

Coming in December...

York College Theatre

continues its

2014-15 Season

with a controversial look at a hotly debated issue....



***Educate
yourself!***

2014
York College Theatre Presents....

Strange Worlds

in my mind



October 24 at 4pm

October 25 at 7pm

October 26 at 3pm

October 28 at 12pm



YORK College
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 and Fine Arts Department COMING EVENTS – Fall 2014

FINE ARTS

York College Fine Arts Gallery Exhibition:

Build Up/ Built Up – Io Palmer

Opening: Thursday, October 23, 2014

Closing: Friday, December 5, 2014

Accomplished installation artist, Io Palmer has been invited to build new mixed media sculptures that explore the excessive, low-wage labor associated with couture garments and how fashion industry production waste has polluted waterways in some of the most poverty stricken areas of the globe.



COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

The Fall Communications Technology

“Digital Art & Technology Showcase”

“The Bridge” Room 4M04

The CT Makerlab

www.the-bridge.cc

December 16th from 12-2pm

MUSIC

TUE 11/18 @ 7 p.m. Music Faculty Recital @ The Chapel

TUE 11/25 @ 6 p.m. Student Piano Recital @ PAC

SUN 12/14 @ 3 p.m. York College Gospel Choir @ Academic Core Atrium

WED 12/17 @ 7 p.m. York College Big Band @ PAC

THEATRE

Teach for AMERICA

A new play by Rob Ackerman

Directed by Hadi Tabbal

December 5 - 13

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.



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



YORK COLLEGE THEATRE

Department of Performing and Fine Arts

Timothy J. Amrhein, Chair

Little Theatre/ October 24–28, 2014

Presents

Strange Worlds in my mind

Created by Kristine Haruna Lee & Cast

Directed by Kristine Haruna Lee

SCENIC DESIGN
Benjamin MacKrell

COSTUMES
Karen Boyer

LIGHTING DESIGN
Katy Atwell

SOUND/VIDEO DESIGN
Stevo Arnoczy

TECHNICAL DIRECTION
Benjamin MacKrell

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
*Jessica Pecharsky

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Christina Acosta

DRAMATURG
Khadija Anderson

CAST

Ashlee Alexander Eliza Asensi Hermilo Bautista
Anthony Castro Bellene Fisher Shatiek Johnson
Katrina Trisha Moise Eric Normil-Mendez Vania St. Louis

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

Dramaturg Notes

A New Experience

After doing some research and speaking to some of the “vets” of the theatre world I was able to come up with my own definition of what the role of a dramaturg consists of. A dramaturg’s main job is to research the ideas that make a play work. This can include the history of the play, background knowledge of the writer, information on the era in which the play is set, etc. With this information the dramaturg can work with the actors to help them understand their parts and the purpose of the play. For this play my job included researching some of the play’s themes, including the Jim Crow era, minstrelsy, Sun Ra, and afro-futurism and relate them to events that are happening now.



Sun Ra was born Herman Blount on May 22, 1914 in Birmingham, Alabama. Since Birmingham was an important stop for touring musicians, Sun Ra grew up seeing many famous musicians. This is believed to have helped encourage his interest in music. By the age of eleven he was already a skilled pianist able to sight-read and compose music. In 1934 he was offered his first full-time musical job at the age of 20. He toured with a band organized by singer Ethel Harper, his high school biology teacher. Shortly afterward, he took leadership of the band,

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Dean, Executive Office

renaming them the Sonny Blount Orchestra. Sun Ra's style is often associated with Big Band music but in time he came up with his own version of jazz, an avant-garde space jazz called Afro-Futurism.



Afro-Futurism is a mixture of history and science fiction, as well as Afro-Centricity. That is truly the philosophy of Sun Ra, to be able to teach the struggle of black people and “black music” with a sound that draws people in. Afro-Futurism affected his performances as well; the whole band would dress up in very flashy robes and headdresses – not the typical clothing for an orchestra. Of course this type of very different music wasn't the best to some, but many people loved Sun Ra. I believe it was because of his ability to combine historical encounters with a science fiction twist that really stuck with people. An artist of today, Andre 3000, a member of the group OutKast, was greatly influenced by Sun Ra. Andre 3000 is well known for his futuristic sounding music and his very bold and unusual sense of style.

Before this independent study I had no idea what a dramaturg was, let alone how to be one. After learning more about Sun Ra I was able to make sense of how he is portrayed in the play. *Strange Worlds in My Mind* is definitely a unique play, different by far than any other play I have seen or been a part of. I think that because I had the opportunity of being the dramaturg in this play, I not only had the opportunity to be involved in a different genre of theatre, but also a whole new side of the theatre world in general.

- **Khadija Anderson** (*Dramaturg*)

THE CAST



ASHLEE ALEXANDER

(*Beauty Contestant #27*) is a theatre major here at York College. Over the years she has participated in high school talent shows at Robert F. Kennedy Community High school. Past stage credits include Off-Off Broadway productions of *Run That Back*, *Visiting Ours* and *Off The Record* presented by the Tuesday/Thursday cast of The Possibility Project. Not only has she co-starred in these productions, she also co-wrote the original musical with the help of her fellow cast members. She hopes to continue her acting career and use it to help others.

ELIZA ASENSI (*Victoria/Beauty Contestant #43*) is a senior at York College majoring in English Literature with a minor in Theatre Arts. This is her second performance at York College, her first being part of the ensemble in last year's *Dreamgirls*. She staged managed last summer's *Starving But Making It* here at York, and is an aspiring actress and writer. Her future is bright and she looks forward to what the world has in store for her.



HERMILO BAUTISTA

(*Richard*) is a Theater Arts major at York College. He prefers being called Milo by his peers because he believes it's easier to pronounce. Milo has been involved in three productions as a backstage crew member: *The Love Magnet*, *Starving But Making It*, and *Dreamgirls*. Last fall he made his York College Theatre debut playing Covielle in the play *The Bourgeois Gentlehomme* by Moliere. Last semester,

Milo performed Francis Flute/Thisbe in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare. This past summer he was part of the cast of *She Kills Monsters* by Qui Nguyen playing Monster/Steve. Milo is excited to be once again on stage as Richard in *Strange Worlds in My Mind* by Kristine Haruna Lee.

**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



DAVID T. JONES (*Adjunct Lecturer of Theatre and Drama Club Advisor*) Professor Jones 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 Gentlehomme*, and last semester'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.



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 HeartBEAT, *Istwa!* (later performed at the 2011 International Fringe Festival, NYC) and *SPEAK OUT* (later 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.



ANTHONY CASTRO (*Charles / Anthony*) is a sophomore. Last season at York College Theatre he played Robert and Henry Irving in *An Evening of Durang*, Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Miles in *She Kills Monsters*. Anthony has been in various productions, both scripted and improvised shows throughout middle and high school.

BELLENE FISHER (*Smudge*) is back again for her second production on stage. Bellene was last seen in the Spring 2014 production of *An Evening of Durang* where she played Jane in *Identity Crisis* and the stage manager Meg in *The Actor's Nightmare*. Bellene is an upper junior at York College and is Double Majoring in English and Theatre Arts so she can learn the trade of creative writing to help her establish her dream of being an actress and a playwright. She is also the treasurer of the York College Drama Royals, which she is proud to serve. Bellene's passion for the theatre grows stronger by the day, which makes her want to learn all the aspects of theatre not just the craft of acting. That is why even if she is not given the chance to act, she will be working backstage. Bellene is extremely excited for *Strange Worlds* and would love to thank the director/playwright Kristine Haruna Lee for giving her a chance to be part of this strange, abstract original piece of art, and she hopes that everyone who comes to see it will fall in love with it too.



SHATIEK JOHNSON (*Sun Ra*) is a senior majoring in Speech Communication/Theatre Arts. He is very excited to be back on the York College Theatre stage! *Strange Worlds in My Mind* will be his fifth production. York productions include *Macbeth*, *A Flea in Her Ear*, and his favorite, York College's production of *DreamGirls* where he played the lead Curtis Taylor Jr. Shatiek hopes to use his degree in theatre to work with and inspire children and teens who love to express themselves through all types of Theatre – as in the quote,

“Being an US for once instead of a THEM.” -*RENT*. He is very grateful for this opportunity and would like to thank all his supporters.



KATRINA TRISHA MOISE

(*Isabelle / Beauty Contestant*) is a well versed dancer in the areas of ballet, tap, jazz, modern, African, and ballroom. She has studied at various schools across the globe including Long Island High School for the Arts and Ballet Hispanico. She has also studied acting and been in various independent shows such as *The*

Music Man and last semester's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She is a graduate of York College, double majoring in Anthropology and Sociology. Her passion for dancing has led her to perform on *Dancing with the Stars* and *So You Think You Can Dance*. She aspires to be a Movement Science educator and travel the world.

ERIC NORMIL-MENDEZ (*Eric*)

began his interests in the performance arts with creative writing and spoken-word poetry.

In high school, Eric won Honorable Mention in the *Random House Creative Writing Competition 2010* and performed spoken-word poetry in many open-mic and community talent showcases including the Knicks Poetry Slam and at the Afrikan Poetry Theatre.

During his senior year of high school, Eric started working at Community Youth Care Services Inc. Out-of-School program. Today Eric studies speech communication/theatre arts at York College. At York, Eric serves as an on-air radio personality and ambassador for the college's online radio station, where he won the York Remixed 2014 "1st Place; Golden Mixing Board Award". He is a member of the York Track & Field team. Eric is excited to be a part of *Strange Worlds in My Mind*.



VANIA ST. LOUIS (Annabelle/Sun Ra) is

a senior majoring in Theatre Arts with a minor in Fine Arts. She has starred in numerous productions while at York including *Love Magnet*, *Starving But Making It*, *Tuskegee Airman*, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, *An Evening of Durang* and most recently *She Kills Monsters*. She has worked as Head Seamstress on *Dreamgirls* and *Flea in Her Ear*. Vania has also danced in several Red Shoes Club productions. She plans on continuing her career once she graduates. She is very grateful for this opportunity and would like to thank all of her supporters.

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.

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 first 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 first 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.

Direction & Design Team

Kristine Haruna Lee (*Playwright / Director*) is a playwright, director, and performer based in Brooklyn.

She is a founding member of harunalee theatre company.

New York Theatre Review calls it,

“a feast for the eyes as well as the mind and heart.” Since 2010, they have been

producing work throughout New York (*Plum de Force* at

Bushwick Starr, *Drunkfish*

Oceanrant at Jack, *She’s Sleep* at Ars Nova) and have

developed their work through Prelude Festival 2012 + 2013, Joe’s Pub, The Propeller Series at The Bushwick Starr, Target Margin’s Lab Series, Asian American Writer’s Workshop, 2nd Generation, The Movement Theatre Company, and New Dramatists. They have received a 2013 LMCC grant for their upcoming collaboration with Built for Collapse on *Drunkfish Oceanrant*, and a Dixon Place Artist Residency and Commission for their upcoming production of *War Lesbian*, a new musical.

Outside of the company, Lee has performed nationally and internationally with artists such as Taylor Mac, NAATCO, The Talking Band, Yubiwa Hotel and Trista Baldwin, Andrea Geyer’s *Comrades of Time* at the Whitney Biennial, The Metawee River Theater Company, Yoshiko Chuma and the School of Hardknocks, Cathy Shaw, William Burke, Kate Benson, and the E.P. release of Antony and the Johnsons’s *Another World*. She is a recipient of the New Dramatists Van Lier Fellowship. She holds a BFA from NYU Tisch, and an M.F.A from Brooklyn College with Mac Wellman and Erin Courtney.



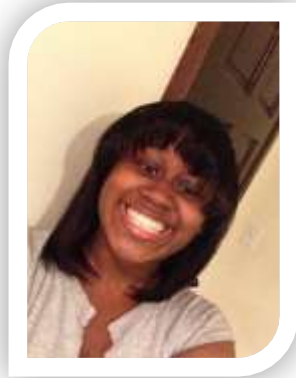
CHRISTINA ACOSTA (*Assistant*

Director) is a recent York graduate, with a degree in Business Administration and a passion for dance. She has an interest in acting as well. She has a dance background in hip-hop and has done many shows throughout high school and college. She is gaining training in contemporary, jazz and ballet as she works and takes classes at Broadway Dance Center and does volunteer work for dance companies. She strongly supports the arts and hopes to one day open her own dance studio to share her life experiences with the next

generation.

KHADIJA ANDERSON

(*Dramaturg*) is a junior at the City University of New York majoring in Entertainment Business and Entrepreneurship. At Queensborough Community College she had the opportunity of being the Assistant Director for the play *Columbinus*. Upon graduating, Khadija plans to own a concert hall and manage her own after-school program for the arts.



STEVO ARNOCZY (*Sound / Video Design*) is a freelance media designer, actor, and founding member of harunalee theatre company. He is native to New York City, and currently based in Sunnyside. He attended NYU (TSOA '04-'08) and received his BFA in Acting. In 2010, he formed LiveMusicVideo, a company dedicated to exploring live performance in tandem with projected content. Stevo is an associate video designer at Imaginary Media Artists. He has had the great fortune to work with many emerging and

established artists including Alex Timbers, ANIMALS, Avan Lava, Built 4 Collapse, The Stein/Holum Project, Fresh Ground Pepper, Liz Lerman, The Dance Cartel, the TEAM, Club Girls, and Maya Ciarrocchi. He has been commissioned for work by photographer Mike Ruiz, and recording artist Jose Feliciano. His work has been seen in NYMF (New York Musical Festival), and at 3LD, Theater Row, XL Nightclub, Kent 285, TBA, The Living Theater, The House of Yes, *Sleep No More*, The Bushwick Starr, MSU, Swarthmore College, and Ars Nova. His video design for BIO-HAZARD: A Relative Comedy won the 2013 United Solo Festival Award for BEST MULTIMEDIA.

BACKSTAGE CREW

ANTHONY ALICIA (Backstage Crew) 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 (House Manager) 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.

YASHA GEORGES (Backstage Crew) is a senior at York College and a major in Speech Communications/Theatre Arts. This is her first production at York. She is very excited to finally see a show from backstage. She would like to thank Prof. Hadi for the encouragement to take more theatre classes and Prof. Jones and Prof. Mackrell for making it enjoyable. Yasha enjoys spending her free time with family and traveling.

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?"

THEATRE ARTS STAFF



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 Theater Company, Boomerang Theater, Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival, Working Theater, Audax Theatre Group, Capacitor, Theatre LILA, Clubbed Thumb, American Globe Theater, Heartists Productions, and

Moonwork. Jessica is a member of Actors Equity Association (AEA).

BENJAMIN MACKRELL

(*Set Design/ Technical Director / CLT*) holds a Bachelors Degree in Theater from Goucher College in Baltimore. As Technical Director for Manoa Valley Theater, Hawaii's premier off-Broadway playhouse, he received the award for "Outstanding Technical Direction" from the Hawaii State Theater 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 Theater. He was also awarded Broadwayworld.com Outstanding Lighting Design of a Play for *Sight Unseen* at Baltimore's Fells Point Corner Theater in 2006. His passion lies in helping theater artists realize their vision and making it possible for audiences to be emotionally and intellectually transported.



KATY ATWELL

(*Lighting Design*) Recent credits include *Satchel Paige and the Kansas City Swing* (Martha's Vineyard Playhouse), *Accidents Waiting to Happen* (Stable Cable Lab Co), *Gideon's Knot* (Bridge Rep of Boston), *Pacific Overtures* (Boston University Theatre). Assisting

credits include: *To The Bone* (Cherry Lane Studio), *Subverted* (Shetler Studios), *Sweeny Todd in Concert* at Lincoln Center. She works at the BAM Fisher Building and has her MFA in Design from Boston University.



KAREN BOYER (*Costume Design*)

designs and builds costumes out of her studio in Brooklyn, New York, and is excited to be collaborating once again with Kristine Haruna Lee! Images of past work are at bevanandkaren.com.

Thank You!

David T. Jones, Gloria Giraldo,
York College Printing Service,
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NYC DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

At the time I was beginning to envision this play, I was in my native hometown an hour outside of Tokyo during an exceptionally hot month of August. Back in New York, I had just seen a breathtaking exhibit about Afro-futurism at The Studio Museum of Harlem (*The Shadows Took Shape*), and with the newly formed cast of *Strange Worlds*, we had taken a trip to South Williamsburg's abandoned Domino Sugar Factory to see Karen Walker's giant, awe-inspiring Sphinx Woman with the controversial 'Black Mammy' face (*A Subtlety* or *The Marvelous Sugar Baby*). Having had these images fresh in my mind of provocative movements from the depths of radical black subculture in the United States spanning both past and present, I was intent on creating a show with students (they are *all* students of color, and this is no coincidence) that reflected what it's like to be a young person contending with race and identity in America today. Then on August 9th, Michael Brown was shot dead by a local police officer in Ferguson, MO and his body lay in the hot sun for four hours. I heard about this case through a close friend of mine on a humid Tokyo evening, and though I was physically distanced from the news by land mass and oceans, it was palpable to me that this heinous act was proof of an ugly truth we were all trying to hide: that racism has always been well and alive in America. This horrific incident with Michael Brown wasn't the beginning of something, nor was it the end. It was a repetition brought to light. But it was this particular tragedy that was a trigger for both me and the cast – a trigger because, this issue of 'race' which lay dormant within our heads, became instantaneously activated and alive in that moment.

Perhaps the most interesting conversation we had as a cast was the notion of a not-so-distant-future where the possibility of racial divide would be eliminated entirely. It seems that among Millennials, this is a popular theory. In a couple of hundred years, we will all physically look alike, a hybrid race of people unified as one. However, what was inherently disturbing to me in this analysis of the future was that at its center, there was a belief that the erasure of race would mean the erasure of *racism* as well – as if the reason for racial inequality, what

was to be blamed here, was the actual color, tone and hue of our skin, rather than the reigning oppressive forces of white supremacy. I believe that throughout this process, it became clear to all of us that 'colorblindness' is not the answer to disempowering racism, but rather, that it is only through our own awareness and retaliation of abusive and exploitative systems, that we could possibly begin to dismantle racism and create something new.

So how does Sun Ra play into all of this?

The prolific jazz musician and philosopher who was born Herman Poole Blount was known for his many eccentricities; dressing in Egyptian robes and planetary head pieces during the heyday of the East Village avant-garde art scene during the 1970's. He was indeed ahead of his time, and this is why. His mythic character, Sun Ra, hailed from a planetary consciousness that promoted self-actualization specifically *for people of color*. This was truly revolutionary at the time. He whole-heartedly believed that the narrow-mindedness of planet earth blinded the human race. And through his philosophy, Sun Ra (who was himself from Saturn) brought to his people a knowledge only accessed by travelling the spaceways. For myself, I understood the 'spaceways' as an inner, spiritual tunnel. A space infused by truths and memories. That it was only through this inward reflection and defining of one self *for one self*, that a person could escape the confines of racial stereotypes and the plethora of negative, disenfranchising media and images placed onto racialized bodies. Today, we live in a world where young black men are considered a threat to society just through their very existence. How then, are young Americans of color expected to survive? How do these very students fight this cycle of oppression?

Strange Worlds is an exploration of race and racism in the most immediate sense. The students have used their own bodies, their own memories, and their own inner knowledge as canvases. They have painted their hopes and fears of their future onto the blank canvas of theatre. And what you are about to see is a performance full of color, honesty, and a different kind of truth entirely.

- **Kristine Haruna Lee**