

 COLUMBIA STAGES

MATT BARBOT • STEPHEN FOGLIA  
AENEAS HEMPHILL • BECCA PLUNKETT  
ALIX SOBLER • ELLEN STEVES  
CALLAN STOUT • ALEX VITERI

ORIGINAL WORK BY THE MFA  
PLAYWRITING CLASS OF 2017

# NEW PLAYS FESTIVAL

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS | THEATRE

THE OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II CENTER FOR THEATRE STUDIES

## A MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF PLAYWRITING

These thesis productions from a remarkable group of young dramatists exemplify two core values of the playwriting program at Columbia School of the Arts: production and diversity. Reading plays is important, but they are meant to live in a theatrical space, and come to life through performance, as these pieces do wonderfully. Furthermore, the works of the MFA playwriting class of 2017 exhibit a wide range of cultural, international, and aesthetic diversity. Theatre is vital enough to tell many different kinds of stories, using a variety of formal techniques, to engage our hearts and minds.

Each of these playwrights chose a favorite artist to mentor them through their production process. Peruse this brochure, and you will find an impressive group of artists at the forefront of our field, who share a commitment to nurturing new voices. We are grateful for the gift of their time and expertise.

Welcome to the future. We're proud of these bold and energetic new works by the next generation of playwrights. Remember their names. You'll hear more from them soon.

*David Henry Hwang*



## MATT BARBOT

MENTOR: KRISTOFFER DIAZ

Matt Barbot is a writer and actor from Brooklyn, New York. He has been a finalist in Repertorio Español's 2014 Nuestras Voces competition, was named the Kevin Spacey Foundation's 2016 Artist of Choice in US Theatre, and won a production grant from the Hispanic Federation. His work has been read and performed at Dixon Place, the Flea Theater, the Brick, Two River Theater, INTAR, and the Lucille Lortel Theatre. In his work, Matt often seeks to tell stories about stories — mining pop culture, mythology, heritage, history, and comic books to examine the ways we define ourselves.

APRIL 26 AT 2:30 PM  
APRIL 28 AT 8:00 PM  
APRIL 29 AT 2:30 PM

## STEPHEN FOGLIA

MENTOR: SHARR WHITE

Stephen Foglia uses diverse theatrical forms to approach the intimacy of other lives and search out the magic lurking in the cracks of our experiences. In 2015, he wrote and directed a dance-theatre piece inspired by NASA's Voyager program (*Voyager*) and an immersive detective story about mental illness (*Mistress of the House*). Prior to arriving in New York, he adapted *Ulysses* and *The 1,001 Nights* for performance at the Dallas Museum of Art. *September Gurls*, a time-skipping exploration of first best-friendship, debuted in 2016 at Columbia. Stephen is a member of Lincoln Center Directors Lab.



APRIL 19 AT 2:30 PM  
APRIL 21 AT 8:00 PM  
APRIL 22 AT 2:30 PM



A LIST OF SOME SHIT I'VE KILLED  
PHOTO CREDIT: KELLY STUART  
FEATURED: KAREN EILBACHER,  
OLIVIA JAMPOL, DOMINIQUE  
BRILLON, AND MICHAEL JOHN  
IMPROTA

## SAINTS GO MARCHING

Jo's grandfather—a decorated veteran—has died, leaving emotional wreckage and unpaid debts in his wake. As she prepares for the funeral, Jo's heart is set on keeping grandpa's burial flag; to get it, she'll have to deal with her despondent mother, an attempted exorcism, and competition from a secret aunt young enough to be her little sister. It won't be easy, but nothing an aspiring saint like Jo can't handle.



## OUTER BANKS

One sunny afternoon on a North Carolina beach, Junie's twin sister disappeared without a trace. Two years later, no sign of the missing woman has surfaced, and Junie's family has decided it is time to say goodbye. But Junie may not be ready. She begins to receive mysterious messages that might just be coming from her sister. By the brackish waters of the Neuse River, the borders between worlds grow porous, and death's door opens.

SEPTEMBER GURLS  
PHOTO CREDIT: KELLY STUART  
FEATURED: LINDSEY HOWARD AND  
DOMINIQUE BRILLON



## AENEAS HEMPHILL

MENTOR: NAOMI WALLACE

Aeneas Sagar Hemphill is a writer and performer based in New York City. His work mythologizes the historical and the contemporary to uncover buried truths. His plays include *Ariadne*, *The Wordless End*, *A Stitch Here or There: A Sock Tragedy in One Act*, and *The Troll King*. He is currently a member of the Pipeline Play Lab.

MAY 3 AT 2:30 PM  
MAY 5 AT 8:00 PM  
MAY 6 AT 2:30 PM



THE TROLL KING RISES  
PHOTO CREDIT: KELLY STUART  
FEATURED: NATHANIEL JACKSON,  
ERIK OLSON, KALEN BOYD

## BLACK HOLLOW

After a school shooting rips open the heart of an idyllic American town, the people of Black Hollow reckon with their loss and fight to live on. A play about grief, community, and resilience.

## BECCA PLUNKETT

MENTOR: TAYLOR MAC

Becca Plunkett is a theatre-maker from Austin, Texas. She is a writer, director, and performer, as well as a maker of music, videos, and found object art installations. She was a resident artist at the Rhodopi International Theatre Laboratory in Smolyan, Bulgaria, where she studied performance traditions such as Kathakali, Kabuki, and Peking Opera. Many of her plays are influenced by these performance techniques and often explore gender roles, class structure, and semiotics/codification. Becca has worked on productions in Macedonia, Poland, Bulgaria, and Argentina. Her plays include: *The Conflabbergation*, *Love Is, Love Was*, and *The Fifth Sun*.



MAY 4 AT 8:00 PM  
MAY 5 AT 2:30 PM  
MAY 6 AT 7:30 PM



## A DOLLZES HOUSE

A power-hungry King in a war-torn nation forces his royal court to perform a heavily redacted version of *A Doll's House*. The King's favorite, Tulip, stars in the show as Nora, a role she's been preparing for her entire life. When Tulip discovers that the King has altered Ibsen's ending to promote his own, twisted ideology, her porcelain world begins to crack. *A DollZes HoUse* is a play about History, hegemony, and resistance/rebellion.

THE CONFLABBERGATION  
PHOTO CREDIT: KELLY STUART  
FEATURED: ELLEN STEVES,  
KINSEY KECK, ARTEM KREIMER,  
AND TORI ERNST



## ALIX SOBLER

MENTOR: LISA KRON

Alix Sobler is a writer from New York whose plays have been read, workshopped, and produced in North America and England. In 2016, she had three plays produced, including her play *The Secret Annex* at the Segal Centre in Montreal; *JONNO*, at the Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival; and *The Great Divide*, at the Finborough Theatre in London. Her play *Sheltered* won the 2018 Alliance/Keneda National Graduate Playwright Competition and will have its world premiere at the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta in 2018. You can find out more about her and her work at [alixsobler.com](http://alixsobler.com).

MAY 11 AT 8:00 PM

MAY 12 AT 2:30 PM

MAY 13 AT 7:30 PM



*THE GLASS PIANO*  
PHOTO BY KELLY STUART  
FEATURED: MATT RENSKERS  
AND MAREN SEARLE

## LAST NIGHT IN INWOOD

A major disaster in Manhattan has everyone on the island looking for high ground. For Danny's family and friends, that higher ground happens to be her one-bedroom apartment in Inwood. As the world outside goes to pieces, Danny tries to keep the peace among the assorted characters gathered in her space. They might make it through this crisis, if they can manage to survive each other.

## ELLEN STEVES

MENTOR: SHEILA CALLAGHAN

Ellen Steves is a founding member of boom!, a small production house/arts collective in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn. Her work focuses on the semiotics of performative violence. She likes to explore status and manipulation, often focusing on small micro-chasms to explore large ideas. You can find out more at [www.thisisboom.com](http://www.thisisboom.com)



APRIL 27 AT 8:00 PM

APRIL 28 AT 2:30 PM

APRIL 29 AT 7:30 PM



## HATEWATCH

After a televised intervention goes off the rails, three friends go to extreme measures to take things into their own hands. *HATEWATCH* is an exploration of the connection between art and commerce, torture, manipulation, friendship, pornography, and cheese dip.

*THIN MINTS*  
PHOTO CREDIT: KELLY STUART  
FEATURED: TORI ERNST AND  
BECCA PLUNKETT



## CALLAN STOUT

MENTOR: DANIELLA TOPOL

Callan Stout is a playwright, troublemaker, and storyteller. Callan writes plays about women confronting a world that often doesn't want them. She believes it's important to write plays that are not only about ideas and people, but plays that interact with the world we have, and try to create the world we want. Her plays include *LEG* (Princess Grace Semifinalist), *Girl Becomes Bone* (Pipeline Theatre Company), *Breathing in the Rain* (Columbia University), *A Song for a Surfer* (LA Female Playwrights Initiative). Callan's children's plays are published by YouthPLAYS. She holds a BFA in playwriting from NYU and an MLitt in Folklore from University of Aberdeen, Scotland. [www.callanstout.com](http://www.callanstout.com)

APRIL 20 AT 8:00 PM  
APRIL 21 AT 2:30 PM  
APRIL 22 AT 7:30 PM



*BREATHING IN THE RAIN*  
PHOTO CREDIT: MEGAN MACK  
FEATURED: DIANE CHEN,  
FERNANDO CONTRERAS,  
JACKIE MARUSCHAK,  
JOHN GUTIERREZ AND  
ELIZABETH WEISEL

## YOU DO NOT LOOK

Gerda is trying to sell encyclopedias in order to stay in America. But she keeps getting sidetracked as she tries to save a world of other women around her. As the play loops and unravels in repeating patterns of PTSD, Gerda cannot escape her own traumatic past. *you do not look* challenges the audience to see female trauma that is too often purposefully overlooked. Developed with Fresh Ground Pepper and the Denmark Arts Center.

## ALEX VITERI

MENTOR: YOUNG JEAN LEE

Alex Viteri is a multidisciplinary artist who believes in parallel dimensions, chaos and happy encounters. Alex graduated from the Visual Arts department at Universidad de Los Andes, where she focused on Live Arts—which included video art, installation, and performance studies. While pursuing her Bachelor's in Colombia, her home country, she worked as an actress and dramaturg for the theatre company TeatroR101. Her latest play *Tales of Imaginary Birds* was based on an internship in the south of France where she worked with refugees from around the world. In 2016, she was a playwright in exchange at Shanghai Theater Academy. Nowadays, she lives and works in Berlin. <https://foliosviteri.wordpress.com/>



MAY 10 AT 2:30 PM  
MAY 12 AT 8:00 PM  
MAY 13 AT 2:30 PM



## UNDER THE MOUNTAIN'S GRASS

A family comes together to celebrate life in a country on the verge of signing peace after 52 years of war. Or the trip journal of a paranoid daughter who falls in love far away from home.

*LA FAMILLE BIZARRE*  
PHOTO CREDIT: ERIC LUCAS  
FEATURED: OYON ASKOR,  
VITALIK KHOUDOYAN, IMAD ASKOR,  
EDGAR KHOUDOYAN, DINA ASKOR,  
VAZGEN ARIS, HAWA SOULEYMAN,  
NELLY HUDOYAN AND ELIAS HUDOYAN.

# 2017 CALENDAR

## APRIL 19

2:30 PM  
*Outer Banks*  
by Stephen Foglia

## APRIL 20

8:00 PM  
*you do not look*  
by Callan Stout

## APRIL 21

2:30 PM  
*you do not look*  
by Callan Stout

8:00 PM  
*Outer Banks*  
by Stephen Foglia

## APRIL 22

2:30 PM  
*Outer Banks*  
by Stephen Foglia

7:30 PM  
*you do not look*  
by Callan Stout

## APRIL 26

2:30 PM  
*Saints Go Marching*  
by Matt Barbot

## APRIL 27

8:00 PM  
*HATEWATCH*  
by Ellen Steves

## APRIL 28

2:30 PM  
*HATEWATCH*  
by Ellen Steves

8:00 PM  
*Saints Go Marching*  
by Matt Barbot

## APRIL 29

2:30 PM  
*Saints Go Marching*  
by Matt Barbot

7:30 PM  
*HATEWATCH*  
by Ellen Steves

## MAY 3

2:30 PM  
*Black Hollow*  
by Aeneas Hemphill

## MAY 4

8:00 PM  
*A DollZes HoUse*  
by Becca Plunkett

## MAY 5

2:30 PM  
*A DollZes HoUse*  
by Becca Plunkett

8:00 PM  
*Black Hollow*  
by Aeneas Hemphill

## MAY 6

2:30 PM  
*Black Hollow*  
by Aeneas Hemphill

7:30 PM  
*A DollZes HoUse*  
by Becca Plunkett

## MAY 10

2:30 PM  
*Under the Mountain's Grass*  
by Alex Viteri

## MAY 11

8:00 PM  
*Last Night in Inwood*  
by Alix Sobler

## MAY 12

2:30 PM  
*Last Night in Inwood*  
by Alix Sobler

8:00 PM  
*Under the Mountain's Grass*  
by Alex Viteri

## MAY 13

2:30 PM  
*Under the Mountain's Grass*  
by Alex Viteri

7:30 PM  
*Last Night in Inwood*  
by Alix Sobler

# 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 opened 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 hosts 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.

# 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.

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