

MARCH 2024



STEW

by Zora Howard

directed by Claudine Mboligikpelani Nako

March 15 - 31



encore

SEATTLE EROTIC ART FESTIVAL

SEATTLE CENTER
APRIL 26, 27, & 28, 2024

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TICKETS AT SEATTLEEROTIC.ORG

OUMOU SANGARE

Beloved singer and activist from Mali
known as the Songbird of Wassoulou



APR 6

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encore STAGES

March 2024

Volume 19, No. 4

In This Issue

Encore Media Group acknowledges that we are on the lands of the Duwamish People, and their other Coast Salish relations—past and present. We recognize that these lands are unceded and we support the Duwamish Tribe in their struggle to gain Federal Tribal Recognition. We honor with gratitude the land itself. This acknowledgement does not take the place of authentic relationships with Indigenous communities, which we seek to build. We hope that this step of honoring these lands, and the First People of Seattle who remain their stewards, will help us become better neighbors to the Duwamish Tribe and all the people who have called the Pacific Northwest home since time immemorial.

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Account Executive

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Bay Area Representative

JACQUI DZIAK, MICHELE MANZO,
DEIDRA VIBERG
Regional Sales Representatives

Encore Media Group

1631 15th Ave W, Suite 219
Seattle, WA 98119-2796
206.443.0445
info@encoremediagroup.com
encoremediagroup.com

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**Encore—Connecting Arts, Culture
and Community.**

Encore Stages is an Encore arts program that features stories about our local arts community alongside information about performances. Encore Stages is a publication of Encore Media Group. We also publish specialty publications, including the SIFF Program, Seattle Pride Magazine, and Seattle Art Dealers' SADA. Learn more at encorespotlight.com.

Encore Stages features the following organizations:





Pearl Lam in a Microsoft commercial.

The Commercial Side of Seattle Theatre

By TODD MATTHEWS

For many local theatre actors, television and internet commercials help pay the bills.

Late last year, actor Marianna de Fazio pulled into Federal Way's Wild Waves Theme & Water Park under cover of darkness at 4:30 a.m., steering her car down a narrow driveway and toward a parking lot. Stepping out of her vehicle, she walked past dormant and eerily quiet roller coasters and water slides before spotting people gathered under tents and around craft services tables.

This must be the place, she thought. »



Clearly, this wasn't a typical acting role. De Fazio and maybe a dozen other actors were up early to film a commercial for Washington Lottery's Kraken-themed scratch tickets. The shoot began at the park's area for bumper cars, which was cleared and converted into ad hoc bleachers resembling Climate Pledge Arena's hockey stands. Actors wore Kraken jerseys and reenacted a raucous crowd celebration. By sunrise, de Fazio and her fellow actors were strapped into the Timberhawk—Washington state's largest wood-framed roller coaster—and launched through the ride's steep dives and careening curves for a 30-second commercial that would appear on television and the internet.

"That was a unique gig, for sure," said de Fazio, whose agent asked if she was up for repeatedly riding a roller coaster. For this one-day

shoot, she rode the roller coaster 19 times. "I thought, 'I don't know.' I mean, I used to love roller coasters as a kid." Still, she accepted the job—one of several commercial roles she's performed for Delta Dental, Microsoft, and Toyota.

De Fazio is one of many local actors who scratch together an income by splitting their time between performing at ACT Theatre, Seattle Rep, Taproot Theatre Company, Village Theatre, and other theatres while also performing in television and internet commercials for PEMCO, Seattle Cancer Care Alliance, Taco Time, and other companies. Pay attention to the commercials the next time you watch a Seahawks or Mariners game—you might spot a local theatre actor.

"I think you have to have your irons in many fires to make a living as an actor in general, especially

in a smaller market," said Melissa Baldauf, Agency Director at Big Fish NW Talent Agency, which helps de Fazio and other local actors find commercial work. "Commercials pay pretty well; usually, it's a one-day shoot. Many actors in this market are theatre actors, so agents and casting directors are used to working with their busy schedules. With most shoots being one day, it's possible to squeeze in commercial shoots in between rehearsals and shows."

De Fazio recalled wrapping the Washington Lottery commercial by 3 p.m. and being home for dinner. Also, preparing for a commercial, which often requires little to no dialogue, involves far less preparation than preparing for a theatre role.

Seattle has a decent environment for commercial work—whether filming spots for television or the



Pearl Lam in a Taco Time commercial.

CREATIVITY & INSPIRATION

Be inspired by the natural world this spring at Bloedel Reserve. Visit and learn about programs that explore the connection between nature, inspiration, and creative innovation.



Bainbridge Island | Timed tickets required for admission
Open Tuesday-Sunday, rain or shine | bloedelreserve.org



Photo: Zoe Schlanger

sky hopinka

SUBTERRANEAN CEREMONIES

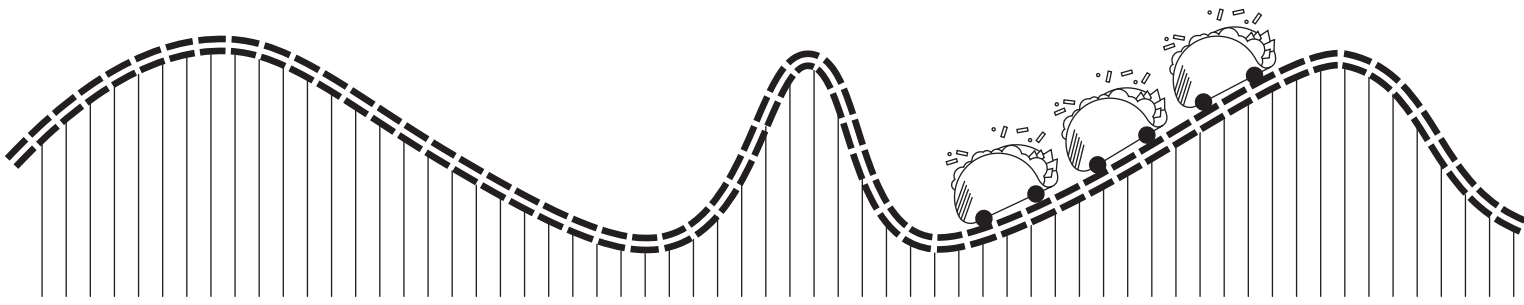
Through May 26, 2024

This exhibition is made possible through support from the Terra Foundation for American Art. Lead individual support provided by Rhoda Altom and Cory Carlson. Generous additional support provided by the Frye Foundation and Frye Members. Media sponsorship provided by Encore Media Group.

Sky Hopinka. *Mnemonics of Shape and Reason* (still, detail), 2021. Digital video (color, sound); 4:12 min. Courtesy of the artist

TERRA FOUNDATION FOR AMERICAN ART encore FRYE / Art Museum

“Now, we have so many more and higher paying opportunities with the growth of tech and new media to share commercials and digital content. We now get a fair amount of SAG-AFTRA national commercials.”



“The director told me that out of all the auditions they received, mine was the only one that made them laugh.”

internet or in-house employee training videos for Microsoft and Amazon. According to Baldauf, some synergy exists between theatres and commercials, with casting directors attending theatre productions and calling in talent for auditions after seeing them perform in various shows. “We’ve certainly found some great talent to partner with after seeing them in local productions,” added Baldauf.

The City of Seattle’s Office of Economic Development reports nearly 570 permits for commercial and corporate projects were issued between 2019 and 2022, accounting for an average of 58 percent of the permits issued for all types of filming during that period. Local actors and crew members filled an average of 4,450 jobs during that period.

Baldauf has seen the industry evolve. “Seattle is a huge non-union commercial and digital market these days,” she said. “When I moved to Seattle 20 years ago, the breakdowns were mostly for Microsoft corporate videos and some local and regional commercials. Now, we have so many more and higher paying opportunities with the growth of tech and new media to share commercials and digital content. We now get a fair amount of SAG-AFTRA national commercials.”

It’s also very competitive, with The Actor’s Group, TCM Models & Talent, TC Talent, Big Fish NW, and other agencies responding to casting calls. “We have to

treat every project as if at least two to five other agencies are submitting talent,” added Baldauf. “Depending on what clients are looking for, they could see hundreds apply for a single role.”

Evolving technology and the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly changed how actors land commercials—namely, the absence of in-person auditions. Baldauf estimates at least 90 percent of commercial casting is conducted via Zoom or a video an actor records on their own.

Local actor Bob Williams misses face-to-face auditions and credits one in particular with his landing a principal role in a Seattle Cancer Care Alliance commercial in 2016. During the 20-second spot, which aired on television and the internet, a voice actor stresses the importance of healthy choices as Williams is surrounded by co-workers in a breakroom and distracted by a box of donuts. Instead of eating an entire donut, he takes the voice actor’s advice and cuts it in half, then quarters, making a healthier choice than eating an entire donut.

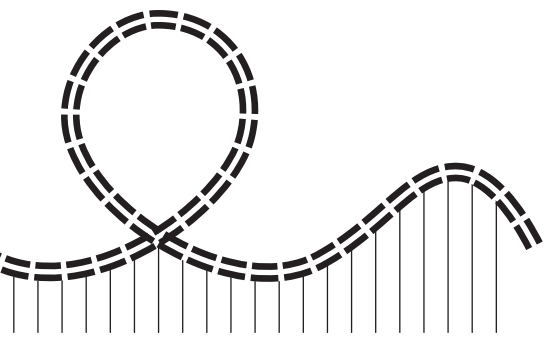
“I kind of won them over in the audition room,” he recalled. “I was just casually talking with one of the producers, the director, and a couple of other people when we ended up having a funny conversation about Cancun and Señor Frog’s.” When it came time to audition, Williams said his performance was natural because he had already been talking and laughing with

the crew. “I was a real person,” he added. “I think that came through in the commercial. If I got asked to audition for that commercial today, I’d be in my living room setting up, shooting, and directing my self-taped audition, which might not bring out that connection.”

Actor and comedian Pearl Lam represents a new generation of actors pursuing commercial work. Lam graduated from the University of Washington in 2020 with Bachelor of Arts degrees in Marketing and Cinema and Media Studies. A few years ago, she landed her first major commercial—a 30-second Taco Time spot you might have seen in heavy television and internet rotation. Relaxing in a heavily wooded area, kicking back in a foldable chair, and taking in a view of Deception Pass while eating a Taco Time burrito and Mexi-Fries, Lam is startled for a moment—wide-eyed and suspicious after hearing mysterious noises—before she shrugs and returns to her meal. Lam has no lines, but her comedic acting chops and facial expressions are hilarious—extensions of her YouTube channel, which features comedy sketches and boasts more than 33,000 subscribers, and her improv and comedy performances at Jet City Improv, ComedySportz Seattle, and 18th & Union.

“The director told me that out of all the auditions they received, mine was the only one that made them laugh,” Lam said. “That was a really nice compliment.”

Lam has since filmed commercials for Microsoft, Amazon, and SwissWater Decaf, all of which enlist some level of comedy and improvisation. “Humor is big in commercials because it’s easier to



sell products when there's comedy," Lam explained. "Most casting calls I get call for humor, which is one of my strong suits. Sometimes, they don't even write the lines. They just give you the topic and tell you to film yourself riffing on it. It varies from project to project, director to director." One of her favorite commercials was a Tik-Tok-style job for Amazon, where the directors gave her a bare-bones structure and asked her to improvise.

"I'm a full-time actor," Lam said. "I'm not working a day job at the moment. For people trying to make a living from acting, you have to factor in commercials. But a lot of the commercials are non-union and tend to pay less. It can be pretty hard."

Like many local actors, Lam isn't ready to leave the stage entirely for commercials. She wrote and performed the solo show *XXX Island* at 18th and Union in January and performed in the dramatic sci-fi adventure play *Once More, Just For You* at Seattle Public Theater in February. "Acting and creative work are rewarding," she added. "I don't fully get that from commercials."

Todd Matthews is a Seattle-based writer, editor, and journalist whose work has appeared in Earshot Jazz, HistoryLink, Real Change, Seattle magazine, and other publications in print and online over the past 25 years. A graduate of the University of Washington and the author of three non-fiction books, he has earned four awards from the Society of Professional Journalists.



STEW

by Zora Howard

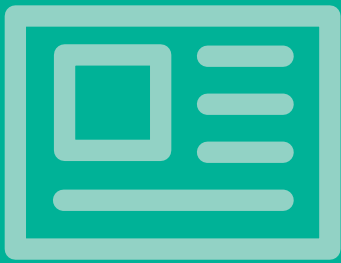
directed by Claudine Mboligikpelani Nako

March
15 - 31

"Intimate, funny,
and heartbreaking."
-The New Yorker

acttheatre.org





The Word Around Town

Do you keep up to date on all the news and reviews for Seattle performances? Match the quote from a review to the correct title or artist of an upcoming show.

A
Conrad Tao

B
Alvin Ailey
American Dance
Theater

C
Hélène Grimaud

D
Stew

E
*Something's
Afoot*

F
Sanctuary City

1
"A vivid glimpse into the personal costs of living in limbo as a Dreamer."—*DC Theater Arts*

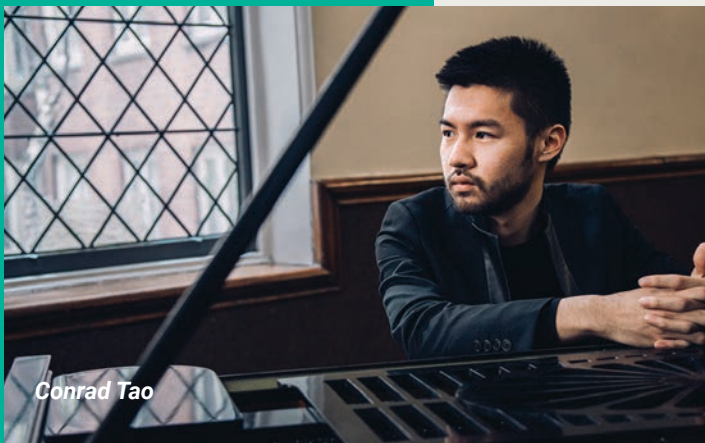
2
"...an interesting player, robust and full-blooded in his approach."—*The Guardian*

3
"...a collection of extraordinarily versatile movement artists who can dance pretty much anything."—*San Francisco Chronicle*

4
"It is an adorable piece that is seldom done, so you will have little to compare it to, but no need to—just enjoy and laugh."
—*Around the Town Chicago*

5
"Her phrasing is elastic, her accents and dynamics sometimes unorthodox, and she knows which changes are the right ones to make when she feels 'a sense of inevitability.'"
—*The Boston Globe*

6
"A captivating story that's intimate, funny, and heartbreaking in equal measure."
—*The New Yorker*



Conrad Tao

1) F—*Sanctuary City*; 2) A—Conrad Tao;
3) B—Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater;
4) E—*Something's Afoot*; 5) C—Hélène Grimaud;
6) D—Stew



presents

STEW

By Zora Howard

Directed by Claudine Mboligikpelani Nako
March 15 – 31, 2024

CAST

Kataka Corn* – Lil' Mama
Varinique "V" Davis – Nelly
Shermona Mitchell – Lillian
Shaunyce Omar* – Mama
Lexi Warden – Lil' Mama Understudy

CREATIVE TEAM

Claudine Mboligikpelani Nako[†] – Director
Parmida Ziaei – Scenic Design
Danielle Nieves – Costume Design
Connie Yun[†] – Lighting Design
Erin Bednarz – Sound Design
Jasmine Lomax – Intimacy Consultant
Quetzle Taborga – Casting Director
Thorn Michaels – Assistant Lighting Designer

STAGE MANAGEMENT

Anna Vraney* – Stage Manager
Isabella Marziello – Production Assistant

Theatre and Season Partners



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

World Premiere of STEW was produced by PAGE 73 PRODUCTIONS
(Michael Walkup, Artistic Director; Amanda Feldman, Managing Director; and Rebecca Yaggy, Director of Development)

Special Thanks:

Julie Renée Butler; Claude and Alex Howard; Michael Walkup; Kari Olmon; Page 73's 2019 Interstate 72 Cohort; Colette Robert; Portia; Kristin Dodson; Toni Lachelle Pollitt; Nikkole Salter; the entire creative team of STEW's NYC Premiere produced by Page 73 Productions; Justin Emeka; Collaborative Artists Bloc (CAB); Keiana Richárd; Deborah Stein; Marybeth Ward; and Dominique Morisseau.

For Tajai Rice.

And

For all of the women who raised me.

*Members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

[†]ACT Core Company member



CONTEMPORARY
THEATRE

STEW

By Zora Howard

Directed by Claudine
Mboligikpelani Nako

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PATRON INFORMATION

During the Show

The videotaping or making of electronic or other audio and/or visual recordings or streams in any medium, including the internet, is strictly prohibited, a violation of the author(s)'s rights and actionable under United States copyright law. For more information, please visit:

<https://concordtheatricals.com/resources/protecting-artists>

Audience members are cordially reminded to silence all electronic devices.

Please do not walk on the stage before, during, or after the show.

Food and Drink

Bar service and concessions are available in the lobby. Cash and cards accepted. No outside food or drink is allowed.

Group Sales

Groups of 10 or more can save on most productions. For more information, go to acttheatre.org/visit/ discounts.

Smoking Policy

Smoking is NOT allowed in any part of the building or within 25 feet of the entrance.

Firearms Policy

No firearms of any kind are allowed in any part of the building.

Lost and Found

Please contact the Box Office at boxoffice@acttheatre.org or call 206.292.7676. For Box Office hours visit acttheatre.org/visit/box-office

COVID Safety Policy

ACT's COVID-19 safety policies will continue to be reviewed and updated based on the advice of local health authorities, federal government guidance, and evolving circumstances.

Accessibility

ACT offers the Figaro MobiTxt® Closed Captioning System for audience members who are Deaf or hard of hearing. This system is offered at all performances in most of our theatres. ACT is also equipped with the Williams Sound® Audio Equipment, which amplifies stage sounds with the aid of headsets and also provides sound for our Audio Description performances. Both devices can be reserved at the time of ticket purchase and/or requested upon arrival to the theatre at the Accessibility table (please ask staff for assistance).

Large Print Programs are available and can be picked up at our Accessibility table.

Audio Description and American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation is offered at the following performances:

STEW, Saturday, March 30 at 2pm

The Lehman Trilogy, Saturday, May 11 at 2pm

ACT Contemporary Theatre Contact Information

700 Union Street, Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: 206.292.7676
acttheatre.org



A Letter from the Artistic Director JOHN LANGS

The Tucker women have been on our minds for a long time. We first fell for them three years ago when ACT's Curation Committee read the play together. "I never wanted to leave that kitchen" was a comment uttered by one of our committee members that echoes back to me whenever someone asks about this play.

"In the kitchen... our walls come down, our secrets are revealed, and vulnerabilities are laid bare."

Families and food are two of the defining influences that shape our lives, and bringing them together as both the backdrop and the substance of this story was one of Zora Howard's beautiful tactics in creating the powerful delivery system for the world she asks us to contemplate.

The sharpness of the writing captured us, but what drew us back to this script again and again was the clear reflection of humanity. The humor, the characters, the relationships, and the complexity and contradictions of family that are so recognizable. These all take place in the most universal of all locations.

In the kitchen, as we participate in the act of living our bonds are built, our walls come down, our secrets are revealed, and vulnerabilities are laid bare.

Looking into Mama's kitchen as shaped by Zora Howard we can see how one generation affects the next and, in our struggle to break the cycle of a previous generation, powerful echoes are heard and seen.

As a child I watched and listened as my grandmother shared all her wisdom with her three daughters in the kitchen while she prepared recipes handed down from the old country. Roll the dough and talk about the goings on in our town. Create the filling and gossip about the most recent church service. Boil the stock and share the fear that keeps you up at night. Evenly place the filling on the dough as you offer your compassion and experience. Cut the dough into squares and exchange your fellowship in loneliness. Twist the dough and crack the joke that dispels the preciousness and reminds you that humor is the best medicine. Twist the dough around the filling and offer guidance and grace. While the recipes are different, what is learned in the kitchen shapes our lives and echoes into generations.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Langs". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.



A Letter from Director CLAUDINE MBOLIGIKPELANI NAKO

echo (from Oxford Languages)

noun

1. a sound or series of sounds caused by the reflection of sound waves from a surface back to the listener.
2. a close parallel or repetition of an idea, feeling, style, or event.

verb

1. (of a sound) be repeated or reverberate after the original sound has stopped.
2. (of an object, movement, or event) be reminiscent of or have shared characteristics with.

***I know all the words. I just don't remember the order.
Time gets a little... tricky. Or, it gets trickier with time.
-Mama, STEW [Act I, Sc. 1]***

On STEW...

Phrases repeat:

Each time with subtle riffs upon the tune.

Notes bent or squeezed or changes in the rhythm

Put emphasis on words you may have missed.

Great histories echo through these women's lives
Of dreams and fears and secrets held too tight,
Of breaking points. Of broken points. Of love
And grief and sorrow for a fractured world.

She prays for peace and echoes just grow louder.

Now listen. Do you hear the phrase repeat?
What's new this time?

- Claudine Mboligikpelani Nako

ACT has renewed our commitment to our mission, values, culture, and the creation of New Works. We are publishing them here to invite conversation and hold ourselves accountable.

OUR MISSION

ACT is a contemporary theatre where artistic ambition and civic engagement unite.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

ACT Contemporary Theatre acknowledges that the land on which this theatre stands is part of the ancestral homelands of the **Muckleshoot, Suquamish, Duwamish, Snoqualmie, and Tulalip** peoples along the waterways of the **Salish Sea**. We honor the **29 federally recognized sovereign nations** within the state of Washington as well as **the many other unrecognized peoples in this area**.

As we gather and strive to share stories of our world with joy and clarity, **we honor with gratitude the original stewards and storytellers of these lands — past, present, and future**. We value the immense contributions, sacrifices and **resilience of Indigenous People** here, and fully **acknowledge** the profound multi-generational impact that colonization has had on Native people everywhere, including ongoing disparities, racism, and political and social **INVISIBILITY**. **To heal, we need truth and understanding that everyone actively participates in, together.**

This land acknowledgment is one small act in recognizing the importance of continuing to care for the land and acknowledge our important relationship with the original people of this place we call home who are still here. **We are all in relationship to each other.**

WE BELIEVE ACT STATEMENT OF VALUES AND COMMITMENTS

ACT believes in the power of theatre to change lives. For too long, the lives of our institution has focused on have been predominantly white and able-bodied. We acknowledge that ACT has worked inside biased systems that have continued to center only a small group of our global community. We want our art to be joyful and our work to have a spirit of adventure, so we commit to building thoughtful guardrails to bolster an environment where we can all be brave and buoyant together.

Developed by the Staff, Core Company and Trustees of ACT Contemporary Theatre, this statement of values and commitments was created to ensure the well-being of artists, collaborators, board members, and staff to engage in the spirit of an ever-improving process.

OUR VALUES

We are people-led and art-centered.

We believe in creating a safe space in which to do dangerous work.

We depend on each other for clear, honest, and responsible communication.

We believe that the building of excellent art is risky and joyful, and takes time.

We strive to ensure that artistic trust is baked into the way we work.



See a PDF of our "We Believe" document.

THE 2022 Tony Winner for Best Play! LEHMAN TRILOGY

by
Stefano
Massini

adapted by
Ben Power

directed by
John Langs

April 26 - May 12



CONTEMPORARY
THEATRE



acttheatre.org
206.292.7676



THE

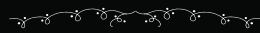


CONTEMPORARY
THEATRE

reENGAGEMENT PARTY



friday, april 19 @7pm



food, music, drinks, & more!

to purchase tickets, contact kristine.haroldson@acttheatre.org

THANK YOU TO OUR INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS!

As the leading voice for contemporary theatre in the Pacific Northwest, ACT is deeply grateful for the support of our donors. Thank you to these Institutional Partners and more who power audacious theatre and bold New Works!

Join ACT in creating bold, relevant theatre while elevating your business and offering your employees and clients exclusive benefits. Our corporate sponsor tiers begin at \$5,000 and provide unique marketing opportunities that place your organization center stage.

We can find a partnership opportunity that works for you. To learn more, please email Katie McKenna, Development Officer for Institutional Partnerships, at katie.mckenna@acttheatre.org.

We look forward to working with you!



Who's Who in STEW

CAST



Kataka Corn*
(they/them)
Lil' Mama

Kataka Corn is honored to make their ACT debut! Select

Credits: *Hedwig and The Angry Inch* (Yitzhak) at ArtsWest, *The Wiz* (Dorothy) and *Afterwords* (Jo u/s) at The 5th Avenue Theatre, and *Mamma Mia!* (Sophie u/s, Ensemble) at Village Theatre. Kataka is grateful for the support of their community and family.



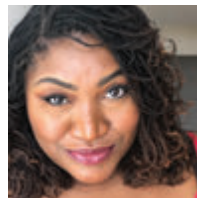
Varinique Davis
(she/her)
Nelly

Grandma 4eva. Love to the dolls <3 Enjoy! linktr.ee/VDavis515



Shermona Mitchell
(she/they)
Lillian

Shermona Mitchell is an actor, director, and adaptor, transplanted in Seattle by way of Kentucky. In addition to working artistically for over two decades in Seattle, Shermona has enjoyed a myriad of opportunities both nationally across Washington, Oregon, and Pennsylvania and internationally in Canada and Turkmenistan. Shermona's work has been seen on stages at The 5th Avenue Theatre, Sound Theatre Company, ACT, Intiman Theatre, Washington Ensemble Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, Book-It Repertory Theatre, Anything is Possible Theatre, and theater simple, among many others. Shermona also serves as Co-Artistic Director for Sound Theatre Company.



Shaunyce Omar*
Mama

Shaunyce Omar holds a B.A degree in Theatre from

Southern University and A&M College. Her regional credits include: Seattle Rep, The 5th Avenue Theatre, Intiman Theatre, True Colors Theatre, Village Theatre, The Ensemble Theatre Houston, Alley Theatre, and TUTS. National Tour: *Menopause the Musical*. TV/ Film credits include *The Librarians*, *Last Seen In Idaho*, and *Portal Runner*. Her voice can also be heard as the character Madison Grant in the *State of Decay: Lifeline* video game. Shaunyce is the recipient of two Gregory, Footlight, Broadway World, and The 5th Avenue Theatre Subscriber's Choice awards. In addition to stage and screen work, Omar is a teaching artist and has taught in both public and private schools, arts organizations, and overseas as a Master Sensei of Gospel Music in Japan. "Lead With Love"



Lexi Warden
(she/her)
Lil' Mama Understudy

Lexi Warden is a theatre artist, educator, and

advocate based in Seattle. She is incredibly grateful to make her ACT debut amongst such a fantastic group of artists. Recent credits include Laurel in *The Flight Before Xmas* (Macha Theatre Works), Roxy in *ROE* (Whidbey Island Center for the Arts), choreographer for *Comedy of Errors* at Seattle Shakespeare Company, associate choreographer/Swing for *Miss You Like Hell* at Strawberry Theatre Workshop, and assistant choreographer for *Public Works: The Tempest* at Seattle Rep.

*Member of AEA

† Member of ACT Core Company

CREATIVE



Zora Howard
Playwright

Zora Howard is a Harlem-bred writer and performer. Plays include *STEW*

(2021 Pulitzer Prize Finalist; Page 73 Productions); *THE MASTER'S TOOLS* (Williamstown Theatre Festival); *BUST* (2022 Susan Smith Blackburn Prize Finalist; 2022 L. Arnold Weissberger New Play Award Finalist); *HANG TIME* (2022 Creative Capital Award Finalist); and *GOOD FAITH*. Her work has been developed at Ojai Playwrights Conference, SPACE at Ryder Farm, The Lark, Primary Stages, and Cape Cod Theatre Project, among others. In 2020, her film *Premature* (2020 Film Independent John Cassavetes Award nominee), which she co-wrote with director Rashaad Ernesto Green, opened in theaters following its world premiere at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival. Zora is the inaugural Judith Champion Fellow at MTC, a 2022 Lilly Award and Helen Merrill Award recipient and is currently under commission from Seattle Rep, MTC, and Wessex Grove.

Erin Bednarz
Sound Design

Erin Bednarz works in sound, music, production, and performance. Awards: LA Drama Critics Circle, Gregory (Seattle, WA), Broadway World (Regional). Press mentions: Wall Street Journal, New York Times. Off-Broadway: *MAC BETH* (Red Bull, Hunter Theater Project, Seattle Rep), *The Convent* (Rattlestick). Regional: Sara Porkalob's *The Dragon Cycle* (Pittsburgh Public, American Rep, Marin Theatre Company, Center Rep, Diversionsary, Intiman); *A Few Good Men* (Pittsburgh Public); *Teenage Dick*. Public Works' *The Tempest*, *Lydia and the Troll* (Seattle Rep); *The Year of Magical Thinking*, *The Thin Place* (ACT); *Choir Boy* (ACT/5th Avenue); *Wonder Boy*, *Spring Awakening* (5th Avenue); *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (Seattle Children's); *Wild Horses*, *Two Mile Hollow* (Intiman). Teaching: Pomona College, Cal Poly, NYU, Atlantic Acting

School, Cornish College of the Arts, University of Washington. @play__pranks

Jasmine Lomax

Intimacy Consultant

Jasmine Lomax is a Cornish College of the Arts Original Works graduate working tirelessly to help shape the Seattle Theater Community into a healthy, creative, and collaborative environment. Some of their recent credits include *Trouble in Mind* (director) with the Burien Actors Theatre, *The Niceties* (associate director/ fight choreographer) with Intiman Theatre, *Tiara's Hat Parade* (director) with Book-It Repertory Theatre, *Pass Over* (intimacy director/ co-fight choreographer) with The Spot Sun Valley, *This Bitter Earth* (intimacy director) with Seattle Public Theater, and *The Bonesetter's Daughter* (assistant director) with Book-It Repertory Theatre. For fun, follow them on Instagram (@jasmineissublime) for more information on upcoming projects and to take a peek at their work with Delta Dental of Washington as the Tooth Fairy!

Isabella Marziello

(she/her/ella)

Production Assistant

Isabella Marziello is thrilled to be joining ACT for *STEW!* Isabella's credits include; Village Theatre: *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, *Hello Dolly!*, *How to Break*, ArtsWest: *Q Brothers Christmas Carol*, Washington Ensemble Theatre: *Dream Hou\$e*, Seattle Children's Theatre: *The Boy Who Kissed the Sky*, *In the Forest Grim*, Seattle Repertory Theatre: *Emerald City Development Workshop*, *Bruce*, and *Ghosts*. Isabella holds a B.A. in Theatre Arts from University of Puget Sound. In her free time, she enjoys reading and hiking through the forest. She sends her thanks to her friends and wonderful fiancé for their constant love and support.

Thorn Michaels

Assistant Lighting Designer

Thorn Michaels has designed and assisted for The 5th Avenue Theatre, Seattle Opera, Village Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, ACT,

Santa Fe Playhouse, Kentucky Opera, Lincoln Center, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, San Francisco Opera, New York City Ballet, and others. She was the 2016 Gilbert Hemsley intern and holds an M.F.A. in lighting design from the University of Washington. For more about her work, please visit thornmichaels.com.

Claudine Mboligikpelani

Nako†

Director

Claudine Mboligikpelani Nako is a multifaceted artist whose work includes directing, teaching, performing, and collaborating with innovators who spark her curiosity. Nako is the writer and composer of the musical *Photosynthesis* (photosynthesismusical.com) which was developed at the 2023 JMF Writers Grove at Goodspeed Musicals and featured in Goodspeed's 2024 Festival of New Musicals. Associate directing credits: *Sweat* (ACT); *Songs for a New World*, *Mamma Mia!* (Village). Performance credits: *The Crucible*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Dracula*, *Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play* (ACT); *As You Like It*, *A Raisin in the Sun* (Seattle Rep); *Little Bee* (Book-It); *Red Riding Hood*, *Snow White* (SCT); *My Heart is the Drum*, *Big River* (Village); and *A Bright Room Called Day* (Williams Project). Film/TV: *Raising Dion*, *Outside In*, *Everything Sucks!* (Netflix); *Three Busy Debras* (HBO Max); *Grimm* (NBC). Nako is a proud member of AEA & SAG-AFTRA.

Danielle Nieves (she/her)

Costume Designer

Danielle Nieves is thrilled to be back with the wonderful artists at ACT. Her work has been seen previously at ACT (*A Case for the Existence of God*, *Every Brilliant Thing*), The 5th Avenue Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Village Theatre, The Old Globe, Dallas Theater Center, South Coast Repertory, Goodman Theatre, St. Louis Shakespeare Festival, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, and Cleveland Playhouse. Off-Broadway credits: *Pity in History*, *No End of Blame*, *Gertrude The Cry*, and *Lovesong of the Electric Bear* for PTP/NYC at the Atlantic Stage 2. Danielle

holds an M.F.A. in Costume Design from the University of California Irvine and a curatorial certification for Japanese and Western costumes from the Kyoto Costume Institute. daniellenieves.com

Quetzie Taborga (they/them)

Casting Director

Quetzie Taborga is a Neurodivergent, Queer, Fat Latine artist and healer with a cute lil patchy beard. They are a storyteller, activist, and educator who revels in the power and impact of works written for and by the historically oppressed. They have worked locally with Seattle Opera, The 5th Avenue Theatre, Village Theatre, Seattle Rep, and others, as well as regional theatres across the country. They are currently in the process of obtaining their master's degree in Couple and Family Therapy, specializing in Drama Therapy. "We must be impatient for change. Let us remember that our voice is a precious gift and we must use it." - Claudia Flores

Anna Vraney* (she/her)

Stage Manager

Anna Vraney is beyond thrilled to be back at ACT for this production. Some previous credits include *Choir Boy* (ACT), *Hello Dolly!* (Village Theatre), *Goodnight Moon* (Seattle Children's Theatre), *Into the Woods* (The 5th Avenue Theatre), *Shout, Sister, Shout!*, *The Children* (Seattle Repertory Theatre), and *Always... Patsy Cline* (Taproot).

Connie Yun† (she/her)

Lighting Designer

Connie Yun is pleased to return to ACT where she last designed *A Case for the Existence of God*. Recent Seattle area designs include *Samson and Delilah* for Seattle Opera and the world premiere of *The Boy Who Kissed the Sky* for Seattle Children's Theatre. Other recent designs include *L'Allegro, il Penseroso, ed il Moderato* for Curtis Opera Theatre, *The Marriage of Figaro* at Portland Opera and New Orleans Opera, *The Royal Shepherd* at Orpheus PDX, and *La Cenerentola* at Kentucky Opera. She has also designed

Who's Who in STEW

* Member of AEA

† Member of ACT Core Company

for Seattle Rep, The 5th Avenue Theatre, Tacoma Opera, Hawaii Opera Theatre, Palm Beach Opera, and Madison Opera. Upcoming engagements include *Madame Butterfly* for Opera Philadelphia, *Maria de Buenos Aires* for Florentine Opera, and *Salome* for Des Moines Metro Opera. Connie is a Core Company member for ACT, member of United Scenic Artists Local USA-829, and mentor with the ETC Fred Foster Student Mentorship Program. connieyun.com

been a scenic and production designer with many Seattle theaters including ACT, Village Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, ArtsWest, Taproot Theatre, and Seattle Public Theater, among others. When not designing, Parmida performs, choreographs and teaches as a movement artist. Parmida has been the recipient of multiple residencies including the Summer of 2023 Body, Space, Time Residency at UW Department of Dance and 2022 Northwest Creator Residency at Village Theatre. parmidaziaei.com

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Parmida Ziaei (she/her)

Scenic Designer

Parmida Ziaei is an Iranian multidisciplinary artist and designer based in Seattle and the co-founder of Seda Iranian Theatre Ensemble. Parmida has

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Shaunyce Omar as Mama in STEW; image by Howard Shack

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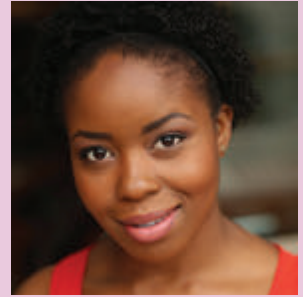
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Boiling Down *STEW*

An Interview
with Claudine
Mboligikpelani Nako



You've been on the ACT stage in quite a few roles. How does it feel to make your directorial debut at ACT?

I had a great time working with John Langs as the Associate Director of ACT's 2022 production of *Sweat*, so the offer to helm my own production was an incredibly exciting opportunity that I couldn't pass up. I've learned so much from the challenging variety of roles I've been able to play at ACT both on stage and off in my work as a Core Company member. I am delighted to add "Director" to that list of roles, and I'm deeply moved that I get to make my debut with this beautiful play.



Varinique "V" Davis, Shaunyce Omar, Kataka Corn, and Shermona Mitchell in *STEW*.

Could you tell us about how you balance life as a writer, director, and actor? What attracts you to each role?

As soon as I figure that out, I'll let you know! Balance is elusive for many folks who make their living as artists. We tend to cycle back and forth between seasons of abundance and dry spells, and the patchwork nature of our employment can make stability a real challenge. I love the specificity, creativity, and collaboration that is required to do this work well. I'm attracted to projects that pique my curiosity, and I especially love taking on roles where I see an opportunity to subvert expectations.

How does *STEW* speak to you?

STEW speaks to the complex humanity of Black womanhood. It doesn't limit or simplify our experience. These women are intelligent, passionate, joyful, curious, afraid, hopeful, vulnerable, courageous, loving, and yes angry--because why the hell shouldn't they be? Zora Howard gives us this rich language with many, many layers of meaning. Each time I read this play I discover another moment in which I understand something new about these characters that I am convinced I already know so well, and I'm humbled to have them remind me that there is always more to learn.

You put the *STEW* cast together with the casting director. What is so exciting about this cast?

Each person in this cast is a smart artist whose individual and collaborative approach to storytelling excites me. I was looking for actors who were very willing to play. As you'll see in this production, things aren't quite what they seem in the world I've envisioned for this piece, so I really needed people who understood the assignment and these actors absolutely do.

What's next for you?

Putting my writer's hat back on! My new musical *Photosynthesis* was featured in Goodspeed's 2024 Festival of New Musicals in January. My next goal is to record a demo album and mount a workshop production. The story, set in Seattle's Central District, centers on a Black woman searching for light in dark times. For news and updates about this project, please sign up for the mailing list at photosynthesismusical.com!

Scenes from the STEW Meet & Greet

Photos by McKenna Deen





Pagliacci at Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

Seattle Opera Announces 2024/25 Season

Seattle Opera welcomes you to a transformative experience in the upcoming 2024/25 season. Prepare to be captivated by a rich tapestry of emotions as the mainstage showcases five renowned operas that delve into the realms of heartbreak, resilience, romance, and grand drama. The carefully curated selection promises to transport audiences to new heights of artistic expression and storytelling. From the powerful arias to the intricate staging, every detail is crafted to create a mesmerizing and unforgettable experience. »

In addition to the mainstage productions, the 2024/25 season at Seattle Opera offers a myriad of extra performances and educational classes. These events provide patrons with the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the operatic art form, interact with artists, and engage in the vibrant cultural community that surrounds the opera. Whether you are a seasoned opera enthusiast or a newcomer, there is something for everyone to explore and enjoy beyond the traditional performances.

To enhance the overall experience for patrons, Seattle Opera introduces innovative subscription choices for the upcoming season. These choices are designed to make it more convenient than ever for audiences to immerse themselves in a world of music, drama, and compelling narratives. Subscribers are not only guaranteed access to all mainstage productions but also enjoy exclusive perks, including seamless ticket exchanges, flexible cancellations, a one-time seating upgrade, and additional ticket discounts. This commitment to flexibility ensures that patrons can fully embrace the magic of opera without any concerns.

The Seattle Opera's dedication to creating a welcoming and accessible environment is reflected in the comprehensive benefits offered to subscribers. The 2024/25 season promises to be a celebration of artistic excellence, community engagement, and the timeless beauty of opera. As Seattle Opera invites you to discover a new light within its hallowed halls, prepare for a season filled with unforgettable moments, shared emotions, and the transformative power of live performance.



Jubilee
October 12–25, 2024

Jubilee at Arena Stage.

Set soon after Emancipation and the end of the Civil War, follow the historic Fisk Jubilee Singers on their first tours, raising funds for the fledgling Fisk University and spreading their music around the world. This world premiere opera by renowned writer and director Tazewell Thompson (*Blue '22*) features an ensemble of 13 singers performing over 40 spirituals, including “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,” “Wade in the Water,” and many more.



J'Nai Bridges and Russell Thomas star in *Les Troyens in Concert*.

Pagliacci
August 3–17, 2024

When a *commedia dell'arte* troupe arrives in a small Italian village, they are greeted by cheers of welcome. Comedy turns to tragedy when jealousy rages, lovers are revealed, and the curtain comes down on murder. Set in 1930s Italy, our “visually arresting” (*The Independent*) production features artful sets and traditional *commedia dell'arte* costumes.

Les Troyens in Concert
January 17 & 19, 2025

Following last season's celebrated *Samson and Delilah in Concert*, join us for an abridged version of Hector Berlioz's epic in a concert version featuring full orchestra and chorus. Seattle Opera is excited to welcome back mezzo-soprano and Tacoma native J'Nai Bridges (*Samson and Delilah in Concert '23*) as Dido, the Queen of Carthage, and Russell Thomas (*Nabucco '15*), “a tenor of gorgeously burnished power” (*The New York Times*), as Aeneas.



The Magic Flute at the Komische Oper Berlin.

The Magic Flute

February 22–March 9, 2025

Featuring seamless interaction between onstage performers and eye-popping hand-drawn animated visuals, experience a striking new-to-Seattle production of a beloved audience favorite. Inspired by silent movies, Barrie Kosky's colorful and energetic production comes to Seattle after receiving standing ovations at opera houses around the world.

Tosca

May 3–17, 2025

Giacomo Puccini's melodrama returns to the McCaw Hall stage in a fan favorite classic production! "Vocally perfect" (*Broadway World*) soprano Vanessa Goikoetxea and "gleaming soprano" (*Opera Warhorses*) Lianna Haroutounian return to McCaw Hall as the fiery prima donna Floria Tosca.



Tosca at Seattle Opera.

Learn more about Seattle Opera's 2024/25 season and subscription packages at seattleopera.org.

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Village Theatre will present *Becoming Dr. Ruth* now through March 17.

X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X

Seattle Opera
NOW THROUGH MARCH 9

Luchadora!

Seattle Children's Theatre
NOW THROUGH MARCH 17

Becoming Dr. Ruth

Village Theatre—Everett
NOW THROUGH MARCH 17

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith: Memory Map

Seattle Art Museum
NOW THROUGH MAY 12

Anida Yoeu Ali: Hybrid Skin, Mythical Presence

Seattle Asian Art Museum
NOW THROUGH JULY 7

Dance BFA Concert

Cornish College of the Arts
MARCH 1-2

Conrad Tao's Playlist

Seattle Symphony
MARCH 1-2

Batsheva Dance Company

Seattle Theatre Group
MARCH 2

Something's Afoot

The 5th Avenue Theatre
MARCH 1-24

Sanctuary City

Seattle Rep
MARCH 1-31

New Works Festival Part 1: 5x5

Cornish College of the Arts
MARCH 6-9

Bach St. John Passion

Seattle Symphony
MARCH 7-9

Vanity Fair

UW School of Drama
MARCH 7-16

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Seattle Symphony
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New Baroque Orchestra Concert

Early Music Seattle
MARCH 10

The Fantasticks

Village Theatre—Issaquah
MARCH 13-APRIL 14

A Conversation with Eric Kim

Seattle Arts & Lectures
MARCH 14

Sibelius & Nielsen

Seattle Symphony
MARCH 14-16

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MARCH 14-16

Glenn Miller Orchestra

Seattle Symphony
MARCH 15

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Seattle Theatre Group
MARCH 15-17

One Thousand Pieces

Pacific Northwest Ballet
MARCH 15-24

Stew

ACT Theatre
MARCH 15-31

French Connection

Kirkland Civic Orchestra
MARCH 16

Murmurations: Local Voices Taking Flight

Seattle Arts & Lectures
MARCH 19

The Bed Trick

Seattle Shakespeare Company
MARCH 20-APRIL 7

How to Write a New Book for the Bible

Taproot Theatre Company
MARCH 20-APRIL 20

Menopause The Musical 2: Cruising Through "The Change"

Tacoma Arts Live
MARCH 21

Annie Saunders & Becca Wolff

On the Boards
MARCH 21-23

Simon Trpčeski Plays Tchaikovsky

Seattle Symphony
MARCH 21-24

The Moors

Seattle Public Theater
MARCH 22-APRIL 14

Harold and the Purple Crayon

Pacific Northwest Ballet
MARCH 23-30

Caetano Veloso

Seattle Theatre Group
MARCH 27

Calder Quartet with Antoine Hunter's Urban Jazz Dance Company

Meany Center for the Performing Arts
MARCH 28

Matthew Desmond

Seattle Arts & Lectures
MARCH 28

Spring Music Student Showcase

Cornish College of the Arts
MARCH 29

Rachell Ellen Wong & David Belkovski: Europe's Grand Tour

Early Music Seattle
MARCH 30

"I think I'm getting it!"

Sir John Guillod, 90 years old, rehearsing his third production of KING LEAR



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—Antonio Banderas

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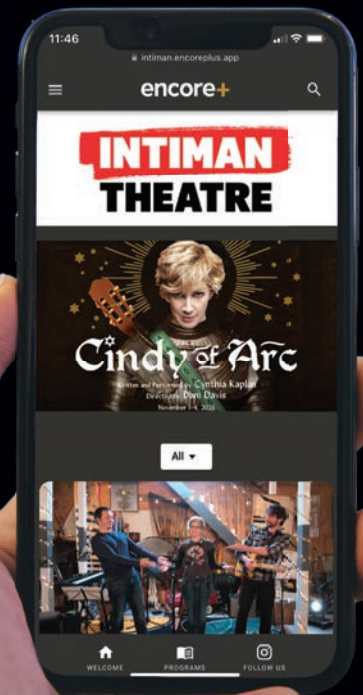
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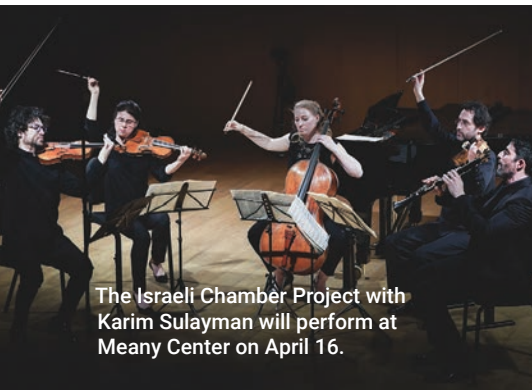
Greater Seattle Area

- A Contemporary Theatre
- The 5th Avenue Theatre
- Intiman Theatre
- Meany Center for the Performing Arts
- Seattle Children's Theatre
- Seattle Opera
- Seattle Rep
- Seattle Theatre Group
- Seattle Shakespeare Company
- Taproot Theatre Company
- Village Theatre

San Francisco Bay Area

- American Conservatory Theater
- Berkeley Rep
- Cal Shakes
- San Francisco Opera
- San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus
- San Francisco Symphony





The Israeli Chamber Project with Karim Sulayman will perform at Meany Center on April 16.

Accessible Performances

Here are a few of the accessible performances coming up in Seattle.

Luchadora!

Seattle Children's Theatre
MARCH 10
SENSORY SENSITIVE

Becoming Dr. Ruth

Village Theatre—Everett
MARCH 16
CAPTIONED

Something's Afoot

The 5th Avenue Theatre
MARCH 24
OPEN CAPTIONED

Sanctuary City

Seattle Rep
MARCH 30
ASL INTERPRETED AND
AUDIO DESCRIBED

Stew

ACT Theatre
MARCH 30
ASL INTERPRETED

Beetlejuice

Broadway at The Paramount
APRIL 7
ASL INTERPRETED AND
AUDIO DESCRIBED



Beetlejuice

Broadway at The Paramount
APRIL 2-7

Manuel Cinema: "Frankenstein"

Seattle Theatre Group
APRIL 3

Copland Appalachian Spring

Seattle Symphony
APRIL 4-6

English

ArtsWest and Seda Iranian Theatre
Ensemble
APRIL 4-28

The Art of Leaving

Seattle Symphony
APRIL 5

Whose Live Anyway?

Seattle Theatre Group
APRIL 6

Carnival of the Animals

Meany Center for the Performing Arts
APRIL 6

Kronos Quartet

Seattle Theatre Group
APRIL 11

Mahler Symphony No. 3

Seattle Symphony
APRIL 11-14

The Brass: Movie Magic

Seattle Symphony
APRIL 12-13

Fat Ham

Seattle Rep
APRIL 12-MAY 12

Israeli Chamber Project with Karim Sulayman

Meany Center for the Performing Arts
APRIL 16

Yefim Bronfman

Meany Center for the Performing Arts
APRIL 18

Dvorák Symphony No. 6

Seattle Symphony
APRIL 18-20

Cherdonna & The Bearded Ladies

On the Boards
APRIL 18-27

Through Her Window

Seattle Symphony
APRIL 19

Rhiannon Giddens

Meany Center for the Performing Arts
APRIL 19

Randal Bays & Ceóltoirí Cascadia: Irish Baroque II

Early Music Seattle
APRIL 20

dani tirrell and The Congregation

Seattle Theatre Group
APRIL 20-21

Disney's Aladdin

Broadway at The Paramount
APRIL 24-28

Romeo and Juliet

Seattle Shakespeare Company
APRIL 24-MAY 19

Antarctic Symphony

Seattle Symphony
APRIL 25-28

A Tale of Peter Rabbit

Seattle Children's Theatre
APRIL 25-MAY 12

Zakir Hussain Trio

Seattle Theatre Group
APRIL 26

The Lehman Trilogy

ACT Theatre
APRIL 26-MAY 12

The Fantasticks

Village Theatre—Everett
APRIL 27-MAY 19

-  Dance
  Classical
  Theatre
  Visual Art
 Music
  Film/Talks/Readings
  Comedy

Intermission Brain Transmission

Why stare at your phone for the hundredth time today when you could treat your brain to this scintillating trivia quiz? Better yet, send us your answer to the bonus question for a chance to win tickets to an upcoming performance.

1 Village Theatre Issaquah will stage *The Fantasticks* from March 13 to April 14. The original off-Broadway production of the show is the longest-running musical in the world. How many years did the original production run for?

- A 42 years
- B 43 years
- C 44 years
- D 45 years

2 Seattle Symphony will present the Glenn Miller Orchestra on March 15. The jazz big band was formed as a re-creation of the group Glenn Miller and His Orchestra after the loss of leader Glenn Miller. Glenn Miller and His Orchestra recorded the first song to ever receive a gold record. For what song was this certification rewarded?

- A "In the Mood"
- B "Moonlight Serenade"
- C "Chattanooga Choo Choo"
- D "Tuxedo Junction"

3 Seattle Shakespeare Company will present the world premiere of *The Bed Trick* written by Keiko Green. Green has also recently written for a new show on Hulu based off which Charles Yu book?

- A *How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe*
- B *Interior Chinatown*
- C *Third Class Superhero*
- D *Sorry Please Thank You*

4 *Disney's Aladdin* will come to Broadway at The Paramount from April 24 to 28. The stage interpretation of the Disney film premiered at a Seattle theatre in 2011 before moving to Broadway in 2014. At which theatre did the acclaimed musical have its debut at?

- A The 5th Avenue Theatre
- B Village Theatre
- C Taproot Theatre Company
- D Seattle Rep

BONUS

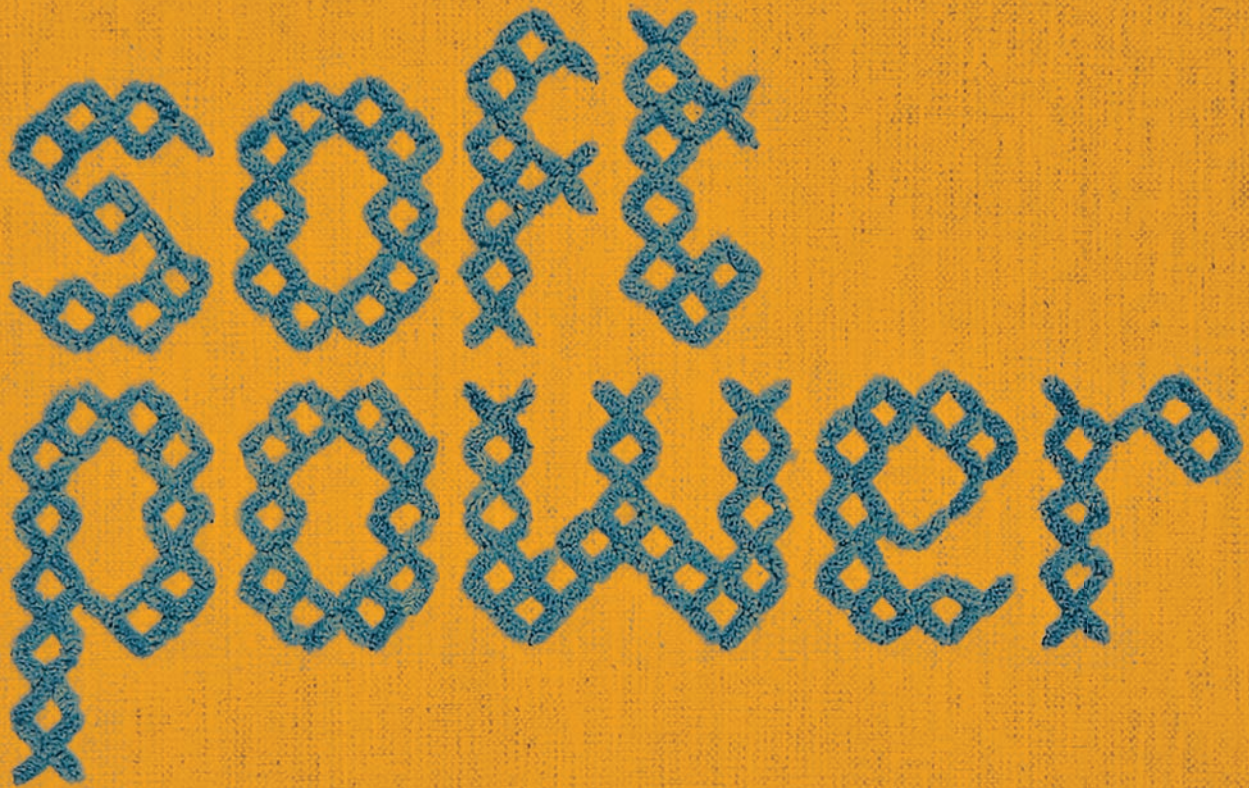
What's your favorite live performance that you've seen recently?

Post your answer on social media and tag @encorespotlight with a picture of your Encore program for a chance to win tickets to an upcoming performance!

1. A—42 years
2. C—"Chattanooga Choo Choo"
3. B—*Interior Chinatown*
4. A—The 5th Avenue Theatre

Alexis Lee Ortiz-Duarte
Allyce Wood
Colleen RJC Bratton
Erika Harada
Gail Tremblay
Joey Veltkamp
Juventino Aranda
Kellz Moylan
Lily Martina Lee
Marc Dombrosky

Marie Watt
Marita Dingus
Monyee Chau
Nina Vichayapai
Paul Komada
Priscilla Dobler-Dzul
Ric'kisha Taylor
Roquin-Jon Quichocho Siongco
Shannon Eakins
Tuan Nguyen



OCT 14,
2023-
SEP 01,
2024

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