



COLUMBIA STAGES

NEW

PLAYS

**ORIGINAL WORK BY
THE MFA PLAYWRITING
CLASS OF 2016**

FESTIVAL

Celebrating 50 Years

Columbia University School of the Arts

THE OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II CENTER FOR THEATRE STUDIES

These plays make me excited for the future of the theatre. In the range of their content and form, as well as their ambition, they capture the diversity of our nation and our world.

Each of these playwrights chose a favorite artist to help guide them through the development and production process. Perusing this brochure, you will find an impressive group of mentors, who stand at the forefront of our field, with a commitment to nurturing younger artists. We are grateful for the gift of their time and expertise.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to Professor Chuck Mee, who years ago recognized the critical importance of giving MFA playwrights at the School of the Arts an opportunity to see their works fully staged and to collaborate with a renowned mentor, the way young artists a few centuries ago worked in the studio with Giotto or Leonardo da Vinci or Michelangelo.

Welcome to the future. We hope you enjoy these bold and energetic new works by the next generation of playwrights.

David Henry Hwang

HEAD OF PLAYWRITING

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS



**2 McFEELY
SAM GOODMAN**



**3 MING
PEIFFER**

**4 BEN
HOOVER**



**5 EMMA
STANTON**



**6 KRISTIN
SLANEY**



**7 DOMINIC
FINOCCHIARO**

**8 SAMANTHA
COOPER**



**9 CHAS
LIBRETTO**

**10 KATE
MULLEY**



**11 HONGYI
TIAN**



The Columbia New Plays Festival is made possible with the generous donations of The JTS Fund, The Katherine and Gilbert Miller Fund, The Howard Stein New Play Fund, and Mrs. Marianne Stein. All images of the playwrights by Matthew Dunivan Photography.

AFTERWARD

McFeely Sam Goodman

APRIL 21 AT 3PM | APRIL 23 AT 7:30PM | APRIL 24 AT 2:30PM



Sam Breslin Wright, Alex Borinsky, Lindsay Hockaday, and Sam West in *Special Cheese*. Photo by Kelly Stuart.

Set behind the scenes of a superhero movie and written largely in the first person, *Afterward* tells the story of McFeely Sam Goodman's experience as a childhood cancer survivor. With humor, heart, and thoughtfulness, the piece combines medical memoir with superhero movie tropes to explore illness, trauma, survivorship, and anxiety.

MENTOR: KARINNE KEITHLEY SYERS

McFeely Sam Goodman's plays include *America Breathing* (The Martin E. Segal Center), *Special Cheese* (CATCH, Hearth Gods, Columbia), *Brunchtime Is Over* (Columbia), and *The Pickle* (Little Theatre at Dixon Place), all directed by Sarah Hughes, as well as *Where Are We Now?* (chashama Summer Performance Series Residency) directed by Marina McClure. A work-in-progress excerpt of *Afterward* was presented in October at Prelude 2015. As an assistant director and dramaturg, he has worked with Half Straddle, Sibyl Kempson, Radiohole, and The Riot Group.

2

USUAL GIRLS

Ming Peiffer

APRIL 22 AT 3PM AND 8PM | APRIL 23 AT 2:30PM



Ying Ying Li, Jaspal Binning, Karen Eilbacher in *i wrote on ur wall and now i regret it*. Photo by Kat Yen.

Usual Girls is an autobiographical work-in-progress chronicling early female sexual development and the social conditioning that teaches women to function as sexual objects in our society. This installment of *Usual Girls* is performed in three radically different ways with three different casts, helmed by an all-female creative team. Directed by Kat Yen.

MENTOR: DAVID HENRY HWANG

Ming Peiffer is the Co-Artistic Director and Resident Playwright of the critically-acclaimed Spookfish Theatre Company and a proud member of EST's Youngblood. Her plays have been produced at and/or commissioned by HERE, The Flea, The Wild Project, FringeNYC, Alchemical Theatre Lab, Yangtze Rep, Kraine Theater, Theater for the New City, Under St. Mark's, among others. Her plays have been developed at The Lincoln Center Director's Lab and NPTC's Women's Work Project. Ming is the recipient of The Kennedy Center's Paul Stephen Lim Playwriting Award.

3



PIONEER SPECIES

Ben Hoover

APRIL 26 AT 8PM | APRIL 27 AT 2:30PM | MAY 1 AT 8PM



Ben Vigus, Emma Healey, and Jefferson White in *A Microlesson in Denimology*. Photo by Kelly Stuart.

Home from a long stint in the Amazon, Nick is sunburnt, bug-bitten, and ready for Grandmother's pumpkin pie. But when a hunting trip goes awry, he has no choice but to start anew and make a family he can call his own. What does it take to survive in a forest where the trees seem more kindred than his own relatives?



MENTOR: ANNE WASHBURN

Ben Hoover is a writer and neuroscientist who uses scientific experimentation and collaboration to make live performances. His work includes *Midlife* (upcoming at Single Carrot Theatre in Baltimore, MD and also as a MainStage play at the 2016 Great Plains Theatre Conference), *A State of Becoming* (Shanghai Theatre Academy), and *In One Sense* (Columbia). He is the Artistic Apprentice at Roundabout Theatre Company. His scientific writing on glioma cancers, Lou Gehrig's disease, and multiple sclerosis have been published in *Neuron*, *Journal of Neurosurgery*, and *Journal of Neurochemistry*.

4

NO CANDY

Emma Stanton

APRIL 28 AT 2:30PM | APRIL 30 AT 7:30PM | MAY 1 AT 2:30PM



Stephanie Shum, DeChantel Kosmatka, and Ryan Heywood in *Circle-Machine*. Photo by Joe Mazza.

At the center of *No Candy* is a multi-generational community of Bosnian Muslim women who survived the Srebrenica genocide and, years later, run a souvenir shop near the Srebrenica memorial. While this play is about how trauma inhabits the body and shapes a community, it is also about the persistence of humor, art, and absurdity in an unimaginable time.

MENTOR: CARIDAD SVICH

Emma Stanton is a Chicago and New York theatre artist. She has worked with such companies as American Theater Company, About Face Theatre, Double Edge Theater, Steppenwolf Theatre, En Garde Arts, and Walkabout Theater, of which she is Associate Artistic Director. She was a recipient of a Civics and Arts Foundation Playwriting Award for Emerging Artists in Chicago and a semi-finalist for a Princess Grace Award. Currently, Emma is writing for Walkabout Theater Company's show, *Cure*, and teaching a documentary theatre class in Harlem Public Schools.



5

UN-UTERO

Kristin Slaney

APRIL 29 AT 2:30PM AND 8PM | APRIL 30 AT 2:30PM



Ben Vigus and Taylor Shurte in *The Unnatural Journey of St. Valerie to Nova Scotia*. Photo by Bobby Plasencia.

Best friends Mel and Becca live in a town where all Planned Parenthood locations have recently shut down. When Mel becomes pregnant, Becca decides to donate her eggs under the table to help Mel. *Un-Utero* is a comedy about fertility, feminism, female friendship, and Susan Miller horoscopes.

MENTOR: LYNN NOTTAGE

Kristin Slaney is a playwright originally from Halifax, Nova Scotia. Her plays have been produced and developed in New York and Canada at Ensemble Studio Theatre, The Flea Theatre, The Tank, Columbia University, Dalhousie University, the University of Alberta, Ship's Company Theatre, Eastern Front Theatre, Halifax for Young People, and DaPoPo Theatre. Kristin is a member of EST's Youngblood, and *Un-Utero* has been named a semifinalist for the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center's 2016 National Playwrights Conference.

6

TREES IN THEIR YOUTH

Dominic Finocchiaro

MAY 3 AT 8PM | MAY 4 AT 2:30PM | MAY 8 AT 8PM



Elise Musciano and MacKenzie Turnbull in *The Lucky Ladies (someday you will be loved)*. Photo by Paul Gillespie.

Who were you in high school? What do you remember? What have you chosen to forget? Four seniors navigate the perils of privilege, race, gender, and sexuality as they struggle to come of age in their cloistered Bay Area town.

MENTOR: GREGORY S. MOSS

Dominic Finocchiaro is a Brooklyn-based playwright, performer, and freelance dramaturg. His full-length plays include *brother brother*, *complex*, *The Found Dog Ribbon Dance*, *Gold Person*, and *The Lucky Ladies (someday you will be loved)*. His work has been developed around the country, including with Actors Theatre of Louisville, the Lark Play Development Center, the National New Play Network, Portland Center Stage, the Flea Theater, the Kennedy Center, the Amoralists, and the UCross Foundation. He is a current member of the Civilian's R & D Group and the Lark's Monthly Meeting of the Minds.



7

INVINCIBLE ONES

Samantha Cooper

MAY 5 AT 2:30PM | MAY 7 AT 7:30PM | MAY 8 AT 2:30PM



Jordan Smith and Elly-Anne Ehrman in *These Mistakes*. Photo by Kevin McNair.

Reeling from the death of their best friend, four women face seemingly unanswerable questions in the aftermath: Who will give the eulogy? Will they ever be able to live alone? Why did that girl's brother show up? Drawing on roller derby culture, *Invincible Ones* explores grief, guilt, and a constant drip from the heavens above.

MENTOR: MELISSA JAMES GIBSON

Samantha Cooper is a playwright and theatre cross-trainer originally from Cheney, Washington. She received her BA from Western Washington University (WWU) in 2010. Samantha has been affiliated with organizations such as: Annex Theatre, The Barrow Group, Blood Ensemble, Book-It Repertory Theatre, Disquiet International Literary Program (2015 Short List), Last Frontier Theatre Conference (2015 Play Lab), Macha Monkey Productions, Northwest Playwrights Alliance, and Seattle Repertory Theatre. Find her online at: <http://www.samantha-cooper.com/>.



8

THE LAODAMIAD

Chas LiBretto

MAY 6 AT 2:30PM AND 8PM | MAY 7 AT 2:30PM



Salvatore Cacciato and Madeleine Hamer in *A Cure in the House*. Photo by Kelly Stuart.

When Iolaus is killed in combat, Laodamia becomes the first woman to be widowed by the Trojan War. How she deals with her grief echoes through history and myth for millennia. Inspired by fragments from Euripides' lost play *Protesilaos*, *The Laodamiad* explores love, war, and loss.

MENTOR: OSKAR EUSTIS

Chas LiBretto is a writer and performer based in New York. He is the co-founder of Psittacus Productions, and an alum of Ars Nova and Theater Masters. His writing has been produced and developed at Lincoln Center Education, Ars Nova, Pasadena Playhouse, New Ohio, Live Source, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Vineyard Theatre, New York Musical Theatre Festival (NYMF), Theater Masters, littlefield, Ugly Rhino, Columbia University, The Sargent Theatre, Musical Theatre Factory, Son of Semele Theatre, The Lost Colony, and the Paideia Institute for Humanistic Study. Find him online at <http://www.chaslibretto.com>



9

GREY LADY, HITHER DITCH & THE NEXT WAR

Kate Mulley

MAY 11 AT 2:30PM | MAY 13 AT 8PM | MAY 14 AT 2:30PM



Gianmarco Soresi, Kineta Kunutu, and Hye Young Chyun in *Cherry on Top*. Photo by Scott Fetterman.

Grey Lady, Hither Ditch & The Next War constitute a trilogy of plays that explores the intersection of war and medicine across three different wars and 150 years. Set during the Civil War, the First World War and the War in Afghanistan, these plays delve into the tragedy, comedy, mystery and romance of life and death at the front lines, in field hospitals and at home.



MENTOR: MADELEINE GEORGE

Kate Mulley is a playwright, producer, dramaturg and founding member of Vox Theater. Her plays have been performed throughout the US and internationally at theaters including Dixon Place, the Flea, Northern Stage, Theatre503 and the Soho Theatre. Kate has been a Fellow at Shanghai Theatre Academy, a Tennessee Williams Scholar at the Sewanee Writers Conference and a finalist for the Juilliard Playwriting Fellowship. She graduated from Dartmouth with a degree in Theater and History and received an MA in Writing for Performance from Goldsmiths College, London.

10

PLANET HEART

Hongyi Tian

MAY 12 AT 2:30PM AND 8PM | MAY 14 AT 7:30PM



Stephen Elrod and Aaron David Gleason in *Wutopia*. Photo by Chris Thielking.

An American who teaches English at a high school in Xi'an, China, and a Chinese who works in New York City. They're in different countries, yet their journeys intersect and intertwine as they meet different people along the way. A play about family and being a foreigner, and perhaps most importantly, how we make sense of our existence as we journey through life.

MENTOR: STAN LAI

Hongyi Tian hails from Xi'an, China. His works include *Wutopia*, *Yossarian and Bardamu*, *Familiar Strangers*, *Long Night in the Rye*, *Blue Snow*, and *At 30,000 Feet, We Meet and Depart*. In October 2015, Hongyi assisted his thesis mentor, Taiwanese playwright/director Stan Lai at the 3rd Wuzhen Theatre Festival. Since November, Hongyi has been working as Stan Lai's assistant at Theatre Above, a brand-new theatre located at the heart of Shanghai. Hongyi is also translating Stephanie Arnold's *A Creative Spirit: An Introduction to Theatre*, which will be published in China later this year.



11

CALENDAR

APRIL 21

3PM **AFTERWARD**
BY McFEELY SAM GOODMAN

APRIL 22

3PM **USUAL GIRLS**
BY MING PEIFFER
8PM **USUAL GIRLS**
BY MING PEIFFER

APRIL 23

2:30PM **USUAL GIRLS**
BY MING PEIFFER
7:30PM **AFTERWARD**
BY McFEELY SAM GOODMAN

APRIL 24

2:30PM **AFTERWARD**
BY McFEELY SAM GOODMAN

APRIL 26

8PM **PIONEER SPECIES**
BY BEN HOOVER

APRIL 27

2:30PM **PIONEER SPECIES**
BY BEN HOOVER

APRIL 28

2:30PM **NO CANDY**
BY EMMA STANTON

APRIL 29

2:30PM **UN-UTERO**
BY KRISTIN SLANEY
8PM **UN-UTERO**
BY KRISTIN SLANEY

APRIL 30

2:30PM **UN-UTERO**
BY KRISTIN SLANEY
7:30PM **NO CANDY**
BY EMMA STANTON

MAY 1

2:30PM **NO CANDY**
BY EMMA STANTON
8PM **PIONEER SPECIES**
BY BEN HOOVER

MAY 3

8PM **TREES IN THEIR YOUTH**
BY DOMINIC FINOCCHIARO

MAY 4

2:30PM **TREES IN THEIR YOUTH**
BY DOMINIC FINOCCHIARO

MAY 5

2:30PM **INVINCIBLE ONES**
BY SAMANTHA COOPER

MAY 6

2:30PM **THE LAODAMIAD**
BY CHAS LIBRETTO
8PM **THE LAODAMIAD**
BY CHAS LIBRETTO

MAY 7

2:30PM **THE LAODAMIAD**
BY CHAS LIBRETTO
7:30PM **INVINCIBLE ONES**
BY SAMANTHA COOPER

MAY 8

2:30PM **INVINCIBLE ONES**
BY SAMANTHA COOPER
8PM **TREES IN THEIR YOUTH**
BY DOMINIC FINOCCHIARO

MAY 11

2:30PM **GREY LADY**
BY KATE MULLEY

MAY 12

2:30PM **PLANET HEART**
BY HONGYI TIAN
8PM **PLANET HEART**
BY HONGYI TIAN

MAY 13

8PM **HITHER DITCH**
BY KATE MULLEY

MAY 14

2:30PM **THE NEXT WAR**
BY KATE MULLEY
7:30PM **PLANET HEART**
BY HONGYI TIAN

Performances at
The Pershing Square
Signature Center
480 West 42nd St.
New York, NY

For tickets and more information,
visit ColumbiaStages.org

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 for 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.

VISIT

ColumbiaStages.org
for tickets and up-to-date information.

FOLLOW US

[@custages](https://www.instagram.com/custages)

LIKE US

[Facebook.com/columbiastages](https://www.facebook.com/columbiastages)

Celebrating
50 Years
Columbia University
School of the Arts

2960 BROADWAY, MC 1807
601 DODGE HALL
NEW YORK, NY 10027

theatre@columbia.edu
arts.columbia.edu/theatre
columbiastages.org

Return Service Requested



NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
NEW YORK, NY
PERMIT NO. 3593