

UC SAN DIEGO THEATRE & DANCE

SPRING NEWSLETTER: WEEK 1 DEPARTMENT NEWS



MFA CLASS OF 2018 GRADUATES

On Saturday, March 24th, the class of 2018 graduated from UC San Diego Theatre & Dance in a ceremony held at the Forum theatre. MFA Playwriting alumna Lauren Yee gave the opening address and a reception was held afterwards. This year's class is pictured above (missing Andrew Gallop, Lily Padilla, and Claire Roberson). Congratulations on all of your work here at UCSD and best wishes into the future!



MFA ACTING CLASS OF 2018 PREPARE FOR SHOWCASE

The upcoming MFA Acting Class of 2018 is preparing for their showcase in New York City.

They will perform twice on Monday, April 9th, 2018 at the Alice Griffin Jewel Box Theatre at the Pershing Square Signature Center on 42nd Street. Please let your agents and managers or others in the industry know and ask them to let their colleagues know.



NAOMI IIZUKA'S *WHAT HAPPENS NEXT* TO PREMIERE AT LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE

Head of Playwriting and MFA Playwriting alumna Naomi Iizuka's play *What Happens Next* will receive its world premiere production at La Jolla Playhouse as part of their Without Walls Festival beginning on April 19th.

In *What Happens Next*, Bonnie, an idealistic but inexperienced acting teacher, finds herself paired with a group of veterans as part of a drama therapy program. As she is confronted with the reality of her reluctant new students, Bonnie struggles to find a way to build trust and find common ground. Inspired by stories shared by the military community, this riveting new play mixes professional actors and San Diego veterans in an exploration of the complexities of sacrifice and resilience of those who have served.

ROBERT BRILL DESIGNS *SUMMER* ON BROADWAY

Scenic Design Faculty Professor Robert Brill is the Scenic Designer of *SUMMER: The Donna Summer Musical*, which is currently in previews on Broadway. Assisting Robert are recent MFA Scenic Design alumni Justin Humphres & Anna Robinson. Recent MFA Lighting design alumnus Joel Britt assists Howell Binkley on lights. BA alumna Desiree Hatfield-Buckley is assistant costume designer.



KYLE ADAM BLAIR HOSTS OPEN REHEARSAL AT UC SAN DIEGO

Kyle Adam Blair would like to invite all Theatre and Dance grads to an open rehearsal of his final solo concert "With A Little Help From My Friends..." on Wednesday, April 4 from 11:15-12:30pm.

It'll be held in the Concert Hall of the Conrad Prebys Music Center, east from Galbraith on Gilman Dr before you reach the Gilman Parking Structure. He will be performing the following program without an intermission to facilitate time, and is offering this open rehearsal as an alternative for Theatre and Dance grads to see the concert given the WNPF rehearsal schedule preventing attendance at the actual Friday, April 6 7:00 time (though if you're free, please go to that!)

Family Portraits: Self (in 14 Stations) - Stuart Saunders Smith (10 min.)

Radius - Annie Hui-Hsin Hsieh (UCSD alumna) (12 min.)

)Piano Sonata No. 2 (Concord, Mass. 1840-1860) - Charles Ives (45 min.)

ALUMNI NEWS



MELISSA NG DESIGNS COSTUMES AT VICTORY GARDENS

MFA Costume Design alumna Melissa Ng is designing costumes for *Lettie* by Boo Killebrew directed by Chay Yew at Victory Gardens in Chicago. They begin previews this week.

After serving seven years in prison, Lettie is released and struggles to make a fresh start. Her children, who have been cared for by her half-sister, want little to do with her. Her re-entry job is anything but gentle as she takes on the dark, harsh world of welding. Trying again and again to create a non-criminal life, Lettie is confronted by her past and must make impossible choices to protect her future.

QUINCY TYLER BERNSTINE TO STAR IN *OUR LADY OF 121ST STREET*

MFA Acting alumna Quincy Tyler Bernstine is currently in rehearsals for *Our Lady of 121st Street* by Stephen Adly Guirgis which will perform at Signature Theatre from May 1-June 10. This will be the second production of Guirgis's Signature residency after last fall's production of *Jesus Hopped the 'A' Train*.



CHAZ HODGES APPEARS AT CINCINATTI PLAYHOUSE

MFA alumna Chaz Hodges just ended her run playing gospel singer Marie Knight in *Marie and Rosetta* at the Cincinnati Playhouse. She was recently featured by the playhouse for a long blog post about her role, her work, and training.

LAUREN YEE PROFILED BY LOS ANGELES TIMES

MFA Playwriting alumna Lauren Yee has been profiled by the Los Angeles Times this week in a story about her career and new play *Cambodian Rock Band* which is currently performing at South Coast Rep

Cambodian Rock Band tells the story of a musician who survives the genocide and lands in America, sharing little of the horror he's seen. When his adult daughter travels to Cambodia as part of an effort to prosecute a man who ran a notorious Khmer Rouge prison, he follows her there, and previously unspoken history finally unfolds between them.





TODD CERVERIS APPEARS IN *SOONER/LATER*

MFA Acting alumnus Todd Cerveris is in Cincinnati Playhouse' production of *Sooner/Later* which performs through April 21st.

When teenage daughter Lexie helps her reluctant single mother Nora re-enter the dating scene, an unlikely suitor emerges in Griff – the guy at the coffee shop who inadvertently witnesses Nora's string of unsuccessful dates. As choices collide with coincidences and longing mixes with reality, each character must face the complications that always arise in the search for intimacy and the closeness of family. This captivating world premiere with a metaphysical twist navigates the paths of romance, marriage and parenting while exploring the pains and pleasures of all three.

ABDUL-KHALIQ MURTADHA PLAYS ORSINO IN SALT LAKE CITY

MFA Acting alumnus Abdul-Khaliq Murtadha is currently playing Orsino in Pioneer Theatre's *Twelfth Night* in Salt Lake City, which began performances last week.



UC SAN DIEGO ALUMNI DESIGN *MEN ON BOATS*

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MFA Scenic Design alumni **Christopher Scott Murillo**, **MFA Costume Design** alumna **Elisa Benzoni** and **MFA Sound Design** alumna **Melanie Chen Cole** are all collaborating on designing *Men on Boats* at New Village Arts here in San Diego (Carlsbad). It also features **BA alumna Paloma Young** among the cast and performs through most of April.

For tickets and more information, [click here](#).



MEG MACCARY APPEARS IN *CITY GIRLS AND DESPERADOES*

MFA Acting alumna Meg MacCary is currently starring in Theater for the New City's *City Girls and Desperadoes* which runs through April 8th in NYC.

Set in 1970's New York City, a rag-tag band of accidental outlaws at war with their pasts explodes with high rolling, high risk relationships and the altered state that love in its most extreme form engenders, an intoxication that is as mind altering as any pharmaceutical.

KJ SANCHEZ TO DIRECT AT CAL SHAKES

MFA Acting alumna KJ Sanchez will be directing in Cal Shakes next season which recently announced creative teams for their 2018 season. KJ will be directing *Quixote Nuevo* by Octavio Solis, an adaptation of the Cervantes classic which will perform June 13th through July 1st. **BA alumna Michele Apriña Leavy** will appear in the production.



HAYA YASMEEN NASSER HOSTS SHOW AT MBC

BA alumna Haya Yasmeen Nasser is a segment producer and presenter at MBC, Middle East Broadcasting Center where she appears on a show called *Sabah Al Kheir ya Arab*, translated as *Good Morning Arabs*. Haya does the travel segment on it so she travels the world with a camera crew and director.

MARIA MILEAF DIRECTS AT PRIMARY STAGES

MFA Directing alumna Maria Mileaf has directed Sharon Washington's *Feeding the Dragon* which performs in NYC at Primary Stages now through April 27th.

As both playwright and star of this autobiographical solo piece, Sharon Washington revisits her time growing up in an apartment on the top floor inside the St. Agnes Branch of the New York Public Library, where her father served as the building's custodian. Shrouded in family mystery, Sharon's story boldly examines how both the power of forgiveness and her lifelong love for the written word have helped her battle dragons of all forms.



NGOZI ANYANWU INCLUDED IN A.C.T.'S NEW STRANDS FESTIVAL

MFA acting alumna Ngozi Anyanwu's *Nike, Or We Don't Need Another Hero* will be included in the Third Annual New Strands Festival at A.C.T. in San Francisco performing May 17 - 20.

In this epic story uniting Afrofuturistic myth, Greek drama, and contemporary language, New York playwright Ngozi Anyanwu crafts a bold hero's journey with an all-black cast. In the aftermath of a battle between the titans, Nike recovers her memory and learns that she is a god with a mighty destiny. As the fates of everyone she loves hang in the balance, can she confront her past and unleash the power she holds within?



LILY BARTENSTEIN AND CHRISTOPHER MURILLO DESIGN AT CTG

MFA Scenic Design alumni Lily Bartenstein and **Christopher Scott Murillo** are designing lighting and scenery, respectively, for *Bloodletting* by Myra Cris Ocenar at the Kirk Douglas Theater as part of Center Theatre Group's *Block Party*. *Bloodletting* began performances on March 31st and is a remount of a show that Lily designed lights for and Christopher designed sets for back in November 2016. It was also the first show Christopher designed under his Princess Grace Foundation Grant.



BRIAN BOSE TO APPEAR IN NEW DR. SEUSS SHOW

BA alumnus Brian Bose will appear in a new theatrical adaptation of Dr Seuss' work, *Dr. Seuss's The Lorax*, which will perform at both the Children's Theatre in Minneapolis & at the Old Globe in San Diego.

The production begins performances in Minneapolis on April 15th before transferring to The Old Globe soon after.

WEST HYLER DIRECTS *AIR PLAY* FOR NEW VICTORY

MFA Directing alumnus West Hyler has directed *AIR PLAY*, at the New Victory which opened this weekend.

Watch in absolute wonder as umbrellas take flight, balloons sprout minds of their own and shimmering silks ripple to the rafters in the modern circus spectacle *AIR PLAY*. With knowing smiles and suitcases full of surprises, the globetrotting Acrobuffos, Seth Bloom and Christina Gelsone, elicit gasps and giggles in equal measure as they animate airflow, goad gravity, and make buoyant, beautiful and really, really, really high art out of the very thing we breathe.

West's recent production of *Avenue Q* in Bulgaria won the Icarus Award, Bulgaria's highest theatrical award!



LILA ROSE KAPLAN'S NEW PLAY TO PERFORM AT GEVA

MFA playwriting alumna Lila Rose Kaplan's play *The Magician's Daughter* will be produced as part of the Geva Theatre Center's 18-19 Season with performances beginning next January.

Inspired by Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, this play is a Magic Show. The Magician Prospero and his daughter Miranda dazzle and delight until the day Miranda quits. A rift grows between them as Miranda searches for the courage to let her father know how his addiction has affected her life. What she doesn't expect is to learn how much she loves him.

UC San Diego

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