

# GREAT PLAINS THEATRE COMMONS

2023 New Play Conference


**GREAT STORIES  
FASCINATING PEOPLE**

OMAHA, NEBRASKA

May 28 – June 3







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# WELCOME

Dear GPTC Friends,

We are overjoyed to welcome you to the 18<sup>th</sup> Great Plains Theatre Commons' New Play Conference!

We've always enjoyed that this yearly convergence of local and national artists, community members, and stories, is a harbinger of the summer season, when the prairie surrounding us bursts into bloom. Just as these plants will grow to feed much of the world, this conference week will hold that same energy of growth and sustenance.

As we slowly move away from the years of the pandemic there are profound changes in our world on so many levels, including the theatre. In the last few years, we have lost many companies and leading new play development organizations. Many others, like the GPTC, are struggling to stay alive. If anyone doubts the importance of this work, they should take a moment to imagine what their life would be like without stories. Why do we have so many stories of our past and our present, of our families, friends, and communities? Why do we continue to gather to share them with each other?

For the last eighteen years, the GPTC has been fortunate to have the visionary financial support of our local and national community that has allowed us to offer all our programming for free. The individuals, families, and foundations who have steadfastly supported the GPTC have made this week, and all of our work throughout the years, possible. Their support allows us to share the gifts of time, space, and community that are needed for artists to be nurtured, to take risks and grow, and for new work to enter the world. We are immensely grateful to them for making this possible.

We are equally grateful to Metropolitan Community College, who founded the Conference, and has allowed the beautiful Fort Omaha Campus to be our home since the beginning. They have continued to champion the conference even as the GPTC has grown into a life as our own nonprofit with year-round programming and service in the community.

Our local theatre artists are also practicing radical hospitality as they pour themselves into the plays, and the week, with a joy and generosity that radiates throughout. Their artistry and energy are a significant part of the week's creative engine, and we are ever grateful to them.

The GPTC board and staff are committed fully to our mission, and work to enact it with passion, intelligence, and great heart. Their hard work holds this weeklong journey of creativity together; it is an endeavor that can be felt in every rehearsal, every performance, every meal where we break bread. We are deeply grateful to be a part of this wonderful group, and to all the individuals who we have the privilege to work beside each day.

Finally, to all our national artists, and especially our 2023 PlayLab playwrights, *thank you* for sharing your talent and these beautiful new stories, and for the love and courage to continue exploring together in this gift of a week.

With gratitude,  
Kevin Lawler  
Director, GPTC

Quinn Metal Corbin  
Manager, GPTC



## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Great Plains Theatre Commons acknowledges that our organization, located on the banks of the Missouri River, is situated on land that is the homeland of the Ponca, Omaha, Pawnee and Otoe. We pay respect to the Ponca, Omaha, Pawnee and Otoe peoples, elders, and their ancestors, past, present and future.

The Great Plains Theatre Commons pays respect to all Indigenous peoples who have stewarded this land throughout the generations, and to their ongoing contributions, culturally, intellectually, artistically and spiritually.

## CULTURAL EQUITY

Although GPTC was founded on the principal of sharing new and diverse stories, GPTC began its work as an arts nonprofit with four white staff members (one nonbinary member). It was critically important to our mission to address this lack of diversity. Since 2020, we have achieved over 50% Global Majority representation on our board of directors and increased diversity on our staff. We intend to increase our diversity until a standard of equity is achieved.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & AFFIRMATIONS

- In the United States, there are systems of power that grant privilege and access unequally such that inequity and injustice result, and that must be continuously addressed and changed.
- Cultural equity is critical to the long-term viability of the arts sector.
- We must all hold ourselves accountable, because acknowledging and challenging our inequities and working in partnership is how we will make change happen.
- Everyone deserves equal access to a full, vibrant creative life, which is essential to a healthy and democratic society.
- The prominent presence of diverse artists helps to challenge inequities and encourages alternative models.

### ACTION

To provide informed, authentic leadership for cultural equity, we vow to work towards...

- The GPTC has over 50% Global Majority representation on the board and vows to grow our board diversity.
- We vow to increase our staff diversity until a standard of equity is achieved.
- We vow to continue to work with Global Majority and marginalized artists and community members with a focus that reflects our foundational commitment to diversity and equity.
- Pursue cultural consciousness throughout our organization through substantive learning and formal, transparent policies.
- Acknowledge and dismantle any inequities within our policies, systems, programs, and services, and assess organizational progress on an annual basis.

### FIELD PROGRESS

To pursue needed systemic change related to equity, we vow to...

- Encourage substantive learning to build cultural consciousness and to advocate for pro-equity policies and practices by all of our constituencies and audiences.
- Improve the cultural leadership pipeline by creating and supporting programs and policies that foster leadership that reflects the full breadth of American society.
- Generate and aggregate quantitative and qualitative research related to equity to make incremental, measurable progress towards cultural equity.
- Advocate for public and private-sector policy that promotes cultural equity.



# GREAT PLAINS THEATRE COMMONS



**The mission of the Great Plains Theatre Commons is to strengthen community by supporting the creation and sharing of diverse new stories.**

THE GPTC NEW PLAY CONFERENCE SERVES AS AN AVENUE TO:

- Introduce new theatrical work into the American theatre scene
- Premiere the works of new and emerging playwrights
- Explore and strengthen the connection between the community and the arts
- Provide avenues for works produced beyond the Conference
- Connect local and national actors, directors, dramaturgs, designers and technical theatre personnel

## COMMUNITY

At GPTC, we believe everyone has a story to share and role to play in creating a world that is more loving, diverse, and equitable. That's why we work to develop a range of quality theatre programs with, and for, the communities we serve. Our programming strives to be community responsive and to sustain and deepen relationships across the city and country. We aim to serve as the creative home base for artists and storytellers at any stage in their lives—meeting them at their level of interest in theatre and taking them wherever they wish to go.

GPTC's strength is in our many long-standing and ever-growing partnerships with community service organizations that help us reach artistically underserved communities. In the fall of 2022, GPTC opened its first space at Yates Illuminates, providing creative workshops, readings, and performances for the community, with a special emphasis on serving New American/ Immigrant populations.

**STORY CIRCLES AND WORKSHOPS** - In collaboration with community partners, GPTC encourages everyone (especially individuals who may not identify as artists) to tell their stories

**COMMONERS** - This is a two-year residency for Omaha and Omaha-adjacent playwrights to grow the support, community, and connection they need to launch their stories into the world.

**CONNECT** - This public program invites a panel of diverse artists to share personal stories connected to a contemporary work of American theatre and opens discussion to community participation.

**FIRST FIRST DRAFT** - This program supports individuals who are committing to writing a full-length play for the first time. Writers commit to bi-weekly meetings over a three-month period.

**YOUNG DRAMATISTS** - Working to support and develop high school playwrights with mentoring, workshops, meetings with professionals, and guided access to the New Play Conference.

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT GPTC AND TO HELP SUPPORT OUR MISSION, VISIT [HTTPS://WWW.GPTCPLAYS.COM](https://www.gptcplays.com)**



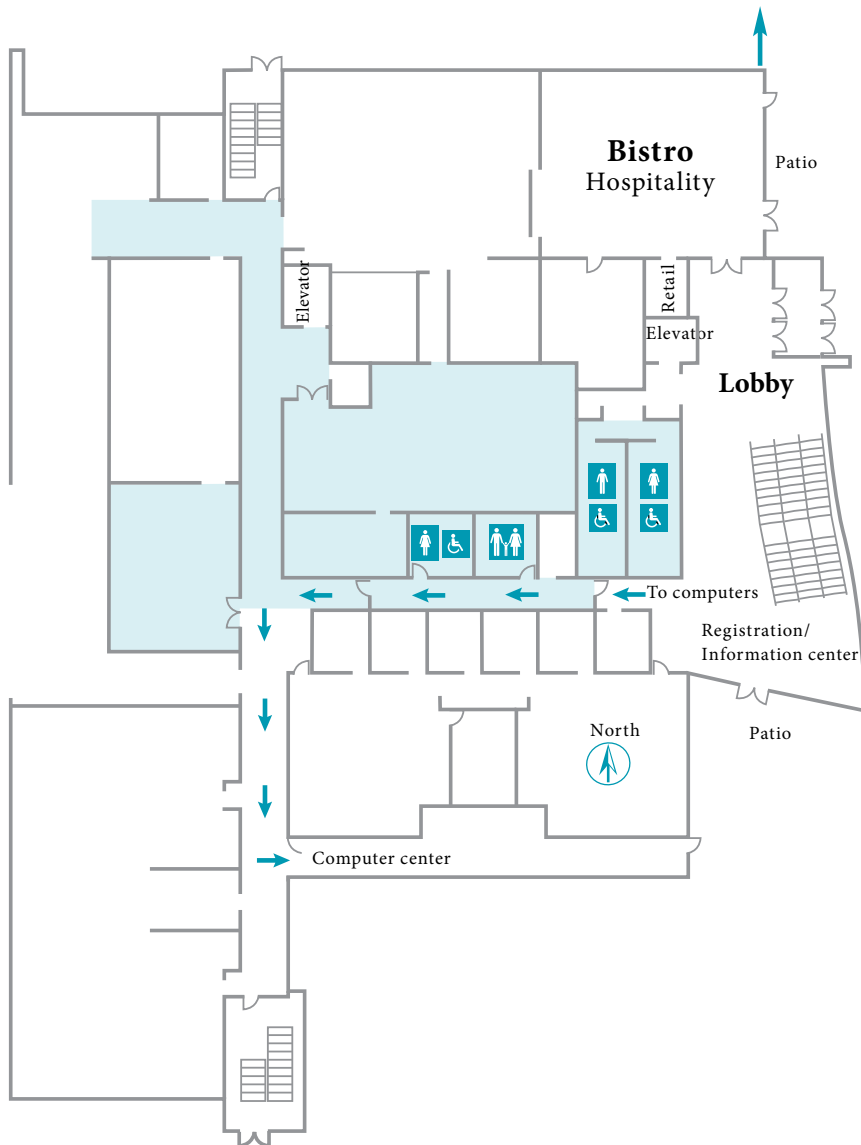
# CONFERENCE INFORMATION



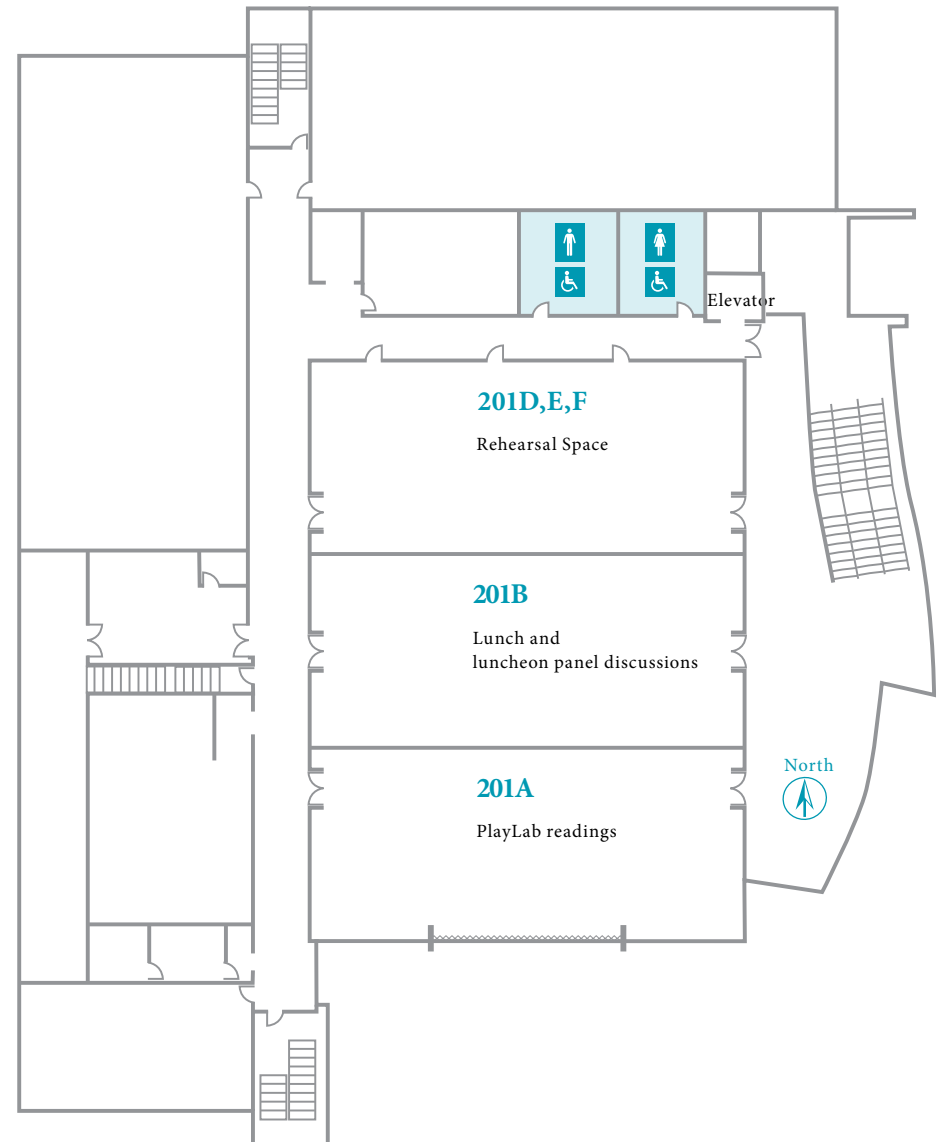
# CONFERENCE INFORMATION

## MAPS

### *Swanson Conference Center - Building 22* *First floor*

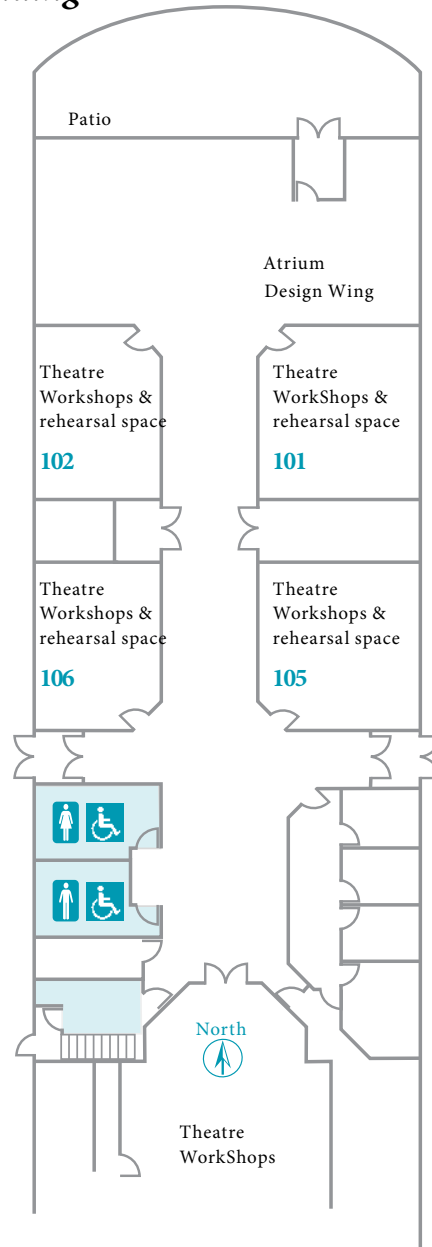


### *Second floor*

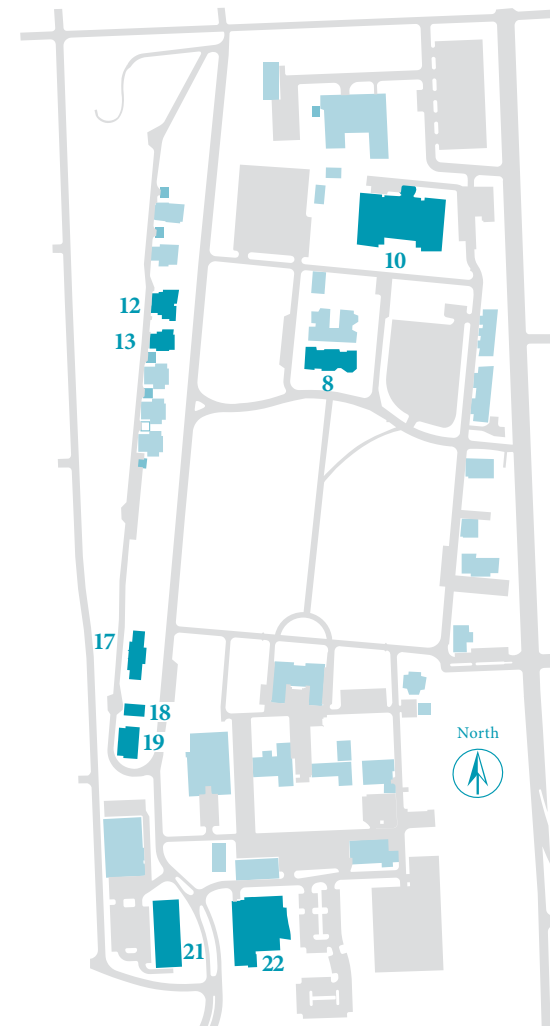


## MAPS

*Mule Barn - Building 21*



*Fort Omaha Campus*



# CONFERENCE INFORMATION

## CONFERENCE LOCATIONS

All daytime events occur at the Fort Omaha Campus of Metropolitan Community College in the Institute for the Culinary Arts (ICA), Swanson Conference Center (Building 22) and the Mule Barn (Building 21). These locations are highlighted in the maps section on pages 10-11. PlayFest's *Practice House* will be held at Yates Illuminates (3260 Davenport Street). GPTC's Benson First Friday event will be held at Benson Theatre (6054 Maple Street).

## HELPFUL NUMBERS AND ADDRESSES

- GPTC Staff: [402-714-7522](tel:402-714-7522) (Quinn) and [917-570-2624](tel:917-570-2624) (Kevin)
- GPTC Hotel Liaison: [573-289-7100](tel:573-289-7100) (Ron)
- Fort Omaha Campus: 5300 N 30th St., Omaha, NE 68111
- Element Hotel: 3253 Dodge Street, Omaha, NE 68131. [402-614-8080](tel:402-614-8080)
- Metropolitan Community College Police/Public Safety: [531-622-2222](tel:531-622-2222) (available 24 hours)

## THEATRE WORKSHOPS

Theatre Workshops are a series of hands-on playwriting and performance-related classes designed and led by featured and guest artists. All Theatre Workshops are free and open to the public. Sign up at the registration/information center.

## GPTC CONFERENCE PANELS

Luncheon panels are theatre-related discussions with GPTC guest artists. All luncheon panels are free and open to the general public. Community members who would like to join for lunch prepared by the wonderful Culinary team at MCC have the option to pay \$15/day in cash or Venmo at the registration.

## FEEDBACK AND EVALUATIONS

We ask audiences to complete evaluations after each PlayLab reading. This helps to foster the work by providing thoughtful feedback to each individual playwright.

Additionally, you will have the opportunity to evaluate the GPTC. We will send each participant a survey via email after the conference. We appreciate your feedback to help us plan for and make enhancements to future conferences.

## REGISTRATION/INFORMATION CENTER

Staff and volunteers are ready to answer your questions each day of the conference at the registration/information center located in the SCC Lobby. Registration hours can be found on page 16. The following are also available to you:

- WiFi guest login info
- Theatre Workshop sign-up
- Rehearsal location information
- Printing
- Copy machine
- Variety show sign up
- Schedules
- Directions
- Transportation info

## PERFORMANCE ETIQUETTE

Be mindful of those who are performing and attending performances. During readings and performances we ask you to please:

- Arrive on time
- Turn off your cell phone
- Whisper in hallways and lobbies
- Keep feedback concise, thoughtful and constructive

## NETWORKING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The most shared piece of advice from past GPTC participants: Connect! We encourage all Conference attendees to get to know fellow attendees. Introduce yourself and make introductions for others. Many past GPTC attendees have found friendships here that have grown into deep personal and professional friendships well beyond the Conference. Please make use of the Whova message boards and take advantage of GPTC social media.

**Instagram:** @gptcplays

**Facebook:** @GreatPlainsTheatreConference

**Use our hashtag:** #GPTC2023

## IF YOU NEED HELP

We ask that everyone attending the conference keep the highest level of respectful, creative dialogue. If you experience any barriers to that, please let a staff member know so that we can quickly assist you.



## PLAYFEST

Reservations are not required for our national guest artists for the PlayFest production of *Practice House* on May 31st. The evenings are free and open to the public. PlayFest seating is general admission, first-come, first-served. For guests staying in conference housing, transportation is provided, please consult your participant transportation schedule for more information.

## MEALS

Lunch will be served for registered conference participants each day in the SCC. Unregistered guests may purchase lunch (\$15) at the registration/information center.

## PRINTER ACCESS AND WI-FI

Wireless Internet is available in the SCC. Please see the registration/information center for login information. Participants may use designated stations to print necessary materials.

## TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

MCC has free parking throughout the campus. For registered conference guests only, a round trip shuttle is available to and from the Fort Omaha campus, Element Hotel and PlayFest evening performances. Consult your participant transportation schedule for more information.

## SEVERE WEATHER

Nebraska weather can be unpredictable. Designated severe weather shelter areas are located throughout the buildings on campus. In the event that severe weather occurs, GPTC staff, volunteers and MCC police officers will direct you to safe areas. For reference, Omaha is located in Douglas County.

## DISCRIMINATION OR HARASSMENT

The GPTC is committed to creating a safe, barrier-free environment for participants. Discrimination or harassment based on or because of race/ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, marital status, socioeconomic status, geography, citizenship status, religion, veteran status, or any other protected status is a violation of state and federal law and GPTC policy.

Awareness is the only way the GPTC can respond. Your concern will be kept confidential and addressed appropriately as warranted. If at any time during the conference you have an experience, interaction or situation that makes you feel uncomfortable, reach out directly to a GPTC staff member, or contact the GPTC staff at [402-714-7522](tel:402-714-7522) (Quinn) and [917-570-2624](tel:917-570-2624) (Kevin) or [commons@gptcplays.com](mailto:commons@gptcplays.com) immediately.



**SCHEDULE**



# AT A GLANCE

**ALL CONFERENCE TIMES  
ARE CENTRAL TIME ZONE.**

**STREAMING LINKS CAN BE FOUND  
THROUGH OUR WHOVA REGISTRATION  
PORTAL FOR SECURITY REASONS.**

## DAILY, MAY 28 – JUNE 3

Conference Registration and Information Center  
Hours, SCC 1st Floor Lobby

5/28 8:30am – 2:30pm

5/29 9:00am – 5:00pm

5/30 9:00am – 5:00pm

5/31 8:00am – 5:00pm

6/1 9:00am – 5:00pm

6/2 9:00am – 5:00pm

6/3 8:30am – 1:00pm

## SUNDAY, MAY 28

9:30am – 10:15am General Orientation (Bistro)

10:15am – 10:20am Break

10:20am – 10:50am PlayLab Orientation for  
Responders and Dramaturgs (SCC 201F)

11:00am – 12:30pm Workshop Session1  
(Mule Barn/SCC)

12:30pm – 1:45pm Lunch/Panel 1: Coalitional  
Movements in Theatre: Working with Racial,  
Disability, and Sexual Justice at 1:00pm(SCC 201B)

## MONDAY, MAY 29

9:30am – 11:45am *Big Black Sunhats* by Mallory Jane  
Weiss PlayLab and Response Session (SCC 201A)

12:00pm – 1:00pm Lunch Info session with Ouida  
Maedel, National Endowment for the Arts (SCC 201B)

1:00pm – 3:30pm *witch play* by Erika Phoebus  
PlayLab and Response Session (SCC 201A)

3:30pm – 3:45pm Break

3:45pm – 4:45pm 2023 PlayLab Playwright Cohort  
Meeting 1 (meet at registration)

## TUESDAY, MAY 30

9:30am – 12:00pm *Organized Chaos* by Pravin  
Wilkins PlayLab and Response Session (SCC 201A)

12:00pm – 1:00pm Lunch (SCC 201B)

1:00pm – 3:20pm *El Mito or The Myth of My Pain* by  
Andrew Rincón PlayLab and Response Session  
(SCC 201A)

3:20pm – 3:35pm Break

3:35pm – 6:10pm *What A Time to Be Alive (You Say  
that Everytime)* by Paul Michael Thomson PlayLab and  
Response Session (SCC 201A)

7:00pm – 8:30pm Young Dramatists Evening  
featuring two one act plays: *Sherrie* by Phoenix Nehls  
& *Roses* by Olivia Wallace (SCC 201A)

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 31

9:00am – 10:30am Workshop Session 2 (Mule Barn)

10:30am – 10:45am Break

10:45am – 12:55pm *Dharma* by Nayna Agrawal  
PlayLab and Response Session (SCC 201A)

12:30pm – 1:30pm Lunch (SCC 201B)

1:45pm – 4:25pm *Annelies* by Oded Gross PlayLab  
and Response Session (SCC 201A)

7:30pm – 10:00pm *Practice House* by Rachael Carnes  
PlayFest production (Yates Illuminates)

## THURSDAY, JUNE 1

10:00am – 12:20pm *Lola* by Miles Orduña PlayLab  
and Response Session (SCC 201A)

12:15pm – 1:45pm Lunch/Panel 2: New Avenues of  
Conveying Story at 1:00pm (SCC 201B)

2:00pm – 3:00pm Playwright Cohort Meeting 2 (meet  
at registration)

3:05pm – 6:10pm *Without a Formal Declaration of  
War* by Anya Pearson PlayLab and Response Session  
(SCC 201A)

## FRIDAY, JUNE 2

10:00am – 12:05pm *for the fish* by Surrey Houlker  
PlayLab and Response Session (SCC 201A)

12:00pm – 1:15pm Lunch/Panel 3: Guest Artists at  
12:30pm (SCC 201B)

1:30pm – 3:00pm Workshop Session 3 (Mule Barn)

3:15pm – 5:35pm *In the Basement* by Bailey Williams  
PlayLab and Response Session (SCC 201A)

8:00pm – 9:30pm Benson First Friday Program  
(Benson Theatre)

## SATURDAY, JUNE 3

9:30am – 11:20am *More of a Heart* by Dave  
Osmundsen PlayLab and Response Session  
(SCC 201A)

12:30pm – 1:45pm Lunch with Design Wing  
Presentations (Mule Barn)

1:30pm – 2:15pm Design Wing Installation  
(Mule Barn)

6:00pm – 9:00pm Closing Celebration (SCC 201)

## ALL CONFERENCE TIMES ARE CENTRAL TIME ZONE

### SUNDAY, MAY 28

9:30AM – 10:15AM (BISTRO)

#### GENERAL ORIENTATION

10:15AM – 10:20AM

#### BREAK

10:20AM – 10:50PM)

#### PLAYLAB ORIENTATION (SCC 201F)

11:00AM – 12:30PM (MULE BARN/SCC 201A)

#### WORKSHOP 1

**Kia Corthron**

#### Getting Unstuck (Capacity: 12)

Do you feel stuck on the play you're currently working on? Or did you get stuck on a former piece and finally, in frustration, put it aside? This workshop will help get you out of creative gridlock, allowing you to open up your play via new, unexplored territory.

**José Cruz González**

#### Rituals & Observations (Capacity: 20)

Playwright José Cruz González will lead a workshop about discovering your character's daily rituals through the people they encounter. What does their barista have to say about them? Or the grocery checker or even the bank teller? Through these observations we will learn more about your character's daily rituals.

#### Ollie Webb/Circle Theatre (Capacity: 28)

This hands-on, full immersion workshop with Carrie A. Nath (Ollie Webb) and Fran Sillau (Circle Theatre) will delve into the process of creating plays with artists with physical and intellectual disabilities. From the collaborative writing process, casting, rehearsing, and performing, participants will come away from the workshop with practical tools for collaborating and working with individuals with all abilities. Workshop includes readings of 4 new short works created by individuals from the Ollie Webb Center, Inc., in partnership with The Circle Theater and Omaha Community Playhouse.

12:30PM-1:45PM (SCC 201B)

#### LUNCH PANEL

“Coalitional Movements in Theatre: Working with Racial, Disability, and Sexual Justice” with Kate Busselle, Khalid Y. Long & Samuel Yates. Panel begins at 1pm.

### MONDAY, MAY 29

9:30AM – 11:45AM (SCC 201A)

#### PLAYLAB AND RESPONSE SESSION

*Big Black Sunhats*

by Mallory Jane Weiss

**Director:** Haley Piper Haas

**Dramaturg:** Jihye Kim

**Design Wing Fellow:** Tim Kelly

**Responders:** Mia Chung, Sibyl Kempson

**Synopsis:** Forty years ago, Penelope, Bobbi, and Evelyn last waved goodbye to their husbands (Owen, Percy, and Hugo), as the men embarked on a perilous journey. It's now forty years later, and the women, now all nearly 70 years old, receive a phone call. It turns out, their husbands aren't dead after all. The men are coming home. They come bearing tales, talismans, and a dangerous proposition: youth. Oh, and the men haven't aged a day since they left. *BIG, BLACK SUNHATS* is a play that explores time — how we pass it, the stories that live outside of it, and what we do when it's handed to us in new ways. It's a play that asks questions about youth, marriage, friendship, waiting, and womanhood.

#### Cast:

Penelope: Connie Lee

Bobbi: Peggy Jones

Evelyn: Judy Radcliff

Owen: Xavier Carr

Percy: Raydell Cordell III

Hugo: Thomas Gjere

**Stage Directions:** Stephanie Kidd

12:00PM – 1:00PM LUNCH (SCC 201B)

#### LUNCH & INFO SESSION

Ouida Maedel, National Endowment for the Arts

(CONT)

# DAY BY DAY SCHEDULE CONTINUED

1:00PM - 3:30PM (SCC 201A)

## PLAYLAB AND RESPONSE SESSION

*witch play*

by Erika Phoebus

**Director:** Anna Jordan

**Dramaturg:** Alex Vermillion

**Design Wing Fellow:** Adrienne Miikelle

**Respondents:** Christina Ham, Eliza Bent

**Synopsis:** It's 1563...ish, and Anny Chapman wants to get pregnant. No wait, Anny Chapman is SUPPOSED to want to get pregnant, or else she could be tried as a witch. Problem is, Anny Chapman has never... had... an orgasm? And everyone of the time knows a husband and wife must both do such a thing in order to conceive. As secret fertility treatments from the local alewife, Besse, births an unexpected love between them, the world outside threatens to knock down their door. Meanwhile, the Virgin Mary has arrived on the scene, and she wants her autonomy back... A dark comedy, a love story, a ritual, a spell; *Witch Play* searches for all the places our pleasure may go, after we've chosen to unleash it.

**Cast:**

Besse: Hannah Clark

Anny: Darlyn Gonzalez

John: Jordan Smith

Patrik: Matthew Olsen

Jasper/Father Wright: Jarod Cernousek

Colban: Ezra Colón

The Virgin Mary: Kylah Calloway

**Stage Directions:** Katie Cameron

3:30PM - 3:45PM BREAK

3:45PM - 4:45PM

## 2023 PLAYWRIGHT COHORT MEETING 1 (MEET AT REGISTRATION)

## TUESDAY, MAY 30

9:30AM - 12:00PM (SCC 201A)

## PLAYLAB AND RESPONSE SESSION

*Organized Chaos*

by Pravin Wilkins

**Director:** Bryan Moore

**Dramaturg:** DeRon Williams

**Design Wing Fellow:** Andre Segar

**Respondents:** Eliza Bent, Mashuq Mushtaq Deen

**Synopsis:** A university is shaken by a battle between workers, their union, and their bosses, over a new contract. Meanwhile, students in the university theatre program begin to question their responsibilities to the workers, as indirect beneficiaries of their labor. As workers begin to face reprisal for organizing, and faculty face unexpected consequences for aligning with the movement, each character must ultimately pick a side: to strike or not to strike. *Organized Chaos* explores the intersections between workers' struggle for fair wages and benefits at a university hospital and the exploitation of graduate students and adjunct professors at that same university. By centering the perspectives of union workers, students, and faculty, this piece calls into question the positionality of the academic world in conversations about capitalism and labor rights.

**Cast:**

Lorena: Paige Nola

Krasimira: Jackie Knappes

Damini: Sierra Lancaster

(CONT)

## PLAYLABS

*These readings are free  
and open to the public.*

The daily PlayLab readings are the foundation of the Conference. This year, 12 plays were selected from over 600 submissions. They are rehearsed by directors and actors and then presented as staged readings. Playwrights receive constructive critiques of their work from theatre professionals, scholars, and the general public in a guided-response setting. Each year the PlayLab readings act as a catalyst for many premieres of new American plays both locally and nationally.

Anton: Marcel Daly  
Max: Nicholas Jansen  
Julie: Cecilia Poon  
Ishani: Surbhi Malik

**Stage Directions:** Omni Webster

12:00PM - 1:00PM LUNCH (SCC 201B)

1:00PM - 3:20PM (SCC 201A)

## PLAYLAB AND RESPONSE SESSION

*El Mito or The Myth of My Pain*

by Andrew Rincón

**Director:** Isaiah Ruiz

**Dramaturg:** Alex Vermillion

**Design Wing Fellow:** Leo Grierson

**Respondents:** José Cruz González, Mia Chung

**Synopsis:** The play follows Los Villegas, a Colombian American family as they produce a local access telenovela in Miami, Florida. As the Villegas deal with grief after losing their Abuela Rosmira, the youngest daughter of the family Michelle discovers a special ability to travel to worlds outside of the real. As she begins to learn how to use her new gifts from a mysterious mentor, demons from Colombian myth begin to appear in Miami hunting for her older brother Flaco. It will be up to Michelle to protect her brother and the rest of her familia from danger. But she'll have to unlock secrets from her Abuela's past in order to confront what's coming. A story about familia, traumas and the myths we pass down.

### Cast:

Michelle – Tatiana Sandoval  
Flaco –David Muñoz  
Diana – Marina Rosado  
Harvey – Angel Hernandez  
Chemita – Carina DuMarce  
Freddi - Giovanni Rivera

**Stage Directions** - Leticia Taveras

3:20PM -3:35PM BREAK

3:35PM - 6:10PM (SCC 201A)

## PLAYLAB AND RESPONSE SESSION

*What A Time to Be Alive (You Say That Everytime)*

by Paul Michael Thomson

**Director:** Breanna Carodine

**Dramaturg:** Khalid Y. Long

**Design Wing Fellow:** Tim Kelly

**Respondents:** Kia Corthron, Sibyl Kempson

**Synopsis:** It's 2004, and a state senator named Barack Hussein Obama is running to represent Illinois in the United States Senate. On the South Side of Chicago, his field team includes: Dan, a hot, smart white guy ("politically incorrect"); Clark, a spritely base coverer; and Porsche, an environmentalist who loves humanity but is meh on humans. When newcomer Aisha joins the team, her candor, quick smile, and comfortability with voters rocket her to the top of the organizing food chain. But how will the other members of her team react to this fast ascent? Can white men cede power when they really, really think they deserve it? And, dear God, will Mr. Obama win his Senate race?!

### Cast:

Aisha - Allana Pommier  
Clark - David James Zenchuk Jr.  
Porsche - Ejanae Hume  
Dan - Billy Ferguson

**Stage Directions** - Sydney Readman

7:00PM - 8:30PM (SCC 201A)

## YOUNG DRAMATISTS EVENING, FEATURING TWO ONE ACT PLAYS

*Sherrie*

by Phoenix Nehls

*Roses*

by Olivia Wallace

**Director:** Amy Lane

**Dramaturg:** Alex Vermillion

**Design Wing:** Paul Jonathan Davis & Tim Kelly

# DAY BY DAY SCHEDULE CONTINUED

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 31

9:00AM - 10:30AM

### WORKSHOP SESSION 2 (MULE BARN)

**Eliza Bent**

#### **The Art of Self Production (Capacity: 20)**

Don't know where to start when it comes to producing your own work? Let's get to work. In this workshop with Bent discover how producing can be as artful and satisfying as writing plays. The craft of the polite-yet-persistent follow up will be explored along with how to write a stellar press release and how to engage in brain tempests, a brain storm that is so big that it inspires you to reach a bigger goal than you could have imagined.

**Mia Chung**

#### **The Outline: A Gentle Tool for Revision (Capacity: 8)**

Have you written a play that you know needs significant revision but are stymied by how to tackle it? Or perhaps you have a strong impulse that a play needs work, but you don't yet know where to focus and how to start? We want what's best for our plays, but we often fear tampering with the extraordinary gift of their birth. We don't want to contaminate their unique, idiosyncratic, intuitive expression with practical concerns. We fear breaking their spirit with a stern, critical eye.

This is a practical workshop for writers grappling with this complex phase of their play's development. We will explore several ways to make and use outlines as a tool for seeing plays anew. Participants should be prepared to send over PDFs of their plays.

**Christina Ham**

#### **Anthropology of Character (Capacity: 15)**

Where we live shapes who we are. Different regions of the country have varied dialects, belief systems, and axioms. This trend is equally pronounced within different countries, socio-economic statuses, and time periods. In plays this is no exception. Such dramatists as August Wilson, Anton Chekov, Tennessee Williams, and Shakespeare made the deliberate choice to set their classic dramas in Pittsburgh, Russia, New Orleans, and Denmark respectively to tell their powerful dramas. But, setting can be more than the environment in which your story is set; it can also be a reflection of your characters. This workshop will explore setting and how this dramatic element can help advance your plot,

shape your story, affect your characters, enhance tension, and inform your theme as you look to create or rewrite your play. We will explore how setting not only creates a dialogue among your characters, but also is a key blueprint to the world of your play that will be accessed by your creative team during production. If utilized to the fullest extent, setting can be a valuable asset to your play and not just a place where your characters dwell. This workshop is perfect for either someone who is at the beginning stages of trying to craft a play or someone who is looking to rewrite their play.

10:30AM - 10:45AM BREAK

10:45AM - 12:55PM (SCC 201A)

### PLAYLAB AND RESPONSE SESSION

*Dharma*

by Nayna Agrawal

**Director:** Sierra Lancaster

**Dramaturg:** Khalid Y. Long

**Design Wing Fellow:** Paul Jonathan Davis

**Respondents:** Mashuq Mushtaq Deen, Christina Ham

**Synopsis:** Three first-generation, South Asian American siblings in their 30s ask their immigrant parents to get a divorce so that they can fulfill their dharma, or cosmic duty: to house their parents during their sunset years. But none of the siblings wants to take both parents for fear that the dysfunctional marriage which informed their formative years will prey upon their adult lives. But, when the request is made, invectives fly, secrets spill forth, and each family member must come to terms with the role s/he sees in the Sahgal family, his/her role as the family sees it, and coping with the divide between the discrete points of view.

**Cast:**

Jade: Surbhi Malik

Vimal: Mallika Jayanti

Nik(hil): Nathan Karnik

Milana: Sierra Lancaster

Bhagwati Prasad "BP":

Teacher/Pastor/Waiter/Dr. Preston/Cord Brechman: George Dippold

**Stage Directions:** Sophia Lancaster

12:30PM - 1:30PM LUNCH (SCC 201B)



1:45PM - 4:25PM (SCC 201A)

## PLAYLAB AND RESPONSE SESSION

*Annelies*

by Oded Gross

**Director:** Roxanne Wach

**Dramaturg:** DeRon Williams

**Design Wing Fellow:** Leo Grierson

**Respondents:** Sibyl Kempson, José Cruz González

**Synopsis:** The present collides with the past in the drama *Annelies*. Mourning the loss of his father, a bereaved man in 2020 begins to keep a journal, only to find himself in correspondence with the famous and tragic diarist, Anne Frank. A play about grief and friendship, *Annelies* explores the strength and legacy of the written word, and its power to change our lives forever.

### Cast:

Ari: Murphy Scott Wulfgar

Ronia: Angie Heim

Anne: Sasha Denenberg

Older Anne: Sherry Fletcher

**Stage Directions:** Dan Wach

7:30PM - 10:00PM (YATES ILLUMINATES)

## PLAYFEST PRODUCTION

*Practice House*

by Rachael Carnes

**World Premiere, Developed as a GPTC New Play Conference PlayLab in 2021**

*Practice House* is based on a real chapter in American education, in which babies were leased from local orphanages for the purpose of training women in the new and improved “scientific parenting methods.”

**Director:** Susie Baer Collins

**Stage Manager:** Krista Freimuth

### Cast:

Betsy: Kara Davidson

Viola: Evelyn Hill

Miss Van Rose: Mary Kelly

Jennie Claire: Lauren Krupski

Radio Announcer & Driver: Cork Ramer

Elma: Erika Hall-Sieff

**Scenic Design:** Bill Van Deest

**Props Design:** Hannah Clark

**Costume Design:** Denise Ervin

**Co-Sound Design:** Kevin Lawler, Brendan Greene-Walsh, Susie Baer Collins

**Audio Engineer:** Craig Marsh/Pink Giraffe

**Props Design Consultant:** Chris Pliatska

**Drawing Book Artist:** Chelsey Hill

**ASL Interpreters 5/31:** Pamela Duncan, M.S. & Summer Dykstra

**Front of House:** Alyssa Gonzalez & Steve Knox

**Poster Design:** @qmetalc

A recorded version of the play will be screened at a later date during the summer. If you are interested in attending virtually, please email [commons@gptcplays.com](mailto:commons@gptcplays.com)

**CW:** Nobody under the age of 14 will be admitted due to mature content. The world of this play depicts a loss of liberty and human rights, with reference to and exploration of institutional discrimination, white supremacy, facism, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual assault, human trafficking, child abuse, self-harm, suicide, violence, electrocution, mutilation, torture, and death. The author has derived all characters, plot and dialogue from actual events in American history.

(CONT)



# DAY BY DAY SCHEDULE CONTINUED

## THURSDAY, JUNE 1

10:00AM - 12:20PM (SCC 201A)

### PLAYLAB AND RESPONSE SESSION

*Lola*

by Miles Orduña

**Director:** Wai Yim

**Dramaturg:** Jihye Kim

**Design Wing Fellow:** Andre Segar

**Respondents:** Mia Chung, Christina Ham

**Synopsis:** Middle-aged, Filipino-American Rey is having an identity crisis. He's stuck on an underwhelming rung in the corporate ladder at his mediocre, Silicon Valley job. His woke teenage son, James, is disappointed in him and his failed marriage - and is now acting out in school. Nora, his aging immigrant Mother, is getting worse. She's glued to Fox News and EWTN (the Catholic channel) and her hoarding is reaching new heights. And on top of all that he can't stop dreaming about his Father, whose death 30 years ago upended Rey's life. However, the comfortable distance between the three is erased when Nora becomes the victim of a violent, anti-Asian hate crime. Both Rey and James put their lives on hold to come back to Rey's childhood home in Des Moines, IA to help nurse Nora back to health - a process that proves that healing is sometimes more painful than the injuries themselves. In *Lola*, three generations of a Filipino-American family collide in the name of healing and self-discovery.

**Cast:**

Rey: Ron Domingo

Nora: Ching Valdes-Aran

James: Adam Bassing

**Stage Directions:** Roni Shelley Perez

12:15PM-1:45PM (SCC 201B)

### LUNCH PANEL

"New Avenues of Conveying Story" Jihye Kim, Jared Mezzocchi, Alex Vermillion, DeRon Williams, Khalid Y. Long. Panel begins at 1:00pm

2:00PM - 3:00PM

### PLAYWRIGHT COHORT MEETING 2 (MEET AT REGISTRATION)

3:05PM - 6:10PM (SCC 201A)

### PLAYLAB AND RESPONSE SESSION

*Without a Formal Declaration of War*

by Anya Pearson

**Director:** Denise Chapman

**Dramaturg:** DeRon Williams

**Design Wing Fellow:** Adrienne Miikelle

**Respondents:** Kia Corthron, José Cruz González

**Synopsis:** The War in Vietnam rages, a revolution brews, and the FBI targets a community while Clytemnestra finds herself, and the world, on the brink of great change. Set in the section of East Oakland that will come to be known as The Killing Fields, Anya Pearson places characters from Aeschylus' Agamemnon in 1969.

**Cast:**

Clytemnestra: Allana Pommier

Aegisthus: Marcel Daly

Agamemnon: Corbin Griffin

Menelaus: Xavier Carr

Helene: Asia Nared

Aerope: Rusheaa Malimbe

Pelopia: Deborah Dancer

FBI Agent: George Dippold

Wounded Soldier: Justin Payne

Atrous: Eric Jordan

Cassandra: Liza Barr

**Stage Directions:** Liza Barr



# DAY BY DAY SCHEDULE CONTINUED

## FRIDAY, JUNE 2

10:00AM - 12:05PM (SCC 201A)

### PLAYLAB AND RESPONSE SESSION

*for the fish*

by Surrey Houlker

**Director:** Jay Hayden

**Dramaturg:** Khalid Y. Long

**Design Wing Fellow:** Leo Grierson

**Respondents:** Eliza Bent, Sibyl Kempson

**Synopsis:** ‘*for the fish*’ sets out to explore the experience of growing up alienated and queer in the countryside. How can we find (and keep) safety as queer people? What even is ‘safety’? Do fish have feelings? Somewhere deep in rural Massachusetts in the 70s, 13-year-old Susanna goes fishing with her Uncle whenever she gets bored. Or overwhelmed. Or terrified. Susanna’s big heart and quick temper keep her precariously perched between normalcy and disaster. Her Uncle, grappling with their addiction and Susanna’s math homework, finds themselves caught up in this wave of teenage turmoil. As 1974 comes to a close, Susanna and her Uncle draw closer, bonded by an understanding very few in their town will ever hold.

**Cast:**

Susanna: Anna Preston

Uncle: Carina DuMarce

Dick the Fish: Thomas Gjere

**Stage Directions:** Stephanie Kidd

12:00PM - 1:15PM (SCC 201B)

### LUNCH PANEL WITH GUEST ARTISTS

Eliza Bent, Mia Chung, Kia Corthron, Mashuq Mushtaq Deen, José Cruz González, Christina Ham. Panel begins at 12:30pm

1:30PM - 3:00PM

### WORKSHOP SESSION 3 (MULE BARN)

**Mashuq Mushtaq Deen**

**Heart Circle: Censorship (Capacity: 8)**

The center of this workshop will be a heart circle, which is a sharing circle where feelings take priority and intellectual thoughts are put aside for a time. Each participant is asked to commit to both listening and speaking from their hearts. It is a vulnerable space, and a confidential one. We will be talking about censorship out in the world, and how we experience self-censorship within us. This will likely feel like a dangerous workshop to take. That’s okay.

**Sibyl Kempson**

**Aperture of Perception (Capacity: 20)**

In this workshop we attempt to expand and diversify our way of seeing. How can we employ our human language function and bodily presence to bridge our interior, present-moment somatic experience (image, thought, memory, energy or emotion as they dwell in the body) with outer phenomena such as architecture, directional orientation, natural elements, or the presence of others? This is an experiential workshop for writers, performers, and directors alike. Using subtle perceptive shifts such as wide-angle vision, long-range vision, and kinesthetic tracking, we will observe and map connections between what is within and without – manifested and manifesting - to explore and merge individual consciousness with what we call “surroundings” or “environment” as source material for any writing or performing practice. Sharpen your appreciation for diversity of form, and widen your capacity for description and expression in your work. Bring a notebook, a pen, and wear comfortable clothing.



3:15PM - 5:35PM (SCC 201A)

## PLAYLAB AND RESPONSE SESSION

*In the Basement*

by Bailey Williams

**Director:** Taylor Adams

**Dramaturg:** Alex Vermillion

**Design Wing Fellow:** Andre Segar

**Respondents:** Kia Corthron, Mashuq Mushtaq Deen

**Synopsis:** Dingus is disgusting. Her sister Teenie is perfect. Her boyfriend is Jard and Jard is Christian and Jard is also Dad. Mom is Dad too, if that clarifies things. Anyway, Dad and Mom talked and decided the basement is now an office. Don't go into the basement. Seriously. Final warning.

### Cast:

ACTOR #1 Dingus: Zoella Sneed

ACTOR #2 Teenie, Julie: Roni Shelley Perez

ACTOR #3 Mom, Lascivious Robert, Dad, The Claw: Dani Cleveland

ACTOR #4 Dad, Linda, Jard: Carina DuMarce

ACTOR #5 Little/Big/Old/Dead Sal: Allana Pommier

**Stage Directions:** Abz Cameron

8:00PM - 9:30PM

## BENSON FIRST FRIDAY PROGRAM (BENSON THEATRE)

6054 Maple St.

Variety show of local and national artists

## SATURDAY, JUNE 3

9:30AM - 11:20AM (SCC 201A)

## PLAYLAB AND RESPONSE SESSION

*More of a Heart*

by Dave Osmundsen

**Director:** Carrie Nath

**Dramaturg:** Jihye Kim

**Design Wing Fellow:** Paul Jonathan Davis

**Respondents:** Mashuq Mushtaq Deen, Mia Chung

**Synopsis:** When Mary-Ellen's son Zachary was diagnosed with Autism, she became his fiercest advocate. But now, Zachary is grown up and having his own thoughts and feelings about her advocacy. When an unexpected crisis hits their lives, mother and son must say the things that need to be said before time runs out.

### Cast:

Zachary: Ben Pearson

Mary-Ellen: Stephanie Anderson

Anne: Kim Jubenville

Rachel: Abz Cameron

Ben: Jared Dominguez

ABA Instructor: Jessica Johnson

**Stage Directions:** Nick Jansen

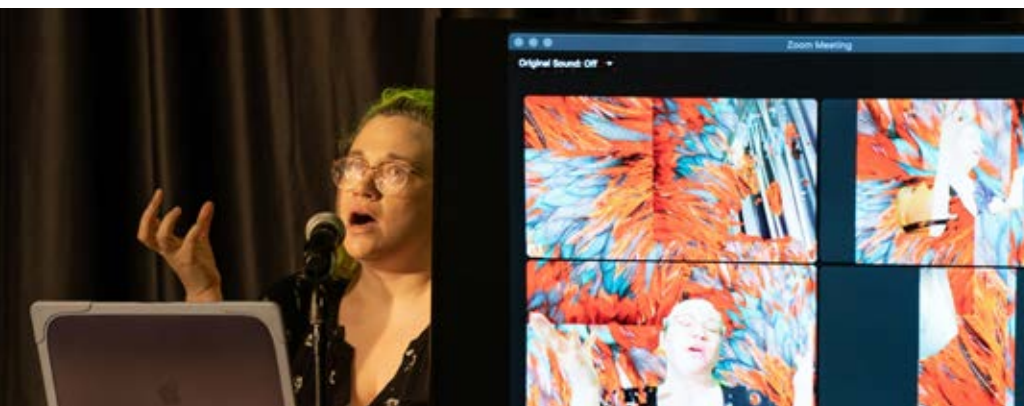
12:30PM - 1:45PM (MULE BARN)

## LUNCH & DESIGN INSTALLATION

Design Wing talk begins at 1:30pm

6:00PM - 9:00PM (SCC 201)

## CLOSING CELEBRATION





**PLAYFEST**



# PLAYFEST

## A Free Festival of Contemporary Performance

PlayFest is a season of new works performed in various locations across Omaha. PlayFest examines how theatre is produced, its connection to society and what new designs are possible. Performances take in a variety of forms from devised theatre and movement work created by local and national artists, to full-length plays highlighting the work of artists from the GPTC Conference, to Neighborhood Tapestries, a celebration of local stories, music, art and community. The goal of PlayFest is to paint a diverse and vibrant portrait of the city, create a chance for friends and neighbors to interact, and be a catalyst for a dialogue within the community about the stories that affect our lives.



### PLAYFEST SPONSORS

**Goldenrod \$20,000+**  
National Endowment for the Arts

**Blue Aster \$5,000+**  
Nebraska Arts Council

**Primrose \$1,000+**  
Sara Foxley

**Coneflower \$100-\$500+**  
Ellen Hargus  
Carol & Rick Russell

PlayFest is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. To find out more about how NEA grants impact individuals and communities, visit [www.arts.gov](http://www.arts.gov).



GREAT PLAINS THEATRE COMMONS PRESENTS  
THE WORLD PREMIERE OF  
**PRACTICE HOUSE**  
By Rachael Carnes. Directed by Susie Baer Collins.



Kara Davidson  
(Betsy)



Evelyn Hill  
(Viola)



Mary Kelly  
(Miss Van Rose)



Lauren Krupski  
(Jennie Claire)



Cork Ramer  
(Radio Announcer & Driver)



Erika Hall-Sieff  
(Elma)



Rachael Carnes  
(Playwright)



Susie Baer Collins  
(Director)



Krista Freimuth  
(Stage Manager)



Hannah Clark  
(Props Designer)



Denise Ervin  
(Costume Designer)



Brendan Greene-Walsh  
(Co-Sound Design)



Kevin Lawler  
(Audio Engineer)



Bill Van Deest  
(Scenic Designer)

## PLAYFEST PRODUCTION

*Practice House*

by Rachael Carnes

7:30PM – 10:00PM (YATES ILLUMINATES)

WORLD PREMIERE, DEVELOPED AS A GPTC NEW PLAY CONFERENCE PLAYLAB IN 2021

Practice House is based on a real chapter in American education, in which babies were leased from local orphanages for the purpose of training women in the new and improved “scientific parenting methods.”

**Director:** Susie Baer Collins**Stage Manager:** Krista Freimuth**Cast:**

Betsy: Kara Davidson

Viola: Evelyn Hill

Miss Van Rose: Mary Kelly

Jennie Claire: Lauren Krupski

Radio Announcer &amp; Driver: Cork Ramer

Elma: Erika Hall-Sieff

**Scenic Design:** Bill Van Deest**Props Design:** Hannah Clark**Costume Design:** Denise Ervin**Co-Sound Design:** Kevin Lawler, Brendan Greene-Walsh, Susie Baer Collins**Audio Engineer:** Craig Marsh/Pink Giraffe**Props Design Consultant:** Chris Pliatska**Drawing Book Artist:** Chelsey Hill**ASL Interpreters 5/31:** Pamela Duncan, M.S. & Summer Dykstra**Front of House:** Alyssa Gonzalez & Steve Knox**Poster Design:** @qmetalc

A recorded version of the play will be screened at a later date during the summer. If you are interested in attending virtually, please email [commons@gptcplays.com](mailto:commons@gptcplays.com)

**CW:** Nobody under the age of 14 will be admitted due to mature content. The world of this play depicts a loss of liberty and human rights, with reference to and exploration of institutional discrimination, white supremacy, facism, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual assault, human trafficking, child abuse, self-harm, suicide, violence, electrocution, mutilation, torture, and death. The author has derived all characters, plot and dialogue from actual events in American history.

**MAY 31 - JUNE 2, 2023, 7:30PM**

Yates Illuminates  
3260 Davenport St.







**PLAYWRIGHTS**



**NAYNA AGRAWAL**

Featured in *Variety*'s "100 Writers to Watch" (2015), **Nayna Agrawal** is a former NYC analyst, a former DC policy writer, a former international aid director, and a former touring dancer. Her plays have been staged or produced in New York, Los Angeles, Seattle and Chicago. She is the recipient of an East West Players (LA) playwright scholarship, a Moving Arts Theater (LA) playwright fellowship and a Kuma Kahua Theatre (HI) playwright award. In 2023, her plays will appear at StudioTenn in Nashville and Signature Theatre in DC. Nayna is an alumna of the Unlock Her Potential initiative (2022), The Salon initiative (2021), Disney ABC TV Writers Program (2019) and the Sesame Street Writers Program (2018). She has written for Disney, ABC, Netflix, DreamWorks, Mattel and won a development deal with Sesame Street. Recent credits include ABC's *The Baker and The Beauty*, Disney's *Encanto*, an upcoming Disney film, and a Netflix live-action YA fantasy show.



**ODED GROSS**

**Oded Gross**'s plays have been produced at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Great Lakes Theater, Boston Court and Moscow Art Theatre in Russia. His adaptations include Moliere's *The Imaginary Invalid*, Goldoni's *The Servant of Two Masters* and Gogol's *The Government Inspector*. His farce *Heart Attack With A Knife* was produced at Kentucky's Y.E.S. Festival. The Comedy of Romeo and Juliet, a satiric take on the Shakespeare classic played at the HBO Workspace, and his play, *Dantino's*, an original Commedia about gay marriage was a finalist at Eugene O'Neill's National Playwrights Conference. Currently, he's getting his MFA at Columbia University. [www.odedgross.com](http://www.odedgross.com)



**SURREY HOULKER**

**Surrey Houlker** (she/her) is a Queer, Massachusetts-based theater-maker who explores the intricacies of the LGBTQIA+ experience through community, honesty, & humor. She is also a big crier. Surrey's first full-length play *for the fish* was workshopped with Moonbox Productions in 2022 & Depot for New Play Readings in 2023. She is elated & honored to share *for the fish* with folks at Great Plains Theatre Commons this summer. Other plays include *The Dead Dadz Club* (reading: TC2 Theatre Company), ten-minute plays: *Linda's Donuts*, *Seven Minutes*, *Untitled Turkey Day Play*, and *Bridget & Liz*. BFA: Emerson College | In-Progress MFA: Lesley University. [www.linktr.ee/shoulker](http://www.linktr.ee/shoulker)

**MILES ORDUÑA**

**Miles Orduña** is a New York City-based writer by way of Silicon Valley and Des Moines, IA. His plays have been developed and/or presented by Naked Angels (Tuesdays@9 & 1stMondays, Royal Family Productions (2022/23 Emerging Artist), Fresh Ground Pepper (2022 BRB Retreat, Cherry Picking (2022), and The New School for Drama. His pilot *The Death of the Great American Mall* was a 2022 Sundance Episodic Lab finalist. He's incredibly grateful to GPTC for this amazing opportunity. BFA: SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Theater Arts, MFA: The New School for Drama.



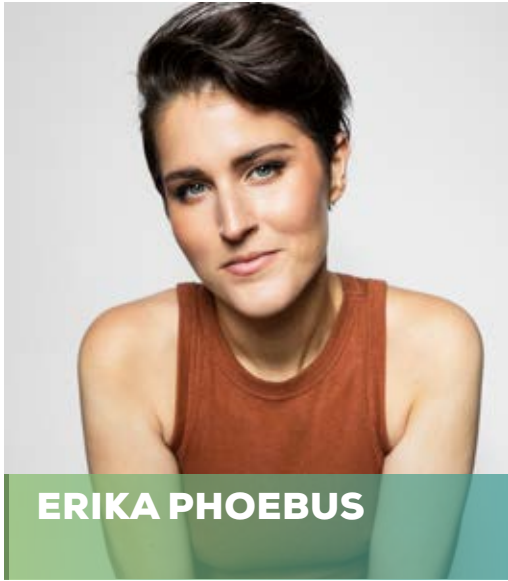
**DAVE OSMUNDSEN**

**Dave Osmundsen** (He/Him/His) is a queer and Autistic playwright whose work has been seen and developed at the Kennedy Center/NNPN MFA Playwrights Workshop, Purple Crayon Players, B Street Theatre, the William Inge Theatre Festival, Phoenix Theatre Company, Clamour Theatre Company, Premiere Stages, the Valdez Theatre Conference, and more. His play *Light Switch* was a Distinguished Achievement recipient of the Jean Kennedy Smith Playwriting Award. A recipient of the Blank Theatre/Ucross Foundation's inaugural Future of Playwriting Prize, his plays have been published by *The Dionysian*, *Canyon Voices*, *Exposition Review*, Concord Theatricals, Broadway Play Publishing, and more. MFA: Arizona State University.



**ANYA PEARSON**

**Anya Pearson** is an award-winning playwright, poet, screenwriter, producer, actress, and activist. A '21-22 Hodder Fellow at Princeton University, she is currently finishing her debut collection of poetry, writing a novel, three pilots, launching a BIPOC-owned wearable activism clothing label, and *constantly* plotting, planning, devising, imagining, and revising visions of a better, more just world. Her plays include: *The Measure Of Innocence* (The Kilroys List, Drammy Award, Finalist: Oregon Book Award), *Made To Dance in Burning Buildings* (Showcase: Joe's Pub, NYC; STT, Portland, OR), *The Killing Fields* (2018 Orphic Commission; Valdez Theatre Conference; Seven Devils New Play Foundry; Great Plains Theatre Conference), *Without A Formal Declaration of War* (PCS Commission, Seven Devils, JAW, Great Plains), *Three Love Songs* (Play at Home Initiative, PCS). [www.anyapearson.com](http://www.anyapearson.com)

**ERIKA PHOEBUS**

**Erika Phoebus** (she/her) is an NYC-based playwright whose work orbits around pleasure, autonomy, and all things magical, strange, and a little horrific. She is a winner of the Samuel French OOB Festival and was a finalist for the Soho Rep Writer Director Lab (2022-23). Her work has been developed or presented with the New Ohio Theatre, Fresh Ground Pepper NYC, Primary Stages, Torn Page, Actors Theatre of NY, and The McKittrick Hotel (home of *Sleep No More*), among others. Her play *Shark Week* is published by Concord Theatricals. BFA Creative Writing: Brooklyn College. [www.erikaphoebus.com](http://www.erikaphoebus.com)

**ANDREW RINCÓN**

**Andrew Rincón** is a Queer Colombian-American playwright. Their work blends fantasy, modern Latine mythology and Queer fabulation. They are the winner of the 2018 Chesley/Bumbalo Grant for writers of Gay and Lesbian Theatre and New Light New Voices Award (2019). Dramatist Guild Foundation Fellow (19-20), MacDowell Fellow (Winter 2020). Skidmore College's Playwright in Residence (21-22). Selected plays; *The Lonely (A Fictionally Non-Accurate Historical Kiki)*, *El Mito or The Myth of my Pain*. Their play *I Wanna Fuck like Romeo and Juliet* had its world premiere at 59e59 Theaters (produced by New Light Theater Project) and will be published by Concord Theatricals/Samuel French in 2023.



**PAUL MICHAEL THOMSON**

**Paul Michael Thomson** is a Chicago-based theatre artist and interdisciplinary scholar who always texts back. His plays have been developed or produced by Good Company Theatre, Haven Theatre, Definition Theatre, Live Theatre Workshop, Theatre L'Acadie, Avalanche Theatre, The Impostors Theatre Co., Chicago Children's Theatre, Young Actors Theatre of Indiana, and The Story Theatre, of which he is a founding ensemble member. He is under commission as the playwright-in-residence at Raven Theatre. Paul Michael is currently pursuing his PhD in Afro-American Studies from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. He is so grateful for this opportunity. [paulmichaelthomson.com](http://paulmichaelthomson.com)



**MALLORY JANE WEISS**

**Mallory Jane Weiss's** plays include *Big Black Sunhats* (The O'Neill National Playwrights Conference 2022; Clubbed Thumb Biennial Commission finalist 2020), *Lights Out And Away We Go* (Clubbed Thumb reading 2022), *The Page Turners* (Clauder Competition Gold Prize 2023; Princess Grace Award semi-finalist 2022; The O'Neill NPC finalist 2021), *Pony Up* (Princess Grace Award Finalist, 2019), and *Dave and Julia are stuck in a tree* (Playing on Air's James Stevenson Prize 2020). Mallory is an alumna of Clubbed Thumb's Early Career Writers' Group (2021-2022), The COOP's Clusterf\*\*k (2021), Gingold Theatrical Group's Speakers Corner (2018-2019), and Fresh Ground Pepper's BRB Retreat (2019). B.A.: Harvard University, M.F.A.: The New School. [www.malloryjaneweiss.com](http://www.malloryjaneweiss.com)

**PRAVIN WILKINS**

**Pravin Wilkins** is a published playwright & poet from San Diego, California, whose works typically deal with race & class struggle--and the many intersections between. In May 2020, Pravin received his MFA in Dramatic Writing from Carnegie Mellon University. His first full-length play, *Moreno*, was a 2020 O'Neill National Playwrights' Conference finalist and the winner of the 2020 Theatre503 International Playwriting Award: *Moreno* premiered in London in March 2022 and is published by Concord Theatricals. Pravin's other plays and monologues have been digitally produced by The Dramatic Question Theatre (*The Hamlet Monologues*, 2021) and Four Walls Theater (*Bars*, 2020).

**BAILEY WILLIAMS**

**Bailey Williams** is a writer of plays and fiction. Plays include *Events* (The Hearth/The Brick, Dec. 2022), *Coach Coach* (Clubbed Thumb/Winterworks, Jan. 2023), *I thought I would die but I didn't* (The Tank, May 2019) and *Buffalo Bailey's Ranch for Gay Horses Troubled Teen Girls and Other: a 90 Minute Timeshare Presentation* (Exponential Festival, Jan. 2018). MFA: Brooklyn College. [baileywilliams.live](http://baileywilliams.live)



# YOUNG DRAMATISTS



**PHOENIX NEHLS**

**Phoenix Nehls (Young Dramatist)** is a graduating senior from Millard South High School and is excited to be starting at Mount Holyoke College in the fall to study Public History and Archives. She is captain of her high school's debate team, president of her Thespian troupe, and administrator for the Patriots Care Pantry. She likes narrative fiction podcasts, her cat, and of course, Sherlock Holmes. This is her first script.



**OLIVIA WALLACE**

**Olivia Wallace (Young Dramatist)** will be a senior at Bryan High School. She is active in the theatre and journalism programs. This is her first script.

**GUEST ARTISTS**

# GUEST ARTISTS



**ELIZA BENT**

Writer/performer **Eliza Bent** creates “Bentertainments.” These include solo works, *Karen, I Said*, which the New York Times described as a “wicked satire,” *Toilet Fire*, Time Out New York Critic’s Pick; plays, *Indeed, Friend!*; adaptations, *The Beyonce*; and hybrid affairs, *Blue Wizard / Black Wizard*, published by Samuel French. Bent’s shows have been developed, workshopped, and produced at Abrons Arts Center, the Atlantic Theatre, Bushwick Starr, and New York Theatre Workshop’s Next Door Series. Residencies: MacDowell, SPACE on Ryder Farm, Goodman Theatre Playwrights Unit. Bent has performed in off off B’way venues, in regional LORTs, and toured internationally with Half Straddle. BA in philosophy, MFA in playwriting from Brooklyn College. Currently on faculty at Northwestern University’s Radio TV & Film department. INSTA @getbentobox



**DR. KATE BUSSELLE**

**Dr. Kate Busselle** (she/her/hers) is thrilled to be back at GPTC for the third year in a row! Kate is the founder of Heartland Intimacy Design & Training, a theatrical intimacy training company which offers academic, accessible, and affordable intimacy training entirely online. She has taught several workshops on staging intimacy, as well as designing intimacy for several productions. Her specific area of expertise is staging sexual trauma and assault and how to assist actors in leaving these moments behind in the theatre. She is Assistant Professor of Movement, Violence, and Intimacy at the University of Oklahoma. Kate completed her Ph.D. in Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Missouri in 2019 and recently became a Level 1 Margolis Method Certified Instructor. Kate is also an Advanced Actor Combatant with the Society of American Fight Directors (SAFD) with certifications in all weapon disciplines and theatrical firearms safety. She is also a member of the Association of Movement Theatre Educators (ATME), Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE). Kate is also a scholar of theatrical intimacy best practices and theorizing ethics of care. Her most recent articles can be found in *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* and *Theatre/Practice*.



**RACHAEL CARNES**

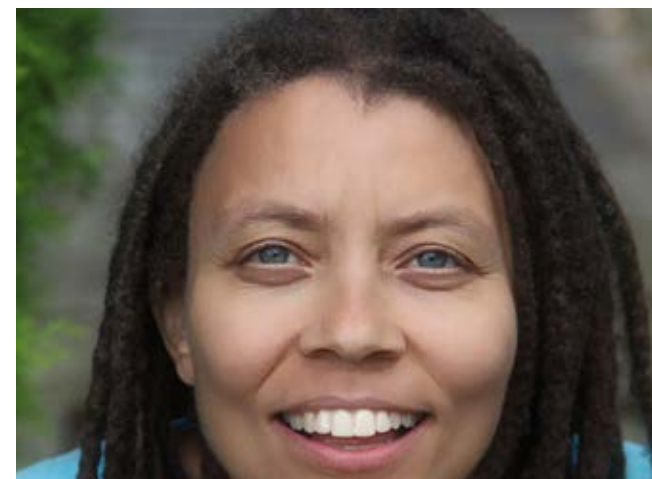
**Rachael Carnes** received a 2020 Oregon Literary Fellowship, a 2020 Oregon Arts Commission Grant, a 2021 Lighthouse Writers Workshop Advanced Dramatic Writing Fellowship, and is the recipient of the 2021 Jane Stevens Award in Theatre. Rachael has had productions of her work across the U.S., U.K., the Middle East, Canada and Asia. She’s published in many literary journals and has enjoyed developing work at many theater and writing festivals and conferences. She’s thrilled to premiere *Practice House* with the Great Plains Theatre Conference (Developed as a GPTC New Play Conference PlayLab in 2021)! Rachael and her family live in Oregon. She dedicates this play to her daughter, Jane. [www.rachaelcarnes.com](http://www.rachaelcarnes.com)

**MIA CHUNG**

**Mia Chung** received a 2023 Whiting Award for Drama. Her play *Catch as Catch Can* premiered at Playwrights Horizons in Fall 2022 (Off-Off-Broadway world premiere Page 73, 2018). Additional work: *Ball in the Air* (NAATCO/Public Theater 2022). *Double Take* (PH Almanac 2021). *This Exquisite Corpse* (multiple awards). *You for Me for You* (Royal Court, National Theatre Company of Korea, Woolly Mammoth, multiple regionals. Published: Bloomsbury Methuen.) Awards, commissions, residencies include: Clubbed Thumb, Helen Merrill, Huntington, Loewe Award, MTC/Sloan, NYTW, Playwrights' Center/Jerome, PH/Steinberg, Playwrights Realm, South Coast Rep, SPACE/Ryder Farm. Alum: Ma-Yi Writers Lab, New Dramatists.

**SUSIE BAER COLLINS**

**Susie Baer Collins** is a professional director, actor, and dialect coach. She served as Associate Artistic Director at the Omaha Community Playhouse from 1987–2014, where she directed a variety of more than 65 plays and musicals, including *Les Misérables*, *Ragtime*, *Not About Nightingales*, *The Importance of Being Ernest*, *Hairspray*, and *Caroline or Change*. Susie continues to work as a free-lance theatre artist in Omaha. She most recently directed the play *Outside Mullingar* during the 2022 Playhouse season, as well its 47th main stage production of *A Christmas Carol*. An actor, Susie has worked extensively in theatre and television as well as commercial radio and currently is heard on 94.5 Boomer Radio weekday mornings with her friend Dave Wingert. Among other awards and honors, Susie received the 2014 Governor's Arts Award for Outstanding Artist in 2014 and received the GPTC McDowell Award in 2019 for her service to the Omaha Theatre Community.

**KIA CORTHRON**

**Kia Corthron's** *Tempestuous Elements* premieres at Arena Stage February 2024. Awards: Simon Great Plains Playwright Award, Windham Campbell Prize, Horton Foote Award, Flora Roberts Award, USArtists Fellowship, McKnight National Residency. Productions: Playwrights Horizons, NY Theatre Workshop, Atlantic Theater Company, Manhattan Theatre Club, Yale Rep, Goodman, Taper, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Center Stage, Hartford Stage, Children's Theatre Company, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Eclipse Theatre, London's Royal Court and Donmar Warehouse. Novels: *The Castle Cross the Magnet Carter* (NYT Book Review Editor's Choice, winner of the Center for Fiction First Novel Prize), *Moon and the Mars*. Dramatists Guild Council, New Dramatists alumnus.



# GUEST ARTISTS



**MASHUQ MUSHTAQ DEEN**

**Mashuq Mushtaq Deen** is an award-winning writer whose works include *Draw The Circle*, *The Shaking Earth*, *The Betterment Society*, *The Vessel*, and *Flood*. His work has been supported with residencies and grants from the Siena Art Institute, Sundance Theatre Institute & the Ucross Foundation, Blue Mountain Center, MacDowell, Bogliasco Foundation, Helene Wurlitzer Foundation, SPACE at Ryder Farm, Tofte Lake Center, Chesley/Bumbalo Foundation, Arch and Bruce Brown Foundation, NYFA, Bronx Cultural Council, and TCG. He is a PWC Core Writer and member of the Dramatists Guild. He writes from the lens of liminality.



**RON DOMINGO**

**Ron Domingo** has been a professional actor in New York City for the last thirty years.



**MADELINE EASLEY**

**Madeline Easley** is a Wyandotte artist whose work as a writer and performer converges at the intersection of magical realism and elevation of Tribal Sovereignty. Born in Kansas City, MO, Madeline is a proud citizen of the Wyandotte Nation of Oklahoma (Porcupine Clan). She is the inaugural Four Directions Resident Playwright for 2023, a 2022 Greenhouse Playwriting Resident at SPACE on Ryder Farm, and a 2021 First Peoples Fund Cultural Capital Fellow. Her plays include *Shift*, *Feast for the Dead*, and a new play commissioned by KCREP centering on Lyda Conley and her protection of the Wyandot National Burying Ground. @measley12



**JOSÉ CRUZ GONZÁLEZ**

**José Cruz González's** plays include *If by Chance* (South Coast Repertory commission), *The Extraordinary ZLuna Captures the World* (Denver Center Theatre commission), *Under a Baseball Sky*, *American Mariachi*, *Sunsets & Margaritas*, *September Shoes*. Mr. González was selected as one of the inaugural 2022 Kennedy Center's Next 50, a new initiative celebrating cultural leadership with 50 trailblazing leaders and organizations. Mr. González was a 2016 PEN Center USA Literary Award Finalist. He is a member of the College of Fellows of the American Theatre, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and Professor Emeritus at California State University Los Angeles.

**CHRISTINA HAM**

**Christina Ham's** plays have been produced both nationally and internationally at the Kennedy Center, Arena Stage, South Coast Repertory Theatre, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Tokyo International Arts Festival, and The Market Theatre in South Africa to name a few. Her plays are published by Dramatic Publishing, PlayScripts, Inc., Smith and Kraus, and Oberon Books. She is currently a member of the Playwrights Union and The Kilroys. A graduate of the University of Southern California and a MFA in Playwriting from The UCLA School of Theater, Film, and Television, she was nominated for an Emmy Award for the hit Netflix series *Sweet Tooth*. [www.christinaham.com](http://www.christinaham.com)

**DR. AMY LANE**

**Dr. Amy Lane** is an Associate Professor of Theatre at Creighton University where she serves as the Program Director for Musical Theatre & Theatre. At Creighton, she teaches Theatre for Social Justice, Theatre History, Directing, and Contemporary Dramatic Literature. Recent directing credits include *Men on Boats* at the Omaha Community Playhouse, *In the Next Room or the Vibrator Play* at the Blue Barn, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* at Creighton University. Her theatrical work has also focused on developing and directing new works for the stage such as Ellen Struve's *Old Bat* (GPTC), *Recommended Reading for Girls* and *The Dairy Maid-Right*, Laura Campbell's *Eminent Domain*, Max Sparber's *Buffalo Bill's Cowboy Band*, and most recently Marie Amthor Schuett's *Stuck with Lemons*.

# GUEST ARTISTS



**SIBYL KEMPSON**

**Sibyl Kempson** began writing and making her own performances in NYC at the turn of the millennium. She launched the 7 Daughters of Eve Thtr. & Perf. Co. in 2015. Works have been staged and presented in theaters and museums in NYC, across the United States, and internationally. Her plays are published by 53rd State Press, in *PLAY: Journal of Plays*, and *PAJ*. She teaches and has taught at Brooklyn College, Bryn Mawr College, Sarah Lawrence College, Victoria College of the Arts/ University of Melbourne, The Atlantic Center for the Arts, the New School, and through 7 Daughters of Eve. [www.7daughtersofeve.com](http://www.7daughtersofeve.com) @7daughters



**JIHYE KIM**

**Jihye Kim** is a freelance dramaturg and a deviser based in L.A and Seoul. Her interest and specialty lie in new play development, ensemble-devising, site-specific immersive works and literary translation (Korean to English). Some of her collaborators include Jaerin Son (*Dogs or Cats; Augmented Body, The Waves: Blue Night Shattering, Butcher Hands Up!, This is NOT Shakespeare*), Haejung Hwang (*Chinese Cabinet*), Hoongu Kang (*Rocket Candy, Badasugi, Phonepari, Motherfucker Oedipus*), Chankyu Park (*The Seoripool Cats, Burgundy Muki Channel Intro*), Joo Jin (*Ladies' Room*), Lyra Yang (*The Opticians, Paper Dream, The Peachlanders, Blue Moon*), Chil Kong (*Finding Christmas*), Hee-won Kim (*His Truth is Marching On*). Jihye was a research dramaturg for Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig's *Snow In Midsummer* and has worked for Great Plains Theatre Common's New Play Conference and Philadelphia Asian Performing Artists Playwrights Project in 2022, UCSB's Launch Pad in 2019, DMV Q Fest 4.0 in 2021, and *Clay & Water* in 2022. She is a current season researcher at Doosan Art Center in Seoul. In 2021-2022, *Dogs or Cats; Augmented Body*, the experimental puppet show she co-developed with Jaerin Son has performed in Steppenwolf and Links Hall Chicago. In addition to her dramaturgy work, she enjoys teaching devising and solo performance workshop for non-professional performers.



**FRAN SILLAU**

**Fran Sillau** (HE/HIM/HIS) Fran has worked professionally as a playwright, director, producer, education coordinator, teaching artist, arts administrator, grant writer, and inclusion consultant working extensively within the world of Theater For Young Audiences for over twenty years. Fran serves as the Director of Accessibility at The Rose Theater, He also serves as Executive Artistic Director of Circle Theatre, Omaha's theater for individuals of all abilities. He is a frequent contractor for The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Fran serves on the board of the International Inclusion Arts Network and holds an MFA specializing in directing and inclusion from Goddard College.



# GUEST ARTISTS



**KHALID Y. LONG, Ph.D**

**Khalid Y. Long**, Ph.D, is an assistant professor in the Department of Theatre and Films Studies and the Institute for African American Studies at the University of Georgia. Khalid is a scholar, dramaturg, and director, specializing in African American/Black diasporic theatre, performance, and literature through the lenses of Black feminist/ womanist thought, queer studies, and performance studies. In addition to being a regular dramaturg with GPTC, his dramaturgy credits included the works of August Wilson, Adrienne Kennedy, Kirsten Greenidge, James Ijames, and Dominique Morisseau, among others. He is the co-editor of the forthcoming anthology, *Contemporary Black Theatre and Performance: Acts of Rebellion, Activism, and Solidarity*, to be released in May 2023.



**CHING VALDES-ARAN**

**Ching Valdes-Aran** is an OBIE award-winning theater artist/director/visual artist who resides in NYC. Other Awards: 2021 Ruthie Award, Fox Foundation Fellow, Asian Cultural Council Fellow, Dramatist's Charles Bowden Award, Ma-Yi Theater Award for Artistic Excellence, MAP grantee (Foundry), U.S. Congressional Award for Arts & Culture, others. Films & TV: *Missing Link* (Golden Globe, 6 Oscar nominations), Lav Diaz's *What it was Before* (Palm de Oro, Locarno Int'l Film Festival ), *Sex & The City I*, *Across the Universe*, *Blacklist*, Others. Ching traveled nationally and internationally for 2.5 years before the pandemic lock-down in Geoff Sobelle's *HOME* and resumed this July at The Galway Int'l Festival. She will be seen in People's Light production of Sam Shepard's *True West*.



**ALEX VERMILLION**

**Alex Vermillion** (ze/zir/zirs) is a dramaturg, artist, and educator. Zir dramaturgy credits include *blues for miss lucille* at the Yale School of Drama; *Henry VI, Part III* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* with Play On Shakespeare; and *We Are Proud to Present...* at the Yale Cabaret. Ze is currently the PR & Digital Content Writer for Play On Shakespeare and has been a guest artist at festivals such as the Great Plains Theatre Commons and a guest lecturer at Skidmore College. At Yale, Alex served as Co-Artistic Director of the Yale Cabaret and a Managing Editor at Theater magazine. Alex received zir M.F.A. in Dramaturgy & Dramatic Criticism at YSD (2020), zir B.A. in English and Theatre at the University of Utah (2016), and is currently working on their D.F.A. in Dramaturgy at Yale.

# GUEST ARTISTS



**DERON S. WILLIAMS**

**DeRon S. Williams**, he/him (Dramaturgy Mentor) is an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Loyola University Chicago, a scholar, and a freelance dramaturg and director. He also serves as the dramaturgy mentor at Loyola University Chicago. His dramaturgy credits include *Toni Stone* (Goodman); *Trouble in Mind*, *Boulevard of Bold Dreams* (Timeline Theatre); and *Anon(ymous)* (Middle Tennessee State). His directing and associate directing credits include *The Lil' Flo and Big Moe Show!* (Hartford Stage); *Trouble in Mind* (Timeline Theatre); *Jump, Aladdin Jr., Mulan Jr., Leftovers* (Kennedy Center). As a scholar of African American theatre, drama, performance, and directing techniques and pedagogies, Williams is co-editing the forthcoming edited volume *Contemporary Black Theatre & Performance: Acts of Rebellion, Activism, and Solidarity* as a part of the Agitations: Politics, Text, Performance series that accentuates the expansiveness of Black theatre and performance and how the usage of conventional and nonconventional performance techniques persist to function as a vehicle of activism. He has published in *The Journal of American Drama* and *Theatre and Continuum: The Journal of African Diaspora Drama*. Williams is also working on two new book projects. He received a BA in Theatre from Albany State University (GA), an MA in Arts Administration from Eastern Michigan University, and a Ph.D. in Theatre at Texas Tech University.



**SAMUEL YATES, Ph.D**

**Samuel Yates**, Ph.D., is a deaf artist and researcher who is a resident dramaturg and Assistant Professor of Theatre at Pennsylvania State University. Selected dramaturgy work: *La Casa de la Laguna* at Gala Hispanic Theatre (world premiere), *Care: The Musical* (3Arts/Art Institute of Chicago), *Teenage Dick* (Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Pasadena Playhouse, The Huntington Theatre), *Fairview* and *Violet* (Millikin U), *Historias* (Rainbow Theatre). Recent disability/artistic consulting includes *She Kills Monsters* (UMBC), *Into the Woods* (U Mass-Amherst), and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* (Penn State), and for such disparate companies/schools as the NEA, Ohio State U, and Gensler. They've previously worked in the literary offices of The Abbey Theatre (Ireland) and the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, and now freelance. Samuel's current book project, *Crippling Broadway: Producing Disability in the American Musical*, concerns disability aesthetics and accessibility practices in Broadway musicals, asking how our notions of disability and the able body inform and transforms theatrical performance.

**DESIGN WING**



# DESIGN WING

The Great Plains Theatre Commons Design Wing expands the conceptual boundaries and experiential reference for a new generation of designers in the performing arts. Five emerging designers embark on an exploration of process and are deeply immersed with the artists and activities at the GPTC. The designers will move between the GPTC events, workshops and a design lab, with emphasis on the latest developments in the design process for the performing arts and integration with the national playwrights at the conference. The designers will have a chance to expand their purview with these top national artists with the goal of strengthening the cultural fabric of the performing arts both locally and nationally.

The work of the Design Wing will correspond with a larger collaborative effort by the GPTC to explore new possibilities for how creativity becomes manifest in our communities.



**JARED MEZZOCCHI**  
Design Wing Mentor

**Jared Mezzocchi** (Design Wing Mentor) is a two-time OBIE Award-winning theater artist, working as a director, multimedia designer, playwright, and actor. Mezzocchi's work has appeared at notable theaters nationwide, including The Kennedy Center, Geffen Playhouse, Portland Centerstage, Cleveland Playhouse, South Coast Rep, GEVA Theatre, and many more. In 2016, he received his first OBIE, Lucille Lortel and Henry Hewes Award for his work in Qui Nguyen's *Vietgone* at the Manhattan Theatre club. In 2020, the New York Times spotlighted his multimedia innovations alongside the pandemic work of four other theater artists, including Andrew Lloyd Webber and Paula Vogel. His directorial work on Sarah Gancher's live-digital production *Russian Troll Farm* was also celebrated as a New York Times critic pick and praised for being one of the first digitally native successes for virtual theater. In 2023, this digital production of *Russian Troll Farm* won Jared his second OBIE as director and multimedia designer. Mezzocchi is a two-time Macdowell Artist Fellow, a 2012 Princess Grace Award winner, and is an Associate Professor at The University of Maryland, where he created the curriculum for the multimedia track within the MFA Design program. Mezzocchi has a BA in theater and film from Fairfield University, and an MFA in performance and interactive media arts from Brooklyn College. He grew up in New Hampshire and returns every summer to serve as Producing Artistic Director of Andy's Summer Playhouse, an innovative children's theater producing original work by professional artists from across the country.



**PAUL JONATHAN DAVIS**

**Paul Jonathan Davis** is a multifaceted theater artist, primarily focused on Lighting Design and Directing. Before moving to NYC, I spent my pre-pandemic years directing and designing productions on the Monterey Peninsula in California. My favorite credits include *Next to Normal*, *Cinderella*, *Chicago*, *Almost Maine*, *Antigone*, and more. I am currently working on my MFA in Lighting Design from NYU and am thrilled to be alongside some of New York's best up-and-coming designers. I want to thank my parents for their support and my Fiancé for holding down the fort while I'm gone. [www.pauljonathandavis.com](http://www.pauljonathandavis.com)  
[@pauljonathandavisdesigns](https://www.instagram.com/pauljonathandavisdesigns)



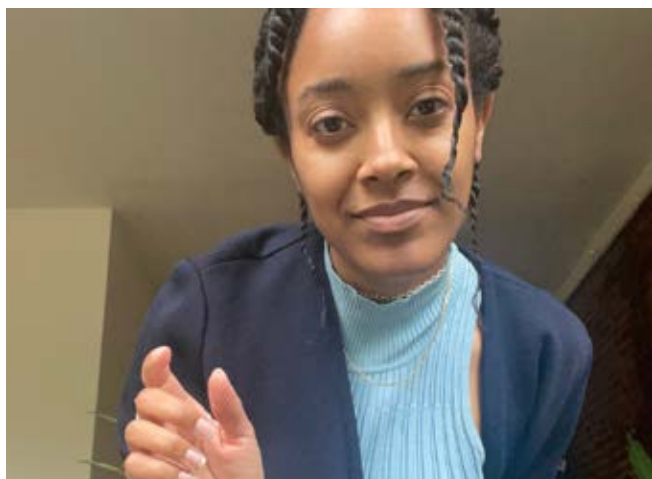
**Leo Grierson** (They/He) Design: *Here I am* (Georgetown Labs), *Proving Up* (Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center), *Tiny Beautiful Things* (Rogue Theatre Company). Playwriting/Directing: *Playing Wolves* (Jim Henson Awards), *The Witches You Couldn't Burn: A WitchTok LiveStream* (Fearless New Plays Festival), *Cabin 12* (New American Theatre Festival, Oregon Shakespeare Festival Midnight Project, Fresno Rogue Festival, Oregon Fringe Festival), and *The American Girl Cycle* (Oregon Fringe Festival). They are currently pursuing an MFA in multimedia design at The University of Maryland.



Originally from Norfolk, UK, **Tim Kelly** graduated from the University of York BA Writing, Directing and Performance in 2016 before moving to London to work as a freelance theatre creative and technologist with work spanning disciplines including lighting, set, video, and interactive media. He's passionate about work that plays with form and sits at the intersection of performance, accessibility, and technology. He is currently based in Maryland, pursuing an MFA in Media Design for Theatre at UMD. Selected credits: *This Beautiful Future* (Lighting and Projection Designer, Jermyn Street Theatre). *Antigone* (Lighting Design & Production Manager, New Diorama). *Electrolyte* (Lighting Designer, UK Tour) [www.timothykelly.co.uk](http://www.timothykelly.co.uk). Instagram: @therealjimjelly







**ADRIENNE MIIKELLE**

**Adrienne Miikelle** is a New York city based visual artist and storyteller. Endlessly inspired by the natural color and pattern found in the sky, she explores creating and enhancing atmospheres through light, adding rich layered depth to color and finding calm in the repetition of form. Her exploration of new concepts often begins in collage.



**ANDRE SEGAR**

**Andre Segar** is an African American world-traveling Lighting Designer. He is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University School of Drama with a BFA in Lighting Design. Now residing in New York, Andre attends NYU in Tisch's Design for Stage and Film pursuing his MFA. Before pursuing his BFA and MFA in Lighting Design, he spent over a decade traveling the world with touring companies such as Royal Caribbean Cruise Line International; Feld Entertainment; and NetWorks Entertainment where he worked on shows such as *Disney on Ice*; *Marvel Universe Live*; and *Dirty Dancing the Musical*, respectively. Andre's creative goals is to bring real life magic to the stage, through illusion and perspective. Using light as a medium, he strives to transport audiences to creative, bold and unique worlds to help put them inside of the stories being told. His work has been seen and supported by Williamstown Theater Festival, The Contemporary Arts Center in New Orleans, The Kelly Strayhorn Theater, Manhattan Theater Club at the Samuel J. Friedman Theater, Playwright Horizon, The Brick, The Eddy Theater at Chatham University, Helen Wayne Rauh Theater at Carnegie Mellon University, and the Tisch Dance Program at NYU in the Jack Crystal Theater.



# PLAYLAB DIRECTORS

# PLAYLAB DIRECTORS



**TAYLOR ADAMS**

**Taylor Adams** (They/Them) is an Omaha based director and designer. They currently are a fellow for the Holland Community Opera Fellowship at Opera Omaha. Most recently, they directed the Creighton University Production of *Ruthless!: The Stage Mother of all Musicals* in February of 2023. At the Rose Children's Theater, they previously directed the world premiere of *Popularity Coach* by Brian Guehring. They are passionate about creating community led artistic spaces, specifically making space for GenderQueer individuals to step into roles that are aligned with their gender identity. XOXO to Fabian, their family, and their cat Francisco. Instagram: @Taylor.the.Painter



**BREANNA CARODINE**

**Breanna Carodine** made her directorial debut in 2018 with the staged reading of *Lasso of Truth*. She also directed *Women Laughing Alone with Salad* (OCP) *Down the Rabbit Hole* (Radio Theatre Omaha) and *Deadass* (GPTC). She has served as an Assistant Director for *Shrek*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, and *The Color Purple* (OCP.) Her most recent pricey was *Black Women Rebel* (RTO). Currently she serves as a People Operations Specialist at Vannevar Labs and cohosts the Queensized podcast.



**ANNA JORDAN FRUSH**

**Anna Jordan Frush** (she/her) is an actor, educator and director from Omaha currently based in Kansas City. She holds her BA in Theatre from the University of Nebraska at Omaha and has worked with GPTC as a director or an actor for over a decade, having directed *oh, to be pure again* in 2022 and *Perennials* in 2021. Most recently, she taught Acting at UNO in the School of the Arts, played Emily in *Heroes of the Fourth Turning*, Caroline in *I and You* (OEAA Nominee, Best Actor in a Play), and Nimme in *The Woodsman*—all at the BLUEBARN, Karen in *The Spongebob Musical* at The Rose, and Desdemona in *Othello* in Nebraska Shakespeare's final season.



# PLAYLAB DIRECTORS



**HALEY HAAS**

**Haley Haas** is the Artistic Director and Co-Founder of Anastasis Theatre Co. She recently directed the tour of the Anastasis play *More Than a Number*, as well as the original production of the play inside NE State Penitentiary. Haley worked for 15 years as an actor and the Training and Education Director for R.E.S.P.E.C.T., a touring educational theatre company. As an actor, favorite regional shows include: *Silent Sky* (Henrietta TAG award for Outstanding Lead Actress) and *Red Summer* (Virginia) at the Blue Barn Theatre. Haley holds a BFA in Theater performance from Creighton University. She has also trained with the groundbreaking community-engaged theater company Cornerstone based in Los Angeles, CA.



**JAY HAYDEN**

**Jay Hayden** (they/them) is a genderqueer performer, playwright, educator, activist, and list-maker. Jay is the Director of Teen Programming at The Rose Theater in Omaha NE — at The Rose, Jay supervises the High School Internship, oversees all classes for students ages 12-18, and produces the free-to-participate Teens 'n' Theater season, where teens create devised, justice-based theatre. Jay is a co-conspirator with Old School Shakespeare Omaha, is a proud member of Ring of Keys, and is a Theatre of the Oppressed practitioner. They have previously worked with Vermont Stage, Theatre SilCo, and Vermont Fairy Tale — and are overjoyed to be adding GPTC to the list! Proud graduate of the University of Vermont. @flareupwithlove



**SIERRA LANCASTER**

**Sierra Lancaster** (she/her) is a producer, director, performer, and arts advocate based in New York City. Originally from Omaha, NE, Sierra came to the city after receiving her BFA in Musical Theatre (Directing Emphasis) with a minor in Creative Entrepreneurship from the Boston Conservatory at Berklee in May of 2022. Sierra is the Founder and Executive Producer of Samuel-Lancaster Productions, a production company dedicated to dismantling systemic oppression through storytelling and the restructuring of artistic practices. She currently serves as the Artistic Programming Coordinator at the Tony Award winning Broadway Advocacy Coalition. As a producer, Sierra has worked at notable organizations including The Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center and Eva Price's production company, Maximum Entertainment Productions. In the fall of 2021, Sierra made her Broadway debut as a Co-Producer on Antoinette Nwandu's *Pass Over* (New York Times Critics Pick), which was the first play to open on Broadway after the pandemic shutdown. Sierra is a proud recipient of the Charlene Gordon Arts Impact Award, and is currently a member of the 2023 Theater Producers of Color cohort. Sierra also serves as the Creative Producer for the band Lyric and The Vision, and the artist Sage Jepson. Upcoming projects: *Payanam alMuhajir* (Actor), *Songs I Never Thought I'd Sing* at Green Room 42 (Performer). [www.sierralancaster.com](http://www.sierralancaster.com)

# PLAYLAB DIRECTORS



**Bryan Moore** (MFA, University of Iowa) is a Professor and Director of Theatre at Concordia University, Nebraska, and is the Past President of the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (LMDA). His 25+ years of theatre experience includes new play and production dramaturgy, directing, applied theatre, technical theatre, and acting. Shows directed include *The Mountaintop*, *12 Angry Jurors*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Mary Poppins*, *Harvey*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Rabbit Hole*, *Lost in Yonkers*, and *The Giver*. Locally, he is a board member and director at Olde Glory Theatre (Seward). This is Bryan's 6th year with GPTC, previously serving as director, dramaturg, and guest artist. He was the dramaturg for the first cohort of the GPTC Commoners, and he will serve as the dramaturg for the Omaha Community Playhouse's first New Omaha Works (NOW) Lab. His research interests include social/cultural identity and use of storytelling in multicultural drama.



**Carrie A Nath** is Managing Director, The Art of Imagination, Ollie Webb Center, Inc., serving adults with intellectual and developmental disability. She served as Executive Director, The Kentucky Center Governor's School for the Arts; Director of Education, Kentucky Arts Council; Associate Director of Education, Seattle Opera; and Education Consultant, Ford's Theater, D.C. Artistic credits include Manhattan School of Music; Cornish College of the Arts; multiple Shakespeare companies; Seattle Repertory Theater; Actor's Theater of Louisville; Washington National Opera. Ms. Nath serves as a Nebraska Arts Council (NAC) roster artist and a panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts and NAC. Carrie is also a Workshop Guest Artist for the 2023 Conference.



**Isaiah Ruiz** is a Director, Actor, and Community Engagement Director born and raised in California and now resides with his 2 dogs in Omaha, NE. Isaiah is the Director of Community Connections for The Rose Theater. Previously Isaiah served as a Resident Director and Outreach Director for Chino Community Children's Theater. He has studied Communications and Political Science. Isaiah attended The Young Americans College Of The Performing Arts where he received a Certificate In Music Outreach. His Director credits include *Last Stop On Market Street*, *13 The Musical*, *The Lion King* and so many more. @theisaiahruiz



# PLAYLAB DIRECTORS



**ROXANNE WACH**

**Roxanne Wach** - A multifaceted artist, she has performed, designed and directed for many Omaha stages over the past 50 years, including Bellevue Little Theatre, Chanticleer Theater, New York International Fringe Festival, Omaha Symphony, Omaha Community Playhouse, Opera Omaha, Shelterbelt Theatre, SNAP! Productions, and at The Kennedy Center's New Visions/New Voices. Roxanne is the Executive Director for Shelterbelt Theatre, Omaha's home for new plays. She hopes to ignite interest in not just seeing new plays but supporting the page to stage process. She also is the Executive Director of Compassion Omaha, a visual artist and creator of Innerscapes Nail Potions.



**WAI YIM**

**Wai Yim** is an actor, director, choreographer, playwright, and the Managing Director of Chicago's Token Theatre. Wai last appeared in Mary Zimmerman's *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* (Goodman Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre Company, The Old Globe). Acting credits: *A Christmas Carol*, *The King of Hell's Palace*, *Postnation* and *King of the Yees* (Goodman Theatre); *Chimerica* (TimeLine Theatre); Mary Zimmerman's *The White Snake* (The Old Globe, McCarter Theatre, Wuzhen Theatre Festival in China); *The Oldest Boy* (Unicorn Theatre); *Nomad Motel* (Horizon Theatre Company). Film: *North of the 10*, *Fatal Influence: Like, Follow, Survive*. TV: *Work in Progress*, *Power Book IV: Force*, *neXt*, *Chicago PD*, *The Chi*, *Patriot*. Wai recently directed *The Chinese Lady* at BLUEBARN Theatre in Omaha. His semi-autobiographical play, *The Emperor and The Fool* (Chronicles of the House of Yim) was also workshopped there and won OEAA's Best New Script. He has participated in GPTC conferences as an actor and director since the very beginning. @whyym



**DENISE CHAPMAN**

**Denise Chapman** is the Producing Artistic Director of Theatre at the Union for Contemporary Art in Omaha. She graduated from Creighton University with a BA in theatre. She went on to receive her MFA from the Theatre Conservatory at the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. After graduation she performed with Qwest Educational Programs touring elementary and middle schools in the greater Chicago land area and worked as a Solo performing artist. She returned to Omaha in 2006 and worked with Blue Barn's *Witching hour* for three years as Co-Artistic director/ensemble member and at the Omaha Community Playhouse as the director of education and outreach. She is a strong believer that art changes our lives for the better, it gives a voice to those who feel like they are not being heard, and expresses a vision of hope to all those who are touched by it. She is an alumni of the fellowship program at the Union for Contemporary Art. She was an Artist in Residence at the Carver Bank project, a collaboration between Bemis and Theater Gates and "*Livness is Critical*" at the Bemis Center. Currently she is the Artistic Director of Theatre, The Union for Contemporary Art and an adjunct professor at Metro Community College and the University of Nebraska Omaha. Past Directing Credits include *The Divine Order of Becoming*, *Bourbon at the Border*, *Center the Margins*, and *The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin*. *More Than Neighbors* (The Union) *The Crowd You're in*, *Neighborhood Tapestries*, *Voices from the Center* - Great Plains Theatre Festival (GPTC), *Withlove Felicia*, *Love is not Abuse* - Malcom X Center, *House of Blue Leaves*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf* (Circle Theatre), *The Good Doctor* (Creighton University) *Sand Mountain* and *Brighton Beach Memoirs* (Midland Lutheran University) *Sweet, Tell Martha Not to Moan*, *Marvelous Country*, *Turpentine Jake* (Readings for GPTC) *The Nightshade Tapes*, *Hello Madness*, *If*, and *Hysterical Blindness 3* (Blue Barn's *Witching Hour*) Acting credits include: Mildred D Brown - *Northside Carnation*, Sophie - *Flying West*, Ester - *Intimate Apparel* Omaha Community Playhouse, Loretta - *Breathe* - GPTC, Ensemble - *Down and out in Heaven and Hell* - Blue Barn's *Witching Hour*, Just... - *Hot House*, Spook - *Shoes* - Victory Gardens Theatre Chicago, IL.



A WORD  
FROM OUR  
FRIENDS





GPTC STAFF

# THANK YOU



# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

## PRODUCER'S CIRCLE

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PlayFest is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. To find out more about how NEA grants impact individuals and communities, visit [www.arts.gov](http://www.arts.gov).

The Nebraska Arts Council, a state agency, has supported both PlayFest and the Conference through its matching grants program funded by the Nebraska Legislature, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment. Visit [www.artsCouncil.nebraska.gov](http://www.artsCouncil.nebraska.gov) for information on how the Nebraska Arts Council can assist your organization, or how you can support the Nebraska Cultural Endowment. GPTC is also supported in part by an American Rescue Plan Act grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to support general operating expenses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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## PROGRAM DESIGN

the small e

## GPTC VIDEO

Aaron Zavitz/ThinkMOTION

## GPTC PHOTOS

Tom Grady Photography

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MANY THANKS TO OUR ROOM HOSTS AND VOLUNTEERS WHO HELP US WITH SO MANY THINGS!



## BOARD

### Carolyn Anderson, President

COA Inc, Consultant. Recipient of the 2020 Governor's Arts Award "Access to the Arts". Carolyn was the founder and director of the non-profit Why Arts for 15 years. Carolyn is committed to creating accessible artistic opportunities for all abilities, age and cultures Board member of the Omaha Community Playhouse.

### Cecilia Poon, Vice President

Psychologist, Adjunct Assistant Professor in Psychiatry, Nebraska Medicine/UNMC. As a geropsychologist and theatre artist, Cecilia seeks to connect people of all ages, abilities, cultures, and experiences through creative arts.

### Diane Watson, Treasurer

Diane is the Growth Officer for Cetera Advisors. She is an actor, improv artist, and serves on the Board of Trustees of Saybrook University. She is also host of the YouTube food sustainability show, Leftover Chef.

### Susan Baer Collins, Secretary

Theatre Director, Actor. Recipient of the GPTC McDowell Award for her service to the Omaha theatre community and the 2014 Governors Arts Award for Outstanding Artist, Susan served as Associate Artistic Director of the Omaha Playhouse for 27 years.

### Diane Coffin, Executive Assistant

Omaha Symphony. A lover of theatre, music and the arts, Diane Coffin serves as executive assistant to the Omaha Symphony's President & CEO, a position she has held for more than thirty years, assisting seven CEOs and the organization's board of directors.

### Raydell Cordell III

Art Teacher at Loveland and Westgate Elementary, Westside Community Schools and Actor / Teaching Artist in the Omaha Community. A product of Omaha Public Schools and The Rose Theater, Raydell is a passionate individual who believes in the human connection and the power of impact and growth in individuals.

### Ted Lane

Regulatory Compliance Counsel, Berkshire Hathaway Homestate Companies. Ted's law career and passion for nonprofit arts derives from his enduring love of writing, acting, stage managing, and producing theatre.

### Juan Padilla

Community Development Manager, Canopy South. Previously with Union Pacific Railroad for almost six years, Juan realized during his time there that his passion lied in nonprofits. Juan had the opportunity to work for the Omaha Community Foundation and completed the Chartered Advisor in Philanthropy (CAP\*) certification. Born in Guatemala City, Juan moved to Omaha as a young child and has lived in Omaha since. Juan is a firm believer that having a thriving community is the result of a safe neighborhood, higher education, a healthy lifestyle, and providing community members with opportunity to thrive.

### Marina Rosado

Marina Rosado has been a professional bilingual journalist for the last twenty years, working as an editor, writer, photographer, air talent and news anchor. In addition to her professional work, Marina has performed as an actress, in original plays, based on the experiences of migrants in the United States and in stories that promote Mexican cultural traditions.

### Kathy Tyree

Performing Artist, Director, Producer. Kathy Tyree is a native of Omaha with a 41 year performing arts/theatre career which over the past 7 years evolved into directing and producing.

### Hugo Zamorano

Multidisciplinary Artist. I am a multidisciplinary artist who enjoys mentoring, spray painting, and boxing.

### Ronald J. Zank, PhD

Assistant Professor of Theatre, School of the Arts University of Nebraska at Omaha. Ron Zank is a director, playwright, dramaturg, and theatre historian at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

### Emiliano Lerda

Community Advisor.  
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### Alexandra Hubbard

Legal Counsel. Attorney at Koenig Dunne, PC LLO

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My thanks to you for your support!  
Kevin Lawler, GPTC Director

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