

SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Theatre Arts & Dance presents

SONNETS FOR AN OLD CENTURY

By José Rivera / Directed by Paul Draper

Jody Banks / Director of Photography and Video Editor

Marie Ramirez Downing / Voice Coaching

**Thursday, April 8, 2021-
Sunday, April 11, 2021**

Streamed

www.showtix4u.com/event-details/49464

Artistic & Production

Director Paul Draper
Stage Manager John Ruzicka
Assistant Stage Manager Noah Hewitt
Production Manager Vikki Del Rosario
Technical Director Theo Bridant
Director of Photography/Video Editor Jody Banks
Costume Coordinator Martha J Clarke
Vocal Coach Marie Ramirez Downing
Marketing Director Jana Duncan

Cast

Lindsey Abbott *It Was a Brain Tumor! Jesus Christ*
Euan Ashley *On the Beach*
Amara Bailey *Mixed Boobs*
Maya Pratt-Bauman *To be a Ballerina*
Alessandro Bravo *Waiting for my Novia*
Danielle Cain *Xs*
Régine Danaé *The Human World Behind Doors*
Alissa Dernetz *I Want to Apologize*
Allison Dominguez *Unlucky Ghosts of the Freeway*
Marie Ramirez Downing *Sixteen Little Motherfuckers*
Baruch Porras Hernandez *Evil But Funny*
Tiffani Lopez *I Learned a Few Things*
James Marchbanks *Honor Thy Mother and Thy Father*
Rafael Manzo *Boy in a Cage*
Dorothy Rose-Miller *Three Boys*
***Laura Odeh** *Lava in the Sky*
Noelle Dominique Rodriguez *Glasses*
Miranda Tilley *Laughter Clear as Symphonies*
Phi Tran *We Would Have Sex*
Silas Vaughn *Three Days in the City*
Kim Hester Williams *Make Your Statement;
First Time*
Avery Wilson *I Caused the Northridge Earthquake*

* The Actor appears through the courtesy of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

Sonnets

PROGRAM A

Make Your Statement

We Would Have Sex

I Learned a Few Things

On the Beach

Waiting for my Novia

I Want to Apologize

Xs

Sixteen Little Motherfuckers

Three Boys

Unlucky Ghosts of the Freeway

Honor Thy Mother and Thy Father

Evil But Funny

Laughter Clear as Symphonies

First Time

PROGRAM B

Make Your Statement

We Would Have Sex

Glasses

I Caused the Northridge Earthquake

It Was a Brain Tumor! Jesus Christ

Three Days in the City

The Human World Behind Doors

Lava in the Sky

Mixed Bloods

To be a Ballerina

Boy in a Cage

Honor Thy Mother and Thy Father

Laughter Clear as Symphonies

First Time

Director's Notes

by Paul Draper

Is there a single story from your life that you would want to leave behind? Could you put your tale into words for others to hear? This is the question that acclaimed playwright José Rivera asks of some 30 characters in his late-90's play *Sonnets for an Old Century*. Two additions written in the last year address our collective COVID experience and the unconscionable caging of children at the Mexican/US border are in our production. Presented in Programs A and B, each comprised of 14 sonnets, audiences can experience 22 of them by viewing both programs.

These sonnets are free flowing, poetic, solo pieces that are obliquely interwoven and vaguely connected. They are decidedly not written in classical sonnet form. They are by turns autobiographical or culled from stories told to the writer by his friends and even his children. They seem to encapsulate a life in America in 1999 and continue to resonate in 2021 in our time of COVID seclusion, speaking as it does of aloneness and loneliness.

Rivera achieves a rare depth through his *Sonnets* that many plays cannot. Plays by their nature concentrate on groups of people in relationship to each other. In *Sonnets* Rivera explores a wide range of personalities, experiences, and backgrounds, each speaking from some unnamed future/past in deeply personal and complex ways.

Although each sonnet emanates from an individual, deeply personal voice, taken together they present a crescendo of consciousness and conscience as characters "make their statements" while passing from this life to another, isolated in a space somewhere between earth and oblivion.

Rivera does not name this space, saying only that "it could be a tunnel, a cave, a warehouse, an airplane hangar, catacombs, or a seedy office building—but it's a large space." While some characters are accepting (*I Was Shot in the Head; The First Time*) others are surprised, even stunned by where they have arrived (*Mixed Bloods*.) Still others are simply confused (*Unlucky Ghosts of the Freeway; Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother*.) Where these characters imagine they have arrived is less germane than Rivera's central question, "What would be your last words sent into the universe for all time?"

Rivera's canvas is vast: inclusive, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and many generational. He writes, "The many people who appear in the space are from various parts of the United States. There are Latinos, Blacks, Asians, whites. There are gays and straights, children and old people. All are strangers to each other."

For me, the experience of the play is compounding and cumulative. Not unlike living. While imagining what lies beyond, *Sonnets* peeks into Hamlet's "undiscovered country" and sets a challenge for us all: "What will you leave behind?"



José Rivera

José Rivera is a recipient of Obie Awards for *Marisol* and *References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot*, both produced by The Public Theatre, NY, and seen regionally and internationally. Other plays include *Cloud Tectonics* (Playwrights Horizons, Humana Festival, La Jolla Playhouse), *Boleros for the Disenchanted* (Yale Rep, Huntington Playhouse), *Sueño* (Hartford Stage, Manhattan Class Company), *Sonnets for an Old Century* (Barrow Group), *School of the Americas* (Public Theatre), *Massacre* (Sing to Your Children) (Goodman Theatre, Rattlestick), *Brainpeople* (ACT/San Francisco), *Adoration of the Old Woman* (Sundance Theatre Lab, INTAR, La Jolla Playhouse), *The House of Ramon Iglesia* (Ensemble Studio Theatre), *Another Word for Beauty* (Goodman, New York Stage and Film), *The Maids* (INTAR), *The Kiss of the Spiderwoman* (Menier Chocolate Factory, London), *Each Day Dies with Sleep* (Circle Rep, Berkeley Rep). His screenplay “The Motorcycle Diaries,” was nominated for 2005 Best Adapted Screenplay Oscar – making him the first Puerto Rican writer ever nominated for an Academy Award. His screenplay was also nominated for a BAFTA and Writers Guild Award, and received top screenwriting awards in Argentina and Spain. “On the Road” premiered at the 2012 Cannes Film Festival. “Trade” was the first film to premiere at the United Nations. Rivera co-created and produced “Eerie, Indiana,” (NBC) and was a consultant and writer on “Penny Dreadful: City of Angels” (Showtime) 2019. He will be the sole writer of the Netflix series based on *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Rivera’s short film “The Fall of a Sparrow” has been seen in film festivals around the country. In 2020 he directed the world premiere workshop of his play *Lovesong (Imperfect)* at the 14th Street Y as well as the short film “The Civet.” He has served on the boards of Theatre Communication Group and the Sundance Institute and mentored at Sundance Screenwriting Labs in Utah, Jordan, and India. His most recent play *Your Name Means Dream* was part of the Rattlestick Playwrights Jam, 2020, and read at the Sundance Theatre Lab.

Director's Bio



Paul Draper

Paul Draper is Professor of Theatre Arts and Director of the Acting Program. From 2005-2012 served as the chair of the Department of Theatre Arts & Dance and from 2013-2018 he was Sonoma State University's first Director of Sustainability. Previously he served as resident director with the Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis and has taught at the Universities of Tennessee and Minnesota where he has been a Guest Artist with the University of Minnesota/ Guthrie Theatre BFA Acting Program. Professor. Draper is a member and past Vice President for Advocacy of the Association of Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE.) Draper holds a MFA in Directing from Columbia University (NY) and a BSS Theatre Studies and Acting from Northwestern University.

Directing credits include: *Woyzeck*, *Hamlet*, *Orchard Development* (a dance/theatre piece based on Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, co-directed with Kristen Daley), *She Kills Monsters*, *Molière A-Go-Go*, *Up 'n Under*, *Shakers Re-stirred*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Rock 'n' Roll*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Learned Ladies*, *Ring 'Round the Moon*, *Big Love*, *Cabaret*, *Spring Awakening*, *Twelfth Night*, *Amadeus*, *Oleanna*, *She Loves Me*, *The Monkey King and Other Children's Tales from Around the World*, *The Show-Off*, *Measure for Measure*, *Alfred Stieglitz Loves O'Keefe*, *Cymbeline*, *Voice of the Prairie*, *Shimmer*, *Talking With*, *The Swan*, *That Time*, *Force of Habit*, and *Marie and Bruce*.

Cast Bios



Lindsey Abbott

Lindsey Abbott is a graduating fourth year at SSU. She is excited to share this show with her loved ones and is grateful for this experience. Lindsey is ready to embark on her next theatrical journey in the outside world, and thanks her family, friends, and professors for their continued support throughout her four years.



Euan Ashley

Euan Ashley is a graduating fourth year senior at SSU. He is excited by the opportunity to perform one last time for the SSU theatre arts and dance department before going out into the world. He would like to thank his family, professors, and all others who have helped him reach this point in his life as both a person and a performer.



Jody Banks

Jody Banks is an award-winning producer, writer, director, DP and editor based in San Francisco. His work includes features, broadcast documentaries, TV spots, reality shows, music videos, fashion, entertainment, and live concerts and performances. He teaches On Camera Acting and Production in the Department of Theater Arts & Dance at Sonoma State University.



Maya Pratt-Bauman

Maya Pratt-Bauman is a second year acting student at Sonoma State University. This is her second zoom production, her first being *The Connection Collection* with the theatre department in november of 2020. Maya has really enjoyed working on this project and can't wait to share it with others.



Alex Bravo

Alex has been acting for 9 years in school. He went to the ArtQuest program at Santa Rosa High School and attended the Lenaea Festival multiple years. He is also acting in a short film on youtube called *Grass is Greener* by Walking Planet Productions. He is taking classes at the Santa Rosa Junior College this year and this is his first show for Sonoma State University and plans to continue acting in the future.



Danielle Cain

Danielle Cain has been a working theatre artist in the North Bay for 25 years. She teaches, directs, coaches, and acts. She has worked as an artistic director, casting director, and marketing coordinator. As an actor favorite shows include *Angels in America*, *Arcadia*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Skylight*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *The Tempest*, *Top Girls* and *Hamlet*. Danielle leads Shakespeare classes in London for SSU students.



Allison Dominguez

Allison Dominguez is a third year theatre major at SSU, and is very excited to continue doing shows in this strange time. Most recently she performed in *Candide*, and is also currently working on *Nine* for The Senior Project Festival. She loves acting and looks forward to continuing working with her favorite people.



Marie Ramirez Downing

Marie Ramirez Downing is an Assistant Professor of Theatre Arts, (Acting, Voice and Movement) at SSU and the Voice Coach for the show. She has an M.F.A. in Acting from The Theatre School at DePaul University and a B.A. in Theatre Arts, Acting from CSU, Fresno and is a Designated Linklater Voice Teacher. Recent roles include Sheena in *Rules for Living*, Cathy in *Orange Flower Water*, and Prue in *Celebration* with Slow Theatre Company. Marie is grateful for the opportunity to join her students, alumni, and fellow faculty to bring life to Jose Rivera's beautiful play, *Sonnets for an Old Century*.



Baruch Porras Hernandez

Baruch Porras Hernandez's solo show *Love in the Time of Piñatas* got a clapping man from the SF Chronicle with EpicParty Theatre in 2019, and was later performed for a virtual audience with Portland Center Stage in 2020. He has been an artist in residence at The Ground Floor at Berkeley Rep, he's acted in shows with CalShakes, Shotgun Players, Word for Word, NCTC and many more. He was born in Toluca, Mexico, and lives in San Francisco.



Tiffani Lopez

As a junior in SSU's Theatre Arts program, Tiffani has performed choreography for Native American Heritage Month as well as a fall dance performer and video editor. Tiffani has worked professionally in Bay Area film and television as first a production assistant, and more recently as a production coordinator. She wishes to further her storytelling/writing craft as well as continuing her education at Sonoma State.



James Marchbanks

After graduating from SSU's Acting Program, Marchbanks later graduated from the UC Davis MFA program and performed in a play called *Elephant's Graveyard*, written and directed by Jade Rosina McCutcheon at UC Davis, and also performed as Winston Ntshona in *The Island* at UC Davis, and then at UC Irvine for the Athol Fugard Festival, directed by Peter Lichtenfels. Marchbanks still resides in Northern California, while continuing some theatrical works in progress.



Rafael Manzo

Rafael Manzo feels honored to debut the role of Francisco Javier, written in 2020 by José Rivera. The responsibility of portraying the children separated from their families at the U.S. border was given utmost respect. Rafael has studied acting over 10 years; performed over 25 productions including: *Lydia* (Misha), *Sweeney Todd* (Pirelli), *GYPSY* (L.A.). As a new playwright, Rafael self-produced/ directed a workshop of his play *JOVEN: Reflections of Mexican-American Youth* in Napa.



Dorothy Rose-Miller

Dorothy Rose-Miller is a sophomore at Sonoma State University. Her major is Early Childhood Education, she has taken theatre in middle and high school as an extracurricular. After taking Theatre Arts 125 at Sonoma State, she decided to pursue *Sonnets for an Old Century* as her first show in college.



Laura Odeh

Laura Odeh: Broadway: *The Rivals* at Lincoln Center Theatre (dir. Mark Lamos). Off-Broadway: *The Aristocrats*, *A Body of Water at Primary Stages* (dir. Maria Mileaf), *Gaslight*, *King Lear* at The Public Theater (dir. James Lapine), *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, Regional: *King Lear* at Goodman Theatre and Shakespeare Theatre Company (dir. Robert Falls), *33 Variations* at La Jolla Playhouse and Arena Stage (dir. Moses Kaufman), *The Cherry Orchard* at Yale Rep (dir. Bill Rauch), Film/TV: *The Other Woman* (dir. Don Roos), *Synecdoche, NY* (dir. Charlie Kaufman), *The Unusuals*, *Guiding Light*. Training: MFA, NYU Graduate Acting. Proud member of Actor's Equity



Noelle Dominique Rodriguez

Noelle is a Chicana actress of indigenous descent based in LA. She is an artist who is committed to highlighting original works that center around Latinx and Indigenous communities through her podcast Line720 which you can find on Spotify. She is very excited to perform in anything Jose Rivera has written and is currently working in voiceover and film. You can see what she is up to on her IG: @TheNoelleRodriguez or at NoelleDominiqueRodriguez.com. She would love to thank SSU for inviting her to this special performance.



Miranda Tilley

Miranda is a graduating senior who previously appeared in SSU's *Connection Collection* in the fall as well as Actor's Ensemble of Berkeley's productions of *The Skin of Our Teeth* in 2019 and *Caucasian Chalk Circle* in 2017. She hopes everyone is staying as safe and sane as they can in these difficult times.



Phi Tran

Born April 7th, 1996 and raised in Marin County, California, Phi Hoang Tran has always had a thing for the spotlight. With a Vietnamese/Chinese identity and upbringing, making people laugh and smile comes easy. Phi got into dancing in middle school, followed by acting in high school. Now he continues life at Sonoma State University where he looks to close his undergraduate journey soon enough.



Silas Vaughn

Silas Vaughn is ecstatic to be taking part in his final show at SSU. During his time here he has had the privilege of playing roles such as Judge Turpin in *Sweeney Todd* and originating the role of Gary in the new play: *Origin Story*. He owes a debt of gratitude to his loving family who has shown him nothing but support throughout his time here at SSU, and ambitiously looks forward to the future.



Kim Hester Williams

Kim Hester Williams teaches courses on nineteenth-century American literature and African American literature and culture at SSU in the departments of English and American Multicultural Studies. She is also an affiliate faculty member in Film Studies and Women and Gender Studies.



Avery Wilson

Avery Wilson is a fourth year student at Sonoma State University. She is thankful for all the experiences she has had at Sonoma State, from *Sweeney Todd* to student driven performances like Hope Ablaze. This will be her second to last show here and she is looking forward to what the future will bring!

Welcome to the Department of Theatre Arts & Dance



EVERT B. PERSON THEATRE is an extraordinary learning laboratory, a fully-equipped live performance space containing professionally staffed costume and scene shops, where SSU students learn skills essential to the art of live dance, music and theater performance. For today's show, through performance-related coursework, the students have spent weeks in this building hammering, harmonizing, acting, welding, stitching, and cabling, under the mentorship of professional staff, designers, and faculty. We hope you enjoy the product of the students' learning and skill-building process.

2020-21 EVERT B. PERSON SCHOLARSHIPS

ACTING Lindsey Abbott, Maya Pratt-Bauman, Silas Vaughn

DANCE Abigail Eissman, Angeles Higareda, Sol James, Alessandra Balestrieri-Jennings, Brandon Leong

MUSIC Andrew Cedeño, Linda Peng, Sierra Smith, Jonathan Decicio, Owen Donahue, Abbigayle Samuels, Matthew Bowker, Adan Ortega, Natalie Cucina, Kristina Ibarra, Liam Daley, Joey Banducci, Jady Gorbet, Ann Kessler, Isabella Grimes, Elizabeth Lyle, Sungdu Bae

TECHNICAL THEATRE Elise Clark, Saylor Duckworth, Francelle Mariano

THEATER STUDIES Joelle Joyner-Wong, John Ruzicka

CHAIR OF THE DEPARTMENT Christine Cali

Acting

PROGRAM DIRECTOR Paul Draper

Beginning Acting, Scene Study, Characterization, Non-realistic Style, Chekhov, Shakespeare, Directing, Theatre History

Danielle Cain Voice, Scene Study, Comedy of Manners, Shakespeare, Audition

Marie Ramirez Downing Introduction to Acting, Advanced Scene Study, Voice, Movement, Devised Theatre Workshop

Laura Odeh Beginning Acting, Career Prep and Planning, Physical Theatre

Doyle Ott Critical Thinking, Children's Theater, Humanities Learning Community, Commedia dell'Arte, Feldenkrais, Theater History

Dance

PROGRAM CO-DIRECTORS Christine Cali and Kristen Daley

Christine Cali Contemporary Technique, Choreography, Global Perspectives in Dance, Improvisation/Somatic Practices, Theatre in Action, Critical Thinking, Actor/Dancer Collaboration, Dance Ensemble, Spring Dance Choreography, Teaching Methodologies and Dance for Everybody

Kristen Daley Contemporary Technique, Anatomy for Dance, Choreography, Dance History & Criticism, Yoga, Dance Conditioning, Actor/Dancer Collaboration, Dance Ensemble, Spring Dance Choreography, Global Perspectives in Dance

Jennifer Jaffe Ballet

Nancy Lyons Professor Emeritus

Farah McAdam Dance Ensemble, Dance for Everybody, Hip Hop

Technical Theatre

PROGRAM DIRECTOR Anthony Bish Scene Design, Light Design, Prop Design, Stage Management, Portfolio

Theo Bridant Light Design

Martha Clarke Costume Construction, Costume Design, Stage Management

Peter Crompton Design for the Stage

Theatre Studies

PROGRAM DIRECTOR Scott Horstein Dramaturgy, Contemporary Theatre, Playwriting, Research Methods, Theatre History, Humanities Learning Community

Judy Navas Professor Emeritus

2020-21 Guest Artists

Jody Banks Virtual Design Sonnets for an Old Century Spring 2021

Danielle Cain Virtual Performance Director Connection Collection Fall 2020

Matt Langlois Virtual Design Fall Dance, Spring Dance 2021 and Post-Production Design/Editing for Senior Project Festival 2021

Farah McAdam Virtual Performance Director Fall Dance 2020

Charlie Stellar Virtual Title Design Connection Collection

DEAN, SCHOOL OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES Hollis Robbins, Ph.D.

CPA Professional Staff

CPA PRODUCTION MANAGER Vikki Del Rosario

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER Tai Russotti

ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST, DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC Brooke Tester

ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST, DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS & DANCE Douangta Sorensen

ASSISTANT TO THE DEAN Leigh McTaggart

COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH ANALYST Linda Eichhorn

PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST Jana Duncan

COSTUME DIRECTOR Martha Clarke

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR Theo Bridant