



VIRTUAL

2021 NEW SOUTH young playwrights festival



MAY 31 – JUNE 5, 2021

**NEW SOUTH YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS 5 MINUTE PLAY FESTIVAL
JUNE 5, 7PM**

www.horizontheatre.com

404.584.7450

The project is made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Molly Blank Fund, and Warner Media.



**2021
SEASON
SPONSORS**



Major funding is provided by the Fulton County Commission under the guidance of the Fulton County Arts Council. Horizon is also supported in part by the Georgia Council for the Arts through appropriations of the Georgia General Assembly. The Council is a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes a great nation deserves great art.

About Horizon's New South Young Playwrights Festival

This year, the winners of our New South Young Playwrights Contest, who hail from all over the country, joined us for a one-week virtual playwriting experience at Horizon. During this intensive program, they were submerged in the world of playwriting and theatre. They wrote every day and worked with their mentors/dramaturgs. They attended seminars and workshops taught by nationally acclaimed guests. They met professional playwrights of all ages and backgrounds. They saw plays, discussed, and debated. They heard their own work read by professional actors. And most importantly, they were nurtured and supported as young artists and as the future of American theatre.

The short plays that you will see today were written this week as a part of their residency at Horizon.

The PLAYS

ATLAS OF THE STARS • by Alexandria Passanisi

U. Texas at Austin

Tay: NAIMA CARTER RUSSELL • Taur: KAYODÉ SOYEMI
Atlas: MEGAN HAYES • Stage Directions: JUSTIN WALKER
(Mentor: Alexa Derman; Director: Cynthia D. Barker)

CYCLES • by Yazmeen Mayes *Kennesaw State University*

Nicky: ASIA ROGERS • May Tag: MAGGIE BIRGEL •

Tommy: BRANDON MICHAEL MAYES • Stage Directions: KOFI OWUSU
(Mentor: Kara Davidson; Director: Nichole Palmietto)

THE TIME MACHINE • by Maria I. Arreola *Macalester College*

Meg: HANNAH CHURCH • Alicia: MARGARET IVEY • Little Boy: JUAN
SEBASTIAN CRUZ • Stage Directions: KEVIN QIAN
(Mentor: Megan Tabaque; Director: Heidi Mc Kerley)

THERAPY WITH BOOKS • by Kalani Washington

Oconee County High School

Anne: CARA MANTELLA • Sibylle: PARRIS SARTER •
Derek: LAMAR K. CHESTON • Bennett: ROBIN BLOODWORTH •
Stage Directions: NINI HUTCHERSON
(Mentor: Alysha Griffin; Director: Jamil Jude)

SPECIAL DELIVERY • by Gabriel Hansley *Morehouse College*

Dani: NAIMA CARTER RUSSELL • Nolan: KAYODÉ SOYEMI •
Stage Directions: JUSTIN WALKER
(Mentor: Darren Canady; Director: Cynthia D. Barker)

CELESTIAL ECHOES • by Miguel Silan *University of Georgia*

Bennett: KOFI OWUSU • Icarus: BRANDON MICHAEL MAYES •
Stage Directions: ASIA ROGERS
(Mentor: Kara Davidson; Director: Nichole Palmietto)

SYCAMORE ROOTS • by Chayton Pabich Danyla *Yale University*
Alden: KEVIN QIAN • Delilah: MARGARET IVEY
Chase: JUAN SEBASTIAN CRUZ • Harper: HANNAH CHURCH •
Stage Directions: BRANDON ALSTON
(Mentor: Megan Tabaque; Director: Heidi McKerley)

DILF • by Noah Gentry *Emory University*
Aaron: JUSTIN WALKER • Chloe: NAIMA CARTER RUSSEL •
Quiz Master: MEGAN HAYES • u/thatboymark: KAYODÈ SOYEMI •
Stage Directions: ARDEN ADAMS
(Mentor: Alexa Derman; Director: Cynthia D. Barker)

HE WAS DOWN THERE THE WHOLE TIME • by Ryan Martinez
UC San Diego
Red: KEVIN QIAN • Blue: MARGARET IVEY •
Stage Directions: HANNAH CHURCH
(Mentor: Greg T. Nanni; Director: Heidi McKerley)

THE ELEVATOR • by Isabelle Stevens *Smith College*
Everett: LAMAR K. CHESTON • Ada: PARRIS SARTER •
Sara: CARA MANTELLA • Stage Directions: ROBIN BLOODWORTH
(Mentor: Alysha Griffin; Director: Jamil Jude)

HOW 'BOUT THEM PINEAPPLES? • by Cassandra Hsiao
Yale University
Stephanie: MARGARET IVEY • June: HANNAH CHURCH •
Matteo: JUAN SEBASTIAN CRUZ • Harold: KEVIN QIAN •
Stage Directions: BRANDON ALSTON
(Mentor: Greg T. Nanni; Director: Heidi McKerley)

—10-MINUTE INTERMISSION—

WHEN NATURE TAKES ITS COURSE • by Avery LaMar Pope
Ohio University
Anthony: ROBIN BLOODWORTH • Catherine: CARA MANTELLA •
Spencer: LAMAR K. CHESTON • Monica: PARRIS SARTER •
Stage Directions: NINI HUTCHERSON
(Mentor: Jordan Ealey; Director: Jamil Jude)

JELLYFISH EVERYWHERE • by Giovanni Tortorici
Georgia State University
Kai: HANNAH CHURCH • Leon: JUAN SEBASTIAN CRUZ •
Stage Directions: MARGARET IVEY
(Mentor: Greg T. Nanni; Director: Heidi McKerley)

HAPPY HOUR AT SUNNYBROOK GARDENS • by Jacob Cramer

Yale University

Mora: MEGAN HAYES • Memory: NAIMA CARTER RUSSELL •
Anthony: KAYODÉ SOYEMI • Stage Directions: JUSTIN WALKER
(Mentor: Darren Canady; Director: Cynthia D. Barker)

I KNOW YOU DON'T WANT TO • by Matias Dupree

U. Alabama, Birmingham

Malcom: KOFI OWUSU • Christian: BRANDON MICHAEL MAYES •
Stage Directions: MAGGIE BIRGEL
(Mentor: Vic Shuttee; Director: Nichole Palmietto)

PAPER STRAWS (OR) HOW THEY KILLED THE DOG • by Elliot Lewis

Yale University

Paula: PARRIS SARTER • Aria: CARA MANTELLA • Michael: ROBIN
BLOODWORTH • Stage Directions: LAMAR K. CHESTON
(Mentor: Jordan Ealey; Director: Jamil Jude)

THE NUMBER 117 • by Ayanna Palmer *Kennesaw State University*

Mother: NAIMA CARTER RUSSELL • Kiddo: KAYODÉ SOYEMI •
Celia: MEGAN HAYES • Stage Directions: JUSTIN WALKER
(Mentor: Darren Canady; Director: Cynthia D. Barker)

GARDEN OF STARS • by Abigail Smithwick *University of Georgia*

Gardener: PARRIS SARTER • Avis: LAMAR K. CHESTON
Quinn: CARA MANTELLA • Stage Directions: ROBIN BLOODWORTH
(Mentor: Jordan Ealey; Director: Jamil Jude)

AURUM • by Madeleine Adriance *Brown University*

Leaf: BRANDON MICHAEL MAYES • Corey: ASIA ROGERS •
Stage Directions: MAGGIE BIRGEL
(Mentor: Kara Davidson; Director: Nichole Palmietto)

TILL THE SUN TEARS US APART • by Jessica Wang *Emory University*

B: HANNAH CHURCH • V: MARGARET IVEY •
Stage Directions: KEVIN QIAN
(Mentor: Megan Tabaque; Director: Heidi McKerley)

ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD • by Malaika Fernandes

Wesleyan University

Daughter: NAIMA CARTER RUSSELL • Son: KAYODÉ SOYEMI
Artist: MEGAN HAYES • Stage Directions: JUSTIN WALKER
(Mentor: Alexa Derman; Director: Cynthia D. Barker)

THE RIGHTEOUS CREW VS. THE ENVIROMENACE! • by Roan Lucas

DeKalb School of the Arts

Lady Legacy: MAGGIE BIRGEL • Invisiboy: BRANDON MICHAEL
MAYES • Hammerhead: KOFI OWUSU • Enviromenace: ASIA
ROGERS • Stage Directions: NAILAH DABON
(Mentor: Vic Shuttee; Director: Nichole Palmietto)



We wish to express our gratitude to the
Performers' Unions:

AMERICAN GUILD OF MUSICAL ARTISTS

AMERICAN GUILD OF VARIETY ARTISTS

SAG-AFTRA



for their cooperation in permitting the Artists
to appear on this program.

Festival Leadership

Lisa Adler, Artistic Director
Amy L. Levin, NSYPF Coordinator

Festival Staff

Nichole Palmietto, NSYPF Casting

INTERNS: John Cai, Nailah Dabon, Brandon Alston, Arden Adams, Nini Hutcherson

Readers: Amy L. Levin, Lisa Adler, Keena Redding, LaWanda Green,
Jack Padgett, Lauren Morris, Nichole Palmietto

Directors

Heidi McMerley (Horizon Artistic Associate)
Cynthia D. Barker (Clayton State University)
Jamil Jude (True Colors Theater)
Nichole Palmietto (Horizon NNPB Producer-in-Residence)

Plays in Dark Blue directed by Heidi McMerley; Plays in Red directed by
Cynthia D. Barker; Plays in Green directed by Jamil Jude; Plays in
Light Blue directed by Nichole Palmietto

Festival Teachers and Dramaturgs

Lead Mentors/Professional Playwrights:

Darren Canady (University of Kansas), Megan Tabaque (Emory University)

MFA Mentors:

Kara Davidson (U. Nebraska at Omaha), Alexa Derman (Brown University),
Jordan Ealey (University of Maryland), Alysha Griffin (University of Kansas),
Greg T. Nanni (Columbia University), Vic Shuttee (Texas State University)

VERY SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to thank the artists and leaders who gave generously of their
time and talents this week to launch the next generations of playwrights.

LITERARY ROUNDTABLE

Jordana Fraider
Hana Sharif
Danielle Ward
Jay Woods
Otis Ramsey-Zoë

PLAYWRIGHTS IN TV/FILM

Carla Ching
Itamar Moses
Tophy Payne
Steve Yockey

REGIONAL PLAYWRIGHTS

Lauren Gunderson
Angie Jones
Thomas W. Jones II
Elyzabeth Gregory Wilder
Lauren Yee

WEEKDAY READING ACTORS

Leslie Bellair, Mala Battacharya, Joy
Bhowmick, Maggie Birgel, Robin
Bloodworth, Lamar K. Cheston, Juan
Sebastian Cruz, O'Neil Delapenha,
Shelli Delgado, Suehyla El-Attar
Alexandra Ficken, Dai'Sean Garrett,
Greta Glenn, Jack Ha, Megan Hayes,
Jonathan Horne, Asia Rogers Rogers,
Chris Kayser, Alan Kim, Lizzy Liu, Cara
Mantella, Brandon Michael Mayes,
Erika Miranda, Matt Nichie, Gabriel Ortiz,
Mary Lynn Owen, Brook Owens, Sofia
Palmero, Jordan Patrick, Tamil
Periasamy, Trevor Perry, Kevin Qian,
Lillianguina Quinones, Joshua Rapp,
Keena Redding, Dan Reichard, Kait
Rivas, Braian Rivera, Maria Rodriguez-
Sager, TJ Ruth, Parris Sarter, Jennifer
Schottstaedt, Brandy Sexton, Kayodé
Soyemi, Juan Suarez, Vivi Thai

YPF COORDINATOR

Amy L. Levin

INTERNS

John Cai
Nailah Dabon
Brandon Alston
Arden Adams
Nini Hutcherson

SPECIAL THANKS

Marguerite Hannah
Christopher Carpenter

DRAMATISTS GUILD

Emmanuel Wilson

Playwrights



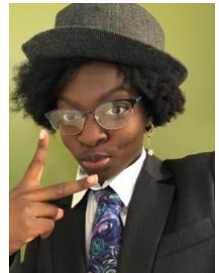
Abigail Smithwick (she/her), originally from Canton, Georgia, is a rising junior at the University of Georgia. She is pursuing a Theatre and Entertainment & Media Studies double major as well as a minor in English. She is passionate about writing for children and young adult audiences. Her first play, *Adelaide and the Faerie Land*, was staged by UGA's Children's Theatre Troupe this past spring. Besides writing, some of her other interests include lighting and scenic design, film, and watching *Survivor* with her roommate. Abigail is so excited to be participating in the New South Young Playwrights Festival and to have the opportunity to collaborate with such talented playwrights.

Alexandria Passanisi is a playwright and screenwriter from Bonham, Texas. Currently, she is attending the University of Texas at Austin, where she is pursuing a B.A. in Theatre and Dance, with an emphasis in playwriting and directing, as well as a B.S. in Radio-Television-Film. This last spring, Alexandria wrote and co-directed a full length drama for the 2021 Cohen New Works Festival. In 2018, she was commissioned to write and direct a one act comedy for Take the Wheel Productions. This summer, Alexandria will be attending the National Theatre Institute's Theatremakers Summer Intensive as a playwright. Alexandria loves creating art that focuses on female empowerment, joyful representations of ASD, and funny girls who like to run around the woods



Avery LaMar Pope (He/Him) is a storyteller from Cleveland Heights, OH. He tells stories through many different mediums, including theater as an actor and playwright, music as a singer/songwriter and musician, poetry, and movement. He received his BFA in Acting from Ohio University and is an avid believer in Christ. His desire is and always has been to tell the stories that haven't been told, and to leave no place the way he found it. Some of his work can be viewed on averylamarpoppe.com and he's extremely excited to work with Horizon Theatre and meet the fellow members of his cohort.

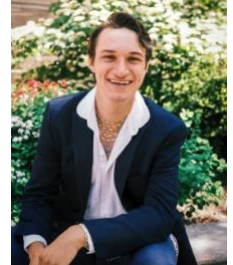
Ayanna Palmer (Kennesaw State University) is a writer, performer, and composer from Lawrenceville, GA and Chesapeake, VA. She is currently a rising sophomore pursuing a double major of English and Theater, with a minor in German. She's relatively new to theater as a verb, and she's been working hard to get the hang of actually pursuing her passion; this is the first play that she's finished, and the second to be put on stage! On campus, she serves as president and vocal arranger for her school's show choir. Dedicated to creating works that sing and falling in love with the beauty and connection that exists in every circumstance, her ultimate career goal is to change people's lives through art. When she's not writing or leveling up her skill set, Ayanna can be found reading poetry, playing with her dogs, and writing love songs for her adorable baby plants.





Cassandra Hsiao studies Theater Studies and Ethnicity, Race & Migration at Yale University. Her plays have been selected as finalists for national playwriting competitions and were produced by The Blank Theatre, Writopia Labs, Princeton University, Durango Arts Center, California Playwrights Project, YouthPLAYS, and Yale University. She has also won a Gracie Award for her entertainment journalism and was recognized as a Voices Fellow for the Asian American Journalists Association (AAJA). Her poetry has been recognized by a variety of national and international lit magazines and organizations. She has interned for development/current film/TV departments at film distributors, studios, and production companies in Hollywood. Her dreams for the near future consist of infiltrating a writer's room, going to an ABBA concert, and unlocking her superpowers of flight.

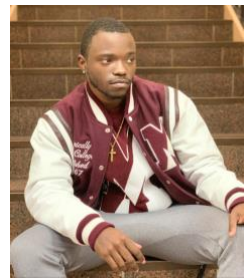
Chayton Pabich Danyla (he/him) is an actor, dancer, poet, and playwright devoted to bringing the traditionally underrepresented stories to the stage. His award-winning solo-work has focused on Love, Loss, Queer Magic, Identity, and the challenges of navigating politically fraught worlds. Chayton just graduated from Yale University this past May with a B.A in Theater and Performance Studies. He is local to Atlanta, where he has been a student and practitioner of the performing arts all his life. Chayton is a proud alumnus of the 2016 Georgia Governor's Honors Program for Theater Performance and in another life, Chayton was an evolutionary biologist who specialized in genetics and researched some Lophotrochozoa. As much as he tries, he cannot escape his background in STEM. IG: @falconchay | <https://www.chaytonpabich.com/>



Elliot Lewis (Yale University) is an aspiring playwright, screenwriter, and journalist. Originally from Highland Park, Illinois, he is currently a rising junior at Yale University studying English with a concentration in playwriting. He started writing plays as a sophomore in high school, where he was able to produce his one-acts through his school's short play festival. He has continued to grow as a writer throughout college while studying under playwrights Marc Lepadula and Deb Margolin. At Yale, Elliot serves as Editor-in-Chief of *The Yale Herald* and Associate Editor of *The Yale Daily News Magazine*. In his first year of college, he received the J. Edward Meeker Prize in Fiction from Yale for his play "Mobile." His

short film "The Suicide of Howard Klein" was produced by Yale in Prague and is available on YouTube.

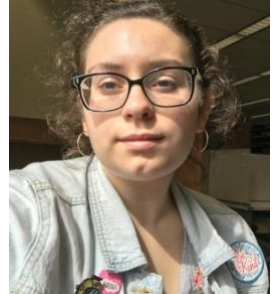
Gabriel Hansley is an all-around artist and entertainer. The Brooklyn native actor, singer, songwriter, playwright, and poet is currently a rising senior at the prestigious Morehouse College where he studies theatre performance. Some of his hobbies include playing basketball, listening to all types of music, and traveling. He pursues a relentless mission to showcase and build upon his many crafts of entertainment on the big stage and screen while paying it forward and providing opportunities for those who share similar roots and backgrounds. With his many talents, humble beginnings, and authentic voice he hopes to leave a mark and spark the minds of those who wish to dream big and change the world.





Giovanni Tortorici - Homegrown in Atlanta, Georgia State University senior Giovanni Tortorici grew up surrounded by actors and stages with connections to the local arts world. He's witnessed firsthand the impact arts have on solidifying community. While he directs, writes, and AD's, you can find him giving script feedback and anything else that uplifts growing filmmakers. Since 2018, he and his collaborators at Potluck films have launched an online film festival, Potluckfest with proceeds supporting the Atlanta Artist Relief Fund. In 2021, Giovanni's short, "Eat Your Heart Out," was an official selection of the Atlanta Film Festival. When not in Potluck, Giovanni is at work on developing his playwriting sensibilities, producing a documentary project about toxic masculinity and developing a pilot with his writing partner.

Isabelle Sanatdar Stevens (she/her) is a rising senior at Smith College pursuing a degree in Theatre, English, and Translation Studies (Spanish and Farsi). A first-generation Iranian-American, Isabelle grew up in a family that formed a mosaic of countries and cultures; this often manifests in her work, where she likes to explore how different languages and cultures can intersect and diverge. Folklore and fantasy also tend to mark her work, as the lines between reality and illusion are often blurred. A passionate theatre maker, Isabelle loves improv, acting, writing, and working behind the scenes. *My Brother's Name* is her first play, and she's thrilled to be participating in NSYPF. Based out of Providence, Rhode Island, this summer Isabelle is also working as the Production Assistant for RI Latino Arts *Teatro en el Verano's* bilingual-adaptation of *Don Quixote*. Isabelle can be reached at istevens@smith.edu.



Jacob Cramer is a rising senior at Yale University studying psychology and Spanish. Originally from Cleveland, Ohio, you can find him directing original plays and acting workshops as artistic director of Yale Children's Theater or scare acting year-round at Connecticut's largest indoor haunt. Last summer, he devised and assistant directed a musical at the Tony Award winning Children's Theater Company in Minneapolis. He loves helping kids unleash their creativity and build confidence, and aspires to create children's theater and TV programming professionally. Outside of theater and writing, he enjoys video production (including making TikToks galore) and talking about Taylor Swift. Follow him on Instagram @jacobcraa

Jessica Wang (Emory University) is a writer, director and actor from Kaohsiung, Taiwan. She is currently a rising senior at Emory University double majoring in Playwriting and Film Studies. She has a passion for storytelling in any genre. Even though she doesn't have a clear set goal for the future, she wants to create stories that can make people laugh, cry and most importantly, feel. She is allergic to boredom and fun, excitement are her two priorities in life. Since 2020, she has been working with a local Taiwanese artist organization, The Story of An Island, to produce films, plays and dances that give local artists a voice. In November, her stage play, *Summer Rain*, is going to premiere in Taipei. She's beyond excited to be part of the festival and looks forward to witnessing every artists' talent and art.

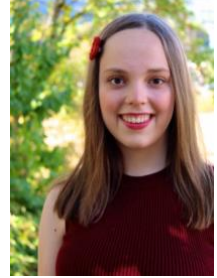




Kalani Washington is a rising college freshman and an aspiring Dramatic Writing major at the Savannah College of Art and Design. She has found inspiration for her writing from the music she has heard and the people she has met in her various activities including band, chorus, and drama. In 2020 she was selected as a Georgia Governor's Honors Program Finalist for the Communicative Arts department. Since the program was cancelled (like most of 2020), Kalani spent her time at home writing short films and play scripts which she submitted to several competitions. She has been

recognized with the titles of Honorable Mention from the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, the Platinum Award from the SCAD Challenge competition, and "Best Film" at the University of Georgia's Black Theatrical Ensemble Awards. In the future she dreams of writing for Disney, and she plans to be the first in line to watch the new movie *Cruella*.

Madeleine Adriance (Brown University) is a queer playwright in conversation with the more-than-human world. She grew up in Guatemala City and Portland, Oregon, and currently resides in Providence, Rhode Island, where she is a sophomore pursuing her BA in Theater Arts and English at Brown University. In addition to theater work at Brown, she has also worked professionally as an actor, dramaturg, and assistant director with the Young Professionals Company in Portland, and as an assistant playwriting and acting teacher with Oregon Children's Theater. Her favorite pastime is performing one-woman versions of Jesus Christ Superstar in her kitchen, and she dreams of one day writing a play to be performed for birds only.



Malaika Fernandes (Wesleyan University) is a rising junior majoring in Theater and Economics. She's from Mumbai, though she was born in Toronto, raised in Phoenix, and is currently based in New Jersey—her work explores her own ever-broadening, ever-fluctuating definition of home. When she isn't writing, she's trying to facilitate the creation of more kind, casual, original theater at her school, because she believes theater shouldn't be exclusive. When she isn't doing theater, she's reading, binge-watching Netflix shows or trying to watch all of the Oscar-nominated movies of the season.

Maria I. Arreola (she/her) is a Chicana playwright from Blue Island, Illinois. She recently graduated from Macalester College with a major in Sociology and Political Science and a minor in Spanish and Theater. Maria is a recipient of the Kennedy Center Region 5 John Cauble Short Play Award for *Floating Girls Go To The Moon*, a former Ascending Playwright at Yonder Window Theatre, and her short play *La Vida Corta* was selected for Theatre Three's Off-Stage Online Project. Her writing ritual includes going on long walks and writing at parks (and the occasional interview).



Matias Dupree (He/Him) is a playwright from Mobile Alabama. He is currently a rising senior at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He writes for both stage and screen. He is also an actor. He recently acted in and wrote for the digital collaborative piece "Disconnect" that received the Special Achievement in Ensemble Collaboration and the Citizen Honors Awards at the KCACTF National Awards. His goal is to create works that are relatable to young, modern audiences.

Miguel L. Silan is a writer from Woodbridge, New Jersey. Last month he finished his B.A. in Entertainment and Media Studies from the University of Georgia, with minors in Theatre and Film Studies. During his time at the University of Georgia, Miguel has written and directed three short films, assisted in the creation of other films, acted (and rapped) in the Asian American Student Association's *Lunar New Year* event, and written various plays and scripts. Unsure of what he wants to do with his life (for now), he hopes to one day create stories that speak to our universal truths and insecurities, and unravel them. Having moved around a lot as a child (having lived in Guam, then New Jersey, then Guam, then New Jersey again, then Georgia), he enjoys meeting different types of people and connecting with them. Living by the words "All will be well," he enjoys spending time joking with friends, playing video games, and watching TV and movies (and then breaking them down).

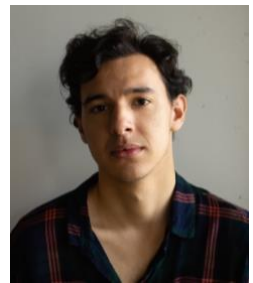


Noah Gentry (Emory University) is a rising junior from Birmingham, Alabama and is pursuing a double major in playwriting and business administration. He began writing in middle school and early high school, although one might argue that writing a rap song is much different than writing a play. His work became more narrative-based during his junior year of high school after his submission to the Scholastic Arts and Writing Awards won the National Silver Key for Humor. At Emory University, he is the social chair for Rathskeller Improv as well as an advising fellow with the school's Matriculate chapter. A few of Noah's passions include running, competitive gaming, and classic hip-hop. He is eagerly awaiting the release of the miniseries, *Star Boys*, a science fiction sitcom which he wrote, produced, and acted in alongside two childhood friends.



Roan Lucas is a writer and actor from Atlanta, Georgia. Recently, he graduated from DeKalb School of the Arts as a creative writing major and drama minor. He has written a variety of one-act plays, some of which have been performed and some of which have been buried away in his writing folder never to see the light of day again. He was the winner of the 2018-2019 Georgia Thespian Conference Playwriting Contest with his piece "The Eye of Ra," which was later performed at his school's Fringe Festival. When writing, Roan mainly chooses to focus on comedy, because really, the world needs a laugh right about now. As for his personality, Roan believes that his Twitter bio sums it up best: "one time i let a crawfish bite my nipple for a pack of m&ms and really that's all you need to know about me."

Ryan Diego Martinez (UC San Diego) is a Chicano playwright, writer, and theatre artist from Covina, CA, currently studying literature and playwriting at UC: San Diego. He has had multiple works produced in San Diego, including the short plays *Oh God I Will Do It* and *It Will Be Good and It Will Be Loved* at the Stage Room with Company 157, and *Coyote y Coyote (or, How to Feel Okay with Killing for Sport)* at the Pride and Joy Festival with TigerBear Productions. He was also a featured finalist for the Storytwigs Micro-Fiction Contest in April 2021. His most recent project was a staged reading with UCSD's Honors program, of his full-length thesis play *Mr. Shakespeare and the Gaping Maw*, Presented in Association with the Howard County Community Theater.





Yazmeen Mayes (Kennesaw State University) is a playwright and composer from Georgia. When she was six, she started guitar lessons in pursuit of her dream of becoming Hannah Montana. Later, Yazmeen joined choir, where she sang for the next ten years and discovered harmony, “toilet tunes” (copyright pending), and arranging, which eventually led her to composition. Yazmeen is now in her third year as a music student at Kennesaw State University. She started playwriting during the pandemic, and the process of writing, editing, and questioning has allowed her to learn and heal through the page. She hopes her work allows others to do the same.

Mentors

DARREN CANADY (LEAD MENTOR)

Darren Canady hails from Topeka, KS. His work has been produced at the Alliance Theatre, Congo Square Theater, Horizon Theatre, London’s the Old Vic Theatre, M Ensemble, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, American Blues Theater, and others. His awards include the Alliance Theater’s Keneda Graduate Playwriting Award, Chicago’s Black Excellence Award, the Black Theatre Alliance Award, and the American Theatre Critics Association’s Osborn Award. His work has been developed at numerous festivals including the O’Neill Theater Center’s National Playwright’s Conference. His play *You’re Invited* appeared in *The Best American Short Plays 2010-2011*. His work has been seen or developed at the Quo Vadimus Arts’ ID America Festival, the Fremont Centre Theatre, Premiere Stages, the BE Company, Penumbra Theatre, and American Blues Theater. Darren is an alum of Carnegie Mellon University, New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts and the Juilliard School. He is a former member of Primary Stages’ Dorothy Strelsin New Writers Group, and a past participant in the T.S. Eliot US/UK Exchange. He is an artistic affiliate with American Blues Theater and Congo Square Theatre. He currently teaches playwriting at the University of Kansas.



MEGAN TABAQUE (LEAD MENTOR)

Megan Tabaque is Filipina-Canadian playwright, actor, and arts educator. Her work has been developed, commissioned, and produced by the Alliance Theater, Salvage Vanguard Theater, Tofte Lake Center, the Workshop Theater, Paper Chairs, Vanderbilt University, and Egg & Spoon Theatre Collective, among others. She is a James A. Michener Fellow, Kundiman Fiction Fellow, Sewanee Writers’ Conference Scholar, Seattle Public Theater Emerald Prize finalist, Playwrights’ Realm Scratchpad Series semi-finalist, and a 2021 Four Seasons Residency nominee. She is currently developing a brand new play about conspiracy theorists and human trafficking in Asian American communities titled *Marry Me, Bruno Mars* for Emory University’s Brave New Works festival. Megan earned her MFA in Playwriting and Fiction from the Michener Center for Writers in Austin, TX. She currently resides in Atlanta, where she is the 2021-2023 Emory Fellow of Playwriting.



JORDAN EALEY

Jordan Ealey is a dramaturg, playwright, and scholar from Atlanta, Georgia. As a dramaturg, Jordan specializes in new play and musical development, having worked with organizations such as Synchronicity Theatre, Theatrical Outfit, Working Title Playwrights, and Hush Harbor Lab. Since completing the playwriting apprenticeship at Horizon Theatre Company, Jordan's plays have been developed, workshopped, and/or produced with Out of Hand Theater, The Keegan Theatre, Rorschach Theatre, and LiveArt DC. In addition to her artistic practice, Jordan is the co-creator, co-host, and co-producer of *Daughters of Lorraine*, a podcast on Black theatre through a Black feminist lens, which is supported by HowlRound Theatre Commons. Currently, Jordan is pursuing a PhD in Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park, where she researches Black women-authored musicals from the nineteenth century to the present.



ALYSHA GRIFFIN

Alysha Griffin is a poet, theatre artist, and scholar from Appling, GA. As a PhD candidate in Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Kansas, she is completing a dissertation about playwriting pedagogy that includes a creative component-- a play titled *Lot's Daughters*. She is a graduate of Spelman College (BA, English and History) and the University of Kansas (MA, Literature).



VIC SHUTTEE

Vic Shuttee is a 2021 graduate from Texas State University, earning an MFA in Dramatic Writing. Vic also holds a BFA in Playwriting and Dramaturgy from University of Houston.

Texas State Productions include *Bunco State* (part of the 2020-2021 season, directed by Martin Jason Asprey), *Pew! Pew!* (Directed by Ryan Scarlata) and *Free Tickets For a Taping of the New Government Funded Sitcom: 'ICE Box'* (Directed by Aaron Sparks). His *10 Minutes Milk in the Desert* and *Howie Zazser Can't Not*, and his *One Acts Not Every Hand* and *...ICE Box* have all been recognized by the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. His full-length *Brick Wall*, a previous finalist for the New York Young Playwrights Competition and The Blank Theatre's *Stella Adler Competition*, was produced by the University of Houston and awarded a Jean Kennedy-Smith award by the Kennedy Center. Vic attended an observer-ship at the O'Neil Playwrights Conference, participated in The Lark's Writers Retreat and developed scripts under Mark Medoff and Theresa Rebeck. Vic's written about entertainment for Houston Press since 2014, and he was named one of Houston Press's 100 Creatives to Watch and a 40 Under 40 by Empower Magazine. His plays can be read and reviewed on the New Play Exchange. Outside of writing, Vic has performed comedy at theaters and festivals across the country and trained as an improviser with UCB, Second City Hollywood, and ComedySportz. He's shadowed the head writer on the CBS sitcom *Mike and Molly*, assisted Emmy-winner Robert Wuhl with his first stage play *Hit Lit*, and taught classes and workshops of playwriting, screenwriting, podcasting and comedy at the High School of Performing and Visual Arts, the Texas Thespians Conference, ComedySportz and Stageworks Theatre. While at Texas State, he's taught 7 sections of "Intro to Playwriting" and developed the curriculum and taught the course "Creating Comedy", based on the essentials of writing jokes, stand-up, and sketch comedy. His comedy interview podcast *Hail Satire!* has reached nearly half a million listeners and produced over 500 episodes!



GREG T. NANNI

Greg T. Nanni is a playwright, comic book writer, performer, marketer, and former Philadelphian now living in the NYC area. He is a member of Witherspoon Circle, Passage Play Lab, a former PDC Playwright in Residence at Plays & Players, the Literary Manager of the Idiopathic Ridiculopathy Consortium, and the former Marketing Manager of Plays & Players Theatre. He is the Co-Founder and former Co-Moderator of the PDC Playwrights' Happy Hour, and formerly served as President on the board of the Philadelphia Dramatists' Center.



He is a Co-Leader of the Witherspoon Circle, and is the co-producer of the New Feathers Reading Series program. His One Act plays have been featured in Festivals and Readings throughout the Greater Philadelphia Area, and have been produced nation-wide. He performs his own solo shows *FAT* and *THE DEPRESSION SHOW!* on demand. Full length plays include: *LONELINESS* (CU 2020 Workshop Production), *THE BEAR IS HERE* (BAPF Semi-Finalist), *RAGE*, *LOVE* (AMONG DREAMERS), *VACATIONS*, and *ANGST*. He is a graduate of George Washington University. He is a current MFA Playwriting Candidate at Columbia University, and is the recipient of the Dean's Fellowship. gregnanni.com

KARA DAVIDSON

Kara Davidson is an actor, playwright, and teaching artist currently pursuing her MFA in Writing for Stage and Screen at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Kara is passionate about creating poignant narratives for the stage that illuminate something universal about being a human being in this world. She is a company member with The House Theatre of Chicago and has also worked with Manual Cinema, Lookingglass Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, ABLE Ensemble, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Nebraska Repertory Theatre, and Flatwater Shakespeare, among others. She is also a motion capture performer and her previous video game credits include *Injustice 2*, *Mortal Kombat 11*, *Call of Duty: WWII*, and *Call of Duty: Cold War*. She is a co-founder and director of a monthly virtual workshop called The Lab which aids in developing new works-in-progress by artists from all across the country (www.thelab.blog).



ALEXA DERMAN

Alexa Derman is a playwright from Jersey. Her plays include *PSYCHOPSYCHOTIC* (Relentless Award Honorable Mention; Finalist: Playwrights Realm Writing Fellow, Sanguine Project Playwright, Unicorn In-Progress Series, Kitchen Dog New Works, Echo Young Playwrights in Residence; Semifinalist: Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Downstage Left Residency; Brown University and Yale Drama Coalition), *GIRLISH* (Fresh Ink Theatre, Yale Dramatic Association, Yale Playwrights Festival), and *RESTORATION MASTER RESET* (Cutting Ball in *WAYS TO LEAVE A BODY*). Other honors and experiences include selection as a 2019 Lambda Literary Fellow; O'Neill NPC Semifinalist 2017, 2015; Jane Chambers Student Prize for Feminist Playwriting Honorable Mention; and at Yale the Marina Keegan Award for Excellence in Playwriting. BA from Yale in Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies; also interested in games, radio, and other forms of narrative entertainment. She is currently pursuing her MFA at Brown, where she studies under Julia Jarcho and is a member of the Brown-RISD Game Developers.



5 MINUTE PLAY FESTIVAL ACTOR AND DIRECTOR BIOS available on our website.

<https://www.horizontheatre.com/education-and-community/new-south-young-playwrights-festival-2021/>