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2021–22 Season at the Lederer Theater Center

under the direction of

Curt Columbus

The Arthur P. Solomon and Sally E. Lapides Artistic Director

Jennifer Canole

Interim Executive Director

Tiny Beautiful Things

BASED ON THE BOOK BY CHERYL STRAYED

ADAPTED FOR THE STAGE BY NIA VARDALOS

CO-CONCEIVED BY MARSHALL HEYMAN, THOMAS KAIL, AND NIA VARDALOS

THE ARTISTIC TEAM

Directed by Curt Columbus

Music Direction by Gunnar Manchester

Set Design by Baron E. Pugh

Costume Design by Amanda Downing Carney

Lighting Design by Dawn Chiang

Sound Design by Peter Sasha Hurowitz

Production Stage Managed by Buzz Cohen

January 13, 2022 - February 13, 2022

in the Sarah and Joseph Dowling, Jr. Theater

Tiny Beautiful Things is performed with no intermission.

THE CAST

Sugar Angela Brazil *‡
Letter Writers Stephen Berenson*‡, Phyllis Kay*‡,
Marcel Mascaró*, Brian McEleney*‡, Jenna Lea Scott*

Musician: Gunnar Manchester

Understudies: Madeleine Russell, Chingwe Padraig Sullivan Understudies never substitute for a listed player unless a specific announcement is made at the time of performance.

- * Denotes member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers.
- **‡** Trinity Rep Resident Company member

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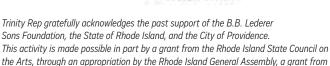


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ON THE COVER: ANGELA BRAZIL • COSTUMES BY AMANDA DOWNING CARNEY • IMAGE BY MICHAEL GUY

Tiny Beautiful Things is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com

> Original New York Production by The Public Theater Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director Patrick Willingham, Executive Director

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FROM THE ARTHUR P. SOLOMON AND SALLY E. LAPIDES ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



WELCOME BACKTO TRINITY REPERTORY COMPANY

for our first subscription series play in almost two years. We

are so thrilled to be back in a physical space with folks after the long absence of public performances at venues like ours. All of us have been profoundly changed by the events since the closing of our theater on March 12, 2020. What we thought might be a short, weeks-long pause became a seminal

moment in our recent history, with upheaval in what feels like every corner of our lives.

That is why we chose to program *Tiny Beautiful Things* as our first show in this year's subscription series. This adaptation features advice columns written by Cheryl Strayed, under the pseudonym "Sugar," and showcases letters of real people, people who reached out in times of great need to an anonymous stranger to ask her advice. Sugar's responses to them are filled with radical empathy. She is simultaneously blunt, clear, yet full of kindness.

And Sugar's letter writers bring to her problems that are devastating. Unimaginable. Deeply rooted in their private experiences. She responds to them in kind, revealing incredible things about her own past, her own traumas and failings, as well as her quotidian triumphs. What is revealed by her being so transparent about herself is that inexplicable suffering and sorrows await each and every one of us. In fact, being human is about how we transcend those inevitable life challenges.

Sound timely to you? It did to me, to all of us. So timely, that it had to be our first show for live audiences after *A Christmas Carol*. But in imagining this show for you, we encountered so much more about the experience of bringing people together around these letters. First, Baron E. Pugh imagined this place that held letters that you see before you, an American post office from the last century. Is it a dead letter office? The post office where they send the letters that little kids write to Santa? A liminal space that holds all of the lost fragments of peoples' attempts to reach out to each other? You can decide for yourself.

We also started thinking about the very act of letter writing. I told the story of meeting my husband nearly twenty years ago, and our passionate, beautiful correspondence... that all took place on email and that is now long vanished. I talked about how I wish I had physical letters to read and re-read when we aren't together. And how the beauty of physical letters, of paper-written communication in general, is increasingly lost in our electronic age.

It is these traces, these physical objects left behind that are disappearing rapidly. And I would posit that we are losing our connections to each other, partially because these physical objects no longer exist. They are remnants of us and our presence, the very thing that we have been missing while consigned to Zoom boxes since March of 2020.

That is why we are going to ask you to leave a written communication with us at the end of the night. You'll hear more about that at the end of the show. We want to collect that presence, that fragment of each person who sits in this theater, in a way that demonstrates that we are all here, that we are listening to the problems of real people. And that, like Sugar, we can encounter their problems, and our own, with radical empathy.

The work at Trinity Rep only exists when an audience brings it to life, and so, your presence is vital to us. We are so happy that you are here, back at your home for dramatic discoveries. I look forward to seeing you, in person, at the theater.



Curt Columbus
The Arthur P. Solomon and Sally E. Lapides Artistic Director



FROM THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

YOU'RE HERE! WE'RE HERE! And we are so excited to welcome you home. Whether

you've been away for a while (like we were) or whether this is your first time experiencing a production at Trinity Rep, we are happy to have you with us, in the theater, in person.

We're here, because of you. We couldn't have gotten through the last nearly two years without the incredible generosity of this community and folks

coming together to support the theater and performing arts industry. Your donations helped us through an incredibly difficult time. And your notes and messages inspired and moved us.

As I was re-reading *Tiny Beautiful Things*, and reflecting on our time away, one of Sugar's responses stuck with me: "You go on by doing the best you can. You go on by being generous. You go on by being true. You go on by offering comfort to others who can't go on..."

Thank you for reaching out with your personal stories of Trinity Rep's impact on your lives. Thank you for keeping us buoyed in your thoughts. We felt your love. Thank you for helping us go on.

Speaking of moving forward, the search for Trinity Rep's next executive director is making progress. As you may know, Tom Parrish left in mid-October, and my role expanded to provide interim leadership while we conduct a national search. The executive director position profile, developed in consultation with artists, board members, and staff, was posted in mid-November and our search committee is working closely with our search firm to identify the best candidate to lead us into the future. You can find updates online at www.trinityrep.com/EDsearch.

If you're a subscriber, thank you. If you're not yet a subscriber, we've got a great line-up this spring. Four-show packages start at just \$80 – you'll have great seats, the best value, fantastic nights out, and peace of mind – if something pops up, you'll have unlimited exchange privileges. Simply contact our ticket office at tickets@trinityrep.com or (401) 351-4242 to apply the cost of today's ticket to a subscription. I hope you'll make plans to join us. We'd love to see you more often!

Thank you for being here.

Warmly,

Jennifer Canole

Interim Executive Director and Director of Development

Jennyer Canole

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PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

The letters are real... I thought, as I read Cheryl Strayed's incredibly moving book, Tiny Beautiful Things.

People wrote these letters.

A few years ago, author Cheryl Strayed gave advice as Sugar for the literary website, The Rumpus, and later collected the letters into a book. Journalist Marshall Heyman gave his friend, director Thomas Kail, the book and Tommy gave it to me suggesting it could become a play. As I read the letters exchanged, I wept, smiled, and was astonished by the raw and extraordinary candor.

Sugar and the writers of the letters reveal themselves and we find ourselves in their conundrums and sorrows, in their lives lived and roads traveled. I yearned to be as bold, audacious, and willful. As I adapted the book into a play, I found the words so illuminating that I grieved and moved on from certain events of my own.

Still, if I had one letter to write, it would be:

Dear Sugar, I hope to be as brave as the writers of the letters and as open as Cheryl Strayed.

Nia Vardalos

For Your Information

- Trinity Repertory Company 201 Washington St., Providence, RI 02903 www.TrinityRep.com info@trinityrep.com
- Ticket Office (401) 351-4242 tickets@trinityrep.com Visit trinityrep.com/ticketoffice for up-to-date hours.
- Subscriber Services (401) 351-4242 tickets@trinityrep.com
- Administrative Offices (401) 521-1100, 9:00 am-5:00 pm, Mon.-Fri.
- Health & Safety: Trinity Rep takes the safety of our patrons, artists, and staff very seriously. Read our
 current safety protocols at www.trinityrep.com/health.
- Our performances begin on time. Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of house management, and until then will be able to view video monitors in the lobby.
- Emergency Protocol: The theater is protected by emergency lighting and sprinklers. Our house staff
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- Assistive Listening Devices are available for our theaters. Please ask a House Services staff member for assistance.
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Becoming "Sugar" with Angela Brazil

by Laura Weick

For Angela Brazil, getting into the philosophy of *Tiny Beautiful Things'* "Sugar" was about understanding radical empathy – both on and off the stage.

Angela's connection to *Tiny Beautiful Things* is personal. Mikey Perlman, a graduate of the Brown/Trinity Rep MFA directing program, introduced Angela to the show when it first debuted in New York in 2016. After perusing the script, Angela read the original book.

"I went down the rabbit hole of that book, and I have had an ongoing relationship with it since," Angela told us. "It's the book I pick up as a touchstone to remind and teach me how to live my life."

Since then, Angela has used both the book and the play's script in classes she instructs at the Bread Loaf School of English at Middlebury College. But the lessons Angela learned and teaches from the book apply to more than just academics. Key to both the original *Tiny Beautiful Things* book and the stage adaptation is what Angela describes as "radical empathy."

Tiny Beautiful Things book author Cheryl Strayed defined radical empathy as being honest with one another, seeing the best in people, and sharing a piece of yourself to get the core of understanding other people. Angela implements this in her classes: One of Angela's courses provides middle and high school teachers with resources on practicing radical empathy in the classroom, alongside interpreting Tiny Beautiful Things as literature.

This idea of radical empathy is especially timely today, Angela said. Trinity Rep had cast Angela as Sugar (Cheryl Strayed's pen name) and slated *Tiny Beautiful Things* to run in the 2020-21 Season, but this was of course delayed due to the national pause in live performances. But the pandemic and concurrent political events made the show's themes of empathy and isolation particularly relevant now.

"I'm not alone in realizing there's something about what Strayed is doing that speaks to us in the now," Angela said. "Not just in moments of isolation and COVID, but in this place where we are challenged by the lack of the ability to communicate with each other if we find ourselves on opposing sides of, for example, a political spectrum. The honesty that Strayed proposes can actually go a long way towards real conversation, and I hope, bridging divides. She's intimately replying to people who are writing to her with family issues, personal issues, issues within themselves, but the way that she is proposing that we move forward together, and how to hold conversations with honesty and love with each other. It eddies out into a larger thing that I will just call hope: that there is actually hope for us."

In this vein of hope, which Angela feels is part of radical empathy, Angela recently began keeping a gratitude journal, where she keeps track of her own "tiny, beautiful, things" in life. Chief among them are interactions with her family, including her 11-year-old daughter, 16-year-old son, and husband, fellow resident actor Stephen Thorne. She said that she tried to keep this gratitude in mind by being present, seeing what's in front of you, and responding with sincerity as she prepared for the role of Sugar, particularly in how she responds to letter writers.

Outside of considering the show's themes and their real-life connections. there were other challenges that came with becoming Sugar. Nia Vardalos of My Big Fat Greek Wedding fame originated the role at The Public Theater in New York, while Reese Witherspoon portrayed Cheryl Strayed in the film Wild, based on another one of Strayed's memoirs. Noting that she bears little to no physical resemblance to Cheryl Strayed, Angela discussed the questions that came regarding where she and director Curt Columbus could take artistic liberties while still respecting Strayed's true experience.

"With any role that is based on a real person, there's a certain level of interrogation that we have to do in the

rehearsal room," Angela reflected. "So where do we have a theatrical license to just sort of create the character? That is an exciting conversation to have, but also one that is also just a different set of questions that we get to ask, as opposed to a completely fictional script with all fictional characters."

Considering this, what Angela hopes is that she can tap into the true radical empathy the real Cheryl Strayed introduced as Sugar, both in her performance and in her own life.

"I feel a great responsibility to the material," Angela confided. "And I feel a great responsibility to coming to every rehearsal and show in a way that Cheryl Strayed herself comes to her readers. At one point she says 'I will be open with you, I will be bare. I will show you my brokenness and my strengths.' And I hope to do that every minute of rehearsal and performance of this play."



Behind Music With Gunnar Manchester



Students in their final year of the Brown University/Trinity Rep MFA acting program typically perform in a mainstage Trinity Rep production, alongside resident company members and guest actors who've become mentors throughout their study; one student's expertise allowed him to take on a role unlike any of his peers. Let's meet Gunnar Manchester, who will be performing all of the original music in Trinity Rep's production *Tiny Beautiful Things*.

Gunnar grew up playing the violin and was a part of the Rhode Island Philharmonic Youth Orchestra. As he got older, he learned how to play other instruments, including trumpet, viola, ukulele, piano, and accordion. He is also a singer and a composer.

Artistic Director Curt Columbus recommended that Gunnar apply to the Brown/Trinity Rep MFA program when he directed him in a production of *Uncle Vanya* at the Gamm Theatre, in which Gunnar played multiple instruments. Knowing Gunnar's musical talent, Curt, who is also directing *Tiny Beautiful Things*, asked Gunnar to compose and perform music instead of being cast in a "traditional" acting role.

Gunnar and Curt decided that the show's music should be stripped down, acoustic, harkening back to traditional American folk songs, but for a modern era.

"The idea of Shaker hymns is one that I brought up during [my first meeting with Curt] because there's something about that being the ultimate acoustic music," Gunnar said. "They often just use their voices, people raising their voices together. And even the idea of performing in that community and the idea of advice columns are both to try to better other people's lives."

That human connection, of course, is key to *Tiny Beautiful Things*. Gunnar made sure to include the sense of community within the music he wrote and performs with the rest of the cast. And with this being just the second Trinity Rep stage production since the pandemic began, this is something Gunnar and Curt understood more than ever.

"[Writer] Cheryl Strayed is grappling with things herself, so she does not pretend to be some guru, but rather just another human being, offering the stories that she has herself experienced to other human beings who are seeking help, and hopefully illuminating solutions to their problems with her own experiences," Gunnar said. "And in that way, these folk songs are shared, so many people raise up their voices together to create a unified sound in a way that is not complicated or pretentious."

The History of Advice Columns

By Danielle Mages Amado, reprinted courtesy of The Old Globe

The advice column traces its roots to the 1690s, when readers wrote to British paper *The Athenian* to ask its "Oracle" column questions about their marriage settlements, their family relationships, the pros and cons of dancing, and the perennial demand "what is love?" Advice columnists continued their trade in England (where they have commonly been called "agony aunts"), but Americans have taken to the advice column like no other culture.

Jessica Weisberg, in her book Asking for a Friend: Three Centuries of Advice on Life, Love, Money $\bar{\alpha}$ Other Burning Questions from a Nation Obsessed, describes our cultural penchant for advice columns this way: "Americans' interest in advice reflects our cultural tendency towards optimism: we tend to believe that with a bit of direction and a small boost, the future can be bright. [...] The fact that Americans want advice is proof that the American dream still exists, at least in people's imaginations. Who doesn't want to believe that with hard work, determination, and a bit of advice, anything is possible?"

In the 20th century, the advice column truly hit its stride. The biggest names in the advice-giving game—Abigail Van Buren and Ann

Landers— were popularized in the 1950s by twin sisters Pauline Phillips and Esther "Eppie" Lederer. In 1955, Lederer won a contest to take over the existing "Ask Ann Landers" column in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, and just a few months later, Phillips created "Dear Abby" for a newspaper in San Francisco. The competition between the similar columns led to a feud between the two sisters, who might have benefitted from the straightforward, no-nonsense advice their alter egos doled out to squabbling family members for nearly 50 years.

When Cheryl Strayed took over the online "Dear Sugar" column in 2010, she took an approach strikingly different from the advice columnists who had gone before her: she wrote deeply and personally about her own life. "All the stories I tell about my life in the 'Sugar' column are true," she says. "There are details about my life I don't get particular about—the city where I live, the names of my family members, and so forth—but I'm particular about everything else." Her "radical empathy" gained her a legion of dedicated followers, and the column's popularity led to the collection *Tiny Beautiful Things*, which was published in 2012.

Setting the Stage

by Laura Weick

For a play about an online advice columnist, Trinity Rep's staging choice for *Tiny Beautiful Things* may seem a bit surprising at first glance: Why set the show in an old-school American 20th-century post office when the letters advice columnist Sugar receives are all virtual? But for set designer Baron E. Pugh and director Curt Columbus, the scenery choice is the perfect fit for the story they want to tell.

Cheryl Strayed, the real-life "Sugar," posted the "Dear Sugar" column on the website The Rumpus, and those asking for advice sent their questions through emails. But it can be challenging to visualize that sort of digital communication on stage, so in the inaugural production of *Tiny Beautiful Things* at the Public Theater in New York City, Sugar gave advice from the inside of her home, which letter writers came and went throughout the story.

When Curt and Baron first discussed *Tiny Beautiful Things'* set design, they knew that they wanted to go in a different direction. They wanted to reflect how Sugar's column was a meeting place for her and the letter writers, and emphasize the ritual of being in-person again after nearly two years of isolation.

"In this world we are currently living in where everything is very digital, especially coming out of the pandemic, there is sort of this lost art form that is writing actual, physical letters," Baron said.

"Because of that, and how the show is positioned, we decided to put it in a post office."

When designing the set. Baron took inspiration from historic post offices in Providence and Pawtucket, as well as those in Washington D.C. He said older post offices had a ruggedness that he felt would add to the show's staging. Details such as marble, grand windows, columns, and high ceilings are some of the concepts that Baron brought into the set design from his research.

By making the set

appear vintage, the show would have a more timeless feeling, and would invite audiences into a public space in a way Zoom boxes and emails can't.

Baron began the design process in the

summer of 2021, and between then and the final blueprints, the scenic design evolved. Minor changes would add up over time, but Baron said the most noticeable evolution was the size and scope of the set.





"Where we started from day one to where we are now is a vastly different show visually," Baron said. "It's a lot more confined and intimate than it was in the first version. In paring it down, we kind of got down to the bare necessities, with not a lot of extra space. There are only six actors in the show, plus a musician, so we don't need a lot of space. And by not having that extra space, the audience is forced to focus on one person, because there's just not many places for them to go."

Focusing on one person isn't just a way to draw the audience's attention. It highlights the show's themes of truly listening to what others have to say, and caring for them with radical

empathy. And especially in these times, there's something special about looking into just one other person's eyes and truly listening. Sharing experiences in a straightforward way, while combining communications of the past and present, was what Baron wanted to get across with the set overall.

"We were thinking 'What does it mean to tell a story today, versus how we used to tell stories in the past?" Baron said. "So, the thought of writing on pieces of paper came up, and then the post office, and thinking it'd make sense if we used that quote-unquote "archaic" way of communicating to express all of that."

Baron told us that while this set was small and intimate, it also had some detailing that made it one of the more complex sets he has designed at Trinity Rep. But he loved working on this show, and we can't wait to see what he does next!





Nia Vardalos and Cheryl Strayed Want to Give You Uncomfortable Advice

The following excerpt comes from an interview with Cheryl Strayed, the real-life "Sugar," and "Tiny Beautiful Things" playwright Nia Vardalos. This piece was originally published at Vulture.com on October 2, 2017, when the show was holding preview performances at The Public Theater in New York.

Let's start at the beginning of the play's history: It was Marshall Heyman who recommended the book to the play's director, Thomas Kail, who recommended to Nia, and to the [Public Theater] artistic director, Oskar Eustis.

Nia Vardalos: Tommy gave me the book saying, "I think this is a play." I flew back to L.A. reading it on the plane and embarrassed myself with gasps, sobs, and hard laughs. When I landed, I said, "We have to get the rights to this book." Several calls to agents went unanswered, we didn't know what was happening, so I reached out to Cheryl on social media.

Cheryl Strayed: Tommy had originally

sent me an email several months before, but he emailed me right in the middle of a very busy time in my life. [My other memoir] Wild and Tiny Beautiful Things were published months apart, and I was in this weird situation where I was promoting two books at once. I dragged his email into my "to-do" file, which is like shoving it into a closet or under the bed. But one day on Facebook, I posted

something and Nia commented. What caught my attention was all of these other people who

were like, "Oh my god, that's Nia Vardalos! She's writing to Cheryl!"

What I always wanted to do more was illumination rather than instruction.

to send her a DM on Twitter because I don't understand Facebook. Then I just laid it out, as if I was writing a letter to Sugar: "Dear Cheryl, Tommy Kail gave me this book, we are hoping to make it into a play." Cheryl said, "I'm coming to L.A. tomorrow to see the first screening of [the film adaptation of] Wild."

NV: I said I was going

CS: After [director]
Jean-Marc Vallée had

finished the first cut of Wild, and I went and saw it with him and Reese [Witherspoon] and Laura

Dern and my husband, the next day my husband and I met Nia for tea in the hotel in Santa Monica.

NV: The emotions that carry you into a place of grieving and reconciling the pain that you didn't know you had permission to feel anymore was what made me feel this could carry a narrative. But talking to you was what made me realize, *Oh, we have so much in common*. When Tommy and I got to know you, we learned that you wrote in your kitchen, which informed our choices. Your house, your children, your relationship with Mr. Sugar. Cheryl was an open, open, open book. There were no questions left unanswered.

Cheryl, you wrote Dear Sugar after you had written *Wild*, but before the book came out. What was your life like then?

CS: Tiny Beautiful Things is really the book I wrote by accident. I sold Wild, wrote it, finished the whole draft, sent it to my editor, and days after I had sent it off, [the Rumpus editor] Steve Almond emailed me and asked if I wanted to take over this column. I thought, "Oh, I'll just do this little thing for the fun of it, on the side, while I'm doing the edits of Wild." I did revisions, but then they held [Wild] for a year, so I was sort of drumming my fingers, waiting for the book to come out.

Meanwhile, Sugar was becoming more important to me as a writer. All these editors were emailing Sugar, saying, "I don't know who you are, but if you want to publish a book, just give me a call." Meanwhile, I've got this other book! I went to my publisher and said, "We need to publish a book of the Dear Sugar columns, let's just do it now," and then that went into the pipeline!

NV: The one thing that really struck me is how you were a paid author, and yet you were writing this for free. It was feeding something, and you were feeding so many people. You had this memoir coming out and yet you'd write at night, all week.

CS: I think there can be this overly idealized idea of, "Real artists don't get paid," which is why we've been screwed over for all time. I hate that and I'm very adamantly against that, but I also know that sometimes you do things only because you want to. I did Sugar because I wanted to.

How did you decide which questions to include in the show?

NV: It was really hard to decide which pieces could go on to the train tracks of the play, and which pieces were boxcars that we had to cut loose. The first reading...was vastly different than this.

CS: What's often said about writers is that you have to kill your darlings, and the agony of being adapted is that somebody *else* kills them!

What is it about good advice that is something you can revisit? Many of the people coming to the show have read Dear Sugar's columns before — what draws them back?

CS: What I always wanted to do more was illumination rather than instruction, and I don't think there's anything wrong with instruction. There are times when, embedded in one of the columns, I say, "I think you should do this." That's the traditional style of an advice column. But what I was really trying to do as a writer was something else, which was illuminate the question in a way that deepens it, allows the reader to think about the questions that weren't asked. I don't know that I was conscious of that. I talk about it as if it was my grand plan, but when I look back I realize what I was trying to do in the columns.

NV: We would often ask, when she got letters, would she answer them right away? And I love what you said: You walked around them.

CS: When something landed with me and I couldn't get it out of my mind, I'd walk around and I wouldn't be writing. I'd be with my kids, pushing them on the swing in the park, and this person — their suffering, their secret, their sorrow — would be coming to me, and through me. A story would rise up in me, an experience I had in my own life, that seemed, oftentimes, completely unrelated to the letter or question, and I would think, "I have to start writing that story and trust that there's a thread between me and you." Sometimes there wasn't and I failed, but a lot of times there was.

The emotions that carry you into a place of grieving and reconciling the pain that you didn't know you had permission to feel anymore was what made me feel this could carry a narrative.

There's one seemingly nonsense reader question: "WTF." It gets repeated throughout the play until Sugar answers with this anecdote about her own abuse. Was that something you had to sit with for a long time?

CS: In real life it was the opposite experience. In the play, she's like, "Of course I'm going to not answer this question because it's not a question," and then she's finally ready for it. In real life, I was sitting at my computer as soon as that question came in, so I saw it come in, I read it, and I almost immediately deleted it, because it's not a letter, you know? I stopped — and I started writing. That was one I didn't think about. I immediately wrote the response, and the next day it was on the website.

I was terrified, because I'm writing about being sexually abused. It's the part of the play I have to muscle my way through as an audience member — I always sink in my seat. I'm sometimes crushed by it. I hate that part of the play, even though I think it's a necessary part. I realized last night it was because I knew there were a whole bunch of people in the room who have had this experience, and I feel that sorrow. I was so aware last night that there were people in the room who experienced sexual abuse as children, and they have to sit there and feel what they're feeling. I think that is a good thing, a powerful thing, but it's hard...This is what's so strange to me about my experience of it with the play — that's true. I wrote it. I'm healed. I'm okay. I can make jokes about it. But I wrote that piece because I have processed it. Somehow, when it's in your hands, I feel vulnerable to it, whereas when I'm the writer, I'm in command. But when you perform it, you're making it alive again, and it brings up a real mix of things inside of me.

NV: I had a friend sitting behind you in one of the performances in the last run, and he said he just wanted to put his arms around you and say, "Thank you for telling this story."

CS: One of the things about that story, too, is, that some people in the room are thinking, "Thank you for telling that story." Other people are thinking, "Who would say that stuff? This is so gross and ugly." It makes some people very uncomfortable, to the point of being repulsed by it. People aren't comfortable with people sharing certain things, right? Don't you think there are people who walk into the play and think, "What the f*** am I doing here?"

 ${\bf NV}$: Absolutely. That's a good theatrical experience.

THE ARTISTIC TEAM

CHERYL STRAYED

Author

Is the author of *Tiny Beautiful Things, Torch, Brave Enough*, and the No. 1 New York Times best seller *Wild*. Her books have been translated into more than 40 languages around the world. The Academy Award-nominated film adaptation of Wild was released in 2014. Ms. Strayed's essays and stories have appeared in *The Best American Essays, Vogue, The New York Times, The Washington Post*, and elsewhere. She is the co-host of The New York Times's "Dear Sugar Radio" podcast, which originated with her popular "Dear Sugar" column.

NIA VARDALOS

Adaptor, Co-Conceiver

Is an alumna of Chicago's The Second City and a Joseph Jefferson Award winner whose most recent theatre credits include Sugar in Tiny Beautiful Things directed by Thomas Kail in two consecutive seasons (The Public Theater) and Jennie in *Company* directed by Gary Griffin (Theatre 20). Her writing/acting credits for film include My Big Fat Greek Wedding and its sequel (Academy Award and Golden Globe Award nominations, Independent Spirit and People's Choice Awards). Connie and Carla, and I Hate Valentine's Day. Her film and television acting credits include My Life in Ruins; For a Good Time, Call...; "Graves"; and "Jane the Virgin." Ms. Vardalos's memoir Instant Mom was a New York Times best seller, and all proceeds are donated to adoption groups.

MARSHALL HEYMAN

Co-conceiver

Has written for the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, The New Yorker, Vanity Fair, Vogue, Instyle, W, Harper's Bazaar, New York, and many others. He recently wrote for the AMC show "dietland."

THOMAS KAIL

Co-conceiver

Directed the Broadway productions of Hamilton (Tony Award), In the Heights (Tony nomination), Lombardi, and Magic/Bird. His selected credits include the world premieres of Hamilton, Dry Powder, Tiny Beautiful Things, and Kings (The Public Theater), the world premiere of In the Heights, Broke-ology, and the world premiere of When I Come to Die (Lincoln Center Theater), and the world premiere of Daphne's Dive (Signature Theatre Company). He is the co-creator and director of the hip-hop improv group Freestyle Love Supreme. Mr. Kail's television credits include "Fosse/Verdon", Grease Live! (two Emmy Awards), "2 Broke Girls," and The Oprah Winfrey Oscar Special.

CURT COLUMBUS

Director

Curt Columbus became Trinity Repertory Company's fifth artistic director in January 2006. He is also the artistic director of the Brown/Trinity Rep MFA programs in Acting and Directing. His directing credits for Trinity include Ragtime, Beowulf: A Thousand Years of Baggage, Middletown, Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, The Merchant of Venice, His Girl Friday, Camelot, Cabaret, Blithe Spirit, A Christmas Carol, Cherry Orchard, and the world premieres of The Completely Fictional—Utterly True—Final Strange Tale of Edgar Allen Poe and Social Creatures. Trinity Rep has been home to the world premieres of three of his plays, Paris by Night, The Dreams of Antigone, and Sparrow Grass, and produced his translations of Chekhov's Cherry Orchard and Ivanov, as well as Feydeau's A Flea in Her Ear and Lope de Vega's Like Sheep to Water, or Fuente Ovejuna. Curt's adaptation of Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment (with Marilyn Campbell) has won awards and accolades around the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. His translation of Chekhov's Three Sisters, developed at the Arden Theatre in Philadelphia, is published by Dramatists Play Service, as is Sparrow Grass and his translations of Chekhov's Seagull, Uncle Vanya, Cherry Orchard, and Ivanov. Curt lives in Providence, Rhode Island with his husband, Nate Watson.

GUNNAR MANCHESTER

Music Director

Trinity Rep: Fezziwig (u/s), A Christmas Carol 2021; Ghosts of Christmas Past and Present, (u/s) A Christmas Carol 2018. **Brown/Trinity Rep:** Caliban, The Tempest; Stranger, The Late Wedding; John Buchanan Jr., Summer and Smoke; Tom, Tom & Eliza. Other Theatre: Arcadia, Uncle Vanya, As You Like It (The Gamm Theatre); Spring Awakening, Straight White Men, Church (Wilbury Theater Group); Cymbeline (Commonwealth Shakespeare Co.); Exit the King (Actors Shakespeare Project). Other: Gunnar is a Providence-born actor, singer, multi-instrumentalist, composer, and teaching artist. He is currently in the final year of his MFA in Acting at Brown University/Trinity Rep, where he is a recipient of the Stephen Sondheim Graduate Fellowship in Theatre Arts. His education was also made possible by the Antonio Cirino Memorial Fellowship, awarded by the Rhode Island Foundation. Thank you to my parents for taking me to that strange lady near a farm who taught me to play violin wrong, and then taking me to a strict lady who did her best to teach me how to play it right.

BARON E. PUGH

Set Designer

Baron E. Pugh is a Boston-based scenic designer who has designed for various New England theaters as well as others throughout the country.

Previous Trinity Rep designs include: Radio Golf. Select scenic design credits include: The Comedy of Errors (Shakespeare Theater of New Jersey); How I Learned What I Learned (Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival); Breath and Imagination, The Wiz (Lyric Stage Company of Boston); School Girls (TheatreSquared); Puffs (The Know Theater of Cincinnati); Passover, Choir Boy, School Girls (SpeakeEasy Stage Company); Marie and Rosetta, The Three Musketeers (Greater Boston Stage Company). Baron received a Masters of Fine Arts in Scenic Design from Boston University, and is a member of USA 829. For more information and upcoming productions, please visit BaronPughDesign.com

AMANDA DOWNING CARNEY

Costume Designer

Amanda Downing Carney is Trinity Rep's costume shop director and the costume designer for shows including Fade in 2019 and An Iliad in 2018. Her responsibilities include overseeing practical costume logistics and enabling the designer's artistic visions for each production. She started as a stitcher/wardrobe in 2006 after returning home to Rhode Island from a life on the road as a wardrobe supervisor and costume coordinator for multiple national tours. In addition to her full-time gig at Trinity Rep, she designs costumes for local universities and theaters including: Brown/Trinity Rep, the University of Rhode Island, Providence College, The Gamm Theatre, Wilbury Theatre Group, Contemporary Theatre Company, and The White Heron Theatre on Nantucket. She has also designed for Trinity Rep's Teatro en El Verano tours of *Romeo and Juliet, La Tempestad,* and *Much* Ado/Tanta Bulla. Amanda has a BFA in Costume Technology from URI and lives in South County with her two young sons.

DAWN CHIANG

Lighting Designer

Trinity Rep: black odyssey, Pride and Prejudice, A Christmas Carol (2017), The Mountaintop. Broadway: Zoot Suit, co-design for Tango Pasion; associate design: Show Boat, La Cage Aux Folles. Opera: Resident lighting designer, New York City Opera. Off-Broadway: Manhattan Theatre Club, Roundabout Theatre, the first two seasons of the Encores! (City Center/New York). Regional: Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Mark Taper Forum, Denver Center Theatre Company, South Coast Repertory, Guthrie Theater, Syracuse Stage, and Arena Stage. Awards: Two Dramalogue awards, two Lighting Designer of the Year awards (Syracuse Area Live Theatre). Nominations: American Theatre Wing/Maharam design award, Los Angeles Drama Critics' Award and San Francisco Bay Area Drama Critics' Award.

PETER SASHA HUROWITZ

Sound Designer

Peter Hurowitz has designed the sound for more

than 80 productions at Trinity Rep, including recent productions of *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Ragtime, black odyssey, A Midsummer Night's Dream, A Christmas Carol*, and *Beowulf: A Thousand Years of Baggage*. This is his 26th season with the company, where he serves as sound engineer. He also has worked at the Gamm Theater where he designed sound for *Assassins*.

ADDITIONAL STAFF

Production Assistant Olivia Tellier

THE CAST

STEPHEN BERENSON* ‡



Trinity Rep: Debut in 1985, company member since 1992. Recent roles include Monsieur De Farge, A Tale of Two Cities; Robert Haxton, The Prince of Providence; Mr. Mushnik, Little Shop of Horrors; Witch, Macbeth; Stuart, Into the Breeches!;

Willy Loman, Death of a Salesman; Academic One/ Grendel, Beowulf: A Thousand Years of Baggage; Scrooge, A Christmas Carol; Fagin, Oliver!; Fool, King Lear; Shylock, The Merchant of Venice. Other Theaters: NYC's Town Hall, BAM, The Kennedy Center, Dallas Theater Center, on tour in the US and Canada, 17 seasons with the Bread Loaf Acting Ensemble. Other: Founding Director of the Brown/Trinity Rep MFA Programs, he holds a Tutorial appointment at Lincoln College Oxford. Awards include New England Theatre Conference, Providence Mayor Citation, The Lunt-Fontanne Fellowship at Ten Chimneys. www.stephenberenson.com

ANGELA BRAZIL * ‡ Sugar



Angela Brazil has been a member of Trinity Rep's Resident Acting Company since 2000. **Acting**: In over 60 roles, highlights include Mary/Mr. Bingley, *Pride and Prejudice*; Emilia, *Othello*; Scout, *To Kill a Mockingbird*; the title characters in *The*

Heidi Chronicles and Veronica Meadows; Hildy Johnson, His Girl Friday; Elizabeth Proctor, The Crucible; Jane, Absurd Person Singular; Mathilde, The Clean House; Samantha, Indoor/ Outdoor; Julia, A Delicate Balance; Claire, The Long Christmas Ride Home; Edward and Victoria, Cloud Nine; Priscilla, Homebody/ Kabul. Other favorites: Appropriate, Blues for Mister Charlie, House & Garden, Cherry Orchard, The Henriad, and The Cider House Rules.

Directing: Trinity Rep (*A Christmas Carol* 2017, co-directed with Stephen Thorne) and The Wilbury Theatre Group. **Other Theaters:** Dallas Theater Center, Long Wharf Theater, Berkeley Rep, The Bread Loaf Acting Ensemble, Riverside Theater. **Other:** Ms. Brazil is Director of the Brown/Trinity Rep M.F.A. Programs in Acting and Directing and is a member of its Voice and Speech faculty. She is also on the faculty of the Bread Loaf School of English. She has narrated numerous audiobooks.

PHYLLIS KAY * ‡ Letter Writer



Ms. Kay has been a member of the Resident Acting Company since 1991. Her favorite productions include Macbeth, Lend Me a Tenor, One for the Money, Angels in America, We Won't Pay! We Won't Pay!, The Beauty Queen of Leenane,

The Cider House Rules, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Cherry Orchard, All The King's Men, Cabaret, King Lear, House & Garden, The Hunchback of Seville, Appropriate, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Death of a Salesman, and Into the Breeches! Film/ TV: She has worked at several regional theaters - most recently at Huntington Theatre Company and Arena Stage. She has appeared in the films Smithereens, By A Thread, Federal Hill, Brooklyn Rules, Meet Dave, The Proposal, Fairhaven, Some Freaks, and Polka King. Television credits include Miller's Court, Law & Order, The Sopranos, Body of Proof, and Kevin Can F**k Himself. Other: She attended Emerson College, L'University de Lausanne, and Brown University. She is a graduate of The Neighborhood Playhouse and a 2015 Ten Chimneys Fellow.

MARCEL MASCARÓ* Letter Writer



Marcel Mascaró is a non-binary theatrical artist located in Providence, a former Brown/Trinity Rep student, and a resident artist at The Wilbury Theatre Group. Their previous credits include

The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Heart, The Red Bike, and Miss You Like Hell at Wilbury and Like Sheep to Water, or Fuente Ovejuna at Trinity Rep. Marcel has been involved with Teatro en El Verano, a collaboration between Rhode Island Latino Arts and Trinity Rep, since its creation. Marcel uses they/them/theirs pronouns.

BRIAN MCELENEY * ‡ *Letter Writer*



Trinity Rep/ Actor: Over 75 plays, including A Tale of Two Cities, An Iliad, King Lear, Richard II, Richard III, Julius Caesar, The Glass Menagerie, ...Edgar Allan Poe, Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, The Odd Couple, Who's Afraid of

Virginia Woolf?, The Cider House Rules, Angels in America, Long Day's Journey Into Night, The Merry Wives of Windsor, The Threepenny Opera, Cherry Orchard, Amadeus. Director: Over 25 productions at Trinity Rep, including Death of a Salesman, To Kill a Mockingbird, Blues for Mister Charlie, Ivanov, The Grapes of Wrath, House & Garden, Absurd Person Singular, The Crucible, Twelfth Night, The Dreams of Antigone, A Raisin in the Sun, All the King's Men, Our Town, Hamlet, Measure for Measure. Other: A graduate of Trinity College and the Yale School of Drama, he is Founding Director of the Brown University/Trinity Rep M.F.A. Acting Program alongside Stephen Berenson.

JENNA LEA SCOTT* Letter Writer



Jenna Lea Scott is making her Trinity Rep debut. Credits include: Moss Hart Award-winning, A Piece Of My Heart (Leeann, Wellesley Repertory Theatre); Elliot Norton Awards for Outstanding Musical

Production and Outstanding Ensemble, Hairspray (Tracy Turnblad, Wheelock Family Theatre) and Avenue Q (Christmas Eve, Lyric Stage Company); It's A Wonderful Life (Cousin Tilly/Ensemble, Greater Boston Stage Company); Dogfight (Ruth Two Bears/Rose u/s, SpeakEasy Stage Company); The Fantasticks (The Mute, Walnut Street Theatre); Avenue Q (Christmas Eve, Ocean State Theatre Company). Jenna is also a Standardized Patient/ Physical Exam Coach at New England Clinical Skills Consulting (NECS) and a Teaching Artist all over New England. Graduate of AMDA in NYC and former Dorothy Haas Acting Apprentice at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia. You can hear her voice in a space adventure video game coming out in March 2022. Jenna is grateful to Angela Brazil and Curt Columbus for letting her into the mailroom. Dedicates her performance to her guardian angels Judith McNulty Scott (mommy) and Kathryn Anne Scott (scissor).

BUZZ COHEN*

Production Stage Manager

Trinity Rep: Ivanov, Grapes of Wrath, The How and the Why, The Merchant of Venice, Absurd Person Singular, Twelfth Night, A Raisin in the Sun,

Richard III, Our Town, The Moliere Impromptu, Proof, Copenhagen, Thunder Knocking on the Door, The Piano Lesson, Mrs. Warren's Profession. Public Theater/NYSF: 77 productions since 1986—most recently A Bright Room Called Day, Mojada, White Noise, Fire in Dreamland, 30 Shakespeare productions, many more. Broadway: The Tempest, The Secret Rapture, The Queen and the Rebels, Ned & Jack. Awards: Obie Award for Distinguished Stage Management and the SMA's 2017 Del

Hughes Lifetime Achievement Award for Stage Management.

KELSEY EMRY*

Assistant Stage Manager

Trinity Rep: Assistant stage manager, *Marisol*; production assistant, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Macbeth, A Christmas Carol* 2017 and 2018, *Native Gardens, Into the Breeches!*, and more. **Trinity Rep/Rhode Island Latino Arts:** Production stage manager, *Shakespeare en El Verano: Romeo & Juliet.* **Off-Broadway:** *Storyville*, York Theatre

Company. Other Theaters: The Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre, Ocean State Theatre Company, Bushwick Starr.

- * Denotes member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers.
- **‡** Trinity Rep Resident Acting Company member

This theater operates under agreements with the League of Resident Theatres, Actors' Equity Association (the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States), the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, and United Scenic Artists. Trinity Rep is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for non-profit theater; an Associate Member of the National New Play Network; and a Public Works Affiliate.













Funding provided in part by a grant from the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities, through the Rhode Island Culture, Humanities, and Arts Recovery Grant (RI CHARG) program. This program was made possible thanks to the National Endowment for the Humanities, via funds from the federal American Rescue Plan Act.

Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Dear... Whoever needs to hear this from you

When you entered the theater, you may have noticed old mailboxes placed in the lobby, or even some letters hanging on the walls. While it sets a wonderful ambiance in the Lederer Theater Center before the show starts, we didn't put them here just for decoration. It's all part of a community engagement effort at Trinity Rep where we encourage audience members to pick up letter writing, just as shown in *Tiny Beautiful Things*.

We ask patrons to reflect after the show and write a message to someone who needs to hear from you. It could be a message to yourself, to someone who hasn't heard from you in a long time, maybe someone who has died, or even someone you talk to every day. Letters can be posted in the lobby anonymously with the writer's permission, but you can also place it in a sealed box so no one else can read it, or take it home for yourself.

Artistic Director Curt Columbus, Director of Community Engagement Michelle Cruz, and resident company member Angela Brazil, who plays Sugar in *Tiny Beautiful Things* agreed that during the pandemic, it was important for folks to reflect and share experiences.

"Curt was really excited about having this post office space in both the outer lobby and inner lobby downstairs, and having an activated community space again," Michelle said. "And it's

a reflective space: we are still in a pandemic, but I think the letter writing will give people time to just reflect on their past, or on the show. So many times, we see a performance and then just go to our cars and leave, but I think for this show, it can open up feelings in some folks and we want to offer a space to do just that."

Michelle also described letter writing as a "lost art" in a world of typing and texting, and hopes that guests may continue writing physical letters in the future.

While the initiative ties into the show's themes of writing letters, you will not receive any advice from a Trinity Rep "Sugar." Instead, Michelle says it is a way to practice "radical empathy" towards oneself. You can learn more about what radical empathy is and why it's important on page 7.

"By taking the time to write something whether or not anyone sees it, whether we write it and crumple it up or write it and put it into a space, it gives you a sense of time and space to just be," Michelle said. I think that's a big part of the vision."

This isn't the only way we're asking the community to participate in letter writing. Early in the pandemic, What Cheer Writers Club launched the Dear Rhode Island project, which was basically

a pen pal program during the time of the heaviest of social distancing. Trinity Rep is partnering with What Cheer Writers Club/Dear Rhode Island to get folks both in and out of the theater into letter writing.

"Physically having those letters be sent to folks, it was really popular, and pretty transformative," Michelle said. "I had followed that campaign through the pandemic, and I thought that was just a really beautiful way to be able to communicate, so part of the community piece we're having folks write about different things in their lives. Our prompt for this community letter-writing campaign is remembering a beautiful gesture".

There will be letter-writing stations at the Writers Club for submission, but will also allow digital submissions. We're asking folks to tell us about a time when you have expressed or received a "beautiful gesture." There will be letter-writing stations at the Writers Club and Trinit for submission, but will also allow digital submissions by emailing stories@trinityrep.com.

LEADERSHIP FOR TRINITY REP

CURT COLUMBUS

The Arthur P. Solomon and Sally E. Lapides Artistic Director



Curt Columbus became Trinity Repertory Company's fifth artistic director in January 2006. He is also the artistic director of the Brown/Trinity Rep MFA programs in Acting and Directing. His directing credits for Trinity include Macbeth, Ragtime, Beowulf:

A Thousand Years of Baggage, Middletown, Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, The Merchant of Venice, His Girl Friday, Camelot, Cabaret, Blithe Spirit, A Christmas Carol, Cherry Orchard, and the world premieres of *The Completely Fictional—Utterly* True-Final Strange Tale of Edgar Allen Poe and Social Creatures. Trinity Rep has been home to the world premieres of three of his plays, Paris by Night, The Dreams of Antigone, and Sparrow Grass, and produced his translations of Chekhov's Cherry Orchard and Ivanov, as well as Feydeau's A Flea in Her Ear and Lope de Vega's Like Sheep to Water (Fuente Ovejuna). Curt's adaptation of Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment (with Marilyn Campbell) has won awards and accolades around the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. His translation of Chekhov's Three Sisters, developed at the Arden

Theatre in Philadelphia, is published by Dramatists Play Service, as is *Sparrow Grass* and his translations of Chekhov's *Seagull, Uncle Vanya, Cherry Orchard*, and *Ivanov*. Curt lives in Providence, Rhode Island with his husband, Nate Watson.

JENNIFER CANOLE Interim Executive Director and Director of Development

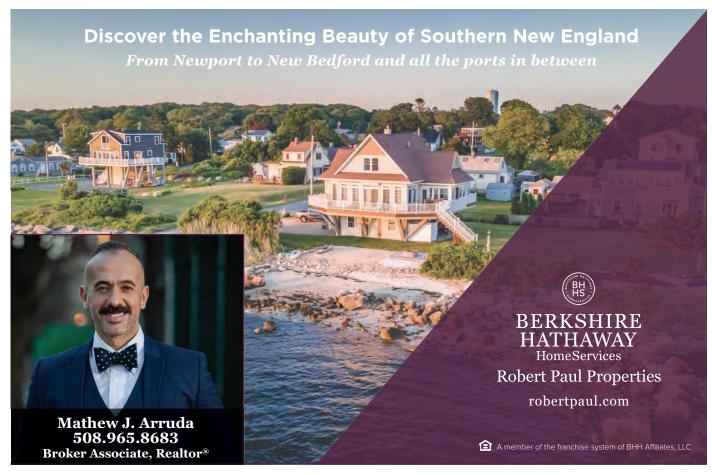


Jen has worked in development and external relations at Trinity Rep since 1999 and has been director of development since 2016. She was appointed to serve as interim executive director in October, as the theater engages in a national search for its next administrative

leader. Over Jen's 22 years with the theater, she secured the seed money that launched Trinity Rep's Young Actors Studio (after-school and summer programs), Project Discovery Plus (in-school residencies supporting student matinee attendance), Trinity Rep Active Imagination Network (programs for children and adults with autism, cognitive, and psychiatric disabilities), and Open Access Theater; served on the board of Rhode Island Citizens for the Arts; worked on multiple capital campaigns and dozens of special events; and has raised millions of dollars for the theater's operations, facilities, programs, and endowment. She was

recognized for her work with a Providence Business News 40 Under Forty Award in 2013. Jen is a graduate of Ithaca College, and lives in Lincoln, Rhode Island with her husband and two sons.

Thank you for joining us in our return to live theater!



Trinity Rep's next show is August Wilson's Gem of the Ocean – the first chronological play in Wilson's legendary American Century Cycle. Set in 1904 Pittsburgh where slavery was still living memory, Gem of the Ocean offers a searing and mystical exploration of freedom, justice, and reclamation. Communications Associate Laura Weick met with director Jude Sandy last fall to discuss his vision for the production.

Diving into Gem of the Ocean

Laura Weick: You directed *Radio Golf* in 2020, and now you are directing *Gem of the Ocean*. Both are part of August Wilson American Century Cycle, and they are the last play and first play chronologically in it. What brought you back to the Wilson canon?

Jude Sandy: Wilson's American Century Cycle is such a profound achievement in the American theater, an entire 10 play cycle sweeping 20th-century history through the lens of African American people's experiences. August Wilson created a world with this cycle, and Artistic Director Curt Columbus felt once we had done *Radio Golf* that we had to do *Gem of the Ocean* as the two plays speak to each other in poignant ways.

Radio Golf is anchored in realism and individualism while Gem of the Ocean invokes an immense spiritual and communal realm that is known to many African-Americans, but less fully appreciated by the rest of our culture. With Radio Golf set in the 1990s as a kind of schismatic Black success story that questions the costs for African-American citizenship in this society, it felt vital for us to experience the other end of Wilson's narrative arc. Gem of the Ocean, set in the 1900s, sees a community of African-Americans grappling with a nominal freedom of Abolition and the shortlived Reconstruction period aborted by resurgent forces of white supremacy that tried to return African-Americans to effective enslavement with Jim Crow laws. It's a story in which Black people are "officially" free, but in reality, are not.

Gem of the Ocean looks at what it takes to restore the spirit of solidarity needed to return to the battle for a freedom that's deeper than legislated civil liberties. It feels appropriate to what we're living through now as we examine the ways in which the freedom African American people are told they have keeps being contradicted in real-life events that expose systems that haven't

been as deeply reconsidered as we need them to be. Replenishing and recommitting ourselves to a communal struggle hopefully makes freedom a possibility for all of us in this country. So *Gem of the Ocean* asks African American people, and by extension all Americans: "Who are you, really? What is the meaning of all that you hold within yourself? And is it possible for you to be an empowered participant in our society if you are content to be denied access to the fullness of who you are in spiritual and civic solidarity with others?"

LW: Radio Golf and Gem of the Ocean take place in the same world, with elements in Gem being referenced throughout Radio Golf. What will it be like for audiences to revisit this world? And what will the connections between characters mean for your directing?

JS: Gem contains a gargantuan cosmic force that we hope to make palpable in the Chace Theater. For Radio Golf, which we produced in the smaller Dowling Theater and which Wilson set in a storefront office, we created a forgotten store-fronted house whose bones might resemble Aunt Ester's home on 1839 Wylie Avenue, where Gem is set. We hoped it would help us feel Ester's absence in Radio Golf more directly, this holder of African-American spirit who was as old as the Middle Passage itself, but who'd died and whose memory is about to be destroyed. So it'll be interesting for those of us who witnessed the Radio Golf house to experience how this idea expands into the larger theatricality of the Chace, with Ester still alive and powerful at the center of the epic space Gem invokes.

I've been in rich conversation with scenic designer Michael McGarty, who did haunting work on *Radio Golf* along with co-designer Baron E. Pugh. He was the only choice to design *Gem's* set because he is an unparalleled sculptor of poetic space and there is almost no one who knows these

two theaters, their history and their possibilities more intimately than McGarty does. We've barely begun our process, but I'm excited by our task of fulfilling the spiritual and historical force of *Gem of the Ocean*, to call up the loss of millions of Africans in the Middle Passage and render it urgent to our present lives. We want our audiences to feel like we're not watching Aunt Ester lead Citizen Barlow to the City of Bones to wash his soul, but that we're all going there together.

LW: Gem has quite the cast – Longtime Trinity Rep friend Ricardo-Pitts Wiley, and resident actor Joe Wilson, Jr. are in this show and were both in Radio Golf, so it'll be fun to see them come back to this world. And this will be local legend Rose Weaver's grand return to Trinity Rep after decades away!

JS: The tenderness that Joe, Ricardo, Omar Robinson and Dereks Thomas brought alive together in Radio Golf was unlike anything I'd personally experienced among African-American men onstage in the theater. They gifted us something we don't see represented nearly enough in the American theater: Black men finding care and solidarity with one another, as they are, on their own terms, even in conflict. For Ricardo, his two characters [Elder Joseph Barlow in Radio Golf, Solly Two-Kings in Gem of the Ocean aren't directly related, but Joe's characters are: Cesar Wilks in Gem of the Ocean is Radio Golf's Harmond Wilks' grandfather. In Gem of the Ocean, Ricardo and Joe are foils, so they'll have a different relationship to explore.

And I just don't have words for what it means for us to welcome the incomparable Rose Weaver back to Trinity Rep. It's of great resonance for our institution and for our community that Rose, Ricardo, and Joe will share the stage altogether for the first time, in Providence, in this play. Rose's coming home to Trinity Rep hopefully completes something that began with Ricardo's

return in *Radio Golf*. To see these artists, who themselves hold so much meaning and memory for our community, working together alongside resident company member Mauro Hantman, *Radio Golf* actor Dereks Thomas and talented MFA actor Christopher Lindsay, creates a kind of intergenerational theatrical experience that Wilson's plays make uniquely possible.

LW: The legacy of slavery is a huge theme in the show. It takes place at the turn of the 20th century, so it's still a raw memory for characters like Solly and Aunt Ester. But even over a century after the play takes place, we're still grappling with all of those questions about the long-term, generational impact of slavery on Black people in America. I'd like to hear you go more in detail about how this show's themes are especially timely now.

JS: So much of this play is about reclaiming memory and history and what has been buried. Citizen has to transport himself back to the very beginning of the saga for "Africans in America", as Wilson describes us. Citizen has to go back to this beginning to find the resources to forgive and restore himself to communion with his people and his own being. We collectively and individually have buried so much for the sake of survival in our culture and now are re-learning so much, like the history of Rhode Island's participation in the slave trade and how it made powerful institutions like Brown University possible, built on the wealth of profiteers of slavery Nicholas, John, and Joseph Brown.

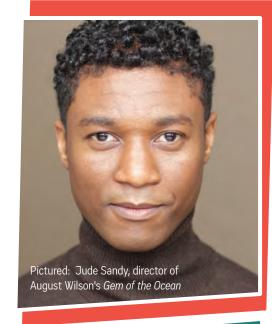
I think it's vital for us to live with this play and ask "What have we forgotten? And how are we made less powerful and less actualized in our forgetting?" We've been so afraid to look honestly at our history, but that truth is working upon us, whether we face it or not. In working through it together we can commit to a future that empowers all of us towards the fullest expression of our humanity. That takes confrontation and release and reckoning and repair. So I hope the conversations we have with this show encourages us to all look at our history together, see how it lives in our fraught present, and choose a future together that renews us.

LW: At the time of this interview (November 2021), there's still a lot in progress, but what are you most looking forward to with this show? What do you think will make your vision of it unique?

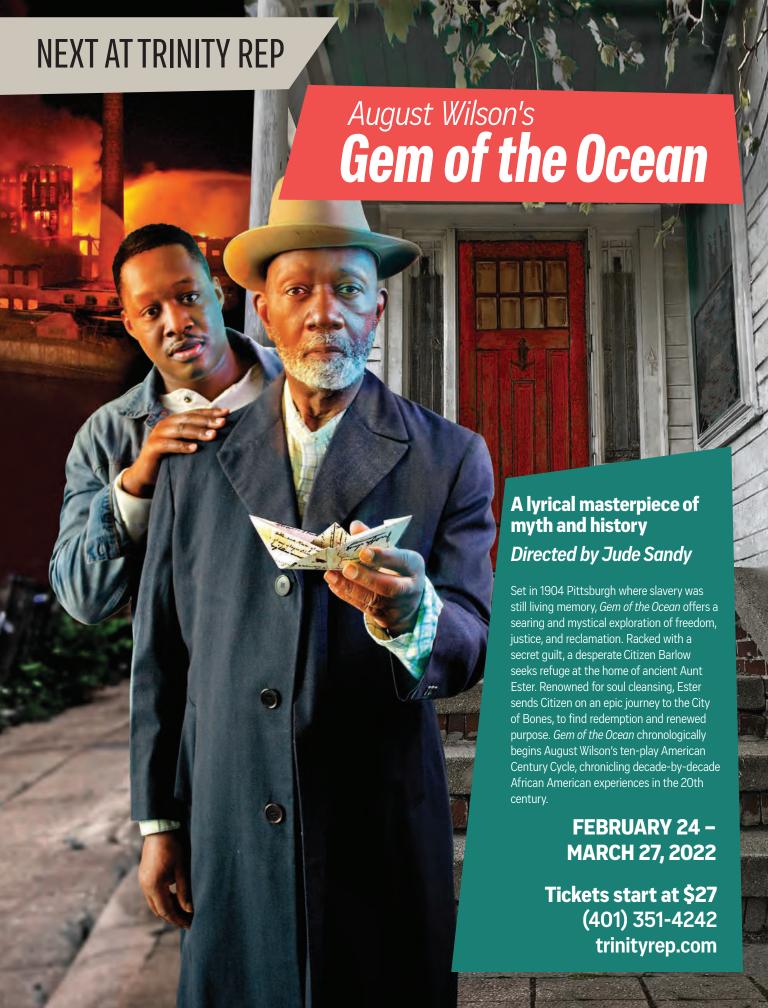
JS: Well, Trinity Rep at its best is grounded in an artists' community. And I'm not only talking about the acting company only, I'm talking about a larger creative community of which Trinity Rep is just one anchor. I'm excited because we're going to experience the work of a community of artists whom we know, admire and trust, whom we've watched grow, mature and wrestle with their

artistry, taking on a story of deep relevance to all Rhode Islanders. I hope this production will be special because these artists who have invested their lives in Rhode Island have forged a collective genius unlike any other, anywhere else in the world. And because this is a community of artists whose collective genius is founded in a shared pursuit of lovingkindness in our work and lives, we hope to carry this story into the kind of brave, visceral, generous, truth-telling and communal transcendence Wilson and Gem make possible. We hope for all of us to leave the theater feeling mandated to live in courageous relationship to all that we are, to all that has gone before us and brought us here, and therefore in fuller embrace of the great responsibility we have to ourselves, to one another and to all those yet to come.

Gem of the Ocean runs in the Chace Theater February 24 – March 27, 2022. For more information, and to buy tickets, visit trinityrep. com/gem or call the ticket office







Meet the Director OF EDIA



Photo by Marisa Lenardson.

My name is **Monique Austin** and I am the Director of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism (EDIA) at Trinity Rep.

I assumed this role on September 20, 2021 and am honored to be a part of this amazing organization. One of the many things that drew me to this role was the active steps that Trinity Rep had taken in the area of EDIA. Not only did they put their commitment in writing, they acted.

In this current political and social climate, this will definitely be cause for conversation. As we are watching trials begin, continued injustices plaguing communities of color, and other abuses, we have an obligation to confront these issues and provide a space for discourse. While these visuals and subsequent conversations may not be easy, we must get comfortable being uncomfortable.

During my first 30+ days, I held multiple "listening sessions" for senior management and staff. The level of honesty that people shared with me was nothing short of amazing. Everyone I spoke with has had a wonderful experience at Trinity Rep and are committed to continue to make things better. Out of these listening sessions it became apparent that staff need to have a voice, a space of their own to bring forward issues related

to EDIA. Out of these sessions, we are pleased to announce that we have established the EDIA Staff Committee. The members of the committee are:

- Barry Branford, Company Manager
- Viguens Louis, Major Gifts Officer
- Lizzy Pegler, Costume Technician
- Suzanne Tidwell, House Services Manager
- Jess Toporoski, Human Resources Manager
- Abby Wang, Assistant Lighting Supervisor
- Bradly Widener, Assistant Director
 of Service and Experience
- Gia Yarn, Artistic Assistant

I am honored to have such a diverse group of staff from across the company participating and am excited about what is to come from this group!

Another initiative that has come out of the listening sessions is a program called Lunchtime Conversations. These will be held on a monthly basis and in a format similar to a brown bag luncheon. The series will provide an opportunity

to for staff to have lunch and discuss EDIA related topics.

Our first session was held on November 18th. The topic was: "Black Actors in White Theater" and the discussion led by our very own resident acting company member Joe Wilson, Jr. With close to 30 people in attendance, it was a very open conversation around the choices made in the casting and production of this year's A Christmas Carol. Joe spoke of his own experiences as a Black man in the world of theater.

Other exciting news is that our CORE team of the Anti-Racism Transformation Committee formed in 2020, consisting of Joe Wilson Jr., Mia Ellis, and Amanda Downing, have worked very hard to create Affinity Spaces for Trinity Rep. The team hired Farsight, a consulting company with vast experience working with theaters will be hosting training for staff, administration and board of trustee members in December.

It is a very exciting time here at Trinity Rep and I am excited to continue to work with such an amazing staff! For more information about Trinity Rep's work to become an anti-racist organization, visit www.trinityrep.com/antiracism.

Audience Agreement

Welcome to Trinity Rep. This is YOUR home for dramatic discoveries.

Our mission is to "reinvent the public square" and create a forum for diverse communities to engage in dialogue. We produce plays, community events, and educational opportunities – but without an audience they have no effect, and they are far less impactful and meaningful if they aren't shared by a diverse audience that represents our entire community. So, whether you consider yourself a "theater person" or not, **you are welcome here**. Whether you're wearing jeans and a t-shirt or dressed to the nines, **you are welcome here**. Whether this is your first show or hundredth, **you are welcome here**. At Trinity Rep, you are welcome whatever your background or history, however you look or identify. We ask only that everyone join us in committing to these community agreements:

Respect for each other is essential. Language or actions rooted in hate, whether intentional or not, have no place at Trinity Rep. We do not tolerate racism, discrimination, or harassment of any kind, including microaggressions.

Recognize that this organization belongs to all members of the community.

Trinity Rep welcomes everyone and hopes that our patrons will welcome one another with the same enthusiasm and respect.

All respectful responses to the artists and their work on stage are encouraged,

including but certainly not limited to: laughter, applause, tears, snaps, and verbal encouragement.

Refrain from participating in unwelcome contact with artists, staff, and patrons including physical contact and remarks about appearance, ability, or identity.

If you have any comments or concerns, or have not felt welcome at Trinity Rep, please let us know by speaking to our staff at the theater, contacting us by phone at (401) 259-0700, email feedback@trinityrep.com, or complete the form at www.trinityrep.com/feedback. Your name and contact information are not required, but if you would like us to follow up with you, we will need to know how to reach you.

The Arts Create Jobs, And Not Just for Artists



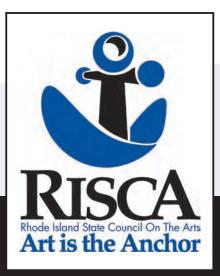
photos left to right: Kingston Chamber Music Festival; Trinity Repertory Company (by Mark Turek).; The Steel Yard (by Force 4 Photography).

The arts are an important part of the Rhode Island economy.

Over 12,000 people work in our state's arts sector, and according to Americans for the Arts, Rhode Island is third in the nation in the number of arts related businesses per capita, exceeded only by California and New York.

That's important news for the Rhode Island economy, because when the arts are thriving, Rhode Island businesses thrive as well. The arts help keep our restaurants and parking garages full, and our retail stores busy. Local businesses employ thousands of Rhode Islanders whose livelihood depends, in large measure, on the arts.

Here's where we come in.



Rhode Island's investment in the arts is small (just 6/100ths of 1% of our state budget), but RISCA-funded programs and services reach millions of Rhode Islanders and visitors each year, pumping hundreds of millions of dollars into the Rhode Island economy.

With all the economic energy that comes from an active arts community, let's ensure that Rhode Island continues to benefit from the arts.

Support the Arts! www.arts.ri.gov



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SCAN FOR WEBSITE



The Story So Far

Live shows, classes, and events at Trinity Rep returned in full swing last fall, and your home for dramatic discoveries doesn't plan on stopping! Here are a few highlights of what's happened at Trinity Rep during the past few months.

A Christmas Carol

Thousands of people experienced the wonder of *A Christmas Carol* 2021 this holiday season. This was Trinity Rep's first live in-person show since the pandemic began, and our cast and crew brought so much energy to the stage.



Timothy Crowe as Ebenezer Scrooge (foreground) and the cast of *A Christmas Carol*. Photo by Mark Turek.



Guests arrive at their seats during opening night of *A Christmas Carol*. Photo by Marisa Lenardson.



Artistic Director Curt Columbus and Interim Executive Director Jennifer Canole address the audience during opening night of *A Christmas Carol*. Photo by Marisa Lenardson.

The Late Wedding

Directed by Brown University/Trinity Rep MFA student Aileen Wen McGroddy, *The Late Wedding* by Christopher Chen featured five fellow students and a local actor on the Pell Chafee Performance Center's stage. Based on the works of fabulist writer Italo Calvino, *The Late Wedding* took a dive into the challenges of intimacy, longing, and trust in romantic relationships through a series of genre-bending vignettes.

In March, Brown/Trinity Rep students will act in and direct four "Four in Rep" shows: *Everybody*, directed by JaMario Stills, *Constellations*, directed by Carol Ann Tan, *Angels in America Part One: Millennium Approaches*, directed by S. Andrew Watring, and *Collective Rage*, directed by Molly Houlahan. *Death and the Maiden*, Eddie DeHais' thesis project, will run in May.



Andrew Gombas, Jihan Haddad, and Gunnar Manchester in *The Late Wedding*. Photo by Mark Turek.



Han Van Sciver and Catia in The Late Wedding. Photo by Mark Turek



The cast of The Late Wedding. Photo by Mark Turek.

Veteran Voices

On November 6, local veterans performed music or spoke about their experiences in the military in the Dowling Theater. This intimate show allowed veterans to express themselves in the ways they felt best reflected their thoughts and feelings.



Kevin "Big Lux" Luther performs an original piece based on his experiences in the U.S. military in Iraq. Photo by Marisa Lenardson.



Dora Vasquez-Hellner discusses her 23-year-long Army career and the challenges she faced as a female veteran. Photo by Marisa Lenardson.



The Providence chapter of Guitars for Vets plays classic rock songs such as "Have You Ever Seen the Rain" by Creedence Clearwater Revival. Photo by Marisa Lenardson.

Education

Kids, teens, and adults got to learn the ins and outs of theater through our fall classes!



The Theater Explosion! ensemble rehearses a scene. Photo by Gia Yarn.



Students in Grades K-1 perform for their parents. Photo by Gia Yarn.



The Grades 5-7 classes prepares to take a bow after a performance. Photo by Gia Yarn.

Community Sing

On December 3, Director of Community Engagement Michelle Cruz and local carolers sang down Washington Street for the Providence Tree Lighting Ceremony for our annual Community Sing. Some folks submitted videos for a virtual Community Sing.



Carolers gather for group photo during Community Sing event. Photo by Marisa Lenardson.



Director of Community Engagement Michelle Cruz instructs participants during the beginning of the event. Photo by Marisa Lenardson.



Michelle Cruz leads in caroling with other participants during Community Sing. Photo by Marisa Lenardson.



See the work of the Brown/Trinity Rep students on stage in the Pell Chafee Performance Center

Constellations

by Nick Payne Directed by Carol Ann Tan

March 3 - 9

Everybody

by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins Directed by JaMario Stills

March 4 - 10

Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes

Part One: Millennium Approaches by Tony Kushner Directed by S. Andrew Watring March 15 - 21

Collective Rage: A Play in Five Betties

by Jen Silverman
Directed by Molly Houlahan
March 16 - 22

Give back to your community and become a Volunteer Usher!

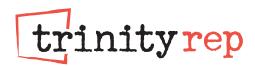
Trinity Rep is grateful to have a community of dedicated volunteer ushers. Here's your chance to join our incredible team! Ushers perform essential duties at each performance — handing out programs, scanning tickets, and directing patrons while creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all. We couldn't do what we do without them, and ushering is the easiest way to give back while seeing Trinity Rep's award-winning shows. Ushers also get a complimentary seat at the performance when they volunteer, space permitting. To learn more about ushering, please email Suzanne Tidwell, house services manager, at stidwell@trinityrep.com. Or leave a message at (401) 453-9200 and include your name, a telephone number, and email address.

Boost Your Business —Advertise in Trinity Rep Programs

Advertising with Trinity Rep is an affordable way to reach a highly desirable audience with thousands of advertising impressions throughout the year. In fact, approximately two-thirds of the audience are full season subscribers, who see at least four productions a year. For more information, contact Maddie Ulevich at (401) 453-9237 or mulevich@trinityrep.com.

Groups Enjoy Great Savings and Great Theater at Trinity Rep!

Why wait until after you've seen a great show to tell your friends about it? With discounted group rates, you don't have to! Save up to 30% on tickets and have a fun night out at the theater with friends, family, workplace groups, book clubs, alumni organizations, and more. Contact the ticket office at tickets@trinityrep.com or (401) 351-4242 for more information



WHAT'S NEXT IN YOUR 2021-22 SEASON

LIVE AGAIN!

he plays we selected excite us as art makers, storytellers, and community builders, and we think you will agree. They embody both the intimacy and the spectacle that exist only in the theater. They will inspire us to think differently about our world and our place in it. These are plays that allow us to celebrate our shared humanity, and also shine a light on experiences and worlds different from ours.

And what's more, we will do all of these things together. Our heartbeats will synchronize as we gasp in surprise, erupt in laughter, or get drawn into quiet, heartrending moments. We will rediscover the magic of the communal experience that is live theater. In short, when the theater is live again, we will all get to live again.

Plays, dates δ artists subject to change

Season Sponsors





Supporting Season Sponsor



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August Wilson's **Gem of the Ocean**

Directed by Jude Sandy February 24 – March 27, 2022 **From the legendary playwright**

A lyrical masterpiece of myth and history

Set in 1904 Pittsburgh where slavery was still living memory, *Gem of the Ocean* offers a searing and mystical exploration of freedom, justice, and reclamation. Racked with a secret guilt, a desperate Citizen Barlow seeks refuge at the home of ancient Aunt Ester. Renowned for soul cleansing, Ester sends Citizen on an epic journey to the City of Bones, to find redemption and renewed purpose. *Gem of the Ocean* chronologically begins August Wilson's ten-play American Century Cycle, chronicling decade-by-decade African American experiences in the 20th century.

"The great culmination of all for which Wilson stood." —CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Media Sponsor Rhode Island

Sueño

Translated and adapted by José Rivera From the play by Pedro Calderón de la Barca Directed by Tatyana-Marie Carlo April 7 – May 8, 2022 **Mesmerizing modern adaptation**

Love, revenge, dreams, and forgiveness

A humorous and haunting metaphysical story peppered with intentional anachronisms, *Sueño* is a contemporary reimagining of *Life is a Dream,* considered one of the jewels of the Spanish Golden Age. Years after a Spanish prince is imprisoned at birth based on astrological predictions, the young man is released to test the prophecy. Once freed, his actions could either earn him the throne or return him to a lifetime of isolation to question the very nature of reality and humanity.

"Enchanting and frequently funny take on the classic." —CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Media Sponsor Rhode Island PBS @

Fairview

By Jackie Sibblies Drury May 19 – June 19, 2022 **Pulitzer Prize-winning drama**

Boldly challenging perceptions

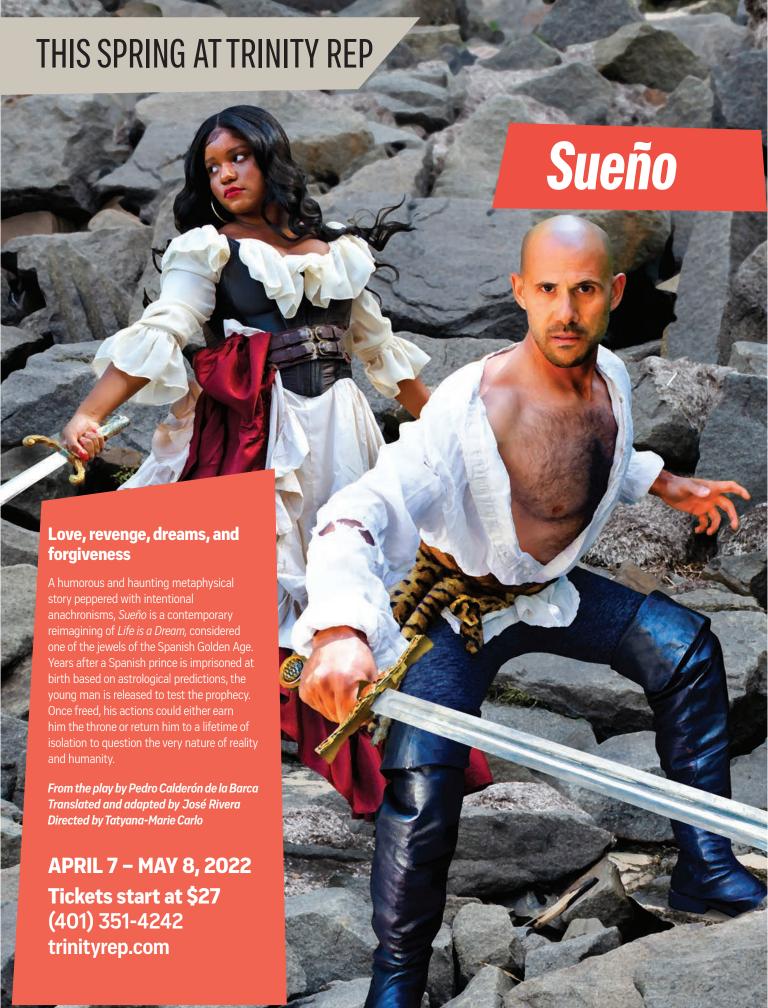
This stunning Pulitzer Prize-winner begins simply: It's Grandma's birthday, and Beverly needs the family's celebration to be perfect. But her husband is no help, her sister is getting into the wine, her brother hasn't arrived, and her teenage daughter's secrets threaten to derail the day. Then this family comedy takes a surprising turn, becoming an unpredictable and thrillingly theatrical experience that boldly confronts perceptions of race and identity.

"Dazzling and ruthless... A glorious, scary reminder of the unmatched power of live theater to rattle, roil, and shake us wide awake."

-NEW YORK TIMES







Trinity Rep is your home for dramatic discoveries.

We acknowledge the lands where Trinity Rep stands in Downtown Providence today as once the lands of the Masswascut—The Land between the two rivers, and the territory of Meshanticut, which are the ancestral homelands of the Narragansett, Pokanoket, and Nipmuc people.

We also acknowledge that as contemporary Rhode Islanders, we hold the legacy of this state's economic foundation through its participation in the triangle slave trade. We encourage you to research and personally acknowledge these legacies, and support our contemporary Indigenous and Black communities in actionable ways.

NATIONALLY CELEBRATED

Founded in 1963, Trinity Rep has long been nationally recognized for excellence and innovation. The company received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theater in 1981, produced four television productions for PBS, toured India and Syria, and was the first American theater company to perform at the Edinburgh International Festival in Scotland. Trinity Rep's Project Discovery program, which celebrated 50 years of student matinees in 2016, became a national model for arts education.

Trinity Rep shapes the future of the nation's theater through the development and production of new plays, as well as the Brown University/ Trinity Rep MFA program — a tuition-free, three-year program that is one of the leading actor and director training programs in the world.

LOCALLY MADE

Trinity Rep's celebrated artistic company members make Providence their home and are proud to be a part of this community. They provide an artistic foundation that allows directors and playwrights to achieve heightened levels of creativity and encourage the audience to feel more connected to the creative work and organization.

Community connections are made and strengthened daily through robust education and engagement programs. In a single season Trinity Rep's educational programs reach more than 20,000 Southern New England students through performances, in-school visits, and backstage workshops. Engagement opportunities range from conversations with artists to community partnerships. Trinity Rep is committed to inclusion at every level of the organization, including programs like open captioning and sensory-friendly performances.

Located in downtown Providence, Trinity Rep has long been a driving force behind the creativity that fuels and defines the region. From its roots in Providence's Trinity United Methodist Church, Trinity Rep moved in 1973 to its present home, the Lederer Theater Center in downtown Providence. Built in 1917 and formerly known as the Majestic Theater, the historic building now houses two performance spaces: the Elizabeth and Malcolm Chace Theater (500+ seats) and the Sarah and Joseph Dowling, Jr. Theater (200+ seats.)

Employing more than 275 artists, educators, and administrators, the organization generates over \$21 million in economic activity annually.

CONSTANTLY CREATIVE

Trinity Rep is committed to reinventing the public square and inspiring dialogue by creating emotionally-stimulating live productions and innovative education programs for all ages and abilities. Whether classical or contemporary, all of Trinity Rep's productions connect audiences with the play in meaningful and sometimes surprising ways. Its annual production of *A Christmas Carol* is new every year and has brought families together for over 40 years.

Artistic director since 2006, Curt Columbus has embraced the Trinity Rep aesthetic established by founding Artistic Director Adrian Hall and continued by his successors: Anne Bogart, Richard Jenkins, Oskar Eustis, and Amanda Dehnert. Together, with Interim Executive Director Jennifer Canole, Columbus



is committed to creating unparalleled theatrical experiences for and with the community.

OUR MISSION

Trinity Rep's mission is to reinvent the public square with dramatic art that stimulates, educates, and engages our diverse community in a continuing dialogue.

OUR VALUES

Company • We provide eclectic, bold, and original theater through our resident acting company. Since 1964, we have proven that a company of resident artists is the best vehicle to achieve the best theater, while at the same time contributing to the vibrancy of the community. Our vision for the artistic company includes artists of diverse backgrounds and ages, with a range of talents and abilities, including acting, writing, and directing. A resident company provides playwrights and directors a unique opportunity to develop new work specifically suited to the strengths of actors, and to re-imagine classic work in innovative and ground-breaking ways. We will premiere at least one production each year developed specifically for our company, and continue to revitalize and define our company in the years to come.

Community • We are a public square. We are a cultural resource, a public square, where the ideas and issues of our time and of our culture are pondered, discussed, and debated, sparked by the work on our stages. We provide rich, engaging opportunities in our classrooms, talkbacks, and online materials. We are committed to our location in downtown Providence. Renovating and conserving our building is fundamental to who we are and why we exist. Our vision for our physical plant includes more space for public gatherings and educational programs, as well as better technical support.

Education • We offer in-depth educational opportunities. We contribute to the well-being of this region in innumerable and profound ways, most especially through our educational programs. The work on our stages is a point of genesis, not the end point, for our numerous education programs: Project Discovery, a student matinee program founded in 1966, has given over 1.4 million students the experience of live theater; the Brown University/Trinity Rep MFA Acting and Directing programs are among the top graduate studies programs in the world, developing the next generation of theater artists; and our myriad life-long learning educational courses serve not only thousands of children each year, but adults of all ages.

ANTI-RACISM

We at Trinity Rep acknowledge our complicit and too-often active involvement in upholding and benefiting from structures of racism and oppression. We have resolved to meaningfully place anti-racism at the center of all of our work. We are committed to developing, sharing, and holding ourselves accountable to short- and long-term goals, with full recognition that this work has no endpoint. More information about our commitment and our goals, as well as an opportunity to provide feedback on this work can be found at www.trinityrep.com/antiracism.

DEVELOPING OUR DEVELOPMENT TEAM

As Trinity Rep prepared for the return to live theater this season, we added fresh faces throughout our organization. Our development team is no exception and, in fact, is comprised almost entirely of new staff! Read on to learn more about who they are, what they do in their roles, and why they're passionate about theater.

JEN CANOLE

Interim Executive Director/Director of Development

In late spring of 2000, as I was winding down my full-season public relations internship at Trinity Rep, the director of development at the time approached me about joining the development team. I had no real fundraising experience outside of selling Girl Scout cookies and various items for band fundraisers in high school, and I wasn't sure how I felt about asking people for money. But I had a passion for theater, a deep appreciation of its impact, and I'd just spent nine months learning and writing about the inner workings of Trinity Rep. With a nudge from a trusted friend, I decided to try it out, and in July 2000 I started as grants writer.

Twenty-one years later, I'm leading the team. I wouldn't be here without the support, guidance, and mentorship from my first development boss, Steve Sorin. He was a wonderful teacher and a gifted fundraiser. In the six years we worked together, I built a solid foundation of skills and

instincts that I've drawn on every day and have endeavored to pass on to the interns, students, and staff that I have mentored since.

Over the years, Trinity Rep's development department has changed and evolved, both as the organization has made changes, and as our staff has made changes in their lives. This fall, I had the unique opportunity to bring together an entirely new development team to help us achieve our fundraising goals.

I am excited to welcome Tina, Viguens, Maddie, and Colin to the theater. Each person brings a unique experience and perspective to the work. As a team and, as a theater, I look forward to the connections we'll make and successes we will celebrate as we move forward together.

TINA LANGILL

Assistant Director of Development

My role at Trinity Rep is to tell the story of the larger impact that we are making on the lives of our patrons and community, and invite people to support that and be a part of it through

their donation. I make sure that we are on track for our fundraising goals for the year through various communications and outreach strategies. I hope that I am able to inspire more people to give and build an awareness of the essential role that donors play in non-profit arts.

I joined Trinity Rep because I love being a part of a theater, especially one that is educating young people and leading the public conversation around important social issues, and that is what Trinity is all about.

Previously, I have served in all aspects of non-profit arts fundraising for two other theaters in the Los Angeles area prior to moving to Rhode Island. Before getting into fundraising, I explored many roles in theater as well, from acting to stage combat choreography, lighting design to stage management, and I even created and directed summer and after school programs. All of these experiences help me to tell the story of theater creation and education



to patrons and donors in a way that connects their donation to the real people and artists they are impacting.

Outside of fundraising, I have spent more than 15 years as a fencing instructor and stage combatant for theater, film, and live events. I trained in all three styles of European fencing (though I prefer foil), and all edged, blunt and pointed weapons.

VIGUENS LOUIS

Major Gifts Officer

In my role at Trinity Rep, I oversee our major giving and legacy giving programs. Prior to joining the development staff, I saw a handful of enlightening productions at Trinity Rep. I saw how important honesty and vulnerability is to Trinity Rep and its resident acting company. Equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility are a priority in my work and witnessing Trinity Rep uphold these values drew me to join the organization.

During college, I attended a regional collegiate theater-conference, KCACTF (Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival). This led to the opportunity to participate in their national festival where I learned about arts management and development. From there, I got involved in the ASPIRE Leadership Fellows Program in coalition with the League of Resident Theater's as one of its inaugural members. This program focused on cultivating a new generation of diverse and underrepresented administrative leaders.

My work focuses on building major gift fundraising efforts based on the missions and values of the community Trinity Rep serves. In non-profits, it is important to signify the missions and values of the community in order to best serve it's needs and sustainability. I aim to contribute to Trinity a strong sense of commitment of its values.

In my downtime, you can find me making music, spending time with those I love, and learning new ways to communicate to those willing to share their stories.

MADDIE ULEVICH

Development Officer

I am so excited to have joined Trinity Rep! I am an actor, singer, and lifelong theater lover, and I have been working in fundraising for the performing arts for several years.

Most recently, I was part of the development team at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City. When I moved from NYC to Providence in June 2021, I knew I wanted to find a new position that would allow me to continue to support the art that I love most. That's when I stumbled upon an opening at Trinity Rep! I was inspired and excited by the company's commitment to the pursuit of equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism, so I jumped on the opportunity and applied. I'm so glad I did!

Now that I'm here, I get to spend every day connecting with the wonderful individuals, trustees, and businesses who are passionate about Trinity Rep and who go above and beyond to ensure that the company can continue to produce the bold, challenging theater they love. I hope to continue helping members of our community feel more connected to the work they're supporting so that Trinity Rep can be a place we all feel proud of.

Outside of my work with Trinity Rep, I've continued to perform in theater and film, and I run a small business selling my own handmade jewelry. I am so grateful to be in a community that respects and supports the arts and artists of all sorts, and I absolutely love getting to learn about Trinity Rep, Providence, and so much more with each day that I spend here.

COLIN BAYLOR

Development Coordinator

I have previously worked with Island Moving Company, Newport's contemporary ballet company, as the development officer and registrar of the company's Newport Academy of Ballet. My other work has included being faculty at a music school and the membership coordinator of the Texas Library Association, serving 7,000 member librarians throughout the state of Texas.

As development coordinator, I manage the donor database and communications in support of fundraising goals. I bring a passion for the arts and community to Trinity Rep that began when I helped in founding a community music school with my college professor. I currently maintain a small private studio of piano students and teach lessons to all ages and skill levels.



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As a not-for-profit organization, Trinity Rep's donors play a critical role in our ability to make Tony Award-winning theater for and with our entire community. Your essential support makes it all possible: high-quality, vibrant productions; powerful and unique new play development programs; bold, rich conversations in our communities; and in-depth, unparalleled education opportunities for students of all ages.



Trinity Rep encourages creativity, empathy, and the ability to dream big. Make a gift today and help us keep dreaming.

Donate online at TrinityRep.com/support. You can also give through your IRA Rollover or charitable trust. Contact us with any questions.

In New Company

Introducing the Youth Company

by Tosin George

This past fall, Trinity Rep began a new education program, the Youth Company, for students in grades 10-12. This company of young actors take acting classes, network with theater professionals, and learn more about the performing arts throughout the entire academic year. Youth Company member Tosin George wrote about her experience in the program and interviewed some of her peers about what they enjoyed most.

The Youth Company is a new program for young actors in grades 10-12 that combines elements of programs previously offered to the same age group, including the Theater Lab and Teen Ambassador programs. It's designed to mirror Trinity Rep's resident acting company and emphasize the important link between performance and community.

The Youth Company currently has 10 members: Jeffrey Bento, Ahlyha Bright, Lola Brosco, Ashley Diaz, Damon Drury, Maya Kelly, Victoria Ortiz, Xander Ricci, Camila Tabora, and myself, Tosin George. All of us underwent an application process that included interviews with the program's leaders, Associate Education Director Matthew Tibbs and Resident Company Member Taavon Gamble. As a Youth Company member myself, I thought it would be interesting to speak with my fellow company members about the impact the pandemic had on them as artists, and get their perspective on the intersection of art and community found in the Youth Company

Each Monday we gather in the Lederer Theater Center's lobby and climb an insane amount of stairs that eventually lead to a rehearsal hall. We discuss the highs and lows of our respective weeks followed by acting games and exercises to get our artistic brains working, something that could not be done physically for over a year because of the pandemic.

"I went from three acting classes a week and being in a production, to absolutely nothing," says Victoria Ortiz, a sophomore at the Met School in Providence. "It was extremely difficult for me mentally, and I also just missed the excitement and relationships I built through acting and theater. I eventually started taking some classes on Zoom, but they were nothing like what I was used [to],"

I personally also struggled with going virtual in all aspects of life, especially with theater. While online theater classes are often helpful in terms of learning acting techniques, the relationships and

connections that one forms in an acting class or while rehearsing for a show in-person are lost. Victoria did however find something positive in the gloom of virtual theater, and that was a sense of independence.

"Once I got used to doing this whole acting thing virtually it opened my eyes to all the possibilities that were available to me," Victoria told me. "I started creating a lot of monologues and entering challenges, and I just began to become independent. I used to rely on my teachers so heavily to give me all the resources and things I needed to be successful, when in reality they were right in front of me. I just had to get creative."

But now we are back to in-person performing, and after acting from home for over a year, it would be neglectful to not acknowledge the fact that we spend our Mondays learning in the setting of a Tony Award-winning professional theater. Camila Tabora, a sophomore at Lincoln High School, adds "Having access to a real-life example of theater, of a place with professionals that have done this for years, means that your education will be held to the same standard of quality."

In addition to weekly acting classes, the Youth Company has the opportunity to see all of Trinity Rep's mainstage productions free of charge, which speaks to the immersive nature of the program. We are also a youth group that mirrors a professional acting company, which allows us to be active learners in our artistic education,

as we are both learning in the setting of a professional theater and seeing (thereby learning from) professional productions.

"It teaches us how to be in a company like that at a younger age," Lola explains. "The youth group gets to experience the theater industry through professional lenses and gets to know what it is like to be a part of a theatre company," Ashley Diaz, a sophomore at Classical High School in Providence, says.

Learning in a professional environment also exposes young actors to the versatile nature of the theater industry.

"The information you gather will actually help you in the real world,"



Camilla explains. "Even just in terms of exposure, you get to see how life really is in the industry, so not only could you decide whether you want to pursue a career in this or not, but you could even find other parts of the theater that you would want to try to learn about."

In my opinion, one of the most important pillars of theater (and one of Trinity Rep's guiding principles) is community, and after over a year of isolation, it is more pertinent than ever. Maya Kelly, a senior at The Lincoln School in Providence, says community is a place where people feel they are supported and encouraged. The Youth Company is a community itself, and is also in the process of figuring out what engagement and outreach with the greater Providence and Rhode Island communities will look like. However, we are a very enthusiastic and creative group and we all understand the importance of community outreach in the arts. As Maya says, "We literally have a stage. And anywhere there's a stage, there's an opportunity to share something important."

The professional nature and communal energy of this program, and Trinity Rep in general, is unparalleled and I am so excited to see what is in store for this talented group!

For more information about the Youth Company and Trinity Rep's other education programs, visit trinityrep.com/education.





Local news for Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts www.thepublicsradio.org

NEW WAYS TO CONNECT

Company. Community. Education. These are Trinity Rep's three core values. The inclusion of "community" on this list is critical to our mission and fuels our work. It ties together the other two values, "company" and "education," and provides greater context and meaning to our events. We don't just put on plays and teach classes. We are a cultural resource, a public square, a place where the ideas and issues of our time and culture are pondered, discussed, and debated, sparked by the work on our stages.

Trinity Rep's core values are so deeply ingrained into the fabric of the organization that no single individual or department is responsible for them. They permeate our work and affect every facet of what we do. However, while centering community is part of everyone's work at the organization, one department, Community Engagement, develops and produces many of the initiatives that help us form relationships with existing patrons and those who haven't yet connected with us.

Michelle Cruz joined the Trinity Rep team in 2019 as the Director of Community Engagement and since then has grown existing programs and developed new ways to embody our values. Michelle is deeply connected to the Rhode Island community – from her past work with Farm Fresh Rhode Island, her active role as an award-winning singer and musician, and her support of the local Cape Verdean community.

Inspired by these experiences – and many more – Michelle brings a hands-on approach to the work of Community Engagement. Her commitment to forming meaningful, authentic relationships is evidenced in the public programs listed below, as well as in behind-the-scenes work to develop and nurture partnerships with individuals and organizations. Michelle is looking forward to working more with Resident Artistic Associates Taavon Gamble, Tatyana-Marie Carlo, Rachael Warren, and Joe Wilson, Jr., and the artistic staff as a whole. More information about all these programs can be found at **www.trinityrep.com/engage**.

Community Engagement Events

Neighborhood Voices

The newest addition to our Community Engagement programming is Neighborhood Voices. These conversations are inspired by the work on our stages, but familiarity with the plays is not required.

The first event in this series is a conversation between Michelle Cruz and Angela Brazil, who plays Sugar in *Tiny Beautiful Things*, about the themes of the show and how acts of radical empathy can affect our lives. This event will be streamed live on January 26 at 7:00 pm. Access is free, but space is limited and advance registration is required. A recording will be made available at trinityrep.com in the days following the event.

Save the Dates:

Mark your calendars and check www. trinityrep.com/neighborhoodvoices for more information about Neighborhood Voices events for the rest of the season. These events are free with advanced registration required.

Gem of the Ocean: March 10 at 7:00 pm **Sueño**: April 27 at 7:00 pm

Fairview: June 9 at 7:00 pm

Prologues

One hour prior to every subscription series performance (does not include A Christmas Carol), a member of the cast leads a 30-minute discussion with a spoiler-free peek into the play-making process and other details to enhance your playgoing experience. Each Prologue concludes with a $Q \bar{\otimes} A$ with the audience. Read more about Prologues on page 35.

Green Light Ghost Light Project

The Green Light Ghost Light Project (GLGLP) is dedicated to highlighting the voices of our local Veteran community. It is a combination of the "Greenlight a Vet" initiative, in which communities light a green light to show support for veterans, and the Ghost Light Project, in which theaters leave a light on to signal that the theater is a safe space for all.

The GLGLP was launched in May 2021 with a Memorial Day Reflection Walk which featured stories and reflections of the families of the "Rhode Island Nine", the nine Rhode Island Marines who lost their lives during the Marine Barracks bombing in Beirut, Lebanon on October 23, 1983. The walk began at Trinity Rep, continued with stories along Westminster St, ending at the new Beirut Memorial on Dyer St.

The next GLGLP event was Veterans Voices, which occurred on November 6 in the Dowling Theater. (See photos on page 21). Veteran Voices combined Trinity Rep's longstanding theatrical traditions with the emotions and experiences of local veterans. Veterans read original and existing writings and performed music. By sharing work created by or that resonates with them, local veterans will be able to connect with and educate the community. This event was produced with the assistance of the Providence Clemente Veterans' Initiative (PCVI), a humanities course specifically for Veterans directed by Dr. Mark Santow. Many of the participants are current or graduated PCVI students.

Community Sing

Since 2019, Trinity Rep's Community Sing brought friends and family together through caroling. In 2019, singers caroled from the theater

to the Providence Tree Lighting Ceremony, while in 2020 folks recorded music for a virtual community sing. In 2021, we invited guests to carol in person or online. We can't wait to see how Community Sing will take shape in 2022.

Sunday Dinner

Sunday Dinner celebrates the experiences of the Black community through food from Black-owned businesses throughout New England. Our first dinner was held at the closing of *Radio Golf* in 2020, and we hope to revisit this event again soon.

America Too

America Too is a Trinity Rep initiative that seeks to reflect on the times in which we live and catalyze community conversation. The genesis of the project was Trinity Rep's participation in The Every 28 Hours Plays in 2015, a theatrical response to the events in Ferguson, Missouri. In addition to the community's relationship to policing and racism, America Too events have also looked at the impact of the repeal of DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), Providence's housing crisis, and health care. The culminating event of America Too each year is a staged reading of short or full-length plays that illuminate the topic, followed by a robust audience discussion. When in-person performances were not possible in 2020 and 2021, America Too became a five-part online series with a culminating in-person, outdoor event.

In 2022, America Too will focus on the many ways that service can manifest and the enormous impact it has on our community, whether through the military, education, or volunteerism. This free event is scheduled for May 31, 2022 with more information to follow in the coming months.

The perfect "Prologue" before the show

Trinity Rep provides more than just top-notch theater: We pride ourselves as a public square for education and community engagement. That's why it's so exciting to bring Prologues back for the first time since March 2020!

One hour before each show in the subscription season, a cast member leads a Prologue, or a roughly half-hour-long spoiler-free discussion about the production. It's designed to give the audience context regarding the play itself, the production process, and the artists that put it together here at Trinity Rep. At the end of the discussion, there will be a Q δ A session where the audience can ask the cast member questions they may have. Cast members might ask the audience questions too. What's more, the entire experience is included free with your ticket!

"Prologues are a great way to get a sneak peek into the playmaking process," Director of Community Engagement Michelle Cruz said. "We strive to build more of the public square sentiment as we take a deeper dive into what you are about to see."

Trinity Rep held Prologues since 2017 and continued to do so through the last live show at Trinity Rep before the theater closed early in the pandemic. *Tiny Beautiful Things* will be the first show to include Prologues since then, so we're all very excited to bring them back. Michelle emphasized how especially now, we should consider how Prologues tie into community and current events.

"One of my favorite parts of our Prologues is the community connection to our plays: What does this mean for this production? Why here? Why now?

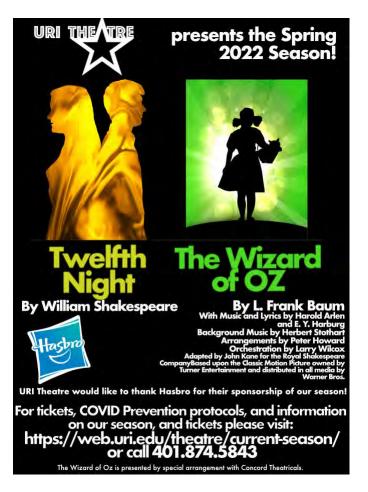
Why this particular story at this particular moment?" Michelle said. "For example, during the Prologues for *Radio Golf* in winter 2020, we were able to tie in the story of the Cape Verdean matriarch of the Alves family in the now-gentrified Fox Point neighborhood and find the parallels to the Hill District and [the character] Aunt Esther from the August Wilson American Century Cycle].

There is also a $Q \bar{\Delta} A$ session at the end of every Prologue, and Michelle urges audiences to get involved.

"We've had some pretty interesting conversations around themes of our plays, whether from *The Prince of Providence* and the legacy [Providence Mayor Buddy] Cianci left to our captial city or even what it means to the 'minority hire' as discussed in *Fade*. People really open up in this intimate setting and it sets an interesting tone before they really settle in their seats for each production."

If you ever wanted to learn about the playwright's life, how an actor prepared to play a character, or how Trinity Rep's team put together the production's technical aspects, stopping by a Prologue could be a great experience for you!

Please note that there is no late seating for Prologues. The 30-minute event begins one hour prior to the start of each performance and is included with the price of each ticket.





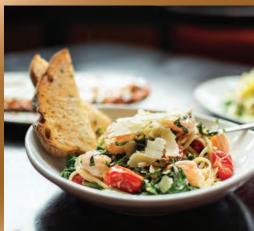
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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: REFERENCES TO SALVADOR DALÍ MAKE ME HOT, A CHRISTMAS CAROL, SHE KILLS MONSTERS, MARIE ANTOI-NETTE, & THE PRINCE OF PROVIDENCE. PHOTOS BY MARK TUREK



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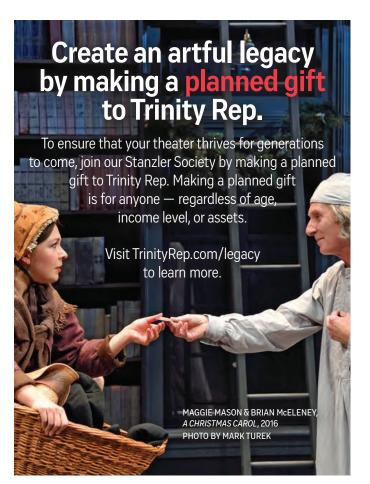
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Tiny Beautiful Things • January 13 – February 13, 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WED.	THURS.	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
JAN. 9	10	11	12	13 PWYW PR 7:30 PM	14 PR 7:30 PM	15 PR 7:30 PM
16 OC PR 2 PM	17	18 PR 7:30 PM	19 ON 7:30 PM	20 7:30 PM	21 7:30 PM	22 7:30 PM
23 2 PM 7:30 PM	24	25	26 2 PM 7:30 PM	27 7:30 PM	28 7:30 PM	29 7:30 PM
30 2 PM 7:30 PM	31	FEB. 1	2 SF 7:30 PM	3 7:30 PM	4 7:30 PM	5 2 PM 7:30 PM
6 2 PM	7	8	9 OC 2 PM OC 7:30 PM	10 0C 7:30 PM	11 0C 7:30 PM	12 OC 2 PM OC 7:30 PM
13 OC 2 PM 7:30 PM	14	15	16	17	18	19

Sueño • April 7 – May 8, 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WED.	THURS.	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
APRIL 3	4	5	6	7 PWYW PR 7:30 PM	8 PR 7:30 PM	9 PR 7:30 PM
10 OC PR 2 PM	11	12 PR 7:30 PM	13 ON 7:30 PM	14 7:30 PM	15 7:30 PM	16 7:30 PM
17 2 PM 7:30 PM	18	19	20 2 PM 7:30 PM	21 7:30 PM	22 7:30 PM	23 7:30 PM
24 2 PM 7:30 PM	25	26	27 SF 7:30 PM	28 7:30 PM	29 7:30 PM	30 2 PM 7:30 PM
MAY 1 2 PM 7:30 PM	2	3	4 OC 2 PM OC 7:30 PM	5 0C 7:30 PM	6 OC 7:30 PM	7 OC 2 PM OC 7:30 PM
8 0C 2 PM	9	10	11	12	13	14

Gem of the Ocean • February 24 - March 27, 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WED.	THURS.	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
FEB. 20	21	22	23	24 PWYW PR 7:30 PM	25 PR 7:30 PM	26 PR 7:30 PM
27 OC PR 2 PM	28	MARCH 1 PR 7:30 PM	2 ON 7:30 PM	3 7:30 PM	4 7:30 PM	5 7:30 PM
6 2 PM 7:30 PM	7	8	9 2 PM 7:30 PM	10 7:30 PM	11 7:30 PM	12 7:30 PM
13 2 PM 7:30 PM	14	15	16 SF 7:30 PM	17 7:30 PM	18 7:30 PM	19 2 PM 7:30 PM
20 2 PM 7:30 PM	21	22	23 OC 2 PM OC 7:30 PM	1	25 0C 7:30 PM	26 OC 2 PM OC 7:30 PM
27 OC 2 PM	28	29	30	31	APRIL 1	2

Fairview • May 19 – June 19, 2022

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WED.	THURS.	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
16	17	18	19 PWYW PR 7:30 PM	20 PR 7:30 PM	21 PR 7:30 PM
23	24 PR 7:30 PM	25 ON 7:30 PM	26 7:30 PM	27 7:30 PM	28 7:30 PM
30	31	JUNE 1 2PM 7:30 PM	2 7:30 PM	3 7:30 PM	4 7:30 PM
6	7	8 SF 7:30 PM	9 7:30 PM	10 7:30 PM	11 2 PM 7:30 PM
13	14	15 OC 2 PM OC 7:30 PM	16 0C 7:30 PM	17 0C 7:30 PM	18 OC 2 PM OC 7:30 PM
20	21	22	23	24	25
	16 23 30 6	16 17 23 24 PR 7:30 PM 30 31 6 7 13 14	16 17 18 23 24 25 PR 7:30 PM ON 7:30 PM 30 31 JUNE1 2PM 7:30 PM 6 7 8 SF 7:30 PM 13 14 15 OC 2 PM OC 7:30 PM	16 17 18 19 PWYW PR 7:30 PM 23 24 PR 7:30 PM 25 PR 7:30 PM 26 PR 7:30 PM 30 31 JUNE1 2PM 7:30 PM 2 PR 7:30 PM 6 7 8 PR 7:30 PM 9 PR 7:30 PM 13 14 15 OC 2 PM OC 7:30 PM 16 OC 7:30 PM	16 17 18 19 PWYW PR 7:30 PM 20 PR 7:30 PM 23 24 PR 7:30 PM 25 PR 7:30 PM 26 PR 7:30 PM 27 PR 7:30 PM 30 31 JUNE 1 2PM 7:30 PM 2 PR 7:30 PM 3 PR 7:30 PM 6 7 8 SF 7:30 PM 9 PR 7:30 PM 10 PR 7:30 PM 13 14 15 OC 2 PM OC 7:30 PM 16 OC 7:30 PM 17 OC 7:30 PM

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