



GREAT SCENES FROM AMERICAN KITCHEN SINK THEATRE
ILLINOIS THEATRE

Lisa Gaye Dixon, artistic director/producer

Latrellle Bright, Genesee Spridco, Jordan Coughtry, and Nisi Sturgis, directors

Recorded Wednesday-Sunday, April 14-18, 2021

On-demand viewing available Friday-Sunday, April 30-May 2, 2021

WELCOME TO THIS (MOSTLY VIRTUAL) SEASON OF ILLINOIS THEATRE!



This has been a very strange—truly era-defining—time to be making theatre. The global pandemic has come home in particularly significant ways for everyone involved in live performance. How do you produce art when much of the basis of that art becomes a danger to

the very communities for and with whom you make that art? When singing, playing instruments, declaiming, and even breathing heavily carries the risk of transmitting a respiratory virus? When smiles, frowns, grimaces, and looks of surprise are covered by masks? When the numbers of people needed not only on stage but also backstage and in production shops must be limited to maintain the community's health?

For us, you seek creative new approaches, because the core, underlying need to find human connection and illumination through stories is as strong as it has ever been. And you keep a close eye on the spot where live performance meets digital media. As our future unfolds in theatre, we are increasingly aware of the value of media to help us tell those stories and to get them to you, our audiences. But we are also continuously reminded of the value of liveness, of the unique, ever-vanishing present and the ways that live theatre can place us in that present like nothing else.

We have done some industry-leading work to put the shows you're seeing this year on stage and on screen—and to do it safely. We are very fortunate to be a theatre production team in a research university, because it gives us the chance to find solutions to problems that theatres around the world are facing. We have developed a set of protocols that draw on the work of major industry organizations and on the campus and state epidemiological and public health expertise. It is remarkable what we can do when the full range of expertise in theatre—stage managers, designers, technicians, actors, directors, and dramaturgs—are in it together. In the end, those protocols not only offer us the chance to make this work, but also give direction to our peers across academic theatre.



Human stories, the stories Illinois Theatre tells, are a beacon of hope in dark and unsettled times. Whether satirical or sentimental, polemical or philosophical, reflective or action-packed, theatrical art can reveal and produce our connections to each other when we need them most.

So welcome, and thank you. We are glad you are here—even if “here” is on your computer. We look forward to being with you now and in the years to come.

—Lisa Gaye Dixon, Producer,
Department of Theatre

—Gabriel Solis, Professor and Head,
Department of Theatre

PROGRAM

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August Wilson's The Piano Lesson

August Wilson, playwright

Curse of the Starving Class

Sam Shepard, playwright

'Night, Mother

Marsha Norman, playwright

References to Salvador Dalí Make Me Hot

José Rivera, playwright

There will be a 20-minute intermission following Curse of the Starving Class.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/PRODUCER'S NOTE

Hello to all, and welcome to our first LIVE audience performance of the spring semester 2021!

I shall try to avoid the too oft-used phrase "in these unprecedented times" and simply say how happy we are here at Illinois Theatre to be able to give a warm and enthusiastic **"Welcome back!"** to those in attendance for our first LIVE AND IN PERSON show of the 2021-22 season!

Alas, while currently we are only able to welcome those folks in the Champaign-Urbana community who are a part of the University of Illinois COVID-19 testing protocols (currently U of I students/faculty/staff), we have our fingers crossed that ALL will be welcome in attendance come this fall semester. Also, the entire community may view these pieces through live streaming/recording on the Krannert Center digital delivery platform. For more information, please check the Krannert Center website.

Great Scenes from American Kitchen Sink Theatre is a collaborative, jointly conceived effort by faculty, staff, and students in the Level 21/ design and acting areas and gives many of our students opportunities wherein they may put into production all the things they have been working on in classes throughout the past year. These scenes are full and fully realized (with COVID-19 protocols), onstage, and our faculty directors and I are excited to give you a taste of some of the most iconic and beloved scenes that represent a range of the American Experience as told through the eyes of some of our most revered and beloved playwrights.

I hope you enjoy the journey through time and place and that it whets your appetite for more to come this fall!

Best,

Lisa Gaye Dixon
Producer, Illinois Theatre

DRAMATURG'S NOTE

Great Scenes from American Kitchen Sink Theatre is a compilation of four scenes derived from the work of playwrights who helped define the landscape of American 20th-century theatre. It serves up a potent dose of Americana through vignettes that provide a rich, shared iconography and deeply specific, personal voices. The kitchen setting grounds these disparate stories in a way that delineates the heart of the home, exploring the unpolished intimacy of the place that can offer solace and comfort or crudely expose vulnerability.

August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson*, one of 10 plays from his "Century Cycle," explores the Black American experience through each decade of the 20th century. It takes place in 1936 in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Like many of Wilson's plays, *The Piano Lesson* dives deeply into ancestral memory. Wilson centers the play on the family heirloom piano, which brings pride, beauty, and music into the home. The history carved into the piano's body also represents a lived, inherited trauma—a history haunted by choices and consequences that literally emerge as ghosts in the play. Moreover, selling the piano could provide Boy Willie with the money to purchase the land that once enslaved his ancestors. In our selection, we venture into the best of Wilson's storytelling. The characters gather in the kitchen to share drink and stories as they discuss their aspirations to leave the past behind, while confronting its enduring imprint on their lives.

Sam Shepard's *Curse of the Starving Class* is often considered one of his seminal plays from the 1970s and 1980s centering on the unraveling of the American family and questioning the notion of

an "American Dream." The play explores identity, home, family, and what it feels to hope desperately for something better, or maybe just something else. Shepard's combative characters and brutal dialog incite both humor and horror, locking our attention with the intensity and familiarity of these characters' needs and grievances. Are they literally hungry, or are they simply starving for more in life? More food, more choice, more opportunity; what will give them sustenance?

In Marsha Norman's *'Night, Mother*, time, represented by an actual ticking clock, proves to be the ultimate antagonist. The play's central question revolves around choice and power over one's own life. What happens when you find clarity and it doesn't align with what society or your loved ones expect? At its most basic level, this play is a conversation between a mother and her daughter. Norman, though, saturates their dialogue with shared history and layers of meaning that only two people with profound familiarity can share. Like Wilson and Shepard, Norman's characters are trapped, struggling to communicate, and desperate to escape and define their lives on their own terms.

References to Salvador Dalí Make Me Hot by José Rivera closes out this era of American theatre and brings us hurtling into the 21st century. The play, which was first produced in 2000, takes place near the Mojave Desert during the height of summer 1991. It centers on the life of Gabriela, a woman fighting to find meaning and passion as she fills the lonely role of an army wife. Her husband Benito, a United States soldier who recently fought in the Persian

Gulf War, is struggling to maintain the status quo while grappling with post-traumatic stress disorder. Inspired by magical realism and the surrealist paintings of Dalí, this play investigates the point of no return within the backdrop of a dreamscape. It explores what it means to grow up in an America that is both for you and against you. Rivera's language is poetic and sensual and forces the extremes of the physical world to crash with the emotional.

Witnessing these four scenes together allows us to see some of America's greatest playwrights exploring new forms and challenging traditional

representations of the American family and American trauma. The diversity of the playwrights offers a breadth of experience and exploration of identity that still resonates today, perhaps with even more nuance and reflective understanding. Who are we, and what can we call home? Are we defined by our ancestry, or are we free to create our own legacy? Does our history hold us back or drive us forward? These scenes raise these questions in richly inventive ways, allowing us to experience the urgent desires of these breathing, wanting, supremely human beings.

—Mariana Seda, dramaturg

DIRECTOR'S NOTE: *AUGUST WILSON'S THE PIANO LESSON*

If the past is present, so then are its ghosts. We remember them, try to forget them, acknowledge them, rebuke them, conjure them. Sometimes we call them up in the form of story. Tonight, we witness an impromptu family reunion of men—oral historians—keepers of family and community history and a world view born of experience from within, not from without. These stories paint the environment of a time, and within this time sit a piece of land and a piano.

Our relationship to land is fraught with injustice, and many of us have run away from it seeking city life and the work in the factories and on the rails. But what is it to wish to return to the land? To purchase it, own it, work it on our own terms and reap the benefits thereof? What is it to wrestle with the ghosts there?

—Latrelle Bright, director

AUGUST WILSON'S THE PIANO LESSON

Time: 1936

Place: Pittsburgh

PLAYWRIGHT

August Wilson

DIRECTOR

Latrellé Bright*

CAMERA DIRECTOR

Leojae Payton

SCENIC DESIGNER

Blaine Fuson

COSTUME DESIGNER

Hannah Haverkamp

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Gillian Frame

SOUND DESIGNER

Dakota Erickson

ASSOCIATE SOUND DESIGNER

Walter Koonce

MEDIA DESIGNER

M Ospina-López

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Leojae Payton

PROPERTIES MASTER

Timothy Swift

STAGE MANAGER

Kaetlyn Allen

DRAMATURG

Mariana Seda

*Member of Stage Directors and Choreographers (SDC)

This scene contains adult language and is intended for mature audiences only.

CAST: *AUGUST WILSON'S THE PIANO LESSON*

WINING BOY

Latrell Crawford

DOAKER

Haven Janeil Crawley

BOY WILLIE

Nathan M. Ramsey

LYMON

Antwaun Allen

DIRECTOR'S NOTE: *CURSE OF THE STARVING CLASS*

We inherit more than items from our parents and lineage: habits (both good and bad), perspectives on the world around us, perspectives of worth, morals, and more. In *Curse of the Starving Class*, Shepard explores the Tate family's journey in inherited poverty and perpetual self-sabotage. The family mimics its failing avocado farm—its rotting out at the root. In this scene, the refrigerator becomes a place of counsel where each member of the family seeks out something to satisfy their physical and spiritual starvation,

but the fridge continues to be what it is—a fridge . . . and a mostly empty one at that.

Despite taking place in 1978, this play exemplifies the dwindling middle class and failing family farms across America, gutted by predatory capitalism today. Each of them crafts their escape from this cycle with an echo of the American Dream held so dear. But these dreams of escape will not remove them from themselves and the curse that they have inherited.

—Genesee Spridco, director

CURSE OF THE STARVING CLASS

Time: 1978

Place: California Central Valley

PLAYWRIGHT

Sam Shepard

DIRECTOR

Genesee Spridco

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR

Rebecca Goodman

SCENIC DESIGNER

Blaine Fuson

COSTUME DESIGNER

Hannah Haverkamp

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Gillian Frame

SOUND DESIGNER

Dakota Erickson

ASSOCIATE SOUND DESIGNER

Walter Koonce

MEDIA DESIGNER

M Ospina-López

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Leojae Payton

PROPERTIES MASTER

Timothy Swift

STAGE MANAGER

Matthew Rohan

DRAMATURG

Mariana Seda

This scene contains references to alcoholism, domestic violence, and adult language and is intended for mature audiences only.

There will be a 20-minute intermission following this scene.

CAST: *CURSE OF THE STARVING CLASS*

ELLA

Rachael Fox*

EMMA

Destiny Jording

WESLEY

Destin Sorin

UNDERSTUDY FOR ELLA

Greer Nicole Durham

UNDERSTUDY FOR EMMA

Sarah Clement

UNDERSTUDY FOR WESLEY

David Stasevsky

*Member of Actors' Equity Association (AEA)

DIRECTOR'S NOTE: *'NIGHT, MOTHER*

If it will happen, it will happen here
If it will happen, it will happen now
A mother and a daughter at the end
In a kitchen in mid-America
The mingled yarn that knits a family
The ravel of unspoken sentiment
The tying and untying of a knot

To claim a jot of truth before goodnight
Cancel the subscriptions, wind the clocks
Stock the fridge and wipe the counter down
Maybe we live for others, or, perhaps
We cling to life because it's all we know
Tonight, two little lives in a kitchen
A teapot's tempest is no less a storm

—Jordan Coughtry, director

'NIGHT, MOTHER

Time: 1983

Place: Not Far from Here

PLAYWRIGHT

Marsha Norman

DIRECTOR

Jordan Coughtry*

SCENIC DESIGNER

Blaine Fuson

COSTUME DESIGNER

Hannah Haverkamp

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Gillian Frame

SOUND DESIGNER

Dakota Erickson

ASSOCIATE SOUND DESIGNER

Walter Koonce

MEDIA DESIGNER

M Ospina-López

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Leojae Payton

PROPERTIES MASTER

Timothy Swift

STAGE MANAGER

Jenna Keefer

DRAMATURG

Mariana Seda

*Member of Actors' Equity Association (AEA)

This production contains adult content and is intended for mature audiences only.

CAST: *'NIGHT, MOTHER*

MAMA/THELMA

Charlee Amacher

JESSIE

Alex George

UNDERSTUDY FOR MAMA/THELMA

Dominique E. Allen

DIRECTOR'S NOTE: REFERENCES TO SALVADOR DALÍ MAKE ME HOT

In the farther reaches and later depths of isolation—as the tethers to home, to love, and to self fray—the line between sleeping and waking shudders like heat on dry earth.

"I'm very fascinated with the idea of home and what home is. Puerto Rico, where I was born, is in the back of my mind, and a lot of my characters are wanderers without a place to call home."

—José Rivera

Gabriella and Benito are such wanderers, not knowing if home is a place, a person, or a dream. Belonging to each other, but not knowing how.

—Nisi Sturgis, director

REFERENCES TO SALVADOR DALÍ MAKE ME HOT

Time: 1991

Place: Barstow, California

PLAYWRIGHT

José Rivera

DIRECTOR

Nisi Sturgis* †

CO-DIRECTOR

Zev Steinrock

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR

Tonatiu Ruiz-Escobedo

SCENIC DESIGNER

Blaine Fuson

COSTUME DESIGNER

Hannah Haverkamp

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Gillian Frame

SOUND DESIGNER

Dakota Erickson

*Member of Actors' Equity Association (AEA)

†Member of Screen Actors Guild —American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG/AFTRA)

Special thanks to Anastasia Kasimos, Zev Steinrock, Dane Brandon, Jess Prichard, Professor Leslie Looney, Craig Sutter, and Sergeant First Class Tyrone J. Ramsey Jr.

This scene contains adult language, partial nudity, and a theatrical firearm and is intended for mature audiences only.

ASSOCIATE SOUND DESIGNER

Walter Koonce

MEDIA DESIGNER

M Ospina-López

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Leojae Payton

INTIMACY DIRECTORS

Anastasia Kasimos

Zev Steinrock

PROPERTIES MASTER

Timothy Swift

HAIR AND MAKEUP COORDINATOR

Necole Bluhm

STAGE MANAGER

Greg Mueller

DRAMATURG

Mariana Seda

CAST: REFERENCES TO SALVADOR DALÍ MAKE ME HOT

BENITO

Daniel Alexander Rivera

GABRIELA

Amy Toruño

UNDERSTUDY FOR BENITO/CAT

Fabian Alejandro Guerrero

UNDERSTUDY FOR GABRIELA/COYOTE

Bree Kazinski

PROFILES



Antwaun Allen (Lymon-August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson*) is currently a junior pursuing a BFA in acting at the University of Illinois. He has performed locally at the Armory Free Theatre starring in productions such as *RUMO(U)RS in Motion* and

Emmanuel. Also, along with his acting career under the stage name Smokey Doc, Allen participates in the art form and performance of drag (lg@smokeydoc.tm).



Dominique E. Allen (Understudy-'*Night, Mother*) is currently a junior transfer pursuing a BFA in acting at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign. Her recent credits include *The Messenger Project* (Therese) at the Krannert Center Amphitheatre, *Tragedy*

of Johnny and Lisa (Mark/Florist) at the Armory Free Theatre, and *Marisol* (June) and *Men on Boats* (John Wesley Powell) at the Station Theatre in Urbana. After graduation, Allen hopes to dive into intimacy directing and work on getting her certification for directing scenes of intimacy in theatre and film. She would like to thank the cast and crew of '*Night, Mother* for their vital work on creating art in a troubling time when we need to be reminded of what is and isn't important to us.



Charlee Amacher (Mama/Thelma-'*Night, Mother*) is a senior BFA acting student. She previously performed in *Pshitter! A Drinking Song for the Year of Our Lord 2020* (Witch 1/Queen Wictoria/Lady Macduff), *Lysistrata* (Chorus Woman #1), *Because I am Your*

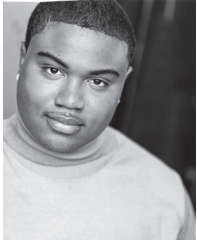
Queen (Lucretia Borgia), and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Protean) with Illinois Theatre; *Metamorphoses* (Ensemble) and *The Princess Play* (Cinderella) at the Armory Free Theatre; and has appeared on NBC's *Chicago P.D.* (Housekeeper). Amacher attended Interlochen Arts Camp and graduated high school from Interlochen Arts Academy where her credits included *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 *Cardenio* (The Widow Camilla).



Sarah Clement (Understudy-'*Curse of the Starving Class*), from Lindenhurst, Illinois, is a junior pursuing her BFA in acting at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. This production of *Great Scenes from American Kitchen Sink Theatre* is her third

performance with Illinois Theatre. Clement has recently been seen as The Commentator in Illinois Theatre's production of *Pshitter! A Drinking Song for the Year of Our Lord 2020*, Eurydice in *Eurydice* at the Armory Free Theatre, as well as a Female Chorus Member in Illinois Theatre's production of

Lysistrata. She is also featured in the student-directed musical *Gay Card*, which will be released this spring.



Latrel Crawford (Wining Boy-August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson*) is currently a senior candidate in the BFA acting program at the University of Illinois. His Illinois Theatre credits include *Marat/Sade* by Peter Weiss, *Hit the Wall* by Ike Holter, *August Wilson's*

Gem of the Ocean as Eli, and a virtual production of *Pshitter! A Drinking Song for the Year of Our Lord 2020* in the fall semester of 2020. *Great Scenes from American Kitchen Sink Theatre* marks his fifth production with Illinois Theatre. Past productions and projects include *Orfeo ed Euridice* (Armory Free Theatre), *Impulse 24/7* (Armory Free Theatre), and Zora Neale Hurston's one-acts (Illinois High School Theatre Festival), among others. Professional theatre credits include Chicago Jeff Award-nominated *truth and reconciliation* (Sideshow Theatre Company), *The Project(s)* by PJ Paparelli and Joshua Jaeger (American Theatre Company), and *This Beautiful City* by The Civilians (American Theatre Company).



Haven Janeil Crawley (Doaker-August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson*) is currently a junior pursuing a BFA in acting at the University of Illinois. This is their third performance with Illinois Theatre, having previously worked on *Titus Andronicus* and *Cabaret*.

They've participated in several productions through Chicago Youth Shakespeare, including a role as Prospero in *The Tempest* performed at The Joffrey Ballet. They are also a poet, visual artist, and amateur community activist.



Greer Nicole Durham

(Understudy-*Curse of the Starving Class*) is currently a junior pursuing a BFA in acting and minors in art and design and art history at the University of Illinois. Her Illinois Theatre credits include *The Wolves* (#00). She has

performed locally at the Armory Free Theatre, the Art Theater, and with the Penny Dreadful Players theatre company in roles such as Annelie in *Steel Magnolias*, Toni in *Hazelwood Jr. High*, and Columbia in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. She has studied at the Yale Summer Conservatory for Actors and will be traveling to Italy to attend the Summer Physical Theatre Intensive at the Accademia dell'Arte this May.



Rachael Fox (Ella-*Curse of the*

Starving Class) is a third-year MFA actor at the University of Illinois. Her Illinois Theatre credits include *Why Did Desdemona Love the Moor?* (in collaboration with the Provincetown Tennessee Williams Festival), *Lysistrata*,

Titus Andronicus, *Because I am Your Queen*, and *Tame That*. Off-Broadway 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*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Tame That* (Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre). Film credits include *Campus Life* (with Martin Scorsese and Ray Liotta); independent films *Mike & Lucy*, *The Sound of Ill Days*, and *Manhattan*, as well as the recurring role of Charlie on the award-winning web series *Here We Wait*.



Alex George (*Jessie-'Night, Mother*) is a sophomore pursuing a BFA in acting from the University of Illinois. They made their debut with Illinois Theatre last semester in the digital production of *Pshitter! A Drinking Song for The Year of Our Lord 2020* (Ross/

Puppets on the Heath.) George proudly hails from southeastern Kentucky, the hub of the universe. They are a founding member of the nonprofit theatre group Flashback Theatre Co. in Somerset, Kentucky, where they worked as an actor, teaching artist, and administrator. George is also a proud alumnus of Interlochen Arts Camp, where they performed in *Twelfth Night* (Malvolio) and *Alice* (March Hare).



Fabian Guerrero (*Benito/ Understudy-References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot*) is a senior, proudly from Aurora, Illinois, pursuing a BFA in acting from the University of Illinois. Some of his favorite university credits include *Cabaret* (Herr Schultz) and

Crazy for You (Bela Zangler) with Lyric Theatre @ Illinois and *Titus Andronicus* (Marcus Understudy) and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Senex) with Illinois Theatre. His most passionate project and work was *Red* (Rothko), which he appeared in at the Armory Free Theatre.



Destiny Jording (*Emma-Curse of the Starving Class*) is a sophomore pursuing her BFA in acting at the University of Illinois. She is a transfer student from Illinois Central College where she earned her associate degree in acting. She has previously performed

in six shows at Illinois Central College including *One Man Two Guvnors* (Pauline), *Columbinus* (Perfect), *Blue Window* (Emily), *1984* (Gladys), *The Revenants* (Karen), and *A Macbeth* (Witch 3). *Great Scenes from American Kitchen Sink Theatre* will be her first performance at the University of Illinois.



Bree Kazinski (*Understudy-References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot*) is a Wisconsin native and a junior at the University of Illinois working toward her BFA in acting. Her past shows include *Pshitter! A Drinking Song for the Year of Our Lord 2020* (Understudy)

and *Lysistrata*, which was unfortunately canceled in March 2020 due to COVID-19. She continues to train with the Society of American Fight Directors as an actor combatant and has been assistant fight choreographer for *Titus Andronicus* and firearms handler for *Hit the Wall*, both with Illinois Theatre. Kazinski has performed with many theatres in the Milwaukee area such as Milwaukee Repertory Theater, First Stage Children's Theater, and collaborations with Skylight Music Theatre and Milwaukee Chamber Theatre to name a few. Breekazinski.com



Nathan M. Ramsey (*Boy Willie-August Wilson's The Piano Lesson*) is in his third and final year as an MFA acting student at the University of Illinois. He is a Bronx, New York, native and United States Air Force veteran with a penchant for making things

that in no small way reflect his experiences, beliefs, and curiosities in life thus far. New York City training credits include The Barrow Group and the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. He has performed with Illinois Theatre, Montana Shakespeare in the Parks, The Duplex Cabaret Theatre and Piano Bar (New York City), New York University, Lehman Stages, and has appeared in numerous independent films, one of which recently premiered at the American Black Film Festival. Ramsey has also been studying clown during the pandemic via Zoom with clown guru Christopher Bayes. Although he's not on social media, check out his website (www.nathanmramsey.com) to see what he's up to sometime.



Daniel Alexander Rivera (*Benito-References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot*) is in his third year as an MFA actor at the University of Illinois. A Los Angeles native, Rivera has a BA in theatre arts from California State University, Northridge. Prior U of I

productions include *Titus Andronicus* (Demetrius) and *Hit the Wall* (Tano). Notable Los Angeles theatre credits include *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* (Judas) and *Eurydice* (Big Stone).



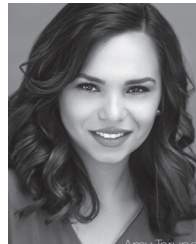
Destin Sorin (*Wesley-Curse of the Starving Class*)

is currently a junior pursuing a BFA in acting at the University of Illinois. His Illinois theatre credits include *Titus Andronicus* (Mutius) and the Armory Free Theatre production of *Eurydice*

(Orpheus). When not acting on the stage, Sorin pursues his musical interests, which include singing and guitar, and works on student projects in Champaign-Urbana.



David Stasevsky (*Wesley (Understudy-Curse of the Starving Class)*) is currently a sophomore pursuing his BFA in acting at the University of Illinois. *Great Scenes from American Kitchen Sink Theatre* is his debut production with Illinois Theatre.



Amy Toruño (*Gabriela-References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot*) is a Nicaraguan native raised in Miami, Florida. She is a third-year MFA theatre candidate and holds a BA from the University of Iowa. She was recently seen as *Fräulein Kost* in *Cabaret* at Krannert Center.

Her favorite credits include *Miss B* in *Back in the Day* at the Chopin Theatre (Chicago), *Gypsy* in *Zorro: The Musical* at Miami Theater Center, and a finalist in *New York's Got Talent* at the Elektra Theatre (New York City). Toruño is also a published author of a collection of poems, *The F*ckboy Chronicles*, as well as a winner of the 2021 Kennedy Center's Latinx Playwriting Award.



Lisa Gaye Dixon (Artistic Director/Producer) is a Professor of Theatre, Producer for Illinois Theatre, and professional actress. She has worked professionally across the country and around the globe, beginning her career with the renowned

Steppenwolf Theatre Company of Chicago in a revival of Ntozake Shange's *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf*. She has had the good fortune to experience work on the stages of the Royal Shakespeare Company and the New Globe Theatre in London and at various regional theatres including The Attic Theatre, Performance Network, Lost Nation Theatre, Kitchen Theatre Company, the GEVA Theatre Center, Illinois Shakespeare Festival, Milwaukee Shakespeare, and Goodman Theatre, where she appeared as the Ghost of Christmas Present in the 40th-anniversary production of *A Christmas Carol* and Lucy in *The America Play*. She premiered her one-woman show, entitled *My Case Is Altered: Tales of a 21st Century Roaring Girl*, under the direction of internationally recognized choreographer and director Struan Leslie at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. Professional directing credits include *Detroit '67* (Clarence Brown), *Ladyish*, and *King Lear*. Film credits include *The Trouble with Men and Women* (BBC/IFC), *Leading Ladies*, and *USING* and her most recent starring role in the short film *Ruby Love*. As poet, playwright and deviser, Dixon finds interest in the intersections of humanity—where we may find universality of experience inside the specificity of identity.



Latrelle Bright (Director-*August Wilson's The Piano Lesson*) is a theatre maker, arts advocate, and educator. Credits include *Cabaret*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* and *No Child*. . . (Illinois Theatre); *Dreamgirls* (Krannert Center for the

Performing Arts); *Elephant's Graveyard* (Parkland College), *Top Dog/Underdog* (Hattilooh Theatre); *Otherwise Occupied* (Jump Start); *Fun Home* and *Men on Boats* (Station Theatre). In recent years, she has directed an immersive opera piece with Opera on Tap (Brooklyn, New York); an interdisciplinary piece on the quantum world with professor Smitha Vishveshwara; performance pieces about water: *The Water Project* and her solo piece *Stories in the Water* premiered at Memphis Fringe.



Jordan Coughtry (Director-*'Night Mother*) is a graduate of the University of Illinois' MFA acting program. Illinois Theatre credits: *Assassins*, *In the Next Room*, *Iago's Plot*, *Mr. Burns*, and *The Grapes of Wrath*. He also directed *Red* for the Armory Free Theatre

and has helped adapt plays and write original music for productions at the Illinois Theatre Festival and the Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre where he is a member of the Artistic Collective. He has helped develop new work for Manhattan Theatre Club and OSF's PlayOn! Project. As an actor, he has worked all over the country including the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Denver Center, Human Race Theatre, Theater at Monmouth, Olney Theatre Center, Pioneer

Theatre Company, Royal Shakespeare Company, Theatreworks, Two River Theater, Westport Country Playhouse, Williamstown Theatre Festival, nine seasons at the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, and on television, has had spots on *Chicago P.D.* and several commercials.



Genesee Spridco (Director-*Curse of the Starving Class*) teaches movement in the acting program. University of Illinois credits include movement director of *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* (Illinois Theatre), movement director/associate

director of *Pshitter! A Drinking Song for the Year of Our Lord 2020* (Illinois Theatre) and movement director of *The Adventures of Little Sharp-Ears* (Lyric Theatre @ Illinois). She is co-vice chair for the National Playwriting Program and coordinator for the Devised Theatre Initiative for the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Region III. She is also a guest respondent to Regions IV and VIII. Spridco was founding artistic director for Chicago-based physical theatre ensemble Suitcase Shakespeare, and co-founding artistic director of Imaginez. She led Imaginez throughout the Midwest and into Canada touring their original productions *Take Flight: An Adventure in Cirque* and *Miranda: One Woman's Tempest*. She received her BFA in directing and BS in theatre education from Viterbo University and her MFA in ensemble devised physical theatre from Dell'Arte International School for Physical Theatre in California. She is a member of the Theatre Communication Group, Association for Theatre Movement Educators, Alexander Technique International, and the Network of Ensemble Theatres.



Nisi Sturgis (Director-*Curse of the Starving Class*) is proud to serve as assistant professor of acting in the Department of Theatre. Most recently, she directed *The Wolves* at Krannert Center in 2020. In 2019, she directed *The Winter's Tale* at the Arkansas

Shakespeare Theatre where she is also a founding member of its Artistic Collective. As a member of the Actors' Equity Association for 18 years, she has performed on Broadway (*The 39 Steps*) and Off-Broadway (*Intimate Apparel*, *The Pretty Trap*, *Dysphoria*, *The Less We Talk*). As an actor, she has worked at numerous theatres including Goodman Theatre, Berkeley Rep, Seattle Rep, Chautauqua Theatre Company, Pioneer Theatre Company, San Jose Rep, The Olney Theatre Center, Capital Rep, Geva Theatre Center, Theatre at Monmouth, Merrimack Rep, The Williamstown Theatre Festival, three seasons with the Cleveland Play House, three with The Illinois Shakespeare Festival, three with the Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre, four seasons with The Old Globe, five with Denver Center for the Performing Arts, and seven seasons with The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey. She has helped develop new work for Manhattan Theatre Club, Lark Theatre, New Harmony Project, Dramatist Guild, Colorado New Play Summit, and OSF's PlayOn! Project. Sturgis won a Bay Area Theatre Award for her performance as Emily Kapoor in Ayad Aktar's *Disgraced*, a Rose Bruford Award from the Chautauqua Institute for her work as Maggie Dalton in George Brant's *Into the Breeches*, was included as one of the top 40 actors in 40 years at the Illinois Shakespeare Festival, and won the National Irene Ryan Award at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. As a member of the Screen Actors' Guild, she played June Thompson in all five seasons of HBO's *Boardwalk Empire* and was included in a SAG Award for Best Ensemble nomination. Sturgis holds an MFA from the Old Globe USD Professional Actor Program.

Kaetlyn Allen (Production Stage Manager-*August Wilson's The Piano Lesson*), from Crystal Lake, Illinois, is a senior pursuing a BFA in stage management. Her academic credits include *Tryon Scenes* (Lyric Theatre @ Illinois), *Amor Perdidio/Lost Love: A Collection of Stories by Tennessee Williams* (Illinois Theatre, Station Theatre), and *Studiodance II* (Dance at Illinois) as the stage manager. Allen has also recently served as the assistant stage manager for *Lyric Theatre Under the Stars* (Lyric Theatre @ Illinois), *The Wolves* (Illinois Theatre), *Crazy for You* (Lyric Theatre @ Illinois), *Marat/Sade* (Illinois Theatre), and *February Dance 2018* (Dance at Illinois). She is also the social media ambassador for @illinoistheatre.

Dane Brandon (COVID-19 Rehearsal Monitor) graduated from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign with a BFA in acting and the Robin's Hood Scholarship for Excellence in Stage Combat in 2020. During his time with Illinois Theatre, he appeared as an actor and fight captain in several productions and developed a close relationship with Lyric Theatre @ Illinois. He has since worked as an actor, teaching artist, and fight choreographer in the Atlanta area and returned to his alma mater this past fall to serve as COVID-19 rehearsal monitor and associate fight choreographer for Illinois Theatre's *Pshitter! A Drinking Song for the Year of Our Lord 2020*. Brandon is a member of the Society of American Fight Directors.

Dakota Erickson (Sound Designer) is currently a second-year MFA candidate in the theatre sound design and technology program. This is his first design with Illinois Theatre, but he has also participated in *November Dance 2019* (audio engineer), *The Wolves* (audio engineer), and *Pshitter! A Drinking Song for the Year of Our Lord 2020* (A1). Being from Arizona, past productions have been from Arizona State University (*Trade*

Love, Good Friday, Ajax), Mesa Community College (*Good 'N' Plenty, Top Girls*), Desert Stages (*The Bad Seed*) and Mesa Encore Theatre (*Legally Blonde*). Past credit for summer stock positions includes Contemporary American Theater Festival (Intern), Black Hills Playhouse (Designer), and Utah Lyric Rep (Engineer). Erickson also received national recognition at the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival for sound design in 2016. Future projects include *The Marriage of Figaro* (Designer) and The MacHadyen Theatre's 2021 Season (Designer).

Gillian Frame (Lighting Designer) is a graduate assistant studying lighting design at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She grew up in Skaneateles, New York, and moved to Chicago in 2017 to pursue professional design. While at U of I, she has designed *Studiodance II* in 2019 and is looking to continue her work at Krannert Center and in the professional world. Outside of the U of I, she has done lighting design for shows such as *Big Fish, The Last Five Years, Panic*, and has assisted on many shows at The Rev Theatre Company. In her free time, Frame enjoys sketching, cooking, and playing board games with friends.

Blaine Fuson (Scenic Designer) is a junior pursuing a BFA in scenic design at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. *Great Scenes from American Kitchen Sink Theatre* is her first realized design with Illinois Theatre. Previous credits include scenic design for *She Kills Monsters* and assistant scenic designer for *Titus Andronicus* and *Because I Am Your Queen*.

Hannah J. Haverkamp (Costume Designer) is a second-year MFA candidate in costume design at the University of Illinois. She received her BA in history and studio art from Beloit College in 2014 and still takes an interdisciplinary approach to her designs. During her seven years of professional theatre, she has worked for companies such as American Players Theatre, Central City Opera, and the Eau Claire Children's Theatre. Recent design credits include *My Dear Watson* at the Chicago Musical Theatre Festival (2019), which was nominated for Best Costume Design, *Deliver Me*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Gays*, thesis films for Columbia Film School, and went on to run the digital festival circuit throughout the 2020 season. Despite the rigors of graduate school, Haverkamp maintains a steady stream of freelance illustration work and recently illustrated a children's book *The Boy Who Was Too Much Trouble* by Mary Jurmain, coming in 2021.

Jenna Keefer (Stage Manager-'*Night Mother*) is a senior at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign and is currently pursuing a BFA in stage management. So far in her time at Krannert Center, she has stage-managed *A Suite from Psalm*, the student-run productions of *Sunshine and Broken Glass* and *Red* at the Armory Free Theatre, as well as co-stage-managed the world premiere of *The Surrogate*. Additionally, Keefer has spent three summers working with the Urbana Park District Youth Summer Theatre where she stage-managed *Into the Woods* and accumulated a number of assistant stage management credits. She also served as the assistant production coordinator for the Illinois High School Theatre Festival 2019 (IHSTF) and expanded her events experience on projects such as Ellnora | The Guitar Festival (co-hospitality coordinator) and the Playful by Design Festival: Fall 2020 (co-logistics coordinator).

Walter Koonce Jr (Associate Sound Designer) is a senior from Calumet City, Illinois, pursuing a sound design major at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. He was the co-sound designer for Studiodance II in the Studio Theatre venue, the A2 audio staff hand for *Crazy for You* in the Tyron Festival Theatre, and sound designer for the "Allerton Project" at the Allerton Estate.

M Ospina-López (Co-Media Designer) is a videographer and multimediam artist from Bogotá, Colombia. They are currently a second-year MFA candidate in media design and technology at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Ospina-López is a graduate of the University of Los Andes (2013-18) with a BA in design and a BA in electronic and media arts. They are the resident video designer at La Compañía Estable, a Colombian Theatre and Opera Company. They have designed for *The Magic Flute*, *Candide*, *Dido and Aeneas*, *María de Buenos Aires*, and *Habrà que cantar en los tiempos difíciles*. With images from a production field trip through the Amazon, Ospina-López designed video projections for *Florencia en el Amazonas* and performed at the Teatro Colón in Bogotá and the XXI Amazonas Opera Festival in Manaus, Brazil, as an international guest. In 2019, they designed the live show for Cimarrón Joropo Ensemble. Most recently, Ospina-López was the media designer and editing supervisor for Illinois Theatre's production of *Pshitter! A Drinking Song for the Year of Our Lord 2020* at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts.

Matthew Rohan (Stage Manager-*Curse of the Starving Class*), originally from Orland Park, Illinois, is a junior pursuing dual degrees in stage management and history. At Krannert Center, he has served as the stage manager for Endalyn Taylor's dance work *Boxed* in November Dance 2020 (Dance at Illinois) and *Songs for a New World* and Senior Showcase 2021 (Lyric Theatre @ Illinois). He has also been the assistant stage manager for Studiodance I and Studiodance Extended 2019 (Dance @ Illinois), the production stage manager for the Armory Free Theatre, and a production assistant for *Marat/Sade* (Illinois Theatre). Professionally, Rohan has also worked as an assistant stage manager for Oak Park Festival Theatre's production of *Elizabeth Rex*.

Mariana Seda (Dramaturg) is pursuing a master's degree in theatre studies at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Her research centers on United States Latinx theatre history, experience, and representation on the American stage.

Timothy Swift (Properties Master) is currently a first-year graduate student pursuing a degree in properties design and management at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. He previously completed his bachelor's degree in communication science at Troy University in Troy, Alabama. Swift aspires to own his own prop rental house as well as create a local makers' space back in Alabama.

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The University of Illinois System carries out its mission in its namesake state, which includes the traditional territory of the Peoria, Kaskaskia, Piankashaw, Wea, Miami, Mascoutin, Odawa, Sauk, Mesquaki, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Ojibwe, Menominee, Ho-Chunk, and Chickasaw Nations. These lands continue to carry the stories of these Nations and their struggles for survival and identity.

As a land-grant institution, the University of Illinois has a particular responsibility to acknowledge the peoples of these lands, as well as the histories of dispossession that have allowed for the growth of this institution for the past 150 years. We are also obligated to reflect on and actively address these histories and the role that this university has played in shaping them. This acknowledgement and the centering of Native peoples is a start as we move forward for the next 150 years.

Krannert Center affirms the commitment by the university to move beyond these statements, toward building deeper relationships and taking actions that uphold and preserve Indigenous rights and cultural equity.

As we gather to experience this performance, we have an opportunity to reflect on the ways that systems of oppression have shaped our society. We can work together to create systems that support human dignity, establish equity, strengthen cross-cultural relationships, and draw upon the creative capacity of all people that make up this community, state, nation, and world.

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We are living through history. In the midst of it, Illinois Theatre continues to be a leader in producing art that helps us know ourselves and the world we live in. We are training students today to imagine the art of tomorrow. If you'd like to help, we welcome you as a Friend of Illinois Theatre. We'll use your financial contributions to support our students through scholarships, visiting artist residencies, new work development, and production. Help Illinois Theatre make theatre that matters today, tomorrow, and beyond.

*Contributions to Friends of Illinois Theatre can be made by visiting **theatre.illinois.edu/giving**, scanning the QR code, or by check payable to UIF/Friends of Illinois Theatre and sent to: University of Illinois Foundation, PO Box 3429, Champaign, IL 61826-3429.*



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