum. Her wish was about to come true. Fisher spoke to the whole theatre department, then made a special visit to a lighting class, since the professor, Bill Nelson, had also been his professor two decades earlier. Most students asked specific questions—about what gel Fisher might use on a light in a certain scene, or the like—but Eisenhauer went for the big picture, inquiring, “How do you know if you're any good?” Neither recall what he answered, but they both know what happened next.

Eisenhauer raced out afterward and called home (“long distance”) to gush, “Mom, I met him, I met him. It was worth all the tuition!”

Eisenhauer's mom sprang into action and found Fisher's address in New York, writing him a note thanking him for taking the time to talk to the class and explaining how excited her daughter had been. Fisher, who had been so thrilled as a youngster when Mielziner took the time to encourage him, wrote back (“Of course I still have the letter,” Eisenhauer says with a grin) to offer to lend her a helping hand.

So in 1982, after college, Eisenhauer ditched her summer stock gig to come to New York, where Fisher's street cred helped get her name on the roster at the Public Theater. She worked there as a spot operator for designer Richard Nelson on *The Death of Von Richthofen as Witnessed from Earth*. She proved her chops assisting Nelson over the next few years, and then began assisting Fisher when she was 23. Over the next seven years she was by his side for every show.

Then, around 1992, Fisher decided that that alignment no lon-



Jules and Peggy on the set of *The Iceman Cometh*.

HEIDI BOHNENKAMP FOR AMERICAN THEATRE

we just get more granular in the details,” Eisenhower said, sitting at her temporary lighting desk in the back of the orchestra one afternoon, running through various cues on her headset with her computer programmer positioned at the back of the balcony. She methodically ran through each note, taking lights up or down one at a time, discussing with Fisher his idea about changing the color correction. They would run any significant change by Wolfe, but Fisher said the director does not insist on controlling every tiny detail. “Some directors do not want us to touch anything without consulting them,” he said.

Still, no matter what the director’s style is, Eisenhower noted, “The director’s vision always comes first and comes last.

We may feel a spark of an idea and see if

ger made sense. “I said, ‘Well, she’s just as good at this as I am, and she can make me look even better, so we should be partners.’” A few years later they incorporated as Third Eye Studio, which shares headquarters with Fisher’s architectural lighting design company, Fisher Marantz Stone, and with his theatrical consulting company, Fisher Dachs Associates.

Their work succeeds in part, Fisher believes, because they push each other. “We look at something and see two different problems and try solving both,” he says. But, Eisenhower points out, when they are creating, they work as a single unit: “We don’t have any pride of ownership for our ideas.”

Tommy Tune, who directed four Broadway shows lit by the duo and who first worked with Fisher back in 1973, says, “They share the same eyes, with a sense of color and drama and place and time.” Tune adds that “they have an astonishing work ethic and they maintain an equilibrium that is highly appealing in the days before a show opens, when everything is crashing.”

One reason they are able to stay relatively calm, they both say, is that they have each other. Being a lighting designer, Eisenhower concedes, can be “isolating,” with “fear and loneliness” built in. As a duo they can face those challenges with complementary strengths: she the meticulous planner, he the more patient crisis manager.

“I take pride in planning and always think ahead and use all our experience to think about possible outcomes,” Eisenhower says. “But when the wheels start to fly off, I don’t have the flexibility. Jules can peel off and help solve the problem. It’s amazing to me how other designers do both things at once.”

“She’s more critical—in a good sense—and will tell me why something wasn’t okay, and she’s usually right,” Fisher says. “I’m more relaxed and more used to dealing with the other personnel.”

Each day during *Iceman* previews, Eisenhower and Fisher made adjustments based on notes from Wolfe and from his stage manager, but the most detailed course corrections came from the pair’s own pages and pages of notes. Those early stagings are their first chance to really see how their choices play out on the actors’ varying skin tones and in their actual costumes.

“As we go on in previews, the number of notes doesn’t decline,

we can develop it on our own, but once it grows, then we submit it to the director.” The key, Fisher chimed in wryly, is to get them to own the idea. “Then they like it because they’ve said it,” he joked.

During previews, they will sit in different seats to make sure the lighting works not only from their booth but everywhere from front of the orchestra to the back of the balcony. “Sometimes the actors look great from the balcony, but you see the light causing patterns on the stage that can be a distraction,” Fisher explained. “Or you find a dark hole and you need to fix it without making it worse elsewhere.”

*Iceman*’s four-hour run time and large cast means lighting the show in such a way that “the audience won’t get bored,” but Wolfe insisted it not look “too pretty or eloquent,” Eisenhower elaborated. So ultimately “what makes *Iceman* exciting is that we are *hiding* the lighting—we are pulling the audience’s attention around and setting the right mood without people really seeing it.”

By the time that show’s previews were over, they’d solved the staircase problem: When Washington briefly appeared there, he remained brilliantly lit. And then the moment was gone in the blink of an eye, before the audience could even appreciate the time and effort that had gone into perfecting it. (Tony voters at least recognized the duo’s work with their 21st nomination.)

The Fisher-Eisenhower partnership has not changed much over the years, though Fisher says he gradually became more trusting of Eisenhower’s superior musicality and her understanding of rhythms in lighting. And Eisenhower says their style has evolved over time. “I like to think we carry the influences of all the directors we have worked with,” she said.

That heritage is important, she continued, pointing out that *Iceman* brings them back to the very venue where Eisenhower first worked with Fisher as his assistant back in 1985.

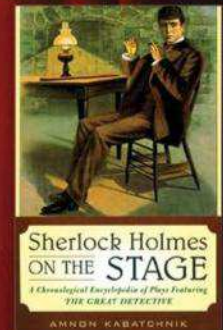
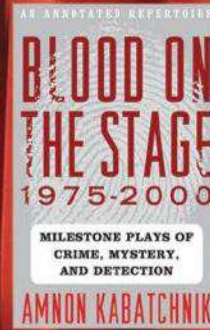
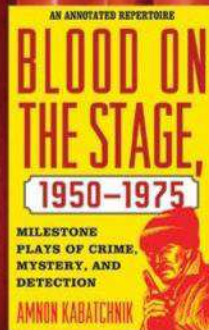
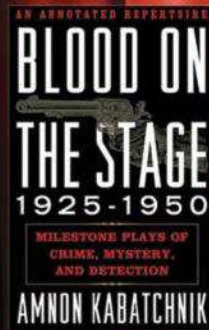
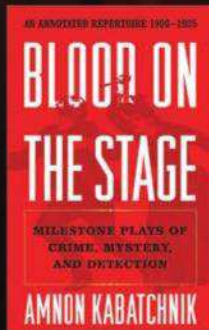
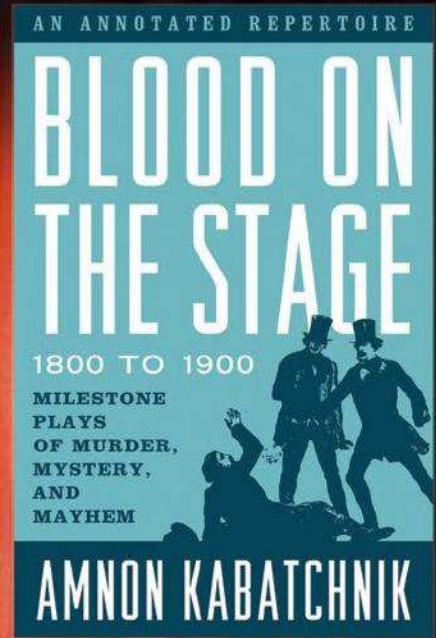
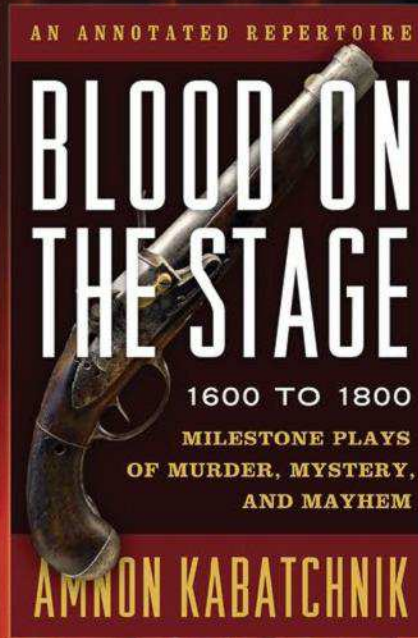
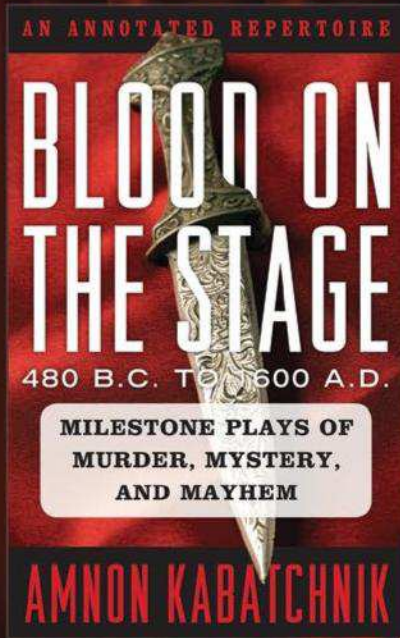
“It’s nice feeling a sense of community and a sense of lineage,” she said. “To know that you take a little bit of George Wolfe or Bob Fosse with you—that this is where and who you come from—is just incredible.” 📌

**New York City-based arts journalist Stuart Miller writes frequently for this magazine.**



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# ANDREW

## ART & SCIENCE

**THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF CINCINNATI'S KNOW THEATRE WEARS MANY HATS, BUT HIS MAIN LENS INTO THEATRE IS LIGHTING DESIGN**

BY JACKIE MULAY

**A** TALL, LANKY MAN IN HIS LATE 30S STANDS IN front of a small but packed house. He rocks on his feet, practically dancing with anticipation, and flashes the audience a beaming smile. As he launches into the de rigueur “no cell phones, note the exits” pre-show monologue, he cracks jokes with the lighthearted familiarity of someone who has done this approximately 1,000 times before. This man is Andrew Hungerford, and he is the producing artistic director at Know Theatre of Cincinnati.

But Hungerford also wears a few other hats: He’s the director as well as the scenic and lighting designer of tonight’s show, the regional premiere of playwright Lauren Gunderson’s *Ada & the Engine*, a play about scientific pioneer Ada Byron Lovelace, who invented the first computer program, and her relationship with inventor Charles Babbage, the “father of computers.”

“I was lucky enough to have seen the demonstration of Babbage’s machine about 10 years ago, before I read this play,” Hungerford recalled a few days before opening, leaning back in his chair at the local coffee shop just around the corner from the Know. “Watching

it work was one of the most beautiful things I’ve ever seen,” he said.

It’s not just the kind of show Hungerford is attracted to but one he may be uniquely suited to. (His theatre previously staged Gunderson’s *Silent Sky*, another show about forgotten women in scientific history.) An unlikely pairing of science and art has characterized Hungerford’s career in the theatre from the start, and may be the reason for his singular position as a lighting designer who runs a theatre.

His college résumé gives some clue as to his diverse interests: He holds a B.S. in astrophysics and a B.A. in theatre from Michigan State University, as well as an MFA in lighting design from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. One reason he’s not doing science today, in fact, is that it was in the university’s theatre department that he discovered the passion that would become his profession. At Michigan State, as part of an assistantship, Hungerford happened to shadow a professor who was assigned to the school’s scenic and lighting department. That was his first exposure to design.

His original plan, he explained, had been to go to grad school



# HUNGERFORD



DAN R. WINTERS

for physics and seek theatre design work on the side. But after doing another assistantship for an astrophysics professor, he saw the tedium of that line of work in the field, and his plans shifted dramatically.

"I spent more time working on shows than, say, my thermodynamics homework," he recalled with a twinkle in his eye.

In 2001, Hungerford studied abroad in London, and there he saw Robert Lepage's one-man show *The Far Side of the Moon*, performed in both English and French ("The French version is 15 minutes longer, which I find fascinating," he interjected). The final scene of the show, he said, left him with an image and impression he will never forget: a scene featuring Lepage, a bed, two mirrors, and an orange that created the illusion that Lepage was sitting up in bed and the orange was floating. This moment, Hungerford said, changed the trajectory of his life.

"This is the thing that made me think, okay, I have to do theatre," he says. "Visually inventive worlds are the center of my design aesthetic."

After that fateful trip, Hungerford began assisting in scenic design. Then in his junior year he discovered lighting design, in what might literally be described as a lightbulb moment. "Lighting design awoke the science part of my brain," he recalled.

Indeed lighting design fused Hungerford's two academic interests in a perfect marriage of two subjects often thought to be wildly

different from each other. "The depth of research of science combined with the artistry was so engaging and compelling," he said. "So I ran with that and then designed as many shows as possible."

## AT TIMES HUNGERFORD'S RIGHT-BRAIN/LEFT-BRAIN

intellect can seem intimidating. Local actor Maggie Lou Rader, who is also Know Theatre's education director, described her boss's intelligence as a vital asset. As an example, she offered an anecdote about starring as Henrietta Levitt in Gunderson's *Silent Sky*, which told the story of the women at Harvard Observatory who manually mapped the stars and galaxies the male scientists observed. When she asked Hungerford why the play's characters were "charting this and this and this," and "why is that important?" he sat down and enthusiastically explained it all to her in detail. "I think I gathered enough to understand why Henrietta was brilliant, but that was the extent," she said with a laugh.

You can see what she means: Hungerford's eyes positively glow with enthusiasm when he describes the favorite gel colors he uses in his designs. But the way he speaks about those colors and their inspiration is so poetic, you almost wouldn't believe he's thinking about the science too. His current favorite color belongs to the LEE palette and is LEE 728, which is called Steel Green, which he described thus, "I love it because it's the color of a summer sky in Michigan

Opposite page: Andrew Hungerford. Above: Cary Davenport and Montez Jenkins-Copeland, foreground, in *Girlfriend*, with set and lighting by Hungerford.





DAN R. WINTERS

as a tornado approaches. It's such a great, unexpected color, and it looks spectacular on scenery."

Hungerford often uses paintings and photographs from the period in which the show he's designing is set to find the color palettes for the show. Lately he's taken a particular interest in blue-green and silver gels. "There's something really painterly about it," he describes. "Combining unexpected colors so you get unexpected undertones adds depth to the overall picture."

Part of his design process includes analyzing the script to determine the actionable goals of the characters moment to moment, then designing a lighting plot that supports those goals. "For me, lighting design is about taking it all and translating it into the actual lighting systems," he explained.

Hungerford got his professional start as a lighting designer in 2004 at the Children's Theatre of Cincinnati, then became the resident scenic and lighting designer at the Know in 2007. In 2010, he started another role as a set, lighting, and sometime sound designer at the Cincinnati Shakespeare Company.

Darnell Pierre Benjamin met Hungerford when the latter was the scenic designer for Know Theatre's 2010 staging of *Angels in America*. But their professional working relationship extended through work at both the Know and Cincinnati Shakespeare Company.

"I saw him as a nerdy guy who was somehow able to have great social skills," Benjamin recalled, smiling fondly. "Whenever we did chat, we always had great conversations. But our friendship flourished right as he became artistic director at the Know."

That was in late 2012. The interview for the artistic director position took place in the local coffee shop around the corner from the theatre. It was a casual conversation with the previous artistic director, Jason Bruffy, and it lasted around 15 minutes. It ended with a difficult choice for Hungerford, whose home is in L.A. with his wife, Elizabeth, a screenwriter.

"It was tough, because I am based in L.A., but I had invested five years of my life into the organization at the time," Hungerford said. "Which seems like such a small amount of time looking back," he added.

All of the previous artistic directors at the Know came from directing backgrounds, as do most artistic directors of most theatres. Hungerford brings with him a different way of looking at theatre. While he has taken on many other roles at the Know, his lighting design remains paramount to his vision. "There have only been two or three times in my career where someone has designed the lighting for a set I designed," he said.

While it's rare for a designer to run a theatre, Hungerford has found a way to incorporate his lighting background into his work on scenic design and his directing as well. There is no better example of Hungerford succeeding at this than with *Ada & the Engine*.

That play, he said, was his favorite show to design so far, in part because he had been thinking about it for such a long time. "I thought about what I wanted it to be, but it didn't crystalize," he explained. "Like, I had all of these amorphous thoughts. It was partly the struggle that made it so satisfying. It turned into something super-magical."

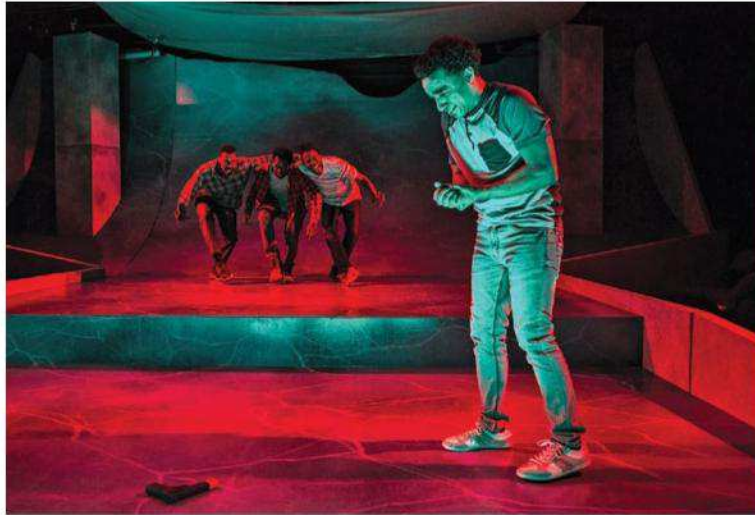
Magical is a good word for the work produced at the Know, whose own website describes itself as "Cincinnati's Theatrical Playground." A pointedly experimental theatre, the Know hosts several programs outside of the regular mainstage season, including an annual Fringe Festival, which introduces new shows from independent artists over the course of 11 days, hosting more than 150 live performances from groups all over the country.

Reflecting on the Know programming outside the mainstage, Benjamin observed that the content seems to get stranger and stranger. "Andrew is seen as the leader of the weird stuff," Benjamin said. "He is more than willing to give people a place to test things."

A good example would be the show *Calculus: The Musical*, a



musical comedy about a contemporary student named Ada who is visited by the historic Isaac Newton. After its 2007 Cincinnati Fringe performance, *Calculus: The Musical* became the only show in Fringe history to be granted an extended run due to audience demand. This year, *Calculus: The Musical* kicked off the Cincinnati Fringe Festival's announcement party with a revival performance, proving that there is always a home for the offbeat at the Know.



DAN R. WINTERS



DAN R. WINTERS

One reason Hungerford ardently pursues producing and introducing the Cincinnati community to new works has to do with their content—and their design challenges. Benjamin recalled working with Hungerford on a show in which Benjamin was an actor and Hungerford was the lighting designer. “He asked me to stand in place for a while,” Benjamin said. “I’m not stupid—I’m a dark-skinned black man surrounded by pale white people. That is not easy to light.”

He asked Hungerford if that was the reason for the long lighting process, and the designer confirmed it with a wry smile. Benjamin found it “so refreshing” that the designer would make the effort to ensure everyone involved in the production receive the same level of attention to detail, something Benjamin hasn’t often encountered in his career, he said.

Hungerford’s sensitivity to diversity and inclusion onstage also suffuses the shows he selects as the Know’s artistic director. A crucial aspect of producing new plays is a bold commitment to telling diverse stories. “He’s very passionate about giving voices to marginalized groups,” Benjamin said.

As Hungerford put it, “We have such problems with representation on our stages that any opportunity we have to expand who is represented onstage in all aspects, the better. I want our plays to reflect the diversity of the world around us. This is the world we live in; let’s represent it.”

In addition to being a home for diversity, Alice Flanders, Know Theatre’s managing director, said she thinks of the theatre as “a breeding ground for young artists. One of Andrew’s favorite things is to host the opening or regional premieres of shows,” she added. As a member of the National New Play Network (NNPN), the Know has become quite familiar with staging new works and regional premieres.

Rader described working on the premiere of a show called *Pulp*, by Joseph Zettelmaier, which the Know hosted as part of the NNPN’s Rolling World Premiere program, which supports three or more theatres willing to produce a show during a 12-month period. As a part of the process, Zettelmaier came in to watch a run.

“To have the playwright in the room was so scary, and it was something that none of us had ever done before,” Rader explained.

But because Hungerford made the effort to lighten the room and relieve the stress, it turned into one of the most fun rehearsal periods Rader’s had. Hungerford has a knack for stress relief, she said. “If it ever does get tense he’ll be the first to remind you that, ‘Eh, you know, it’s just a play.’”

“If we’re not having fun practicing our art in the room, why are we doing this?” Hungerford asked rhetorically. “If the cast had fun and had an enjoyable experience making the show, then the audience can see and feel it. It’s part of that infectious joy of the live experience.”

A sense of humor and cool under pressure is something those who’ve worked with Hungerford for a long time have noticed. Jeremy Dubin, company member and director of creative education at Cincinnati Shakespeare Company, described Hungerford as a “fount of positivity. I think he always tends to influence a room. He always brings kind of a lightness to it.”

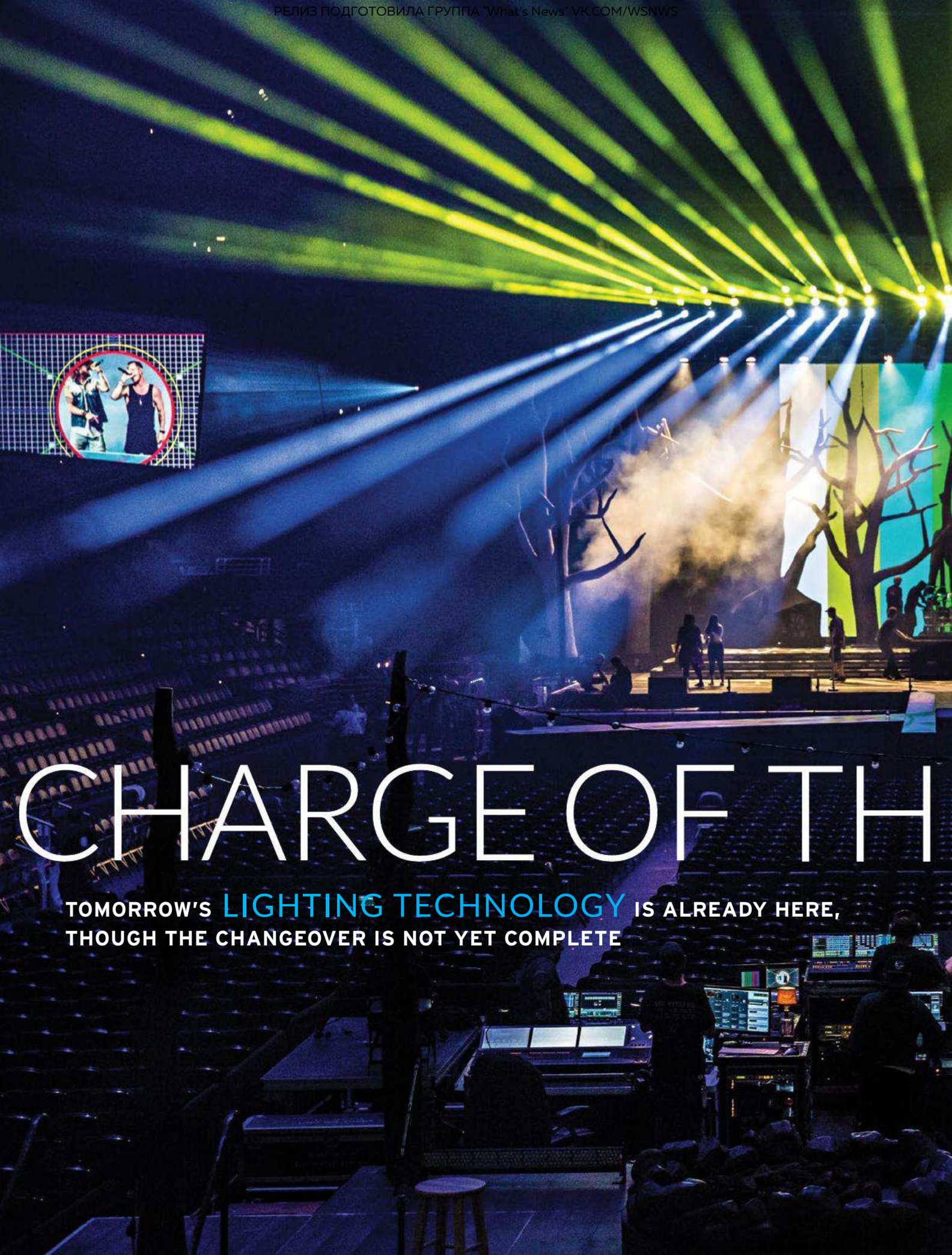
My first encounter with Hungerford rang all these bells. I was invited to an off-site rehearsal for *Ada & the Engine*; I’d slipped in through the side door as he was offering direction to the cast. He stood, settled onto one of his lanky hips, one hand entangled in his scruffy brown hair, as he searched excitedly for the right words to capture his thoughts. When he finished, he jumped back into his chair and directed the cast to begin the scene again before grabbing his coffee mug.

This first introduction perfectly captured his sense of humor, his creative passion, and his love for science: On his coffee mug was Neil deGrasse Tyson and the words, “Ya’ll Mothafuckas Need Science.” 📌

**Jackie Mulay is a theatre critic and writer based in Cincinnati.**

Opposite page: Corinne Mohlenhoff in *The Handmaid’s Tale*; above left: Elliott Young, Darnell Pierre Benjamin, Landon E. Horton, and Crystian Wiltshire in *Kill Move Paradise*; above right: Tess Talbot in *Ada & the Engine*.

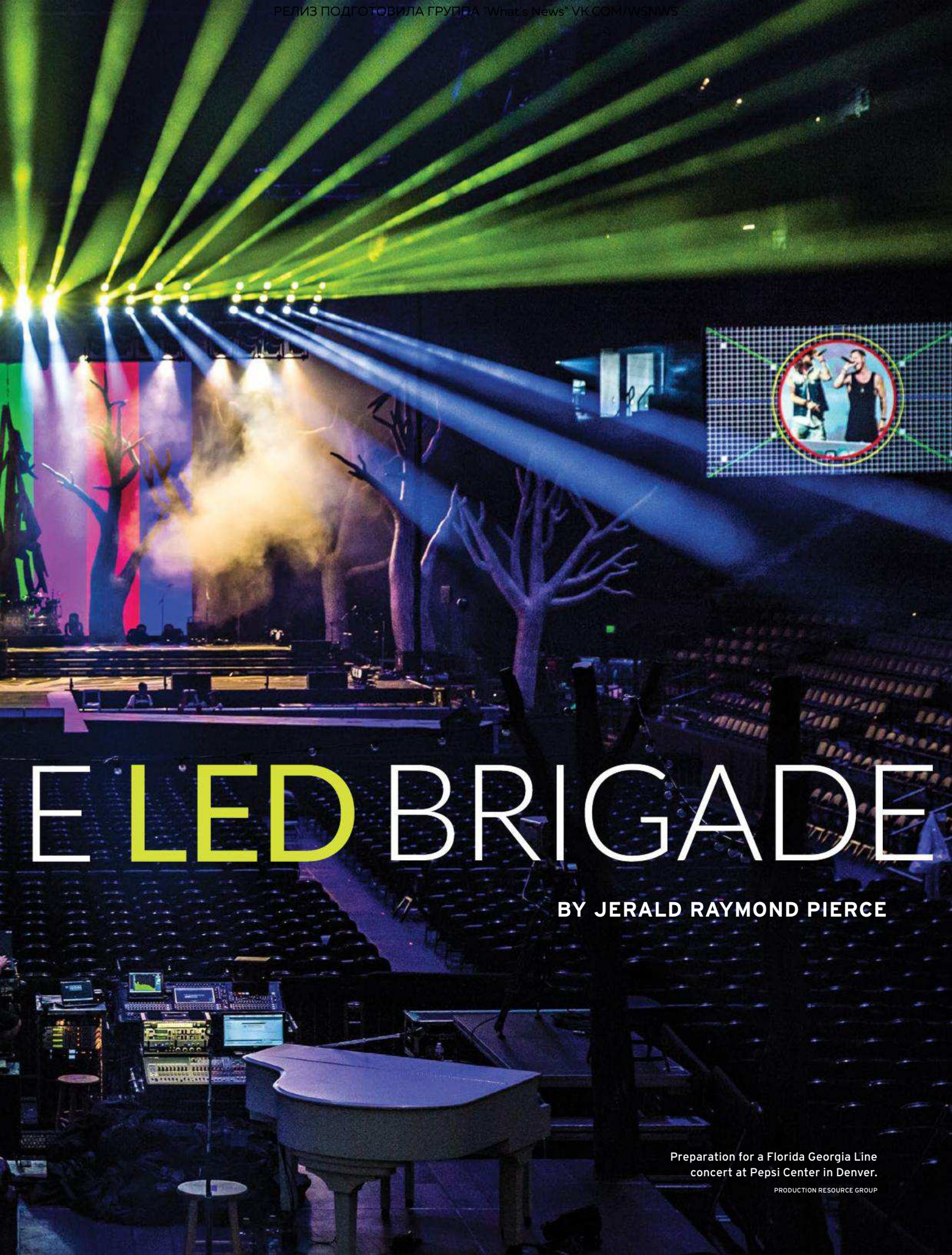




# CHARGE OF TH

TOMORROW'S **LIGHTING TECHNOLOGY** IS ALREADY HERE,  
THOUGH THE CHANGEOVER IS NOT YET COMPLETE





# ELED BRIGADE

BY JERALD RAYMOND PIERCE

Preparation for a Florida Georgia Line  
concert at Pepsi Center in Denver.

PRODUCTION RESOURCE GROUP



## HEATRE HAS COME A LONG WAY FROM THE DAYS

when “lighting” meant the ability to manipulate or work around the movement of the sun. Now theatres have extensive grids that allow designers to hang and focus tens and hundreds of lights to conjure everything from bright sunlight to a candlelit dinner, and all points in between.

Until fairly recently, if you walked into any given theatre that was setting up for tech, you’d often see a lighting designer up on a ladder on the stage, possibly with an assistant down below. They’d hang one, two, maybe a third instrument and focus all of them on the same area. One area, three lights, each with its own gel—specific colors selected to provide a warm or cool or specialized light, as the case may be.

Now you might see something a little different, as theatre is in the midst of a fundamental lighting change—one that will nar-

green/blue combination, could containing seven different colors, thus increasing the nuance available to designers.

Color is the key to LEDs’ appeal, as Michael Lincoln, a lighting designer and professor at Ohio University, explained, and it’s hard to understate how fundamental a change they’re making in the way lighting designers work. “We’ve never had a source before that instantly changes color, that you didn’t have to have some mechanical means of changing the color,” Lincoln marveled.

With incandescent instruments designers must place color gels in front of the light to change the color of the light onstage—the equivalent of draping a scarf over a lamp to set up lighting for a party. And to change the color, the gel either needs to be changed, or another light with a different gel has to be employed. But LEDs change colors digitally, both in the original red/blue/green models and the newer seven-colored instruments.



Perkins’s lighting for *Seven Guitars* at Actors Theatre of Louisville; Bowman Wright, Forrest McClendon, and J. Alphonse Nicholson in the show.

KATHY A. PERKINS

row those three instruments down to one, and make them at least partly remotely adjustable. The change has a bulky official name, Light Emitting Diode, but everyone knows it as LED.

“They’re great time-savers,” said lighting designer Kathy A. Perkins of the lighting technology that is sweeping the field. “Where I used to double-hang and triple-hang down and back light, I only do it with one light source. I’m hanging fewer lights, I’m having to focus fewer lights, and it gives me more time in tech.”

This shift will see most if not all of the traditional lighting instruments in theatres replaced with LED lights, which designers previously kept at arm’s length. About a decade ago, around 2007 and 2008, LED lights were just starting to hit stages around the world. In a 2010 interview, Tony Award-winning lighting designer Kevin Adams discussed his use of LEDs in *Spring Awakening*, *Next to Normal*, and *American Idiot*. At the time he used them primarily as a way to light background surfaces, he explained, and as lights to point at the audience. Specifically citing the color that LEDs were able to produce, Adams said that it was “a little bit tricky to get a variety of colors that look handsome on skin.”

That has begun to change. Around the time Adams was using LEDs mainly for supplementary lighting, Electronic Theatre Controls, Inc. (ETC) acquired the Selador product line from Selador co-founders Rob Gerlach and Novella Smith. This game-changing acquisition meant that LEDs, once possessed of a simple red/

Lincoln, who has designed more than 300 productions on Broadway, Off-Broadway, and in regional theatre, raved about the “crazy amount of control” that designers have with LEDs. Previously Lincoln had to use what he called “scrollers” if he wanted one incandescent instrument to create different colors during the course of a show. These attachments for the front of lighting instruments allow designers to scroll among multiple different color gels, in a programmed sequence, usually changing over repeatedly throughout a performance.

The trick, and the difficulty, comes in those changeovers. Because scrollers aren’t instantaneous, Lincoln said, a lighting designer needs to carefully figure out when to take a light out so that the machine has time to scroll to the next color—not a terribly quick process sometimes—before the light comes back up. Poor timing, or just a short blackout, can result in the light coming up while odd colors scroll by onstage, like one part of a kaleidoscope that can’t quite keep up with the rest.

LEDs have changed that, effectively putting scrollers out of their misery, according to Lincoln. “We tried to get our (scrollers) fixed and they’re like, ‘Nope, we can’t, sorry, we can’t fix those anymore,’” Lincoln explained. “You can’t get the parts. So as they die, they’re just dead.”

The advantages of LEDs being able to change colors more or less instantaneously means that the conversation designers have

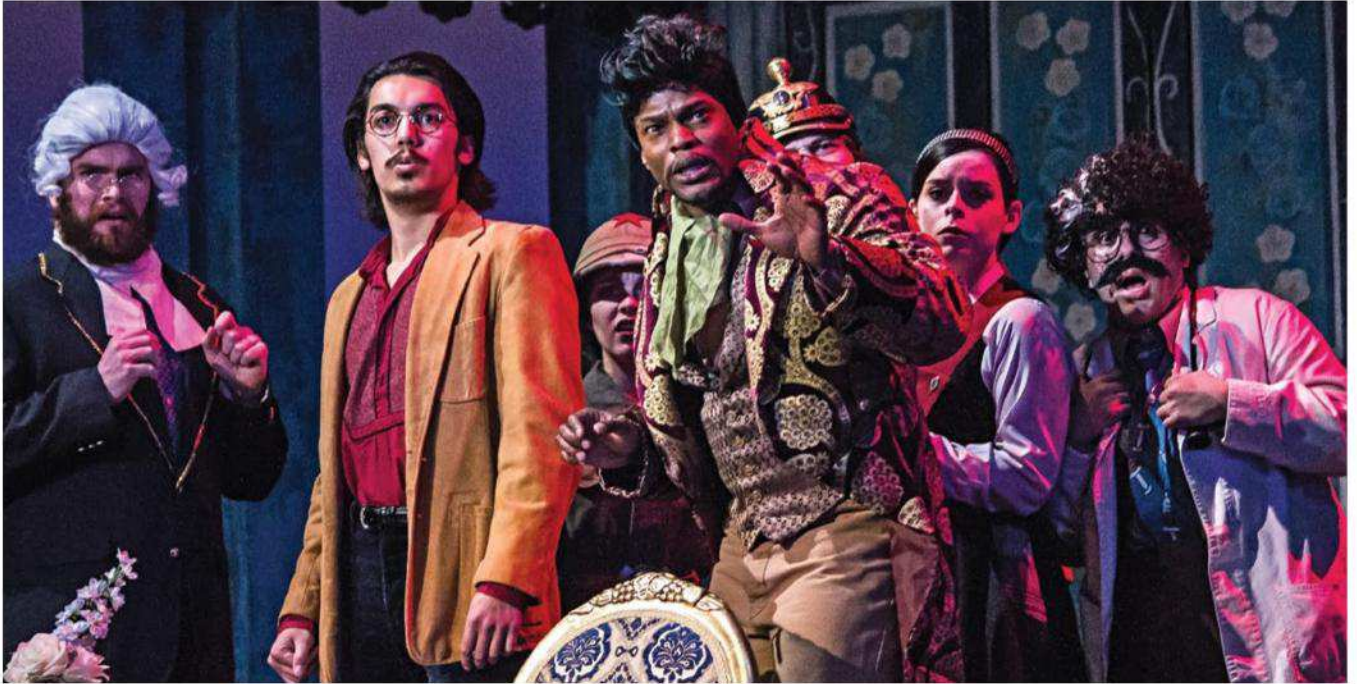


around lighting and color is changing, Lincoln said. Those trained in a previous era, he pointed out, are used to discussing color based on Rosco gel labels. For instance, R68 is "sort of a medium blue." But LED systems, which don't require gel labels at all, present designers with a circle containing the entire spectrum of light.

"You just click on a place in that color spectrum and say, 'Give me that color,'" Lincoln said. "You don't even pay attention to the fact that it's an old R68 or something like that—it's just what color looks good onstage right now."

to work on his LED discovery, LEDs became brighter and found more uses, thanks to the advantages they presented over incandescent lights. While incandescent bulbs lose 90 percent of their energy as heat, because they use electricity to heat the metal filament inside until it becomes hot, LEDs emit very little heat at all. LEDs also emit light in a specific direction, which reduces the need for elements that can trap light, like reflectors and diffusers, which could result in more than half of the light never leaving the fixture.

Since their invention, LEDs have been used in flashlights, kids'



DANIELLE YOUNG

The cast of *The Government Inspector* at Ohio State University, with lighting design by Bentley Heydt.

Designers still go through their extensive planning process before they get into the theatre and start hanging and focusing, but LEDs and their numerous color options give designers more freedom throughout the whole process. Lighting designers always create a color palette that allows them to paint with light during the tech process. What LEDs do is give them the opportunity to expand and adjust that palette on the fly, without needing to climb a ladder to replace a no-longer-needed gel.

**DESPITE THE OBVIOUS BENEFITS, DESIGNERS HAVE HAD** their reservations about LEDs.

"A lot of us wouldn't use LEDs because they had such a harsh quality of lighting," said Perkins, who has worked regionally with theatres such as St. Louis Black Rep, the Goodman, and Steppenwolf. "You could definitely tell it from an incandescent."

LEDs were first invented in 1962 by Nick Holonyak Jr. while he was working for General Electric. The first LEDs were only red and were used for indicator lights and calculator displays in the 1970s. Soon pale yellow, green, and blue diodes were invented, which quickly led to researchers producing a white light using a combination of red, green, and blue LEDs.

Holonyak wasn't trying to replace incandescent bulbs when he invented LEDs; he wasn't even trying to create a light source. He was actually trying to make a laser. But as researchers continued

light-up shoes, optical computer mice, car headlights, and televisions. In addition to being more energy-efficient, LED bulbs can have a lifespan of upwards of 25,000 hours, or more than 25 times longer than incandescent bulbs. Still, despite their advancements, the different science behind LED meant they had their own particular look which theatres weren't initially eager to accept.

The big change Lincoln has seen over the last two or three years has been in how much more intricate LEDs have become. While LED lights used to emit a distinctive cold blue light, they're now able to mimic color temperature anywhere from the harsh fluorescent of a hospital room to the warmth of a regular tungsten fixture, like any in-home light bulb.

"The technology, as it always does, advanced rapidly, and now they're the most sophisticated conventional unit," Lincoln said. "You can produce a light that I don't think any lighting designer—if they didn't know that it was an LED source, they couldn't tell."

Lincoln compared the shift to what he saw when the Source Four instrument came out. Conventional instruments before the Source Four used halogen bulbs and produced a warm tungsten light. Lincoln said he heard established designers vow they'd never use the Source Four because it didn't look like the old units. Now, he points out, the Source Four is dominant in the theatre because it was simply the most sophisticated option.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 71

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## FOX FOUNDATION RESIDENT ACTOR FELLOWSHIPS ROUND 11

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**Ike Holter**  
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**Lauren Gunderson**  
*The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley*  
Marin Theatre Company



**Margot Melcon**  
*The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley*  
Marin Theatre Company



**Adam Rapp**  
*The Sound Inside*  
Williamstown Theatre Festival



**Sharyn Rothstein**  
*Landladies*  
Northlight Theatre



**Mark St. Germain**  
*Gertrude and Claudius*  
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**James Anthony Tyler**  
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Los Angeles, CA



**Alejandra M. Cisneros**  
Los Angeles, CA



**Abigail Esperanza Vega**  
San Antonio, TX



**David Francisco Mendizábal**  
New York, NY



**Lauren E. Turner**  
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**Jamie Van Camp**  
Placerville, CA

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**Bryce Tevan Goodloe**  
Saint Louis, MO



**Pia Haddad**  
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**Peter J. Kuo**  
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**Carl E. Overly, Jr**  
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**Anna Skidis Vargas**  
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# The Way Idris Goodwin Moves

His plays are an intoxicating mix of hip-hop and social history

BY MARCUS CROWDER

And in This Corner: Cassius Clay at Oregon Children's Theatre.

OWEN CAREY

**E**ACH TIME PLAYWRIGHT IDRIS GOODWIN SEES the hip-hop supergroup the Roots, he has an epiphany. First when he was 17, again at 24, and then at 30. Each of these performances became for Goodwin “a moment of clarity and purpose.” Considered by many to be the greatest live hip-hop band ever, the Roots are legendary for their authenticity and creativity in a genre that prizes both above all else. “Every time I see them I have a feeling where I’m like, ‘That is what excellence looks like,’ and I want to be at that level of truth and realness,” Goodwin explains.

Like the Roots, Goodwin has the contemporary rhythms of language in his bones, and he brings them to the stage as both a performer and playwright. He grew up absorbing hip-hop culture in Detroit and became serious about it as a young rapper in Chicago. He carries a natural performer’s magnetism with him,

whether he’s onstage making music or in the classroom leading a creative writing discussion. Though not a large man, he commands space by filling it with a direct, engaging vibe. Wherever he goes, and whatever form his work takes, Goodwin lights up rooms with his energy, humor, and enthusiasm.

“I feel like it’s possible for me to do anything—it’s all just telling stories,” he says.

Like much of the best hip-hop, Goodwin’s plays dive into contemporary social cultural issues and U.S. history. The 41-year-old now has 14 plays under his belt, and has been produced all over, including *How We Got On* (first seen at the Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville, and subsequently produced around the country), *Bars and Measures*, *The Raid*, and *Blackademics*.

“There is an assumption of a world of possibilities in his characters that is deeply uncynical,” says Alison Carey, who commissioned his newest work, *The Way the Mountain Moved*, as part of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival’s American Revolutions history cycle. The play receives its world premiere at OSF July 10 through Oct. 28. “There is a strength in his characters, who are open to possibility, which is delightful,” Carey says.

Coming up is *This Is Modern Art*, co-written with Kevin Coval, which had a contentious premiere in Chicago in 2015 and played at New York Theatre Workshop June 2-23; *HYPE MAN: a break beat play* at Philadelphia’s InterAct Theatre Company in January 2019; and the youth show *And in This Corner: Cassius Clay*, playing at Seattle Children’s Theatre this fall after runs at various other TYA venues.

Indeed several of Goodwin’s plays have been tailored for young audiences: *And in This Corner* introduces us to the 12-year-old boxer who would become Muhammad Ali. This summer he’ll double down on this youth focus as he becomes the producing artistic director of StageOne Family Theatre in Louisville, Ky., which commissioned and premiered *Cassius Clay*. “I was just ready to spread my wings in a different direction, and I wanted to go back to nonprofit



Goodwin  
SCOTT MALORS



work, community building, outreach," Goodwin says of the move.

As he's moved into theatre, Goodwin hasn't entirely left behind doing hip-hop for real. He has five rap albums, available at [idrisgoodwin.bandcamp.com](http://idrisgoodwin.bandcamp.com), including *Rhyming While Black*, the compilation *Kings for the Night*, and *Break Beat Poems*.

"Black art is inherently about disruption—that's what jazz is, that's what hip-hop is," he says. "It's all in this continuum of us finding ways to use art to be free."

**GOODWIN WAS RAISED IN DETROIT** and its suburbs. His father was an auto industry executive and his mother worked in urban planning. He moved to Chicago when he was 19, where he had his "cultural awakening."

"I was in bands, I was making films, I was doing plays—just moving," he recalls. There was never a question in his mind that he would be an artist. "I knew I was creative, and I knew I wanted to be around other creative people," he explains.

He credits his time in Chicago for instilling a clear-eyed work ethic to buttress his artistic sensibility. If hip-hop has been Goodwin's heartbeat, Chicago's own Lorraine Hansberry was his theatre lifeblood. He calls her "the greatest American playwright. *A Raisin in the Sun* is a perfect piece of drama and theatre. Such richness and dimension."

Goodwin received his bachelor of arts degree in film, video, and screenwriting from Columbia College, and an MFA in creative writing from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. For the last five years, he's taught creative writing and hip-hop aesthetics at Colorado College.

Goodwin intends for his work to create engagement and discussion. The conversation has occasionally been heated. *This Is Modern Art* created a kerfuffle when it premiered in 2015 at the Steppenwolf Theatre Company as part of its theatre for young adults lineup. Based on actual events—the 2010 graffiti tagging of the relatively new wing of the Art Institute of Chicago—the play got no love from the city's two major newspaper critics, who complained that the play glorified vandalism by the predominantly African American graffiti crew. Wrote Chris Jones in the *Chicago Tribune*: "Graffiti can be inartful, for goodness' sake. More importantly yet, graffiti had the effect of making people feel unsafe in the city. It terrified people."

Jones and the *Chicago Sun-Times'* critic, Hedy Weiss, were summarily skewered via social media by the Chicago theatre community and beyond for purportedly missing the play's ideas about the nature of art, representation, and race.

Goodwin generally steered clear of any public statements about the controversy. "I knew we'd get reactions that mirrored the very same reactions to the incident that we wrote about," he remarks. "What I wasn't expecting was how vocal the theatre community would be in protest to the reviews. Obviously Kevin and I were both honored by the support."

Goodwin calls some of his stage work "breakbeat" plays—breakbeat, widely considered the rhythmic foundation of hip-hop, refers to the way early hip-hop DJs used the turntable to improvise with drum breaks. These plays—*How We Got On*, *The Realness*, and *HYPE MAN*—are based in the elemental aesthetics of hip-hop art, and are about hip-hop in both form and content.

The playwright calls them "musical plays that are not musicals." Instead they're

plays in which hip-hop is baked into the skeleton of the work, even when the characters are speaking. He explains that "this includes the integration of rap (all three plays have rap in them); turntablism (in *How We Got On*, the DJ/narrator blends scenes together, and uses the cast as if they were sample sounds), beatboxing (again, *How We Got On*), beat production (*HYPE MAN*), call and response, and so on."

The "breakbeat" plays began with *How We Got On*, Goodwin's most-produced work to date. In that play, middle-class black teenagers navigate the early days of hip-hop while searching for their identities at an age when the questions can be vague and answers elusive. Alongside the characters' stories, the play provides a running history of the sonic innovations of hip-hop.

Goodwin uses the play's DJ, Selector, as the primary storytelling engine. In the tradition of classic old-school DJs of hip-hop (such as Kool Herc and Grandmaster Flash), Selector sets the sonic tone, gives the audience information, and commands and reacts to the characters. An illustrative snippet:

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JASAON SANFORD AS HAMLET, 2017. DIR. KYLE HADEN. PHOTO BY MICHAEL STADLER

(Selector puts on "Pungee" by the Meters. Over "Pungee":)

**SELECTOR:** Battle rhymes.

When you start—drop a lot of popular nouns—words people will know but be surprised to hear—they'll be like Oooooohhhhsnapp!!

say the other guy is not actually a guy at all say you got intimate with his mother. Or his sister.

Use techniques like metaphor

**HANK:** If rap was a shoe, you'd be a sandal

**SELECTOR:** Simile

**HANK:** Black and heavy, just like an anvil

Goodwin hit on the idea of the "breakbeat" plays while conversing with his friend Coval, his *This Is Modern Art* co-writer.

"We were trying to figure out: Who are we? What are we doing?" Goodwin says. He decided the question of identity came down to the breakbeat. "Taking the stripped-down, percussive rhythmic nature of a song and looping it is the marker of us as writers," Goodwin says. When writing those plays, he was looking for "that raw, stripped-down



*The Way the Mountain Moved* director May Adrales, Goodwin, and dramaturg Laura Brueckner at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

nature that makes you do the 'ugly face.'"

Adding the moniker "breakbeat" tells audiences they're about to see something unapologetically informed by the now-ubiquitous stream of popular culture. Goodwin also hopes these works explore how America has evolved in response to the new art form.

Buck Busfield, producing artistic direc-

tor of B Street Theatre in Sacramento, Calif., who directed an early production of *How We Got On*, enthuses, "I just thought it was a beautiful piece of theatre. When was the last time you saw a play stop dramatic action and get into the technical advancements of sound? That's just audacity. He did it successfully and kept it interesting dramatically."

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The GLOBAL CONNECTIONS program was designed by TCG and is funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.



Busfield and Goodwin share a love of music, which led to their collaboration on *Bars and Measures*. The inspiration came from a *New York Times* article Busfield read about two very different African American brothers. He forwarded the piece to Goodwin, who then wrote the play about one brother who plays jazz bass and may have become involved in a terrorist cell, and the other, a classically trained pianist, who tries to get his brother exonerated. It premiered at B Street in 2015, supported by the National New Play Network, and was then produced around the country.

**MAY ADRALES, WHO IS DIRECTING** *The Way the Mountain Moved* at OSF (July 10–Oct. 28), says that as different as Goodwin's plays seem, they have a common element. "The words leap off the page," Adrales marvels in an email. "His writing is vibrant, musical, rhythmic, and daring." But it's not just his form—it's also his content. "He's also deeply curious and has a strong sense of justice," she notes. "He addresses those issues in his plays."

For example, in the one-act play *#matter*, two longtime friends—one white, one black—share different interpretations of the Black Lives Matter protests. *HYPE MAN* features an interracial hip-hop trio on the verge of a commercial breakthrough when they have conflicting reactions to the police shooting of an unarmed black teenager.

While breakbeats and cultural dynamics have often informed Goodwin, he is also a student of history. His play *The Raid* deals with the armed insurrection led by John Brown in 1859. In *American Tales*, he connects American folktales to the communities they originated from. *And in This Corner* explores how racism and Jim Crow laws affected the young Clay/Ali in Louisville in the 1940s.

That made his OSF American Revolutions commissions a natural fit (the series has birthed such well-known works as *Sweat* by Lynn Nottage and *All the Way* by Robert Schenkkan). In Goodwin's case, it was pre-Civil War history that inspired the environmentally themed *The Way the Mountain Moved*. The play takes place in the mid-1850s. It examines the crossed paths of U.S. Army surveyors seeking the best route for the Transcontinental Railroad, Native Americans whose land will be consumed

by the project, and African American Mormons seeking a safe homestead. Goodwin says the raw historic material—rough travelogues, maps, and illustrations—was rich with conflicting intentions and interests.

"America means so many different things to so many specific different cultural groups across race, religion, and ideology," he explains. "They're driven by the same thing: this desire for discovery and freedom. What happens when they collide around those different objectives?"

Adrales, who directs the sprawling tale of *Manifest Destiny*, says that the play "reframes that narrative by capturing what the West really was. It's a collision of people from vastly different backgrounds, who more often had to work together, rather than reach for the gun, to survive."

It's also a play in which Goodwin can address his "love/hate" relationship with the Western genre. While these stories often glorify one culture and mythology at the expense of others, they also have a compelling feeling of action and adventure. Accordingly Goodwin doesn't set out to satirize or send up Westerns; he wants to find his own way into the canon, as someone who rarely saw himself represented in the genre. "This became the study of looking at all the multiplicities that America has, and these conflicts have been in us from the beginning," he says. "That's the moment we're still in."

Goodwin will continue melding theatre and music in his next projects: an immersive hip-hop piece for the Denver Center and a play about the early life of Jimi Hendrix for Seattle Children's Theatre. After opening his play in Ashland, Goodwin will move with his wife and son to Louisville, where his focus will be on running StageOne and on raising its national profile through creative programming and developing new work.

"It's how we begin to cultivate a new generation of theatre-fluent people onstage and off the stage," Goodwin says. "We need to be listening to each other and learning more about each other. Theatre and the performing arts are positioned to be a leader in that discourse." 📧

**Marcus Crowder is an arts and culture writer based in Northern California. For 17 years he was the theatre critic at the *Sacramento Bee*.**

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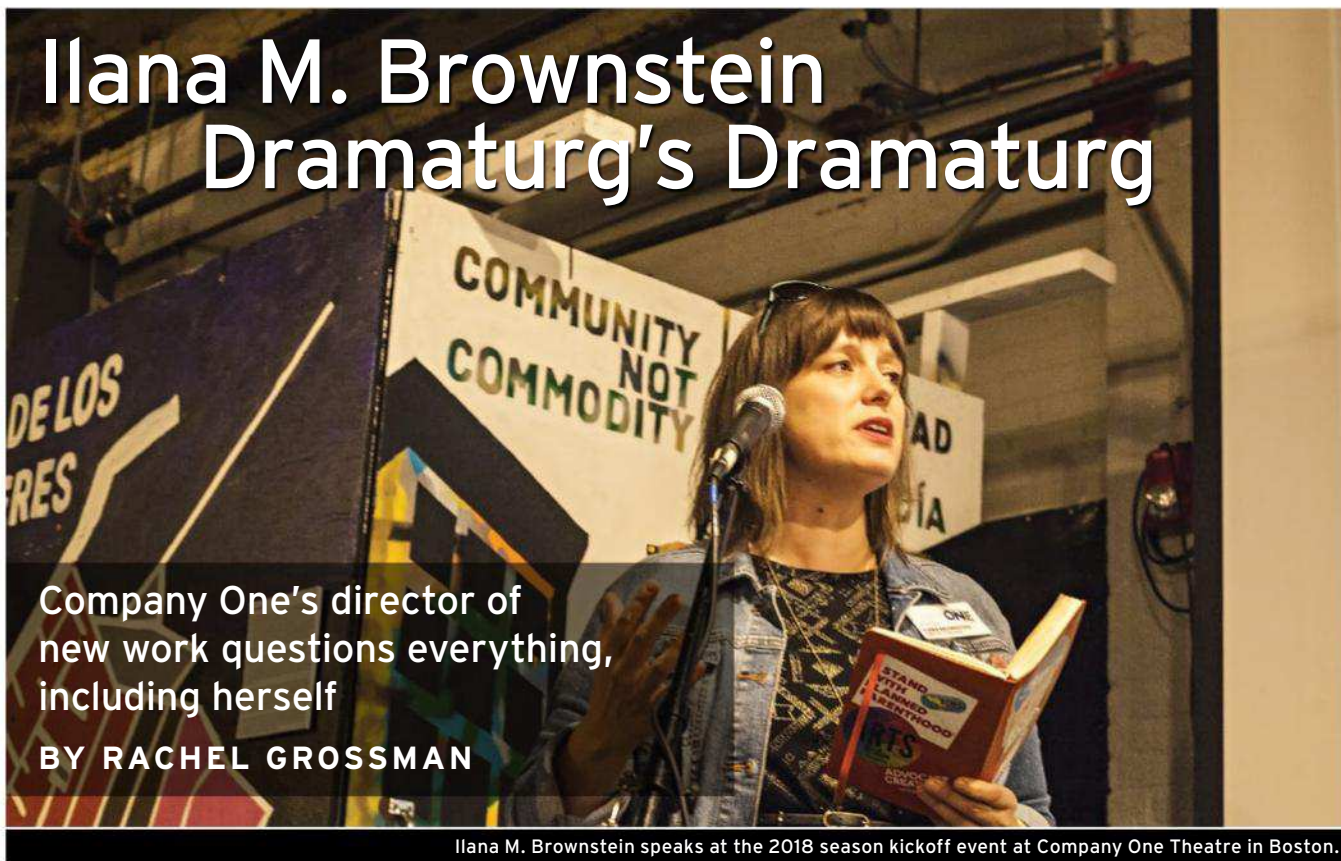
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# Ilana M. Brownstein Dramaturg's Dramaturg

Company One's director of new work questions everything, including herself

BY RACHEL GROSSMAN



Ilana M. Brownstein speaks at the 2018 season kickoff event at Company One Theatre in Boston.

LIV SLAUGHTER

**F**OR YEARS ILANA M. BROWNSTEIN'S TWITTER avatar was an illustrated phrenology chart. This tiny image of a human mind as a multicolored patchwork—representing to me the myriad things going on in that brilliant brain of hers—is what first drew me to Brownstein. It seemed to crop up in every social media conversation about new-play development or audience engagement. As a fellow theatremaker, what has kept me and many other theatre artists returning to Brownstein time and again is also embodied in the way she later interrogated the complex history of phrenology—the discredited study of the size and shape of the skull as reflections of what's happening inside—and decided against having that image represent her. Brownstein is nothing if not thorough and deep, investigating everything. In this way, she is the consummate dramaturg.

To be a dramaturg with the Brownstein Approach (whether she admits it or not, this is a thing) is a formidable, comprehensive job. It is to be an artist of impact—to be a producerial, generative dramaturg, not merely a responsive, research-retrieving dramaturg. It is to be an artistically compelling theatremaker in her own right, an active participant in a rigorous play development process. As Brownstein put it to me, it is to think “carefully about the whole container of the work, the event of it, the connection of the theme of the play and the community.” It is to be as aware of and working on yourself as you would be with a play. When accepting her second Elliott Hayes Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dramaturgy in 2014 from Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of America (LMDA), Brownstein reflected,

“A dramaturg has the power to be a curator, a facilitator, a teacher, an organizer, a distributor of resources both esoteric and logistical, a node around which a movement can happen, a driver of new forms, and a force for public good.”

This vision was also an organizing principle of the Playwrights Commons: the Freedom Art Retreat. Brownstein created this space because she “turged” the Boston theatre ecology—as well as her own soul—and saw a need. She felt called to de-silo playwrights, dramaturgs, and designers from one another, and to promote new thinking around play development processes. Dramaturgs do not and cannot exist in a bubble; they must act and react; they must *do*.

## “ILANA WAS ALWAYS ON MY BRAIN,” RECALLS

Shawn LaCount, artistic director of Boston's Company One Theatre (C1), where Brownstein serves as director of new work. LaCount knew her from her work at the Huntington Theatre Company in Boston, where she was literary manager from 2002 to 2008. Brownstein came to the Huntington directly from Yale School of Drama's Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism MFA program. At the Huntington, in addition to serving as production dramaturg on numerous shows every season, Brownstein started the Breaking Ground Festival of New Play Readings and directed the Huntington Playwriting Fellows program, in which mid-career Boston-based scribes took part in a two-year paid residency comprising a writers' collective with the theatre's artistic staff, attending Huntington productions and events, and being eligible for reading and workshop opportunities. “Writers





LIZA VON

Sidney Monroe in *Wig Out!*, staged by C1 in collaboration with the American Repertory Theater.

in Boston place value on her thoughtfulness and her generosity," says LaCount.

In Company One's early years, LaCount knew that he wanted Brownstein on his team. After dramaturging Lydia R. Diamond's *Voyeurs de Venus* in 2008-09, she settled in for C1's 2010-11 season and hasn't left since. She and LaCount worked together for the first time in fall 2012 with *Bengal Tiger at*

*the Baghdad Zoo*. "I found an artistic partner," he says. "It was like having someone much smarter than I was in the room and someone the artists respected. The work was deeper for her presence."

At C1, Brownstein mentored a corps of dramaturgs as it grew into the dramaturgically focused company it is today. For proof of the troupe's investment in this work, look

no further than the theatre's staff directory: Other titles include connectivity manager & dramaturg, literary manager, documentation dramaturg, dramaturg & connectivity fellow, and connectivity associate. The team behind every C1 show includes both a lead dramaturg and an assistant, who each touch all areas of production.

"If you are a dramaturg," notes Ramona Ostrowski, associate producer of the Boston-based HowRound as well as a former C1 literary manager and dramaturg and Boston University student of Brownstein's, "you are in every rehearsal, tech meeting, designing lobby environments, writing and designing programs, and creating engagement events around the production."

Kirsten Greenidge, Playwright-in-Residence at Company One, calls this two-turg approach a "deep dive into the world of the play and the playwright and the director, as well as the rehearsal room." According to LaCount, C1 is producing bigger, scarier work because of Brownstein's presence in the company. Her "doer" tendencies and the corps of dramaturgs have led to the cre-

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*Urinetown, the Musical*, 2018  
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ation of more new and varied opportunities for writers to hone their skills and have their work developed and produced.

And Brownstein was key in curating C1's current season on the black male experience in the U.S.: Idris Goodwin's *HYPE MAN: a break beat play*, Tarell Alvin McCraney's *Wig Out!*, and the world premiere of Josh Wilder's *Leftovers* (July 20-Aug. 18).

#### BROWNSTEIN COULDN'T UNDERSTAND

why *American Theatre* magazine wanted to profile her, of all people. Despite her collaborators' accolades—"brilliant, passionate, caring, engaged" (LaCount), "a real ally" to artists (Goodwin), "If Ilana were a tree, she would be an oak" (Greenidge)—Brownstein is unfailingly humble. A vocal, energetic presence in rehearsal rooms, classrooms, conferences, social media, and street corners, Brownstein is otherwise an introvert who says she longs to escape to a cabin in the wilderness sans internet (most likely with the "loves of her life," husband Chandran and son Bhaskar). Brownstein acts from an unrelenting, heartfelt compulsion

to bring people together and create change.

"The thing that sustains me is that theatre is not just an art form," she explains. "It's a vehicle for empathy and humane connection. It comes to us through a history of ritual and spiritual practice, and though we've largely moved on from those structures, the roots remain."

Brownstein is inexplicably predisposed to dramaturgy—or maybe not so inexplicably, given her background. She spent her first decade in a predominantly African American community in a South Side neighborhood of Chicago near Jackson Park, but commuted with her mother to Evanston, Ill., where she attended school with almost exclusively white children. Brownstein now appreciates what she learned about racial segregation and inequity at an early age.

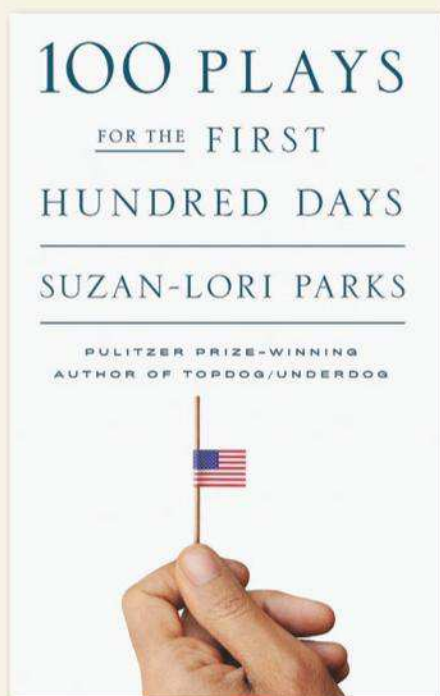
At 10, her family relocated to the Clayton area of St. Louis, where she had "a very white, very Jewish experience." This 180 from her life in Chicago instilled further lessons about social identity privilege. She began to question oppressive systems and structures earlier than many of her white

peers, planting the seeds of her life's mission: fighting for greater inclusion, representation, and justice.

She had some fighting to do on her own behalf: Throughout high school and most of college, she believed she wasn't smart. Most of her close friends were skilled in science and math, and her arts-inclined friends in her circle pursued significant works of English literature, notoriously challenging works like *Finnegans Wake*, which left Brownstein staring at the page thinking, "Wha?!"

It wasn't until her senior year in the directing program at the College of Wooster in Northeast Ohio when it struck her that she could do something those around her struggled to do: She could look at a script and determine how and why it worked, what the playwright was striving to do—in her words, "really understand the bones, muscle, and fat of how a play works." It had never occurred to her that this was a skill. Now that she's teaching dramaturgy and dramatic literature at BU, Brownstein is asking herself: Are the skills of the dramaturg teachable, or are some of them unlearnable? Brownstein has

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been rethinking her pedagogy and coursework, turning it inside out.

"I want to know, what are my assumptions about how and why I teach what I teach?" she says. "What are the assumptions I make about what people bring in to learning how to be a dramaturg? Or thinking about dramatic literature and history as a genealogy of performance, and why we care about that and what it means to a theatremaker today."

Of course Brownstein wants to harness people's natural analytical skills, but she recognizes that this is not everyone's entry point into dramaturgy and criticism. While Brownstein feels the analytical skills of dramaturgy are vital, she's aware it's not everyone's "natural intelligence" to approach processes like she does. So like the dramaturg she is, she's questioning the whole container—including herself, its maker and producer.

#### AS IF SHE DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH TO

interrogate, since the birth of her son Brownstein has been asking questions of herself and the theatre field about practices that are unfriendly to families—particularly to mothers, and especially at the non-union level. As Brownstein sees it, the processes of creating, rehearsing, and performing plays aren't designed for people with families. Individuals in decision-making positions are not always people who care for younger children, either because they don't have kids or because they're men with partners who primarily care for children. "Could meetings not be over dinner time?" she wonders. "Could we not rehearse the bulk of the day on a weekend day?"

She's brought these questions to both Company One and LMDA. At C1, since Brownstein is not the only parent in the company, her inquiries have been met warmly and, when possible, led to changes. "Be flexible to the artists' needs," LaCount says of his approach. "We have the responsibility to make [the process] healthy for parents as much as we would anyone."

For herself, the work-life balance question is not always easy to answer: In the first couple of years of Bhaskar's life, she turned down offers that weren't family-friendly. As a nursing parent, for example, she couldn't go away to a theatre festival for two weeks; easy decision made. But, I wondered naïvely, could the repercussions really be that wide-

spread or long-lasting? Well, consider that in 2014, as Brownstein told me, she was at a professional high point "in terms of the amount of invitations to work freelance, to adjudicate things, to be on panels, to win the [Elliott Hayes] award for a second time. I felt flow, professional flow. And then I got pregnant." Since then it has been "a rough, rough climb out of that hole of productivity and professional high."

A year after Bhaskar was born, she received "the offer," a major job she'd hoped for. But she had to decline it; it simply wasn't the time. The opportunity isn't coming back. "I see peers getting opportunities that I'm not getting, and I think it's because people perceive me as unavailable," says Brownstein. "It's hard to reconcile. But it's a choice. I'm making a choice to be more available to my family." She says she's beginning to feel closer to "where I was in 2014," but also feels "completely overworked and overcommitted. The professional dip is real. It is real hard."

Along these lines Brownstein, Ostrowski, and a number of other female peers are connecting with the Parent Artist Advocacy League (PAAL) for the Performing Arts, and its founder, Rachel Spencer-Hewitt. I asked playwright Greenidge how parenthood has changed and strengthened Brownstein. She recalls a picture she has of Brownstein, wearing an apron, greeting Greenidge's oldest child at a party at Brownstein's home.

"What I love about this photograph," Greenidge says, "is that it exemplifies some values Ilana has always brought into her work, from before she became a parent up to the present: that bringing people together to experience something communal is important; that children are real facts (sometimes theatre parents kind of have to hide that we have them or pretend they are no big deal); that preparation (as indicated by the apron) is half the battle to success."

To me Brownstein embodies the wisdom of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie from *Dear Ijeawele, or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions*: Brownstein is her full self, honest and aware of the equal humanity of other people. In living this value and instilling it in others, she is shifting the landscape, a little bit every day and with every play. 📌

**Rachel Grossman is the ensemble director and a co-founder of dog & pony dc in Washington, D.C.**

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# 'The Forest of Everywhere,' for Everyone

Bricolage Production Company's  
Immersive Companion Program leads audiences  
of all abilities through immersive shows

BY ALLISON CONSIDINE

Child with Sobi the crocodile, played by Tal Kroser, at Bricolage's *The Forest of Everywhere*.

HANDERSON GOMES

## INSTEAD OF A PRE-SHOW ANNOUNCEMENT

about silencing cell phones and unwrapping candies, audiences at the Bricolage Production Company's *The Forest of Everywhere*, which ran May 17-June 3, must take a pre-show oath. Audiences enter a 12-foot-wide redwood tree named Shushy and are led through "The Oath of the Oaks" by Ranger Roger and an alpaca named Simon. The oath reminds the young audience members to be kind, to be gentle, and to help everyone they meet inside feel like they belong.

The goal of Bricolage's Immersive Companion Program (ICP) is to show that everyone indeed *does* belong in the theatre. While the point of many immersive shows, from *Sleep No More* to *Then She Fell*, is that they're staged in adventurous, barely accessible venues, such entertainment options by definition leave out a large portion of the population. And that's where Bricolage's program comes in, equipping any theatregoers who ask for one with a one-on-one companion to guide them through the company's immersive shows. The team of volunteer Immersive Companions—trained audio describers, ASL interpreters, and emotional aides—can be arranged ahead of time for anyone needing any sort of accommodation. For the company's first ICP show this fall, *DODO* at the Carnegie Museum, an audience member who had a debilitating fear of snakes was led on an individualized track of the show.

*The Forest of Everywhere* was specifically grown for children on the autism spectrum and those with mobility challenges to freely experience the magic of theatre in a sen-

## CHALLENGE

To create an immersive theatrical experience that is sensory-friendly and ADA-accessible

## PLAN

To build a program with trained companions to lead audience members one-on-one through the show

## WHAT WORKED

Creating a personalized, inclusive theatrical experience

## WHAT NEEDS WORK

Creating accommodations for a variety of needs, building audiences

sory-friendly and ADA-accessible space. It was created in response to the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust and the Children's Museum's request for Bricolage to adapt their children's programming to be inclusive for children on the spectrum. First produced in 2016 as *Welcome to Here*, the show has been improved to become more accessible.

While both immersive shows and sensory-friendly performances had been done before at the theatre, an immersive sensory-friendly show was a new hybrid.

"Once we started doing some research and gathering the creative team and began devising in rehearsals, it really became clear to us that a lot of the work that we had been doing in the immersive realm was perfect for this commu-



nity," says Tami Dixon, the show's writer and director. "Our immersive work is intimate, personalized, and sensory-based. I think this type of work is incredibly flexible, and the borders are really porous and allow us to engage with human beings one-on-one."

The ICP program was created from the same place of individualized attention.

"The solution had to be just like the type of theatre that we create: personalized, intimate, and one-on-one," says managing director Jackie Baker, who heads ICP. "We need to allow them to self-identify what all of their potential barriers may be to this work so that we could meet them where they are."

And while creating immersive shows is the company's stock in trade, crafting an interactive world to be fully inclusive posed new challenges. "The very thing that makes our other immersive work successful was making this one a disaster," Dixon concedes, "and that was the structure."

The original conception was to have audiences spend set amounts in each location, but at the 11th hour, Dixon cut back on the narrative and made the experience

less linear, so that guests could explore the world at their own pace.

In shuffling the story this way, though, the team had to let go of any worry about spoilers. "We had to give up the ghost on trying to keep everything precious and secretive," says Dixon. "This audience needs to know what they're getting into, so we just tell them everything from beginning to end."

And while *The Forest of Everywhere* offered Immersive Companions, the show was created with a concept of universal design, considering physical and spatial accommodations from the start.

Inside the forest, children could choose their own adventure: They could lay down in the log crawl, create music with Esther the ostrich, dance with Don Key the burro, or slide down a sliding board. Whatever they chose to do, there was one task at hand for all who entered: A worldwide storm has left animals from across the globe scattered, audience were told, and the audience members had to help the animals to acclimate to their strange new home in the forest.

The show wasn't just for children with

disabilities, of course, but all who attended got the benefit of the loose-fitting structure, minus traditional theatregoing rules.

"Removing some of the restrictions and expectations just allows kids to be kids, regardless of whether they are autistic or allistic [neurotypical]," says Baker. Adds Dixon, "When we can give the opportunity for the parents to see their child interact with neurotypical kids in a setting that is inclusive, we give them a gift that they don't often get."

To maintain the ethos of inclusion throughout, the show's characters and other roaming "Forest Friends" in green vests reminded the guests to uphold the rules of "The Oath of the Oaks." This was an especially helpful reminder if a child got overstimulated while in the space.

"The oath is also for the parents," says Dixon. "Many times parents of children on the spectrum don't feel a sense of relaxation—they feel on guard all the time to protect their child from the mainstream world that is not very accepting or loving. It is a reminder to them that this is a dif-

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ferent space—here we practice letting go and allowing.”

The creative team relied on autistic artists and children on the spectrum, along with their families, to be beta testers throughout the development process. Pittsburgh organizations such as the Arts for Autism and Evolve Coaching also provided support.

From the workshop production in 2016 to the latest iteration, a few improvements were made. For one, all the animals were accessible in this iteration, whereas before some had been placed on risers in the theatre.

And a new character was added: a crocodile with large teeth and a menacing exterior. “We’re talking about inclusion, so we wanted to add an animal that came with all these labels and to see if we could change that and alter how people experience that animal,” says Dixon. The crocodile turned out to be a wise and docile storyteller.

The take-a-break space for those who need to exit was also revamped. After meeting an architect at the Big Umbrella Festival—a month of sensory-friendly performances, events, and symposia—at New York City’s

Lincoln Center this spring, Dixon learned how quiet spaces outside the action can hinder autistic children’s ability to reenter. The space now has a hammock and interactive props from the forest to occupy guests.

“Now we give them an option to integrate slowly at a different pace and maybe with less stimulus, so that when they come back they can see things that were in the take-a-break space there back in that world and not be afraid of them,” says Dixon.

The company also reached out to parents to see what challenges typically prevent families from attending performances.

“One barrier we learned from talking to parents is that it is hard to justify paying for a ticket for themselves when the experience is really for their kid,” says Baker. So the company created a pricing structure so that the first chaperone of any group can attend for free. Stations for breastfeeding mothers were also available throughout the run.

The open-world show even offered the ultimate accessibility option: It was over whenever a guest decided to go. Before they left, attendees were told to look for Osheen, the

Great Prince of the Forest. Osheen, played by an actor with autism, brought guests to the Water of Lights, thanked them for their help in the forest, and gave them a parting gift.

“They’ll have this little token, this beautiful golden acorn lovingly handmade by many of our volunteers, to remind them of their experience in the forest,” says Dixon. “Whenever they want to come back, they can. What better way to send off these people, kids or adults, than to let them know that they can behave this way outside of the forest?”

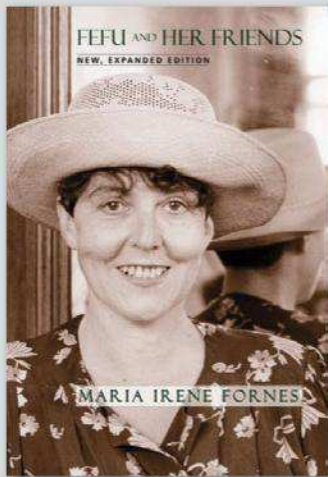
And while the company has made strides in opening the entrance to the forest even wider for audiences, there’s still a lot to learn.

“I would really love to know what other people are doing to make their shows accessible, so that I can borrow and steal and they can borrow and steal and we can all do better in general with this kind of work,” says Baker. “I’m sure that we are going to fail gloriously in ways that we don’t know yet, that they will tell us all about. And I want to know what that is so we can do better next time.”

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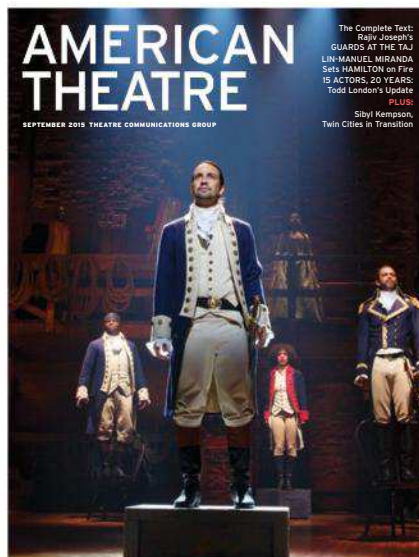
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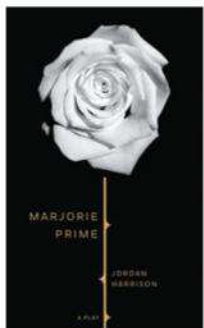
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# Cambodian Rock Band

BY LAUREN YEE

FEATURING SONGS BY DENGUE FEVER



JORDAN KUBAT

Joe Ngo (Chum), Abraham Kim (Rom/Journalist), Brooke Ishibashi (Neary/Sothea), Jane Lui (Pou/S21 Guard), and Raymond Lee (Ted/Leng) in the world premiere of *Cambodian Rock Band* at Costa Mesa, Calif.'s South Coast Repertory, directed by Chay Yew.



Lauren Yee

JOEY YEE

# Rock in a Hard Place

A conversation with the playwright

BY CAYLEE SO

*Lauren Yee's **Cambodian Rock Band** follows the efforts of Neary, a young Cambodian American working for an NGO in Cambodia, to arrange the trial of Comrade Duch, the first Khmer Rouge official to be held responsible in court for the Cambodian genocide in the late 1970s; meanwhile Neary's father, Chum, arrives to dissuade her from prying too deeply into their nation's troubled past. Using flashbacks and live rock music, Yee's play confronts a painful past with humor and grit. She spoke to Caylee So, whose new film **In the Life of Music** also considers the legacy of the genocide through the lens of Cambodian rock, about her play.*

**CAYLEE SO:** Your play has a puzzle for the audience to uncover in the journey we go on with the characters. In the writing process, which characters came to you first?

**LAUREN YEE:** Some of the first things that occurred to me were the characters of Chum and Leng, who are kind of friends at the S21 prison in 1978. Once I started workshoping it with actors, I realized how much backstory and filling in I needed to do for a typical American audience to situate us and give us a real sense of the history, because that's not something you're able to see from the perspective of two people living in Cambodia in 1978—they have no sense of what's going on in the rest of the country. After that, I started writing the father/daughter relationship, two people looking back at what happened in Cambodia at that time. That seemed to be the right combination, as we toggle back and forth from the past to the present (the present being 2008).

**Did it frighten you to take a historical character like Duch and give him such charisma and charm? Did you wonder how the Cambodians who survived the genocide would receive such a humanization of a character that most blame for the atrocities of the genocide, on a level almost close to Pol Pot? That's pretty brave.**

Thank you. Duch's terrible impact and legacy on Cambodia is something that's just incredibly staggering. I found it not only repugnant but fascinating and complicated, because I think even though Duch was the first, he was by no means the only one, or the worst, perpetrator of crimes. And there were so many things in his real biography that I was surprised by—the fact that he'd been a math teacher, that he kind of was in charge of sculpting young minds. He constantly talked about being in fear for his own life while

running S21. I think Duch is just one of those people that have so many contradictions. When you watch Rithy Panh's documentaries that feature Duch and S21, he is by turns charismatic and chatty and enthusiastic, and also by turns seemingly penitent, and also by turns horrifying in what he's describing. I wanted to give you a character that seduced an audience, in a way. Even if you don't agree with what he's saying, you're like, "Oh, this guy's really interesting. I want more of him."

**One of the things that is most endearing to me, being Cambodian American and growing up with the '60s music, was seeing the music played live in your play. It feels like such a great way to capture the energy and the spirit of what binds us as Cambodian families, especially after the war. Was that decided on a directorial level or a script level?**

It came about because I had such talented actors. When I initially conceived of this piece, I thought it would be a play about music, that we talk about the band and meet the band, but largely the music would come across through transitions, or maybe we'd play like a canned recording. Very luckily, Joe Ngo, who plays Chum, plays electric guitar and he sings. I also realized that there were just so many talented Asian American actors around me who were like, "Oh yeah, I used to be in a college band," or, "I play drums," or, "I play electric bass." It became a real possibility because of all the talent around me.

Also, live music should be a component of it, because on top of losing some of the recordings of Ros Sereysothea, Sinn Sisamouth, Pan Ron during the Khmer Rouge era, we lost the live performance element. Even if some of this music survived in a recorded form, the musicians themselves were gone. And I thought, having these actors

**ABOUT THE PLAY** *Cambodian Rock Band* was commissioned and first produced by South Coast Repertory (Marc Masterson, artistic director; Paula Tomei, managing director), with support from the Time Warner Foundation, on March 4, 2018. It was directed by Chay Yew. The scenic design was by Takeshi Kata and Se Hyun Oh, the costume design was by Sara Ryung Clement, the lighting design was by David Weiner, the sound design was by Mikhail Fiksel; the dramaturg was Andy Knight, the music director was Matthew MacNelly, and the stage manager was Bryan Sommer. The cast was: Joe Ngo (Chum), Brooke Ishibashi (Neary/Sothea), Raymond Lee (Ted/Leng), Daisuke Tsuji (Duch), Abraham Kim (Rom/Journalist), and Jane Lui (Pou/S21 Guard). This play was developed with support from The Ground Floor at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Berkeley, Calif. This play is a recipient of an Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award.

**ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT** This season, Lauren Yee premiered *Cambodian Rock Band* (music by Dengue Fever) at South Coast Rep and *The Great Leap* at Denver Center, Seattle Rep, and Atlantic Theatre. Upcoming: *Cambodian Rock Band* at Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Victory Gardens; *The Great Leap* at the Guthrie, American Conservatory Theatre, Arts Club, InterAct Theatre; *King of the Yees* at Baltimore Center Stage, SF Playhouse; and *The Song of Summer* at Trinity Rep. Other plays include *Ching Chong Chinaman* (Pan Asian, Mu Performing Arts), *The Hatmaker's Wife* (Playwrights Realm, Moxie, PlayPenn), *Hookman* (Encore, Company One), *In a Word* (SF Playhouse, Cleveland Public, Strawdog, Lesser America), and *Samsara* (Victory Gardens, Chance). Her work is published by Samuel French. Recent honors: Kesselring Prize, Francesca Primus Prize, an upcoming Hodder Fellowship at Princeton University, and the #1 and #2 plays on the 2017



perform live was really the best way to celebrate what theatre does better than anything else, and also really give you a visceral sense of what this music felt like. It's one thing to listen to the album of your favorite band, but to see them in front of you and to be sharing the space with them is such a different experience.

**Did any of the songs guide the scenes and the story, or vice versa?**

I think the Dengue Fever songs were the first songs that got introduced into the play. Because some of their lyrics are in English, there were certain songs where the overall message of the song contributed to the plot. But a majority of the music in the play is in Khmer, so I think it's about giving the audience a sense of the feel and the message through the music and the performance. I would go on these long YouTube deep dives looking at different songs, trying to find ones that connected with me. For instance, "Champa Battambang." I was trying to decide on that song and Joe, whose parents were born in Cambodia, was like, "My parents really love that song. Here's a video of them playing it on the piano." I was like, "Well, I guess that should be in the show." I've got a question for you. In discovering the music when you did, did your parents have a reaction to these songs? Did they remember the music?

**You know, it wasn't until after I chose that song for my film that I went back home and asked my aunts and my dad to sing it. It's surprising how much they remember, and if they didn't, they would help each other remember it through the melody. It's still kind of playing in their heads. I actually did a video recording of all these adults trying to come up with the lyrics without looking it up.**

Oh, that's hilarious. I think it is particularly noteworthy that Cambodian music is not just covers of American or Western music. It's really this modern, distinctive sound that is found nowhere else. It is kind of all these influences, from traditional Cambodian music, French New Wave, some of the Vietnam War-era radio. It is so ingrained in the culture in a way that I just find incredibly unique.

**Yeah, they were doing some really genius stuff in the '60s. A lot of us wonder where the music would have gone to if not for the genocide. Maybe that's why your play struck a chord with us so much. I don't know what to reference in terms of telling people how much the genocide cost the country, or the scope of it. Music is one of those things.**

When people say genocide and list numbers and give you facts and statistics, it can be hard for people to emotionally connect to

that. When you play them a song and they fall in love with it, and you're like, "That artist never got out of the Khmer Rouge years alive," that does something to people in a way that's hard to reach with cold numbers.

**People probably ask you this a lot, because you seem to capture the Cambodian family very well: Did you spend a lot of time around Cambodian families?**

First of all, I'm Chinese American, not Cambodian American. The second part is, I was already looking into the history of this period of time; it's been haunting me for years. Because it's not my background, I had to find the way into it that felt genuine and visceral. For me it was the father/daughter relationship and thinking about families where there is a wall that comes down in terms of information, and that's more out of a sense of love than anything else. That was something that is prevalent in the Cambodian American community that I could really identify with and find something of myself in there.

**What I love about this is that you took a story about genocide, which is very heavy, and there's humor. Is that something innate in you as a writer, or did the characters just write themselves in that way?**

I think it comes from two things. The first is that I'm just one of those writers who really thrives on being on the edge between kind of poignant and funny; it feels very human to give an audience that kind of combination of what real life is like. People's real existences are full of funny, strange, absurd, sad moments. I think the other part of it is that, once again, Joe and his family were a huge influence on this play. Whenever Joe talks about his mom, who's a Khmer Rouge survivor, he talks about this very joyful, fierce, strong woman who loves music and makes jokes and loves making food for the cast. You wonder how someone like that came to be. There are a variety of ways in which people respond to trauma. There are some people who close inward, and there are some people who kind of extend outward into the world. Joe's mom falls into the latter category. I think that can kind of feel like an unexpected choice, but it's one that feels very real and human to me. In the events that I've gone to in the Cambodian American community in Long Beach, I found that they're always full of food and joy and music and dance. I've actually never gone to a Cambodian restaurant where music wasn't a strong element, and there was probably very likely a house band playing. So I think to not give an audience a sense of how much music and the arts and joy matters to the Cambodian and Cambodian American communities is shortchanging them. 📺

Kilroys List (*Cambodian Rock Band* and *The Great Leap*). Finalist for the ATCA/Steinberg Award and Edward M. Kennedy Prize. Member of the Ma-Yi Writers' Lab and alumni playwright of Playwrights Realm. Current commissions: Geffen Playhouse, La Jolla Playhouse, Lincoln Center/LCT3, Mixed Blood, Portland Center Stage, and Trinity Rep. BA: Yale. MFA: UCSD. [www.laurenjee.com](http://www.laurenjee.com)

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# Cambodian Rock Band

BY LAUREN YEE

FEATURING SONGS BY  
DENGUE FEVER

## THE CHARACTERS

**CHUM:** Cambodian, male, 51, 21, and 18

**NEARY:** Cambodian American, female, 26 (also plays Sothea)

**TED:** Thai Canadian, male, 25 (also plays Cadre, Leng)

**DUCH:** Cambodian, male, ageless

**ROM:** Cambodian, gender neutral, 20s–30s (also plays Journalist)

**POU:** Cambodian, gender neutral, 20s–30s (also plays S21 Guard)

Chum, Neary/Sothea, Ted/Leng, and Duch serve mainly as actors. Rom and Pou serve mainly as musicians. (Note: Rom and Pou are written as male and female, respectively, in this draft, but the characters are gender neutral.)

In scenes from the past, Chum, Leng, Sothea, Rom, Pou, and Duch speak in perfect English, standard American accent, to reflect that they are speaking fluent Cambodian/Khmer.

## THE BAND

You can adapt this (and corresponding dialogue) according to your actors' musical talents, but here's a possible blueprint:

**CHUM:** Electric guitar, lead male vocals

**LENG:** Electric bass guitar, background vocals

**SOTHEA:** Lead female vocals, tambourine

**ROM:** Drums/percussion, background vocals

**POU:** Keyboard, background vocals

**DUCH:** Tambourine or cowbell

A sax and more percussion would be great, but not necessary.

## THE SET LIST

### SIDE A:

"Cyclo" by Yol Aularong and Has Salon

"Uku" by Dengue Fever

"Old Pot Still Cooks Good Rice" by Ros Serey Sothea

"Family Business" by Dengue Fever

"One Thousand Tears of a Tarantula" by

Dengue Fever

"Cement Slippers" by Dengue Fever

### SIDE B:

"Champa Battambang" by Sinn Sisamouth

"Sni Bong" by Dengue Fever

"The Times They Are A-Changin'" by Bob Dylan (or another recognizable pre-1975 American song)

"Tooth and Nail" by Dengue Fever

"I'm Sixteen (Chnam Oun Dawp-Pram Mouy)" by Voy Ho

"Cyclo" by Yol Aularong and Has Salon

"Today I Learnt to Drink (Doo Wop)" by Ros Serey Sothea

## ABOUT THE MUSIC

The music in this play is raucous, LOUD, bubblegum, dissonant psychedelic surfer rock. We should hear in it the Jackson 5, Jefferson Airplane, and James Taylor, but also all their Cambodian counterparts. It should sound both familiar and foreign. Most of all, the music should be shit you want to get up and dance to. Music to get drunk and high to. The biggest, most epic, and possibly last concert of your life. Check out music by Ros Serey Sothea and Sinn Sisamouth to get started.

Listen to the music of *Cambodian Rock Band* here: [www.tinyurl.com/CRBplaylist](http://www.tinyurl.com/CRBplaylist)

## ABOUT THE PLAY

The play is set in Phnom Penh, Cambodia (April 2008), outer Phnom Penh, Cambodia (April 1978), and Phnom Penh (April 1975). Cambodian New Year happens in April.

The show runs 2 hours and 15 minutes, including all the music and a 15-minute intermission.

" / " indicates overlapping dialogue.

## ONE MORE THING

This will help you out: The word "Khmer" means "Cambodian." It can refer to the language (we speak Khmer), the people (we are Khmer), and the Khmer Rouge ("Red Cambodia" or the communists). "Khmer" is pronounced "kuh-MAI."

## ALSO

Some of this really happened.

## PRESHOW

*An empty stage, set up for a rock concert.*

*Electric guitar, electric bass, full drum kit, and mikes.*

*The band—Chum, Leng, Sothea, Pou, and Rom—comes out. They play the song "Cyclo."<sup>1</sup>*

## "Cyclo"

BY YOL AULARONG AND HAS SALON

### Verse 1:

GEE CYCLO

CYCLO [*Pronounced: See-klow*]

DAO SAH (T)MAYE

CYCLO

K(U)N SRAI SRAI

CYCLO

B(Y)E OW PAUM

CYCLO

B(Y)E OW PAUM

CYCLO

(N)YUM SMUN DAH PAUM

CYCLO

M(U)N MIEN PAUM DAY

CYCLO

GEY NIT NIYUM MAW (T)MAY-EE

### Chorus:

MOY (T)NAY MOY (T)NAY

AHHHH

(K)NOM-OH RAUT DE GEE CYCLO

MUN S(R)EI S(R)EI

AHHHH

BAH DUAH DJEE KROV NING RUE(T)

AHHH

CYCLO MU(N) S(R)EI S(R)EI

AHHH

(K)NOM SUK DJEE(T) DIE

### Breakdown:

CYCLO

CYCLO

CYCLO

CYCLO

### Verse 2:

GEE CYCLO

CYCLO

DAU SAH DJAH(NG)

1. Note: the song is structured as a call-and-response. The Khmer language has a number of vowel and consonant sounds that do not exist in the English language. As a shorthand, some of these sounds have been approximated in parenthesis, but the best way to learn is to listen to the language.





Joe Ngo (Chum) and Brooke Ishibashi (Neary/Sothea) in the South Coast Repertory production.

CYCLO  
S(R)EI S(R)REI DJ(R)A NAH  
CYCLO  
(LEIP) MASAU BEY(NG) MOK  
CYCLO  
DU(K) SAU DEE DOI-EE  
CYCLO  
UNG GOI DJAUNG HAUNG  
CYCLO  
DO(NG) PLAI SAU MAU  
CYCLO  
BYE(T)OW PAUM DEE(T)HAY-EEE(NG)

*English translation:*

*RIDING A CYCLO  
TO CENTRAL MARKET  
CHECKING OUT GIRLS  
WEARING MATERNITY BLOUSES  
THOSE MATERNITY BLOUSES  
THOUGHT SHE WAS KNOCKED UP  
BUT SHE'S NOT  
IT'S JUST A POPULAR NEW STYLE*

*RIDING A CYCLO  
TO THE OLD MARKET  
THERE'S PLENTY OF GIRLS  
THEY'RE ALL POWDERED UP  
WEARING PIG TAILS  
THEY CROUCH TO SIT  
WHILE BUYING RAMBUTANS*

*THEY'RE WEARING MATERNITY BLOUSES  
AGAIN OH!*

*EVERY DAY I RIDE A CYCLO AND CHECK  
OUT GIRLS  
IF THIS MAKES ME POOR, THAT'S ALL  
RIGHT  
Then they play "Uku."*

**"Uku"**

BY DENGUE FEVER

DJUNG-OH / KAH-DU(K) / AI OWN /  
NUK S(T)-RO(P)  
NUK DAW / YAY (T)AH / MING (M)  
YEAH / OWN BONG

DJUNG-OH / KAH-DU(K) / AI OWN /  
NUK S(T)-RO(P)  
NUK DAW / YAY (T)AH / MING (M)  
YEAH / OWN BONG

*English translation:*

*THE WINDY SEASON MAKES ME THINK  
OF MY VILLAGE  
I THINK OF THE OLD PEOPLE, YOUNG  
PEOPLE, AUNTS AND UNCLES  
WE USED TO RUN AND PLAY, HIDE  
AND SEEK  
BUT NOW WE ARE FAR APART*

*FAR APART*

*They get about halfway through the song when  
Duch appears onstage, stops the song.*

**DUCH:** Thank you! Thank you!  
*One stray note plays.*

**DUCH:** THANK YOU.  
The Cyclos, everyone!  
Weren't they great?  
And that was "Uku."  
"Uku"?

*A nod.*

**DUCH:** From their first, last, *only* album,  
recorded in Phnom Penh, April 1975.

A tape that—like so much of Cambodia's  
music of the time—no longer exists.

Because in case you were not aware, music  
is the soul of Cambodia.

It's true!

*Duch clicks through slides of Cambodia's rock  
bands and musical acts. The people are young,  
vibrant, and of the period.*

**DUCH:** But that's not what you think of when  
you think of Cambodia, is it?

YOU think of something a little more like this:  
*Duch clicks on slides of Cambodia during the Khmer  
Rouge. Black-and-white. Gruesome.*

**DUCH:** Boring.

*Next slide:*

**DUCH:** Tragicque!

*Next slide:*

**DUCH:** Genocide genocide genocide. Boo.

*Duch clicks off the slides.*

**DUCH:** You think of everything that came after, once the shit hit the fan.

The Khmer Rouge, Pol Pot, and two million dead.

A story I've told a thousand times over, quite a lonely endeavor.

It's enough to keep you up at night!

*The sound of a plane landing streaks overhead.*

**DUCH:** But tonight, I find, I've got company. Because for the first time in 30 years his plane has hit the tarmac, his bags are in the cab.

And it appears, oh yes, he is back.

Sooner or later, they all come back.

Like fish, can't keep away from the scene of the crime.

And while I am rather set in my ways, perhaps this is good.

Perhaps this is how I finally get some sleep.

So tonight—for one night only—my story Told just a little bit differently.

I may not appear in this story for quite some time.

I KNOW!

But even when I'm not HERE here, I'm still basically here, oh yes I am.

Watching watching always watching.

Is that confusing? Are you confused?

Welcome to Cambodia, 2008!

*Ting! Duch has a pair of finger cymbals that he plays himself or deputizes to Rom.*

**DUCH:** The jewel, the pearl, the Detroit of Southeast Asia.

The lost cause of lost causes!

The capital of music.

Welcome to my show.

## SCENE 1

*Phnom Penh. April 2008.*

*Lights up on the radio in the corner of the hotel room. Chum, 51, has just entered the room. He hears the radio playing. He turns off the radio. Music stops. Silence. Neary, 26, enters on a call with a huge stack of manila folders.*

**CHUM:** Neary!

**NEARY:** Frank, I'm going to have to call you back.

*Neary hangs up.*

**NEARY:** Daddy, what're you doing here?

**CHUM:** I said I was your dad, they just GAVE ME the key. That's terrible! I could've been a stranger. We need to talk to them about that.

**NEARY:** No, no, no, what're you doing here? In Cambodia.

**CHUM:** You invited me.

**NEARY:** When I first got here, two years ago.

**CHUM:** You always said for me and Mom to

come visit.

**NEARY:** I never thought you'd actually come.

**CHUM:** Hey, it's New Year's! New year, new Dad.

**NEARY:** It's a really busy time for us. Why didn't you guys at least tell me you were coming?

**CHUM:** I try calling from the airport, but I couldn't find some change!

**NEARY:** No, like BEFORE today.

**CHUM:** Last minute. You know your dad. Cambodian time!

**NEARY:** Weren't plane tickets like—

**CHUM:** Aah, don't worry! I just went to the airport and told them, "I'm Neary's dad, I gotta see my daughter for New Year's," so they put me on the next plane to Phnom Penh, no charge! *(Beat)* That's not true. I maxed out the credit card.

**NEARY:** Mom let you do that?

**CHUM:** So how come you live in a hotel?

**NEARY:** One of our partnering NGOs runs it. It's convenient.

**CHUM:** They give you a good deal? For free?

**NEARY:** On the room?

**CHUM:** How much they charge?

**NEARY:** They take it out of my salary.

**CHUM:** How much?

**NEARY:** Two hundred.

**CHUM:** DOLLARS?!

**NEARY:** Yeah.

**CHUM:** A MONTH?!

*We can't quite tell from his tone whether that's good or bad.*

**NEARY:** ...yes?

**CHUM:** That's TERRIBLE! My daughter comes back to Cambodia and they put her in this room, SO SMALL.

**NEARY:** I didn't "come back."

**CHUM:** Oh yes you did!

**NEARY:** I've never been to Cambodia. So technically I can't be "coming back."

**CHUM:** Hey—I come from Cambodia, so you come from Cambodia. And now you come back and they don't even give you a good deal on the hotel? They should be ashamed of themselves! What kind of Cambodians are they?

**NEARY:** I don't even think they're Cambodian!

**CHUM:** What else could they be?

**NEARY:** I don't know, Thai?

**CHUM:** See? Can't trust the Thai!

**NEARY:** Daddy!

**CHUM:** We gotta move you outta here and across the street to the Sheraton!

**NEARY:** I'm not moving into the Sheraton!

**CHUM:** My cyclo driver was telling me, they got a full buffet and everything! We check you into the Sheraton, take a dip in the fish spa!

**NEARY:** The what?

**CHUM:** The fish spa! You ain't been there yet? You pay the people money and they eat the dead skin off your feet. The fish, not the people. Imma pay my money and Imma sit there all night! Get my whole foot eaten! Get my whole money's worth. You come with me, maybe they give us the Cambodian price! A two-for-one deal. *(Referring to number of feet)* Or a four-for-two deal.

**NEARY:** If you and Mom want to stay at the Sheraton, fine, but I'll be here—

**CHUM:** Nah! We stay, we stay all together.

**NEARY:** In this room?

**CHUM:** I just sleep on the floor.

**NEARY:** Daddy, you're not sleeping on the floor.

**CHUM:** I used to sleep on the floor all the time! Back then, you used to be lucky, you had some floor like this to sleep on, you be like, "Wow, look at that floor! Imma sleep all over that!"

**NEARY:** And Mom wants to sleep on the floor, too?

*Ted enters in swimtrunks. He towels off.*

**TED:** Oh hey.

**CHUM:** Who're you?

**NEARY:** Ted, this is my father.

**TED:** OH! MR. CHUM! I didn't know we were expecting you.

**NEARY:** We weren't.

**CHUM:** New year, new Dad!

**NEARY:** Ted works with me at ICTJ.

**CHUM:** Oh! The International Center for Tricky Justice!

**NEARY:** Transitional Justice. We work for the International Center for Transitional Justice.

**CHUM:** War crimes, I know.

**TED** *(In Khmer): Lok, chom reab suor?*<sup>2</sup>

**CHUM** *(Can't hear):* What?

**TED** *(In Khmer): Lok, chom reab suor?*

**NEARY:** Just say it in English, Ted.

**CHUM:** In my GOOD EAR! *(Referring to his left ear)* This one don't work no more.

**TED:** Hello, Mr. Chum.

**CHUM:** Hello—

**TED:** Ted. Patpong.

**CHUM:** Patpong. Thai.

**NEARY:** Half Thai.

**CHUM:** So Ted PATPONG, whatchu doing all the way here from THAILAND?

**NEARY:** Ted's never been to Thailand.

**TED:** I was born and raised in Toronto.

**CHUM:** So you switch off?

**TED:** Excuse me?

**CHUM:** You work for Thailand, you work for Cambodia? Either way!

2. Hello, sir.



**NEARY:** Ted is from Canada.

**CHUM:** Well, very nice to meet you Ted the Canadian switch-hitter who SOMEHOW lives in Cambodia.

**TED:** Will we see you at the party?

**CHUM:** What party?

**NEARY:** No party.

**TED:** Over at the Sheraton.

**CHUM:** Oooh, the Sheraton!

**NEARY:** Just to toast New Year's.

**TED:** They've got live-band karaoke and everything.

**NEARY:** My dad doesn't do karaoke.

**TED:** Yeah, I pretty much suck at every song, too. But Near's a beast. You should come!

**CHUM:** Well, I see you there.

*Ted waits.*

**CHUM:** You looking for something, Ted Patpong?

**TED:** Sorry, I gotta change.

**NEARY:** Do it in your room.

**TED:** This is my room.

**NEARY:** You changed rooms.

**CHUM:** This is Neary's room.

**NEARY:** So go to YOUR room.

**TED:** Oh. Yes.

*Ted slowly collects everything that's his. Chum maybe hands him a sock.*

**TED:** Anyway, so excited you're here, Mr. Chum. That you'll get to be around for this.

**CHUM:** For what?

*Ted picks up a file from the bed.*

**TED:** Duch's case.

**CHUM:** What about the Duch?

**TED:** Monday? Near didn't tell you?

**NEARY:** Okay, Ted. Bye.

*Ted exits.*

**NEARY:** I'll see if we can get you guys another room.

**CHUM:** Aaaah, don't worry. Call in the maid. Slip 'em a dollar.

**NEARY:** You and Mom aren't sleeping on the floor.

**CHUM:** Mom's not coming.

**NEARY:** What?

**CHUM:** Mom don't know I'm here.

**NEARY:** Why not?

**CHUM:** You know your mom! You tell her one thing and she's gotta know everything else.

*Chum sees the maid outside the door.*

**CHUM:** Oooh, there's the maid. Imma go get her to change those sheets your friend got wet. *Chum slips out of the room.*

## SCENE 2

*Duch picks up a file on the bed, opens it.*

**DUCH:** Duch!

AKA Kang Keu Ieu.

AKA Bad Bad Leroy Brown.

The meticulous, controlling, and utterly utterly charming head of Tuol Sleng Prison—S21! Rawr.

During the Khmer Rouge's four-year reign of terror, Duch sent almost 20,000 men, women, and children to their deaths. S21 was so efficient that when the Vietnamese liberated the prison in 1979, only seven survivors were found. Even his fiercest critics would later admit, Duch was very very good at his job.

Once presumed dead, Pol Pot's chief torturer would rise back into public consciousness in 1999 when he was discovered and later arrested near the Thai border, after decades of hiding in plain sight.

The only reason Duch was later charged with anything?—was the vast paper trail of confessions he had accumulated during his time at S21.

When asked about the documents that ultimately led to his arrest, Duch replied: "I was a math teacher. I always expected my students to show their work."

*Neary enters. Duch drops the folder back into the pile on the bed.*

**DUCH:** "What other choice did I have?"

*Duch bangs on the radio. It springs to life. Music again.*

## SCENE 3

*Neary goes through the hotel room, stuffing Ted's belongings into a pillowcase. Ted reenters. He turns off the radio.*

**TED:** Is the coast clear?

**NEARY:** He's across the street, checking out the fish spa.

**TED:** So how much time've we got?

**NEARY:** You also need to get your things from the bathroom.

*Neary shoves the pillowcase at Ted.*

**TED:** For what?

**NEARY:** Ted—he's gonna be back any minute.

**TED:** I've never seen you like this before. You're really worried.

**NEARY:** Yes!

**TED:** I've seen you confront former Khmer Rouge.

I've seen you speak up in those tribunal meetings.

And this is what freaks you out?

**NEARY:** He's my father, so please do this one thing. I don't need to give him another reason to be disappointed in me.

**TED:** Who could ever be disappointed in you?

**NEARY:** I am 26.

I am NGO.

I am student loans.

I am the sound of a good LSAT score going to waste.

I am the only child of an only child.

I am disappointment made flesh.

**TED:** And how much of that has he actually said?

**NEARY:** I can see it in his face.

**TED:** You're working to convict the first Khmer Rouge official to be tried for crimes against humanity. You are a rock star, Near.

**NEARY:** Not according to him.

**TED:** Have you even told him about the photograph?

**NEARY:** Of course not, no.

**TED:** That you went to S21 and you found evidence of a possible eighth survivor—

**NEARY:** I found a photograph.

**TED:** In a haystack of 20,000 dead.

**NEARY:** We haven't even ID'd this person yet.

**TED:** The biggest break in Duch's case in how many years?

**NEARY:** I did okay, rah rah. Pat on the back.

**TED:** Does he even know about the press conference on Monday?

**NEARY:** Obviously not.

**TED:** So how can you expect him to be proud of you when you keep all of your accomplishments a secret?

**NEARY:** It's not a secret. My mom knows. I told her about the photograph. My dad could find out if he wanted to.

**TED:** If you wanted him to.

**NEARY:** When I first got here, I emailed both my parents updates about the trial, all the time. And nothing. He never responded. Oh no, except to say, "Duch's trial? The case you've been working on for months, YEARS now? All a sham, Near. All for show." He never wanted me working on this case to begin with.

**TED:** Genocide makes you crazy.

**NEARY:** Cambodia makes him crazy. When I was 10, another Cambodian family moved in across the street from us. The next day he went out, bought a gun so he could "guard against street thugs."

**TED:** I thought you grew up in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

**NEARY:** Somerville. He doesn't trust the Thai, he doesn't trust Cambodians. As far as he's concerned, he thinks the Khmer Rouge are still in power.

**TED:** I mean, he's not wrong. There are former Khmer Rouge are all over the country.

**NEARY:** But he literally thinks the Khmer Rouge are gonna pop out from behind a bush and snatch his junk mail.

**TED:** He lived through Pol Pot.

**NEARY:** My dad spent most of that time at a labor camp in Battambang, quietly planting rice, far far from Pol Pot.

**TED:** I'm just saying I understand his mindset.

**NEARY:** He wants nothing to do with Cambodia.

**TED:** He's here now, though.

**NEARY:** Just so he can yell at me, I'm sure.

**TED:** Invite him to the press conference.

**NEARY:** No.

**TED:** Show him who you are.

**NEARY:** He'll run off taking pictures before I can even sit him down to talk.

**TED:** So you know where you should take him...

#### SCENE 4

*The band—drums and keys—plays "Old Pot Still Cooks Good Rice."*

#### "Old Pot Still Cooks Good Rice"

BY ROS SEREY SOTHEA

TE(R) (M)DOIK / ALOW / BAHBONG / BAI CHE(T)

ROH KU(T) / MUN CONE / TAI KOH / RUNG A-VAI

BOT CHET / NAH DAI / RAW RY- / -EH TRAI

ROUX BONG / MIEN (T)MAYI / BAN (T)CHIYUH / PLEK OWN

MUH BONG / VUHL VENG / OWN GO(H) / TU(L) TUET

RIP CHUNG / SUM ROYT / TAH GEE / BUHN (T)MAYI

CH-NANGJAH / BAI CH-NANG / PLO(T) TROY / MOH (T)LAI

YAM YOP / YAM (T)AI / BAI DAU / DO (T)AI

#### English translation:

*WHAT AM I TO DO NOW?*

*I CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT I'VE DONE WRONG*

*I'VE TRIED TO KEEP YOU PLEASED EVERY NIGHT*

*IS THERE SOMEONE NEW, NOW YOU'RE FORGETTING ME?*

*IF YOU COME BACK I'D WELCOME YOU WE'LL START A NEW CHAPTER OF OUR LIVES*

*THE OLD POT STILL COOKS RICE YOU ONCE ENJOYED*

*EATEN DAY OR NIGHT, THE RICE IS ALWAYS WARM*

*WHAT AM I TO DO, YOU'RE OFF WITH SOMEBODY NEW*

*COME BACK I'D LET YOU IN, AND I'LL BE NICE*

*'CAUSE THIS OLD POT STILL MAKES TASTY RICE*

**DUCH:** Also! I'm Duch!

That guy!

I can't remember if I've mentioned that.

But you knew that, right?

No? Some? Half?

"Utterly utterly charming"? "Hiding in plain sight"?

What a coincidence, yes?

I know, right?

When I joined up, I never thought I'd be partaking in class-based genocide either!

But after the general's capitalist dogs arrested my students for being "communist sympathizers" and hung them from the flagpole, I joined the opposition, in hopes that the Khmer Rouge would make things better.

Instead of making it, well, a shitshow.

Because the starvation, the killings, the general incompetence?

That's not what they sold me on when I joined up, I promise you.

*As the crew moves the set:*

**DUCH:** But I guess Brother Number One knew—once you've got them in their seats, once you're calling the shots, who will possibly challenge you?

All you have to do is lower the lights.

*The lights dim.*

**DUCH:** Play some music.

*A note or two.*

**DUCH:** And you'd be shocked what you can get away with.

*The band plays the instrumental "Tokay." Duch recedes. "Tokay" eventually morphs into the fish spa's muzak.*

#### SCENE 5

*Chum and Neary are seated at a small pool of water. Their legs dangle above the water as the muzak plays. Chum films on his camera.*

**CHUM:** Okay, Near, what day is it?

**NEARY:** It is April 12 / 2008.

**CHUM:** New Year's! Cambodian New Year's! And where are we?

**NEARY:** We're in Phnom Penh / Cambodia.

**CHUM:** CAMBODIA! YEAH! CAMBODIA, WHOOO! And what are we about to do?

**NEARY:** We're about to get in the / fish spa.

**CHUM:** The world-famous international fish spa! Dr. Fish. Get a picture of me and the sign. *Neary films the sign and Chum.*

**NEARY:** Can we do it yet?

**CHUM:** You got it, boss!

*They dunk their legs in the fish spa. The fish begin to nibble.*

**CHUM:** Say, "We see you soon."

**NEARY:** "We'll see you soon."

**CHUM:** Okay! Send it later to Mom so she won't yell at me.

*They endure tiny fish nibbling on their feet.*

**NEARY:** Daddy, I think you're bleeding.

**CHUM:** Where?

*Neary points at a fish nibbling on Chum's big toe.*

**NEARY:** Over there.

**CHUM:** Ooh yeah, look at that biggie! Hungry. How you think they get them to eat us out like that?

**NEARY:** So I was just wondering how long you were planning to stick around for—

**CHUM:** Five minutes!

**NEARY:** What?

*Chum sets an alarm on his watch.*

**CHUM:** Five minutes, and then she comes back, gives us a free Coke.

**NEARY:** I don't mean the fish spa, I mean Cambodia. How long are you here for?

**CHUM:** However long I need to! To get the job done.

**NEARY:** What job?

**CHUM:** I will tell you! But first—

*Chum takes out his guidebook, reads.*

**CHUM:** "Cambodia is one of the most beautiful countries in the world."

—That is true!—

"With some of the most friendliest and accommodating people."

—See, you think we are all so sad, not so!—

**NEARY:** I know Cambodia. I've been here almost two years. You don't need to tell me all that.

**CHUM:** Who said anything about you? I'm not reading it for you. I'm reading it for me.

**NEARY:** You grew up here.

**CHUM:** So?

**NEARY:** You need a book?

**CHUM:** I grew up in OLD Cambodia, this is NEW Cambodia. My first time back, I gotta stay up-to-date. Maybe we read this, we learn something.

"But visitors should know you stay here too long, it is possible to lose yourself."

—Oh wow!—

"To not tell your dad things of the most important nature."

**NEARY:** What is this about?

**CHUM:** I'm here to bring you back.

**NEARY:** That's why you came.

**CHUM:** Pink slip. Law school is waiting!

**NEARY:** I didn't get into Cornell! I'm not going to law school.



**CHUM:** Swing and a miss. Try again.  
**NEARY:** I'm in the middle of this case.  
**CHUM:** You been in the middle since you started. Two years ago.  
**NEARY:** We've made progress. It'll be solved in two, three years. Ted says maybe even sooner.  
**CHUM:** Of course TED say that, keep you here as—what do you call it?—his butt dial? It's been NINE YEARS since they arrest Duch.  
**NEARY:** The trial will happen.  
**CHUM:** Cambodia don't want a trial!  
**NEARY:** Yes, it does—  
**CHUM:** Haven't you ever wondered why, 30 years, they never arrest anyone? Why Duch's trial is the FIRST? Because the government, the police, the PRIME MINISTER of Cambodia is all former Khmer Rouge!  
**NEARY:** We have a strong case against Duch. A massive amount of evidence.  
**CHUM:** But how come you don't start with Brother Number Two, Three, or Four instead of Brother Number 562? Someone important, not this low man on the totem pole.  
**NEARY:** Duch ran S21 prison. He helped Brother Number One—POL POT—kill two million of his own people. And we have just found evidence that will blow this case wide open.  
**CHUM:** You mean your eighth survivor.  
**NEARY:** ...Mom told you about that?  
**CHUM:** Uh-huh. And I have something to say to that!  
**NEARY:** WHICH IS WHY I wanted to invite you to the press conference we're holding.  
**CHUM:** For what?  
**NEARY:** On Monday, we're going to formally launch the search for the eighth survivor.  
**CHUM:** Oh, your mom did not tell me that.  
**NEARY:** We just decided.  
**CHUM:** But you already got survivors to boohoo in court!  
**NEARY:** You mean Bou Meng and Vann Nath?  
**CHUM:** Yeah! You got the Bobbsey Twins, why you need more?  
**NEARY:** You mean Bou Meng who goes to S21 every day to sell his book, and Vann Nath who released a documentary about his time there. The most vocal survivors are also the ones who have the most to gain by Duch's conviction. Duch walks and what happens to them? Who buys their book, who hires them for speaking engagements?  
**CHUM:** Duch walks, what's gonna happen to you? Who you think he's gonna be gunning for, Long Beach-style?  
**NEARY:** Duch is a 66-year-old former math teacher. Even if he got off, which he will not, he's not going to gun down the team that helped prosecute him.

**CHUM:** Why not?  
**NEARY:** WHY would he do that? What's the point?  
**CHUM:** Pol Pot hands him 20,000 prisoners, and how many's left when Duch gets through with 'em, huh?  
**NEARY:** Seven.  
**CHUM:** Seven. That's what kind of man the Duch is.  
**NEARY:** He deserves to be punished. He's had this coming for years.  
**CHUM:** You think karma's gonna work like that here?  
**NEARY:** I'm not leaving until we find this eighth survivor.  
**CHUM:** You ain't gonna find him! If he ain't come forward by now—you know he is a-dead!  
**NEARY:** From what?  
**CHUM:** From a friendly fire. From the Vietnamese guns. From the refugee camps. From the horrible shits. From the THAI. Cambodia: We are the land of 10,000 lakes you can die in!  
**NEARY:** He's alive. I know it.  
**CHUM:** How can you be so sure? What makes your gun a-smoke?  
**NEARY:** On the back of the photo, Duch wrote: "Keep for use."  
**CHUM:** So?  
**NEARY:** The same thing he wrote for all seven other survivors. "Keep for use"—  
**CHUM:** "For now!"  
**NEARY:** What?  
**CHUM:** "Keep for use. For now."  
**NEARY:** That's right.  
**CHUM:** So you not looking for a man, Near, you looking for a ghost.  
*Chum's watch goes off.*  
**CHUM:** Ohp! Five minutes. Gotta get the Cokes! Or else, she's gonna cheap out on us.  
*Chum goes off for the Cokes. Neary sits for another moment. Then something hits her. She gets out of the fish spa, and hurries off.*

## SCENE 6

*Duch holds Chum's guidebook. He reads.*

**DUCH:** "Cambodia is one of the most beautiful countries in the world. With—" Yada yada, skip skip—"BUT travelers to this once mighty kingdom should beware: Of the pickpockets. The scams. The potholes. With so many bodies to bury during Pol Pot's reign, a majority of the dead was thrown into shallow graves, alongside roads, so that even

light rain can unearth the grisly evidence of the past."

*Duch closes the guidebook.*

**DUCH:** In short, nothing in Cambodia stays buried for long.

Sooner or later, it all rises to the surface.

*Duch cracks open a Coke.*

## SCENE 7

*Chum and Ted are at the party at the Sheraton. The faint sound of live-band karaoke plays in the next room.*

**TED:** Hey, Mr. Chum! You made it!

**CHUM:** Yeah! Gotta see the Sheraton.

**TED:** You see Near? I just put in her song for karaoke.

**CHUM:** Don't worry, I'm sure she's on her way! Right now, I just want to talk to YOU, man on man.

**TED:** About what?

**CHUM** (*Referring to his deaf ear*): Other ear, Ted Patpong!

**TED:** ABOUT WHAT.

**CHUM** (*Looks out*): What a nice couple. Where you think they met? She's so young, he's so old. You don't see that a lot.

**TED:** Mr. Chum, I think (*Louder*) THAT'S A HOOKER.

**CHUM:** What?! NO.

**TED:** Yeahhh. Young Cambodian girls and rich Westerners, mostly Australians. It's become a big problem around here.

**CHUM:** Oh wow. That's terrible. (*Beat*) ON THE OTHER HAND, I bet you those men tip well. Not like Asians! Asians don't tip at all. (*Sees*) Ohp, they're leaving. That was fast. Maybe they heard you.

*The unseen girl and sex tourist walk by them. Chum waves.*

**CHUM:** Good day, mate! Stay in school!

*The girl and sex tourist exit.*

**CHUM:** How come you don't work on the sex traffic?

**TED:** You mean work with an NGO?

**CHUM:** I mean how come you waste all your time on Duch when you could be fixing all that?

**TED:** Cambodia's sex tourism industry is unfortunate, yes.

**CHUM:** It's not just unfortunate, it's right over there. Or the Thai! Maybe you go fix the Thai!

**TED:** Fix what?

**CHUM:** You know the history of the THAI in Cambodia? How they used to come and take ALL OUR THINGS.

**TED:** Hundreds of years ago, though, wasn't it?

**CHUM:** Even today, they say that Angkor Wat is theirs. Pssh! I say, "Angkor Wat is the middle of our country, brother!" How you gonna claim something that's in the MIDDLE

OF SOMEONE ELSE'S COUNTRY?

**TED:** I don't think I've ever heard anyone say that.

**CHUM:** The one time I visit Thailand, I walk all the way to the Thai border, on the run from Pol Pot, and the Thai? They say, "Go home!" And I say, "Cambodia is my home and Cambodia is GONE." But the Thai don't care! They just send me back. Maybe you work hard, you get me an apology from THEM, finally help out Cambodia.

**TED:** I'd like to think that we are helping Cambodia.

**CHUM:** You really want to help, I tell you how.

**TED:** How?

*Chum takes out his wallet.*

**CHUM:** Call off the survivor search, airlift my daughter outta here, and I make it worth your while.

**TED:** My while?

**CHUM:** Traveler's check, Mastercard, you tell me.

**TED:** Wait, are you bribing me?

**CHUM:** Not a bribe. A DONATION.

*Neary enters.*

**CHUM:** Oh hey, Near!

**NEARY:** It was you.

**CHUM:** What?

**NEARY:** It was you.

**TED:** Neary?

**NEARY:** How could I have been so stupid?

**CHUM:** Hey, you the one who ditched me with the Cokes! You left before we could find out about the feet! I looked in the book there, it's just a regular fish. But you starve 'em long enough, they eat anything, even feet!

**NEARY:** How did I not see it?

**TED:** What are you talking about, Near?

**CHUM:** I think she is saying take a hike, Ted Patpong.

**NEARY:** "Keep for use. For now."

**CHUM:** Yeah?

**NEARY:** How did you know what Duch wrote on the back of the eighth survivor's photo?

**CHUM:** You said it yourself! "Keep for use."

**NEARY:** "For now." "Keep for use. For now." That photo is the only one that contains that exact phrase.

**TED:** That's right.

**NEARY:** How did you know that?

**CHUM:** Maybe you told Mom. Maybe you sprung a leak!

**NEARY:** Nobody knows what Duch wrote.

**TED:** No one but me and Near and a handful of the team.

**CHUM:** I read about it somewhere. Or else I am psychic! Wow.

**NEARY:** It's you: You're the eighth survivor.

**TED:** Oh my god.

**CHUM:** Me?! Near, that's crazy. All the people in Cambodia and SOMEHOW it is me, your dad? You believe this, Ted?

*Neary takes out the photograph.*

**NEARY:** This is you in the photograph. Isn't it?

**CHUM:** Could be anyone! Cambodians, we all look alike. We all got the same sad face.

**TED:** This is amazing.

**NEARY:** Why didn't you tell me? Why didn't Mom—

**CHUM:** Also don't tell any of this to Mom.

**NEARY:** So were you there?

**CHUM:** Don't ask, don't tell!

**NEARY:** If I don't tell Mom, were you there?

**CHUM:** Pinky swear?

**TED:** Should we be recording this?

**NEARY:** How did you survive S21?

**CHUM:** Imma survivor. Keep on surviving.

**TED:** Uh-huh.

**CHUM:** I did not give up. I just work harder! I am Gloria Gaynor!

**NEARY:** This is not a joke, Daddy.

**CHUM:** Fine. You know how I survive? Because of you.

**NEARY:** Seriously—

**CHUM:** I get to S21 and Duch, he says, "Listen, Chum, you a nerd, and I gotta kill all the nerds."

And I say, "No, sir, you cannot."

"Why not?"

"Bong, I got a daughter coming."

"Where?"

"In the future. I gotta get out of here and have her born, so she can go to Cornell, be a lawyer."

And Duch says, "Oh wow, I did not know!"

And then?

He let me go.

**TED:** Duch let you go?

**CHUM:** "I'll see you in the next life."

**NEARY:** That can't be true. No one ever escaped S21.

**CHUM:** Duch let me go.

**NEARY:** Would you be willing to testify to that in court?

**CHUM:** You said you would not tell Mom!

**NEARY:** I don't want to tell Mom. I want—I am ASKING—you to say this at Duch's trial.

**TED:** We would be so grateful.

**CHUM:** You mean go in front of the cameras like Bou Meng, be a-crying like that, go to the S21 museum, sell my sob story to tourists at 10 bucks a pop? That's not your dad, that's not me.

**NEARY:** But sooner or later, once we release this photo—

**CHUM:** Once YOU kiss and tell!

**NEARY:**—someone will recognize you.

**CHUM:** Who is left to point the finger at me?

My friends, my family?

**NEARY:** If you don't speak up... I may have to come forward for you.

**CHUM:** My daughter's gonna rat me out?

**NEARY:** I can't rat you out if you're innocent. *Neary holds up the photograph.*

**NEARY:** You were a prisoner. You were a victim. You deserve justice.

**TED:** And Mr. Chum, we can help.

**CHUM:** Lost cause! Leave it to the Cambodians!

**NEARY:** Because I'm not Cambodian.

**CHUM:** Because you are American. And I raised you better than this. I raised you not to care.

**NEARY:** Can't I care about YOU? About what your life was like?

**CHUM:** You don't know anything about me.

**NEARY:** Isn't that a problem?

**TED:** Neary.

**CHUM:** You want to know about me? You want to know how sad my life is?

Okay!

Seven.

My daughter thinks I was an only child?

No.

Seven.

I had seven brothers and sisters growing up.

**TED:** Oh wow.

**NEARY:** Ted, can you leave us?

*Ted exits.*

**NEARY:** Why didn't you tell me this?

**CHUM:** You never asked.

**NEARY:** I came here for you. To understand what happened to you and Mom.

**CHUM:** You won't! You never will.

**NEARY:** Do you know how we found this photo? How many weeks I spent at S21, all by myself, in the archives, going through the files? I was there every day for a month.

**CHUM:** But where'd you sleep at night?

**NEARY:** ...

**CHUM:** Until you spend a night there and see the sun rise and know that they're coming to do it again? Until you watch 'em die in front of your face, you don't know shit. And you don't get a say. Because this is not your business.

**NEARY (Referring to the photograph):** You are my father.

You are my family.

So this is my fucking business.

**CHUM:** Fine, but Duch's guilty? Then so am I. *All around Neary, the background noise gets louder, the room buzzes with electricity. The music overtakes her, loud, insistent.*

*Neary downs her drink, grabs the mike. She sings "Family Business." As the song climaxes, Neary drops the mike, and disappears into the dark.*

## "Family Business"





JORDAN KUWAH

Brooke Ishibashi (Neary/Sothea) and Joe Ngo (Chum) in the South Coast Repertory production.

## BY DENGUE FEVER

INFRARED THERMAL TRACKING  
SIDEWINDER  
(IT'S JUST A FAMILY BUSINESS)  
HEAT SEEKING MISSILE FROM HEIR  
TO AIR  
(IT'S JUST A FAMILY BUSINESS)

AND BUSINESS IS GOOD  
BUSINESS IS GOOD

SHE TOSSES IN BED AND SHE'S UP  
ALL NIGHT  
HAPPY THAT PEOPLE JUST LOVE  
TO FIGHT  
SHE CARVES A TINY HEART ON THE  
NUMBER CODE  
AS THE SIDEWINDER LOCKS ON TO  
TRACKING MODE

AND BUSINESS IS GOOD  
BUSINESS IS GOOD

SHE CARVES  
(HER HEART ON EVERY MISSILE  
THAT SHE KISSES)  
SHE CARVES  
(HER HEART ON EVERY MISSILE  
THAT SHE KISSES)  
THAT SHE KISSES, THAT SHE KISSES,

## THAT SHE KISSES

INFRARED THERMAL TRACKING  
SIDEWINDER  
(IT'S JUST A FAMILY BUSINESS)  
HEAT SEEKING MISSILE FROM HEIR  
TO AIR  
(IT'S JUST A FAMILY BUSINESS)

AND BUSINESS IS GOOD  
BUSINESS IS GOOD

SHE CARVES  
(HER HEART ON EVERY MISSILE  
THAT SHE KISSES)  
SHE CARVES  
(HER HEART ON EVERY MISSILE  
THAT SHE KISSES)  
THAT SHE KISSES, THAT SHE KISSES,  
THAT SHE KISSES

## SCENE 8

*The next morning. Chum is on a corner, angrily shoveling some street food into his mouth, pacing. Ted approaches Chum.*

**TED:** She wasn't there.

**CHUM:** I told you!

**TED:** I looked in every stall in every corner of the market.

**CHUM:** You don't find her, you know how much her mom's gonna chew me out? "Max out the

Visa AND get our daughter kidnapped?!"

**TED:** I know you're worried, Mr. Chum—

**CHUM:** No shit, Dr. Watson!

**TED:** But I don't think she was kidnapped.

**CHUM:** Then how come she don't answer her phone? How come she don't pick up?

**TED:** I think she just went to blow off some steam.

**CHUM:** ALONE, in Phnom Penh? All last night, all this morning?

**TED:** I think she just wants to be alone right now.

**CHUM:** Yeah, she WANTS to be alone, but how long you think it's gonna take for someone to pick up her? How long before, "Yo, bong, we need some help. Neary Chum, come on down!"

**TED:** Well, then do you want to go to the police?

**CHUM:** Oh right, the POLICE. 'Cause how hard you think they gonna look for her when you tell 'em she is going after their old pal DUCH? And how's she gonna pay 'em off, she leave her wallet! She got no money. She don't speak Khmer.

**TED:** Neary is a grown woman.

**CHUM:** She is 26 years old.

**TED:** Well, you treat her like she's 9.

**CHUM:** Maybe America she is 26, maybe America she knows all, but here? She don't know shit. That this way landmine, that

way Pol Pot!

**TED:** Pol Pot died 10 years ago.

**CHUM:** Pol Pot never left this country.

*Chum shoves his street food at Ted.*

**CHUM:** Here. You have some lunch, Imma take it from here.

**TED:** How long would you have waited?

**CHUM:** I don't know whatchu talking about, Ted Patpong.

**TED:** How long would you have let Neary search for the eighth survivor? The rest of her life?

**CHUM:** Hey, that guy, she may never know who he is!

**TED:** And don't you think that's a mistake? Mr. Chum, why do you think she came here in the first place? Why do you think she's devoted herself to taking down Duch? You. She did it for you.

*Pause. From out of the corner of his eye, Chum sees Duch. Or someone like Duch. Duch smiles.*

**CHUM:** Gimme your phone.

**TED:** She hasn't been picking up. Every time I call, it goes straight to voicemail.

**CHUM:** Good!

*Ted hands Chum his phone.*

**CHUM:** Imma call her. We gonna play her favorite game.

**TED:** But she's not answering.

*Chum gestures for Ted to shoo.*

**CHUM:** You want to help out? Go help out that temple over there.

*Ted wanders off. Chum dials Neary's phone.*

**CHUM (To phone):** Okay, Near's phone! What day is it?

...

It is April 13, 2008!

And I am turning up the city looking for you. 'Cause you pulling a Dad move, flash in, flash out.

And we can't have that.

You don't want to talk to your dad? Okay.

But maybe you got time to play your favorite game, huh?

"Let's Make a Deal."

You want to know what my life was like.

And me? I want to know where you are.

So! Imma call your phone, Imma leave you voicemails, and Imma talk till you hear what you want to know.

And then you gotta tell your dad how to find you.

Okay?

So!

*As Chum speaks, an instrumental version of "One Thousand Tears of a Tarantula" underscores him.*

**CHUM:** Where we leave off?

Seven!

I had seven brothers and sisters growing up.

But I was the oldest.

I was my mom's favorite.

And Phnom Penh, April 1975, Cambodian New Year's:

My family we should've been gone by then.

Escape to Paris.

But no! I don't want to go.

Not yet.

I am stubborn.

Runs in the fam.

I say, "Ma,"

I say, "Please,"

I say, "One more week and then we go."

"Why?"

"I want to see New Year's. I want to go to temple."

—That was a lie, I did not care about that—

But she say, "Okay, *kon*, one more week."

Why I make them stay?

You want to know?

*The sounds of a jam session, vocal warmups, tuning guitars.*

**CHUM:** Well, you got it, boss!

*Duch signals the lights. Transition into the past.*

*Chum transforms into his 18-year-old self. Phnom Penh, 1975.*

*Leng, Sothea, Rom, and Pou also enter, and begin transforming the space into a recording studio.*

*This transition might take a while, that's okay.*

*Jumping back in time takes time. Maybe the house lights come up, stagehands help to roll instruments onstage.*

*When everyone is ready, Sothea goes to the mike, Leng on bass, Chum on guitar, Rom on drums, Pou on keyboard.*

*The lighting shifts to the past and a different location. The band plays "One Thousand Tears of a Tarantula."*

## "One Thousand Tears of a Tarantula"

BY DENGUE FEVER

*Verse:*

KÑOM JAAP GOMNAUT NEAU  
BATTAMBANG

NEAU CHNAM MUY BPOAN

BRAM BUAN ROY HA BPI

BEAL KÑOM NEAU KMENG

MEUN DTOAN DUNG KDAY

*Verse:*

KÑOM JAAP GOMNAUT NEAU  
BATTAMBANG

NEAU CHNAM MUY BPOAN

BRAM BUAN ROY HA BPI

BEAL KÑOM NEAU KMENG

MEUN DTOAN DUNG KDAY

MEDYE KÑOM ROMENG

DYENG JRIENG BAHM BAY

BONNE DEN BEYSACH COMME NACH

AU DTAU CHNGAY

*Chant (8X):*

DTAUJRIENG YOUM DTEANG DTUK  
NEH DTRAH JOHM WENG RONG

WOHNG

MOUL

*The song ends. They all look at each other. They're silent. The lights flicker a bit. They hold their breath. Chum runs to the recording booth to stop the recording.*

**LENG:** Are we good?

**CHUM:** That's a keeper!

**LENG:** My boy says it was good!

*The band exhales. Rom farts slightly.*

**ROM:** Aaaaaaah!

**LENG:** That was good!

**CHUM:** That was SO GOOD.

**LENG:** WAS IT GOOD?

**CHUM:** IT WAS GOOD.

**LENG:** HOW GOOD?

**CHUM:** GOOD GOOD.

*Rom farts.*

**ROM:** Wait, it's over? Was it okay?

**POU:** We're done, Rom.

**ROM:** Was it loud enough? Do you think I should've been louder?

**CHUM:** I was so afraid the power was gonna go out again.

**LENG:** Okay. Seriously. SERIOUSLY. Was that not the best take we've ever done?

**ROM:** I thought I was going to fart the whole time.

**POU:** You did.

**ROM:** But not loud, right?

**CHUM:** I thought all the takes were pretty good.

**ROM:** Every time we got to the end, the room was shaking, and I was like, don't fart don't fart don't fart don't fart don't fart.

**SOTHEA:** How did it sound on your end, Leng?

**LENG (Flirty):** A little slow to be honest.

**SOTHEA (Also flirty):** Really?

**LENG:** Uh-huh.

**SOTHEA:** I'll speed it up next time, babe.

**LENG:** You do that.

**POU:** Get a room.

**LENG:** Um, we have one?

**CHUM:** I thought the tempo sounded fine.

**SOTHEA:** Chum liked it.

**LENG:** Chum's being polite.

**POU:** Chum is always so polite.

**ROM:** Dude, when you two get hitched, there'd better be an open bar.

**LENG:** Who said you're invited?

**SOTHEA (To Leng):** Who said you're getting married?



**POU:** Oooooh.  
**ROM:** Dang, Sothea.  
**LENG:** What?  
**POU:** He's blushing!  
**ROM:** Ohhhh, Leng's blushing!  
**LENG:** What?  
**SOTHEA:** No one's said anything to me!  
**LENG:** We're not talking about this, I don't know why we're talking about this!  
**CHUM:** Okay, guys.  
**POU:** Killjoy.  
**SOTHEA:** See, you can't split those two up!  
**LENG:** Thass right! You know this was originally a guitar band. OUR band.  
**POU:** Back when all your arrangements sucked.  
**SOTHEA:** Back when you had Chum on female vocal.  
**POU:** Oh shoot, I forgot my camera.  
**LENG:** Good for you.  
**POU:** No, I was gonna get a picture for the album!  
**CHUM:** Oh yeah! We should.  
**LENG:** We have photos.  
**POU:** Not all of us in one shot.  
**ROM:** We do! Central Market.  
**POU:** That's us getting noodles.  
**ROM:** But Pou, that's who we are. That's us.  
**LENG:** Next time.  
*Everyone but Chum begins packing up.*  
**CHUM:** Wait, where're you going?  
**SOTHEA:** Wake up, Chum, we finished.  
**LENG:** Gotta make curfew.  
**CHUM:** You guys don't want to go out for a snack first?  
**SOTHEA:** Now?  
**CHUM:** Like we always do.  
**LENG:** Holiday, Central Market's closed.  
**POU:** And some of us've got work in the morning.  
**ROM:** And some of us've got sleep in the morning.  
**SOTHEA:** I gotta help my mom cook.  
**CHUM:** We haven't even toasted New Year's yet. Leng brought beer!  
**LENG:** Chum!  
**CHUM:** Surprise!  
**LENG (Relents):** Happy New Year's, bitches! Happy new beer!  
*Leng breaks out the beers.*  
**POU:** Whaaat?  
**ROM:** Ohhh, you sweet sweet man.  
**SOTHEA:** Um, this is Western beer.  
**LENG:** So?  
**SOTHEA:** Where'd you get it from?  
**LENG:** I paid a call on the Americans.  
**SOTHEA:** So you stole it.  
**LENG:** I was doing a job next door to this diplomat's house. Back door was open, nobody even cared.

**SOTHEA:** The Americans're gonna kick your ass when they find out you've been raiding their supplies.  
**LENG:** Sothea, the Americans are our allies. Share and share alike!  
*They toast.*  
**POU:** Happy New Year.  
**LENG:** Happy 1975!  
**ROM:** To us!  
**POU:** To the Cyclos!  
**LENG:** To the fucking BEST FUCKING band in Cambodia!  
**SOTHEA:** The best fucking UNKNOWN band in Cambodia.  
*They toast, clink, drink.*  
**ROM:** To Nixon!  
**POU:** Fuck Nixon.  
**ROM:** Pou—he's our patron saint of beer!  
**CHUM:** Actually, the current American president is a man named Gerald Ford?  
**ROM:** You sound too sober right now.  
**LENG:** Why aren't you drinking?  
**POU:** Chum's classy.  
**ROM (Sexy):** Chum's so fucking classy.  
**LENG:** DRINK! Dude, you gotta drink. It's unlucky if you don't.  
**CHUM:** Says who?  
**LENG:** New Year's Eve. Bad luck now, bad luck the rest of the year. You wanted it, you drink it.  
**ROM:** DO IT.  
**CHUM:** I don't even have a drink.  
*Leng hands him his beer.*  
**LENG:** DO IT.  
**ROM/LENG/POU/SOTHEA:** DO IT DO IT DO IT DO IT DO IT—  
**CHUM:** To my bandmates, my best friends—  
**LENG:** Hear hear!  
**CHUM:** To the midnight concerts, the rooftop parties  
**POU:** Ow ow!  
**CHUM:** To everything we did together—  
**LENG:** —And everything we have yet to do!  
**ROM:** To all the beers we have yet to drink!  
**CHUM:** I have been waiting for this moment my whole life.  
 And we are finally here.  
 We did it.  
 II  
 I am so happy I stayed for this.  
*Chum puts down his beer.*  
**LENG:** Dude, what's going on?  
**CHUM:** We've leaving. My whole family and I, we're leaving Cambodia.  
**SOTHEA:** WHAT?  
**LENG:** No, you're not.  
**CHUM:** Tomorrow, we're getting on a plane to Paris.  
**POU:** You're going to France?!

**CHUM:** I wasn't supposed to say anything.  
**POU:** Oh god, I'm so jealous, I hate you.  
**SOTHEA:** Babe, he's serious. Is he serious?  
**CHUM:** Come on, you guys had to know my family would be leaving. Everyone's been getting out. It's time.  
**LENG:** The war's not even over yet.  
**CHUM:** It's basically over. We know who's gonna win.  
**ROM:** BEER WILL WIN.  
**CHUM:** It's over for my family here. Our time in Cambodia is up.  
**LENG:** Your dad can't find a new job?  
**CHUM:** YOUR family didn't support the general. YOUR father wasn't a member of his cabinet.  
**LENG:** Fine, the general's out, you're not on top anymore, welcome to the club.  
**POU:** Welcome to the nosebleeds.  
**CHUM:** I'm going to Paris, and I hope that maybe you'll think about coming, too.  
**LENG:** Are you kidding me?  
**CHUM:** There are still flights, there are still spots.  
**LENG:** Dude, we don't need your help.  
**CHUM:** You can't stay here in Phnom Penh. You know that, right?  
**LENG:** It's gonna be fine.  
**CHUM:** When the Khmer Rouge get here—  
**SOTHEA:** No, no, we are not talking about the KR—  
**CHUM:** *When they get here*, what are you going to do?  
**SOTHEA:** Not this. Not tonight.  
**CHUM:** I'm just saying—  
**SOTHEA:** I thought this was our night! I thought we were going to have one last night without talking about some fucking communists located hundreds / of kilometers away—  
**CHUM:** Hundreds? Try tens even.  
**SOTHEA:** —I am gonna be sick.  
**CHUM:** Our country is on fire.  
**LENG:** Cambodia's been on fire since you hit puberty, dude.  
**CHUM:** We can't ignore this. After this, nothing will be the same ever again.  
**POU:** Maybe that's a good thing! I for one am looking forward to finally ending this mess.  
**CHUM:** The only reason they let us have the recording studio for the night? It's because there're no more musicians left in the capital. Because everyone else's fled. Isn't that right, Leng? Isn't that what you told me?  
**SOTHEA:** Babe, is that true?  
**POU:** You know what I think? I think no matter who wins—  
**CHUM:** The Khmer Rouge will win.  
**POU:** Doesn't matter! We get fucked over by

the Khmer Rouge, it's the same as getting fucked over by the French, the prince, the general? Different side, same outcome.

**CHUM:** It's the communists versus the capitalists. It's very very different.

**ROM:** Which one are we?

**LENG:** We're whichever side wins, that's what.

**CHUM:** In another month, a week even, the Khmer Rouge will be here and anyone who's gotten in their way?

**LENG:** Rumors, dude.

**CHUM:** They're already executing people.

**LENG:** So did the general.

**CHUM:** They are executing civilians.

**LENG:** You don't know that.

**CHUM:** Musicians. Intellectuals. Anyone with a college degree.

**ROM:** Lucky for me!

**POU:** You're a musician, Rom.

**ROM:** When did drummers become musicians?

**CHUM:** They are marching right now, through the countryside, destroying anything even remotely connected to the West.

**LENG:** So?

**CHUM:** We're a Western-style rock band. You don't think we're going to be first on their list?

**ROM:** Don't worry about me. I'm like a spider, stomp on me, and I'm still here.

**POU:** You mean a cockroach.

**ROM:** Naw, I'm a spider. I'm tasty. I don't wanna be a cockroach.

**LENG:** Hey, as long as the Americans occupy Phnom Penh, as long as we've got American tanks and American guns?—

**ROM:**—And American beer.

**LENG:**—nothing changes. As long as the Americans are here, keeping the peace, the Khmer Rouge won't be able to pull half the shit they've been threatening. They will have to compromise.

**CHUM:** And if the Americans go?

**LENG:** No way the Americans pull out. They bombed the shit out of us, they created this whole Khmer Rouge problem in the first place: They're going to just leave us hanging? They owe us.

**CHUM:** Do they?

*A lull. In the silence, we hear—from a distance—the faint sound of fighting, bombs, war machines. Or maybe just New Year's fireworks.*

**ROM:** I met him once.

**LENG:** Who?

**ROM:** The Khmer Rouge. Their leader. Brother Number One.

**POU:** How'd you know it was him?

**ROM:** He said, "Rom. I am the leader of the Khmer Rouge."

**LENG:** What did he say?

**ROM:** Nothing. He just took away my name,

took away my face, washed over me like a wave, and I was him.

**POU:** Was this a dream?

**ROM:** It wasn't a dream! It was a VISION. It was heavy, man.

**POU:** Were you asleep?

**ROM:** Yeah.

**POU:** So it was a dream.

**ROM:** Weighed a ton.

**POU:** Okay, tiger.

*Pou takes away Rom's beer.*

**ROM:** Where'd it go?

**POU:** Let's go downstairs. Rom, get some food in you.

*Pou leads Rom out.*

**ROM:** And I was me, but he was him and the two of us!—

*Pou and Rom exit. Sothea wanders offstage in the opposite direction. Chum retrieves a tape recorder, takes out a cassette tape.*

**LENG:** What the fuck, dude? Why didn't you tell me you were leaving?

**CHUM:** I just did.

**LENG:** Same time you tell everyone else?

**CHUM:** I wasn't even supposed to mention it!

**LENG:** So this was it? This was our last gig together?

**CHUM:** It doesn't have to be.

**LENG:** So is that why you wanted your own copy? So you'd have a souvenir from when you were slumming it with the Cyclos?

**CHUM:** I'm going to get you guys out of here, I'm serious about that.

**LENG:** How?

**CHUM:** Once people hear this tape?

**LENG:** You take that tape and the quality's gonna be shit, man. And France has music.

**CHUM:** But nothing like this. Like us.

**LENG:** You want to be famous. Do it here, in Cambodia. As soon as the nightclubs reopen, we'll be playing the Mekong, the Lotus—

**CHUM:** Leng, are you serious? Look out that window. What do you see?

**LENG:** When it settles down—

**CHUM:** When it settles down, all this, the music? Gone.

**LENG:** Dude, this is Cambodia—there will always be music.

**CHUM:** Cambodia is over for us. Why don't you see it?

**LENG:** Because I can't! Because not all of us can afford to split.

**CHUM:** Yes, you can. Sell your bike, borrow some money, and come with me to France.

**LENG:** And what about Sothea? What about her mom and her sisters and her sisters' kids, huh? She won't go, and I can't leave her.

**CHUM:** Then you need a plan. Get out of the capital, go into hiding, something.

**LENG:** Dude, we're gonna be fine.

**CHUM:** But when the Khmer Rouge come?

**LENG:** I'll do what I have to. Get a haircut and go straight into their ranks.

**CHUM:** No, you won't.

**LENG:** Khmer Rouge's gotta be looking for new recruits, too.

**CHUM:** You can't just keep switching sides.

**LENG:** I'm on the side of Cambodia. Whoever wins, that's my side.

**CHUM:** Good karma.

**LENG:** I'll salute a fire hydrant if that's what it takes.

**CHUM:** Listen to me, Leng: When the Khmer Rouge get here, it's gonna be more than just changing the color of your scarf or the way you salute.

**LENG:** Talk about karma, you're the one leaving. You know if you go, this is goodbye.

**CHUM:** I can't stay.

**LENG:** So then I guess this is it, huh? The band really is dead.

**CHUM:** Don't say that.

*Pou and Rom come back in. Pou bangs on the bathroom door.*

**POU:** Turn on the radio.

**LENG:** What?

**POU:** Sothea!

**ROM:** I told you.

**POU:** Turn it up.

**ROM:** The mystic approaches.

*Chum fiddles with the radio. Static. A news announcer. Indecipherable.*

**LENG:** What're they saying?

**SOTHEA (Emerging from the bathroom):** What's happening?

**POU:** The Americans have left Cambodia.

**SOTHEA:** No.

**LENG:** Whoa.

**ROM:** I was me, but he was him.

**CHUM (Listens to radio):** Pou's right. Their embassy pulled out this morning.

**ROM:** I told you, dude! My dream!

**POU:** The Khmer Rouge are marching on the capital.

**ROM:** The prophet has arrived.

**LENG:** Holy shit.

**POU:** It's over.

**CHUM:** It's not over. This is just the beginning.

**ROM:** Here comes the water.

**SOTHEA:** We have to get out of here.

**CHUM:** It's too late.

**ROM:** Here comes the sun.

**CHUM:** They've taken over the airport. No one's getting out.

**SOTHEA:** So what do we do now?

*Leng picks up his bass. He plays a chord. Beat. Chum picks up his guitar. Sothea nods, goes to the mike. Rom creeps back to the drums. Pou on keys.*



The band plays "Cement Slippers."

### "Cement Slippers"

BY DENGUE FEVER

#### Male vocals:

MY GIRLFRIEND LOVES EVERYTHING  
AT THE BEACH  
EXCEPT THE WATER, THE SAND  
AND THE SUN

#### Male/female vocals:

HERE COMES THE WATER

#### Female vocals:

MY BOYFRIEND LOVES EVERYTHING  
ABOUT ME  
EXCEPT THE ENDLESS HOURS OF  
THERAPY

#### Male/female vocals:

HERE COMES THE WATER  
HERE COMES THE SUN

#### Chorus:

AND IT WEIGHS A TON...ON ME  
AND IT WEIGHS A TON...ON ME  
AND IT WEIGHS A TON...AH!

#### Female vocals:

MY BOYFRIEND LOVES EVERYTHING  
AT THE BAR  
BUT THE MUSIC, THE SMOKE AND  
THE BOOZE

#### Male/female vocals:

HERE COMES THE WATER

#### Male vocals:

MY GIRLFRIEND LOVES EVERYTHING  
ABOUT ME  
BUT WHEN I STARE AT THE GIRLS  
AS IF I'M FREE

#### Male/female vocals:

HERE COMES THE WATER  
HERE COMES THE SUN

#### Chorus:

AND IT WEIGHS A TON...ON ME  
AND IT WEIGHS A TON...ON ME  
AND IT WEIGHS A TON...ON ME  
AND IT WEIGHS A TON...ON ME  
AND IT WEIGHS A TON...ON ME  
AND IT WEIGHS A TON...ON ME  
AND IT WEIGHS A TON...AH!

*Behind them, the sound of explosions. New Year's fireworks. The sky glows a bright red. The song is overtaken by the sound of an incoming army, gunfire, jeeps rolling into the city, military sounds, bombs exploding. But the band plays on and on and on. Duch pops out with his finger cymbals. Ting!*

**DUCH:** Intermission.

*Intermission.*

### SCENE 9

*As the intermission ends, even before the lights go down and everyone's seated, Chum comes out. He sings "Champa Battambang."*

### "Champa Battambang"

BY SINN SISAMOUTH

#### Verse:

OUR..., BATTAMBANG BON DOL JIT  
ERY...KHA-NHOM SUOM LEA HERY,  
LEA TEANG AH LAL...TANG PI RUOB  
KHA-NHOM BAN KLEAT TOV CHHA-  
NGAY...KHA-VOL KHA-VAY...NEOK  
SA-DAY PUOM MEAN PEL LA-HAE...

#### Verse:

OUR...BATTAMBANG KORNG KAM  
VEA-SNA...DEL KHA-NHOM PRA  
TNA KHA-MEAN PEL TOM NAE...BER  
SIN JEA KOU KHA-NHOM PI BOOB  
PAE...SUOM ORY...MEAS SNAE NEOK  
KHERNH KREA DERM...

#### Refrain:

KON-LORNG YU CHHA-NAM! JAM  
TE...SA-NGUON...MEAN TER  
ROUB OUN DEL JEA DONG-HERM...  
JOM PUS NUON LA-ORNG JIT BORNG  
SONG-KHOEM...SONG-KHOEM,  
NHOR-NHOEM THA BAN JEA KUU...  
VEAS-SNA!

#### Verse:

OUR...BATTAMBANG KHA-NHOM  
PORNG YU HERY...TEUR THA-NGAI  
NA LERY BAN YOL PHEAK-TRA...JIT  
JA-RUUL JA-RORBOL RAOL THA-NGAI  
KHA-LERCH PHA-SA...JORNG BAN...

CHAM PA BATTAMBANG ERY...

#### Chorus:

JORNG BAN...CHAM PA BATTAMBANG  
ERY...  
JORNG BAN...CHAM PA BATTAMBANG  
ERY...  
JORNG BAN...CHAM PA BATTAMBANG  
ERY...

#### English translation:

OH BATTAMBANG, THE CENTER OF MY  
HEART, IT WAS HARD TO SAY GOODBYE  
SINCE THE DAY I'VE BEEN AWAY FROM  
YOU

I WORRY AND THINK ABOUT YOU ALL  
THE TIME

OH BATTAMBANG, MY DESTINY, I CAN'T  
STOP MISSING YOU

IF YOU WERE MY LOVE'S PREVIOUS LIFE  
PLEASE DON'T FORGET OUR TIME  
TOGETHER.

IT'S BEEN SUCH A LONG TIME, DO YOU  
STILL REMEMBER ME?

YOU ARE MY BREATH

I ALWAYS HOPE TO BE YOURS STILL

OH BATTAMBANG, I'VE MISSED YOU  
FOR SO LONG

WHEN WILL I SEE YOU AGAIN?

I FEEL SO SAD WANTING MY  
BATTAMBANG...

*As Chum sings, the band comes back onstage, tunes their instruments. As soon as they're ready, they play "Sni Bong."*

### "Sni Bong"

BY DENGUE FEVER

ON SNI BONG  
DUNG THAY TA ON SNI BONG  
ON SNI PRA BONG  
JIE YU BON NAH DOU HAI(UH)  
SNI PRATLAI JRA NAI BONG MUN  
DUNG KLUEN  
HIDUVEY NUNG KLUEN LUNGUON  
YANG NI  
LANG MAO BONG  
JUMROOM MAO ROM NUNG CAY  
MUHDAIK PROM MIEMEI  
(NGYEK MOOK DAI JENG YANG NI  
OH...  
OOOH...  
HOLD ME CLOSE TO YOU TONIGHT,  
ON SNI BONG

ON SNI BONG, HOLD ME CLOSE TO  
YOU TONIGHT

ON SNI BONG  
DUNG THAY TA ON SNI BONG  
ON SNI PRA BONG  
JIE YU BON NAH DOU HAI(UH)  
SNI PRATLAI JRA NAI BONG MUN  
DUNG KLUEN  
HIDUVEY NUNG KLUEN LUNGUON  
YANG NI  
LANG MAO BONG  
JUMROOM MAO ROM NUNG CAY  
MUHDAIK PROM MIEMEI  
(NG)YEK MOOK DAI JENG YANG NI  
OH...  
OOH...  
HOLD ME CLOSE TO YOU TONIGHT—

*English translation:*

OH SNI BONG, YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE  
YOU  
LOVE YOU, BOY, SINCE A LONG TIME AGO  
I'VE BEEN LOVING YOU, BUT BABY YOU  
DON'T KNOW  
MY HONEY, WHY DO YOU ACT LIKE THIS?  
COME ON, BABY, COME DANCE WITH ME  
WHY DO YOU TURN AWAY FROM ME?

*Chorus (2X):*

OH, OH, HO, OH, OH, OH, OH,  
OH, OH, OH, OH, OH, OH, OH  
HOOO, OOH, OOH, OOH, HOO, HOO  
HOLD ME CLOSE TO YOU TONIGHT,  
OH, SNI BONG  
OH, SNI BONG, HOLD ME CLOSE TO  
YOU TONIGHT

OH SNI BONG, YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE  
YOU  
LOVE YOU, BOY, SINCE A LONG TIME AGO  
I'VE BEEN LOVING YOU, BUT BABY YOU  
DON'T KNOW  
MY HONEY, WHY DO YOU ACT LIKE THIS?  
COME ON, BABY, COME DANCE WITH ME  
WHY DO YOU TURN AWAY FROM ME?

*Chorus (2X):*

OH, OH, HO, OH, OH, OH, OH,  
OH, OH, OH, OH, OH, OH, OH  
HOOO, OOH, OOH, OOH, HOO, HOO  
HOLD ME CLOSE TO YOU TONIGHT—  
*Then Duch makes his way from the back of the  
theatre to the front of the stage, shamelessly and  
awkwardly, drink and snack in hand. He kicks  
an outlet, the plug is pulled. The electricity goes*

*out. The band looks around, confused.*

**DUCH:** Sorry sorry sorry sorry sorry, bathroom  
line, Cambodian time.

OKAY! I'm back.

Told you I'd be back.

How are we doing? Feeling pretty good?  
REFRESHED?

Well, that is all about to change!

Because it is 1978 and three years have gone by.  
I know!

Felt like 15 minutes, but no!

And now we are here at S21.

THAT place.

Hey, intermission, YOU chose to come back.

*The band members look at each other.*

**DUCH (To the band):** So that will be all. Thank  
you. Thank you. Shoo, shoo.

*As Chum begins to wander off:*

**DUCH:** Comrade, did I say you could go?

**CHUM:** Yes?

**DUCH:** Did I say. You could go.

**CHUM:** I guess not...no.

**DUCH:** No.

*Duch gags and blindfolds Chum.*

**DUCH:** Better. So much better! NOW you  
can go!

*Chum is pulled offstage by an unseen force.*

**CHUM:** Wait wait wait wait!

**DUCH:** So just to recap: My name is Duch  
and we are the Khmer Rouge.

*A scream of torture from offstage. It's Chum?*

**DUCH:** Yes! KHMER ROUGE! Yes, scream,  
YES. And on behalf of our esteemed leader  
Pol Pot, welcome to Cambodia!

Because it is now 1978 and all the rules have  
changed, oh yes they have.

The Americans are fled, Vietnam is over, and  
to the outside world?

Cambodia is just a dark spot on the map.

So this? All this?

*Duch kind of kicks the drum kit over to the side  
messily.*

**DUCH:** Gone.

*The stage management team moves the instruments  
and equipment to the side.*

**DUCH:** That's right. There we go.

My cadres.

I have cadres!

Aren't they great?

The black, it looks good on everyone!

We have taken our brief pause and now we  
are in the hands of Pol Pot and the Khmer  
Rouge!

Our great utopian experiment is now underway.

Welcome to the year zero.

And what does that mean, this year zero?

Well!

*Duch pulls out the show program, consults the long  
list he wrote on the back of it, puts on his glasses.*

**DUCH:** No phones

No pagers

No photography, technology, or recording  
devices of any kind

No artists, intellectuals, or capitalists

No hospitals, no schools, no factories

No banks, money, religion, or holidays

No glasses

—except for these—

No electricity.

*The house lights dim.*

**DUCH (To the booth):** Thank you!—

Personal property? *Nyet!*

Individual feelings? *Neim.*

Your children are now our children.

Your snacks are now our snacks.

And most of all: No music.

*Silence. Abbbbbb. Duch checks the progress onstage.*

*Where are the actors? Are they in their places?*

**DUCH:** How are we doing? Almost ready?

*A Cadre marches a blindfolded Chum onstage.*

**DUCH:** Oh great, this is great.

No lights! No sound! Phones off!

*The lights go out. The sound goes out.*

**DUCH:** And welcome to S21.

**SCENE 10**

*S21, April 1978.*

*A Cadre tortures Chum, 21, in a cell. Chum  
wears a blindfold, his hands bound, unconscious.*

*He's been fucked up pretty badly, tied up to a chair.*

*The Cadre has a gun strapped to him. The Cadre  
smacks Chum.*

**CADRE:** Wake up!

**CHUM:** Mwaa?!

**CADRE:** You said you came from the camp  
in Battambang?

**CHUM:** Mwaaah?

**CADRE:** You said you came from the camp  
in Battambang?

*The Cadre smacks him again.*

**CADRE:** Answer my question, comrade.

**CHUM:** Right. Sorry. You got it, boss!

*Beat.*

**CADRE:** What?

**CHUM:** You got it...boss?

*The Cadre takes a closer look at Chum. Shit.*

**CADRE (Mouths):** Holy shit. Shit shit shit  
shit shit shit.

**CHUM:** Did I say something wrong...boss?

*The Cadre slams his fist against something,  
frustrated, makes a noise.*

**CADRE:** No. You didn't, okay? Shut up.

*Beat.*

**CHUM:** Leng?

**CADRE:** What?!

**CHUM:** Leng, is that you?





Daisuke Tsuji (Duch) and Joe Ngo (Chum) in the South Coast Repertory production.

**CADRE:** No?

**CHUM:** C'mon. Leng, I know it's you. Leng. Your name is Leng.

**CADRE:** No.

**CHUM:** Yes.

**CADRE:** No.

**CHUM (Simultaneously):** Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

**LENG (Simultaneously):** No

No

No

No

**CHUM:** Your name is Leng. You lived in the capital. And we played together in a band.

*The Cadre takes off Chum's blindfold, pulls down his krama, revealing his face. Leng shuts the door.*

**LENG:** Dude, shut up!

**CHUM:** OMIGOD! It IS you.

**LENG:** Shhhh!

**CHUM:** Say my name.

**LENG:** Dude.

**CHUM:** Say my name.

**LENG:** No.

**CHUM:** Say it. Say it. Sayitsayitsayitsayit!  
(Stops) I'll say yours.

**LENG:** Shhhh!

**CHUM:** Then say it.

**LENG (Small):** Chum.

**CHUM:** Can't hear you.

**LENG:** Chum. Your name is Chum.

**CHUM:** SEE! YOU DO REMEMBER ME! OMIGOD, I KNEW IT WAS YOU!

**LENG:** Shhhh sh sh sh sh!

*Leng unties Chum.*

**CHUM:** Omigod, bong, this is amazing. Like what're the chances?! I KNEW you'd make it. I bet you were like, "Peasant!" And they were like, "YEAH!"

**LENG:** You see anyone at your camp?

**CHUM:** In Battambang?

**LENG:** Yeah.

**CHUM:** Some people from the capital, yeah. Kids I knew from high school, their parents.

**LENG:** Anyone from the band?

**CHUM:** Well, Pou split off to head down to her dad's village. And Rom I have no clue.

**LENG:** I mean, like Sothea.

**CHUM:** Didn't she leave with you?

**LENG:** After the Khmer Rouge invaded, we went down south to her aunt's, kept our heads down, pretended to be peasants. But there were troops who needed some help. We got separated.

**CHUM:** Oh.

**LENG:** Have you seen her?

**CHUM:** Sorry, bong, but I bet she's out there. I mean, if I can survive, then she's definitely all right.

**LENG:** Right.

**CHUM (Nudges):** And Khmer Rouge! Niiiiiice.

**LENG:** I'm not Khmer Rouge.

**CHUM:** Khmer Rouge scarf. Khmer Rouge gun! Blindfold's a nice touch. I like it. Smart. So they can't see your face.

**LENG:** What about my face?

**CHUM:** They can't see your face, they can't be mad at you for what you've done.

**LENG:** What have I done?

**CHUM:** Nothing. I'm just—I'm so happy you're alive, buddy. Bong.

**LENG:** I am not your bong. We are not friends.

**CHUM:** But we are.

**LENG:** We don't even know each other.

**CHUM:** But we do.

**LENG:** If anyone comes into this room, we have never met.

**CHUM:** Ohhhh. Smart. Tricky.

**LENG:** You don't even know my name.

**CHUM:** But I do. Leng.

**LENG:** Shhhh!

**CHUM:** Leng?

**LENG:** That's not my name anymore.

**CHUM:** What is it now?

**LENG:** I changed it. To Comrade Kee.

**CHUM:** Hah.

**LENG:** Why, what's yours?

**CHUM:** Comrade Song.

**LENG:** Is that a joke?

**CHUM:** I think it's a good name!

**LENG:** You need to take this seriously, dude.

You are at S21. Do you know what this place is?

**CHUM:** A camp?

**LENG:** A prison. If you're here, it's because they think you're a spy.

**CHUM:** On the truck here, it was old women and children. Five year olds. We're not spies!

**LENG:** If you're here, there's a reason to suspect you.

**CHUM:** Our whole country is starving to death, and this is what the Khmer Rouge is worrying about?

**LENG:** They're terrified the Vietnamese will come back, take over.

**CHUM** (*Laughs*): Me?! A spy?!

**LENG:** YES.

**CHUM:** I would make a TERRIBLE SPY!

**LENG:** Then what are you?

**CHUM:** What?

**LENG:** What's your story?

**CHUM:** My story?

**LENG:** Your biography. In the morning, when they come in and accuse you of being a bourgeoisie capitalist, a CIA agent, a Vietnamese operative, what do you say? Who are you? If you weren't in a Western-style rock band, then what did you do before the war?

**CHUM:** Oh, I'm just a banana seller. I sell bananas.

**LENG:** And?

**CHUM:** What do you mean "and"? That's all I sell. (*Winks*) "Bananas."

**LENG:** Don't say it like that.

**CHUM:** How else can I say it?

**LENG:** Say it like you're a peasant.

**CHUM:** "I'm a banana seller. I sell bananas."

**LENG:** Wrong.

**CHUM:** "I AM A BANANA SELLER. I SELL BANANAS!"

**LENG** (*Sotto voce*): NOT SO LOUD. They'll hear you.

**CHUM:** Though if they do, then they'll be really convinced I'm a banana seller because I was just yelling it at you.

**LENG:** Lower.

**CHUM** (*Deep voice*): "I'm a banana seller. I sell bananas."

**LENG:** How much do you buy them for?

**CHUM:** What?

**LENG:** These bananas you allegedly sell. How much do you buy them for?

**CHUM:** I I don't know.

**LENG:** BANG, you're dead.

**CHUM:** A hundred riel. I buy them for a hundred riel a hand.

**LENG:** And how much do you sell them for?

**CHUM:** One ten?

**LENG:** One hundred and ten riel?

**CHUM:** Yesssss.

**LENG:** Those are slim profit margins, comrade.

**CHUM:** I'm a peasant. I didn't make much money.

**LENG:** Yes, but from the sound of it, sounds like you didn't make ANY money. Sounds like you were a terrible banana seller.

**CHUM:** I was very bad at capitalism!

**LENG:** And who are the others?

**CHUM:** What?

**LENG:** The other spies in your unit, name me their names.

**CHUM:** Bong, come on, there weren't any spies in my unit.

**LENG:** BANG, you're dead.

**CHUM:** I don't know any names!

**LENG:** Make it up. And make it believable.

**CHUM:** Point a finger at old ladies and yell "spy"?

**LENG:** Give them what they want. DEFEND yourself. This is your life.

**CHUM:** How am I supposed to defend myself if I don't even know why I'm here? They say I'm a spy, what're the charges?

**LENG:** I don't know.

**CHUM:** I've been here two days and no one's even told me what I'm suspected of.

**LENG:** It's all written down in your file. In Duch's office.

**CHUM:** Then go get my file from this Duch and tell me what I'm doing here.

**LENG:** Duch's the head of this facility, this is his prison, I can't walk in there, grab a file.

**CHUM:** You're an interrogator, aren't you?

**LENG:** Duch doesn't let us know the charges. He says we get lazy if we don't have to show our work.

**CHUM:** Please, bong.

**LENG:** I'll try.

**CHUM:** Thank you.

*The sound of a bell.*

**LENG:** That's curfew. The night shift will be here soon to take you back into your cell. I'll check on you as soon as I can.

**CHUM:** Thank you.

**LENG:** For what?

**CHUM:** You saved my life.

**LENG:** No, I haven't.

**CHUM:** You did. You gave me something to live for.

**LENG:** Goodnight.

**CHUM:** See you tomorrow.

**LENG:** That is the hope.

**CHUM** (*Whispers*): Thank you.

**LENG:** You're welcome.

**CHUM:** Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

**LENG:** What're you doing?

**CHUM:** I'm saying thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I'm going to say it a thousand times before I fall asleep.

**LENG:** Fine. But do it silently.

**CHUM:** You got it, boss!

**LENG:** And try to get some sleep.

*Chum leans back, closes his eyes. Smaller, but we can still hear it...*

**CHUM:** Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

**LENG:** Chum?

**CHUM:** Yes?

**LENG:** You know what goes on in this place, right?

**CHUM:** Mm hm.

**LENG:** So why are you still smiling?

**CHUM:** Because! Today someone remembered me. Today someone said my name. So today was a good day.

*Leng exits. Chum silently to himself:*

**CHUM:** Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

*Eventually, Chum falls asleep.*

## SCENE 11

**DUCH:** So right now, it is three A.M. And they are all asleep.

I know, right?!

I don't know how they do it, but

Every night

Without fail

No matter who they are

Guard, prisoner, guard-turned-prisoner, prisoner-turned-to-dust: It is three A.M. And they are all asleep.

Sometimes in the interrogation rooms before they'd even finished! One on top of the other.

Men, women, children, who'd been chained up, tossed around, thrown against, battered,

bruised, the worst smells, the foulest conditions...and yet, every night SOMEHOW

I watch them all fall asleep. Only to start over the next morning—

*The sound of Chum screaming as he's tortured.*

**DUCH:** How I envy them.

## SCENE 12

*Chum is tied up in his chair. He's been thoroughly fucked up since we last saw him. Leng enters, shuts the door. Chum whimpers.*

**LENG:** Bong, it's me, it's Leng, it's me.

*Leng unties Chum, feeds him a rice cake, which Chum devours.*



**LENG:** This is all I could get.  
**CHUM:** Where have you been?!

**LENG:** I've been busy. I had work.  
**CHUM:** Why am I here? What are the charges?  
**LENG:** I'm working on it.  
**CHUM:** You said you'd find out for me days ago.  
**LENG:** Duch keeps the files in his office, I can't get in.  
**CHUM:** Go at night when he sleeps.  
**LENG:** Duch never sleeps.  
**CHUM:** Find a way. Otherwise, they're going to kill me.  
**LENG:** They won't.  
**CHUM:** You sure about that?  
**LENG:** They're trained not to.  
**CHUM:** Seemed pretty realistic to me!  
**LENG:** Tonight. I promise. Tonight, I'll get it.  
*Leng moves to the door.*  
**CHUM:** Where're you going?  
**LENG:** Bong—  
**CHUM:** Don't leave me.  
**LENG:** I have to.  
**CHUM:** You're security, you're an interrogator. I'm the prisoner. This is your job. Stay.  
**LENG:** If I'm here in this room, you know what I have to do.  
**CHUM:** Then do it.  
**LENG:** What?  
**CHUM:** Do your job, Comrade Leng.  
**LENG:** Not my name.  
**CHUM:** Comrade KEE then? Will you do it now, Comrade KEE?  
**LENG:** I'll find someone else, someone responsible—  
**CHUM:** The other guards are 13-year-old BOYS.  
**LENG:** —who obey my orders.  
**CHUM:** Please.  
**LENG:** You think I'm going to fuck up my karma like that?  
**CHUM:** We've all done something.  
**LENG:** Not you.  
**CHUM:** Yes, I have.  
**LENG:** Bullshit.  
**CHUM:** I've killed people, too.  
**LENG:** Who?  
**CHUM:** My family.  
**LENG:** I don't believe that.  
**CHUM:** Do you know why my family stayed in Cambodia, why we didn't leave sooner? Because of me. So I could record the album. By the time we were done, the Khmer Rouge was here, the airport was closed, and we missed our escape. So you're not the only one with blood on your hands. *(Beat)* If someone has to do it, I'd rather it be you.  
*Leng picks up a pair of jumper cables from the box in the corner.*  
**CHUM:** See? You got it, boss.

*Chum smiles. Leng begins to warm up the jumper cables. Sparks.*

### SCENE 13

**DUCH:** The one good thing about all hours, all night?  
 —Other than the work you get done—  
 You learn how things sound.  
 Or don't.  
 In the silence, you hear things you never even noticed had a sound before:  
 The sound of bodies  
 The sound of sleep  
 The sound of searching  
 And the sound of deceit.  
*Leng appears with a file folder. He stands outside the interrogation room where Chum is being held.*  
**DUCH:** This is the part where I enter the story. So of course the part where things get significantly more interesting. You're welcome.  
*Duch enters the scene. He leans against the wall, polishing a gun.*  
**DUCH:** Evening, comrade.  
**LENG:** Comrade Duch, I didn't see you there.  
**DUCH:** Couldn't sleep.  
**LENG:** Sorry to hear.  
**DUCH:** Thank you.  
**LENG:** Excuse me?  
**DUCH:** You've been here how long? A year? Two?  
**LENG:** 18 months.  
**DUCH:** Longer than any of our current guards. And never a misstep, never a word out of turn. So thank you.  
**LENG:** I only seek to do my job.  
**DUCH:** Every night this week, I've seen you working late. Working working always working.  
**LENG:** Yes, lots of work to be done.  
**DUCH:** That's wonderful, that's very commendable. I wish the others were as assiduous, as painstaking as you, Comrade Kee.  
**LENG:** I was just finishing an interrogation.  
**DUCH:** In my office?  
**LENG:** What?  
**DUCH:** You came straight from my office.  
*Duch gestures for the file that Leng holds.*  
**LENG:** I just wanted to confirm a detail.  
**DUCH:** Oh you could've asked, comrade. I would have gladly obliged.  
**LENG:** I didn't want to bother you. It's late.  
**DUCH:** You're working on—  
*Duch peeks at the file.*  
**DUCH:** —Comrade Song?  
**LENG:** Yes.  
**DUCH:** The banana seller.  
**LENG:** He's a particularly stubborn case.  
**DUCH:** The rest of his group has already

been processed, turned to dust. What's so special about him?

**LENG** *(Referring to the file):* That's what I wanted to check on.

**DUCH:** Can I meet him?

**LENG:** Comrade?

**DUCH:** Humor me, just for kicks.

**LENG:** He's a peasant, not worth your valuable time.

**DUCH:** I'd just like to understand why this prisoner out of all the other prisoners has been so tricky for you. Let me meet him. It will educate me as much as it will aid you.

**LENG:** Of course.

*Leng hands the folder to Duch and opens the door to the interrogation room, where Chum waits.*

**DUCH:** Banana seller!

**CHUM:** Yes, comrade.

**DUCH:** You sell bananas!

**CHUM:** That's right.

**DUCH:** Well, "banana seller," Comrade SONG, if that is in fact your real name—

**CHUM:** It definitely is!

**DUCH:** —it is so good to meet you!

*Duch reaches out to Chum, then:*

**DUCH:** Untie him, please! He's not our prisoner, he's our GUEST!

**LENG:** Yes, comrade.

*Duch feels Chum's hands.*

**DUCH:** Long fingers.

**CHUM:** Yes.

**DUCH:** Soft hands.

**CHUM:** Are they?

**DUCH:** I don't think I've ever met a banana seller, a FRUIT VENDOR, with such long graceful fingers and such soft soft hands.

**CHUM:** They had to be.

**DUCH:** Did they?

**CHUM:** Who wants to buy a bruised banana?

*Duch laughs. Chum laughs.*

**DUCH:** You know, I never thought of that! But that is true!

**CHUM:** It is!

**DUCH:** Well, comrade, I have to admit, this is a conundrum. According to Comrade Kee, your story seems to check out—

**LENG:** It does.

**DUCH:** And YET, if Central Committee sent you here, then you must be guilty. And if you're guilty, it's my job to find out why.

**CHUM:** Or else I'm innocent.

**DUCH:** Of what?

**CHUM:** Whatever they've charged me with.

**DUCH:** Oh, everyone is guilty of something.

**CHUM:** I'm a banana seller.

**DUCH:** You sell bananas.

**CHUM:** Yes.

**DUCH:** Bananas.

**CHUM:** That's right.

**DUCH:** You sell them.  
**CHUM:** I do.  
**DUCH:** Bananas.  
**CHUM:** Bananas.  
**DUCH:** "BANANAS."  
**CHUM:** BANANAS!  
*Beat. Chum smiles nervously.*  
**DUCH:** You have a beautiful smile, comrade. I do hope you never lose that. That would be such a shame.  
**CHUM:** Thank you?  
**LENG:** Comrade, with all due respect, what does this have to do with—  
*A thought:*  
**DUCH:** Open your mouth.  
*Beat.*  
**CHUM:** What?  
**DUCH:** If you would.  
**LENG:** We did a full search, stripped him and everything. There's nothing he's hiding.  
**DUCH:** Oh, I disagree.  
**LENG:** He's been here for two weeks, what could this peasant possibly be hiding?  
**DUCH:** "Three things cannot be long hidden: The sun, the moon, and the truth."  
**LENG:** But we haven't found anything.  
**DUCH:** I am going to teach you something, comrade. For your benefit as much as mine. Watch closely. *(To Chum)* Open your mouth, comrade.  
*Chum does. Duch hands the file to Leng so he can peer inside Chum's mouth.*  
**DUCH:** Bigger. Wider. Wider...stop. Right there. That's perfect.  
*Chum holds his mouth open.*  
**DUCH:** You see that, comrade?  
**LENG:** I don't think I do.  
**DUCH:** Fillings. He's got fillings. He's a peasant with dental work?  
**LENG:** ...Good job, comrade.  
**DUCH:** You're welcome. Tell the men to grind him to dust. But save the teeth. I'm sure we can use the metal for something.  
**LENG:** But what about his confession—  
**DUCH** *(Referring to the fillings):* We have his confession.  
**CHUM:** What was I charged with?  
**DUCH:** We have everything we need.  
*Duch begins to move Leng toward the door.*  
**LENG:** But, comrade, how will we explain what he wrote?  
**CHUM:** What?  
*Leng takes a scrap of paper from the file.*  
**LENG:** What his unit leader found in his bunk.  
**CHUM:** THAT'S why I'm here? You're going to kill me over that? What I wrote down on a piece of paper?!
**DUCH:** I'm going to get someone to do it for me, but yes.

**CHUM:** You don't even know what that is.  
**DUCH:** CIA code, obviously.  
**CHUM:** But if Brother Number One wants to know what it means? What will you tell him? How will you explain it?  
**DUCH:** It's a message. To your operatives, that's what it is.  
**CHUM:** But what if you're wrong?  
**DUCH:** What what what?  
**CHUM** *(Deliberate):* What if you're wrong.  
**DUCH:** Luckily, that is never the case.  
**CHUM:** Except this time you are. You kill me now, you will never know the answer. And then what will Brother Number One think of your excellent investigative work, Comrade Duch?  
*Duch gestures for Leng to go.*  
**DUCH:** You may go.  
*Leng doesn't.*  
**DUCH:** Comrade, you may go.  
*Leng stands there.*  
**DUCH:** You and I will have the opportunity to discuss your overzealous extracurricular activities at a later date.  
*Leng exits, shutting the door.*  
**DUCH:** Well?  
**CHUM:** They're lyrics. To a song.  
*Duch looks at the piece of paper.*  
**DUCH:** It doesn't even rhyme.  
**CHUM:** It does in English.  
**DUCH:** And where did you get it from?  
**CHUM:** I wrote it down from memory.  
**DUCH:** Because you're a spy.  
**CHUM:** Because I'm a musician. My band and I used to play this song all the time. It's a very popular song.  
**DUCH:** Then why don't I know it?  
**CHUM:** You will, once I play it.  
**DUCH:** So. Let's hear it. This "song," these "lyrics."  
**CHUM:** I need an instrument first.  
**DUCH:** You're stalling.  
**CHUM:** Find me an instrument and we'll do it later.  
**DUCH:** You mean tomorrow.  
**CHUM:** I just want you to hear how it's supposed to be played. So you know the absolute truth.  
*Duch goes to the box of torture instruments. He pulls out an electric guitar. He hands the guitar to Chum.*  
**CHUM:** This is a Stratocaster.  
**DUCH:** Yes.  
**CHUM:** Where did you get this from?  
**DUCH:** I have a way of making things appear and disappear.  
*Duch plugs the electric guitar into the wall. Chum plays a note.*  
**DUCH:** Now impress me.  
**CHUM:** I I I I

**DUCH:** Yes?  
**CHUM:** I don't know if I remember how it goes.  
**DUCH:** Up to you.  
*Chum closes his eyes, listens to something inside of him. He plays "The Times They Are A-Changin'."*

### "The Times They Are A-Changin'"

BY BOB DYLAN

COME GATHER 'ROUND PEOPLE  
 WHEREVER YOU ROAM  
 AND ADMIT THAT THE WATERS  
 AROUND YOU HAVE GROWN  
 AND ACCEPT IT THAT SOON  
 YOU'LL BE DRENCHED TO THE BONE  
 IF YOUR TIME TO YOU  
 IS WORTH SAVIN'  
 THEN YOU BETTER START SWIMMIN'  
 OR YOU'LL SINK LIKE A STONE  
 FOR THE TIMES THEY ARE  
 A-CHANGIN'.

COME WRITERS AND CRITICS  
 WHO PROPHECIZE WITH YOUR PEN  
 AND KEEP YOUR EYES WIDE  
 THE CHANCE WON'T COME AGAIN  
 AND DON'T SPEAK TOO SOON  
 FOR THE WHEEL'S STILL IN SPIN  
 AND THERE'S NO TELLIN' WHO  
 THAT IT'S NAMIN'  
 FOR THE LOSER NOW  
 WILL BE LATER TO WIN  
 FOR THE TIMES THEY ARE  
 A-CHANGIN'.

### SCENE 14

**DUCH:** Okay. Fine. It wasn't electric. But hey, you know what? Maybe it was! Maybe I did plug it in. Maybe Dylan really DID go electric in Cambodia. You don't know. This is my story, I could tell you anything I want.

Isn't that strange?  
 While you are here  
 In this space  
 I can tell you anything and you will believe it.  
 Because whoever tells the story tells the truth.

Because if a tree falls in the forest and that forest is a communist dictatorship and the dictator has ordered you to cut down all the trees to make way for the forest you're supposed to be planting, then who's to say what did or didn't happen! But what is for certain:  
 That night



For the first time in days weeks years, I am asleep.

*Duch drifts off to sleep.*

**DUCH:** And I am transported to a place where I am just an innocent bystander.

*Chum finishes his song.*

**DUCH:** And the next morning, I kill him.

*Chum looks at Duch, waits.*

**DUCH:** I try to.

I should.

I mean, the capitalist.

The Westerner.

The master of sleep.

But I forget.

Yes, that's it.

I plan to kill him, but you know what?

Every night, I forget.

About Pol Pot.

About Central Committee.

About every single thing breathing down my neck.

So every night

One more night.

**CHUM:** What do you want to hear tomorrow?

**DUCH:** And I write down on the back of his photo: "Keep for use."

**CHUM:** "Keep for use."

**DUCH:** "For now."

**CHUM:** "For now."

*Chum back on his guitar as Duch listens. Duch looks at the piece of paper.*

**DUCH:** What does it mean?

**CHUM:** They're lyrics.

**DUCH:** But the message of it.

**CHUM:** I never really thought about it.

**DUCH:** You sang it all the time.

**CHUM:** I never chose the songs we played.

**DUCH:** You were a member of the band.

**CHUM:** It wasn't my place to decide.

**DUCH:** You were just following orders.

**CHUM:** ... Yes.

**DUCH:** And tell me, would I have known you, would I have seen you play?

**CHUM:** Us?! No! We weren't that famous.

**DUCH:** Oh come now, try me! What was the name of your band? What did you call yourselves?

**CHUM:** The Cyclos.

**DUCH:** *Mon dieu*, that's a terrible name!

**CHUM:** So what about you, what did you do before this? You couldn't have been doing this kind of work all your life.

**DUCH:** I taught math.

**CHUM:** Wow, math! That's great.

**DUCH:** No one likes math.

**CHUM:** But you gotta have math!

**DUCH:** I asked for French, they gave me math. I asked to work in the supply unit, they gave me (*Referring to S21*) this.

So here I am.

**CHUM:** The big man!

**DUCH:** I wasn't always that.

**CHUM:** But you are now!

**DUCH:** Comrade Nath was my supervisor, he was the big man. But as soon as he slipped up? OUT and two weeks later, I was the one overseeing his execution. Now I slip up, I fail to carry out Central Committee's will, and what happens to me? To my children?

**CHUM:** But what about mine?

**DUCH:** YOU have children?

**CHUM:** Not yet.

**DUCH:** "Not yet."

**CHUM:** But one day I am going to get married, have a daughter.

**DUCH:** You don't want a son?

**CHUM:** Not me, comrade. I grew up with brothers mostly. Boys only cause trouble.

**DUCH:** Girls are weak. The world takes advantage of them.

**CHUM:** Not my daughter.

**DUCH:** Have you always been such a fool, banana seller?

**CHUM:** You'll see.

**DUCH:** You get ahead of yourself.

**CHUM:** One day, I promise you.

**DUCH:** "Do not dwell in the past, do not dream of the future, concentrate the mind on the present moment."

**CHUM:** That's a quote.

**DUCH:** Is it?

**CHUM:** Buddha.

**DUCH:** Brother Number One has outlawed all religion, comrade. So: Buddha, I would not know.

**CHUM:** You kill me and what of your karma? What will Buddha think of you? You don't believe in Brother Number One's cause any more than I do.

**DUCH:** And what leads you to that strange conclusion?

**CHUM:** You speak French. You teach math.

**DUCH:** Taught.

**CHUM:** Your job is knowledge.

**DUCH:** My job is truth.

**CHUM:** What truth is that?

**DUCH:** The truth that allows Pol Pot to sleep at night.

**CHUM:** You love music.

**DUCH:** Do I?

**CHUM:** How can you let Pol Pot destroy everything you hold dear?

**DUCH:** You have no idea what I hold dear. (*Beat*) This will be my last visit.

**CHUM:** Why?

**DUCH:** Tomorrow, comrade: Central Committee will be here first thing, and I have been neglecting my duties for far too long.

**CHUM:** No.

**DUCH:** And if you are still alive, Central Committee will ask me why. What other choice do I have?

**CHUM:** If you want to keep me, they'll listen to you. They'll consider your request.

**DUCH:** Will they?

**CHUM:** You never know if you don't ask.

*While Duch seems to be considering it:*

**CHUM:** Can I sing you another song?

**DUCH:** Tomorrow is imminent, comrade.

**CHUM:** I wrote it while I was here.

**DUCH:** So?

**CHUM:** Someone should hear it before— (*Stops*) One more song, that's all I ask.

**DUCH:** That's all you want.

**CHUM:** Yes.

**DUCH:** Fine. One last song.

*Duch nods. Chum plays "Tooth and Nail." Maybe Rom, Sothea, and Pou come out and help Chum with the song.*

## "Tooth and Nail"

BY DENGUE FEVER

SOMETHING OLD  
SOMETHING NEW  
SOMETHING BORROWED  
AND SOMETHING BLUE  
COULDN'T KEEP ME FROM TRYING  
AND FIGHTING  
DOING EVERYTHING I CAN  
TO SOMEHOW END UP WITH YOU  
AGAIN

YOU CAN CALL ME A FOOL  
AND I KNOW THAT I AM  
WON'T LET YOU SLIP THROUGH  
MY FINGERS  
JUST LIKE SAND

BEY PLA(T) JAH  
BEY PLA(T) MAI  
BEY PLA GUH JEY (K)NIH  
HAY ME-EN BEY PLAH BUAH KIYO  
MUN AIK AY RU (K)NYOM SAH  
BONG EVAY EVAY  
GRUPYANGNAH(K)NYOMTVUHBAN  
DOI BEY (K)LAH GIT TAH  
JOU (K)NEAH M'DONG DEE

NI-UNG AI TAH (K)NYOM LUNG-(W)  
ONG  
HAI (K)NYOM DONG  
DOI (K)LUEN AING  
(K)NYOM OI NIYAH MAH (T)LIYA  
DOI LUH-BOH (K)NYOM  
MYEH BUHN DJEAH SAI(K)  
**DUCH:** And who would I put in your place?

**CHUM:** What?

**DUCH:** I keep you, who would I put in your place?

**CHUM:** There must be someone who's failed you, who's broken your trust.

**DUCH:** Yes.

**CHUM:** Who's of no use to you now.

**DUCH:** But who would that be, comrade? I think I know who we're both talking about, yes?

**CHUM:** ...Yes.

**DUCH:** Then name his name.

*Beat.*

**CHUM:** I can't.

**DUCH:** Not so easy, is it?

*Duch leans over, unplugs the guitar, wraps up the cord, and puts it back into the box of torture instruments. It disappears from view.*

**DUCH:** You had your chance.

**CHUM:** You kill me—

**DUCH:** —I let you die—

**CHUM:** And I will make sure they know who you are, what you did.

**DUCH:** I have never laid a hand on anyone. In all my time here, I've touched not a single prisoner.

**CHUM:** Instead you've taught boys, CHILDREN how to do it for you.

**DUCH:** I was given a job I could not reject. I had to.

**CHUM:** But how did you get this job? What sins did you commit to prove your loyalty?

**DUCH:** I was a math teacher. They figured I'd be good at reducing sums, I guess.

**CHUM:** You think you can hide your crimes, you think the ghosts won't find you, but you made a mistake. You kill me, and I will make sure that when you have to reckon to Buddha for your soul, they will know all of your sins. I will make sure they find you. *(Beat)* I will make sure you never sleep again.

*In one single move, Duch picks up the pencil, jams it in Chum's left ear. Something busts. Blood. Chum howls. He drops to the ground. And then— Duch takes out his handkerchief, cleans his pencil, places the pencil back into his breast pocket. Chum clutches his ear.*

**DUCH:** Well!

How do you like that?

You have disrupted my temper.

That has never happened before.

That

is such a disappointment.

*Then Leng enters with a cardboard box.*

**DUCH:** Comrade Kee.

**LENG:** Contraband just dropped this off. They told me to bring it up to you right away. *Duch looks in the box. A turn.*

**DUCH:** Oh! Well. Excellent. This is all very

excellent. Thank you, comrade. Drop it off in my room, won't you? After you, take care of our friend here?

**LENG:** Yes, comrade.

**DUCH:** Goodbye, banana seller. I'll see you in the next life.

*Duch exits. Chum looks at Leng.*

**CHUM:** Bong, what's in the box?

## SCENE 15

**DUCH:** And the next morning—?

**S21 GUARD:** The prisoner's gone.

**DUCH:** What?

**S21 GUARD:** And Central Committee is here for their site visit.

**DUCH:** Ah.

**S21 GUARD:** Should I tell them to wait?

**DUCH:** For what?

**S21 GUARD:** While we search for the prisoner.

**DUCH:** What prisoner?

**S21 GUARD:** The one you'd been interrogating. The banana seller.

**DUCH:** No.

**S21 GUARD:** Comrade?

**DUCH:** And the sound of it surprises even me.

**S21 GUARD:** But the prisoner is—

**DUCH:** The prisoner is dead, comrade.

**S21 GUARD:** The prisoner just escaped.

**DUCH** *(Deliberate):* The prisoner is dead.

**S21 GUARD:** But comrade, we can still—

**DUCH:** No one has ever escaped S21. *No one. The S21 Guard leaves.*

**DUCH:** I forget about the banana seller and let his photograph fall into the pile of the dead. And in between confessions, in between he said, she said, party politics and such, I try to enjoy the music.

*Duch listens to a record. Classical music. It's not the same. And he knows it.*

**DUCH:** But still, I can't sleep.

Three months later, when the Vietnamese invaders seize Phnom Penh and take S21, they only find seven survivors.

Like I said, I am very very good at my job.

I flee for the border.

I change my name.

I reach a Thai refugee camp.

I reunite with my wife and four children.

I learn English.

I go back to teaching math.

—My students describe me as strict but committed—

I become a Christian.

Because while Buddha believes karma depends on one's deeds, Christianity is a little more lenient.

They never would've caught me.

Except in 1999, a foreign journalist comes to my door.

**JOURNALIST:** "Hello. I a newspaper."

**DUCH:** —He spoke such terrible Khmer!—

**JOURNALIST:** "You dork."

**DUCH:** And for the first time in, I don't know how long, someone remembers me.

Someone says my name.

And I realize how tired I am of running.

How much I want to sleep.

We find a translator.

**JOURNALIST:** What should I call you?

**DUCH:** Call me Duch.

**JOURNALIST:** Your birth name was Kang Kech Ieu.

**DUCH:** I changed it to Duch when I joined the party. Everyone knows me as Duch. So call me Duch.

**JOURNALIST:** How did you choose that name?

**DUCH:** I found it, in a book, growing up, about a good little schoolboy named Duch who tries so hard to do the right thing.

**JOURNALIST:** Well, Duch, you will be remembered as a sadistic murderer of your own countrymen. What do you say to that?

**DUCH:** "I do not dispute with the world. Rather, it is the world that disputes with me."

**JOURNALIST:** Buddha.

**DUCH:** That's right, yes.

*The Journalist disappears.*

**DUCH:** Authorities are forced to arrest me following the interview's publication.

I am the first Khmer Rouge leader to be tried for crimes against humanity.

30 years late, but hey, Cambodian time!

And when they turn S21 into a museum, it is a museum dedicated to me.

And I tell my story

Every day

All hours

To anyone who will listen.

Interviews, essays, painstaking detail.

What I did.

How I did it.

A victim of circumstance forced into processing the paperwork for unspeakable atrocities.

Just following orders.

I spend the next decade being nothing but honest.

Penitent.

I do what no one else in this country is willing to do.

And yet!

But still!

I can't sleep.

*I can't sleep.*

*Shift.*

**DUCH:** I deserve sleep.

*Chum, now 51, appears.*

**CHUM:** No, you do not.





JORDAN KUWAH

Brooke Ishibashi (Neary/Sothea), Joe Ngo (Chum), Jane Lui (Pou/S21 Guard), Raymond Lee (Ted/Leng), and Abraham Kim (Rom/Journalist) in the South Coast Repertory production.

**DUCH:** Banana seller, you came back.

**CHUM:** Get out of my story.

**DUCH:** I saved your life.

**CHUM:** You saved yourself.

**DUCH:** I let you escape. I stopped my men from coming after you.

**CHUM:** To cover up your own mistakes.

**DUCH:** At least I've confessed.

**CHUM:** You ain't confessed nothing. That's why you can't sleep. 30 years, and you still hiding behind "just following orders."

**DUCH:** That is correct.

**CHUM:** Where's my daughter?

**DUCH:** Oh, she's right in there. Right through that door.

*Chum moves toward the door.*

**DUCH:** But once you go through, you will have to tell her.

*Chum stops.*

**DUCH:** How did you escape S21, hmm? It's a story even I don't know in full.

*Beat.*

**DUCH:** Once she sees who you really are, you will lose her.

She will never speak to you again.

And that is the worst thing, isn't it?

*Chum hesitates.*

**DUCH:** Isn't it?

*Beat.*

**CHUM:** No, it is not.

**DUCH:** What what what?

**CHUM:** Now get outta my way. Move.

**DUCH:** Do you know who you're speaking to?

**CHUM:** Yes. And you don't matter anymore.

**DUCH:** I'm warning you!

*But Chum is already gone through the door. It gets dark over Duch.*

**DUCH:** My trial takes three years.

I am sentenced to life in prison.

*Behind him, projected, the faces of victims from S21.*

**DUCH:** I am still alive today.

## SCENE 16

*S21. April 2008.*

*Chum, 51, enters the room. The same one where he was interrogated. S21 is now a museum.*

*Neary is huddled up on the floor. It's night.*

**CHUM:** Cleanup! S21!

**NEARY:** ...

**CHUM:** You know, you probably the only Cambodian who's tried to stay the night at S21.

**NEARY:** How'd you find me?

**CHUM:** You text, "I went to see the sun rise." Where else could you be?

**NEARY:** I'm sorry you had to come here to get me.

**CHUM:** Aaaah, don't worry! I always wanted to visit!

That's not true, I NEVER wanted to visit.

But you come here looking for me, so I come

here looking for you.

**NEARY:** You found me.

**CHUM:** Look at this place! Just a ordinary room. Just a regular fish, a ordinary room!

When I read that S21 used to be a high school, I didn't believe 'em!

But now I see: They were right.

It's just a ordinary room, Near.

There's nothing here for you.

**NEARY:** Is Ted outside?

**CHUM:** What Ted? No Ted.

**NEARY:** You called me from his phone.

**CHUM:** Him and the night guard is outside. Don't worry, they're not very pissed. They're waiting for you.

**NEARY:** I can't go back out there.

**CHUM:** You stay in here, the tourists gonna come in, think you part of the museum, and work is gonna fire you!

**NEARY:** They're already gonna fire me. I broke into S21.

**CHUM:** Aaah, we just say, "Sorry, stupid American!"

**NEARY:** That's what I feel like, all the time. A stupid American.

**CHUM:** Better than a sad Cambodian.

**NEARY:** I can't go back out there. I can't do that press conference.

**CHUM:** Why not?

**NEARY:** I don't know how to work on this case

anymore. I don't know how to be neutral. I used to see pictures of Duch in the paper. I used to see him reading books, playing chess, holding court, speaking French. I used to see him stirring sugar into his tea, looking out the window. And think, "Huh, how strange." But ever since I found your photo, I see him and I feel such rage. I want to take away his window, take away his tea. I want to see him bruised, battered, chained to the floor, smashed against a tree, I want to slit his throat over the noise of a generator, I want to do everything to him that was done to you and everyone else at S21. I want to grind HIM to dust. I say I want justice, but that's bullshit. I don't want justice. I want revenge. For something I didn't even experience. Because I'm just a stupid American.

**CHUM:** If you feel that, that's on me.

**NEARY:** I didn't even know you liked music. You never came to any of my recitals.

**CHUM:** When I left Cambodia, I couldn't listen to the music no more. (*Referring to his left ear*) Couldn't hear it in this ear and (*Referring to his right ear*) didn't want to hear it in that one.

**NEARY:** Did you ever tell Mom any of this?

**CHUM:** About the band?

**NEARY:** About, what happened here.

**CHUM:** No. But she knows.

**NEARY:** How?

**CHUM:** You Cambodian? You just know.

**NEARY:** Then why don't I "just know"?

**CHUM:** Because I raised you not to. Because I was afraid.

**NEARY:** Of what?

*Beat.*

**CHUM:** You know why I stopped taking you to see the Sox?

**NEARY:** 'Cause they were never gonna win the World Series.

**CHUM:** Yes AND we get to the seventh inning stretch, and you gotta go.

So I take you to the ladies room, try to go in after you.

And Mom says, "You can't go in there, she's nine years old, you gotta let her go in by herself."

And I say, "Dee, what if she don't come out? What if I lose her?"

"That's not gonna happen."

"Dee, you don't know."

All my life, I lose people.

All my life, they go.

I think, you see me for who I was, what I still am: You not gonna want me no more.

And I think to myself, "Wow, that is the worst thing that could happen."

But I was wrong.

Real worst thing?

Not: I lose you.

But: You lose yourself.

*Beat.*

**CHUM:** One last trade. Okay? One last thing about how I leave this place, and you decide you still want me.

**NEARY:** You escaped.

**CHUM:** Yes.

**NEARY:** What else is there?

*Shift to the past. Leng enters with a cardboard box. Back to Chum's last night at S21.*

**CHUM:** Bong, what's in the box?

**LENG:** We found your replacement.

*Leng goes to the box. He takes out a record player, plugs it in, places a record on the turntable, and turns it on. It plays perfectly.*

**CHUM:** Smash it.

**LENG:** It doesn't matter. Central Committee will be here in the morning. He needs you dead.

**CHUM:** And you need to kill me before then.

**LENG:** Yes.

**CHUM:** Then what's the delay?

**LENG:** I need you to forgive me.

**CHUM:** For what?

**LENG:** For what I have to do.

**CHUM:** I'm not doing that.

**LENG:** You have to forgive me. I can't do it if you don't.

**CHUM:** Then DON'T.

**LENG:** My karma is going to be fucked.

**CHUM:** You want better karma?

Let me go.

Let me live.

Open that door, give me till morning, and you will never see me again.

**LENG:** I can't.

**CHUM:** How many of them are out there on night shift?

Four, five? Not even?

They're your men, practically boys, who do what you say.

How many of them would question it if you walked me out of here right now?

**LENG:** You go and they will put me in your place.

**CHUM:** Then let's go together. Let's get out of here.

**LENG:** They chase us and what do we do? How do we fight back?

**CHUM:** You've got a gun.

**LENG:** The guns're empty. We ran out of bullets months ago. I'm as much a prisoner here as you.

**CHUM:** Only you're not.

**LENG:** I am.

**CHUM:** The Leng I know wouldn't care.

Fuck it. Screw it. Right?

Dude, we gotta get out of here, we gotta find Sothea.

**LENG:** Sothea's dead.

**CHUM:** You don't know that.

**LENG:** Yes, I do.

**CHUM:** You got separated.

**LENG:** I watched them take her away.

**CHUM:** When?

**LENG:** One night, we're coming back from the field, and we run into KR soldiers. "Hello, comrade, we need some help. There's a woman down the road giving birth. Come with us please. No, comrade, not you. Just the woman."

**CHUM:** You didn't go after her?

**LENG:** What could I do?

**CHUM:** Did you even check to see if she was dead?

**LENG:** It wouldn't have mattered.

**CHUM:** You are such a coward.

**LENG:** I am.

**CHUM:** Big man Leng: Whoever wins, that's his side. That's how he survives.

**LENG:** I did what I had to. And I lost, same as you.

**CHUM:** What you have lost that you didn't choose to give up?

**LENG:** You think I don't know? You think I don't understand, friends shot out from right next to you, people late at night and in the morning gone, walking, running, running, always running, missing bullets, starving, leaving, close calls, farm roads, landmines, the ground blown out from under you, never safe, never quiet, never trusting the quiet, nothing but quiet and silence and the space in between. You have to give it to me, bong. I have to hear it. I can't go on without it.

*Beat.*

**CHUM:** Come here.

**LENG:** You forgive me.

**CHUM:** Come here.

**LENG:** I need this. You have to.

**CHUM:** I forgive you.

**LENG:** You do?

**CHUM:** Yes.

**LENG:** Say it again.

**CHUM:** I forgive you.

**LENG:** Louder.

**CHUM:** I forgive you.

I forgive you.

I forgive you.

I forgive you.

I forgive you.

I forgive you.

*Leng comes into his friend's arms. Chum goes from hug to chokehold. He uses Leng's krama to strangle him. Leng fights and fights. Chum pulls harder. Leng's body goes limp.*



*Chum strips off Leng's krama, hat, gum, everything that identifies him as a soldier; puts on Leng's uniform.*

*Leng gurgles, stirs.*

*Chum takes the gun, smashes it on Leng's head.*

*Again. And again. And again until Leng stops.*

*Chum leaves the room.*

## SCENE 17

*Beyond the camp, Chum runs. He runs and runs.*

*He runs for 30 years. He stops. He looks around.*

*He is still in Cambodia. He is in his old clothes again. He breathes and breathes and breathes.*

*Back to 2008. The sun has risen. Neary sits there with him. Morning light.*

**CHUM:** You still here.

**NEARY:** Of course I am.

**CHUM:** He was my bandmate.

**NEARY:** He was your captor.

**CHUM:** You say it so simple. Just like that.

**NEARY:** He was going to do the same thing to you.

**CHUM:** But in the end, it was me who did it.

*A noise outside. Neary looks out the window.*

**NEARY:** They're opening the museum gates.

We should get out of here.

**CHUM:** Yeah?

**NEARY:** We should let them in.

**CHUM:** ...Okay.

*As Neary gets up:*

**CHUM:** Wait. One more thing.

**NEARY:** What?

**CHUM:** Before I get here, I make a pit stop.

*Chum takes out a cassette tape player.*

**CHUM:** It was still the same place I buried it!

**NEARY:** What is it?

**CHUM:** You want to know your dad? This is me.

*She presses play. They listen. It's a crappy, degraded recording of something long past.*

**CHUM:** You hear it?

**NEARY:** Um...

*They listen more.*

**CHUM:** Wah, this is bad! This is a terrible recording.

**NEARY:** No, it's not.

**CHUM:** Aay, this tape is garbage. This is not how we sounded at all. We were so much better than this!

**NEARY:** Then show me.

**CHUM:** What?

**NEARY:** What you were like.

*Beat.*

**CHUM:** You got it, boss.

*Chum goes to his guitar. He picks it up for the first time in many years. Rom, Pou, and Leng appear and go to their instruments. Chum rejoins the band. He gestures to Neary. She joins them. The band plays "I'm Sixteen."*

## "I'm Sixteen (Chnam Oun Dawp-Prum Mouy)"

BY VOY HO

CHNAM OUN DOP PRAM MOUY (SOM SRO LANH, SOM SRO LANH)

CHNAM OUN DOP PRAM MOUY (SOM SRO LANH, SOM SRO LANH)

KMEAN PROUY LAEY NA, HAAS HA HAAS HA

JIVOET DOUCHPKA CHAOL KLERNN

KRO OUP SAAY

LA LA LA LA...

CHNAM OUN DOP PRAM MOUY (SOM SRO LANH, SOM SRO LANH)

CHNAM OUN DOP PRAM MOUY (SOM SRO LANH, SOM SRO LANH)

KMEAN PROUY LAEY NA, HAAS HA HAAS HA

A'VEY TEUV SNEHA TEU LVING JUU

JORTT RAE P'AEM

LA LA LA...

CHNAM OUN DOP PRAM MOUY (SOM SRO LANH, SOM SRO LANH)

CHNAM OUN DOP PRAM MOUY (SOM SRO LANH, SOM SRO LANH)

KMEAN PROUY LAEY NA, HAAS HA HAAS HA

JIVOET DOUCHPKA CHAOL KLERNN

KRO OUP SAAY

LA LA LA LA...

### English translation:

*THIS YEAR, I'M 16...THIS YEAR I'M 16*

*THERE ARE NO WORRIES*

*FA LA LA LA*

*LIFE IS LIKE FLOWERS,*

*GIVING OFF A NICE SCENT*

*FA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA*

*THIS YEAR, I'M 16...THIS YEAR I'M 16*

*THERE ARE NO WORRIES*

*FA LA LA LA*

*WHAT IS LOVE?*

*IS IT BITTER, SOUR, OR SWEET?*

*THIS YEAR, I'M 16...THIS YEAR I'M 16*

*THERE ARE NO WORRIES*

*FA LA LA LA*

*LIFE IS LIKE FLOWERS,*

*GIVING OFF A NICE SCENT*

*FA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA*

*Behind them, the sun rises higher and higher, blinding us. We see their silhouettes as they rock out to one last song:*

## END OF PLAY

### ENCORE

*Maybe your audience is really into what they've just seen. In that case, this comes after the curtain call: A medley of songs "Cyclo" and "Today I Learnt to Drink (Doo Wop)."*

### "Cyclo"

BY YOL AULARONG AND HAS SALON

#### Verse 1:

GEE CYCLO

CYCLO

DAO SAH (T)MAYE

CYCLO

K(U)N SRAI SRAI

CYCLO

B(Y)E OW PAUM

CYCLO

B(Y)E OW PAUM

CYCLO

(N)YUM SMUN DAH PAUM

CYCLO

M(U)N MIEN PAUM DAY

CYCLO

GEY NIT NIYUM MAW (T)MAY-EE

#### Chorus:

MOY (T)NAY MOY (T)NAY

AHHHH

(K)NOM-OH RAUT DE GEE CYCLO

MUN S(R)EI S(R)EI

AHHHH

BAH DUAH DJEE KROVNING RUE(T)

AHHH

CYCLO MU(N) S(R)EI S(R)EI

AHHH

(K)NOM SUK DJEE(T) DIE

#### Breakdown:

CYCLO

CYCLO

CYCLO

CYCLO

#### Verse 2:

GEE CYCLO

CYCLO

DAU SAH DJAH(NG)

CYCLO

S(R)EI S(R)EI DJ(R)A NAH

CYCLO

(LEIP) MASAU BEY(NG) MOK

CYCLO

DU(K) SAU DEE DOI-EE  
CYCLO  
UNG GOI DJAUNG HAUNG  
CYCLO  
DO(NG) PLAI SAU MAU  
CYCLO  
BYE(T) OW PAUMDEE(T) HAY-EEE(NG)

*English translation:*

RIDING A CYCLO  
TO CENTRAL MARKET  
CHECKING OUT GIRLS  
WEARING MATERNITY BLOUSES  
THOSE MATERNITY BLOUSES  
THOUGHT SHE WAS KNOCKED UP  
BUT SHE'S NOT  
IT'S JUST A POPULAR NEW STYLE

RIDING A CYCLO  
TO THE OLD MARKET  
THERE'S PLENTY OF GIRLS  
THEY'RE ALL POWDERED UP  
WEARING PIG TAILS  
THEY CROUCH TO SIT  
WHILE BUYING RAMBUTANS  
THEY'RE WEARING MATERNITY BLOUSES  
AGAIN OH!

EVERY DAY I RIDE A CYCLO AND CHECK  
OUT GIRLS  
IF THIS MAKES ME POOR, THAT'S ALL  
RIGHT

**"Today I Learnt to Drink (Doo Wop)"**

BY ROS SEREY SOTHEA

*Verse 1:*

(T)NAI NEE  
(K)NOM JEH NAM S(R)A  
(TH)DOI SAH NEEK NAH  
(TH)DOI SAH SNAI-HA  
SNAI-HA OIY (K)NYOM KEH JUH(N)

*Verse 2:*

JU(N) (K)NOM KUH-UNG  
MU(N) S(R)A-VUN SOH S(R)A  
S(R)A MUN BUN GAH  
S(R)A VENG SNAI-HA  
SNAI-HA KUH DJIA (T)NAM PU(L)

*Bridge:*

(T)NAI NEE (K)NYOM P(NY)AK  
P(NY)AK (R)YENG HAI (G)DAY SNAI  
JE(N) BONG KUH DJIA NI RI VEEK  
(T)EH

ANG VA BOM SNAI BON HAI DOH DOI  
ROYK (BOM) PLEY-IT CHANG

*Verse 3:*

MUN OIY KUNG  
BAH OI KUH M(L)UNG DAU HOIY  
SNAI ROHK PRAH (NG)EY  
BONG JE(T) BRAHN HOIY  
LOOK AY MIEN NEAK NAH SONG

*English translation:*

TODAY / I LEARNED TO DRINK WINE  
BECAUSE OF SOMEONE / BECAUSE OF  
A LOVE  
A LOVE THAT BROKE MY HEART  
MY HEART ACHES / AND IT'S NOT DRUNK  
ON THE WINE AT ALL  
THE WINE HAS NO EFFECT / I'M DRUNK  
ON A LOVE  
A LOVE THAT IS A POISON.

TODAY I AM FORGETTING  
FORGETTING THE MATTER OF LOVE  
OF YOUR HEART THAT HAS DECEIVED ME  
HAVING BEGGED FOR LOVE  
YOU WALKED AWAY AFTER YOU GOT IT  
SO FORGET IT.  
I'M NOT GOING TO LET MYSELF FEEL  
HURT  
IF I'VE MADE A MISTAKE LIKE THIS  
HAVING LOVED, I'M NOW CAREFREE  
MY HEART'S BEEN BROKEN  
BUT MY DEAR / SOMEONE WILL RETURN  
[MY LOVE].

**GLOSSARY**

**ANGKOR WAT** (Ahn-ko What): Temple in Cambodia

**BATTAMBANG** (Bah-dum-bahng): Province (and city) in northwestern Cambodia

**BONG** (Bong, pronounced like "long"): "Brother," but used as a term of familiarity/ endearment

**BOU MENG** (Boo Maing): An S21 survivor

**CHUM** (Choom): Character name

**CYCLO** (See-cloe): A three-wheeled bicycle with a bucket seat for passengers; it is a common mode of transportation throughout Southeast Asia

**DUCH** (Doik): Character/alias of Kang Kech Ieu

**KANG KECH IEU** (Keng Get Ew): Director of the Khmer Rouge's S21 prison

**KHMER** (Kuh-MAI): Cambodian (can refer to the Cambodian language, the Cambodian people, the quality of being Cambodian)

**KHMER ROUGE** (Kuh-mair Rooj, pronouncing

the words in French): "Red Khmers," a name given to the followers of the Communist Party of Kampuchea

**KRAMA** (Krah-mah): Traditional Cambodian garment often used as a scarf or bandana

**LENG** (Laing): Character name

**NEARY** (Near-ee): Character name

**PHNOM PENH** (Puh-nawm Pen): Capital city of Cambodia

**POL POT** (Pole Paht): Prime minister of Khmer Rouge-controlled Cambodia (also known as Brother Number One)

**POU** (Poe): Character name

**RIEL** (Reel or Ree-el): The currency of Cambodia

**ROM** (Room, flipped R): Character name

**ROS SEREYSOTHEA** (Rooh Se-ry-so-teeah, flipped Rs): A famous Cambodian singer

**SINN SISAMOUTH** (Suhn See-sa-muht): A famous Cambodian singer

**SOTHEA** (So-tee-ah): Character name

**VANN NATH** (Vahn Naat): An S21 survivor

**SONG CREDITS**

"Uku," "Family Business," "One Thousand Tears of a Tarantula," "Cement Slippers," "Sni Bong," "Tooth and Nail" are all written by Dengue Fever. All Dengue Fever songs administered by Ellipsis Music Corp. (ASCAP) and Pentagon Lipservices (BMI) on behalf of CHHOM CHIMNEY • 1 ARMED CRAB PUB • FOOLISH MORTAL PUB • NOON KEY MUSIC • S W O P SONGS • TROLL UNDER THE BRIDGE.

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"Cyclo," written by Yol Aularong and Has Salon and originally recorded by Yol Aularong.

"Old Pot Still Cooks Good Rice,"

originally recorded by Ros Serey Sothea.

"Champa Battambang," written and

originally recorded by Sinn Sisamouth.

"I'm Sixteen (Chnam Oun Dawp-Pram

Mouy)," written by Voy Ho and originally recorded by Ros Serey Sothea.

"Today I Learnt to Drink (Doo Wop),"

originally recorded by Ros Serey Sothea.



**CHARGE OF THE LED BRIGADE** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

Despite initial resistance, Lincoln suspects that the LED movement will eventually be widespread. So far, however, the cost of a complete switch-over remains prohibitive for many. As an example of the price difference, Lincoln estimated that, leaving aside bulk deals, a standard Source Four instrument can run a company around \$300, while an LED Source Four can be in the neighborhood of \$2,300.

Christ Conti, a product manager at Production Resource Group (PRG), sits on the supply end of these transactions. PRG supplies lighting equipment and support for theatre, television, film, concerts, and other major events. Conti sees the additional cost as an unintended consequence of designers so excited to upgrade that they haven't sufficiently planned for the changeover. One problem is that "the infrastructure," as Conti explained, "the cable and the power and data distribution infrastructure—to connect the front end, the control console, with the back end of the lights—is a significant increase over conventional tungsten lighting. That adds cost."

While both LED and tungsten units have power cables, Conti continued, the tungsten power connects to a dimmer, while the LED just connects to a power distribution rack. For the tungsten fixtures, a control cable is simply run to the dimmer, which only needed to control the fixture's intensity. But for LEDs, a data cable has to be run to each LED fixture. Then, for each LED fixture, there are multiple control channels needed to control the overall intensity, as well as the red LED, the white LED, the blue LED, the green LED, and combinations of the four to make the color the designer chooses. The sheer amount of physical data means that a more refined and capable lighting console is needed.

"Often," Conti said, "that infrastructure cost gets lost or it gets forgotten about until you have to pay the piper on it."

But it's money well spent in the long run, Lincoln noted. LEDs are "really expensive, but then they are so much more efficient; they use about 10 percent of the power that an old fixture uses. Producing organizations have to get on board, or they're left behind."

And the increase in availability has started to lead some prices to come down, which should help smaller theatres to afford

more. Conti said he's seen high schools start to buy and use LED tape—thin strips of programmable LEDs that can be attached to set pieces for illumination. LED tape is an easy gateway to LEDs in general, because it's low-cost and doesn't require a lot of skill to pull off.

**SO FAR THE COST OF THE BEST LED** fixtures has meant that the shift has happened most rapidly where there's money for it: on Broadway, where producers and rental companies have been willing to invest in the latest technology.

Broadway is also on the front lines of another big change for lighting designers: video projection. In some cases, LED has gotten into that act. On *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*, a show on which PRG worked, LED video screens were used. These large panels can be used behind scenery as a cyc or backdrop, or can even be used as moveable legs, as they were in *Spider-Man*. Adding these massive video panels—in the case of *Spider-Man*, eight feet wide and 33 feet high—adds a new challenge for lighting designers, who have to work with the panels and consider them as their own light source.

"It's an arms race," Conti said. "When you start incorporating LED video panels, the light levels onstage go up significantly. It's a big Lite-Brite, for lack of a better term." He did point out that rarely do they run LED video panels above 30 or 40 percent power, dimming them as much as possible. But even then, "when you have a video wall, it's hundreds of thousands of LEDs. It puts off a lot of light."

Both because of cost, and perhaps just ease, many theatres still use traditional projectors for video elements. This has added another element that lighting designers are still figuring out the best way to collaborate with.

"There's a lot more of a blend now," Conti said. "We see the lighting guys are wanting to control the light levels onstage a lot better, so they're working with the video guys or, in many cases, are handling the video themselves. We're seeing a lot more cross-pollination between the departments, and the lines between the departments are blending."

Another technological change that's gaining momentum (literally) is moving

lights. Conti pointed out that while moving lights have been fairly common for the last decade or so, the trickle-down of affordable products is in full swing. "It used to be only top-tier productions were able to afford that," Conti said. "That's no longer the case. The barrier of entry has been lowered significantly."

For Perkins, moving lights and products like I-Cue's have proven invaluable tools. I-Cue attaches a programmable mirror to the front of a basic instrument, effectively turning that instrument into a moving light. Now Perkins is able to handle contemporary plays that call for more offbeat locations and numerous scenes.

"With younger playwrights, they write for TV," Perkins said. "It's no longer *A Raisin in the Sun*, all in the kitchen or the living room. They're all over the place."

Moving lights give her the freedom to know that she can give the director as many specials (lights used to highlight a particular area or object) as needed; she never has to say she doesn't have enough instruments, or that the crew needs to refocus instruments that are already up in the air. She can simply program a moving light to do the heavy lifting she needs.

"Light plots on Broadway—I would say most of them are predominantly moving lights," Lincoln said. "On Broadway, space is at such a premium because those theatres really aren't very big. They're desperate for every square inch, so if you put a bunch of moving lights in, you've got ultimate flexibility."

Between LEDs and moving lights, lighting grids across the country could look completely different within the next few decades—assuming, of course, that the prices for LEDs, moving lights, and the highly coveted moving LEDs come down to something manageable for regional and smaller theatres. The advancements that LEDs have seen have simply made them irresistible to most in the industry.

"If I had enough money," Lincoln said, "I would go to all LEDs on everything we have." 📺

**Chicago-based writer Jerald Raymond Pierce is a former intern of this magazine.**

Here's what's playing this month  
at TCG theatres nationwide.  
For the most up-to-date  
information about  
performance schedules,  
contact the theatre or  
visit Theatre Profiles online:  
[tcg.org/profiles](http://tcg.org/profiles).



### ALABAMA

**Alabama Shakespeare Festival**, Montgomery, (334) 271-5353, [asf.net](http://asf.net)  
**Annie**, Jul 4-Jul 22  
**Starstruck**, Jul 20-Aug 5

### ARIZONA

**The Rogue Theatre**, Tucson, (520) 551-2053, [theroguetheatre.org](http://theroguetheatre.org)  
**Tales of the Jazz Age**, adapt: Cynthia Meier (also dir) from F. Scott Fitzgerald; music: Mary Turcotte; dir: Cynthia Meier. Jul 14-Jul 14

### CALIFORNIA

**American Conservatory Theater**, San Francisco, (415) 749-2228, [act-sf.org](http://act-sf.org)  
**A Walk on the Moon**, book: Pamela Gray; music and lyrics: Paul Scott Goodman; dir: Sheryl Kaller. Jun 5-Jul 1

**Antaeus Theatre Company**, Glendale, (818) 506-1983, [antaeus.org](http://antaeus.org)  
**Three Days in The Country**, Patrick Marber; dir: Andrew Paul. Jul 5-Aug 26

● **Aurora Theatre Company**, Berkeley, (510) 843-4822, [auroratheatre.org](http://auroratheatre.org)  
**Dry Powder**, Sarah Burgess; dir: Jennifer King. Jun 22-Jul 22

● **Berkeley Repertory Theatre**, (510) 647-2949, [berkeleyrep.org](http://berkeleyrep.org)  
**Angels in America Parts 1 and 2**, Tony Kushner; dir: Tony Taccone. Apr 17-Jul 22

**Bootleg Theater**, Los Angeles, [bootlegtheater.org](http://bootlegtheater.org)  
**Live Arts Exchange/LAX Festival**, Oct 8-Oct 25

**Capital Stage Company**, Sacramento, (916) 995-5464, [capstage.org](http://capstage.org)  
**The Thanksgiving Play**, Larissa FastHorse. Jun 20-Jul 22

**Center Theatre Group**, Los Angeles, (213) 972-4400, [centertheatregroup.org](http://centertheatregroup.org)  
**The Humans**, Stephen Karam; dir: Joe Mantello. Jun 19-Jul 29

● **The Chance Theater**, Anaheim, (888) 455-4212, [ChanceTheater.com](http://ChanceTheater.com)  
**Big Fish**, book: John August; music and lyrics: Andrew Lipka; dir: Oanh Nguyen. Jun 29-Jul 29

● **City Lights Theater Company**, San Jose, [cltc.org](http://cltc.org)  
**In the Heights**, book: Quiara Alegria Hudes; music and lyrics: Lin-Manuel Miranda; dir: Jeffrey Bracco. Jul 12-Aug 19

**Dell'Arte International**, Blue Lake, (707) 668-5663, [dellarte.com](http://dellarte.com)  
**The Mad River Festival 2018**, Jun 14-Jul 14

**Diversionsary Theatre**, San Diego, (619) 220-0097, [diversionary.org](http://diversionary.org)  
**The Loneliest Girl in the World**, book and lyrics: Gordon Leary; music: Julia Meinwald; dir: Matt M. Morrow. May 24-Jul 1

**foolsFURY Theater**, San Francisco, (415) 685-3665, [foolsfury.org](http://foolsfury.org)  
**Role Call**, Debórah Eliezer, Michelle Haner, Ben Yalom (also dir). Sep 5-Sep 22

**FURY Factory Festival of Ensemble and Devised Theater**, Jul 10-Jul 22

**Fountain Theatre**, Los Angeles, (323) 663-1525, [fountaintheatre.com](http://fountaintheatre.com)  
**Arrival and Departure**, Stephen Sachs (also dir). Jul 11-Sep 16

**Geffen Playhouse**, Los Angeles, (310) 208-5454, [geffenplayhouse.org](http://geffenplayhouse.org)  
**Skeleton Crew**, Dominique Morisseau; dir: Patricia McGregor. Jun 5-Jul 8

**Golden Thread Productions**, San Francisco, (415) 626-4061, [goldenthread.org](http://goldenthread.org)  
**New Threads 2018 Staged Reading Series**, Jul 17-Aug 7

● **International City Theatre**, Long Beach, (562) 436-4610, [ictlongbeach.org](http://ictlongbeach.org)  
**The 39 Steps**, adapt: Patrick Barlow. Jun 20-Jul 8

**The Glass Menagerie**, Tennessee Williams. Aug 22-Sep 9

● **L.A. Theatre Works**, Venice, (310) 827-0889, [latw.org](http://latw.org)

**I Love Lucy: A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Sitcom**, Gregg Oppenheimer. Jul 12-15

● **La Jolla Playhouse**, (858) 550-1010, [lajollaplayhouse.org](http://lajollaplayhouse.org)  
**The Squirrels**, Robert Askins; dir: Christopher Ashley. Jun 5-Jul 8  
**queens**, Martyna Majok. Jul 3-29  
**Seize the King**, Will Power; dir: Jaime Castaneda. Aug 21-Sep 16

● **Marin Theatre Company**, Mill Valley, (415) 388-5208, [marintheatre.org](http://marintheatre.org)  
**Straight White Men**, Young Jean Lee; dir: Morgan Gould. Jun 14-Jul 8

**New Village Arts Theatre**, Carlsbad, (760) 433-3245, [newvillagearts.org](http://newvillagearts.org)  
**Avenue Q**, book: Jeff Whitty; music and lyrics: Robert Lopez, Jeff Marx; dir: AJ Knox. May 18-Jul 1

● **North Coast Repertory Theatre**, Solana Beach, (858) 481-1055, [northcoastrep.org](http://northcoastrep.org)  
**A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum**, book: Larry Gelbart, Burt Shevelove; music and lyrics: Stephen Sondheim; dir: David Ellenstein. Jul 11-Aug 12

**Odyssey Theatre Ensemble**, Los Angeles, (310) 477-2055, [odysseytheatre.com](http://odysseytheatre.com)  
**Lysistrata Unbound**, Eduardo Machado; dir: John Farmanesh-Bocca. Jun 9-Aug 4  
**Side By Side By Sondheim**, music: Leonard Bernstein, Mary Rogers, Richard Rogers, Stephen Sondheim (also lyrics), Julie Styne; dir: Dan Fishbach. Jul 21-Sep 2

**PCPA Pacific Conservatory Theatre**, Santa Maria, (805) 922-8313, [pcpa.org](http://pcpa.org)  
**The Hunchback of Notre Dame**, book: Peter Parnell; lyrics: Stephen Schwartz; music: Alan Menken. Jun 14-Jul 8 (Solvang Festival Theater)  
**Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike**, Christopher Durang. Jun 28-Jul 7 (Marian Theatre), Jul 12-22 (Solvang Festival Theater)

**Mamma Mia!**, book: Catherine Johnson; lyrics: Benny Andersson, Björn Ulvaeus; music: Benny Andersson, Björn Ulvaeus. Jul 18-Jul 21 (Marian Theatre), Jul 27-Aug 26 (Solvang Festival Theater)

**Arcadia**, Tom Stoppard. Aug 16-Aug 25 (Marian Theatre), Aug 30-Sep 9 (Solvang Festival Theater)

● **The Road Theatre Company**, North Hollywood, [roadtheatre.org](http://roadtheatre.org)  
**Red Speedo**, Lucas Hnath; dir: Joe Banno. May 5-Jul 1

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The cast of *Jagged Little Pill* at American Repertory Theater.

EVGENIA ELISEVA



**San Francisco Playhouse**, (415) 677-9596, [sfpplayhouse.org](http://sfpplayhouse.org)  
**In Braunau**, Dipika Guha. Jun 13-Jul 7  
**Sunday in the Park With George**, book: James Lapine; music and lyrics: Stephen Sondheim; dir: Bill English. Jul 5-Sep 8  
**Washed Up On the Potomac**, Lynn Rosen. Aug 8-Sep 1

**Scripps Ranch Theatre**, San Diego, (858) 578-7728, [scrippsranchtheatre.org](http://scrippsranchtheatre.org)  
**Out on a Limb: New Plays from America's Finest City**, Jul 14-Jul 23

**Shotgun Players**, Berkeley, (510) 841-6500, [shotgunplayers.org](http://shotgunplayers.org)  
**White**, James Ijames; dir: M. Graham Smith. Jul 6-Aug 5  
**Art**, Yasmina Reza. Jul 30-Jul 31  
**Kiss**, Guillermo Calderón; dir: Evren Odcikin. Aug 23-Sep 23

**TheatreWorks**, Palo Alto, (650) 463-1960, [theatreworks.org](http://theatreworks.org)  
**Finks**, Joe Gilford; dir: Giovanna Sardelli. Jun 6-Jul 1

## COLORADO

**Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center at Colorado College Theatre Company**, (719) 634-5583, [csfineartscenter.org](http://csfineartscenter.org)  
**Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind**, Greg Allen. Jun 29-Jul 21

● **Curious Theatre Company**, Denver, (303) 623-0524, [curioustheatre.org](http://curioustheatre.org)  
**Ars Nova's Underground Railroad Game**, Jennifer Kidwell, Scott R. Sheppard; dir: Taibi Magar. Jun 14-Jul 1

**The Cake**, Bekah Brunstetter; dir: Chip Walton. Aug 30-Oct 13

**Telluride Theatre**, (970) 708-7629, [telluridetheatre.org](http://telluridetheatre.org)  
**Shakespeare in the Park**, Shakespeare; dir: Colin Sullivan. Jul 21-Jul 28

## CONNECTICUT

**Eugene O'Neill Theater Center**, Waterford, (860) 443-1238, [theoneill.org](http://theoneill.org)  
**National Music Theater Conference**, Book, music, lyrics: Masi Asare, Kate Kilbane, Dan Moses; book and music: Anna K. Jacobs; book and lyrics: Michael R. Jackson. Jun 30-Jul 14  
**National Playwrights Conference**, Benjamin Benne, Enid Graham, Jeremy O. Harris, Beth Henley, Celine Song, Cori Thomas, Sarah Tuft. Jul 5-Jul 28  
**Cabaret & Performance Conference**, Aug 1-Aug 11

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**GALA Hispanic Theatre**, (202) 234-7174, [galatheatre.org](http://galatheatre.org)  
**Dancing in my Cockroach Killers**, Magdalena Gómez; music: Desmar Guevara. Jun 7-Jul 1  
**Mosaic Theater Company of DC**, [mosaictheater.org](http://mosaictheater.org)  
**The Vagrant Trilogy**, Mona Mansour; dir: Mark Wing-Davey. Jun 6-Jul 1

**The Shakespeare Theatre Company**, (202) 547-1122, [shakespearetheatre.org](http://shakespearetheatre.org)  
**Camelot**, book and lyrics: Alan Jay Lerner; music: Frederick Loewe; dir: Alan Paul. May 22-Jul 1

## FLORIDA

**American Stage Theatre Company**, St Petersburg, (727) 823-7529, [americanstage.org](http://americanstage.org)  
**Bad Jews**, Joshua Harmon. Jul 11-Aug 5

● **Arca Images**, Coral Gables, [arcaimages.org](http://arcaimages.org)  
**Neve**, Guillermo Calderon; dir: Nilo Cruz. Aug 9-19

**Florida Studio Theatre**, Sarasota, (941) 366-9000, [floridastudiotheatre.org](http://floridastudiotheatre.org)  
**Carole's Kings**, book: John Loos; dir: Catherine Randazzo. Jun 12-Jul 15  
**Murder for Two**, book: Kellen Blair (also lyrics), Joe Kinoshian (also music); dir: Bruce Jordan. Jun 27-Jul 29

**10th Anniversary Sarasota Improv Festival**, Jul 12-Jul 14  
**Music of the Night**, book: Kimberly Hawkey; music: Assaf Gleizner; dir: Catherine Randazzo. Jul 17-Aug 19

**Other People's Money**, Jerry Sterner; dir: Jason Cannon. Aug 1-Aug 19  
**Gilbert & Sullivan Unplugged**, music: Sean Graney, Matt Kahler, Kevin O'Donnell, Andra Velis Simon; dir: Catherine Randazzo. Aug 21-Sep 23

● **GableStage**, Coral Gables, (305) 445-1119, [gablestage.org](http://gablestage.org)  
**I'm Gonna Pray for You So Hard**, Halley Feiffer. Jun 9-Jul 8  
**White Gus on the Bus**, Bruce Graham. Aug 11-Sep 9

## GEORGIA

**Serenbe Playhouse**, Chattahoochee Hills, (770) 463-1110, [serenbeplayhouse.com](http://serenbeplayhouse.com)  
**Peter Pan: A World Premiere Pirate Adventure**, May 31-Aug 26  
**Titanic**, book: Peter Stone; music and lyrics: Maury Yeston; dir: Brian Clowdus. Jul 10-Aug 12

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**Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre Company**, Atlanta, (877) 725-8849, [truecolorstheatre.org](http://truecolorstheatre.org)  
**Dot**, Colman Domingo; dir: Kenny Leon.  
Jul 17-Aug 12

## ILLINOIS

**16th Street Theater**, Berwyn, (708) 795-6704, [16thstreettheater.org](http://16thstreettheater.org)  
**The Hero's Wife**, Aline Lathrop; dir: Ann Filmer.  
Jul 12-Aug 18

● **American Blues Theater**, Chicago, (773) 327-5252, [americanbluestheater.com](http://americanbluestheater.com)  
**Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story**, Alan James; dir: Lili-Anne Brown. Apr 27-Jul 28

● **First Folio Theatre**, Oak Brook, (630) 986-8067, [firstfolio.org](http://firstfolio.org)  
**Shrew'd**, adapt and lyrics: David Rice; music: Michael Keefe; dir: Johanna McKenzie Miller. Jul 11-Aug 19

**The Gift Theatre**, Chicago, [thegifttheatre.org](http://thegifttheatre.org)  
**Hamlet**, adapt: Monty Cole (also dir), Michael Petersen from Shakespeare. Jun 1-Jul 29

● **Goodman Theatre**, Chicago, (312) 443-3800, [goodmantheatre.org](http://goodmantheatre.org)  
**Support Group for Men**, Ellen Fahey; dir: Kimberly Senior. Jun 23-Jul 29

● **The House Theatre of Chicago**, (773) 769-3832, [thehousetheatre.com](http://thehousetheatre.com)  
**The Magic Parlour**, Dennis Watkins. Aug 4-Jul 28

● **Lookingglass Theatre Co**, Chicago, (312) 337-0665, [lookingglasstheatre.org](http://lookingglasstheatre.org)  
**20,000 Leagues Under the Seas**, adapt: David Kersnar, Althos Low; dir: David Kersnar. May 23-Aug 19

**Oil Lamp Theater**, Glenview, (847) 834-0738, [oillamptheater.org](http://oillamptheater.org)

**The Odd Couple (Female Version)**, Neil Simon; dir: Keith Gerth. Jun 14-Jul 29

**The God Committee**, Mark St. Germain; dir: Keith Gerth. Aug 19-Sep 23

● **Piven Theatre Workshop**, Evanston, (847) 866-8049, [piventheatre.org](http://piventheatre.org)  
**Playback**, dir: Scott Shallenbarger. Jul 9-Jul 10

● **Sideshow Theatre Company**, Chicago, [sideshowtheatre.org](http://sideshowtheatre.org)  
**Tiilikum**, Kristiana Rae Colón; dir: Lili-Anne Brown. Jun 22-Jul 29

● **Steept Theatre Company**, Chicago, (866) 811-4111, [steeptheatre.com](http://steeptheatre.com)  
**Linda**, Penelope Skinner; dir: Robin Witt. Jul 12-Aug 18

**Steppenwolf Theatre Co**, Chicago, (312) 335-1650, [steppenwolf.org](http://steppenwolf.org)  
**Guards at the Taj**, Rajiv Joseph; dir: Amy Morton. May 31-Jul 15  
**The Roommate**, Jen Silverman; dir: Phylicia Rashad. Jun 21-Aug 5

● **TimeLine Theatre Company**, Chicago, (773) 281-8463, [timelinetheatre.com](http://timelinetheatre.com)  
**To Catch a Fish**, Brett Neveu; dir: Ron OJ Parson. Apr 25-Jul 1

## LOUISIANA

**New Orleans Shakespeare Festival at Tulane**, New Orleans, (504) 865-5106, [neworleansshakespeare.org](http://neworleansshakespeare.org)  
**Macbeth**, Shakespeare; dir: Jessica Podewell. Jul 6-Jul 22

## MARYLAND

**Imagination Stage**, Bethesda, (301) 280-1660, [imaginationstage.org](http://imaginationstage.org)  
**You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown**, book and lyrics: Clark M. Gesner; lyrics: Andrew Lipppa; dir: Aaron Posner. Jun 23-Aug 12

● **Olney Theatre Center for the Arts**, (301) 924-3400, [olneytheatre.org](http://olneytheatre.org)  
**On The Town**, book and lyrics: Betty Comden, Adolph Green; music: Leonard Bernstein; dir: Jason Loewith. Jun 20-Jul 22  
**H.M.S. Pinafore**, adapt: Sean Graney (also dir), Matt Kahler, Andra Velis Simon; book: W.S. Gilbert; music: Arthur Sullivan. Jul 11-Aug 19  
**The Pirates of Penzance**, adapt: Sean Graney, Kevin O'Donnell; book: W.S. Gilbert; music: Arthur Sullivan. Jul 11-Aug 19

● **Round House Theatre**, Bethesda, (240) 644-1100, [roundhousetheatre.org](http://roundhousetheatre.org)  
**The Legend of Georgia McBride**, Matthew Lopez; dir: Tom Story. Jun 6-Jul 1

## MASSACHUSETTS

**Company One Theatre**, Boston, (617) 933-8600, [companyone.org](http://companyone.org)  
**Leftovers**, Josh Wilder; dir: Summer L. Williams. Jul 20-Aug 18

● **Martha's Vineyard Playhouse**, Vineyard Haven, (508) 696-6300, [mvplayhouse.org](http://mvplayhouse.org)  
**Passionata**, Gwyn McAllister; dir: MJ Bruder Munafo. Jun 23-Jul 14

## MICHIGAN

**Thunder Bay Theatre, Inc.**, Alpena, [thunderbaytheatre.com](http://thunderbaytheatre.com)  
**All Shook Up**, book: Joe DiPietro; lyrics: Elvis Presley; dir: Jeffrey Mindock. Jun 20-Jul 8  
**Hairspray (In Concert)**, book: Thomas Meehan, Mark O'Donnell; lyrics: Marc Shaiman (also music), Scott Whittman; dir: Jeffrey Mindock. Jul 13-Jul 15

**Annie Get Your Gun**, book: Dorothy Fields, Herbert Fields; music and lyrics: Irving Berlin; dir: Jeffrey Mindock. Jul 25-Aug 12

## MINNESOTA

● **Commonweal Theatre Company**, Lanesboro, (800) 657-7025, [commonwealtheatre.org](http://commonwealtheatre.org)  
**The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee**, book: Rachel Sheinkin; lyrics: William Finn; music: Jay Reiss. May 4-Sep 24  
**The Clean House**, Sarah Ruhl. Jun 28-Oct 22  
**Dracula: Prince of Blood**, adapt: Scott Dixon. Aug 31-Nov 11

**Guthrie Theater**, Minneapolis, (612) 377-2224, [guthrietheater.org](http://guthrietheater.org)  
**West Side Story**, book: Arthur Laurents; lyrics: Stephen Sondheim; music: Leonard Bernstein; dir: Joseph Haj. Jun 16-Aug 26  
**The Legend of Georgia McBride**, Matthew Lopez; dir: Jeffrey Meanza. Jul 14-Aug 26

**Park Square Theatre**, St Paul, (651) 291-7005, [parksquaretheatre.org](http://parksquaretheatre.org)  
**Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery**, Ken Ludwig; dir: Theo Langason. Jun 15-Aug 5  
**French Twist**, Jun 22-Jul 15  
**A Korean Drama Addict's Guide to Losing Your Virginity**, dir: Randy Reyes. Jul 27-Aug 12. Co-production with Mu Performing Arts, MN

● **Stages Theatre Company**, Hopkins, (952) 979-1111, [stages theatre.org](http://stages theatre.org)  
**DreamWorks' MADAGASCAR - A Musical Adventure**, book: Kevin Del Aquila; music and lyrics: George Noriega, Joel Someilan; dir: Sandy Boren-Barrett. Jun 29-Aug 5  
**On the Railroad**, dir: Melanie Salmon-Peterson. Aug 3-Aug 26

**Theater Latté Da**, Minneapolis, [latteda.org](http://latteda.org)  
**Underneath the Lintel**, Glen Berger; music: Frank London; dir: Peter Rothstein. May 30-Jul 1  
Next: **New Work Festival**, Jul 1-Aug 1

## MISSOURI

**The Coterie Theatre**, Kansas City, (816) 474-6552, [thecoterie.org](http://thecoterie.org)  
**Goosebumps: Phantom of the Auditorium - The Musical**, book: John Maclay; lyrics: Danny Abosch (also music), John Maclay; dir: Jeff Church. Jun 19-Aug 5  
**Disney's Newsies**, book: Harvey Fierstein; lyrics: Jack Feldman; music: Alan Menken; dir: Jerry Jay Cranford. Jul 7-Jul 29

**Mesner Puppet Theater**, Kansas City, (816) 235-6222, [mesnerpuppets.org](http://mesnerpuppets.org)  
**Go, Dog. Go!**, adapt: Steven Dietz, Mike Horner from P.D. Eastman. Jun 26-Jul 15

## NEVADA

● **Bruka Theatre**, Reno, (775) 323-3221, [bruka.org](http://bruka.org)  
**The Frog Prince - Grimm's 9**, Mary Bennett. Mar 1-Jul 15



The cast of *My Fair Lady* at Lincoln Center Theater.

JOAN MARCUS



**Bud Perry's The Untamed**, Ensemble; dir: Stacy Johnson, Ryan Kelly. Jul 13-Jul 28

## NEW JERSEY

● **Cape May Stage**, (609) 770-8311, [capemaystage.org](http://capemaystage.org)

**Chapter Two**, Neil Simon; dir: Roy S. Jun 27-Aug 3

**The Lion in Winter**, James Goldman; dir: John Gulley. Aug 8-Sep 14

**New Jersey Repertory Company**, Long Branch, (732) 229-3166, [njrep.org](http://njrep.org)

**Mercy**, Adam Szymkowitz; dir: Gail Winar. Jun 14-Jul 15

**Fern Hill**, Michael Tucker; dir: Nadia Tass. Aug 9-Sep 9

● **Two River Theater**, Red Bank, (732) 345-1400, [tworivertheater.org](http://tworivertheater.org)

**Oo-Bla-Dee**, Regina Taylor; music: Diedre L. Murray; dir: Ruben Santiago-Hudson. Jun 9-Jul 1

## NEW YORK

● **The Cider Mill Playhouse**, Endicott, (607) 748-7363, [cidermillplayhouse.org](http://cidermillplayhouse.org)

**Shakespeare in Love**, Lee Hall, Marc Norman, Tom Stoppard. Aug 9-Aug 19

**Classic Stage Company**, NYC, (212) 677-4210, [classicstage.org](http://classicstage.org)

**Carmen Jones**, Oscar Hammerstein II. Jun 14-Aug 1

**HERE**, NYC, (212) 352-3101, [here.org](http://here.org)

**American Weather**, Chris Green; dir: Chris Green. Jun 11-Jul 1

**Lincoln Center Theater**, NYC, (212) 239-6200, [lct.org](http://lct.org)

**My Fair Lady**, book and lyrics: Alan Jay Lerner; music: Frederick Loewe; dir: Bartlett Sher. Mar 15-Jul 8

**Mabou Mines**, NYC, [maboumines.org](http://maboumines.org)

**Imagining the Imaginary Invalid**, adapt: Clove Galilee, Valeria Vasilevski. Jan 22-Feb 7. Co-production with La Mama ETC, NY

**MusicalFare Theatre**, Amherst, (716) 839-8540, [musicalfare.com](http://musicalfare.com)

**Murder for Two**, book: Kellen Blair (also lyrics), Joe Kinosian (also music); dir: Doug Weyand. Jul 11-Aug 12

**Playwrights Horizons**, NYC, (212) 279-4200, [phnyc.org](http://phnyc.org)

**Log Cabin**, Jordan Harrison; dir: Pam MacKinnon. Jun 1-Jul 15

● **Red Bull Theater**, NYC, (212) 352-3101, [redbulltheater.com](http://redbulltheater.com)

**Short New Play Festival**, Tina Howe, Doug Wright. Jul 16-Jul 16

## OHIO

**Dobama Theatre**, Cleveland Heights, (216) 932-3396, [dobama.org](http://dobama.org)

**On The Grill**, Dror Keren; dir: Leighann Delorenzo. Jul 6-Jul 23

● **Tantrum Theater**, Athens, (614)793-5700, [tantrumtheater.org](http://tantrumtheater.org)

**Next to Normal**, book and lyrics: Brian Yorkey; music: Tom Kitt; dir: Robert Barry Fleming. Jul 11-Jul 29

## ONTARIO

**Shaw Festival**, Niagara-on-the-Lake, (800) 511-7429, [shawfest.com](http://shawfest.com)

**The Magician's Nephew**, book: C.S. Lewis; adapt: Michael O'Brien; dir: Tim Carroll. Thru Oct 13

**Grand Hotel**, book: Vicki Baum; adapt: Luther Davis; music and lyrics: Robert Wright and George Forrest; dir: Eda Holmes. Thru Oct 14

**Mythos: A Trilogy of Plays - Gods. Heroes. Men.**, book: Stephen Fry; music: Paul Sportelli; dir: Tim Carroll. Thru July 15

**The Hound of the Baskervilles**, book: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle; adapt: R. Hamilton Wright and David; dir: Craig Hall. Aug 1-Oct 27

**Stage Kiss**, book: Sarah Ruhl; dir: Anita Rochon. Thru Sep 1

**Of Marriage and Men: A Comedy Double-Bill: How He Lied to Her Husband and The Man of Destiny**, book: Shaw; dir: Philip Akin. Thru Sep 2

**O' Flaherty V.C.**, book: Shaw; dir: Kimberly Rampersad. Thru Oct 6

**Oh What a Lovely War**, book: Joan Littlewood, Theatre Workshop, and Charles Cilton; music dir: Paul Sportelli; dir: Peter Hinton. July 14-Oct 13

**The Orchard (After Chekhov)**, book: Chekhov; adapt: Sarena Palmer; music: Debashis Sinha. Thru Sep 1

**The Baroness and the Pig**, book: Michael Mackenzie; dir: Selma Dimitrijevic. Thru Oct 6

**Henry V**, book: Shakespeare; dirs.: Tim Carroll and Kevin Bennett. July 22 to Oct 28

## OREGON

● **Broadway Rose Theatre Company**, Tigard, (503) 620-5262, [broadwayrose.org](http://broadwayrose.org)

**Mamma Mia!**, Jun 27-Jul 22

**Guys and Dolls**, Aug 2-19

**Oregon Shakespeare Festival**, Ashland, (800) 219-8161, [osfashland.org](http://osfashland.org)

**Othello**, Shakespeare; music: Andre Pluessa; dir: Bill Rauch. Feb 16-Oct 28

**Sense and Sensibility**, Kate Hamill; music: Justin Ellington; dir: Hana Sharif. Feb 17-Oct 28

**Destiny of Desire**, Karen Zacarias; music: Rosino Serrano; dir: José Luis Valenzuela. Feb 18-Jul 12

**Henry V**, Shakespeare; music: Palmer Hefferan; dir: Rosa Joshi. Feb 21-Oct 27

**Manhatta**, Mary Kathryn Nagle; music: Paul James Prendergast; dir: Laurie Woolery. Mar 28-Oct 27

**Oklahoma!**, book and lyrics: Oscar Hammerstein II; music: Richard Rodgers; dir: Bill Rauch. Apr 18-Oct 27

**Romeo and Juliet**, Shakespeare; music: Rodolfo Ortega; dir: Dámaso Rodríguez. Jun 5-Oct 12

**The Book of Will**, Lauren Gunderson; music: Paul James Prendergast; dir: Christopher Liam Moore. Jun 6-Oct 13

**Love's Labor's Lost**, Shakespeare; music: Amanda Dehnert (also dir), Andre Pluessa. Jun 7-Oct 14

**The Way the Mountain Moved**, Idris Goodwin; dir: May Adrales. Jul 10-Oct 28

**Snow in Midsummer**, Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig; dir: Justin Audibert. Aug 2-Oct 27

● **Portland Center Stage**, (503) 445-3700, [pcs.org](http://pcs.org)

**Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill**, Lanie Robertson; dir: Bill Fennelly. May 26-Jul 1

**JAW: A Playwrights Festival**, Jul 27-Jul 29

**Profile Theatre**, Portland, (503) 242-0080, [profiletheatre.org](http://profiletheatre.org)

**The Secretaries**, Maureen Angelos, Babs Davy, Dominique Dibbell, Peg Healey, Lisa Kron. Jun 14-Jul 1

● **Staged! Musical Theatre**, Portland, [stagedpdx.org](http://stagedpdx.org)

**Spring Awakening**, book and lyrics: Steven Sater; music: Duncan Sheik. Aug 2-Aug 12

## PENNSYLVANIA

● **Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble**, (570) 784-8181, [bte.org](http://bte.org)

**Charlotte's Web**, Jul 19-Aug 1

**Gamut Theatre Group**, Harrisburg, (717) 238-4111, [gamuttheatre.org](http://gamuttheatre.org)

**Hansel & Gretel**, Melissa Nicholson. Jul 12-Aug 18

**Choose Your Own Adventure the Play: You Only Live Thrice**, David Ramon Zayas. Aug 9-Aug 19

**Montgomery Theater**, Souderton, (215) 723-9984, [montgomerytheater.org](http://montgomerytheater.org)

**Last of the Red Hot Lovers**, Neil Simon; dir: Tom Quinn. Jun 7-Jul 1

**The Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival**, Center Valley, (610) 282-9455, [pashakespeare.org](http://pashakespeare.org)

**TBA**, Jun 1-Aug 4

**Ragtime**, Terrence McNally; lyrics: Lynn Ahrens; music: Stephen Flaherty; dir: Dennis Razze. Jun 13-Jul 1

**Twelfth Night**, Shakespeare; dir: Matt Pfeiffer. Jun 20-Jul 15

**Shakespeare in Love**, adapt: Lee Hall from Marc Norman, Tom Stoppard; dir: Patrick Mulcahy. Jul 11-Aug 5

**Richard II**, Shakespeare. Jul 19-Aug 5

**Shakespeare for Kids**, dir: Matt Pfeiffer. Jul 25-Aug 4

**All's Well That Ends Well**, Shakespeare. Jul 25-Aug 5



LARA GOETSCH

Tiffany Addison and Geno Walker in *To Catch a Fish* at TimeLine Theatre Company.

**People's Light**, Malvern, (610) 644-3500,

[peopleslight.org](http://peopleslight.org)

**Skeleton Crew**, Dominique Morisseau; dir: Steve H. Broadnax III. Jun 13-Jul 8

**Mark Twain's River of Song**, Randal Myler, Dan Wheetman; dir: Randal Myler. Aug 1-Aug 26

● **Pittsburgh Public Theater**, (412) 316-1600, [ppt.org](http://ppt.org)

**Reduced Shakespeare Company in William Shakespeare's Long Lost First Play (abridged)**, Reed Martin, Austin Tichenor. May 31-Jul 1

## SOUTH CAROLINA

**Arts Center of Coastal Carolina**, Hilton Head, (888) 860-2787, [artshhi.com](http://artshhi.com)

**Saturday Night Fever**, book: Nan Knighton; music and lyrics: Bee Gees. Jun 20-Jul 29

**Centre Stage**, Greenville, (864) 233-6733, [centrestage.org](http://centrestage.org)

**Breaking Up Is Hard to Do**, book: Erik Jackson, Ben H. Winters; lyrics: Phillip Cody, Howard Greenfield; music: Neil Sedaka. Jul 26-Aug 18

**Trustus Theatre**, Columbia, (803) 254-9732, [trustus.org](http://trustus.org)

**Memphis**, book: Joe Dipietro; music and lyrics: David Bryan; dir: Dewey Scott-Wiley. Jun 29-Jul 28

**Boy About Ten**, Jon Tuttle; dir: Patrick Michael Kelly. Aug 17-Aug 25

## TENNESSEE

● **Clarence Brown Theatre Co**, Knoxville, (865) 974-5161, [clarencebrowntheatre.org](http://clarencebrowntheatre.org)

**Alabama Story**, Kenneth Jones; dir: Kate Buckley. Jan 31-Feb 18

## TEXAS

**A. D. Players**, Houston, [adplayers.org](http://adplayers.org)

**God's Favorite**, Neil Simon; dir: Braden Hunt. Jul 11-Aug 5

● **Alley Theatre**, Houston, (713) 220-5700, [alleytheatre.org](http://alleytheatre.org)

**The Cake**, Bekah Brunstetter. Jun 1-Jul 1

**Holmes and Watson**, Jeffrey Hatcher; dir: Mark Shanahan. Jun 22-Jul 22

**The Catastrophic Theatre**, Houston, (713) 521-4533, [catastrophictheatre.com](http://catastrophictheatre.com)

**On Tour With Tamarie**, Tamarie Cooper (also dir). Jun 28-Aug 11

**Dallas Children's Theater**, (214) 740-0051,

[dct.org](http://dct.org)

**How I Became a Pirate**, book and lyrics: Mark Friedman (also music), Janet Yates Vogt; music: Janet Janet. Jun 15-Jul 8

● **Dallas Theater Center**, (214) 252-3927,

[dallastheatercenter.org](http://dallastheatercenter.org)

**White Rabbit Red Rabbit**, Nassim Soleimanpour. May 30-Jul 1

**Public Works Dallas - The Winter's Tale**, Shakespeare. Aug 30-Sep 3

● **The Ensemble Theatre Houston**,

(713) 807-4300, [EnsembleHouston.org](http://EnsembleHouston.org)

**Sistas: The Musical**, Dorothy Marcic; dir: Patdro Harris. Jun 23-Jul 29

**Hyde Park Theatre**, Austin, (512) 479-7529,

[hydeparktheatre.org](http://hydeparktheatre.org)

**The Antipodes**, Annie Baker; dir: Ken Webster. Jul 5-Aug 4

**Main Street Theater**, Houston, (713) 524-6706, [mainstreettheater.com](http://mainstreettheater.com)

**Chitty Chitty Bang Bang**, adapt: Ray Roderick, Jeremy Sams; music and lyrics: Richard M. Sherman, Robert B. Sherman; dir: Jimmy Phillips. Jun 12-Jul 29

**Second Thought Theatre**, Dallas, (866) 811-4111, [secondthoughttheatre.com](http://secondthoughttheatre.com)

**Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again.**, Alice Birch; dir: Tiffany Nichole Greene. Aug 22-Sep 15

● **Stage West Theatre**, Fort Worth,

(817) 784-9378, [stagewest.org](http://stagewest.org)

**Don't Dress for Dinner**, adapt: Robin Hawdon from Marc Camoletti; dir: Christie Vela. Jul 12-Aug 12

**An Octoroon**, Branden Jacob-Jenkins; dir: Akin Babatunde. Aug 30-Sep 30

**The VORTEX**, Austin, (512) 478-5282, [vortexrep.org](http://vortexrep.org)

**The Last Witch**, Rona Munro; dir: Jamie Goodman. Jul 6-Jul 21

**Summer Youth Theatre**, Jul 27-Aug 4

● **WaterTower Theatre**, Addison,

(972) 450-6232, [watertowertheatre.org](http://watertowertheatre.org)

**The Last Five Years**, book and music: Jason Robert Brown; dir: Kelsey Leigh Ervi. Jun 8-Jul 1

**Hand to God**, Robert Askins; dir: Joanie Schultz. Aug 3-Aug 26

● **ZACH Theatre**, Austin, (512) 476-0541,

[zachtheatre.org](http://zachtheatre.org)

**Heisenberg**, Simon Stephens; dir: Nat Miller. Jun 20-Jul 22

**Disney's Beauty and the Beast**, book: Linda

Wolverton; lyrics: Howard Ashman, Tim Rice;

music: Alan Menken; dir: Abe Reybold.

Jul 11-Sep 2

## UTAH

● **Salt Lake Acting Company**, Salt Lake City, (801) 363-7522, [saltlakeactingcompany.org](http://saltlakeactingcompany.org)

**Saturday's Voyeur 2018**, Allen Nevins; lyrics: Nancy Borgenicht; dir: Cynthia Fleming. Jun 20-Aug 26

## VIRGINIA

**1st Stage**, Tysons, [1ststagetysons.org](http://1ststagetysons.org)

**The 2nd Annual Logan Festival of Solo Performance**, Jul 12-Jul 22

● **Mill Mountain Theatre**, Roanoke,

(540) 342-5740, [millmountain.org](http://millmountain.org)

**Shrek TYA**, book and lyrics: David Lindsay-Abaire; music: Jeanine Tesori. Aug 1-Aug 12

● **Virginia Repertory Theatre**, Richmond, (804) 282-2620, [virginiarep.org](http://virginiarep.org)

**West Side Story**, book: Arthur Laurents; lyrics: Stephen Sondheim; music: Leonard Bernstein; dir: Nathaniel Shaw. Jun 22-Jul 29

**Crimes of the Heart**, Beth Henley; dir: Steve Perigard. Jul 20-Aug 26

**WSC Avant Bard**, Arlington, (703) 418-4808, [avantbard.org](http://avantbard.org)

**The Tempest**, Shakespeare; dir: Tom Prewitt. May 31-Jul 8

## WASHINGTON

**ACT - A Contemporary Theatre**, Seattle, (206) 292-7676, [acttheatre.org](http://acttheatre.org)

**Lauren Weedman Doesn't Live Here**

**Anytime**, Lauren Weedman; dir: Allison Narver. Jul 20-Jul 12

**ARTSWEST**, Seattle, (206) 938-0339, [artswest.org](http://artswest.org)

**Kiss of the Spider Woman**, book: Terrence McNally; lyrics: Fred Ebb; music: John Kander. Jun 7-Jul 8

**Book-It Repertory Theatre**, Seattle, (206) 216-0833, [book-it.org](http://book-it.org)

**The Picture of Dorian Gray**, dir: Victor Pappas. Jun 6-Jul 1



Francesca Faridany and Randy Harrison in *Angels in America, Part Two: Perestroika* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre.



Zachary Stevenson, Shaun Whitley, and the cast of *Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story* at American Blues Theater.

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● **Harlequin Productions**, Olympia, (360) 786-0151, [harlequinproductions.org](http://harlequinproductions.org)  
**Magical Mystery Midsummer Musical**, music and lyrics: Bruce Whitney; dir: Linda Whitney. Jun 21-Jul 21  
**Ruthless!**, lyrics: Joel Paley; music: Marvin Laird; dir: Aaron Lamb. Aug 16-Sep 15

**Island Shakespeare Festival**, Langley, [islandshakespearefest.org](http://islandshakespearefest.org)  
**Sense and Sensibility**, adapt: Kate Hamill from Jane Austen. Jul 12-Sep 2  
**Othello**, Shakespeare. Jul 12-Sep 2  
**Twelfth Night**, Shakespeare. Jul 12-Sep 2

**Taproot Theatre Company**, Seattle, (206) 781-9707, [taproottheatre.org](http://taproottheatre.org)  
**Sweet Land**, book: Laurie Flanigan Hegge (also lyrics), Perrin Post. Jul 11-Aug 18

## WEST VIRGINIA

● **Contemporary American Theater Festival**, Shepherdstown, (800) 999-CATF, [catf.org](http://catf.org)  
**The Cake**, Bekah Brunstetter; dir: Courtney Sale. Jul 6-29

**Berta, Berta**, Angelica Chéri; dir: Reginald L. Douglas. Jul 6-29

**Memoirs of a Forgotten Man**, D.W. Gregory; dir: Ed Herendeen. Jul 6-29

**Thirst**, C.A. Johnsin; dir: Adrienne Campbell-Holt. Jul 6-29

**A Late Morning [In America] With Ronald Reagan**, Michael Weller; dir: Sam Weisman. Jul 6-29

● **Greenbrier Valley Theatre**, Lewisburg, (304) 645-3838, [gvtheatre.org](http://gvtheatre.org)  
**The House On the Hill**, Amy E. Whitting; dir: Ed Herendeen. Jul 6-29.

**Honky Tonk Laundry**, Roger Bean; lyrics: Jim Newton; dir: Cathey Sawyer. Aug 23-Sep 8

## WISCONSIN

● **American Players Theatre**, Spring Green, (608) 588-2361, [americanplayers.org](http://americanplayers.org)  
**As You Like It**, Shakespeare; dir: James Bohnen. Jun 9-Oct 7

**Blood Knot**, Athol Fugard; dir: Ron OJ Parson. Jun 9-Sep 28

**Born Yesterday**, Garson Kanin; dir: Brenda DeVita. Jun 15-Sep 22

**The Recruiting Officer**, George Farquhar; dir: William Brown. Jun 22-Sep 29

**Exit the King**, Eugene Ionesco; dir: Kenneth Albers. Jun 26-Sep 27

**Heartbreak House**, adapt: Aaron Posner (also dir) from Shaw. Aug 3-Oct 5

**Measure for Measure**, Shakespeare; dir: Risa Brainin. Aug 10-Oct 6

**Our Country's Good**, Timberlake Wertenbaker; book: Thomas Keneally; dir: Tyne Rafaeli. Aug 11-Oct 7

**Peninsula Players Theatre**, Fish Creek, (920) 868-3287, [peninsulaplayers.com](http://peninsulaplayers.com)

**Now and Then**, Sean Grennan. Jun 12-Jul 1

**Miss Holmes**, Christopher M. Walsh. Jul 4-Jul 22

**The Drowsy Chaperone**, Jul 25-Aug 12

**Living on Love**, Joe DiPietro. Aug 15-Sep 2

**Third Avenue Playhouse**, Sturgeon Bay, (920) 743-1760, [thirdavenueplayhouse.com](http://thirdavenueplayhouse.com)  
**Lungs**, Duncan Macmillan; dir: Robert Boles. Jun 27-Jul 28

**archy and mehitable (aka shinbone alley)**, book: Mel Brooks, Joe Darion (also lyrics); music: George Kleinsinger; dir: James Valcq. Aug 1-Sep 8

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## PREVIEW COMING SEPTEMBER 18

### TIME'S UP FOR THEATRE

It hasn't even been a year since the reports of film mogul Harvey Weinstein's long career of sexual harassment and assault broke in the national media, thus starting a long overdue examination of toxic misogyny and gender imbalance not only in culture and media industries but in most professions. The U.S. theatre has had its share of #MeToo earthquakes as well, with artistic leaders losing jobs as survivors come forward and force companies, and the field, to reckon with the need for change. This issue will tackle these countervailing trends—both the structures of abuse and the efforts to insist that the field must do better.

**ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:** How costume designers dress themselves; National New Play Network's commissioning hat trick; Yale playwriting chair Tarell Alvin McCraney

## CONVERSATIONS

## on Facebook

In April we posted news that Arkansas Rep, the only LORT company in Arkansas, had suspended operations (at press time the Rep is raising funds to reopen). Readers' reactions:

**DUTCH WEISMANN:** So g'damned wrong. Can't the military shave off a couple bucks from the \$598.5 billion to keep the arts and theatre companies alive in the U.S.? It would even create jobs! Imagine that...

**KEVIN ELDEN:** Very disappointing. The arts are so vital to our lives and this was a theatre that really added something to the state and the city it is in. These organizations deserve support and are necessary as part of our culture.

**JD GRAVES:** The theatre in general should embrace more shows that appeal to their region

**SHANNON R. MILLER:** They'll be back. Positive thoughts!

Like us at [facebook.com/AT.magazine](https://facebook.com/AT.magazine).

## on Twitter

Our May/June issue on immigrants and the theatre inspired a variety of reactions, but none more epic than this Twitter thread, in response to "Children of the Journey" by Misha Berson:

**@ElenaVLevenson:** THIS. The children of immigrants are, by necessity, attuned to the ways in which the dominant culture differs from their parents' expectations, which are shaped by [the memory of] culture(s) "back home." I loved that Misha Berson discussed the work of 1st and 2nd generation American playwrights of different immigrant backgrounds together—we "third culture kids" share so many commonalities, notwithstanding the variation in our/families' origins. I would love to read an essay that went a step further and explored what is explicitly [U.S.] American about American theatre: what subject matter, motifs, genre. Some of my fellow theatremakers wryly complain that our stages are choked with "white family with a family secret that explodes at dinner" plays, or "living room" plays, or naturalism. Other institutions proudly proclaim they are casting plays in a way that represents America. I think about this more broadly & philosophically, too—what are American stories? "Rags-to-riches"? "The American Dream?" We talk colloquially about the differences between American film and French film; what are the values and hallmarks of American theatre?

Three on the Aisle co-host Elisabeth Vincentelli quipped:

**@EVincentelli:** And you have an immigrant doing one of your podcasts! Can't America make theatre critics anymore?

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## Online

Take us on your commute! Subscribe to *American Theatre's* podcast series:

**THREE ON THE AISLE:** Twice a month, theatre critics Peter Marks, Elisabeth Vincentelli, and Terry Teachout gab about theatre trends and things they've seen that they love (or didn't).

**THE SUBTEXT:** Once a month, playwright Brian James Polak interviews another playwright about the agony and ecstasy of theatremaking.

We're now on YouTube! AT has a new-ish web series: **TOKEN THEATRE FRIENDS**. Twice a month, AT senior editor Diep Tran and contributor Jose Solís provide a people-of-color perspective on the performing arts, and tell you which shows they think you should spend money on.

**TALK BACK!** Post your comments on stories from this issue and from our archives at [AmericanTheatre.org](https://AmericanTheatre.org). Visit our publisher, Theatre Communications Group, at [tcg.org](https://tcg.org).

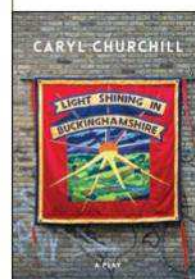
## WHAT'S HAPPENING

## MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS

Did you miss the **2018 TCG NATIONAL CONFERENCE** in St. Louis? Did you attend and want to relive the moments? Watch archived videos from the 2018 National Conference in St. Louis at [tcg.org/Events/NationalConference.aspx](https://tcg.org/Events/NationalConference.aspx).

## NEW FROM TCG BOOKS

Published in conjunction with New York Theatre Workshop's recent revival of the play, TCG Books is pleased to release a revised edition of **Caryl Churchill's *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire***. Churchill's incisive



drama tells the story of the men and women who went into battle for the soul of England in the aftermath of its civil war. Passionate, moving, and provocative, it speaks of the revolution they never had and the legacy it left behind. Order your copy of *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* at [tcg.org/TCGBookstore.aspx](https://tcg.org/TCGBookstore.aspx).

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Up-to-date schedules of TCG theatres from coast to coast.

**PLUS:** details about production venues, designers and choreographers, artistic leader statements, and general information about each theatre at [tcg.org/profiles](https://tcg.org/profiles).



CLEAVON MAEEDON IV

Miles Folley and Allyson Boate in *The Tempest* at WSC Avant Bard in Arlington, Va.

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*\*Board page is as of June 8, 2018*

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**Tina Landau**, nominated for a Tony for directing *SpongeBob Squarepants, The Musical*, is also known for helming the plays of Chuck Mee and her fellow Steppenwolf Theatre Company member Tarell Alvin McCraney. She'll next direct the musical *Dave* at Washington, D.C.'s Arena Stage, July 13-Aug. 19. —Rob Weinert-Kendt

**How do you feel about the response to *SpongeBob*? It hasn't been the biggest seller on Broadway, but it has a real following.**

It's amazing and surprising, honestly. When we were in Chicago doing it two years ago, I was talking to the producer, Susan Vargo, and we were saying, "Well, it won't get nominated for any Tonys—we know it's not that kind of show." We didn't care. We were like, "Let's just do our thing." So the critical response and this awards season have all been stunning and thrilling, and a gift. We have had to battle the stigma, I guess, of being *SpongeBob*. It's like the title is our greatest liability and our greatest asset.

**You had to know that going in, right?**

Yeah, I didn't. I really just thought it would be an asset. In Chicago, we started discovering: Oh, most people would rather kill themselves than come see this show. But the thing that makes me really happy is what it's like in that theatre on some shows—it's like magic happens in there with audiences of all ages. We're reaching a lot of people, and I'm very happy.

***Dave* is also based on a well-known title, but it's quite different, I assume.**

My first love was always musicals, the American musical, and *Dave* to me feels like part of my being and my heritage and who I am; it's on some level a very well-made, traditional book musical. What's great and fresh about it is the content and the time, the moment we are in. What would it mean if we could replace a very destructive, dishonest, self-

ish president with another model? How would that work, what would it be like, what would we dream? I'm very excited about the way *Dave* speaks to the moment we find ourselves in, without it being laden with topicality.

**You're known for your visual sense. Where does that come from?**

When I was young, the first time my parents sent me into school, I refused to talk to anyone. I sat in a corner and I drew, and the school called my parents and said, "We think there might be something wrong with your daughter." My parents were concerned, and they consulted with our GP, and he said, "There's nothing wrong with her. Take her out, let her draw as much as she wants to, and one day soon, she might say to you, 'Can I go back to school now?'" which apparently I did, when I was ready. The point being that growing up, I was a draw-er and I was also a piano player, and I feel like those two interests or passions for me bear fruit in something like *SpongeBob*.

**You're from a showbiz family, right?**

I am. My parents were film producers, Edie and Ely Landau, and my brother [Jon] is in film.

**So in a way you're in the family business, but a different branch?**

That's true. Growing up, the refrain always in my household was, "When are you doing a movie?" I don't know if it was really that I wasn't interested, or more that I was just being the black sheep, and it was my own little personal form of rebellion. I know that I have always been drawn toward the live experience. Some of my earliest memories are of the original *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Hair*, just things that took over my whole being. I just really never thought about doing anything else.

**What do you do to refuel when you're not doing theatre?**

I've never been able to go show to show; I have always planned a month, two months, in between for that very reason. I daydream, I read, I drive around, I like to go places, I like to talk to people. That period of refueling to me feels as important as the time in the room.

I also have a ridiculous amount of books, like a very big library, and I finally feel a little better about it, because I read an article that talked about how an unread library is as much a signifier of wisdom as a read library, and it made me feel much better. It basically said, if you surround yourselves with unread books, it is a reminder to yourself of the constant possibility of future knowledge, and it reminds you to be in a place that is one of humility about what you know and don't know.

**That's good to think.**

You know, I buy books, I touch books, I look at books—sometimes I read books. 📖





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