

REDLINE COLLECTION ILLINOIS THEATRE

By Kristen Joy Bjorge Robert G. Anderson, director Thursday-Saturday, October 7-9, 2021, at 7:30pm Saturday, October 9, 2021, at 2pm Studio Theatre

PROGRAM

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TIME: The last weeks of 1982, and the first guarter of 1983

In Act I, a week separates each scene. In Act II, a month separates each scene.

PLACE: Beth's apartment, Evelyn's office in a high-rise building, the street outside

a downtown Chicago el (train) stop, and an art gallery party

ACT I

Scene 1: The El Stop

Scene 2: Beth's Apartment

Scene 3: Evelyn's Office

Scene 4: The El Stop

Scene: 5: Beth's Apartment

Scene 6: The El Stop

20-minute intermission

ACT II

Scene 1: Art Gallery

Scene 2: Beth's Apartment

Scene 3: The El Stop

This production contains adult language, adult content, profuse swearing, and is intended for mature audiences only.

PLAYWRIGHT

Kristen Joy Bjorge

DIRECTOR

Robert G. Anderson*

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Nicole Ratai

COSTUME DESIGNER

Courtney Kelly

*Appears through the courtesy of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.



REDLINE COLLECTION

SOUND DESIGNER

Madison Ferris

INTIMACY COORDINATOR

Zev Steinrock

STAGE MANAGER

Julia Colpitts

DRAMATURG

Mariana Seda

CAST

EVELYN

Uche Nwansi

GRADY

Antwaun Allen

ALMA

Erica Cruz Hernandez

BETH

Emily Albert-Stauning

LAUREL

Kim Fernandez

UNDERSTUDY FOR GRADY/READING STAGE DIRECTIONS

Jaylon Muchison

UNDERSTUDY FOR BETH/READING STAGE DIRECTIONS

Alex George

UNDERSTUDY FOR ALMA

Jai Torres

In many ways, we're still young. Which makes us believe we have infinite time.

You don't, by the way. None of us do.

-Laurel, Redline Collection

The 1980s in the United States blazed in amidst a robust feminist movement intersecting with the growing "gay liberation" movement, which demanded equal rights for women, gay, and queer people. In Chicago, the first female mayor, Jane Byrne, is in office (soon to be replaced by the first African American mayor Harold Washington); Pritzkers and Daleys are already staples of Chicago elite society; the art scene is eclectic and thriving; and the Bulls are about to get good. However, like in other major cities across the United States, a terrifying human health crisis is beginning to take hold, one that will dominate the lives of so many and fundamentally alter US culture and politics for decades to come.

For many, the health crisis came into view with a headline in the July 3, 1981, edition of *The New York Times*: "Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals." Shortly thereafter, the first few attempts at naming the new phenomenon emerged associated with reductive monikers like "gay cancer," and later, "gay-related immunodeficiency" (GRID), before the medical community settled on Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, or AIDS. It would be a few more years before the virus that causes AIDS was identified as HIV-1, and many more before the first effective treatments were discovered. By 1986, the life expectancy of someone diagnosed with AIDS was 15 months.

DRAMATURG'S NOTE

Today, an HIV diagnosis is not a death sentence for those in wealthy nations with access to quality health care. There are multiple effective treatment options, and some scientists believe a vaccine is near. But in that first decade of the epidemic, the loss of life was astounding, and the lack of public and medical support devastating. Many in gay and queer communities stepped up to help their sick and dying friends by organizing coalitions and advocating for better education, acknowledgement, and treatment options in the fight for a cure. Others were not out yet to their families or their workplaces and feared (not incorrectly) that coming out could subject them to an onslaught of discrimination and put their lives and livelihoods in danger.

For lesbian women at the intersection of sexism, misogyny, homophobia, and racism, being ignored and invisible were perhaps the biggest threats to their safety. However, the many who stepped up to take a stance against discrimination and fear, forging ahead with brave compassion, made all the difference. When counting the nurses, caregiving citizens, and community organizers helping to combat HIV/ AIDS in the early years, many were women, and in particular, queer-identifying or lesbian women. Often, they banded together to donate blood, provide meals and medical care, and offer a hand to hold in the hospital when no one else would come.

In Redline Collection, Kristen Joy Bjorge investigates these dynamics and realities through the lives of four young, queer women living, working, and finding love in Chicago. As they reach for their dreams and begin to find success and community, they are also confronted with the urgency of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and the consequences of speaking their truths. Grady, our one male character, gifts us with insight into the greater, carefree American sentiments of a fresh new decade ripe with change, including shifting technology, iconic films, and a burgeoning era of legendary sports in Chicago. He serves as a litmus test for our own perspectives by which we, in this 21st century, may reflect on what we remember, or don't, and how that informs the way we understand our lives and culture today.

It is impossible to ignore the parallels with the current COVID-19 pandemic that hit nearly 40 years after the start of the HIV/AIDS epidemic; how political and public denial slowed progress and fueled misinformation; how companies, media, and even daily conversations invented euphemisms like "sick" and forced us to reconsider who we share spaces with, and whose lives matter.

Much like the characters in the play, we still find ourselves reckoning with racial injustice and unequal rights for women and queer communities. Like them, we look for ways to continue and to connect even as a virus disrupts and destroys lives around us. Bjorge showcases our need for community and care with joy, humor, sorrow, and love. As her play memorializes and mourns those lost, it also celebrates the resilience and hope of those who survive.

-Mariana Seda, dramaturg

PROFILES



Emily Albert-Stauning, she/her, (Beth) is a Senior Chancellor Scholar studying acting (BFA) and neuroscience (BS) at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She has performed in over 40 film, theatre and television productions across the

Midwest. In 2016, she received an Emmy Award for Best Children's TV for hosting *Into the Outdoors*. During her time at the University of Illinois, she has been honored to perform in Lyric Theatre @ Illinois' *Crazy For You* (Lottie Child) and Illinois Theatre's *Lysistrata* (Myrrhine), *She Kills Monsters* (Fariah), *We're All Gonna Die Here* (Felicity), and *Native Gardens* (Ensemble/Virginia US). Albert-Stauning is also a singer-songwriter and recording artist (Sony Records 2016) and the host of the *Made to Lead* podcast by the Illinois Leadership Center.



Antwaun Allen, he/him, (Grady) is currently a senior pursuing a BFA in acting at the University of Illinois. His Illinois Theatre credits include Pshitter! A Drinking Song for the Year of Our Lord 2020 (Witch #2), The Piano Lesson (Lymon), and Fugitives in

America (Kia). He has also performed locally in the Armory Free Theatre in student-directed shows such as *RUMO(U)RS*, and *Emmanuel*. Allen is also an active drag and makeup artist who hopes to pursue more opportunities in combining theatre and acting with drag artistry.



Kim Fernandez (Laurel) is currently a junior pursuing a BFA in acting at the University of Illinois. She made her Illinois Theatre debut as Tilly in She Kills Monsters.



Alex George, they/she, (Understudy for Beth/Reading Stage Directions) is a junior pursuing a BFA in acting from the University of Illinois. Previous credits with Illinois Theatre include Great Scenes from American Kitchen Sink Theatre ('Night Mother,

Jessie), Psh*tter! A Drinking Song for the Year of Our Lord 2020 (Ross/Puppets on the Heath), and She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms (Evil Gabbi). George proudly hails from Somerset, Kentucky—the hub of the universe.



Erica Cruz Hernández, she/ her, (Alma) is currently pursuing her MFA at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Recently, she wrapped up work on Cymbeline for American Players Theatre as well as The Winter's Tale and Measure for

Measure for Illinois Shakespeare Festival. Other collaborations and credits include The New Harmony Project; St. Louis and Arkansas Shakespeare Festivals; Dipped in Honey (Teatro Bravo, Arizona); Cabaret, Titus Andronicus,

Because I Am Your Queen (Illinois Theatre);
Aguijón Theater's bilingual production of
Soldaderas for Goodman Theatre's Latino Theatre
Festival, and the Festival de Mujeres en Escena
por la Paz in Bogotá, Colombia. She can also be
seen in the films En Algun Lugar (A Place To Be
— available on Amazon) and the upcoming
Midwestern. She is a recipient of the Kate Neal
Kinley Fellowship and is an ensemble member
with Chicago's Aguijón Theater Company, which
has produced Spanish-language and bilingual
works for over 30 years.



Jaylon Muchison (Understudy for Grady/Reading Stage Directions) is a sophomore acting major at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Some of his accomplishments include receiving two All-State acting awards, first place in Oratorical Declamation in the

IHSA Speech and Acting state competition, triple crowning as Round/National Champion in Humorous Interpretation and Student of the Year at the NSDA tournament, and being crowned International World Champion in Oratory through Optimist International. Since attending the University of Illinois, he has performed in seven productions: two plays through Impulse 24/7, a short film directed by Ryan Leshock entitled Subliminal (Male Protagonist), Ghost Gun (Black Boy), Color Struck (John) by Zora Neal Hurston, Illinois Theatre's The Heist (Hawk), and his self-produced, created, directed, edited, and performed short film entitled Mirror, Mirror. Muchison's plans for the future include completing his studies with Illinois Theatre and working hands-on with the craft of acting.



Uche Nwansi, she/her, (Evelyn) is a senior completing her BFA in the acting program and BS in the Gies College of Business this fall at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She was most recently seen at Krannert Center as #7 in The Wolves.

Nwansi has also been seen at Krannert Center in Because I Am Your Queen and Marat/Sade. Other credits include RUMO(U)RS (Armory Free Theatre), Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley (Station Theatre), 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 (IHSTF).



Jailene Torres (Understudy for Alma) is currently a sophomore studying acting at the University of Illinois. *Native Gardens* will be Torres' debut at Krannert Center. She performed all throughout her middle school and high school career in Chicago, Illinois. Her

most notable performances include Titania in A Midsummer Night's Dream, Lilith in She Kills Monsters by Qui Nguyen, and Elvira in Blithe Spirit by Noel Coward. Torres is a proud queer Latina artist who embraces her sexuality and her Puerto Rican culture. When she's not acting, she loves to do her makeup, cook, and spend time with friends and family.

Kristen Joy Bjorge (Playwright) is a screenwriter and playwright who began her career consulting for several years on scripts for the late, Oscarnominated actor Chadwick Boseman and Tessa Thompson, amongst other talent. Bjorge's feature screenplay Notable People advanced in the Academy Nicholl Fellowship and is now in development with Josh Peters (The Lighthouse, Uncle Frank) to produce. Her work will next be seen as one of the writers on Pretty Boy, an LGBT+ coming-of-age feature from Sundance Alumi producer Tara Ansley, set for production at the end of this year. She recently wrapped writing a feature for Vinita Pictures and works frequently in the feature film space on rewrites and original work. Television work includes assisting on the Freeform show Alone Together. This is Bjorge's second time as a visiting artist at the University of Illinois. She is also an alum, holding a BFA in acting from the Department of Theatre. A native Midwesterner of Chilean and Norwegian descent, her writing mainly explores female-identifying characters whose perspectives have been traditionally ignored, especially queer women of the baby boomer generation and women of color. In her spare time, she enjoys fitness of all kinds, swimming, and obscure craft beer. She is represented by Stride Management.

Robert G. Anderson, he/him, (Director) is an associate professor in the Department of Theatre where he trains actors to join the profession. He is a founding member of Struan Leslie's 21st Century Chorus, a London-based collaborative theater project, working on devising new work. Recently he has worked with Kill Your Darlings, a Los Angeles writing group, as a member of their acting cohort. His latest film MONDOHOLLYWOODLAND, is streaming on Prime and he just completed major photography on the film FINAL SUMMER, due for release next year. A member of Actors' Equity Association, he has performed across the United States with Utah Shakespeare Festival, Tacoma Actors Guild, Illinois Shakespeare Festival, the Empty Space Theatre, and the Idaho Shakespeare Festival, among others. He has produced and directed over 30 productions here and abroad. Anderson is a founding member of Lenten Entertainment with which he produced the documentary Within A Play, which aired for two years on the Sundance Channel as part of its Doc Day series. His most recent film, The Actual Authentic Version of Who You Say I Am, which he co-directed and produced, was named an official entry at the Louisville International Festival of Film. He holds an MFA in acting from the University of Delaware's Professional Theatre Training Program. In 2012, he received the College of Fine and Applied Art's Teaching Excellence Award.

Emily Baker, she/her, (Technical Director) is currently a second-year scenic technology MFA student at the University of Illinois. Her previous shows include *Pshitter! A Drinking Song for the Year of Our Lord 2020* (stage carpenter) and *The Heist* (technical director). During her time as an undergrad at Northern Michigan University, she worked on *Cats* (technical director), *The Full Monty* (associate technical director), and *Beauty and the Beast* (assistant technical director). Baker is also Krannert Center's opera technical director, as well as the Armory Free Theatre technical director.

Julia Colpitts (Production Stage Manager) is pursuing her MFA in stage and production management at the University of Illinois. Last semester, she served as an assistant stage manager for Lyric Theatre @ Illinois' production of Turn of the Screw. Originally from Norfolk, Virginia, Colpitts attended Kenyon College where she studied drama and American studies. Her favorite professional credits include Grand Concourse (TheatreLAB, Richmond, Virginia) and Conversations (Capital Fringe Festival). She is particularly passionate about working on new works that explore social justice issues in an inclusive environment.

Nicole Rataj, she/her, (Lighting Designer) is currently in her third year of pursuing a BFA in lighting design and technology at the University of Illinois. Her previous University of Illinois credits include Tryon Scenes (programmer), March Dance (assistant lighting designer), Senior Dance Thesis Concert (co-lighting designer), and *Turn of the Screw* (light board operator).

Mariana Seda, she/her, (Dramaturg) is currently pursuing a master's degree in theatre studies at the University of Illinois with a focus on US Latinx theatre history and dramaturgy. She served as the dramaturg for Illinois Theatre's workshop production of Tocaya (2019) and Great Scenes from American Kitchen Sink Theatre (2021). This past summer, Seda served as the dramaturg for the Latinx Playwriting Award recipient, Temporary by Amy Toruño, at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Directing credits include We're all Gonna Die Here (Krannert Center) and The Light in the Piazza and [title of show] at Green Valley Theatre Company. Acting credits include The Last Five Years (Cathy) at The Station Theatre in Urbana, The Boxed Up Binge (Kris) at Capital Stage in Sacramento, Richard III (Lady Anne) and Two Gentlemen of Verona (Julia) at Big Idea Theatre Company, Frida (Cristina) at Teatro Nagual, In the Heights (Nina), and Spring Awakening (Wendla) at Green Valley Theatre Company.

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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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Restrooms are located in the foyers of Foellinger Great Hall, Tryon Festival Theatre, and Colwell Playhouse; the east entrances on the Lobby level; and in each elevator lobby on Level 1 and Level 3. Lobby restrooms and one restroom in each elevator lobby are fully accessible and contain baby-changing stations.

Ushers will be happy to provide you cough drops courtesy of St. Joseph Apothecary, or disposable foam earplugs if the place starts rockin'.

If you or a companion needs medical assistance, contact an usher or other staff member.

Please take a moment before the performance to note the theatre exits nearest to you. If it becomes necessary to evacuate the theatre, please remain calm, follow the instructions of the house staff, and exit in an orderly fashion to the appropriate safe meeting location, which will be announced to you.

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

The use of cell phones, cameras, and recording devices during performances is prohibited unless otherwise announced from the stage. Turn them off and immerse yourself in the performance—but at intermission, consider tweeting about your experience!

LATE ARRIVALS

As a courtesy to performers and audience members, latecomers will be seated only at times selected in advance by the artist. Should you find that you've arrived late to a performance, our Patron Services staff will keep you informed about the earliest seating opportunity.

LOST ITEMS

If you are in need of Lost and Found, please visit the Patron Services counter. We will do our best to reunite object and owner!

TICKET RETURNS

If you find you can't attend a performance, please contact the Ticket Office in advance, preferably by 6pm the day before the performance (kran-tix@illinois.edu or 217.333.6280). We never charge a handling fee on ticket transactions.

SERVICES

Krannert Center for the Performing Arts is committed to making experiences accessible for all patrons, and we are delighted to provide a number of services to assist you. Krannert Center is equipped with an assisted listening system, wheelchair-accessible and no-step/few-step seating, and large-print programs, Braille programs, and American Sign Language interpreters are available with three weeks' advance notice.

For assistance regarding your visit, please email: Para ayuda en relación con su visita, favor de enviar un email a:

Pour vous aider dans votre visite, prière de nous envoyer un courriel à:

欢迎! 如若您对您的造访需要帮助, 请发送电子邮件至: स्वागत हे! अगर आपको अपने रहने के लिए मदद चाहिए, ईमेल कीजिए:

환영합니다! 방문에 관해 도움이 필요하실 때에는... 에게 이메일로 문의하시기 바랍니다:

PATRONSERVICES@KRANNERTCENTER.ILLINOIS.EDU 217.333.9716



DINING

Our lobby services are open day and evening to serve you:



SUSTAINABLE SPECIALS + EVERYDAY INDULGENCES

STAGE5BAR

SMOOTH SELECTIONS + ARTISANAL APPETIZERS

WHY WAIT?

Order before you head into the theatre, and we'll have your food and beverages waiting for you at intermission or after the show.



COME AS YOU ARE. LEAVE DIFFERENT.



U of I students, come on in. In whatever clothes, whatever state of mind, from whatever world of experience, you are welcome here. We don't have a dress code, we don't have an opinion code, and we want the Center to be your kind of place. Because of the vital support of Krannert Center donors and the Krannert Center U of I student fee, U of I students never pay more than \$10 for a ticket, and dozens of events each year are completely free.

Your presence helps to make Krannert Center a place like nowhere else—and what you can experience here makes your education like nobody else's. If you are inspired by what you find here, invite others to join you.

When you come to Krannert Center, we promise that you'll leave different: refreshed, reaffirmed, renewed!