



BECAUSE I AM YOUR QUEEN (A FEMINIST FANTASIA)
ILLINOIS THEATRE

By Mina Samuels

Barbara Pitts McAdams, director/lead deviser

Thursday-Saturday, March 28-30, 2019, at 7:30pm

Tuesday-Saturday, April 2-6, 2019, at 7:30pm

Sunday, April 7, 2019, at 3pm

Studio Theatre



POWER + PLEASURE

I think a lot about the enormous privilege I have as Head of Illinois Theatre. I have the very great pleasure of working with incredibly talented and committed faculty, students, and staff in the Department of Theatre, the College of Fine and Applied Arts, and Krannert Center for the Performing Arts. I have the power to shape what we show you on our stages through collaboration with those colleagues.

I've spent this past year meeting many of you. I am very grateful to those of you who've taken the time to talk to me in the lobby, to send an email or make a phone call, to connect with me at other events. We have an audience who is passionate about our productions, our students, and our role as a university theatre. Please continue to make those connections.

Those conversations are opportunities to talk about my understanding of the relationship between our production season and the world around us. I believe we serve

three overlapping audiences, and that our departmental mission of inclusion is enacted on and behind our stages.

We have to serve our own students, the people who've come to receive the education to make a career as professional theatre makers. We have an obligation to train them to become working designers, actors, technicians, playwrights, stage managers, directors, scholars, and teachers. We also serve the other 44,000+ students on the campus, many of whom take our classes and enjoy our productions.

We have to serve the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. As part of a Research I university, we are obligated to create new knowledge and to pass it on. Our productions must take part in broad conversations and reflect the goals and strategic plan of the university as a whole. We must make connections across disciplines and across campus.

We have to serve the community. We are a part of this vibrant, micro-urban, Midwestern space and place. We must return the passion, time, and money you offer with a balanced season that reflects our shared values and interests. We have a responsibility to question power and authority as well as an equal responsibility to entertain and please you.

You—our audiences from the community, Theatre 101 classes, campus partners, or our own classrooms and shops—are our privilege to serve. Thank you for being here.

Dr. Kirsten Pullen

Professor and Head, Department of Theatre



PROGRAM

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TIME: Now

PLACE: A Mathematical Imaginarium

This production will be presented with no intermission.

This production includes smoke effects, contains adult content and language, and is intended for mature audiences only.

Special Thanks to Jenny Shin and Dear72

www.dear72.com

for K-beauty product demo and prop donation.

Dear72 Urbana - 700 S Gregory St, G

Dear72 Chicago - 1872 N Damen Ave



Because I Am Your Queen was accelerated at The Orchard Project, Ari Edelson, artistic director.



DIRECTOR/LEAD DEVISER'S NOTE

What is a “devised” play? Devising usually refers to a process in which the people in the room are co-creating what is performed. The process for this play began a few years ago when playwright Mina Samuels approached me, director/actor Lisa Chess, and dancer/choreographer Jacqui Dugal with a hunch: queens and powerful women characters from various classical plays have something to say to each other and to us. We began exploring with snippets of text using Jacqui’s movement techniques, Mina’s background in LeCoq and other physical training, and we made theatrical “moments” with a process called Moment Work. Moment Work invites devisers to explore how all the “elements of the stage” can carry the story, further the narration, create beauty, tension, mystery. Rather than “dress up” an already-written play, we develop the *form* and *content* simultaneously. We ask, “How can movement, light, sound, costume or projections (to name a few theatrical elements) become as central to the dramatic event as the words?”

With *Because I Am Your Queen*, we had no plot in mind initially. We brought in objects that might relate to our queens and later, as a setting emerged, objects and set pieces one might find in this world. Also using sound and music, various light sources, and costume pieces, we began making unrelated theatrical moments without worrying about where they might fit into a story. Next, Mina and I had an opportunity to further develop the play while teaching Moment Work at The Orchard Project (a play accelerator residency in Saratoga Springs, New York).

We particularly want to acknowledge these performers and some angels who helped fund our work: Celeste Cahn, Omayra Garriga Casiano, Ella Glabicki, Verina Kranak, Sandra Rivera, Kathleen Stuart, Marisol Shapiro, Richard Nierenberg, Linda Hillman, Therese Rosenblatt, Susan Greenberg, Anne Benedict, Angela & Joel Solomon, Jonathan Rhoades, Deborah Hrbek, David Silverman, Rachel & Bob Makofsky, Libby Schmais, Diane Arisman, Tatiana Nikitina & Chris Wilkerson, Samuels Wong, Jan Vilcek, Christina & Antony Mott, and our first and foundational supporter in every way, David Foster. All this activity preceded the devising Mina and I enjoyed here with the UI cast and creative team. Their work continued to reveal, shape, and deepen the world Mina conceived. We owe Kirsten Pullen, professor and head of Illinois Theatre, much gratitude for championing the play in its earlier form. And the analytical and passionate contributions of dramaturg Katayoun Salmasi cannot be overstated. Finally, it was important to Mina and me that this “feminist fantasia” be feminist in its process as well as its content. I’m grateful to Christine Young, a San Francisco-based feminist theater practitioner who became a thought partner as we examined our methods throughout, challenging the normal hierarchical theater-making process. In some devised plays, a script emerges in the rehearsal room. In our case, Mina took all our moments, conversations, and explorations and crafted the “fantasia” you see tonight. I bow down to her in awe for weaving this complex narrative and for being such a generous collaborator.

—Barbara Pitts McAdams

CAST

MARY STUART

Rachael Fox*

QUEEN ELIZABETH I

Marlene Slaughter

LUCRETIA BORGIA

Charlee Amacher

MEDEA

Jacklyn Ovassapian

HERMIONE

Zoe Nemetz

LA REINE

Amy Toruno

GLORIA

Erica Cruz Hernández

VERA

Emma L. Anderson

LISA

Zoe Replinger

KATHERINE

Uche Nwansi

*Member of Actors' Equity Association

BECAUSE I AM YOUR QUEEN

PLAYWRIGHT

Mina Samuels

DIRECTOR

Barbara Pitts McAdams

SCENIC DESIGNER

Eleni Lukaszcyk

COSTUME DESIGNER

Larissa Almanza

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Brant Thomas Murray

SOUND DESIGNER/ORIGINAL MUSIC

Brandon Reed

MEDIA DESIGNER

Anja Hose

PROPERTIES MASTER

Megan Dietrich

HAIR/MAKEUP COORDINATOR

Melissa Hall

VOCAL COACH

Allison Moody

MOVEMENT DIRECTOR

Philip Johnston

STAGE MANAGER

Colleen Accardo

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Naomie Winch

DRAMATURG

Katayoun Salmasi

"Bow Down" theme written and performed by Grace McClean.

"Bow Down" video designed and edited by Venna Kranak.

DRAMATURG'S NOTE

A community of powerful women—real and fictional—gather in a spa somewhere in a fluid time and space. This cosmological condition for the queens spans present to past as they set out to free themselves from their historical and literary backgrounds. In this imagined space, three astrophysicists and a sociopolitical activist offer queens from a wide range of dramatic history an opportunity to rewrite their own stories.

They have a limited time to “create a detectible ripple effect for all women” (Samuels 19). They do not know how much time they have, but the moment is passing, and their world is collapsing. This is an exploration of eco-feminism and narrative structure in a story about science and humanity. In eco-feminism, an academic activist movement, “critical connections between the domination of nature and the exploitation of women” are paramount (Eaton 23). Eco-feminists believe that relationships between men and women in society, even in modern industrial societies, must be reformed. This idea underpins *Because I Am Your Queen*. In important ways, stories about these queens affect perceptions of the world, changing accepted but perhaps misguided views as we change the planet.

Because I Am Your Queen follows these powerful women as they change how they have been known into an emergent, self-shaped identity. In the new narrative construct, the entire community evolves

together. After all, as Victor Hugo’s character, Lucretia, says, “the program only works if we pull together” (Samuels 12).

On the planet where these queens have gathered, there is no individual competition, no single winner or loser. The community wins. This new play reminds us that in this crucial moment when rising walls darken our personal horizons, we must join together to heal the wounds of history, both old and new. The conflict among the queens reveals their truths and the dialectical conversations helps them to engage the art of listening—even if their points of view are oppositional.

Queens who know this is their last chance to build radical solidarity with one another try to put away the matter of competition, work together, eliminate the walls that divide them, and focus on what they share. These queens practice equity and inclusion beyond the bounds of hierarchy and patriarchy to overcome the barriers to true inclusion.

—Katayoun H. Salmasi

Works cited:

Eaton, Loi Ann Lorentzen. (2002). *Eco Feminism: An Overview on Different Definitions*. San Francisco: University of San Francisco.

Samuels, Mina. (2018). *Because I Am Your Queen*. New York, New York.

PROFILES



Charlee Amacher (Lucretia Borgia) is a sophomore in the BFA acting program. She previously performed in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Protean) with Illinois Theatre; *Metamorphoses* (Ensemble) and *The Princess Play*

(Cinderella) at the Armory Free Theatre; and appeared in an episode of *Chicago P.D.* (Housekeeper). Amacher also attended Interlochen Arts Camp and graduated from Interlochen Arts Academy. Her credits there include *A Little Princess* (Becky), *Henry V* (Canterbury/Fluellen), *Failure: A Love Story* (Grandfather Clock/Ensemble), *Barefoot in Nightgown by Candlelight* (Alicia), *The Light in the Piazza* (Signora Naccarelli), and Shakespeare's "lost" play *Cardenio* (The Widow Camilla).



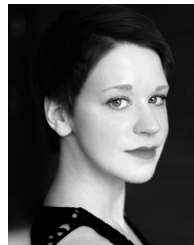
Emma L. Anderson (Vera) is a junior in the BFA acting program at the University of Illinois. She has been seen in multiple productions in the Champaign-Urbana area including *Silent Sky* (Margaret) at the Station Theatre as well as *St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised*

by *Wolves* and *Metamorphoses* at the Armory Free Theatre. At Krannert Center, Anderson has been seen in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Protean) and a staged reading of *Dusty and the Big Bad World*. This past summer, she studied at the National Theatre Institute where she assisted in writing and performing new works. She will be directing a staged reading of her one-act play *cutman.* at the Armory Free Theatre.



Erica Cruz Hernández (Gloria) is a first-year MFA actor. She is an ensemble member with Chicago's Spanish speaking Aguijón Theater Company where her previous credits include *La Chunga*, *Querido Voyeur*, *Antígona*, and the bilingual production of

Soldaderas for the Goodman Theatre's Latino Theatre Festival and the Festival de Mujeres en Escena por la Paz in Bogotá, Colombia. Hernández also participated in the New Harmony Project writers' conference as an actor developing a new play by Kirk Lynn, and you can catch her in the feature film *En Algun Lugar* (*A Place to Be*), available on Amazon. Prior to coming to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, she was a talent agent in Chicago who booked for films, commercials, theatre, and TV shows such as *Chicago Fire*, *Chicago Med*, *Chicago P.D.*, *Empire*, and *The Chi*.



Rachael Fox (Mary Stuart) is a first-year MFA in the acting program at the University of Illinois. New York credits include *The Inferno*, *The King's Masquerade*, and *The Forgotten* (*Sleep No More*). Regional credits include *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The*

Learned Ladies, *Tovarich*, *As You Like It*, *Trelawny of the Wells*, *Measure for Measure*, *Macbeth*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey); *King Lear* and *Much Ado About Nothing* (Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre). Film credits include the recurring role of Charlie on the award-winning web series *Here We Wait*.



Zoe Nemetz (Hermione) is a junior pursuing a BFA in acting at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Prior to acting, she was a competitive dancer. She recently appeared at Krannert Center in Illinois Theatre's *Marat/Sade* as Coulmier's Wife, as an

Ensemble member in *Assassins*, as #8 in a staged reading of *The Wolves*, and as William Larsen in *All the King's Men*. Nemetz also appeared as Daphna in *Bad Jews* with the Unit 14 Theatre Company and as Min in the Armory Free Theatre's *The Cage*.



Uche Nwansi (Katherine) is a sophomore in the BFA acting program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She was most recently seen at Krannert Center in Illinois Theatre's *Marat/Sade*. Nwansi has also been seen at Station Theatre as Jane Bingley in

Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley. Other credits include *Impulse* (Armory Free Theatre), *The Producers* (Niles North Theatre); *Our Town*, *Deathtrap*, *The Grass Harp*, *Hairspray*, *The Luck of the Irish*, and *Neighborhood 3: Requisition of Doom* at the Illinois High School Theatre Festival.



Jacklyn Ovassapian (Medea/ Dance Captain) is a junior pursuing a BFA in acting (and a BS in psychology) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She has appeared in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Tintinabula), *Assassins* (Sara

Jane Moore), and *In the Next Room, or the vibrator play* (Annie) with Illinois Theatre, and in

Spring Awakening (Ilse) on campus. She has also appeared in a staged reading of *The Wolves* (#14) and student presentations of *Things We Want* (Stella) and *Circle Mirror Transformation* (Theresa). Ovassapian serves as student volunteer coordinator for Illinois High School Theatre Festival and previously worked as a choreography intern for Citadel Theatre in Lake Forest, Illinois.



Zoe Replinger (Lisa/Dance Captain) is a sophomore in the BFA acting program, and she is from Rock Island, Illinois. Other Illinois Theatre credits include *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Vibrata/Dance Captain) and *Assassins* (Dance

Captain). She spent last summer as a member of the professional acting company of the Clinton Area Showboat Theatre. There, she performed featured dance roles in Disney's *The Little Mermaid*, *Oliver!*, and *Cabaret* and served as the choreographer for two Theatre for Young Audiences musicals. Other favorite roles include Veronica Sawyer in *Heathers*, Velma Kelly in *Chicago*, and Fastrada in *Pippin*. In addition to her acting training, Replinger is also pursuing a degree in advertising.



Marlene Slaughter (Queen Elizabeth I) is a senior acting major. She is originally from Houston, Texas, and moved to the Chicagoland area. She plans to return to Chicago at the end of this semester to pursue her career as a professional actress. Slaughter

has a background in dance and competitive speaking, and is a gold medalist with the NAACP ACT-SO competition for dramatics. This is her sixth and final Krannert Center performance.



Amy Toruno (La Reine) is a Nicaraguan native raised in Miami, Florida. She holds a bachelor's degree in vocal performance from The University of Iowa. She was recently seen as Gypsy in *Zorro The Musical* (Miami Theater Center) and in *New*

York's Got Talent (Elektra Theatre). Toruno has also appeared on Univision's TV program *Sábado Gigante*. Some of her favorite credits include Helga in *Cabaret*, Fleta in *Iolanthe*, and *Guys and Dolls*. She is a first-year MFA actor and a published author of a collection of poems *The F*ckboy Chronicles*.

Barbara Pitts McAdams (Director) is co-author of *MOMENT WORK: Tectonic Theater Project's Process of Devising Theater*. She was an actor/deviser in the original company of Tectonic's *The Laramie Project* and appears in the HBO film version (shared Emmy Nomination, Best Adapted Screenplay). McAdams was the 2018 Margaret Hill Visiting Artist at Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, devising an interview-based play about campus-wide inclusion and diversity struggles. She is an adjunct at Drew University and the key

Tectonic partner for its annual Tectonic/Drew devised show. McAdams is currently helming a nationwide, multi-versioned interview-based play about youth activism and the gun violence epidemic (www.heretoooproject.com). Recent acting includes *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* and TV appearances in *Anyone But Me* (3 seasons), *Person of Interest*, *Law and Order*, *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, *Kidnapped*, *Forever*, and *Comedy Central Pulp Comics*.

Mina Samuels (Playwright/Co-Deviser) is a full-time writer, playwright, and performer, and in a previous incarnation, a litigation lawyer and human rights advocate. She has created and performed two award-winning solo shows. This is the first production of *Because I Am Your Queen*. Her books include *Run Like A Girl 365 Days a Year: A Practical, Personal, Inspirational Guide for Women Athletes* (coming June 2019); *Run Like a Girl: How Strong Women Make Happy Lives*; and *The Queen of Cups* (a novel). Samuels is also working on translations of Jean de La Fontaine 17th-century French fables with contemporary commentary.

Larissa Almanza (Costume Designer) is in her second year of the MFA costume design program at the University of Illinois. She was born in Tamaulipas, Mexico, and was raised in the Rio Grande Valley located in South Texas. She received her BFA in studio art and design at the University of Texas-Pan American. Prior to her arrival at the University of Illinois, she worked as a freelance costume designer and commissioned artist in South Texas. Almanza most recently designed *La Bohème* (2018), directed by Nathan Gunn for Lyric Theater @ Illinois, and *Terminal C*, choreographed by Kemal Nance for Dance at Illinois' February Dance (2018). She is the new costumes coordinator for Dance at Illinois and most recently worked on February Dance: *Dancing 50: Moving Forward/Looking Back* (2019).

Colleen Accardo (Stage Manager) is currently a senior studying stage management at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Recently at Krannert Center, she has been the stage manager for *She Loves Me* and one of the assistant stage managers for *La Bohème*; *In the Next Room, or the vibrator play*; *Iago's Plot*; *Kingdom City*; and several dance productions. Professional credits include interning at Hope Summer Repertory Theatre and most recently, serving as assistant stage manager for six shows at Cortland Repertory Theatre this past summer.

Megan Dietrich (Properties Master) is the assistant properties director and rentals manager at Krannert Center, as well as a member of the Properties Design and Management MFA program faculty for the Department of Theatre. Dietrich has also worked for the Humana Festival at Actor's Theatre of Louisville, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Chautauqua Theatre Company, Kitchen Theatre Company, and the Pacific Conservatory for the Performing Arts. She has a BLA from Whittier College and an MFA from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Anja Hose (Media Designer) is in her third and final year in completing her MFA. Recently, she has assisted in the creation of new works with The Builders Association and Jessica Lang Dance Company. Media design credits include *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* for Illinois Theatre; *Patina* as part of February Dance: *Dancing 50: Moving Forward/Looking Back* for Dance at Illinois; *Don Giovanni*, *Hansel and Gretel*, and *The Light in the Piazza* for Lyric Theatre @ Illinois; *us/we* for the Jessica Lang Dance Company; and *Sleep Deprivation Chamber* at the Station Theatre in Urbana.

Philip Johnston, PhD (Movement Director) currently teaches in the Dance at Illinois and Illinois Theatre programs at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Before leaving his native Belfast in 1978 where he danced for the Belfast Modern Dance Group under the direction of Helen Lewis, he worked for the Lyric Players Theatre and the Belfast Arts Theatre. Based in London, his career in dance took him to major dance festivals throughout the world. He is the recipient of many professional awards from the United Kingdom, United States, and Norway. Johnston has presented papers at theatre and dance conferences in the United States. His publications include: *The Lost Tribe in the Mirror: Four Playwrights of Northern Ireland* (Lagan Press, 2009) and *Nina Fonaroff: Life and Art in Dance* (Celtic Cat Publishing, 2015), and he is a contributing writer for the Encyclopedia of Europe. Philip has been movement director for 15 Illinois Theatre productions and choreographed many dance works over three decades in the United States and Europe.

Eleni Lukaszczyk (Scenic Designer), originally from Ellicott City, Maryland, is a second-year MFA candidate in the scenic design program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Previous credits as a scenic designer include Illinois Theatre's production of *Marat/Sade* at Krannert Center and *Talley's Folly* and *Clybourne Park* at Salisbury University.

Brant Thomas Murray (Lighting Designer) joined Illinois Theatre last year as the new teaching assistant professor of lighting design and technology. He is the resident designer for Peridance Contemporary Dance Company (New York City) under the direction of Igal Perry, the resident designer for Bodiography Contemporary Ballet Company (Pittsburgh) under the direction of Maria Caruso, an associate artist with Ping Chong + Company (New York City), a designer for IMCD Lighting (New York City), and a senior designer for C & C Lighting (Pittsburgh). Murray's projects range from the award-winning Macy's Herald Square Holiday Windows to New York Fashion Week to Off-Broadway musicals. From 2004 to 2013, he held senior level management positions at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts as a technical supervisor, designer, and production manager.

Brandon Reed (Sound Designer/Original Music) is a third-year MFA in sound design and technology with a BS from Ball State University. *Because I Am Your Queen* is his final production as a student. Other Krannert Center designs include *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*; *Twelfth Night*; *In The Next Room, or the vibrator play*; *The Light in the Piazza*; and *Poppea*. A freelance designer mostly based in Chicago, he also works regionally. Regional credits include Lake Dillion Theatre Company, Cardinal Stage Company, Bristol Valley Theater, Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre, and Chautauqua Theater Company. Chicago credits include Congo Square Theatre, The Hypocrites, Windy City Playhouse, About Face, Underscore, Teatro Vista, and many more. He also received the 2019 United States Institute for Theatre Technology's Robert Cohen Sound Achievement Award for his work as a student and freelancer and was nominated for a Joseph Jefferson Award in 2016.

Katayoun Salmasi (Dramaturg) is an Iranian-American critic, playwright, dramaturg, and director. Salmasi's work as a cultural critic has appeared in many Iranian publications and international journals. Her service to the theatre has been honored by awards for her critical work and leadership in the theatre arts in Iran. Salmasi served five years as an executive committee member of the International Association of Theatre Critics and managed international affairs for the Fajr International Theatre Festival. She is a second-year PhD student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Villale Song (Scenic Charge) is a junior studying scenic design at the University of Illinois. *Because I Am Your Queen* is the first show she is charging for Illinois Theatre. She was previously the co-scenic designer of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* and the scenic assistant for *Twelfth Night* and the Armory Free Theatre's *Mr. Marmalade*.

Naomie S. Winch (Technical Director) is in her second year as an MFA candidate in scenic technology at the University of Illinois by way of Southern California. She is debuting her technical direction in the Studio Theatre for *Because I Am Your Queen*. Winch's most recent credit was as the assistant technical director for *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* for Illinois Theatre. She holds another MFA in lighting design and technology and actively tries to integrate the imperceptible world of lighting design with the tangible world of scenic design, as well as intermixing both into global construction and renovation projects.

PRODUCTION STAFF

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS

Mary Kate Baughman
Casey Griffin

ASSISTANT SCENIC DESIGNER

Blaine Fuson

ASSISTANT COSTUME DESIGNER

Samantha Abbie Padillo

ASSISTANT LIGHTING DESIGNER

Alena Samoray

ASSISTANT MEDIA DESIGNER

Omri Schwartz

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR

Yaqi Liu

SCENIC CHARGE

Villale Song

MASTER ELECTRICIAN

Konrad Ciolkosz

AUDIO ENGINEER

Luke Parker

PRODUCTION RUNNING CREW

Franklin Goodman
Regina Maggio

COSTUME RUNNING CREW

Makyrá Wilson

MAKEUP RUNNING CREW

Sarah Clement
Emily Naud

PROPS RUNNING CREW

Humberto Giles-Sanchez
Elisabeth Schapmann

LIGHT BOARD OPERATOR

Gryffon Cloud

SOUND BOARD OPERATOR

Jodie Werner

MEDIA OPERATOR

Savannah Rung