

YORK COLLEGE THEATRE SEASON - 2015

MARCH 20-24

OUR LADY OF 121st STREET

By Stephen Adly Gurgis
Directed by Michael Earle Fajardo

Is there such a thing
as Salvation?

ADULT CONTENT



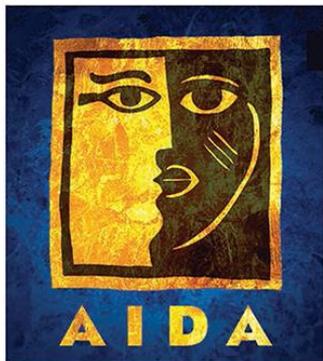
MAY 1- 10

AIDA THE MUSICAL

Music by Elton John Lyrics by Tim Rice

Directed by Timothy J. Amrhein
Music Directed by Jonathan Quash

Sworn enemies find love that
transcends time, place and race.





YORK College

S.E.A.S.O.N 2014 . 2015

TEACH for AMERICA

by **Rob Ackerman**

directed by **Hadi Tabbal**

Dec 5. 4pm Dec 6. 7pm

Dec 7. 3pm Dec 9. 12pm

Dec 12. 7pm Dec 13. 2pm

**Milton G. Bassin Performing Arts Center
Little Theatre**

94-45 Guy R. Brewer Blvd Jamaica, NY 11451



The use of any recording device, either audio or video, and the taking of photographs, with or without flash, is strictly prohibited. Cellular phones, beepers and watch alarms should be turned off or set to non-audible mode.

**PERFORMING & FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT
UPCOMING EVENTS – Fall 2014 – Spring 2015**

MUSIC

YCMC Showcase

The Chapel

Tuesday December 9 – 7 pm

York College Gospel Choir

Academic Core Atrium

Sunday December 14 – 3 pm

York College Big Band

York College Performing Arts Center

Wednesday December 17 – 7 pm

THEATRE

Our Lady of 121st Street

by Steven Adly Gurgis

directed by Michael Earle Fajardo

March 20 – March 24

AIDA

Music by Elton John; Lyrics by Tim Rice

Directed by Timothy J. Amrhein

Music Directed by Jonathan Quash

May 1 – May 10

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

The Fall Communications Technology

“Digital Art & Technology Showcase”

“The Bridge” Room 4M04

December 16th from 12-2pm

The CT Makerlab ; www.the-bridge.cc

SPEECH COMMUNICATION -THEATRE ARTS MAJOR

I. Required Speech Communication and Theatre Arts Courses (12 Credits)

Speech Communication 182 - Voice and Diction (3 Credits)

Theatre Arts 210 - History of Theatre (3 Credits)

Theatre Arts 211 - Basic Acting (3 Credits)

Speech Communication 303 - Ethics & The Freedom of Speech (3 Credits)

II. Speech Communication 490 (3 Credits)

Independent Research

or

Theatre Arts 490 (3 Credits)

Independent Research

III. Speech Communication/Theatre Arts Electives (18 Credits)

Students must concentrate in either Speech Communication or in Theatre Arts and complete at least twelve of their eighteen elective credits in the Concentration that she or he has declared. (A total of 12 credits of SpeechComm/TA coursework must be at the 300-level or higher.)

NOTE: Although Speech Communication students may take as much Theatre Arts *practica* as they please, *no more than 6 credits of Theatre Arts practica* may be applied towards the fulfillment of the Speech Communication Concentration; however, Theatre Arts students *may apply 9 credits of Theatre Arts Practica* towards the fulfillment of the Theatre Arts Concentration. Theatre Arts *practica* courses currently include TA215-19.

*All SpeechComm/TA majors must take SPCH 101 as a Prereq for completion of the Major. Majors in Speech Communication/Theatre Arts must fulfill their General Education Requirements in a discipline other than their major



Share

Join the **YORK COLLEGE THEATRE** Facebook Group and keep up-to-date with all our productions and course offerings.



Milton G. Bassin Performing Arts Center Little Theatre
December 5 - December 13

YORK COLLEGE THEATRE

Department of Performing and Fine Arts
Timothy J. Amrhein, Chair

Presents the New York Premiere of

TEACH for AMERICA

by Rob Ackerman

Directed by Hadi Tabbal

Kevin Cauvin Matthew Echevarria
Michael Earle Fajardo* Yasha Georges
Shakeerah Fredericks Uchenna Ijeaku
Katrina Trisha Moise Bukola Ogunmola
Mariel Suriel Arline Tejada Sabrina Thomas

SCENIC DESIGN COSTUME DESIGN LIGHTING DESIGN
David T. Jones Kara Branch Ryan Hauenstein

TECHNICAL DIRECTION PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
Benjamin MacKrell *Jessica Pecharsky

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors & Stage Managers

CAST

(ADULTS)

SHIPNIA..... Mariel Suriel
KELSEY..... Katrina Trisha Moise
PRINCIPAL LAWRENCE HANDLER Michael Earle Fajardo*
ELLEN CLARK.....Shakeerah Fredericks
MRS. EUSTACE.....Sabrina Thomas

(STUDENTS)

ONYX..... Bukola Ogunmola
SEAMUS..... Matthew Echevarria
ROCHELLE..... Arline Tejada
REESE..... Uchenna Ijeaku
DESTINY..... Yasha Georges
KENAN..... Kevin Cauvin

TIME

The first four months of a school year.

SETTING

A dilapidated high school.

The performance runs around 90 minutes with no intermission.

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors & Stage Managers

Dolores Swirin

Vice President for Institutional Advancement Unit

Olga Dais, Esq.

Executive Director of Compliance and Legal Affairs

Barbara Manuel

Executive Director of Human Resources

Sharon Davidson

Registrar

Linda Chesney

Director for Career Services

Earl Simons

Director of Government and Community Relations

Mondell Sealy

Director of Development and Alumni Affairs

Dr. Jean Phelps

Director of Student Activities and Campus Programming

Cynthia Murphy

Executive Director of Adult and Continuing Education



YORK COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Marcia V. Keizs
President

Dr. Panayiotis Meleties
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Ronald C. Thomas
Acting Vice President for Administrative Affairs

Ismael Perez
Assistant Vice President for Planning and Budget

Dr. Geneva M. Walker-Johnson
Vice President for Student Development

Dr. Holger Henke
Assistant Provost

Dr. Vincent Banrey
Dean of Students

Dr. Donna Chirico
Dean, School of Arts and Sciences

Dr. Panayiotis Meleties
Acting Dean, School of Business and Information Systems

Dr. Lynne W. Clark
Dean, School of Health and Behavioral Sciences

Dr. William Dinello
Dean, Executive Office



KEVIN CAUVIN (*Kenan*) is a Theatre Arts major at York College. Kevin has been apart of many York productions. Most recently he performed as Orcus in *She Kills Monsters*. Other credits include *The Tuskegee Airmen Project* and Lysander in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He was also the assistant stage manager for *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, also at York College. Kevin is extremely excited

to be part of *Teach for America*. He feels blessed to be working with all the talented individuals.



MATTHEW ECHEVARRIA (*Seamus*) is a part-time senior at York College majoring in Community Health Education with a minor in Theatre Arts. This is Matthew's third appearance at York College. Past credits: *Heartbeat*, a spoken word poetry production directed by Tom Marion and the world premiere of *After* directed by Hadi Tabbal. Matthew intends to continue acting in the future



MICHAEL EARLE FAJARDO (*Principal Lawrence Handler*) is currently an adjunct professor with the Performing and Fine Arts Department at York College. He holds an MFA from the NYU GradActing Program and has worked as a professional actor in Theatre, Television, Commercials, and Film. Some credits include 'Soranzo' from the play *Tis Pity she's a Whore* at ACT, 'Frank' from the play *Hilda* at 59E59, and 'Jimmy' from the award-winning short film *Sunday*.



YASHA GEORGES (*Destiny*) is a senior at York College majoring in Speech Communication/Theatre Arts. This is Yasha's first production at York College. She is very excited to join this wonderful cast and production and would like to extend her special thanks to the director for his continuous support.



SHAKEERAH FREDERICKS (*Ellen Clark*) is a senior at York College majoring in English with a minor in Theatre Arts. She has appeared in many York College Theatre productions. Past credits include: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Txt Msg*, *The Tuskegee Airmen Project*, and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, *Dreamgirls*, and *Suburbia*.



UCHENNA IJEAKU (*Reese*) is a senior at York College, majoring in Speech Communication/Theatre with a minor in Political Science. This is Uchenna's 10th production at York College. Past credits include: *Macbeth*, *Heartbeat/Prosody 400*, *Starving But Making It*, *Slapdash*, *The New Breed*, *The Love Magnet*, *A Flea in Her Ear*, *The Tuskegee Airmen Project*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *She Kills Monsters*. He currently performs for the CUNY Creative Arts Team Project CHANGE. He is a founding member of the LYTE Foundation.

YORK COLLEGE PERFORMING AND FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT

Timothy J. Amrhein – Chair
Joycelyn Heywood - Administrative Assistant
Angela Robinson - CUNY Office Assistant
Evangelista Goris – College Assistant

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

Asst. Prof. Smith (Coordinator)
H.E.O. Phelps

FINE ARTS

Assoc. Prof. Buxenbaum (Studio Arts Coordinator)
Asst. Prof. Hajikano
Distinguished Lecturer Prof. Vendryes
CLT Fraser

MUSIC

Asst. Prof. Zlabinger (Coordinator)
Asst. Prof. Lam

SPEECH COMMUNICATION

Lecturer Corkery (Coordinator)
Asst. Prof. Metcalf
Asst. Prof. Gieseler
Prof. Como (Emeritus)

THEATRE ARTS

Asst. Prof. Marion (Coordinator)
Assoc. Prof. Amrhein
Prof. Nickolich (Emerita)
CLT MacKrell
CLT Pecharsky

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



YORK COLLEGE PRINTING SERVICES

YORK COLLEGE BUILDING & GROUNDS

THOMAS MARION

TIMOTHY J. AMRHEIN

MICHAEL EARLE FAJARDO

ROB ACKERMAN



KATRINA TRISHA MOISE (*Kelsey*) is a graduate of York College with a double major in Anthropology and Sociology. Katrina was seen recently at York College in *A Midsummer Nights Dream* and *Strange Worlds in My Mind*. Past credits include *The Music Man* and *Fiddler on the Roof*. Katrina is also a dancer. She has studied ballet, tap, jazz, hip hop, modern, African, and ballroom, at Long Island

High School for the Arts, Broadway Dance Center, and Ballet Hispanico. She has performed on both *Dancing with the Stars* and *So You Think You Can Dance*. She aspires to be a Movement Science educator and travel the world sharing the knowledge and joy of dancing.



BUKOLA OGUNMOLA (*Onyx*) is a York College graduate with a degree in Marketing and minor in Theatre. She has appeared in many theatre productions in New York City and at York College. Past York College credits include: *She Kills Monsters*, *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, *After*, and *A Flea in Her Ear*, *SlapDash*, *Dreamgirls*, *Fame*, and *CVR*.



MARIEL SURIEL (*Shipnia*) is a senior at York College. She is majoring in Medical Technology with a minor in Theatre Arts. This is her second performance at York College, after playing Rania in *After* by Mona Mansour and Tala Manassah, directed by Hadi Tabbal. Past credits include: *Grave Knowledge* (Roberta) at the American Theatre of Actors, by Paul Surace, directed by Freddy Gonzales, *All Shook Up* (ensemble) , *Little*

Shop of Horrors (voice of Audrey 2), and *The Wiz* (Evilene), all at the Bert Keller Auditorium. Mariel is an aspiring actress and is thrilled to be working with such a great cast and director.



ARLINE TEJADA (*Rochelle*) is a junior majoring in Theatre Arts and Communication. This is her first production at York College. She took a theatre class in high school and decided that she wanted to pursue it.



SABRINA THOMAS (*Mrs. Eustace*) is a recent York College graduate with a degree in Speech Communication /Theatre Arts. Past York College credits include: Deena Jones in *Dream Girls*, Mimi Marquez in *Rent*, Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, and Miss Bell in *Fame*. Sabrina's studies include intensive classical training at The Brooklyn Conservatory of Music where she studied piano and various voice techniques for numerous years. She now teaches as an adjunct lecturer at York College.



ROB ACKERMAN (*playwright*) could not be more grateful to Hadi Tabbal and this fantastic cast. Rob's work includes the book for the musical *Volleygirls* (2013, NYMF Award winner for Best Ensemble Performance, Best in Fest, music by Eli Bolin, lyrics by Sam Forman); *Call Me Waldo* (2012, The Working Theatre, Off Broadway, and The Kitchen Theatre, Ithaca); *Tabletop* (2001, American Place Theatre, Drama Desk Award Winner, Best Ensemble); *Volleygirls* (2009, American Conservatory Theatre, commission and premiere); *Icarus of Ohio* (2008, NYU's Tisch School of the Arts); *Disconnect* (2005, The Working Theatre, Classic Stage Company). He is now working on *Factory Girls*, a new musical, with Sam Forman, Creighton Irons and Sean Mahoney. *Teach for America* was commissioned by ACT in San Francisco and produced there in the spring of 2014. Last month, his short play, *Duncan and Troy Visit a Petting Zoo*, was produced by Core Artist Ensemble as part of an evening called *Twisted Shorts*. Rob's



TOM MARION (*Assistant Prof. of Theatre and Theatre Arts Coordinator*) holds an M.F.A. in Acting from Rutgers' Mason Gross School of the Arts (with Bill Esper), a Certificate of Vocal Coaching from The National Theatre Conservatory (with Tony Church), and an internship with The Royal Shakespeare Company (with Cecily Berry and Andrew Wade.) He is a Designated Teacher of Linklater Voice, a founding member of the Linklater Center for Voice and Language, and an Associate Teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework. He has taught at several studios and professional actor programs in NYC, including NYU, The Actors' Center, Marymount Manhattan College, The New School, and Columbia University. He is a former member of Actors' Equity. At York Prof. Marion has directed *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth*, *Fabulation*, *The Exonerated*, *The Tempest*, and was the creator/director of *Istwa!* (which was subsequently performed at the 2011 International Fringe Festival, NYC) and *SPEAK OUT* (which was subsequently performed at The Bowery Poetry Club in Manhattan and at York as part of Black History Month.)



BARBARA NICKOLICH (*Prof. Emerita of Theatre*) received her formal theatre training from Wheaton College, Northwestern University and New York University. In addition, she has been a student of Bobby Troka, voice coach, in NYC. She has appeared as a performer and director with the CUNY Readers Theatre. She developed a one-woman show, *American Counterpoint*, which she performed in Munich, Germany, Nashville and New York City

THEATRE ARTS FACULTY



TIMOTHY J. AMRHEIN (*Chair of the Department of Performing and Fine Arts and an Associate Professor of Theatre*) holds an M.F.A. from Wayne State University in Theatre Design and Technology. Prior to his arrival at York College, he served as the faculty technical director and designer at the University of Pittsburgh and the faculty designer at Schoolcraft College in Livonia, MI. Though Mr. Amrhein is known for his

scenic and costume designs on the York College stage and throughout the tri-state area, he has directed several productions as well. Some of his past directorial credits include: *An Evening of Durang, Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, Dreamgirls, La Luz De Un Cigarrillo, RENT, SlapDASH, All in the Timing, FAME the Musical, Yo Soy Latina, Scapin, Little Shop of Horrors, Anna in the Tropics, Oleanna, Into the Woods and Once Upon A Mattress*. Mr. Amrhein has also designed both costumes and scenery throughout the United States. Some of his most recent designs have been *No Exit, Galileo, Endgame, Charley's Aunt* and *Antigone* (York College), the first New York City revival of *The Full Monty* and *The Fantasticks* (The Gallery Players) and *Twelfth Night* (Princeton Repertory Shakespeare Festival). Other design and directing credits include work for the Village Light Opera Group, the Princeton Repertory Shakespeare Festival, the River Rep Theatre Company, the Wings Theatre, The Second City (Detroit and Toronto), Carnegie Mellon University, and the California Repertory Theatre. He received the Best Scenic Design award from the NJ Star Ledger for *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, the Detroit Free Press's Theatre Excellence Award for *Saturday, Sunday, Monday* and *Scapin* and most recently the Award for Creative Excellence for his set design of *The Hedge* from the Arts in Christian Theatre. Prof. Amrhein has also translated the Dominican play, *La Luz De Un Cigarrillo*, by Marco Antonio Rodriguez from Spanish into English with the help of the cast. The English premier was performed in October of 2012 at York College. He is a member of United Scenic Artists, Local 829 and the United States Institute for Theatre Technology.

writing has been published by Dramatists Play Service, Smith and Kraus and Playscripts and has been nurtured and performed at Yaddo, Flux, Access, At Hand, and Dorset Theatre Festival. He was born and raised in Columbus, Ohio, majored in theatre and Spanish at Middlebury College, and earned an M.F.A. in stage directing at Northwestern University. Rob and his wife, author Carol Weston, live in Manhattan. He is a member of Dramatists Guild of America, Inc.



HADI TABBAL (*Director*) is an adjunct assistant professor of theatre at CUNY York College. Past Directing credits: *After* by Mona Mansour and Tala Manassah (York College Theatre), *Burying Elephants & Other Plays*, a series of four one-acts (The Bridge Theatre), *Boys' Life* (The Zipper Theatre). Past acting credits include: Mona Mansour's *The Hour of Feeling* at The Humana Festival for New American Plays, directed by Mark Wing-Davey, *Circumstance* (Winner of Sundance Audience Award), *Person of Interest* (CBS), *House of Cards* (Netflix). Hadi was resident playwright at Berkeley Rep's GroundFloor program this past summer where he started developing 'The Oum Kalthoum Project'. As an actor, Hadi has been involved with The Sundance Theatre Institute (Utah Lab and East Africa Lab), The Lark Play Development Center (Playground program), Noor Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop, The Public Theatre, and New Dramatists. Hadi has taught in Beirut at Notre Dame University, the Lebanese American University, and the Madina Theatre. He holds an M.F.A from The New School for Drama. He is a proud recipient of the Fulbright Award.



DAVID T. JONES (*Scenic Design*) is an Adjunct Lecturer of Theatre and Drama Club Advisor at York College. David has designed more than 15 of York College Theatre's productions since 2008, including *Anna in the Tropics*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Speak Out*, *Scapin*, *The Tempest*, *Fabulation*, *Fame*, *Rent*, *Dreamgirls*, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, and the past season's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He is Resident Scenic Designer for The Village Light Opera Group in Manhattan, where he has designed nearly the entire Gilbert & Sullivan canon and countless musicals and operettas, including *Kismet* and *Bells Are Ringing*. Most recently he (re)designed the revival of *Scrooge and Gilbert and Sullivan*. He has also

designed various productions in the tri-state area, including *The Merry Widow* at Hartt College as well as *Beauty and the Beast*, *Urinetown*, and *Suessical* for Northern Highlands Regional High School in New Jersey. At York, he teaches Introduction to Theatre and Scenic Painting, among other courses.



RYAN HAUENSTEIN (*Lighting Design*) has designed lights for *I Hope They Serve Beer on Broadway* By: Tucker Max, *Woyzeck Musical*, *Deathmetal* (Gorilla Rep), *Quest for the West: Adventures on the Oregon Trail*, and *A Christmas Carol* (No. 11 Productions), *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare Abridged* (KRT), and the U.S. premier of *Scandalous! The Musical: The Life and Times of D.H. Lawrence* (JPAS). He also works with the band Fauno. He has served as Technical Director for Kentucky Repertory Theatre. Ryan holds a B.F.A. in Technical Theatre from Western Kentucky University



KARA BRANCH (*Costume Design*) has worked as a costume designer in both New York and California. New York credits include *The Woman Who Was Acquitted* at The Flea Theatre, *Hamlet* at Boomerang Theatre Company, *Leaving Iowa* at Downstairs Cabaret Theatre and *The Little Mermaid* at The Schomburg Center. Costume assistant credits include the Broadway musical *An American in Paris* at the Palace Theatre and *Soul Doctor* at New York Theatre Workshop. karabbranch.com



MONIQUE JOHNSON (*Dramaturg*) is an upper sophomore majoring in Theatre Arts/Speech Communication at York College. She is a singer, songwriter and formerly an Atlantic records recording artist. She is a committed community charity worker who helps under-privileged children. She studied Electro-Mechanical Engineering at NYCCT, later becoming a Computer Lab Technician Adjunct for CUNY. She successfully developed an Open Lab for The Research Foundation of CUNY at NYCCT helping

women succeed in computer engineering.

DOMINIQUE MAGLIORE (Backstage Crew) is a senior at York College majoring in Speech Communications/Theatre Arts. It is her first time working backstage for a York production. She enjoys listening to music, reading poetry and seeing the behind-the-scenes work that goes into putting on a great show. Dominique hopes to work backstage in the future and, after graduation, to pursue a career in media management.

VICTORIA MARQUEZ (Backstage Crew) is a sophomore at York College majoring in Speech Communications/Theatre Arts. In her younger years, Victoria participated in school productions. She loves to read anything from fiction to Greek mythology and enjoys listening to Indie Rock, Classic Rock, Hip-hop, Blues and Jazz. She also loves working with her hands, building and sculpting. A veteran crew member, she is Scenic Coordinator for the Drama Royals' next show, "Jesus Hopped the A Train." She hopes to become a speech therapist specializing in helping soldiers who have acquired speech defects.

KENNIS SYLVESTER (Backstage Crew) is a senior at York majoring in Business and Marketing. He lives in Brooklyn with his younger brother, Keenan. In his spare time he organizes events such as fashion shows, parties and fundraisers. In the future he aspires to own a boutique selling high-end clothing. While taking "Intro to Theatre" last summer, one of his assignments was to see a live play. He found "Shakespeare in the Park" amazing and it fueled a fascination with live theatre. He registered for the backstage course to be more involved in production. This is his second time working on a play, and though it takes many people and much effort, so far it has been a fun experience for Kennis.

ENRIQUE VALDEZ (Backstage Crew) is a sophomore at York majoring in Speech Communications/Theatre Arts. This is his second production at the college, but he has always held an interest in acting and stage production. He looks forward to working backstage, but also hopes that he will be onstage soon.

DAVID VOLCY (Backstage Crew) is a sophomore majoring in Speech Communications/ Theatre Arts. He enjoys dancing and music, both as a listener and a writer. It has been his passion to be an artist and entertainer since the age of three. He also has an interest in acting as part of his craft. In his spare time he choreographs and teaches hip-hop 101 to younger and beginning students in his neighborhood. David is no stranger to the York College stage and has been in many productions with the Red Shoes dance club. He plans to perform in York College theatre productions before he graduates.

BACKSTAGE CREW

ANTHONY ALICIA (Props Master) is a senior majoring in Speech Communications/Theatre Arts. He is currently President of the Drama Royals Club. He has a love for theatre and is always willing to lend a helping hand. He hopes York College Theatre can grow bigger and stronger!!! He also hopes to become a teacher so he can spread his love for the arts to others.

BABITA BASSOON (Props Master) is a senior at York majoring in Speech Communications/Theatre Arts. She has participated in school productions since early childhood. She enjoys shopping, acting, listening to music and babysitting her niece. Babita hopes to participate in future shows at York after graduation. She plans to continue her career as an actress.

NATOUCHKA COURTIEN (Backstage Crew) is a lower senior majoring in Interdisciplinary Studies at York College. In her spare time she likes to listen to gospel music, read, cook and go to the movies. She plans to graduate this fall semester. This is her first time taking a theatre course. She enjoys it so far and looks forward to learning even more.

JULIAN JONES (Backstage Crew) is a junior at York College majoring in Speech Communications/Theatre arts. He has yet to appear as an actor in a York production. Julian is a student athlete with the York basketball team. He can be seen at the York College gym during the season and around the theatre anytime else.

ISRAEL LEWIS (Backstage Crew) is a lower junior at York majoring in Speech Communications/Theatre Arts who loves acting and music. He has appeared in several short films and plays at St. John's University and at York.. He is currently appearing in another off-Broadway play. His future plan is to become one of the greatest actors in history and a master of emotions. He lives by the motto: "Why settle for good when you can be great?"



JESSICA PECHARSKY (*Production Stage Manager/CLT*) is a graduate of Hofstra University in dance and theatre. Once at Hofstra, Jessica moved her focus to stage management. She has been stage-managing professionally since 2000. She has held resident stage management positions with Streetlight Productions and The Jekyll and Hyde

Club. Other companies she has stage managed for include Classical Theatre of Harlem, Centenary Stage, Ma-Yi Theatre, Chester Theatre Company, Boomerang Theatre, Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival, Working Theatre, Audax Theatre Group, Capacitor, Theatre LILA, Clubbed Thumb, American Globe Theatre, Heartists Productions, and Moonwork. Jessica is a member of Actors Equity Association (AEA).



BENJAMIN MACKRELL (*Technical Director / CLT*) holds a Bachelors Degree in Theatre from Goucher College in Baltimore. As Technical Director for Manoa Valley Theatre, Hawaii's premier off-Broadway playhouse, he received the award for "Outstanding Technical Direction" from the Hawaii State Theatre Council in 2010, a category created that year. He also received Po'okela Awards for

his outstanding set designs for *Little Shop Of Horrors* (2011), *Sleuth* (2010), *Tuesdays with Morrie* (2009) all at Manoa Valley Theatre. He was also awarded Broadwayworld.com Outstanding Lighting Design of a Play for *Sight Unseen* at Baltimore's Fells Point Corner Theatre in 2006. His passion lies in helping theatre artists realize their vision and making it possible for audiences to be emotionally and intellectually transported.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

There are two things that usually define living in New York City. The first of those is 'opportunity'. Yes. It is an overused phrase. But it is true. Any theatre artist here, for example, can attest to the fact that we are all a short subway ride from working with some of the most inspiring talents today. Every day. Now this subway ride might be an hour trip on the E train to Jamaica Center...well.... but it can also be three stops to Midtown.

I met Rob Ackerman at The Lark Play Development Center, which I am confident to say is one of the most important engines for artistic creation in theatre in New York City. Rob would bring in pieces of his new play, *Teach for America*, which he was developing for its first production at the American Conservatory Theatre's MFA and Young Conservatory Actors program (directed by W. David Keith and produced by Craig Slaughter and Melissa Smith) in San Francisco, and actors, including myself at the Lark, would get up on our feet and do them; no context, no preparation.

When professor Tom Marion generously asked me to direct this fall's main production, I immediately knew it was going to be this play. No hesitation. I knew we could give it life here at York. So I wrote Rob and laid it all out. And it worked out. He said yes.

Now that I know Rob more, I am even more grateful for this opportunity than I was at the beginning, because only now do I really understand how much Rob loves his work, his plays, and his characters. And we get to do it all.

Now, the other thing that usually defines living in New York City, experientially, is this element of 'surprise'. For me, this surprise has been teaching here at York. It combines all the vibrant things that make it exciting to do plays. It just makes sense.

There is something special about working with actors here. To say it crudely, it is a process that is devoid of all the uninspiring preciousness that accompanies making theatre sometimes; that sense of unnecessary über-artistic ownership. In the theatre, as everyone

knows, we usually try so hard to transform fiction into reality. Working with these wonderful actors is quite the opposite: they make reality into fiction. And if that is not theatre, what is? But that is not what I primarily like about Bukola and Uchenna and Kevin and Mariel and Arline and Yasha and Katrina and Sabrina and Shakeerah and Matthew, and of course the generous Michael, who is an actor and a faculty member here. What I love about them is that they are fierce. Because they are intuitive. Because they are never trying to be artistic. They *are* artistic. And that's because they have an authentic voice. They will not do anything they don't believe in. They know the world.

What I also believe has been special about this production of *Teach for America* is the fact that it's a play about public education... at a public educational institution. It is a play about the 'now' and the 'here', which has made it immediate, urgent, and resonant for all of us, and hopefully for our audiences. Educational disparity, bureaucratic pressures, and petrified standardized methods are paramount problems of the future. They are the ingredients of mediocrity. And the eternal conflict of navigating the line between that which is 'right' and that which we have created to be 'the norm' is heartbreaking, especially in the classroom. The thing about bad systems is that they are terrible because they work. It is terrifying.

Theatres and theatre makers, ad nauseam, talk about building new audiences. This, most of the time, translates into offering discounted tickets and distributing pamphlets to hang on bulletin boards and community centers in the so-called outer boroughs. But we all know that this builds nothing but more paper to recycle. I firmly believe that we *are* building new audiences here at York. We *are* creating relevant new work *with* hidden talents *for* communities that transcend the theatre-going scene, both culturally and geographically. And the challenges are immense. To quote the play: *The world is not fair, so we need to make it fair.* And that's art.

Thank You.

Hadi Tabbal