



COLUMBIA STAGES

MFA

DIRECTORS

2016

Celebrating 50 Years

Columbia University School of the Arts

THE OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II CENTER FOR THEATRE STUDIES

A Message from the Head of Directing

I am delighted to introduce you to six talented young directors who are completing their third and final year of graduate training in stage direction in the Theatre Program at Columbia University School of the Arts. In their final year, the directors create a fully produced show in a downtown Manhattan venue. These thesis productions represent an opportunity for you to experience their final projects at Columbia before they embark into the greater theatre world. What unites the six productions is the directors' shared love for the theatre as a vital art form. I know that you will find their work as courageous, theatrical and necessary as I do. May I introduce you here to Shayok Misha Chowdhury, Tatiana Pandiani, Benita de Wit, Marc Atkinson, Sara Rademacher, and Michael Scholar, Jr. I am proud of each and every one.

Anne Bogart



**2 SHAYOK
MISHA
CHOWDHURY**



**4 TATIANA
PANDIANI**



**6 BENITA
DE WIT**



**8 MARC
ATKINSON**



**10 SARA
RADEMACHER**



**12 MICHAEL
SCHOLAR, JR.**

“I seek to activate the forgotten sacred muscles coiled up in ordinary bodies.”

SHAYOK MISHA CHOWDHURY

LEFT Lindsay Tanner in *The Bet*, ensemble-devised by The Lonely Painter Project. Photo by Doug Anderson

RIGHT Julia Joyce-Barry and William Green in *The Optics of Dying Light*. Photo by Carol Rosegg

Shayok Misha Chowdhury is a queer Bengali director and playwright. Born in India, he acquired a taste for sour rice-cakes and the seaside before moving to

Massachusetts where, in a hometown rehearsal, he received his mission from a medicine man with too many Harley Davidson tattoos. Co-founder of The Lonely Painter Project, Shayok Misha creates original, interdisciplinary works for the stage. Through performance, he seeks to activate the forgotten sacred muscles coiled up in ordinary bodies. Recent projects include: *Make*, a song-cycle rooted in African-American hymns and the rising action of breadmaking; a devised adaptation of Chekhov's *The Bet*; and *Inhume*, reimagining Genesis. He has written and directed three new musicals; the most recent, *The Optics of Dying Light*, premiered as his thesis at HERE. A Fulbright and Kundiman fellow, Misha has been published in *Hayden's Ferry*, *Portland Review*, *AALR*, and elsewhere. He was a soloist on the Grammy-winning album *Calling All Dawns* and performed in concert at Carnegie Hall.

shayokmishachowdhury.com



“My work juxtaposes live music, dance, and text to create theatre for a wide range of audiences, events that remind us of our humanity, aliveness, and joy.”

TATIANA PANDIANI

Tatiana Pandiani is a director and choreographer from Buenos Aires. She grew up itinerantly traveling North and South America, during which time she discovered her love of dance and music. Her work is inspired by María Irene Fornés, Pina Bausch, Frida Kahlo, Bob Fosse and Astor Piazzola.

Most recently, she assistant directed *The Glass Menagerie*, directed by Sam Gold at Toneelgroep Amsterdam. Prior to that, she assisted at Lincoln Center, Soho Rep. and Repertorio Español. Her work has been seen at The Bridge, La Micro, Truant Arts, Wertheim Performing Arts, MicroTheatre Miami, The Koubek Center, The Rose Theatre (UK) and The Hangar. Tatiana is also a choreographer and works in film, having recently worked on a digital campaign for TECHO.

In the future? Chekhov, Strindberg, other modern classics, collaborations with choreographers and composers, new South American plays, and a new musical based on Rubén Darío's short stories.

tatianapandiani.com



ABOVE Victoria Collado, Faduoa Hanine, and Ryan Rodríguez in *The Cherry Orchard*. Photo by Roberto Rischmaui

TOP RIGHT Adam Fontana in *Cafe le Monde* by Charles L. Mee. Photo by Oona Curley

BOTTOM RIGHT Melissa Mickens and Adam Fontana in *Cafe le Monde*, by Charles L. Mee. Photo by Oona Curley





“Stories speak to a place deep inside us that logic and reason can’t get to.”

BENITA DE WIT

LEFT Mauricio Pita in *Undrown'd*. Photo by Talya Chalef

BOTTOM Casey Jordan in *The Secret Society of Forbidden Literature*. Photo by Yu-Ting Feng and Laura Chen

Benita de Wit is a New York-based director originally from Australia. She likes to devise theatre in unusual spaces, making imaginative and highly theatrical work that is also deeply intimate.

New York work has included *Audrina*, a serialized drama performed over four episodes in a New York City apartment, and her collaboration with installation artist Gabe Barcia-Colombo on an immersive experience in the New York Public Library that inducted audience members into *The Secret Society of Forbidden Literature*. Benita recently assisted Gregory Mosher on *Antigone in the World*, a project performed in schools and community centers in Kenya and South Africa to start conversations about the plight of young women.

Her thesis project, *Undrown'd: Seeking Asylum*, uses Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and first-hand accounts from refugees to tell the story of a father and daughter awaiting processing in an immigration detention center.

benitadewit.com



“I believe in a theatre that is visibly and audibly part of national and international conversations. A theatre that asserts the power of liveness in our digital times.”

MARC ATKINSON

Marc Atkinson is a director and designer from Catalonia, England and Ireland. After graduating from Trinity College Dublin, Marc co-founded Sugarglass Theatre. Productions include the Irish premiere of Philip Ridley’s *Tender Napalm* (Project Arts Centre) and a Dublin Fringe performance based on Hesse’s *Steppenwolf* (Cultural Highlight of 2012, *The Irish Times*). Marc co-created a production of Beckett shorts for International Human Rights Day in Ireland (International Happy Days Festival) and Bulgaria. They were also performed at the residence of the President of Ireland. Recent NYC projects include *Besieged*, an original production exploring obsession and isolation in contemporary cities, and Martin Crimp’s *Attempts on Her Life*.

Recently, Marc was a directing intern for Ivo Van Hove, and Assistant Director for No’s *Knife*, performed by Lisa Dwan at Lincoln Center. Marc’s thematic interests include the politics of cultural memory; the manipulative power of language; and isolation in a globalized world.

Marc is a Tuckerman Scholar, Shubert Scholar and recently received the Jennifer Johnston Directing Award.

marcatkinson.ie



ABOVE Aaron Heffernan and Erica Murray in *Tender Napalm*. Photo by Colm McNally

TOP RIGHT Peter Corboy, Ellen Flynn, and Ellen Patterson in *Ethica*. Photo by Colm McNally

BOTTOM RIGHT Áine Ní Laoghaire, Sophie Jo Wasson, and Corrin Thomas in *Besieged*. Photo by Mollie O’Mara





“Everyone deserves human connection.
Everyone deserves theatre.”

SARA RADEMACHER



ABOVE Jennifer Marinelli, Jordan Douglas Smith, Kaye Tuckerman, and Zenon Zeleniuch in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, by Edward Albee.

TOP LEFT Jennifer Michaels, Samantha Posey, and Starr Kirkland in *Yet Un-Named*.

BOTTOM LEFT Kaye Tuckerman in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*.

Photos by Phillip Van Nostrand

Sara Rademacher is a Theatre Director interested in expanding cultural accessibility through innovative methods and new work. She believes wholly that in order to represent life, one must live it, and that the Theatre should be as diverse as the world it reflects. Some of her recent credits include: *The Snow Maiden of Appalachia*, a new opera by Andrew Austin; two developmental

productions of *These Mistakes*, by Samantha Cooper; *Yet Un-Named*, a collaboratively devised show about a real life 1950's adoption; and Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*.

She has Assistant Directed for Anne Bogart (SITI), Juliette Carillo (Seattle Rep), Alison Narver (Seattle Rep), Gary Gisselman (Guthrie Theatre), Risa Brainin (Mixed Blood Theatre), Sam Helfrich (Virginia Opera) and others. Sara is the Co-Founder of Elements Theatre Collective and is currently working for the National Theatre Conference. Her upcoming thesis production of *The Love Song of J. Robert Oppenheimer* will open in New York in April 2016.

salarademacher.com

MICHAEL SCHOLAR, JR.



Michael is the Founding Artistic Director of Canada's award-winning November Theatre, with whom he worked on the World English Premiere and tour of *The Black Rider*; the cult punk musical *Hard Core Logo: Live*; Hive 3's *Ana* for the 2010 Cultural Olympiad; and Caravan Farm Theatre's collective modern morality play *Everyone*. Michael was Artistic Associate of The Globe Theatre (Canada), where he directed David Greig's *Midsummer (a play with songs)* and programmed a season of their Sandbox Series. Michael has directed productions for Medicine Show Theatre (NY) and various Canadian regionals, including The Arts Club Theatre, Gateway Theatre, and Persephone Theatre. He recently completed directing internships with Robert Wilson on *La Traviata* (Austria), and with Robert Lepage on a new French production of *Quills* (Quebec). Michael has been nominated for the Jessie Award (Vancouver) for "Best Direction," received the Canadian AEA Emerging Artist Award, and the JBC Watkins Award from The Canada Council for the Arts to pursue his Directing studies.

novembertheatre.com

ABOVE Jon Peacock, Onalea Gilbertson, Jeff Moulton in *ILSA: Queen of the Nazi Love Camp*. Photo by Michele I. Arazi

TOP RIGHT Laurence Haegart and Kathryn Kirkpatrick in *Fat Pig*. Photo by Itai Erdel

BOTTOM RIGHT Elliott Mayer, Samantha Sheppard, and Clara Pagone in *Uncle Vanya*. Photo by Michele I. Arazi

"Theatre is my church. It is where I go to explore larger ideas communally, through story and song."



THESIS SHOWS IN 2015–2016



The Optics of Dying Light

Written by Shayok Misha

Chowdhury

Directed by Shayok Misha

Chowdhury

OCTOBER 21–24 HERE ARTS CENTER 145 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS



1989

Devised by Tatiana Pandiani with
music by Soda Stereo, Sumo, Virus,
Abuelos de la Nada, and others.

Directed by Tatiana Pandiani

FEBRUARY 17–20 THE CONNELLY 220 EAST 4TH STREET



Undrown'd: Seeking Asylum

Devised by Benita de Wit
with music composed by
Gemma Peacocke

Directed by Benita de Wit

MARCH 9–12 THE CONNELLY 220 EAST 4TH STREET



Outlying Islands

by David Greig

Directed by Marc Atkinson

MARCH 30-APRIL 2 THE CONNELLY 220 EAST 4TH STREET



The Love Song of J. Robert Oppenheimer

by Carson Kreitzer

Directed by Sara Rademacher

APRIL 20-23 THE CONNELLY 220 EAST 4TH STREET



Baby Fat: Act I

A Screeching Weasel Rock Opera

Music and Lyrics by Ben Weasel

Libretto by Ben Weasel

(after Victor Hugo and Francesco Maria Piave)

Directed by Michael Scholar, Jr.

JULY 20-23 LA MAMA EXPERIMENTAL THEATER CLUB 66 EAST 4TH STREET

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The MFA Theatre Program at Columbia is international, collaborative and interdisciplinary. Named in honor of Oscar Hammerstein II, it is defined by its location in New York City, a global capital of theatre, and by the extensive network of Columbia alumni who run prestigious Broadway, Off-Broadway and regional theatres; direct and perform in Tony- and other award-winning productions; work in every level of the professional theatre world; and teach, mentor and engage with students on an ongoing basis. Columbia Stages is the producing arm of the Oscar Hammerstein II Center for Theatre Studies.

ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Columbia University School of the Arts awards the Master of Fine Arts degree in Film, Theatre, Visual Arts and Writing and the Master of Arts degree in Film Studies; it also offers an interdisciplinary program in Sound Arts. The School is a thriving, diverse community of talented, visionary and committed artists from around the world and a faculty comprised of acclaimed and internationally renowned artists, film and theatre directors, writers of poetry, fiction and nonfiction, playwrights, producers, critics and scholars. In 2015, the School marked the 50th Anniversary of its founding. In 2017, the School will open the Lenfest Center of the Arts, a multi-arts venue designed as a hub for the presentation and creation of art across disciplines on the University's new Manhattanville campus. The Lenfest will host exhibitions, performances, screenings, symposia, readings, and lectures that present new, global voices and perspectives, as well as an exciting, publicly accessible home for Columbia's Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery. For more information visit arts.columbia.edu.