



THEATRE STUDIES NEW WORK FESTIVAL **ILLINOIS THEATRE**

Dan Kipp, Jordan Ratliff, Rachael Fox, playwrights
Caitlin Chrastka, Alexis Webb, Gina Maggio, dramaturgs
Rebecca Goodman, Jacqueline Moreno, Mariana Seda, directors
Recorded Thursday-Saturday, April 29-May 1, 2021
On-demand viewing available Friday-Sunday, May 7-9, 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

THEATRE STUDIES NEW WORK FESTIVAL ILLINOIS THEATRE

Recorded Thursday-Saturday, April 29-May 1, 2021
On-demand viewing available Friday-Sunday, May 7-9, 2021

Between Us

Dan Kip, playwright
Caitlin Chrastka, dramaturg
Rebecca Goodman, director

Fugitives in America

Jordan Ratliff, playwright
Alexis Webb, dramaturg
Jacqueline Morena, director

We're All Gonna Die Here

Rachael Fox, playwright
Gina Maggio, dramaturg
Mariana Seda, director

DIRECTOR'S NOTE: *BETWEEN US*

During the 1970s, a group of counties lying closer to the western border of Illinois came together to create the 51st state of the Union, then promptly succeeded to declare war on the United States. This new state that would be forged from the desolate prairie would be known as Forgottonia. This was the master plan of a veteran of the Vietnam War in the creation of a PR stunt that drew attention towards the neglect inflicted by the State of Illinois and the nation towards the Western Illinois counties. While this stunt drew national attention, it would quickly fissile away. And when the next decade followed, in which *Between Us* is set, the neglect sits itself back into place brought on by drought and President Reagan's economic policy. In a roundabout way, Forgottonia becomes forgotten once again when we roll around to where our characters find themselves. These three characters have been living within their own sphere with close to no contact elsewhere. And it is within this sphere that they find themselves as well to help one another come to their own understanding of who they are. But as this play touches on the dynamics of friendship we all have with different people, it is also about the lies we tell each

other. Furthermore, it is about the lies we often tell ourselves. And if we convince ourselves well enough that these false truths are correct, then it is all we understand. Thus, we become blind as to what is true within ourselves.

Drawing from my own experience growing up, the signs of my own gender identity as a trans woman were always there, but because of the tradition and sensibilities of the cisnormative culture that surrounded me since my birth, it was all I ever knew. It was only with seeing the experiences of others like me living comfortably as themselves did it come across that I could, too. Which is why, in the process of working on the script with the playwright and dramaturg of this piece as well as going into rehearsal with actors, that I identify with each character in their own way. As you will see in this play, these people have a complex understanding of who they think they are and what is true within themselves. But as the action draws on and the seasons change, their own perceptions will shift. And it is with their friendships with one another will they perhaps find their own way and grow as human beings.

—Rebecca Goodman, director

BETWEEN US

TIME: 1986 to fall of 1990

PLACE: A small town on the edge of Forgottonia
in Western Illinois

PLAYWRIGHT

Dan Kipp

DIRECTOR

Rebecca Goodman

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Zack Saunders

SOUND DESIGNER

Abbey Nettleton

STAGE MANAGER

Maria Miguens

DRAMATURG

Caitlin Chrastka

CAST: *BETWEEN US*

MARY

Raiya Browning

TOM

Dane Brandon

ANDY

Ryan Yapp

DIRECTOR'S NOTE: *FUGITIVES IN AMERICA*

Telling important stories and giving a voice to those that have none has always been some of the biggest driving factors in my decision to become a director. In such difficult and lonely times like these, a play like *Fugitives in America* reminds me of those very same factors and why I continue to make art. This play came to me during some of the hardest times in my life, and while the material in it is anything but happy, it is hopeful. This is a POC story. It is also an LGBTQ story. Whether you fit in one of those categories

or in both, *Fugitives in America* speaks to all of those who understand the struggle of not knowing whether the fight to keep going is worth it. With the ever-growing hate and discrimination in this country, there is no better time to tell such an important story—especially one as hopeful as this one. It reminds us to continue to try to keep on fighting and to reckon against the destruction from societal othering by choosing life

— Jackie Moreno, director

FUGITIVES IN AMERICA

TIME: Present Day

PLACE: Indiana, United States

PLAYWRIGHT

Jordan Ratliff

DIRECTOR

Jacqueline Moreno

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Zack Saunders

SOUND DESIGNER

Abbey Nettleton

STAGE MANAGER

Maria Miguens

DRAMATURG

Alexis Jordan Webb

This performance contains harmful and hateful language, mentions of suicide, violence, sexual assault, and moments of flashing lights and is intended for mature audiences only.

CAST: *FUGITIVES IN AMERICA*

JOSHUA

Palash Ranjit

KAI

Antwaun Allen

MORPHEUS/MO

Carissa Yau

WINTER

Greer Durham

LARRY/KEVIN/STUDENT 3

Jimmy Ladd

SARAH/STUDENT 2/NURSE

Mary Jane Oken

ALAN/STUDENT 1

Ben Mathew

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE: WE'RE ALL GONNA DIE HERE

A teacher of mine once told me that a work of art is good if it springs from need. I instantly recognized the truth of this statement, and then a little voice inside went, “uh-oh.” Who was I to decide what the world needs? That feels pretty presumptuous at any point in history, but particularly in the times we’re living in. This play, however, truly did spring from a need—albeit in a way that surprised the hell outta me. I began writing *We’re All Gonna Die Here* at the beginning of the pandemic—the beginning of lockdown and the beginning of an isolation I’d never experienced or imagined. As my own community vanished overnight, writing these people and this world became my way out of loneliness. I was creating company, a place of escape, and somewhere to put the fear and uncertainty. As I developed the script, calling

on the help and input from other artists, an incredible thing began to happen—this imaginary community I had written started to form into a living community. It’s been truly moving and humbling to experience the connections that have formed around this play, what each person who has touched it has given, and the laughter and hope that it has delivered in what felt at times like a year in the dark. This iteration, through the Theatre Studies New Works Festival, has brought all of that work to fruition, and I am incredibly grateful to share it and for every artist who has been a part of this process at every stage.

(Special thanks to Daniel Rivera for the conversation, inspiration, and superhero education.)

— Rachael Fox, playwright

DRAMATURG'S NOTE: *WE'RE ALL GONNA DIE HERE*

We're All Gonna Die Here, a new play written by Rachael Fox (MFA acting) and brought to the stage by Illinois Theatre, is in many ways a coming-of-age story. Although these characters are well beyond the standard age of adolescence, they are at a critical point in their lives—a crossroad. They have been on their own for quite some time, making their way in a harsh world (also known as New York City). Where they were looking for love, they found heartbreak and confusion. When they chased their dreams,

they found dead-end jobs and disappointment. In this moment, the City That Never Sleeps . . . just wants to take a nap. One fateful night, while they are forced to shelter-in-place inside the café that may never let them go, they are forced to confront themselves. Is who I am at this very moment good enough? Is where I am enough? What choices do I have to make to become the person I want to be?

— Gina Maggio, dramaturg

DIRECTOR'S NOTE: WE'RE ALL GONNA DIE HERE

There are moments in each human life where we just hit a big, hard, and unforgiving wall. For me, it happened just before I turned 30. I had moved from the Midwest to northern California after undergrad and built a community of friends and artistic opportunities that fulfilled me in many ways. But after eight years, I felt stuck. Intuitively, I knew something major had to change or it never would, and I would end up as some suspended version of my 29-year-old self for another decade. So, I broke through my wall. The unknown was both terrifying and thrilling, and that experience launched me into a new orbit I didn't even know existed. When we meet our characters, they are coming up against their own walls. Life has gotten in their way. The blackout acts as a catalyst, forcing them to sit with each other, and with themselves, and re-examine what led them here, what gives their life significance, and where

they want to go next. Will they break through, or will they remain in a rut? While our story doesn't answer every question, it explores this universal journey with these very real, knowable people.

It has been an absolute treat to work on this script, to bring these characters to life alongside Rachael, the person who gave them voice, and to work in tandem with our dramaturg, Gina, to ask the questions that open our understanding of what it means to connect with others and be true to ourselves today, no matter what strange, external circumstances we encounter. Participating in this new work development process is an adventure I hope to repeat many times over. Thank you to all who made this possible.

— Mariana Seda , director

WE'RE ALL GONNA DIE HERE

TIME: October 2015

PLACE: A French-Moroccan Café
in New York City

PLAYWRIGHT

Rachael Fox

DIRECTOR

Mariana Seda

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Zack Saunders

SOUND DESIGNER

Abbey Nettleton

STAGE MANAGER

Maria Miguens

DRAMATURG

Gina Maggio

This performance contains adult language and content pertaining to alcohol and drug use and sexual references and is intended for mature audiences only.

CAST: WE'RE ALL GONNA DIE HERE

FELICITY

Emily Albert Stauning

ESMÉE

Erica Cruz Hernández

NATALYA

Nisi Sturgis

TY

Nathan M. Ramsey

LEO

Fabian Guerrero

MAX

Destin Sorin

ORI

Gabriel Ortiz

RANDY/WALTER

Corey Barlow

STAGE DIRECTIONS

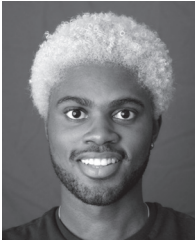
Gina Maggio

PROFILES



Antwaun Allen (*Kai-Fugitives in America*) 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).



Corey Barlow (*Randy/Walter-We're All Gonna Die Here*) is a junior BFA acting major. He most recently appeared as King Venceslas, Rensky, 1st Murderer, and 3rd Witch in *Pshitter! A Drinking Song for the Year of Our Lord 2020* by Henry Wishcamper.

Additional past credits include Emcee in Illinois Theatre's joint production of *Cabaret*, Young Lucius in *Titus Andronicus* with Illinois Theatre, Chip Tolentino in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, the Busboy in *She Loves Me*, Don Ottavio cover/Ensemble in *Don Giovanni* with Lyric Theatre @ Illinois, and Che in Cary-Grove High School's production of *Evita*. Barlow is also a singer/songwriter and has released an EP, titled *Reinvention*, composed of original songs—he plans on releasing much more!



Dane Brandon (*Tom-Between Us*) is a recent alumnus of the BFA acting program at the University of Illinois. Favorite Illinois Theatre credits include the Geminae in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, Saturninus in *Titus Andronicus*, and various roles

in the first incarnation of *Pshitter! A Drinking Song for the Year of Our Lord 2020*. Since graduating last year, Brandon has worked as an actor and teaching artist in Atlanta, most recently appearing in Georgia Ensemble Theatre's production of *A Wrinkle in Time*. A member of the Society of American Fight Directors, he also had the opportunity to come home to Illinois Theatre last semester as the COVID monitor and associate fight choreographer for the second staging of *Pshitter!*



Raiya Browning (*Mary-Between Us*) is a junior acting major from Orange County, California. She has previously been onstage in *Lysistrata* at Krannert Center as well as numerous student productions and film segments through the Armory Free Theatre and

Illinois Film Services. Off the stage, Browning is pursuing her second written script, and first ever screenplay, titled *Softie*.



Greer Nicole Durham (*Winter-Fugitives in America*) 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) and *Curse of the Starving Class* (Ella Understudy).

She has performed locally at the Armory Free Theatre, the Art Theater, and with the Penny Dreadful Players theatre company in roles such as Annelle 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.



Fabian Alejandro Guerrero (Leo-*We're All Gonna Die Here*) is a senior, proudly from Aurora, Illinois, pursuing a BFA in acting from the University of Illinois. Some of his favorite University of Illinois credits include Lyric Theatre @ Illinois with *Cabaret* (Herr Schultz)

and *Crazy For You* (Bela Zangler), and Illinois Theatre with *Titus Andronicus* (Marcus Understudy) and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Senex). His most passionate project and work he has been a part of was *Red* (Rothko) at the Armory Free Theatre.



Erica Cruz Hernández (Esmée-*We're All Gonna Die Here*) is a third-year MFA at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Last summer, she had the pleasure of collaborating with Nisi Sturgis on virtual performances of *Tame That* for St. Louis and

Arkansas Shakespeare Festivals, as well as working with Teatro Bravo on their Zoom production of *Dipped in Honey*. Other credits include *Cabaret*, *Titus Andronicus*, the world premiere of *Because I Am Your Queen*, work with playwrights Nancy García Loza and Isaac Gomez for Chicago's Theater on the Lake, and the film *En Algun Lugar* (*A Place to Be*, available on Amazon). She is also an ensemble member with Chicago's Aguijón Theater Company, which has produced Spanish-language and bilingual works for over 30 years.



Jimmy Ladd (Larry/Kevin/Student 3-*Fugitives in America*) is a junior in the BFA acting program at the University of Illinois. He transferred into the program from Harold Washington College where he was part of the Loop Players and Leading

Man Theatre where he played in *By the Way*, *Meet Vera Stark* (Slasvik) and *Holler If You Hear Me* (multiple parts). Since coming to Illinois, he has been seen in *Farinelli and the King* at Station Theatre and *Gay Card* (Logan).



Ben Mathew (Alan/Student 1-*Fugitives in America*) is currently a sophomore pursuing a BFA in acting at the University of Illinois. In the past, he has appeared in such productions as *Lysistrata* and *Titus Andronicus* (Lucius) at the University of Illinois and *Proof*

(Hal), *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Jimmy), *The Sound of Music* (Rolf), and *A Loss of Roses* (Jelly Beamis) at William Fremd High School in his hometown of Palatine, Illinois. In his free time, Mathew performs and tours nationwide with The Other Guys, a comedy octet. The Other Guys are also the music ambassadors for the University of Illinois.



Mary Jane Oken (Sarah/Student 2/*Nurse-Fugitives in America*) is in her freshman year at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign pursuing a BFA in acting. In her first semester, she participated in a U of I short film titled *Phillies* (Woman in Red). She has most

recently finished her first production at Illinois in *Gay Card* (Blog #3), directed by playwright Jordan Ratliff. Some other notable credits include Deerfield High School's productions of *Mamma Mia* (Donna), *You Can't Take It with You* (Grandma), and *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Miep Gies).



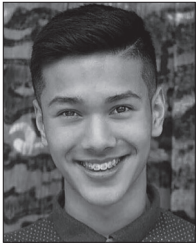
Gabriel Ortiz (Ori-*We're All Gonna Die Here*) is from Park Ridge, Illinois, and is a junior pursuing a BFA in acting at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and a minor in musical theatre through Lyric Theatre @ Illinois. His previous Illinois Theatre credits include

Pshitter! A Drinking Song for the Year of our Lord 2020 (Old Man/Junkherr Mathias con Königsberg/Peasant), *Cabaret* (Bobby), and *Titus Andronicus* (Alarbus/Goth). Recently, he was in a screen dance entitled *Losing My Mind*, choreographed by Rachel Maramba and presented by Dance at Illinois. He has wrapped filming for movie musical *Gay Card*, directed, produced, and choreographed by Jordan Ratliff. Ortiz has also been seen in *Mamma Mia* as Harry Bright and Garvin in *Footloose* with Illini Student Musicals. He also had the opportunity to travel to Boston with a devised theatre piece entitled *Quantum Voyages* under the direction of Latrelle Bright.



Nathan M. Ramsey (Ty-*We're All Gonna Die Here*) 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.



Palash Ranjit (Joshua-*Fugitives in America*) is currently pursuing a BFA in acting at the University of Illinois. Not only is he an actor, but he is also a leasing agent at American Campus Communities, a small business owner at TeeSpring, and a

social media content creator with over 4 million accumulative views on TikTok. *Fugitives In America* is his debut performance for Theatre Studies New Work Festival. He has previously been filmed in *Gay Card* directed by Jordan Ratcliff, a COVID-19 commercial, *Track Thirteen*, and *Harlem Renaissance Poems* at the University of Illinois. His theatre credits are *Cabaret* with Illinois Theatre, *The Messenger* at the Amphitheatre, *Love/Life* with New Revel Players, *Mamma Mia* with Illinois Student Musicals, and *TMLMTBGB* at Illinois High School Theatre Fest. He has appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* and the suburban Chicago newspaper *Daily Herald* for his performance as Peter Pan in *Peter Pan* at ME Fine Arts.



Destin Sorin (Max-*We're All Gonna Die Here*) is currently a junior pursuing a BFA in acting at the University of Illinois. His Illinois theatre credits include *Titus Andronicus* (Mutius), *Great Scenes from American Kitchen Sink Theatre* (Wesley-*Curse of the Starving Class*),

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.



Emily Albert Stauning (Felicity-*We're All Gonna Die Here*) is a junior Chancellor Scholar pursuing a BFA in acting and a BS in neuroscience at the University of Illinois. Her artistic credits include over 40 commercials, plays, and film productions

across the Midwest. In 2016, she received an Upper Midwest Emmy award for Best Children's Educational Series for hosting the series *Into the Outdoors*. Her Illinois credits include *Lysistrata* (Myrrine), *She Kills Monsters* (Farrah), and Lyric Theatre @ Illinois' *Crazy for You* (Lottie). Additionally, Albert-Stauning is a singer-songwriter and recording artist for Rock the Cause Record (Sony).



Nisi Sturgis (Natalya-*We're All Gonna Die Here*) is proud to serve as assistant professor of acting in the Department of Theatre. Most recently in 2020, she directed *The Wolves* at Krannert Center. In 2019, Sturgis 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 all over the country at theatres including Goodman Theatre, Berkeley Rep, Seattle Rep, Chautauqua Theatre Company, Pioneer Theatre Company, San Jose Rep, Olney Theatre Center, Capital Rep, Geva Theatre, Theatre at Monmouth, Merrimack Rep, Williamstown Theatre Festival, three seasons with the Cleveland Play House, three with 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 Akhtar'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. She holds an MFA from the Old Globe USD



Carissa Yau (Morpheus/*Mo-Fugitives in America*) is a student in music open studies, focusing on the integration of performance and education. She has been a part of *Take Flight* with Lyric Theatre @ Illinois and has been enrolled in various Lyric Theatre

courses during her time at the University of Illinois. She is a student of Berit Johnson and has previously studied under Sarah Wigley and Yvonne Gonzales-Redman.



Ryan Yapp (*Andy-Between Us*) is a recent graduate of the University of Illinois' theatre program. He has been involved with the Champaign-Urbana theatre community for several years, performing at the Armory Free Theatre in *Orfeo ed Eurydice* (Chorus),

the Station Theatre's production of *Marisol* (Lenny), and the online reading of *Insulted: Belarusia* (Youth). Yapp is an active playwright with his one-act play *OUT!* premiering at the University of the Arts London. He has also been involved in the comedy scene at the U of I as a member of DeBono Musical Improv.

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.

Latrellle Bright (Producer-*The Piano Lesson*) is a theatre maker, arts advocate and educator. Credits include *Cabaret*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, and *No Child . . .* (Illinois Theatre); *Dreamgirls* (Krannert Center for the Performing Arts); *Elephant's Graveyard* (Parkland College), *Top Dog/Underdog* (Hattiloo Theatre); *Otherwise Occupied* (Jump Start); and *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; and performance pieces about water—*The Water Project* and her solo piece *Stories in the Water* premiered at Memphis Fringe.

Caitlin Chrastka (Dramaturg-*Between Us*) is currently a senior pursuing a BFA in theatre studies at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Her previous work with Illinois Theatre includes *The Heist: A Theatrical Escape Room* (Assistant Dramaturg) and *Titus Andronicus* (Wardrobe). Outside of Krannert Center, she can be found performing, choreographing, and artistic designing for the University of Illinois Registered Student Organization Illini Student Musicals (ISM). Shows with ISM include *Mamma Mia* (Ensemble), *Footloose* (Choreographer), *Carrie* (Hair and Makeup Designer), and *Little Women* (Hair and Makeup Designer). When not in Champaign-Urbana, Chrastka works as a youth theatre instructor and director at Discovery Day Camp in the Chicago suburbs.

Anusha Bansal (Literary Artist) is a senior pursuing a BFA in theatre studies and a BA in creative writing at the University of Illinois. Her Illinois Theatre credits include *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (Dramaturg), *The Wolves* (Assistant Dramaturg), and *Cabaret* (Assistant to the Director). Outside of dramaturgy and directing, she also works on writing plays, poetry, and fiction.

Rachael Fox (Playwright-*We're All Gonna Die Here*) is a third-year MFA actor/playwright at the University of Illinois. Her Off-Broadway credits include *The Inferno*, *The King's Masquerade*, and *The Forgotten (Sleep No More)*. Regional credits include *Why Did Desdemona Love the Moor?* (Provincetown Tennessee Williams Festival); *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 the recurring role of Charlie on the award-winning web series *Here We Wait* as well as independent films *The Sound of Ill Days*, *Manhattan*, and *Campus Life* with Martin Scorsese and Ray Liotta. Her Illinois Theatre credits include *Lysistrata*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Because I Am Your Queen*, and *Tame That*. As a writer, Fox's work was featured in FOLXTALES, a theatrical multimedia event, at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts.

Rebecca Goodman (Director-*Between Us*) is a junior at the University of Illinois pursuing a BFA in theatre studies with a concentration in directing. Other directorial credits with Illinois Theatre include *La Casa de las Mañas* by Lisa Dixon as part of the Sunday Shorts program. She has served as a board member for the Penny Dreadful Players student theatre group as well as volunteering to direct various works for Impulse 24/7 produced at the Armory Free Theatre. Recently, she has directed *A Home Bar Means You're Fine* by Jayne Deely as part of KCACTF's New Play Program as one of six student directors selected from the region.

Dan Kipp (Playwright-*Between Us*) grew up in a small Midwestern town. He then went to a small Midwestern college, namely Illinois Wesleyan University, receiving a BFA in theatre design. Following that, he sought his fortune in various cities across the country, moving approximately two dozen times. Highlights include improvisation stage management at the Annoyance Theatre in Chicago, clubbing in early-1990s New York, escaping West Hollywood, follow-spotting showgirls in Las Vegas, and learning playwrighting and the Method at the Actors Studio Drama School at The New School (New York City). Most recently, he obtained an MA in theatre studies at the University of Illinois. Kipp is currently a second-year PhD student in theatre studies with a research focus on the Off-Loop Theatre movement in Chicago in the 1970s. His play *Bedfellows: A Play in Five Elections* was workshopped in both Bloomington, Illinois, and the University of Illinois.

Gina Maggio (Dramaturg-*We're All Gonna Die Here/Stage Directions*) is a junior and Champaign native currently pursuing a BFA in theatre studies with concentrations in playwrighting and directing and a minor in history. Her previous work with Illinois Theatre includes *Marat/Sade* (fall 2018), *Because I Am Your Queen* (spring 2019), *The Adventures of Little Sharp-Ears* (fall 2019), *Cabaret* (spring 2020) and *Great Scenes from American Kitchen Sink Theatre* (spring 2021.) She is also involved with S.P.O.T., Impulse, Advanced Directing Workshop, and her short play *An Imperial Decision* was performed at the Sunday Shorts Play Festival. Post-graduation from the University of Illinois, she plans to pursue an MA degree in dramatherapy.

Jacqueline Moreno (Director-*Fugitives in America*) is currently a sophomore pursuing a BFA in theatre studies with a concentration in directing at the University of Illinois. This is their first directing credit with the University of Illinois. They have done backstage crew work on the Krannert Center productions of *August Wilson's Gem of The Ocean* (Costume Crew), *Cabaret* (Prop Crew), and *Pshitter! A Drinking Song for the Year of Our Lord 2020* (Deck Crew). Their most recent work outside of Krannert Center was co-stage-managing the musical *Gay Card* directed by fellow University of Illinois student Jordan Ratliff.

Jordan Ratliff (Playwright-*Fugitives in America*) is currently a senior pursuing a BFA in theatre studies with a concentration in playwriting and directing at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Some of his writing credits include *Love Life* and *Ghost of Christmas Past*. His directorial credits include *Gay Card*; *Love Life*; *Prospect High: Brooklyn*; and *Songs for a New World*. He has also assistant-directed *Cabaret* (dir. Latrelle Bright), *Gem of the Ocean* (dir. Chuck Smith), and *Marat/Sade* (dir. Laura Hackman) at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts. He has also served as the diversity/equity chair and head of new play development for New Revels Players. In his work, Ratliff pushes to share the voices of under-represented groups and advocates for their representation on and off stage. After working on *Fugitives in America* for most of his college career, he is excited to be sharing this story on the Krannert Center stage.

Mariana Seda (Director-*We're All Gonna Die Here*) is a life-long theatre maker. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in theatre studies at the University of Illinois. Her research focuses on Latinx theatre history and representation on the American stage. She served as the dramaturg for Illinois Theatre's workshop production of *Tocaya* (2019) and for *Great Scenes from American*

Kitchen Sink Theatre (2021). Previous directing credits include *The Light in the Piazza* and [title of show], both at Green Valley Theatre Company (GVTC). Acting credits include: *The Last Five Years* (Cathy) at The Station Theatre; *Boxed Up: the Musical* and *The Boxed Up Binge* (Kris) at Capital Stage in Sacramento, California; *Richard III* (Lady Anne/Catesby) and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Julia) at Big Idea Theatre Company; *Frida* (Cristina) at Teatro Nagual; *In the Heights* (Nina), *Spring Awakening* (Wendla), *The Rocky Horror Show* (Magenta), *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* (Rachel), *Cabaret* (Kost) and many other productions at GVTC.

Alexis Jordan Webb (Dramaturg-*Fugitives in America*), from Syracuse, New York, is a second-year MA theatre candidate at the University of Illinois. Her degree is focused on new play development and dramaturgy. She graduated in spring 2019 from Mercyhurst University (Erie, Pennsylvania) with a BA in music (voice concentration) and two minors in theatre and arts administration. Some of her previous experience includes Krannert Center's 50th-anniversary production of *Cabaret* (Dramaturg), working as a teaching artist at the Redhouse Arts Center in Syracuse, New York, and as the community engagement coordinator for the Chautauqua Theatre Company (New York). Webb currently works as the youth theatre director for the Champaign Park District. This will be her second production with Illinois Theatre as a dramaturg and first working in literary management.

Maria Miguens (Stage Manager) is a third-year MFA stage management student at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She completed her undergraduate studies in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Her most recent work includes stage manager for *We Got Next Summer Salon Series* webinar and production manager for *Great Scenes from American Kitchen Sink Theatre* produced by Illinois Theatre. At Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, her experience includes stage manager for *The Adventures of Little Sharp-Ears* and *Studidance I* and assistant stage manager for *La Bohème*, *Strange Window: The Turn of the Screw*, and *February Dance 2019*. Her previous experience includes production and stage manager for *Ya Nadie Nota tu Dolor* (Argentina), production and stage manager for *Chau Misterix* (Argentina), and assistant stage manager for *August: Osage County* at thew Station Theatre (Urbana, Illinois).

Abbey Nettleton (Sound Designer) is currently a junior pursuing a BFA in theatre with a concentration in sound design and technology at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Her previous credits include co-sound designer for the staged reading of *Tocaya* (Illinois Theatre), audio engineer for *Lyric Under the Stars* (Lyric Theatre @ Illinois), and assistant sound designer/assistant audio engineer for *March Dance 2021* (Dance at Illinois).

Zack Saunders (Lighting Designer) is currently a junior pursuing a BFA in theatre with a concentration in lighting design and technology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His lighting design credits include *Simpler Times Theatre's* production of *Two Rooms and Dance* at Illinois' production of *Studidance II*. His assistant lighting design credits include Illinois Theatre's productions of *FOLXTALES*, *Pshitter! A Drinking Song for the Year of Our Lord 2020*, and *The Wolves*, and the Armory Free Theatre's production of *RED*. Saunders' master electrician credits include Illinois Theatre's productions of *Great Scenes from American Kitchen Sink Theatre* and *Lysistrata*.

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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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